

## **Pitfalls of marriage / Walter M. Gallichan.**

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# PITFALLS OF MARRIAGE

BY

WALTER M. GALLICHAN.

GEORGE H. WALES.

8 & 10, CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON, W.C.2.



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## MARRIAGE: CONTRARY VIEWS.

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"With most marriages it is not long till things assume a very piteous look."—GOETHE.

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"As for Browning's love towards his wife, nothing more tender and chivalrous has ever been told of ideal lovers in an ideal romance. It is so beautiful a story that one often prefers it to the sweetest or loftiest poem that came from the lips of either."—WILLIAM SHARP, *Life of Robert Browning*.

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"As soon as women are ours we are no longer theirs."—MONTAIGNE.

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"Aye, marriage is the life-long miracle,  
The self-begetting wonder, daily fresh."

CHARLES KINGSLEY, *The Saints' Tragedy*.

---

"Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."—DR. JOHNSON.

---

"It goes far toward reconciling me to being a woman when I reflect that I am thus in no immediate danger of ever marrying one."—LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

---

"There is nothing real in the world but love."—J. S. MILL.

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"Marriage is a desperate thing. The frogs in *Æsop* were extremely wise; they had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the well, because they could not get out again."—SELDEN.

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"The married relationship is at once physical and spiritual, and can only come to its fullness if the couple are one soul and one flesh. If the spiritual element is lacking, bodily union becomes a degradation. If the bodily is lacking, the spiritual can never reach its true completeness, and the marriage remains on the level of an intimate friendship."—"The Relation of the Sexes," Report presented to the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship.

## BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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A TEXT-BOOK OF SEX EDUCATION (THIRD EDITION).

*The Lancet*.—"A strong case for the need of sex teaching."

*Methodist Times*.—"Brave, learned, charming."

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MARRIAGE (THIRD EDITION).

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## PREFACE.

MARRIAGE and parentage in our time compel the severest self-discipline. With the increase of cultural influences, demanding a perpetual and difficult conflict between primal impulses and social and moral codes, the problems of the love-life are greatly intensified. Unless the two streams, tender feeling and the reciprocal erotic desire of the sexes, unite and flow in one even current, wedlock is a state of discord and stress. In an immense proportion of marriages there are barriers that prevent the mingling of the two streams. Those who are happily united often say, "We are lucky!" This is tantamount to an affirmation that conjugal love is only attained by chance. We talk of "the stability of family life" as "the supreme fact of social and national security and well-being," and in the same breath we say, "Marriage is a lottery." Is it an inexorable reality that success in this relationship of civilised men and women is beyond the direction of art or science?

The predominant causes of dissatisfaction in married life are frequently disregarded, or even entirely unsuspected. The root cause is often unrecognised among a number of obvious minor factors of discontent. The ordinary man, with the crudest understanding of his own nature, imagines that he

knows the soul of the woman he chooses as a wife. The average woman, with an even more misleading estimate of her own desires, believes that she has sufficient "feminine intuition" to enable her to live peaceably with a partner whom she is taught to regard as a much less complicated being than herself.

It has been said that we train for every occupation except marriage. Most of us chance our luck. And the result is frequently tragic. Poets throughout the ages have sung of the rapture and the poignancy of love. Notwithstanding the universal sway of this passion, very little is known concerning the psychology of sex. There are many persons who seem anxious to repudiate "sex" altogether, as something alien and hostile in our lives.

Believing, as I do, that the study of human traits and behaviour can help us in the emotionally-toned questions of sex conduct, as it does in purely intellectual matters, or in the choice of work, I have attempted to indicate how the proportion of "chance" may be lessened in matrimony.

WALTER M. GALLICHAN.

Oakdene,  
Meadway,  
Gidea Park,  
Romford.

# PITFALLS OF MARRIAGE

## CHAPTER I.

### LOVE IN WEDLOCK.

"I would base all my sex teaching to children and young people on the beauty and sacredness of sex."—OLIVE SCHREINER.

#### I.

MARRIAGE in our time is recognised as a partnership with the object of "mutual help and comfort." Nevertheless, we hear constantly that there is a tendency to undervalue the married state as a necessary condition of happiness. We are told that at least fifty per cent. of husbands and wives are only united in the social or legal sense; and that about forty of the remaining fifty couples would be reluctant to affirm that wedlock has brought a perfect realisation of true love. One inquirer, after an investigation among a hundred married couples, decided that happy marriages are "extremely isolated exceptions to the general rule."

In all stages of human culture men and women of experience have questioned the possibility of real happiness in married life. Socrates said that it is a matter of indifference whether a man weds or remains single, for in either case he will regret it. We might generalise in this way concerning happiness itself. How many of us are truly happy? Instead of



speculating in this manner, it is more profitable to attempt to discover the primary source and contributing causes of disappointment with life and love.

If we accept Byron's pessimistic view that "love and marriage rarely can combine," as an absolutely incontrovertible fact, we have settled the question and there is no more to be said. But if we admit, as we have grounds for doing, that there have been, and are, numerous instances of ideal conjugal love, we are encouraged to undertake a study of the factors that have brought success in these instances. And we may hope quite reasonably to increase the general sum of happiness through intelligent inquiry into the fundamental principles of love between the sexes.

The pitfalls of marriage are made by ourselves. There is no sinister scheme of Nature for making wedlock "the tomb of love." On the contrary, in the natural order, mating is one of the primary springs of joy, pleasure and well-being. The hymn of love begins with the song-birds and is exalted by the poets. Courtship before actual pairing is not the beginning and the end of love among animals, but a continual exercise of skill until the final rearing of the young. "Passion in a lover's glorious," writes Byron; but he foretells that the passion is inevitably transient, because "men grow ashamed of being so very fond." This common opinion requires cautious examination. The evanescence of passionate love is only inevitable in wedlock when the partners are unversed in the intricate art of love. The first pitfall dug in marriage is

when the man, the woman, or both enter into the bond without an apprehension of the true significance of passion. Among the Northern races there is a kind of shamefacedness even in the use of the word "passion." The word has been misused and misunderstood like some other beautiful words referring to love or sex. Love that leads to the true union of marriage is not thinkable apart from ardour, desire, or passion.

Admiration for emotional qualities, respect for character, esteem and reverence can exist without the element of erotic passion. But "the heavenly fire," as it has been called, that burns in the heart of the lover is passion; and it kindles through the attraction of the primary and secondary sexual characters. That is to say that natural sex-love is independent of any considerations but the attraction of sexual difference, and has nothing to do with money, social status, or even worth of character. "I know that I love thee whatever thou art" is the true avowal of passionate love.

Can anyone with the slightest power of reflection believe that a marriage without passion can prove perfectly successful? I anticipate the reply that the marriage of convenience, or even a deliberate marriage for money, is not infrequently successful. But in such unions passion may, and often does, grow with the intimacies of conjugality. On the other hand, a very passionate wooing may be followed by discordant marriage. In this case the cause of failure is traced

to innate fickleness in one of the partners, to a fixed belief in the transitory nature of fervent passion, to the so-called "law of change" in human affection, to the trials of poverty—that may mean a species of spiritual atrophy or death—to cruelty causing hostility.

## 2.

It is generally accepted as an axiom that "passion is short-lived." The continual repetition of this statement is a substantial aid to the digging of matrimonial pitfalls. It is not denied that a small proportion of marriages are happy. But in the making of generalisations, we always tend to disregard the exceptions to the rule. Passion is not inevitably short-lived. It dies prematurely, without doubt, in perhaps the majority of conjugal unions; but that is not because passion is essentially ephemeral.

We take it for granted that we shall "grow out" of the pristine love ardour after a few months or years of marriage, and the anticipation hastens the cooling down process. The greater number of us are trained from our youth up to repress and stultify the very thoughts, emotions, and desires that tend to the conservation of married love. This upbringing is rarely accompanied by any sane explanation of the engrossing mystery of sex-love, especially among the future mothers of the nation. The boy in adolescence usually acquires a rough-and-ready, more or less vulgar, and often repellent, mental attitude to sex. But for the average girl, notwithstanding the present-

day relaxation of some of the old restraints, "love" is a curious mixture of high-flown false romance, worldly wisdom concerning what constitutes "a good match," and the desire to secure the social status of the married woman.

Neither the young man nor the maiden of to-day, with a few exceptions, has more than an inkling of the real nature of love. The mild flirtations of youth, the calf-loves, the callow amorous adventures are unquestionably educative. But there must be sane intellectual preparation for the life-long, whole-time undertaking of marriage, as a necessary supplement to the little tentative love-makings. Many young women regard marriage as a career. How do they train for it? How many of our young men are there who, entering lightheartedly into marriage, have been instructed in the art of love, and are competent to fulfil the delicate, by no means facile, duty of a bridegroom, and eventually of a father?

A very formidable pitfall is often encountered during the honeymoon, when an entirely unenlightened bride is suddenly confronted by physical facts. The resulting shock is one of the common causes of a permanent recoil against sex, of loveless marriage, and frequently of separation.

### 3.

There are two menacing pitfalls in modern marriage: *the tendency to over-sensualise the relationship and the tendency to over-spiritualise it.* Love, in its most exalted, emotional, altruistic forms, has

grown from the universal and physical attraction of the sexes. It is from the sex-impulse that all the finest manifestations of the "spiritual" in mankind have been slowly evolved, and are still developing. Plato traced this connection when he described thought as a sublimation of erotic desire. The diversion of this urge, or "libido," into spheres of noble activity, apparently unassociated with sex-love, is the source of creative art and of most in life that we value very profoundly.

Over-evaluation of the purely primitive expression of the sex instinct, as instanced in marriage without spiritual comradeship, generally brings disappointment and satiety, and is only to be described as a crude form of pseudo conjugality. The same definition must be given to the relationship in which the sensuous imperative desire is feared or underestimated. Asceticism is an attempt to deny sexuality. Weininger asserted that "reproduction and fertility are nauseating." This may seem an extreme and infrequent mental attitude. There are, however, a very large number of men, and larger proportion of women, who are incapable of understanding the saying of George Sand that, in a complete love union, the soul has not betrayed the senses nor have the senses betrayed the soul. Marital love is often murdered, before it is rightly consummated, by primitive lust or by prudish recoils. The inter-activity of spirit and body is inseparable in the love of the sexes. "Spirit and body, twins, and not as some

would have us believe, antagonists, clamour for sustenance so that through their individual and united fulfilment they may bring peace and joy to the whole nature of a man and woman." (Mrs. Havelock Ellis: "The New Horizon in Love and Life.") In striving to attain the finer spiritualised ideals of wedded love and to dissociate "the lower nature" from "the higher," we incur the risk of over-sublimating passion to such transparency as may lead to the total disappearance of love.

Leo G. Sera has said that to diminish "amorous warmth and vigorous vitality" is to threaten both love and the strength of the race. "It is to the interest of the race to be propagated by means of the most active and healthy individuals." And he adds: "Sentimentalism is the amorous effervescence of cold people."

Sentiment must, however, be regarded as the curb upon instinctual impulses that menace social well-being. Sera seems to fall into the error of affirming that erotic interest and vigour are likely to decline with the development of "poetic love, platonic love, sentimental love." I cannot find any proof in the writings of cultured women-advocates of "the greater love" of the future, of an effort to divorce the bodily from the spiritual in love. Olive Schreiner, Ellen Key, Mrs. Havelock Ellis, Helen Stöcker and Sophie Kowalewski are keenly alive to the danger of under-valuing the physiological basis of the love of the sexes.

## CHAPTER II.

## WHOM NATURE LEADETH.

“Love is doubtless the last and most difficult lesson that humanity has to learn.”—EDWARD CARPENTER.

“One of the greatest of social problems, perhaps the most arduous of all, has been the problem of love.”—TARDE.

## I.

TERTULLIAN, a great Christian writer of early days, may be said to have anticipated the belief of modern physiologists and psychologists when he declared “there is no activity of the soul which is not manifested and conditioned by the flesh.” Rufinus, Athanasius and Clement, also pioneers and saints of the Church, expressed similar opinions. “Man is the handwork of God. There is certainly nothing in us that is impure,” said Athanasius. Notwithstanding, an enormous multitude of the followers of these pious leaders hold the human body in more or less contempt, and assert that the sexual processes are “dirty,” “obscene,” without dignity, and something that should be banished from permissible subjects of discussion.

Among the “activities of the soul” love has always been held in high valuation. We are now

concerned with that manifestation of love which has for some centuries been known as "romantic," in order to distinguish it from crude corporal appetite. Now, this activity of the spiritual part of men and women is "conditioned by the flesh," to use the words of Tertullian.

Unfortunately, it is necessary to defend "the flesh" from age-long misrepresentation and slander. Man, we are told, was made in the image of God. Yet, strange to say, man is shame-faced and apologetic in his estimate of this image. There was, indeed, for a long period of history a careful inculcation of disrespect for the human body. Numerous citations from the ascetic writers show how they vied one with the other in vituperating the body. It was said that the lower part of the human frame was the work of demons. Through the influence of this teaching physical uncleanness was actually esteemed, the study of the body was forbidden, baths were destroyed, foul plagues swept over civilised nations, and the contempt for the body led to many gross forms of sexual aberration. As education progresses prudery declines. There are in our country to-day marked indications of a gradual tendency towards respect for the human body and its various functions and manifestations. For example, the prejudice against "mixed bathing" is rapidly dwindling, and there is diminished effort to accentuate "the flesh" by concealing it with alluring drapery.



## 2.

The awakening to the most exalted, refined, and spiritualised love between a man and a woman is of the psyche or soul. This sublime emotion, as Tertullian tells us, arises primarily in the body, though the body may at first seem almost unconscious of any reaction. There is, however, no love without the functioning of sundry mysterious glands. Human creative power, reflection, imagination, and every manifestation of the brain depend upon the healthy working of the organs of the body. If Shakespeare had suffered from a deficient action of the thyroid gland he could not have written *Hamlet*. The internal secreting or endocrine glands play as important a part in the phenomenon of falling in love as the brain. These ductless glands are to an enormous extent the regulators of personality. The young man whose thoughts turn to love, long before the conventional age for marriage, is well provided with a fluid emanating from the interstitial gland associated with the generative organs. The typical womanly woman, warmhearted, affectionate, and framed by nature for the exercise of the supreme feminine function, is provided with a sufficient secretion from the ovaries.

The man with full lips, bright eyes, a spare body, and great energy is the product of certain glands, and his amative life will be of higher importance to him than money-making. He is predisposed to love and fitted for racial purposes, but the very strength of his

desires may prove his handicap. The woman with very actively functioning ovaries may become an admirable wife and mother, or she may be ruined socially through the force of her inborn erotic ardour.

Does it not seem reasonable that the man or the woman who wishes to marry should know at least a few important rudimentary facts about sex-love? Is it not likely that the pitfalls of wedlock will be unsuspected by those who are totally ignorant of their existence? Probably some of my readers will say "What has physiology to do with love? Why insist upon the animal nature in man?" My answer is contained in that saying of Tertullian quoted at the beginning of this chapter. To explain the manifestations of the soul, we must seek their origin in the physical. The negation of this truth has brought wreckage in tens of thousands of marriages. There is no soul activity without a physical cause. The trouble in many married lives arises from an attempt to draw a contrast of the "spiritual" and the "animal."

Havelock Ellis has said, "The sexual activities of man and woman belong not to that lower part of our nature which degrades us to the level of the brute, but to the higher part which raises us towards all the finest activities and ideals of which we are capable. It is true that it is chiefly in the mouths of a few ignorant and ill-bred women that we find sex referred to as 'bestial' or 'the animal part of our nature.' But since women are the mothers and teachers of the

human race this is a piece of ignorance and ill-breeding which cannot be too swiftly eradicated."

Often when I hear people disparage sex as "animal," I recall the remark of Woods Hutchinson: "Take it altogether, our animal ancestors have quite as good reason to be ashamed of us as we are of them." Persons who "do not want to think about sex matters" have no right whatever to marry and procreate children. It is this culpable shirking of a plain duty that strews married life with pitfalls. An ignorant or uninformed young wife may entirely alienate her husband through ignorance of the physical nature of man, or by persistent refusal to "discuss such matters." Many a marriage that might have proved sacramental and ennobling has become a fettered state of contempt or hatred, through a misunderstanding of the unity of the spiritual and the bodily. The case-books of mental physicians and psycho-analysts are full of evidence that matrimonial disaster is often foreshadowed in childhood through the misguided actions of parents who, in an effort to "protect" the young, instil ideas of the "lowness" or "nastiness" of natural budding sex manifestations. Our parents begin to dig our matrimonial pitfalls for us by the secrecy, evasion, or censure with which they treat our perfectly natural and legitimate questions in childhood.

## 3.

The prevalent distorted, grotesque, guilty, timorous attitude to sex subjects is utterly incom-

patible with ideal love marriage. In the few existing examples of happy wedlock there is a natural acceptance of Nature's dispensation. These unions are as Nature intended them to be, physiological and erotic, and therefore spiritual.

A friendship may possibly exist between a man and his wife without the passional element. The attraction on both sides may survive on a simple physical basis, without refined emotion, and with the minimum of tender feeling. But the so-called platonic partnership and the merely sensual cohabitation are not comparable with that real conjugal affection that yields the highest human felicity.

The questing for a strange woman in the streets of a city, for the transient gratification of a physical urge, would not be associated with love in any intelligent mind. The affections must be aroused, vital emotion must kindle, self-denials and self-sacrifices must be practised before we can say that a man and a woman are in love. *True married love is the idealisation of sexual desire.*

The idealisation of the bodily intimacies of marriage requires frank acceptance of the fact that such intimacies are potentially spiritual in every instance of a marriage of love. It is when love withers that the sexual embrace becomes a mere physical act, and sinks to the level of dull, pavement promiscuity. Unhappily a considerable proportion of wives imagine that the more austerely the physical side is suppressed, the more spiritual the union. This idea is consistently

carried into practice on moral grounds, and sometimes for hygienic reasons, by married people who have no knowledge of sex psychology or conjugal hygiene.

## 4.

To those who have made a scientific study of the erotic life, it is evident that the greater number of failures in marriage are the consequence of psychic disharmony in relation to sexual intercourse. It is invariably the tendency of the unfortunately married to camouflage the situation. Undoubtedly there is often a temperamental source of discord. But love in marriage is based on the normal universal desire for contact with the beloved, known scientifically as "the instinct of conrectation."

There is in the average human being a sense of joy and pride in being desired by a loved partner. There is a wealth of tender feeling in the realisation of one's power to bestow joy. Passion is so often rapidly outlived in conjugal life because the highly important play-instinct is undervalued, and not understood in its spiritual value. Professor Maurice Parmelee has written very significantly on this topic in his volume upon "Personality and Conduct." He states that the cultural value of the play-instinct in sex is extremely high, and that the estimate of sex solely as a means of reproduction is a false one. "It is obvious," writes Parmelee, "that so long as it is believed that there is opposition between the two

functions of sex, it will be impossible to harmonise them in the life of mankind."

In his "Little Essays of Love and Virtue," Havelock Ellis writes, "The longer I live the more I realise the immense importance for the individual of the development through the play-function of erotic personality, and for human society of the acquirement of the art of love. . . By casting out from us the conception of love as vile and unclean, we shall purify the chambers of our hearts for the conception of love as something unspeakably holy. . . . Sexual activity . . . is the function by which all the final activities of the organism, physical and psychic, may be developed and satisfied." The secret of success in marriage is in retaining the lover's ardour, and this is only achieved through complete reciprocal understanding. The lover-husband and the lover-wife have avoided the so-called "inevitable" waning of affection through adaptation to one another's erotic and emotional needs. Such pairs are not only happy in themselves; they are able to radiate happiness in the family, among their friends, and in society.

## CHAPTER III.

## GUIDANCE NEEDED.

“ People need more knowledge of the scientific bearings of sex relations and more clearly defined guidance of their rightful purport and practice.”—LORD DAWSON OF PENN.

“ Ignorance about sexual affairs seems to be a notable characteristic of the more civilised part of the human race.—SIR JAMES PAGET, M.D.

## I.

MANY men, when they have wooed and married a woman, behave as though wedlock is a sanction for the selfish monopoly of a wife's body and soul. In this way they sin biologically and ethically. “ Conjugal rights ” by Act of Parliament were not established by sex psychologists, but by patriarchal legislators reared in the tradition that wedlock constitutes the ownership of the wife by the spouse.

The conception of a wife as a man's chattel is of ancient Jewish origin. Sale marriage certainly conferred ownership upon the husband. Marriage by purchase is obsolete in England, but its spirit survives. According to the law of the land, a man “ cannot be guilty of a rape upon his lawful wife.” He can insist upon intercourse and achieve it by force, if the wife's consent is withheld. No doubt the instances of actual physical aggression on the man's part are now somewhat rare. Nevertheless, there

are means of coercion that do not involve assault. Physicians have testified that the experiences of the wedding night are not infrequently similar to a rape, and that cases of hysteria in women are traceable to this cause, while instances of physical injury are not uncommon. The average husband is not a brute. He is often unprepared with the necessary knowledge, the tact, the sympathetic understanding, and the patience which are essential at the outset of conjugal intercourse. Lifelong antipathy to the marital embrace frequently follows the bride's early experiences. This repulsion is often ineradicable, and it is the cause of many unhappy and tragic marriages. The sacrament of love is too often transformed, by the ignorance and maladroitness of both partners in marriage, to a gross and painful shock, which may result in permanent disharmony.

The husband who desires the well-being of his wife, as well as his own peace and comfort, will not demand "rights" without full consent. He will recognise that even among birds every act of physical union is preceded by elaborate courtship. The importance of the manner in which young inexperienced brides are introduced to marital intercourse cannot be over-rated. "I have seen an honest woman shudder with horror at her husband's approach," wrote Diderot. Such horror is far from uncommon in marriages where "instinct" alone is considered the sole necessary equipment for the performance of the highest of all the physiological functions.



In these days when books upon sex physiology, reproduction, and conjugal hygiene are available, there is no excuse for the mischievous ignorance that has marred countless lives. Every candidate for matrimony should be as deeply concerned with the psychology and physiology of love as with the question of monetary ways and means. If personal counsel is preferred to the written word, the prospective husband and wife should consult a competent physician, or a layman who has made a proper study of the psychology of sex and the hygiene of marriage.

If my readers could read some of the letters that I receive frequently from perplexed and depressed husbands and wives, faced with conjugal problems, they would be able to estimate the amount of misery in our society through lack of knowledge. The ignorance to which these communications testify is one of the darkest reflections upon our "civilisation" and "culture." Years of experience have taught me that the most serious hidden conflicts of the human mind arise from a want of adjustment to the realities of the love-life. Compared with these conflicts, money trials are positively insignificant in their effect upon the emotional nature, the nervous system, and the general health.

## 2.

Men should know before marriage that women are not so readily "eroticised" as the male sex.

Love to the virgin of the sheltered home is seldom the same thing in connotation as it is to her brother. Sex desire is usually far more conscious in the inexperienced young man than in the young woman. As the impregnator in the sex act, the male is provided with secretions and fluids that accumulate in the organs, and produce definite sensations and tension. Woman, in her more receptive rôle, is comparatively impassive and indifferent, until consummated love has touched the springs of her being. Her thoughts of love, before the physical consummation of marriage, are more sentimental than sensuous. The various psychic stimuli that arouse amorous longing in men, often produce little or no effect upon women. Whereas in man sex feeling is centred chiefly in the generative organs, in woman it is more diffused, and may affect parts of the body apparently unassociated with the sexual system. Often the maiden is only conscious of sex in the vaguest sense. This unconsciousness is rare among adolescent boys, partly from physiological influences, and partly through the comparative freedom with which boys discuss sexual matters. A truly terrific pitfall in wedlock exists through the morbid accentuation of the normal sex curiosity in young men and its stern suppression in young women. Either sex has specific ideas on love, and the subject is viewed from angles that are sometimes totally different. A kind of vicarious, but not wholesome, relief is sought by boys

in the common habit of loose jesting on sexual topics. This mode of expression is less common among girls, though their curiosity is often keen. Is it not obvious that two persons in love, who propose to marry and to beget children, ought to understand the fundamental points of their purview of love and sexual intimacies before they unite for life? Perfect love is inseparable from complete candour. Imagine the risk in promising to love till the end someone whose thoughts upon wedded love are an enigma! Is it sane, is it moral, to allow false notions of "propriety" to seal the lips until the life-long link is fastened? If the plighted couple cannot reveal their thoughts one to the other, without a sense of shame or guilt, there is the grave probability that the revelations of marriage will bring suffering, dismay, or disaffection.

The young bride's discovery that marriage does not mean only the restrained caresses of wooing time, the admiration of the husband, the possession of a home, and the attainment of social position, but a complete reversal of a number of her preconceptions and hazy speculations on conjugal love, is often alarming and even terrifying. And if the love she bears her husband is not sufficiently deep to make poetry out of actions that are startling, novel, and often contrary to expectation, she will certainly encounter her first pitfall.

## 3.

When an ardent man in the years of his vigour realises that he has married an irresponsive wife his disappointment is very profound. He has passed through the combat of living continently in youth and early manhood, and he awaits a reward in wedlock. "Coldness," "frigidity," or sexual anæsthesia in woman is not only a personal conjugal problem. It reacts upon society in divers ways. It is one of the reasons why prostitutes assert that married men are their best clients. It is one of the causes of alcoholic excess among men as an escape from repression and frustration. It is a contributing factor of mental and nervous ailments, of drug-taking, and of sex perversion. It is also a common cause of divorce.

The effect upon the children of the sexually anæsthetic mother is often very marked. The daughters frequently exhibit a repugnance towards marital intercourse; and the sons, lacking the sympathy and the comprehension of a normally erotic and warm-hearted mother, often develop an indifference towards the female parent, and become woman-haters with a phobia of marriage. The counterfeit "love," that characterises wedlock when the wife is of the frigid type, usually reacts injuriously upon the children, and has a significant influence upon their future love-lives.

If choice were possible, would not the majority of us choose to be born of parents who loved one another with complete biological and emotional fervour? I

have not known an instance of a happy family living with a cold mother and a disappointed father. Women who know nothing of the masculine amative disposition, and have shirked enlightenment, have scanty sympathy for the spouse of an irresponsible wife. There is even a little malicious pleasure in their attitude, for a large number of women constantly accuse the whole of the male sex of undue or abnormal preoccupation with "the physical side of love." This view, as Dr. Ernest Jones states, has far-reaching social consequences.

Erotic coldness in either sex is an abnormality. The causes are physiological or organic in instances of true sexual anæsthesia. Such cases are rare. The defect in the main arises from psychic sources. The survival of the childish envy of the male in adult women is a common determinant, and reluctance to intercourse is an unconscious form of revenge upon "the enemy sex." Even some women who are normally ardent frequently become "refusers" from various pleas, most of them unconscious evasions of the truth. The gravest unhappiness in married life can be traced in many instances to failure on the part of the wife to respond in intercourse. Men are wont to blame their apathetic wives without due understanding of the true nature and origin of their psychic attitude. In many cases the husband has dug his own pitfall all unsuspectingly. Awkwardness in love-making after marriage has induced chronic psychic erotic coldness in a host of women. Constant

quarrelling may excite a physical recoil against sexual embraces, and cause a vicious circle of disharmony.

There are various factors of disgust that affect sensitive women. Fastidiousness in sexual matters is commoner among women than men; and the odour of the breath of a dyspeptic or alcoholic husband is quite sufficient in some cases to bring the beginning of the end of the reciprocal physical relationship. An unpleasant habit in the husband, such as constant sniffing, may create a physical aversion in the wife. Lying, deception, fault-finding and grumbling may have the same result.

The man-despising woman, the daughter of a tyrannous or drunken father, is apt to seek an unconscious revenge upon the husband, and to refuse his sexual advances, or to arouse desires which she rarely consents to appease. The preconception that everything appertaining to sex is "nasty" or "coarse"—the common result of a bad upbringing in childhood or youth—sets up an obstinate resistance to participation in sexual intercourse.

I have referred to the menace of prudish reticence on the part of engaged couples, and I may repeat here that a lack of frankness is at the root of many of the misfortunes of married life. The necessary consideration on both sides depends upon the understanding of erotic idiosyncrasy, and it should be known that there is great variation between individuals in this respect. Miss Ettie A. Rout (Mrs. Hornibrook), in her excellent book *Sex and Exercise*,

says that "marriage with a frigid woman is nearly always very unhappy—unless the man is wholly or partially impotent." This observant writer on hygienic matters states that "the root cause" of frigidity is quite frequently prolonged constipation. This malady is the bane of a multitude of women, and a toxic condition of the bowels may produce a repulsion from the love embrace, and colour and blight the whole of the emotional life. Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane also points out the dangers of constipation in women, and refers to "the complete loss of sexual desire, it being in many cases replaced by a feeling of disgust for the normal relation of the sexes." Chronic constipation is most frequently the penalty paid for injudicious feeding, an absence of fresh fruit and vegetables, and neglect of exercise.

Another cause of sexual coldness is the habit of masturbation, when formed early and practised excessively. This kind of self-gratification is commonly called "self-abuse." In very morbid cases, there is a total repugnance towards the normal intercourse of the sexes, and if the subject marries discord is bound to arise sooner or later. The habit, when fixed and continuous, influences the attitude towards sex-love in a high degree, and is often accompanied by a strong distaste for any reasonable discussion upon essential matters of marital life. The persistent secret masturbator is usually a stern prude, with extravagant and false ideas upon "purity" in other persons, and an utterly distorted view of love.

Bachelors, long obsessed by this habit, often refrain from marrying, or if they marry prove impotent, or at the least remain strangers to the finer expression of the emotion of love. Transitory incapacity to consummate union physically, a form of pseudo-impotence in men, may result from other causes than masturbation. It is often caused by nervousness at the outset of conjugal relations, by an association in the mind of guilt with the natural expression of passional desire, or by the resistance or actual coldness of the wife.

Psychic sexual anæsthesia in women can be avoided by the cultivation of a sane attitude towards the manifestations of the sex instinct, the acquirement of necessary knowledge of the meaning and nature of love, appropriate hygiene, and rational diet and exercise. Above all, the mind must be cleared of all those vulgar and injurious preconceptions that associate pure sexual love with "the lower nature" or "uncleanness." Sex repulsion is not, as some persons suppose, a virtue, but a species of illness of body and mind. Nature has plainly decreed that the activities of love shall be a fundamental source of joy and well-being. A healthy sexual life tends undoubtedly to deepen the sympathies and to promote personal and social virtues in both sexes.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MONEY QUESTION.

"The most hateful and disagreeable problem of matrimony is the economic, but we cannot avoid nor solve it by shutting our eyes and disregarding it."—PAOLO MANTAGAZZA.

"Sex distinction is with her not only a means of attracting a mate, as with all other creatures, but as a means of getting a livelihood, as is the case with no other creature under heaven."—CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN.

## I.

THE flame of love in wedded life is not only kept glowing through the bodily fondness and desire and emotional tenderness described in the preceding chapters. There is the very important question of pecuniary ways and means. Marriage involves the provision of a home for the family. The poor marry without great heed to income, and it cannot be said that they are unhappier in wedlock than the rest of the community. It is probable that the proportion of fortunate marriages is larger among the wage-earning classes than among the middle and upper classes. The common affirmation that poverty and abiding marital affection are inimical is merely a quarter-truth.

Indigence and impecuniosity are not on the same plane. It may be granted that a perpetual fight against want is one of the severest trials of married

love. Notwithstanding, the very poor are not invariably unhappy nor antagonistic in the married state, even though the gaunt figure of destitution may threaten them. Even among the unskilled labourers, earning a precarious livelihood, there are instances of connubial accord and a fair degree of happiness.

The middle class, with "appearances to keep up," are apparently the most likely to fall out when harassed by money difficulties. The clerk, the shop assistant, the unsuccessful professional man, the writer, the artist, and the teacher seem to suffer more acutely in mind through the sting of poverty than the industrial workers. "Gentility" undoubtedly demands a standard of living that exhausts a slight income, and the spectacle of widespread, threadbare, suburban respectability is one of the most depressing in our society.

To inquire how much money a man requires before he can marry is an almost futile question. I know an ex-cabinet minister whose banking account at the time of his wedding stood exactly at seven and sixpence. If a bank clerk asks me if he is justified in marrying on £300 a year, I can only say: "Other people have married and lived happily on much less." The question of an adequate income for a Benedict can only be decided by himself and his partner. That poverty sometimes proves a pitfall in wedlock is only too true. I deny, however, that it is the commonest source of domestic infelicity. The woman who marries a man with a small or uncertain income

generally marries for the most natural of reasons—love, and there is a love that money trials cannot kill. A woman of this valiant type often possesses the aptitude for making every shilling “go a long way” in household expenditure. No doubt there will be occasions when she is prone to feel dissatisfaction with life. But an equal discontent may be noted among the wives of husbands who are well-to-do in the material sense. Love in a cottage is not an impossible dream where there is courage, mutual help, and good organisation in household affairs. Unfortunately, domestic management and thrift are not taught widely enough among girls, and since the increased opportunities for women’s work out of the home, housewifery has tended to deteriorate.

It is generally a safe course for the husband of the lower middle class to hand over the whole of his salary to his wife, because in most cases a woman entrusted with the purse will make a wise and economical use of its contents. There are, of course, extravagant and careless wives, but they are by no means in the majority. Many young husbands have, in their bachelor days, paid little heed to economy in living, and they are not able suddenly to develop thriftiness. As a rule, the women of their own class have had to keep up appearances on a much smaller sum, and they have learned how to get the best value for money.

## 2.

Squabbles about money matters often bring unhappiness and disruption in married life when one partner has a higher evaluation of comfort than the other. It is essential at the outset that the novitiates in wedlock should have a clear and cordial understanding upon the joint expenditure of the income, and that the amounts allocated for various purposes should be set aside and only used for those purposes. People of limited means must be prepared to make certain sacrifices, even it may be in common comforts, for the sake of love.

There is something to be said for and against the woman's share in breadwinning. If a young wife is able to add to the income by occupation outside of the home, the undue postponement of marriage is prevented. Moreover until children are born, the woman may prefer her business or professional work to whole-time domestic tasks. She may not be a very domesticated type, and her activities may be valuable in another sphere. Again, many women appreciate a practical independence in money matters, and after some years of salary earning, they find it a trial to reduce the standard of living. Men of the middle and upper orders in the community have been so long accustomed to the domestic ministrations of their womenfolk, that the greatest number of them are incapable of accomplishing some of the simplest of domestic tasks. It is an excellent education for the boys of a family to gain experience of a practical kind in domestic

science, especially in these days when so many women are expected to perform work hitherto regarded as entirely masculine.

A man should be ashamed of ignorance in such matters of daily life as sewing on a button, laying or lighting a fire, and cooking a simple meal. When the means are restricted, the burden of service in the house may be lightened by an intelligent division of labour. Many a wife is literally sweated in housework, and leads an existence that can only be classed as slavery. The monotony, drudgery, lack of change and recreation, anxiety and worry that make up "life" for millions of women is terrible to contemplate.

The over-worked, nerve-racked, and discontented wife not infrequently loses health, physical charm, and mental and emotional balance, and becomes a source of disaffection in the family. It is of the highest importance that the man of limited means should not permit his wife to bear a double burden in the toil of life. Child-bearing and rearing alone are sufficient to use up the energy of a normal woman during several years of marital life. Every effort should be made by the father and the children to lessen the incessant work of the mother of a family, by whom the greater share of the toil is borne.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

"Among all peoples, the male sex is subjected to the rule of the female, despite appearances to the contrary."—EDWARD VON HARTMAN.

"A husband in the home is playing a part which was created for him long centuries before he was born. He is falling into a convention, which, indeed, was moulded to fit many masculine human needs, but has become rigidly traditionalised."—HAVELOCK ELLIS.

## I.

WE will now inquire into the nature of some common causes of conjugal discord and misfortune. Let us consider first the question of Authority in the Family.

*The Stern Patriarchal Father.* The Head of the House is the title bestowed by long custom on the husband and father. There has been much vehement opposition during the past fifty years to the Pauline doctrine that the husband is the head of the wife. St. Augustine confirmed this teaching and so have many others since his day. Milton, with all his breadth of view in many respects, believed that the husband is the superior of the wife.

"He for God only, she for God in him."

I think that most women hold the fixed belief that the greater number of, if not all, men possess

a strong yearning for domination in domestic life. It has been stated that one of man's incentives to marriage is the desire to exercise power and to rule the woman and the children, this being one of the few feasible methods open to the ordinary man for the attainment of authority. The facts of every-day life do not finally bear out this theory. There are plentiful examples of complete domination of the British family by the mother.

It may be said that headship in the family has been forced upon the man of to-day by long tradition of usage. A man upon entering wedlock may have an ideal of co-authority and co-partnership with his wife; but in the practical discipline of the children he may be given the ultimate authority by his wife. When it is a question of austere salutary punishment or reprimand of the naughty child, the duty falls on the father. There is also a habit in most families of threatening the unruly child with a paternal beating, hence the father has the sway of an all-powerful monarch in the dominion of the home.

The domineering husband usually selects a compliant, tractable woman, who may, in some instances, enjoy being bullied. Girls who talk about "manly strength," as exemplified in the "caveman" type, choose an aggressive, high-handed partner in marriage. Occasionally, however, a more assertive young woman weds a martinet spouse, and a conflict of will soon arises. A bully married to a virago will turn the home into a bear-garden, and when the

children are old enough they will gladly leave the parents' roof. Some men can nag as bitterly and copiously as the worst nagging woman.

In instances when the wife is definitely masochistic, *i.e.*, capable of experiencing a species of pleasure through brutality or extreme austerity, the union of a hundred per cent. male satrap with an over-feminine woman may prove successful. Generally speaking, fear is opposed to love in conjugality. The wife of a bully often seeks the consolation of a milder-natured man.

The psycho-analysts have discovered that dread of the father is one of the causes of hysterical and other nervous and mental symptoms in the children. Extreme fear of one or both of the parents sometimes sets up the habit of stammering, and cases of squinting have been traced to dread of an angry father. Nervous spasmodic twitchings of the face muscles and various habit tricks are noted among children brought up in an atmosphere of fear and anxiety; and often there is an incapacity for school tasks, secretiveness, and timidity in facing the realities of life. Many children have been crippled mentally and morally through harshness on the parents' part; and there is little doubt that the juvenile offender who appears before courts is most frequently a victim of morbid fear.

Modern psychological educators have repeatedly warned parents against over-severity and methods of terror in correcting the sexual misdemeanours of



childhood. Boys and girls have committed suicide through terrible remorse for the habit of masturbation. In such cases, misguided parents have employed threats or punishment instead of sympathetic advice and moral suasion. The "castration complex" often comes to light in the course of psycho-analytic treatment for neurotic illness, and adult patients have confessed to acute fear in childhood at the parents' suggestion of sexual mutilation as a punishment for masturbatory practices.

Professor Freud has shown that neurosis (mental-nervous ailment) is commoner among children than is supposed, and many practising physicians and observant teachers have endorsed this opinion. The bad child is often ill-behaved through neurosis. Nervous maladies that take an emotional form are not inherited, but acquired, and their onset can be traced in the odd behaviour of quite young children. There must be loving confidence between the parents and the children from infancy onwards; and such confidence cannot exist where the element of fear is overpowering in the child.

*The Over-Fond Father.* Our first objects of love after the infantile stage of self-love or Narcissism, are our parents. Usually the boy shows a more tender affection for the mother, while the girl is apt to bestow her fullest love upon the father. This love is one of the most beautiful of human emotions and experiences. But it is not free from certain risks. The highly emotional girl who idolises her father, and

is excessively fondled and petted by him, forms a partly conscious and partly unconscious ideal of a lovable and desirable mate.

I cannot in this restricted space describe at adequate length this important question of "the father-fixation" in women, and I must refer my readers to the writings of Freud, Ernest Jones, Pfister Jung, Putnam, White, and other inquirers for a complete account.

The father-complex in a girl is deepened and complicated by the over-fond male parent, to his daughter's peril in love and wedlock. The unconscious motive in love will urge a young woman to unite with the first man who appears to be "the father image." The attraction may be physical, the tone of the voice, stature, features, or it may be emotional or intellectual. Unfortunately, the girl is seeking unconsciously qualities and character traits that may be non-existent in the lover, and after marriage she will expect to rediscover the paternal tenderness that drew her so closely to her father.

Undue emotionality, over-caressing, and indulgence by the father are mistaken affection. A girl, like a boy, must not be over-dependent on the parent in adolescence. This is the time for preparation for adult life, self-reliance, the relaxation of those parental restraints that were necessary in childhood, and the forming of independent views. The paternally-dependent wife is often very exacting in the complete monopolisation of a husband's love. She

requires constant attention and services, and is hypersensitive in family life. Indulgence in childhood has led her to think that she ought to possess entirely all her partner's tender solicitude, and she demands his worship as a right. Wives of this type are exceedingly susceptible to jealousy of other women, and sometimes of the husband's love for the children, or his regard for men friends.

*The Rule of the Mother.* Folk-lore and primitive legend bear ample evidence that the mother has been as often feared as the father. The very earliest authority in our childhood is wielded entirely by the mother, and the future and well-being of the child depends in an incalculable degree upon this initial training. It is one of the crises in the life of mankind when the hour arrives for escaping from the mother's apron-strings, and confronting the world independently. Many mothers are reluctant to slacken authority over their children, even when they have gained manhood or womanhood. We all know families wherein the maternal domination is extended long after the adult age has been reached.

Anatole France has written: "There is something worse than hate, worse than indifference: it is love, tyrannous love. I had myself the most loving of mothers. She worshipped her only son, her Anatole, as her masterpiece, her darling. . . . She made me foolish and stupid, vacillating, and timid. Accustomed, because of her leading strings right up to my thirtieth year, I shrank from crossing that

abyss in life which separates adolescence from manhood. . . . There is no tyranny more heavy than that of maternal love."

It is not the finest, most heroic and unselfish love that compels a mother to keep an over-tight tether upon children in their youth. "There is one type of 'mother's boy,'" says Mr. G. F. Morton, headmaster of the Boys' Modern School, Leeds, "who has so incompletely broken with the infantile attitude that he is the despair of schoolmasters. He is a queer mixture—partly braggart, partly fool, and partly nothing at all! All intellectual development must pass through three stages—confidence, inquiry, and doubt, and this type of boy never gets beyond the first." (*Childhood's Fears.*)

Like the too fond, indulgent father, the highly devoted, fussy, anxious mother unwittingly produces what has been called "ambivalence" in her son. This means that her treatment of him, half-petting, half-exacting, sets up a feeling of sentimental affection and a sense of dependence which has its opposite in a feeling of repressed anger, tinged with recurrent dislike, against the maternal domination. Only sons are often brought up in this manner by unreflective well-meaning mothers. Such boys are exposed to risk of neurotic illness which may develop sooner or later. They are also often furtive, sly and deceitful, through reaction against severe repressions in home life.

The tyranny of the too fond and anxious mother,

although based upon natural affection, may estrange the children of either sex. I know "good mothers," as they are described, whose sons' conduct outside the home sphere would appal their parents. In one case, the mother of three sons used every artifice to keep the young men from forming friendships with girls, and treated them with a curious mixture of severity and yearning love. All of the three sons married without disclosing that they had found partners, and each one selected a bride from a lower status. All three wives were disliked by the mother of their husbands. Two of the three men drank to excess and ran risks of criminal prosecution through stealing. One of the three brothers sank into poverty after deserting his wife and eloping with another woman. Another of these carefully-shielded young men developed nervous illness in middle age, and suffered all his life from acute shyness.

The petted and over-fondled boy frequently develops a longing to discover a replica of his mother among young women with whom he associates. Often he is spoilt for matrimony through his state of dependence upon the solicitude and devotion of the anxious mother, who has not allowed him to grow up as a self-reliant, forceful, bold man. As a husband he tries to exact all the service of his wife, and in old age he often becomes dependent upon the care of a daughter.

The dominant type of mother treats her husband as she treats her children. She often tells him that he is "a great boy," and she reproves him as though

he were a child. Actuated generally by good intentions, she disputes her husband's capacity in many of the affairs of life, and delights in "managing" and directing everyone who comes within reach of her sway. As a result, she is often far more feared than loved in the home-circle. In old age she may suffer from loneliness through the partial estrangement of her children.

## CHAPTER VI.

## COMMON SOURCES OF DOMESTIC DISCORD.

"Eccentrics, naggers, sulky folk, grumblers, and the like are mostly persons who are persistently bent upon a feud with father and mother."—OSKAR PFISTER.

## I.

INCOMPATIBILITY in wedded life may develop in the course of months or years, and may succeed a period of tender accord and of fervid passion. Small dissensions are apt to occur even in the case of two romantic persons possessing every desire to make a success of marriage. At the first sign of dissatisfaction on either side, it is wise to take mutual counsel and to attempt a speedy understanding. The minor disagreement should not be permitted to grow into the major conflict.

The reasons why husbands and wives fall out are numerous; but in specific examples of quarrelling it is often difficult to discover the actual cause. Generally a tiff is caused apparently by a very trivial happening, such as a discussion about having a window open or closed. Frequently the apparent source of disagreement is merely contributory. A woman who is slightly annoyed because her husband is moody and silent during the evening hour by the fireside, may address him irritably, and surprise him

by the bitterness of her remark upon his dulness. He, on his part, may think her unreasonable for wishing him to converse when he is preoccupied with business cares, or suffering an indefinable depression.

Most of the bickerings by the domestic hearth are the result of cumulative irritation or tension. The wife who accuses her husband of indifference or selfishness, because he is disinclined to talk, is secretly vexed because, when he came in an hour or two ago, he forgot to kiss her. Or she may feel disappointed because he failed to praise a carefully prepared meal. Irritation has a tendency to accretion, to set up sympathetic irritations and reactions. It may be that the husband is not thinking about business at all, and his taciturnity may be the effect of nervous and organic tension, induced by his wife's seeming or real coldness on the previous night. The same cause may actuate the wife when she lapses suddenly into unguarded speech.

It is a curious fact that the radical sources of incompatibility are often unrecognised, or very dimly surmised. And sometimes when the actual cause of dissatisfaction or irritation is clearly realised, pride, shamefacedness, diffidence, or reluctance to wound may prevent open speech. There is a manner, a feeling-tone, that presages a quarrel, and most husbands and wives are conscious of it. A look, a sigh, a gesture, a compression of the lips tells one partner that the other is perturbed inwardly.

One or two loving words and a caress may banish



irritation that is smouldering, and restore serenity and accord. But the proud-natured, egotistic mortal often finds the effort to avert a quarrel involves magnanimity, or humility. The highly-strained couple do not wish to have "a scene;" so both remain silent, and silence favours brooding and self-pity. Sometimes it is better to explode in anger, and have the matter out, than to hold one's tongue and reflect upon the disappointments of conjugal life.

## 2.

There is no doubt that a high degree of irritability and nervous tension arises in many marriages when there is inadequate or unsatisfying expression of physical fondness. Now, it is not generally understood by women that very ardent men find "platonically" endearments more or less a trial. Often a husband refrains from caresses because he knows that for him these are only excitants or preliminaries to a more intimate expression of love, and that for the time being such expression is not desired by his wife. This apparent indifference is often bewildering to the woman, and she may suspect her husband of coldness at the very moment when he is most ardent. The ignorance of one sex concerning the erotic constitution of the other sex leads to some of the worst disasters in wedlock.

A husband and wife may be compatible in the intellectual or moral sense, but maladapted amatively. It may be noted often that anything except the true

hidden reason for a divorce or separation is regarded as the cause by the intimate friends of the couple. The great majority of divorces are the result of erotic or psycho-sexual disharmony. When the real bodily affinity and passional fervour are fully shared, the chances of final separation are few. The man and his wife may have temporary misunderstandings, disputes, or actual quarrels; but the tender feeling engendered by the desire of one for the other is a link that will endure much straining.

The importance of this passional reciprocity has been underrated by persons who do not wish to admit that wedlock, in its most beautiful examples, is *fundamentally* a physiological relationship. *The spiritual essence of wedded love is a manifestation of physical sympathy or in other words idealised desire.* The home where love reigns is, in the line of Milton, a "perpetual fountain of domestic sweets."

"Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings."

Modern sex psychologists and several notable physicians have recently emphasised the necessity for recognising how profoundly married happiness is controlled by a complete and natural passional sympathy. A relative repression of the sexual impulse is practised in all marriages. That is to say, there are conditions that preclude intercourse, such as the later stage of pregnancy, illness of one of the pair, temporary separation, and physical and nervous fatigue through exacting work. There has been much

insistence upon restraint in marital life, and even advocacy of long periods of abstention. This "stringency of sexual restraint," as Professor Freud points out, may be admirable in certain instances, but cannot be universally applicable on account of the immense variation in the sexual constitution of mankind.

Freud, referring to "the fundamental conditions of married life," states that the abnormality of to-day in conjugal love is widespread, and that a high degree of "renunciation often for both partners is associated with marriage," and he adds: "Of how little the marriage comes to consist instead of bringing the happiness that was so ardently desired."

In his address to the Church Congress at Birmingham, in 1921, Lord Dawson of Penn, the King's physician, said: "Sex love has, apart from parenthood, a purport of its own. It is something to prize and cherish for its own sake. It is an essential part of health and happiness in marriage. And now, if you will allow me, I will carry this argument a step further. *If sexual union is a gift of God it is worth learning how to use it. Within its own sphere it should be cultivated so as to bring physical satisfaction to both, not merely to one. The attainment of mutual and reciprocal joy in their relations constitutes a firm bond between two people and makes for durability of their marriage tie.*"

I commend these courageous and wise words of a widely-experienced physician to the earnest con-

sideration of all married people. For as Lord Dawson declares, "marriages fail from inadequate and clumsy sex-love."

## 3.

The emotional, moral, spiritual values that are fostered by the "mutual and reciprocal joy" of the marital physical intimacies make, therefore, for a permanence of union between husband and wife, and are of benefit, not only to themselves, but to the children of their love also. The observance of restraint in intercourse is, as I have said, essential, and the extent and the advisability of such control can only be decided by the husband and wife who understand the significance of sexual love in relation to spiritualised affection, and who have taken the pains to acquire the requisite knowledge of one another's erotic disposition, and the general rules of conjugal hygiene.

This mutual adjustment is not always an easy matter. In some instances, it is highly difficult. Consider first that the outlook of the man and the woman upon the nature and conduct of wedded love is often opposed in certain respects. Secondly, sexual temperamental differences are sometimes as wide between individuals of the same sex as they are between members of the opposite sex. Only by rare and fortunate chance, under existing social and educational conditions, are the right man and the right woman brought together.

Passional sympathy may be felt strongly by one of the partners in wedlock, and not by the other. In most cases it is the woman who is content with marital circumstances involving infrequent intercourse or long abstention. A woman of this type may believe that she is greatly superior to her spouse, through her aptitude for restraint, ignoring the fact that continence is always, physiologically speaking, a severer discipline for a man than a woman. The quarrels that arise through the non-satisfaction of the most powerful and massive of the human instinctual and emotional desires are among the most fruitful causes of disunion. Sometimes it is the man who is deficient in ardour, more often the woman; but in either case there is unhappiness, concealed or expressed.

Our stressful, hurrying, nerve-wearing modern life in towns is distinctly hostile to healthy and happy relations in marriage. Love does not thrive in the midst of bustle and worry. It demands peace and leisure. The insensate "rush" in which millions of us pass our days, stimulates a craving for strongly exciting pleasures. Hence the great increase of night clubs, semi-barbaric erotic dances, violent noisy music, new cocktail drinks, drugs, orgies, and sex aberrations. The chaste joys of connubial love, as sung by Milton, and extolled by other great poets, are too simple, too natural for a generation in which about eighty per cent. are neurotics.

Fatigue is one of the common inimical factors

among women in married life. Woman's work in the industries and trades is often too strenuous for her strength; and the wife who is employed outside the home for eight or more hours a day must possess a vigorous body to enable her to bear hard daily toil and maintain sexual and reproductive activity. "Nervousness," with its manifold symptoms, unfits an enormous number of women for conjugal relationship and healthy maternity. This almost chronic tiredness of the nerves, accompanied by irascibility, affectability, and discontent, is common among women of every class. It is probably more frequent among the avid, restless, pleasure-seeking women of the well-to-do classes than among the hardworking, artisan women or labourers' wives. This pathological fatigue has two results upon both men and women. It may induce a disinclination for marital intercourse, or it may cause a craving for abnormal forms of gratification. It is well-known to physiologists that physical fatigue often arouses the sexual appetite, whereas close mental application in serious study diminishes desire.

There are husbands and wives of to-day who have no time for love except upon the rare occasions of a holiday away from home, and business. "Clumsy sex-love," as Lord Dawson calls it, is largely the consequence of nervous debility, and this kind of pseudo-conjugal intercourse is a cause of many failures in marriage. It has been stated by two or three mental doctors that connubial relations are

becoming more unsatisfactory and difficult with the speeding-up of "civilisation."

The plea of "tiredness" often employed by hysterical or otherwise neurotic women—or those with sex-antagonism deep-planted in their bosoms—is not always genuine. It is a conscious expression of an unconscious desire to refrain from assigning power and authority to the "tyrant male." Keeping a man waiting in this, as in other affairs, is a frequent habit among women of a certain psychic type.

Some women are never punctual in an appointment with a man, even through it may be a meeting with the chosen lover. Moreover, some women have constituted a kind of guild code—that the scarcity value of their marital "favours" should be stringently preserved. Constant denials, frustrations, and thwartings do not tend to peace and concord in matrimony. The man whom they may arouse, instead of causing disappointment, is either a masochist who enjoys pain or humiliation, or a sadist who takes pleasure in an exhibition of force or actual cruelty. The normal man, especially if he be sensitive, may lose his genuine emotional sexual ardour after a few years of cohabitation with a wife who has apparently lost her capacity to respond. A man with subnormal sex development may be quite content in marriage with an unresponsive woman.

There are also the marriages in which the wife complains of her husband's sexual coldness, and cases

of infidelity are often traced to this cause. Continual repression is, for some women, as hard to bear as it is for most men; and its effect upon the emotional being, the nerves, and in fact, upon every function of the body is in such cases harmful. The waning of desire for marital intercourse in a man frequently brings disturbing doubts in the wife's mind, because in the years of vigour the virile man finds it difficult to restrain such desire; and a wife may suspect secret unfaithfulness and a loss of the husband's affection.

Owing to the loss of seminal fluid, and greater activity in intercourse, a man is more readily exhausted by excess than a woman. When a sense of fatigue in a woman follows participation in the conjugal act, the cause must be sought in excess, in a mental repulsion from the physical expression of love, in ill-health, in injury to the generative parts, or in the decline of ardour due to old age.



## CHAPTER VII.

## SOME CAUSES OF FAILURE.

“In this world nothing is more rare than a person who is habitually endurable.”—G. LEOPARDI.

“Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity.”—FRANCIS BACON.

SOME persons are inclined to smile at the often repeated remark of a discontented wife: “My husband does not understand me.” In a very significant sense, this statement is usually quite true. I refer to the scanty or almost complete misapprehension of most women, and the majority of men, concerning the emotional and erotic attitude of the opposite sex towards love and marriage.

The variability of mood in women has been the theme of poets, dramatists, philosophers, and psychologists. Sooner or later by far the larger number of young men in love find that the object of their passion has unaccountable transitions from angelic amiability to acerbity, pique, touchiness, and combativeness. Men as a rule are less subject to variability in mood than women. In *The Psychology of Marriage*, I have explained the causes of the heightened affectability in women. I propose now to give instances from everyday married life of pitfalls

resulting from the very imperfect understanding of one sex for the other.

Returning to the topic of satisfactory passional reciprocity in wedlock, I must allude again to the frequency of the assertion among women that strong "sensuality" is an invariable dominant male trait. According to some women, "love" to most men begins, endures, and ends simply as sexual gratification. Probably fifty married men in every hundred have been reproached by their wives for "sensuality." Even the average affectionate wife, living happily in marriage, is prone under the influence of a half-combative mood, to say: "I believe you only married me for *that*."

Dr. Ernest Jones refers to "The illusion so widespread among women that sexuality is a peculiarly male attribute," and speaks of its "far-reaching social consequences."

I know a woman who repeatedly informed her husband of her conviction that he regarded her as "a sexual makeshift." There was no justice in this accusation. The man was undoubtedly virile; but he was not exacting in his "rights," and was an enthusiastic supporter of every movement for the advancement of women. Another wife of my acquaintance, in moments of bitterness or petulance, used to say to her husband: "I am only your sexual instrument." The husband in this case was also a feminist, and endeavoured to live up to his ideals of sex equality, romantic love, and chivalry. Now, the

effect of such unmerited remarks is poisonous to marital love. They are often an exhibition of a complex of unconscious hatred of the male sex.

The women who speak thus, in a mood of disappointment or a fit of spleen, may in a moment of tenderness utter the deepest terms of affection, and extol their husbands' conjugal virtues. An inexperienced sensitive man is often bewildered in the early years of wedlock by the sudden outbursts of acridity in his wife. It has been said: "A woman's weapon is her tongue." We may say also that this weapon often menaces the woman herself, and leads to personal unhappiness.

The remark: "My wife doesn't understand me," is perhaps quite as commonly heard as the feminine counterpart. And it is often true. In spite of strong affection, it is frequently difficult to establish a thorough, understanding sympathy with the beloved. Parents are constantly confronted with this difficulty in their bringing up of the family. Two friends of the same sex may experience it. Where, too, is the man or the woman who really knows himself or herself?

Respecting the frequent feminine ascription of "lustfulness and sensuality" to men, it may be said that it has certain evidence in the facts of daily life. A considerable number of men tend to morbid overpreoccupation with the sensuous aspect of the sex-relationship. It may indeed be stated truly that men are apt to overrate the physical expression, and

women to underrate it. To say, as some women do, that men are entirely responsible for "the social evil" is untrue. If there were no loose women there would be no loose men. And, as Ellis and others have pointed out, most men are, in their youth, initiated in sexuality by one of the opposite sex.

A well-known physician in Chicago informed Havelock Ellis that out of twenty-five married men of the middle class "sixteen had been first seduced by a woman." Many facts could be brought forward to show that women are scarcely correct in representing men as the pre-eminently sexual sex. The difference between the two sexes in this matter is not so distinct as many women are disposed to believe.

There is no cause for accusation and recrimination in this respect. The sensuous accompaniment of love is not only manifest in one sex but in both; and Nature has taken the most elaborate care that this attraction shall be constant and strong.

"Marriage in itself means sex-life between those who undertake it, for without a well-regulated and healthy sex-life it does not exist, and those who do not mean to live such a life should not think of marrying" (*The Hygiene of Marriage*, by Dr. Isabel Elmslie Hutton). I will now refer to some of the masculine and feminine characteristics that are likely to bring about domestic unhappiness.

*Naggers and Termagants.* The scolding wife has in all ages provided a topic for wit, scorn, and reprobation. Incessant correction and fault-finding

is a form of activity that brings relief and gratification to a large number of persons of both sexes. The typical nagging woman is often a busy conscientious housewife, abounding in energy, and fond of her husband and children in her own peculiar fashion. She has a mania for setting people right, reforming members of her own family, and directing other folk's affairs.

Nagging arises from an intense egotism or self-esteem. It may be one way of self-assertion or self-expression, in a woman who has a secret sense of inferiority. Scolds would always teach in preference to being taught, and they pride themselves upon their "commonsense." The nagger is not always a cold woman, though her bitter tongue often seems to indicate a cruel nature.

There is probably no cure for confirmed and inveterate nagging. Some men are able to tolerate the habit in their wives, others of the masochistic order may actually enjoy it; and some escape as frequently as possible from the scolding voice, or live permanently sundered and in peace.

The termagant may be easier to live with than the nagger. A violent woman is often capable of conjugal reciprocal affection. But her spouse will need a great store of patience, and restraint. An explosive temper in a woman may be accompanied by warmheartedness and capability. But the "noisy and contentious woman" is scarcely a desirable house-

mate, even though she may be a good cook and seamstress.

Irascibility is a common human trait, and it would be rash to state that a warm-tempered woman is sure to bring unhappiness in married life. The number of women of the serene and equable temperament is comparatively small by reason of affectability associated with the generative organisation. It is not always badness of heart, but physical aches and discomforts that upset the emotional balance of the average woman during menstruation and pregnancy and the change of life. The constant attendance upon young children is also a severely protracted strain upon many a woman's nervous system.

The most lovable and delightful women are apt to "explode" now and again, and it has been said that a woman without a temper is generally deficient in force of character. Apparently it is more difficult for a woman than for a man to restrain feelings of irritation. And there is some truth in the belief that a warm heart and a warm temper exist together.

*The Irascible Husband.* A quick temper in a man, as in a woman, may arise from inherited causes, ill-health, constant worry, and various repressions. A choleric, raging man is as likely to cause "scenes" in the home as a fierce virago. But a normal capacity for feeling and expressing anger, accompanied by control, is essential in the battle of life. Many gifted, distinguished and virtuous men have suffered from irritable nerves.

The bad-tempered bullying husband generally wrecks the happiness of family life. The son of a choleric father is often ill-tempered from birth, and seems to find delight in quarrelling and fighting in the nursery and at school. If he is able to sublimate this pugnacity, he may become a social reformer and a leader of men. If he cannot divert this trend in such a channel of activity, he will gratify his combative impulse by "making rows," in the domestic sphere. Bad temper can be traced to imperfect functioning of the liver, stomach, and intestines, to auto-intoxication through a constipated habit, to gout, rheumatism, neuritis, and many other bodily origins. Irascibility is often a sign of high blood pressure in both men and women. Sexual repression is a very common cause of nervous disturbance inducing surliness, bad temper and outbursts of rage in both sexes.

It has been noted by Haig and other physicians that marital intercourse lowers blood pressure and prevents ill-temper. When a constant sense of sexual deprivation and frustration is experienced by both partners, or by one, domestic tranquillity is threatened. There is medical testimony that over-repression is as detrimental as excess in expression. In this, as in other things, "the happy mean" is the golden rule.

I have noted from my observation of discontented married couples, that bad temper in both partners has developed when, for one reason or another, conjugal intercourse has ceased, or become very infrequent. Reciprocal responsiveness in union has, in the opinion

of many medical authorities of to-day, a tranquillising influence and a therapeutic value. When the home is the abode of love it is also the abode of peace.

The hot-tempered husband must realise that every exhibition of rage reacts upon the wife and family, and that uncontrolled anger induces those feelings of fear, disrespect, and even active dislike that may utterly estrange affection.

*The House-Proud Woman.* There is some truth in the view that a woman who has an inordinate pride in the home is seldom a congenial partner in wedded life. The Martha type of woman is admirable in many respects, provided that she does not allow the house to rule her. Probably the majority of men wish their wives to possess the housewifely skill that makes comfort in the home; but only a few husbands are happy with the woman whose mania for order and tidiness causes positive discomfort.

A fanatical house-proud woman seldom has time for recreation with her husband. She is perpetually cleaning and rearranging the rooms, and often she becomes exhausted and irritable through a lack of rest and relaxation. Many husbands live as though they were mere lodgers in the house. They are seldom indoors in their leisure hours, because the regulations and ordinances of the house are intolerably stringent.

Some wives realise that their first care is to make "the fireside clime" genial and cosy rather than



immaculately clean and painfully tidy. Others attach more importance to the house than to the husband. It has been said that the first request of a house-proud woman on reaching paradise will be for a broom and a duster. Domestic management is both a science and an art in which every wife should endeavour to excel. But it is contrary to the science and art of life to devote the entire energy to superfluous activity in house-keeping.

Better a little dust and litter where love is than a completely tidy room and hatred. Without loving dirt and disorder, one may prefer comfort above a specklessly clean room. In this matter again the happy mean is the best rule. I am not writing an apology for untidy husbands. I recognise the house-wife's point of view, and sympathise with her. What is needed is a sense of proportion in order and neatness. Whatever many women may say, most men do not "like to live in a pig-sty." An extravagantly house-proud wife is often an example of an excess of homely virtue, which reacts upon the whole family. She may cause as much unhappiness as a slattern and an idler.

*The Undomesticated Husband.* Many men are not natural home-lovers. The house that means so much to the wife, may be regarded by the husband as a mere retreat for eating and sleeping. It is unfortunate when a man of the roving type marries a home-abiding woman. A number of men escape temporarily from the home on a variety of pleas. In

every man's club, you will see husbands who spend as little time as possible in the domestic circle.

If the woman is fond of gadding, she is not given to resent the errant behaviour of the non-conjugal or absentee spouse. But if she is devoted to the hearth, she will naturally desire the company of her husband in hours of relaxation or amusement. A young woman whose ideal of wedlock is constant and close companionship, should reflect seriously before she consents to marry a man who is incapable of happiness by his own fireside, and yearns continually for the club, the bar, or the golf links. The husband who wishes to preserve the affection and companionship of his wife should realise that frequent marital communion is the ideal of most women.

*Irritating Habits.* A marked irritating habit in a person otherwise attractive or lovable has prevented many a marriage. The offensive habit may be a nervous cough, a facial tic, or twitching, a tendency to fidget, nail-biting, unconscious sighing, or many other manifestations that are entirely compatible with high moral integrity, kindness, or other admirable traits. There are persons whose voices jar us, and in spite of our respect or liking for them, we realise that life with them would be one long irritation.

A trick of habit may appear very trivial. Yet it may inhibit love, or destroy it in married life. These habits are generally unconscious, and they are "symbolic actions," with a definite cause and a meaning, which can be discovered by a trained

psychologist. When, for instance, an undersized man heralds his presence and his remark with a loud, pompous cough, we may be fairly certain that he wishes to draw attention to himself, and to compensate for a sense of physical inferiority. Blushing in girls is often an indication of half-repressed thoughts, which are regarded as improper or sinful.

One of the principal reasons for breaking off an engagement was given to me by the woman who said, "I could not have any patience with my suitor's habit of wanting to wash his hands at inopportune times." A young man told me that he could not marry a girl who spoke "with an accent;" and a married man confided that one of the causes of disaffection with his wife, from whom he had separated, was her pronounciation of singing as "sing-ging."

Women, with their swiftness of intuition, often find an index to a man's character in his little mannerisms and habits, and though they may feel intellectual attraction, they realise that marriage with such a man would be fatal. Undoubtedly, love is often blind to these peculiarities, especially in early adult life. But, later on, when ardour is diminished, a more critical attitude is wont to develop.

If a woman has not sympathy with a husband's enjoyment of tobacco or whisky, she is liable to show marked disgust with his pleasures. Loquacity of one of a married pair frequently irritates the other. There are husbands who keep away from home through the incessant chattering of their wives. A very silent

husband may have an extremely irritating effect upon his wife, and drive her to seek the society of more entertaining men.

*The Over-Maternal Wife.* Mother-love is one of woman's finest attributes, and of the deepest import for the family, the community, and the nation. There is, however, a misdirection of maternal solicitude that creates disharmony in wedded life. The affection that most women bear for their husbands is qualified by motherly feeling; and if this feeling is uppermost, the spouse is regarded as a big boy who has not grown up, and he is treated accordingly. Many husbands complain that they "feel like boys" in their own houses, through the mixture of high-handedness and anxiety for their health, good behaviour, and general deportment, which constitutes their wives' ideal of married love.

The dependent, feeble-willed, helpless kind of man, who has been his mother's darling, invites his wife's alternate reproof and petting, and so do some strong aggressive men who have masochistic traits. Hence, many men who are in positions of authority in society are frequently bullied by their wives in home life. This tendency to treat the opposite sex as children may be noticed in girls in their teens, who often seem to regard their fathers as their juniors in wisdom, and are perpetually snubbing their brothers. The man who dislikes being "managed" and disciplined by his wife may develop rebelliousness, and cause matrimonial discord. For his wife will find

it difficult to understand why he resents actions which she believes to be prompted entirely by a protective instinct, and will accuse him of ungratefulness.

The over-maternal wife may also become more or less indifferent towards her partner when children are born. In a rather large number of cases, women only marry because they want children. An "advanced" woman, in one of our colonies, once sent me a letter, in which she described a scheme for maternity without co-operation with a husband.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PITFALLS OF PARENTAGE.

"All civilisation involves an ever-increasing forethought for others, even for others who are yet unborn."—HAVELOCK ELLIS.

"For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in science."—HERBERT SPENCER.

## I.

THE normal woman has a powerful natural yearning for motherhood. Generally speaking, the longing for children is not felt so strongly by men. A woman thwarted in this great human instinct frequently experiences the acutest disappointment with life; and it is one of the most serious of all social problems that the redundancy of the female sex in our country inhibits many women from married and maternal love. No satisfactory remedy has hitherto been devised for granting this natural right to women who desire it.

Reams have been written on "the sanctity of motherhood" and "sacred maternal love." Comparatively little has been said upon the science of procreation, the care of mothers, and the safeguarding of unborn lives. Have we a genuine respect for motherhood? Does the average girl prepare herself for the great task of parentage? Are all the children of to-day fed from birth as Nature intended them to be fed? Have we removed the preventable causes of the high mortality of infants? Do we ensure the requisite rest for the pregnant woman?

Although the desire for children is deeply-rooted in women, the capacity and the intelligence requisite for child-bearing are not the rule. Many thousands of civilised women marry with only the crudest knowledge of the reproductive processes, the hygiene of parentage, and the care of children. Many thousands of men undertake the responsibilities of fatherhood without the slightest understanding of their rightful share in the creation of a new life and the upbringing of offspring. Reproduction is for millions of people one of the most casual, irresponsible acts in their lives.

It is dangerous to blink the fact that a vast number of children born in all classes of the community are unwanted. There is a proportion of exceptionally vigorous, anatomically adapted, very maternal women who find delight in bearing and rearing a large family. There is a much higher proportion of modern women who, while they are eager for motherhood, do not desire more children than their strength will permit or the husband's breadwinning can support. The women of former days often submitted themselves to repeated and undesired pregnancies as part of the inevitable lot of their sex. Others, as we may learn from our mothers, lived in continual dread of conception after giving birth to three or four children.

Compulsory maternity is one of the causes of our C<sub>3</sub> population, of the premature ageing and breakdown of innumerable women, of a number of female

maladies, of mental depression and insanity in wives, of pecuniary distress and need, of our over-crowding in the cities, and of numerous other personal and social problems of our day. It is fatal to deny that in a vast number of homes the greater the number of children, the deeper is the misery and the more far-reaching are the results in race deterioration.

“The more the merrier,” applied to the family, may be true or the reverse. A well-to-do man, married to a healthy philoprogenitive woman, may be quite merry with a family of ten children or more. The factory worker, earning £2 a week, with a delicate wife and seven children, is in a very different position. We know that the large family is not always the happy, healthy family. With the reduction in the number of children in individual families in New Zealand, Holland, and every country where restriction has been practised, the infant death-rate has been lowered, the health and even the stature of the people have improved, and the struggle for subsistence diminished.

2.

Every wife should have the right to decide how many or how few children she will bring to life. Reckless reproduction is the source of much misery in marriage. We cannot consider here the very great and important question of family limitation in even a part of its social and racial aspects. “Our hopes of a civilised life for all rest entirely on the possibility



of birth control," declares H. G. Wells. "Birth control has come to stay," states Lord Dawson of Penn. Dean Inge, and other notable churchmen, Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Sir James Barr, and an ever-increasing number of thoughtful social reformers of both sexes, insist that restriction of the number of births is one of the practical methods of diminishing the terrible modern battle for life, and improving the health and general well-being of the community.

The wife who conceives repeatedly against her will is never a happy wife. She may develop a positive hatred for her husband. Dissensions in wedlock through undesired maternity lead in many cases to separation. The birth of each child should be "spaced" by three to four years to ensure the health of the mother and her babe; and to secure this, one of the methods of contraception should be used. The risks and the pains of willing motherhood are serious enough, but they are immensely increased when pregnancy is undesired.

Too frequent conceptions and childbirths result in ill-health and unhappiness in the family, and menace conjugal and parental love. Every young woman should know the facts of the reproductive process from the time of conceiving to delivery, and know how to protect herself and her child against illness or mishaps. It is equally essential for the young married man to possess a knowledge of female sex-physiology and parental hygiene.

In the Report of the Walworth Women's Welfare

Centre for 1924 are a number of instances of the terror and distress endured by mothers of the wage-earning class who become pregnant unwillingly. I will select three cases as typical. Mrs. B., age 44, has been seventeen times pregnant. She has had five miscarriages; there are eleven children to provide for. Her husband is a labourer, earning £2 a week. Mrs. E., age 44, has been pregnant seventeen times. She has ten children living, and her husband's wages are £2 10s. a week. Out of this sum she pays a rent of 22/6 a week. Mrs. I., age 23, was married at 15. She has already had five children, of whom three are alive.

These facts tell their own lamentable tale of domestic misery.

Procreation should be a science instead of the haphazard matter that it is in millions of civilised homes. Maternity and paternity are too often postponed till one or both of a wedded couple are past the healthy reproductive age. Parentage should not be undertaken, as a broad general rule, till the woman is twenty and the man about twenty-five. It has, however, been shown by some physicians that women under twenty-one very often bear fine children and recover quickly from parturition. If a wife begins to bear children before the age of twenty-five, she should not wish to increase the family after forty.

Middle age in women is too late to begin bearing children, and it is an open question whether a man of over sixty should ever become a father. There are

exceptional cases of generative potency in men of that age, but the sexagenarian is nearing the period of senile decline, if he has not already reached it.

## 3.

The inability to bear a child is a bitter trial for a considerable number of women; and the sterile wife, if she is of the maternal mould, is seldom content with her lot. There are several causes of unfruitfulness, which may not be suspected until after marriage. One of the commonest causes is the infection of the wife with gonorrhœa, the most prevalent of the venereal diseases. No man who has suffered from this complaint should marry until he has obtained a clean bill of health from a qualified and experienced doctor.

This disease and syphilis have caused many a pitfall in married life. Some of the most poignant tragedies are the consequence of these poisons in the system. It is a sin for the infected person to add to human misery by bringing diseased offspring to life. A childless marriage is not infrequently the result of sterility in the husband. A man may be apparently virile, yet the spermatozoa, the active fertilising elements of the seminal fluid, may be very few or not potent. Gonorrhœal poisoning often produces unfruitfulness in the male sex. If sterility in a man is not congenital, it may yield to medical treatment. Barrenness in women may arise from organic defect, conditions of the uterus, and disease of the ovaries. This imperfection is sometimes remediable.

## CHAPTER IX.

## HEALTH AND MARRIAGE.

"The majority of women enter the married state with but a very hazy notion of what its functions are, a misfortune to which a large proportion of their special diseases may be attributed."—LAWSON TAIT, F.R.C.S.

"Frantic denials and furious suppressions indicate everywhere the cowardice and want of faith which conceive life as something too terrible to be faced."—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

## I.

ILL-HEALTH is a source of much unhappiness in married life. Women are exposed to risks of diseases that men escape, but the greater number of these risks are avoidable. The prevalence of these ailments is due to a very large extent to the widespread ignorance of women concerning general and sexual hygiene, resulting in derangement of function, and often in serious illness. The verdict of a large number of doctors is that the care of the sexual health of women is terribly neglected. Comparatively few people of either sex are quite free from sexual disorders apart from the venereal infections; and these disorders may affect either the body or the mind. I have the testimony of medical men and nurses that some adult

women are as uninformed as children in matters of reproduction and the hygiene of marriage. There are even grown-up women who do not know how children come into the world. Probably the majority of girls have never received any proper enlightenment upon the import of the monthly period, and the necessity for observing certain rules of health at that time. One of the results of this culpable neglect is the chronic invalidism of many women.

The enormous sway of the generative function in the life of women should be apprehended by both the husband and the wives. The "peculiarities," the "contrariness," the "variability of mood," the "recurrent irritability" of women, which provide problems for themselves and their husbands, are manifestations of physical states associated with reproduction. Most of the "charm," "sweetness," "tenderness," "sympathy" and other cherished virtues and qualities in women are derived from the same source. In man or woman the chemistry of the body is one of the chief determinants of personality and character; and it is important to note that this chemistry is not quite the same in both sexes. The periodic physiological alterations in women produce in many instances very marked changes in mood and conduct.

A monthly pulsation has been observed by medical investigators in both sexes, and there is considerable evidence that men, as well as women, have a periodic access of desire. In some scarce instances a form of

menstruation has been noted in men. The more highly evolved the human being, the greater the influence of these cycles on the body and the mind. Mystery still surrounds the primary cause of menstruation. Its manifold manifestations and influences are well known, though they are often attributed to other causes. Normal menstruation in civilised women, especially of the sedentary class, is somewhat uncommon. Suppression, irregularity, excess, and other disorders are frequent. The reaction upon the mind, the emotions, and the capacity for mental and physical activity is heightened as civilisation advances. Very many women never feel quite well. Thus we find among women a number of apparently unaccountable bodily and psychic symptoms that affect happiness in the married state.

It should be laid down as a principle that neglect of the laws of health during the menstrual period is a moral and physiological offence. The wife who has "bad times" is liable to develop bad temper, and it is frequently noted that the most serious quarrels in marriage occur at the monthly crisis. Considerable restraint on the husband's part is often essential at this period, and the sooner a young man knows this, the more likely will be the chances of preserving marital affection.

"It is among the white races alone that the sexual invalidism of women prevails," says Ellis. Most of the disturbances of menstruation are not natural and physiological, but pathological, *i.e.*,

diseased. It has been reckoned that fifty per cent. of girls in well-to-do families suffer from painful symptoms once a month. Several teachers in large colleges for women have made inquiries in this subject, and the records show the existence of much preventable suffering of mind and body. It has been stated that the women who achieve eminent success in life are not greatly affected by the menstrual process.

Girls tend as a rule to pay less attention to health than their brothers. The average young woman is more interested in the fashions in dress than the preservation of her body. She will wear constricting and unhygienic clothes, eat the most indigestible foods, neglect the health of the bowels, and commit many other hygienic faults. All questions of health she regards as "dry." When she marries, the neglect of hygiene in maidenhood may have far-reaching consequences.

I have already referred to chronic constipation in women as a very fruitful cause of ill-health, and I would now add that this devastating disorder is a foe to physical beauty and a factor of premature signs of old age. Constipation not only induces conjugal and maternal inefficiency; it produces a general poisoning of the system, taints the body, mars the complexion of the features, dulls the mind, and causes ill-temper and mental depression. This disease in both sexes is undoubtedly a frequent source of domestic unhappiness.

Education in the hygiene of menstruation is of supreme importance. Most of the ills attending this function can be prevented by plenty of outdoor exercise, proper feeding, avoiding exhaustion in work or play, and adequate rest at the height of the period. It is also most important that every girl at puberty should receive a sensible explanation of the monthly cycle, and all that it signifies in her conjugal and maternal future. Further, there must be wise endeavour to remove all feelings of fear, bewilderment, shame or disgust. *The cultivation of a sane mental and emotional attitude to all sex matters is absolutely indispensable for the maintenance of the health of women.*

## 2.

A wise husband will instruct himself in the minor matters, at least, of the health of his wife. He will realise that he is largely responsible for his partner's physical well-being and will strive to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes that bring suffering to her and himself. He will not leave this important matter to "instinct." The majority of human beings do not possess enough *instinctive* knowledge to keep themselves alive for one day.

Lawson Tait writes, in *The Diseases of Women*, his conviction that "venereal diseases might be entirely stamped out by a more scrupulous attention to the toilette of the genitals." This is a matter that is



often neglected by both sexes. Various morbid affections of the generative system in women may be caused or aggravated by uncleanness.

Displacements, introversion, and falling of the womb are often serious and lead to much suffering in many cases. A large number of instances of prolapsus of the uterus are the result of faulty hygiene during menstruation and after pregnancy. This malady may entirely incapacitate a woman for the ordinary tasks of domestic life. Appropriate exercise is one of the safeguards against this accident.

The giving birth to offspring is the only normal physiological act attended by pain. It is also a grave risk to the mother in many instances; and a host of women live in dread of pregnancy throughout the whole of wedded life. Our civilisation has intensified the menace and the pain of childbirth. We can but strive to mitigate, if we cannot remove entirely, the perils of maternity by encouraging our young women to study personal health before and after wedlock. Much of the danger and suffering can be avoided by this means.

The exercise of the paternal function is generally unpremeditated. Unfortunately most husbands are indifferent concerning the state of their health when they beget children. Some are chronic invalids, and others belong to families in which there are cases of mental disorder. Very few husbands and wives give heed to the laws of human heredity. Mental defectives produce degenerate and mentally afflicted children.

Confirmed alcoholics beget delicate offspring; and women damaged by tight-lacing, the wearing of high-heeled shoes, and unexercised trunk muscles bear puny babies with much torture.

*Most of our C3 population are the victims of parental ignorance.*

## 3.

Neurotic illness—neurasthenia, hysteria, morbid fears and compulsions, and hypochondria—increases with “the march of progress.” These maladies of the psyche, or soul, bring much unhappiness into married life. “Nervousness” does not arouse the same sympathy from relations and friends as neuritis or pneumonia; but it may be equally painful and less endurable. I have heard a wife say to her husband, who feared a “nervous breakdown” through over-work and worry, “If you have a nervous breakdown, don’t expect much sympathy from me. I don’t believe in nervous breakdowns!” As Dr. Ernest Jones points out, the neurotic invalid, according to the uninformed common view, “could do better if he would only try.”

Nervous diseases (neuroses) are probably the commonest form of ailment in modern civilised society. Broadly speaking, these diseases are the result of a hidden conflict between the instinctual impulses and the demands of moral culture, social law, and civilised standards generally. Over-strain and worry are contributing and exciting causes. This is why “rest

cures," change of scene and occupation, drugs and hydropathy merely alleviate in most cases.

If a person develops hysterical signs after marriage, the source must be looked for in a derangement of the emotional being through an erotic problem that threatens "the ethical and æsthetic standards of the patient's consciousness." For, as Dr. Jones states, "no mental processes are submitted to anything like the same degree of repression and distortion as those concerning sexuality."

We may therefore take the view that neurotic illness is induced by over-repression of secret thoughts, by the substitution of fantasy for fact, by fear of natural instincts, and by the general confusion of mind arising from a sternly repressive education in childhood. The young bride who becomes hysterical during the honeymoon is often utterly ignorant of the physiological aspect of married love. The husband who becomes neurasthenic is afflicted with secret remorse and fear associated with a long-continued habit of self-gratification before marriage. Extreme self-reproach for real or imaginary sexual misdemeanours may find expression in obsessional neurosis. The hysterical girl who suddenly developed a rash on the bosom, when she was expected to wear a low-dress at a dance, was making a protest against what appeared to be immodest behaviour.

The prevention of neurotic tendencies and illnesses is largely a question of a sane sexual education in childhood and youth. The fears associated with

sexuality threaten the health of mind and body. A child undergoes a combat between instinct and social tradition, and in youth this struggle may be intensified. And, as Dr. Rivers has stated, the outcome depends to a great extent upon education. It is the early environment that determines whether a normal child will become "a genius or paranoiac, a criminal or a philanthropist, a good citizen or a wastrel."

Continual repetition of the fact that sex education is one of the proved methods for preventing many of the misfortunes of marriage is necessary. In the numerous popular books of the how-to-be-happy-though-married type, nothing is said upon this fundamental matter. It has always been the tendency to close the eyes to the primary source of the love of the sexes as though it were evil or repellent. We cannot hope for married happiness when, as Thoreau has said, "one of the most interesting of all human facts is veiled more completely than any mystery. It is treated with such secrecy and awe as surely do not go to any religion."

The mysterious disappearances of bridegrooms or brides on the eve of marriage or soon after the honeymoon, and the suicides at such times, are significant that many persons are perplexed and distressed by secret problems of love.

Apparently causeless anxiety of a severe kind, known as anxiety-neurosis, is often described as neurasthenia, a disease which has different symptoms. The development of this morbid state of anxiety in

married people is traced to unsatisfied love longings and an unsatisfactory sex life. It may arise when one of the partners is irresponsive or when the conjugal act is incomplete. This is a not infrequent cause of marital unhappiness and it is engendered by the fatal ignorance of the psychology and physiology of marriage.

## CHAPTER X.

## MARRIAGE IN MIDDLE AGE.

"What man is there, in love or in marriage, who has the good fortune to be able to communicate his thoughts, just as they occur to him, to the woman with whom he passes his life?"—STENDHAL.

"It is not likely that the married state is eminently miserable, since we see such numbers, whom the death of their partner has set free from it, entering it again."—DR. JOHNSON.

## I.

It has been said that if a married pair do not separate before the end of the seventh year of wedlock, the chances are that they will live together until the inevitable parting of death. If a couple of young people heed too seriously the common prediction that the years bring boredom, disappointment, the impairment of affection, and the death of passion-love, they run the risk of realising such forebodings. Love does not wane inevitably with the coming of grey hairs and other signs of advancing age.

Married love in middle age may be deeper and more satisfying than love in the flush of early manhood and womanhood. Knowledge of life, the sharing of burdens, mutual pleasures, parentage, and other experiences tend to widen the sympathies. After ten years of matrimony, a man and his wife may still remain devoted and faithful lovers. Such felicitous examples would be more common if husbands and wives realised that marriage is a much more intricate art than courtship.

Stendhal has some shrewd observations on the woman who has been loved for ten years. After that period she has "become your intimate friend, she can give you new pleasures, the pleasures of old age. 'Tis a flower that, after it has been a rose in the morning—the season of flowers—becomes a delicious fruit in the evening, when the roses are no longer in season."

"When a man becomes familiar with his goddess, she quickly sinks into a woman," says Addison. Yes, but if she is a good woman, what a prize! And I deny that familiarity, wont and custom are inexorably destructive of affection, tenderness and passion. Ten, fifteen, five-and-twenty years of conjugal companionship may increase the romance and poetry. In a few fortunate unions the man and the woman are continually falling in love with each other, and discovering fresh reciprocal charms and virtues.

Too often the passional strand is frayed or severed before middle age. Very many marriages are a state of "armed neutrality," "a dusty highway," or an incessant warfare. The woman who was skilful in attraction before wedlock may neglect the art afterwards; and the fervent wooer often degenerates into the grumpy husband. Marriage is always a discipline in restraint upon primitive combative impulses. The "soft answer" is often difficult, but generally effective.

Instruction in the art of preserving romance in wedded life is not a facile matter. One can only state

that familiarity does not of itself imperil romantic love. Everything depends upon the *quality* of the familiarity. The sentence from Stendhal's volume *On Love* at the head of this chapter is very significant, and it applies to both husband and wife. There is perhaps no greater emotional satisfaction and consolation than being able to express one's deepest feelings and most intrepid thoughts on vital subjects to the beloved. I take this privilege to be one of the greatest that love confers.

Every soul craves intimate communion with another soul. Thoreau lamented that, sooner or later, he found "a stone wall" in the minds of most of his friends, an impenetrable barrier to the exchange of the most intimate thoughts. Fortunate are the married pair who have outgrown the concealments, the defences, the disguises, and the conventions that so often exclude the possibility of honest and profitable human intercourse.

This exquisite intimacy of soul in wedlock is scarcely possible if passion-love is absent, or even feeble. The oneness of the spirit is undoubtedly fostered by a reciprocal sympathy of the body. This beautiful consonance is unfortunately unknown to a multitude of wedded mortals. And it is not even the ideal of very many.

## 2.

That romantic ardour is invariably lacking in the middle-aged is a dangerous fallacy. Love may not



come to vigorous life till a man is forty or a woman over thirty. It has been observed that a considerable number of persons of forty or older experience a re-awakening of the emotion of love, and find themselves more passionate and poetic than they were at twenty-five. A woman, too, may be more capable of fervid love at fifty than she was at twenty.

It is useless to generalise about "the age of love." Erotic manifestations are common in both sexes before puberty, and men and women fall in love at seventy. One man has outlived desire at forty; another has just begun to feel love at that age. Nature is more concerned in arousing love between the sexes than with any other of her devices. She does not gauge the capacity to love by chronology.

The man and woman who are "too old to love" at sixty have been deluded by the traditional error that "winter in the blood" is an invariable accompaniment of the later years; or they have never at any period in their lives experienced passionate love. Emotionality, like the intellect, atrophies from neglect of exercise. The virile man is the active energetic man; and the ardent woman is the womanly type approved by Nature and sought by man.

Hymen's torch is so often flameless in late middle age because the husband and wife have deliberately extinguished it.

When conjugal relations cease through a conviction that they are not permissible, and not from total disinclination, the signs of old age, mental and

physical, sometimes increase rapidly. That moderation is necessary should be understood. There is, however, ample medical testimony that moderate intercourse is beneficial after middle age.

It is stated by several mental physicians that persons over fifty years of age often suffer through repression and that neurotic disorder may result. Many middle-aged people of both sexes are prone to depression of spirit, irritability, high blood-pressure, and other ailments, which are often traceable to over-repression. This is not a recommendation to artificial stimulation of waning potency, which may lead to disorder and premature senility.

The climacteric, menopause, or change of life in woman marks the period when conception is no longer possible. I have treated the question of hygiene at this period in *The Critical Age of Woman*. The advent of the menopause by no means necessarily signifies that a woman has lost the capacity for marital union. The crisis produces certain bodily alterations and may give rise to disorders both physical and psychic. But the risks have often been over-stated, and are therefore dreaded by many women.

The mental and emotional symptoms that are apt to appear at the menopause sometimes cause domestic anxiety and stress. Many husbands are greatly perplexed by their wives' behaviour at this period in married life. Occasionally quarrels arise at the change of life. Husbands should realise that tact, sympathy, and patience will lessen the trials of this period.

## CONCLUSION.

IN these pages I have tried to show that the chief risks to married happiness arise from the prevalent ignorance of the two sexes regarding each other's psycho-sexual emotions, desires and needs. It may seem ludicrous, but it is true, that a husband can live for twenty years with his wife without learning her inner emotional and erotic nature, and that his wife can live for the same period without an understanding of the psychic and physiological differences influencing her own and her partner's amative constitution.

A great multitude of married persons in the Western nations never reach a satisfactory *entente* in personal questions of sex. Shyness or prudery in this respect may be so morbidly developed that a pair who, in the language of Scripture, are "one flesh" shrink from reciprocal frankness of speech. This repression is very common among parents, who often declare that they "cannot talk of sex matters" to their children, the result being that the children gather garbage from the vulgar and corrupt.

From our earliest schooldays and in adolescence the main purpose of education is to fit us for a profession or trade. Few indeed are the parents or

educators who attempt to instruct the young in the meaning of love and its potentialities for the highest happiness or the deepest despair. What is material success in life, if spiritual success is lacking? To possess love is for some of us at least of far higher importance than the accumulation of money.

Every man and woman needs the inspiration that love can alone yield. Success in the battle of life is made harder to attain when wedlock is not a state of mutual help and comfort. Those who miss love miss all that is real in our lives.



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