

SOME NOTES ON MARRIAGE

BY W. L. GEORGE

THE questioning mind, sole apparatus of the socio-psychologist, has of late years often concerned itself with marriage. Marriage always was discussed, long before Mrs. Mona Caird suggested in the respectable eighties that it might be a failure; but it is certain that with the coming of Mr. Bernard Shaw the institution which was questioned grew almost questionable. Indeed, marriage was so much attacked that it almost became popular, and some believe that the war may cut it free from the stake of martyrdom. Perhaps; but setting aside all prophecies, revolts and sermons, one thing does appear: marriage is on its trial before a hesitating jury. The judge has set this jury several questions: Is marriage a normal institution? Is it so normal as to deserve to continue in a state of civilization — given, that civilization's function is to crush nature?

A thing is not necessarily good because it exists, for scarlet fever, nationality, art critics, and black beetles exist, yet will all be rooted out in the course of enlightenment. Marriage may be an invention of the male to secure himself a woman freehold, or, at least, in fee simple. It may be an invention of the female designed to secure a somewhat tyrannical protection and a precarious sustenance. Marriage may be afflicted with inherent diseases, with antiquity, with spiritual indigestion, or starvation; among these confusions the socio-psychologist, swaying between the solidities of polygamy and the shadows of theosophical union, loses all idea of the

norm. There may be no norm, either in Christian marriage, polygamy, or Meredithian marriage leases; there may be a norm only in the human aspiration to utility and to happiness.

For we know very little save the aimlessness of a life that may be paradise, or its vestibule, or an installment of some other region. Still there is a key, no doubt: the will to happiness, which, alas! opens doors most often into empty rooms. It is the search for happiness that has envenomed marriage and made it so difficult to bear, because in the first rapture it is so hard to realize that there are no ways of living, but only ways of dying more or less agreeably.

Personally, I believe that with all its faults, with its crudity, its stupidity shot with pain, marriage responds to a human need to live together and to foster the species, and that though we will make it easier and approach free union, we shall always have something of the sort. And so, because I believe it eternal I think it necessary.

But why does it fare so ill? why is it that when we see in a restaurant a middle-aged couple, mutually interested and gay, we say, 'I wonder if they are married?' Why do so many marriages persist when the love-knot slips and bandages fall away from the eyes? Strange cases come to my mind: M6 and M22, always apart, except to quarrel, meanly jealous, jealously mean, yet full of affability — to strangers. M4 and many others, all poor, where at once the wife has decayed. When you

see youth struggling in vain on the features under the cheap hat, you need not look at the left hand: she is married. It is true that, however much they may decay in pride of body and pride of life, when all allowances are made for outer gayety and grace, the married of forty are a sounder, deeper folk than their celibate contemporaries. Often bled white by self-sacrifice, they have always learned a little of the world's lesson, which is to know how to live without happiness. They may have been vampires, but they have not gone to sleep in the cotton wool of their celibacy. Even hateful, the other sex has meant something to them. It has meant that the woman must hush the children because father has come home, but it has also meant that she must change her frock, because even father is a man. It has taught the man that there are flowers in the world, which so few bachelors know; it has taught the woman to interest herself in something more than a fried egg, if only to win the favor of her lord. Marriage may not teach the wish to please, but it teaches the avoidance of offense which, in a civilization governed by negative commandments, is the root of private citizenship.

For the closer examination of the marriage problem, I am considering altogether 150 cases; my acquaintance with them varies between intimate and slight. Having been attacked because in a previous article I used this method, I may remark that I have thrown out 116 cases where the evidence is inadequate; the following are therefore not loose generalizations, but one thing I assert: those 116 cases do not contain a successful marriage. From the remaining 34, the following results arise: —

Apparently successful	9
Husband inconstant	5
Wife inconstant	10
Husband dislikes wife	3
Wife dislikes husband	7

Success is a vague word and I attempt no definition, but we know a happy marriage when we see it, as we do a work of art.

It should be observed that when one or both parties are unfaithful, the marriage is not always unsuccessful, but it generally is; moreover, there are difficulties in establishing proportion, for women are infinitely more confidential on this subject than are men; they also frequently exaggerate dislike, which men cloak in indifference. Still, making all these allowances, I am unable to find more than nine cases of success, say six per cent. This percentage gives rise to platitudinous thoughts on the horrid gamble of life.

Two main conclusions appear to follow: that more wives than husbands break their marriage vows, and (this may be a cause as well as an effect) that more wives than husbands are disappointed in their hopes. This is natural enough, as nearly all women come ignorant to a state requiring cool knowledge, and armored only with illusion against truth, while men enter it with tolerance born of disappointment. I realize that these two conclusions are opposed to the popular belief that a good home and a child or two are enough to make a woman content. (A bad home and a child or nine are not considered by the popular mind.)

There is no male clamor against marriage, from which one might conclude that man is fairly well served. No doubt he attaches less weight to the link; even love matters to him less than to woman. I do not want to exaggerate, for Romeo is a peer to Juliet — but it is possible to conceive Romeo on the Stock Exchange, very busy in pursuit of money and rank, while Juliet would remain merely Juliet. Juliet is not on the Stock Exchange. If business is good she has nothing to do, and if Satan does not turn her hands to evil works, he may

turn them to good ones, which will not improve matters very much. Juliet, idle, can do nothing, but seeks a deep and satisfying love: mostly it is a life-long occupation. All this makes Juliet very difficult, and no astronomer will give her the moon.

Romeo is in better plight, for he makes less demands. Let Juliet be a good housekeeper, fairly good-looking, and good-tempered; not too stupid, so as to understand him; not too clever, so that he may understand her; such that he may think her as good as other men's wives, and he is satisfied. The sentimental business is done; it is

Farewell! Farewell! ye lovely young girls, we're off to Rio Bay.

So to work — to money — to ambition — to sport — to anything, but Juliet. While he forgets her, the modern woman grows every day more attractive, more intellectually vivid. She demands of her partner that he should give her stimulants, and he gives her soporifics. She asks him for far too much; she is cruel, she is unjust, and she is magnificent. She has not the many children on whom in simpler days her mother used to vent an exacting affection, so she vents it on her husband.

Yet it is not at first sight evident why so easily in England a lover turns into a husband, that is to say, into a vaguely disagreeable person who can be coaxed into paying bills. I suspect there are many influences corrupting marriage and most of them are mutual in their action; they are of the essence of the contract; they are the mental reservations of the marriage oath. So far as I can see, they fall into 16 classes:—

1. The waning of physical attraction.
2. Diverging tastes.
3. Being too much together.
4. Being too much apart. (There is no pleasing this institution.)
5. The sense of mutual property.
6. The sense of the irremediable.

7. Children.
8. The cost of living.
9. Rivalry.
10. Fickleness in men and 'second blooming' in women.
11. Talkativeness.
12. Sulkiness.
13. Dull lives.
14. Petty intolerance.
15. Stupidity.
16. Humor and aggressiveness.

There are other influences, but they are not easily ascertained; sometimes they are subtle. M28 said to me, 'My husband's grievance against me is that I have a cook who can't; my grievance against him is that he married me.'

Indeed, sentiment and the scullery painfully represent the divergence of the two sexes. One should not exaggerate the scullery; the philosopher who said, 'Feed the brute,' was not entirely wrong, but it is quite easy for a woman to ignore the emotional pabulum that many a man requires. It is quite true that 'the lover in the husband may be lost,' but very few women realize that the wife can blot out the mistress. Case M19 confessed that she always wore out her old clothes at home, and she was surprised when I suggested that, although her husband was no critic of clothes, he might often wonder why she did not look as well as other women. Many modern wives know this; in them the desire to please never quite dies; between lovers, it is violent and continuous; between husband and wife it is sometimes maintained only by shame and self-respect: there are old slippers that one can't wear, even before one's husband.

The problem arises very early with the waning of physical attraction. I am not thinking only of the bad and hasty marriages so frequent in young America, but of the English marriages, where both parties come together in a state of sentimental excitement born of ignorance and rather puritanical restraint.

Europeans wed less wisely than the Hindoo and the Turk, for the latter realize their wives as Woman. Generally they have never seen a woman of their own class, and so she is a revelation; she is indeed the bulbul, while he, being the first, is the King of men. But the Europeans have mixed too freely; they have skimmed, they have flirted, they have been so ashamed of true emotion that they have made the Song of Solomon into a vaudeville ditty. They have watered the wine of life. So when at last the wine of life is poured out, the draught is not new, for they have quaffed before many an adulterated potion and have long pretended that the wine of life is milk. For a moment there is a difference, and they recognize that the incredible can happen; each thinks that the time has come, —

Wenn ich dem Augenblick werd sagen:
Verweile doch, du bist so schön . . .

Then the false exaltation subsides. Not even a saint could stand a daily revelation; the revelation becomes a sacramental service, the sacramental service a routine, and then, little by little, there is nothing. But nature, as usual abhorring a vacuum, does not allow the newly opened eyes to dwell upon a void; it leaves them clear, it allows them to compare. One day two demi-gods gaze into the eyes of two mortals and resent their fugitive quality. Another day two mortals gaze into the eyes of two others, whom suddenly they discover to be demi-gods. Some resist the trickery of nature, some succumb; some are fortunate, some are strong. But the two who once were united are divorced by the three judges of the Human Supreme Court: Contrast, Habit, and Change.

Time cures no ills; sometimes it provides poultices, often salt for wounds. Time gives man his work, which he always had, but did not realize in the days

of his enchantment; but to woman time seldom offers anything except her old drug, love. Oh! there are other things, — children, visiting cards, frocks, skating rinks, Christian Science Teas, and Saturday anagrams, — but all these are but froth. Brilliant, worldly, hard-eyed, urgent, pleasure-drugged, she still believes there is an exquisite reply to the question, —

Will the love you are so rich in
Light a fire in the kitchen,
And will the little God of Love turn the spit,
spit, spit?

Only the little God of Love does not call, and the butcher does.

It is her own fault. It is always one's own fault when one has illusions, though it is, in a way, one's privilege. She is attracted to a strange man because he is tall and beautiful, or short and ugly and has a clever head, or looks like a barber; he comes of different stock, from another country, out of another class — and these two strangers suddenly attempt to blend a total of, say, fifty-five years of different lives into a single one! Gold will melt, but it needs a very fierce fire, and as soon as the fire is withdrawn it hardens again. Seldom is there anything to make it fluid once more, for the attraction, once primary, grows with habit commonplace, with contrast unsatisfactory, with growth unsuitable. The lovers are twenty, then in love, then old.

It is true that habit affects man not in the same way as it does woman; after conquest man seems to grow indifferent, while, curiously enough, habit often binds woman closer to man, breeds in her one single fierce desire: to make him love her more. Man buys cash down, woman on the installment plan, horribly suspecting now and then that she is really buying on the hire system. A rather literary case, case M11, said to me, 'I am much more in love with him than I was in the beginning; he

seemed so strange and hard then. Now I love him, but — he seems tired of me; he knows me too well. I wonder whether we only fall in love with men just about the time that they get sick of us.'

Her surmise may be correct: there is no record of the after-life of Perseus and Andromeda, and it is more romantic not to delve into it. Neither they nor any other lovers could hope to maintain the early exaltations. I am reminded of a well-known picture by Mr. Charles Dana Gibson, showing two lovers in the snow by the sea. They are gazing into each other's eyes; below is written, 'They began saying good-bye last summer.' Does any one doubt that a visit to the minister, say, in the autumn, might have altered the complexion of things? And no wonder, for they were the unknown and through marriage would become the known. It is only the unknown that tempts, until one realizes that the unknown and the known are the same thing, as Socrates realized that life and death are the same thing, mere converses of a single proposition. It is the unknown that makes strange associates, attracts men to ugly women, slatterns to dandies. It is not only contrast, it is the suspicion that the unexpected outside must conceal something. The breaking down of that concealment is conquest, and after marriage there is no conquest, there is only security. Who could live dangerously in Brooklyn?

Once licensed, love is official; its gifts are doled out as sugar by a grocer, and sometimes short weighed. Men suffer from this, and many go dully wondering what it is that they miss that once they had; they go rather heavy, rather dense, cumbrously gallant, asking to be understood, and whimpering about it in a way that would be ridiculous if it were not a little pathetic. Meanwhile, their wives wonder why all is not as it

was. It is no use telling them that nothing can ever be as it was — that as mankind by living decays, the emotions and outlook must change; to have had a delight is a deadly thing, for one wants it again, just as it was, as a child demands always the same story. It must be the same delight, and none who feel emotion will ever understand that 'the race of delights is short and pleasures have mutable faces.'

It is true that early joys may unite, especially if one can believe that there is only one fountain of joy. I think of many cases: M5, M33, where there is only one cry: 'It is cruel to have had delights, for the glamour of the past makes the day darker.' They will live to see the past differently when they are older and the present matters less. But until then the dead joy poisons the animate present, it parts by contrast; the man must drift away to his occupation, for there is nothing else, and the woman must harden by wanting what she cannot have. She will part herself from him more thoroughly by hardening, for one cannot count upon a woman's softness; it can swiftly be transmuted into malicious hatred.

This picture of pain is the rule where two strangers wed; but there are some who, taking a partner, discover a friend, many who develop agreeable acquaintanceship. Passion may be diverted into a common interest, say in conchology; if people are not too stupid, not too egotistic, they very soon discover in each other a little of the human goodwill that will not die. They must, or they fail. For whereas in the beginning foolish lips may be kissed, a little later they must learn to speak some wisdom. In this men are most exacting; they are most inclined to demand that women should hold up to their faces the mirror of flattery, while women seem more tolerant, often because they do not understand, very often because they do

not care, and echo the last words of Mr. Bernard Shaw's Ann: 'Never mind her, dear, go on talking'; perhaps because they have had to tolerate so much in the centuries that they have grown expert. One may, however, tolerate while strongly disapproving, and one must disapprove when one's egotism is continually insulted by the other party's egotism. There is very little room for twice 'I' in what ought to have been 'We,' and we nearly all feel that the axis of the earth passes through our bodies.

So the common interests of two egotisms can alone make of these one egotism. The veriest trifle will serve, and pray do not smile at case M4, who forgive each other all wrongs when they find for dinner a *risotto à la Milanaise*. A slightly spasmodic interest, and one not to be compared with a common taste for golf, or motoring, or entertaining, but still it is not to be despised. It is so difficult to pick a double interest from the welter of things that people do alone; it is so difficult for wives truly to sympathize with games, business, politics, newspapers, inventions; most women hate all that. And it is still more difficult, just because man is man and master, for him really to care for the fashions, for gossip, for his wife's school friends, and especially her relations, for tea-parties, tennis tournaments at the Rectory, lectures at the Mutual Improvement Association, servants' misdeeds and growths in the garden. Most men hate all that. People hold amazing conversations:—

She: Do you know, dear, I saw Mrs. Johnson again to-day with that man.

He (trying hard): Oh, yes, the actor fellow you mean.

She (reproachfully): No, of course not, I never said he was an actor. He's the new engineer at the mine, the one who came from Mexico.

He: Oh, yes, that reminds me, did

you go to the library and get me Roosevelt's book on the Amazon?

She: No, dear, I'm sorry I forgot. You see I had such a busy day and I could n't make up my mind between those two hats,—the very big one and the very small one,—*you* know. Now tell me what you *really* think.

And so on.

It is exactly like a Tchekoff play. They make desperate efforts to be interested in each other's affairs, and sometimes they succeed, for they manage to stand each other's dullness. They assert their egotism in turns. He tells the same stories several times. He takes her for a country walk and forgets to give her tea, and she never remembers that he hates her dearest friend Mabel. Where the rift grows more profound is when trifles such as these are overlooked, and particularly where a man has work that he loves, or to which he is used, which is much the same thing. In early days the woman's attitude to a man's work varies a good deal, but she generally suspects it a little. She may tolerate it because she loves him and all that is his is noble. Later, if this work is very profitable, or if it is work which leads to honor, she may take a pride in it, but even then she will generally grudge it the time and the energy it costs. She loves him, not his work. She will seldom confess this, even to herself, but she will generally lay down two commandments:—

1. Thou shalt love me.

2. Thou shalt succeed so that I may love thee.

All this is not manifest, but it is there. It is there even in the days of courtship, when a man's work, a man's clothes, a man's views on bimetallism, are sacred; in those days, the woman must kowtow to the man's work, just as he must keep on good terms with her pet dog. But the time almost invariably comes when the man kicks the pet

dog, because pet dogs are madly irritating sometimes — and so is a man's work. There is something self-protective in this, for work is so domineering. I should not be at all surprised to hear that Galatea saw to it that Pygmalion never made another statue. (On second thoughts it strikes me that there might be other reasons for that.)

It is true that Pygmalion was an artist, and these are proverbially difficult husbands: after an hour's work an artist will 'sneer, backbite and speak daggers.' Art is a vampire, and it will gladly gobble up a wife as well as a husband, but the wife must not do any gobbling. She does not always try to, and there are many in London who follow their artist husbands rather like sandwichmen between two boards; but they are of a trampled breed, indigenous I suspect to England. I think they arise but little in America, where, as an American said to me, 'Women labor to advance themselves along a road paved with discarded husbands.' (This is an American's statement, not mine, so I ask that I may be spared transatlantic denunciations.)

But leaving aside such important things as personal pettinesses, which too few think important, it must be acknowledged that women seldom conceive the passion for art that can inflame a man. They very seldom conceive a passion for anything except passion. An admirable tendency, for which they blush as one does for all one's natural manifestations. They hardly ever care for philosophy; they generally hate politics, but they nearly always love votes. They are quite as irritating in that way as men, who almost invariably adore politics and detest realities, sometimes lovescience and generally prefer record railway runs. But where such an interest as a science or an art has reigned supreme in a man, and reasserts itself after marriage, she

recognizes her enemy, the serpent, for is he not the symbol of wisdom? Invariably he rears his head when the love fever has subsided. Woman's impulse is more artistic than man's, but it seldom touches art; her artistic impulse is not yet one of high grade; she is the flower-arranger rather than the flower-painter, the flower-painter rather than just the painter. But this instinct that is in all women and in so few men avails just enough to make them discontented, while the great instinct that is in a few men is always enough to make them wretched.

It would not be so bad if they had not to live together, but social custom has decided that couples must forsake their separate ways and ever more follow the same. Most follow the common path easily enough, because most follow the first path that offers; but many grumble and cast longing eyes at side tracks or would return to the place whence they came. They cannot do so because it is not done, because other feet have not broken paths so wide that they shall seem legitimate. When husband and wife care no longer for their common life, the only remedy is to part: then the contradictory strain that is in all of us will reassert itself and make them rebound toward each other. If the law were to edict that man and wife should never be together for more than six months in the year, it would be broken every day and men and women would stand hunger and stripes to come together for twelve months in twelve; if love of home were made a crime, a family life would arise more touching than anything Queen Victoria ever dreamed. But from the point of view of a barbarous present, this would never do, for the very worst that can happen to two people is to reach the fullness of their desire. The young man who raves at the young woman's feet: 'Oh! that I were by your side day and night! Oh!

that ever I could watch you move! I grudge the night the eight hours in which you sleep,' — well, that young man is generally successful in his wooing and gets what he wants; a little later he gets a little more. For proximity is a dangerous thing: it enables one to know another rather well; full knowledge of mankind is seldom edifying. One sees too much, one sees too close. A professional Don Juan who honors me with his friendship told me that he has an infallible remedy against falling in love more often than three times a day: 'Stand as close to your charmer as you can, look at her well, very well, at every feature; watch her attitudes, listen to every tone of her voice — then you will discover something unpleasant, and you will be saved.' That is a little what happens in marriage; for ever and ever people are together, hearing each other, watching each other. Listen to M14: —

'I really was very much in love with him, and only just at the end of the engagement did I notice how hard he blew his nose. After we were married I thought, "Oh! don't be so silly and notice such little things, he's such a splendid fellow." A little later, "Oh! I do wish he would n't blow his nose like that, it drives me mad." Now I find myself listening and saying to myself with an awful feeling of doom, "He's going to blow his nose."'

She never tells him that he trumpets like an elephant. She fears to offend him. She prefers to stand there, exasperated and chafed. One day he will trumpet down the walls of her Jericho.

There are awful little things between two people. Here are some of them: —

M43. When tired, the wife has a peculiar yawn, roughly: 'Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo!' The husband hears it coming and something curls within him.

M98. Every morning in his bath the husband sings, 'There is a foun-

tain fill'd with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins' — always the same.

M124. The wife buys shoes a quarter size too small and always slips them off under the table at dinner. Then she loses them and develops great agitation. This fills her husband with an unaccountable rage.

M68. The wife is afflicted with the *cliché* habit and can generally sum up a situation by phrases such as: 'All is not gold that glitters.' Or, 'Such is life,' or, 'Well, well, it's a weary world.' The husband can hear them coming.

There are scores of these little cruel things which wear away love as surely as trickling water will wear away a stone. (Observe how contagious *clichés* are!) The dilemma is horrible; if the offended party speaks out, he or she may speak out much too forcibly and raise this sort of train of thought: 'He did n't seem to mind when we were engaged. He loved me then and little things did n't matter. He does n't love me now. I wonder whether he is in love with some one else. Oh! I'm so unhappy.' If, on the other hand, one does not speak out forcibly, or does not speak at all, the offender goes on doing it for the rest of his or her life, and there is nothing to do except to wait until one has got used to it and has ceased to care. But by that time one has generally ceased to care for the offender.

There are ideal marriages where both parties aim at perfection and are willing to accept mutual criticism. But there is something a little callous in this form of self-improvement society. People who are too much together are always making notes, adding up in their hearts bitter little adverse balances with which they will one day confront the fallen lover. Some slight offense will bring up the bill of arrears. A quarrel about a forgotten ticket will give life to the cruel thing he said seven years before about her mother's bonnets, or

her sudden dismissal of the cook, or the dreadful day when he sat on the eggs in the train. (Clumsy brute!)

All these things pile up and pile up till they form a terrible, towering cairn, made up of tiny stones, but of great total weight, just as an avalanche rests securely upon a crest until a whisper releases it. Nearly all marriages are in a state of permanent mobilization. There is only one thing to do — to remember all the time that one could not hope to meet one quite great enough to be one's mate, and that this is the best the world can do. The thought that nobody can quite understand one or quite appreciate one arouses a delicious sorrow and an enormous pride.

Too much together is bad, and too much apart may be worse. As I suggested before, there is no pleasing this institution.

It is easier to live too separate than too close, for one comes together freshly and marriage feels less irremediable when it hardly exists. There really are couples, who care for each other very well, who meet in a country house and exclaim, 'What! you here! How jolly!' That is an extreme case. In practice, separateness means conjugal acquaintanceship. Different pleasures, different friends, perhaps different worlds; indeed, one is mutually fresh, but traveling different roads one may find that there is nothing in common. Of two evils, it is better perhaps to be too intimate than too distant, because there are many irritating things that with reminiscence become delightful. The dreadful day when he sat on the eggs in the train is not entirely dreadful, for he looked so silly when he stood up removing the eggs, and although one was angry, one vaguely loved him for having made a fool of himself. (There are nine and sixty ways of gaining affection, and one of them is to be a good-tempered butt.)

Separateness, naturally, cannot coincide with the sense of mutual property. This is, perhaps, the cause of the greatest unhappiness in marriage, for so many forget that to be married is not to be one. They do not understand that, however much they may love, whatever delights they may share, whatever common ambitions they may harbor, whatever they hope, or endeavor, or pray, two people are still two people. Or if they know it, they say, 'He is mine.' 'She is mine.' If one could give one's self entirely, it would be well enough, but however much one may want to do so one cannot, just because one is the axis of the earth. Because one cannot, one will not, and he that would absorb will never forgive. He will be jealous, he will be suspicious, tyrannical, he will watch and lay traps, he will court injury, he will air grievances, because the next best thing to complete possession is railing at his impotency to conquer. That jealousy is turned against everything, against work, against art, against relatives, friends, dead loves, little children, toy dogs. 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me' is a human commandment.

Men do not, as a rule, suffer very much from this desire to possess, because they are so sure that they do possess, because they find it so difficult to conceive that their wife can find any other man attractive. They are too well accustomed to being courted, even if they are old and repulsive, because they have power and money; only they think it is because they are men. Beyond a jealous care for their wives' fidelity, which I suspect arises mainly from the feeling that an unfaithful wife is a criticism, they do not ask very much. But women suffer more deeply because they know that man has lavished on them for centuries a condescending admiration, that the king who lays his crown at their feet knows that his is the crown

to give. While men possess by right of possession, women possess only by right of precarious conquest. They feel it very bitterly, this fugitive empire, and their greatest tragedy is to find themselves growing a little older, uncertain of their power, for they know they have only one power; they are afraid as age comes of losing their man, while I have never heard of a husband afraid of losing his wife, or able to repress his surprise if she forsook him.

It would not matter so much if the feeling of property were that of a good landlord, who likes to see his property develop and grow beautiful; but mutual property is the feeling of the slave owner. Sometimes both parties suffer so, and by asking too much lose all. Man seldom asks much: if only a wife will not compromise his reputation for attractiveness while maintaining her own by flirtation; if she will accept his political views, acquire a taste for his favorite holiday resorts, and generally say, 'Yes, darling,' or 'No, darling,' opportunely, she need do nothing, she has only 'beautifully to be.' He is not so fortunate, however, when she wants to possess him, for she demands that he should be active, that the pretty words, caresses, the anxious inquiries after health, the presents of flowers and of stalls, should continue. It is not enough that he should love her: he must still be her lover. When she is not sure that he still is her lover, a madness of unrest comes over her; she will lacerate him, she will invent wishes so that he may thwart them, she will demand his society when she knows it is mortgaged to another occupation, so that she may suffer his refusal, exaggerate his indifference.

Here are cases: —

M21

She: He used to take me to dances. The other day he would n't come, he

said he was tired. He was n't tired when we were engaged.

The Investigator: But why should he go if he did n't want to?

She: Because I wanted to.

The Investigator: But he did n't want to.

She: He *ought* to take pleasure in pleasing me.

(The conversation here degenerates into a discussion on duty and becomes uninteresting.)

M4

The husband is a doctor with a very extended city practice. He is busy eleven hours a day and has night calls. His marriage has been spoiled because in the first years the wife, who is young and gay, could not understand that the man, who was always surrounded by people, in houses, streets, conveyances, should not desire society. She resented his wish to be alone for some hours, to shut himself up. There were tears, and like most people she looked ugly when she cried. She was lonely, and when one is lonely it is difficult to realize that other people may be too much surrounded.

A great deal of all this, however, might pass away if one could feel that it would not last. Nothing matters that does not last. Only one must be conscious of it, and in marriage many people are dully aware that they have settled down, that they have drawn the one and only ticket they can ever hope to draw, unless merciful death steps in. There will be no more adventures, no more excitements, no more marsh fires, which one knows deceptive yet loves to follow. It will be difficult to move to other towns or countries, to change one's occupation; it will even be difficult to adopt new poses, for the other will not be taken in. One will be forevermore what one is. True there is elope-

ment, divorce; in matters of art, there is the artist-courage that enables a man to see another suffer for the sake of his desire. But all this is very difficult and few of us have courage enough to make others suffer; if one had the courage to do no harm at all, it might not be so bad, but not many can follow Mr. Bernard Shaw: 'If you injure your neighbor, let it not be by halves.' They almost invariably do injure by halves: he that will not kill, scratches. There is no refuge from a world of rates, and taxes, and bills, and houses overcrowded by children, and old clothes, dull leaders in the papers, stupid plays, the morning train, the unvarying Sunday dinner. It is so bad sometimes that it causes willful revolt.

I sincerely believe that a great many men would be model husbands if only they were not married. Only when everything is respectable and nice there is a terrible temptation to introduce a change; the wild animal in man — which is in a few a lion, in most a weasel — reacts against the definite, the irremediable, the assured. He must do something. He must break through. He must prove to himself that he has not really sentenced himself to penal servitude for life. That is why so few of the respectable are respectable, and why reformed rakes do make good husbands. (Generally, that is, for a few rakes feel that they must keep up their reputation; on the other hand a really respectable man knows no shame.)

Curiously enough, children seem to act both against and in favor of these disruptive factors. It is difficult to deprive children of influence; they must part or they must unite. They are somebody in the house; they make a noise, and it all depends upon temperament whether the noise exasperates or delights. Parents are divided into those who love their children and those who bear with them; generally, men dislike

babies, unless they are rather strong men whom weakness attracts, or unless they feel pride of race; while women, excepting those who live only for light pleasures, give them a quite unreasoning affection. Children are a frequent source of trouble, for the tired man's nerves are horribly frayed by screams and exuberances. He shouts, 'Stop that child howling!' and if his wife assumes a saintly air and says that she 'would rather hear a child cry than a man swear,' the door opens toward the club or public house. Likewise, a man who has given so many jewels that the mother of the Gracchi might be jealous will never understand the appalling weariness that can come over the mother in the evening, when she has administered, say, twelve meals, four or eight baths, and answered several hundreds of questions varying between the existence of God and the esoterics of the steam-engine. Loving the children too much to blame them, she must blame some one, and blames him.

People do not confess these things, but the socio-psychologist must remember that, when a man quietly picks up a flower-pot and hurls it through the window, the original cause may be found in the behavior of the departmental manager six hours before. The irritation of children can envenom two lives, for it seems almost inevitable that each party should think that the other spoils or tyrannizes. It is not always so, and sometimes children unite by the bond of a common love; very much more often they unite by the burden of a common responsibility. Indeed, it is this financial responsibility that draws two people close, because tied together they must swim together or sink together, until they are so concerned individually with their salvation that they think they are concerned with the salvation of the other. That bond of union is dangerous because

marriage is expensive, and because one tends to remember the time when bread was not so dear and flesh and blood so cheap.

There is affluence in bachelordom; there is atrocious discomfort too, but when one thinks of the good old times, one generally forgets all except the affluence. Of the present one sees only that one cannot take the whole family to the Yellowstone; of the past one does not see the sitting-room, on the hangings of which the landlady merely blew. The wife thinks of her frocks, garlands of the sacrificial heifer; the husband of the days when he could afford to be one of the boys. And, as soon as the past grows glamorous, the present day grows dull; always, because one must blame something, one blames the other. It is so much more agreeable to spend a thousand dollars than to spend a hundred, even if one gets nothing for it. It is power. It is excitement. One thinks of money until one may come to think of nothing but money; until, as suggested before, a husband turns into a vaguely disagreeable person who can be coaxed into paying bills. In the working class especially there is bitterness among the women, who before their marriage knew the taste of independence and of earned money in their purses. It is a great love that can compensate a woman for the loss of freedom after she has enjoyed it.

Nothing, indeed, can compensate a woman for this, except a lover — that is to say, a return to an older state. That is what she turns to, for, strange as it may seem, marriage does not vaccinate against the temptations of love. She does not easily love again, for she has been married, and while it is easy to love again when one has been atrociously betrayed, just because one invests the new with everything that the old held back, it is difficult to love again

when the promised love turned merely to dullness. There is nothing to strike against. There is no contrast, and so women slip into relationships that are silly, because there is nothing real behind them. Boredom is the root of all evil, and I doubt whether busy and happy women seek adventure, for few of them want it for adventure's sake: they seek only satisfaction. That is what most men cruelly misunderstand; they blame woman instead of searching out their own remissness. Sins of omission matter more than sins of commission, more even than infidelities, for love, which is all a woman's life, is only a momentous incident in that of a man. Love may be the discovery of a happiness, but man remains conscious of many other delights. Woman is seldom like that. You will imagine a man and a woman who have blundered upon mutual comprehension, standing on the hill from which Moses saw Canaan. The woman would fill her eyes with Canaan, and could see nought else, while the man gazing at the promised land would still be conscious of other countries. In the heart of a man who is worth anything at all, love must have rivals, art, science, ambition, and it is a delight to woman that there are rivals to overcome, even though it be a poor slave she tie to her chariot wheels.

Marriage does not always suffer when people drift away from their allegiance; in countries such as France notably, where many husbands and wives do not think it necessary to trust, or tactful to watch, each other, the problem does not set itself so sharply. It is mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries, where the little blue flower has its altars, that the trouble begins. A rather fascinating foreigner said to me once, 'Englishwomen are very troublesome; they are either so light that they do not understand you when you tell them you love

them, or so deep that you must elope every time. This is a difficult country.' I do not want to seem cynical, but the mutable nature of man is so ill-recognized and the boredom of woman such a national institution that, when it is too late to pretend that that which has happened has not happened, most of the mischief has already been done. Why a husband or wife who has found attraction in another should immediately treat his partner abominably is not easily understood, for falling in love with the present victim did not make him rude or remiss to the rest of the world. But the British are a strange and savage people. Also, when in doubt they get drunk, so I fear I must leave a clearer recognition of polygamous instincts to the slow-growing enlightenment of the mind of man.

He is growing enlightened; at least he is infinitely more educated than he was, for he has begun to recognize that woman is, to a certain extent, a human being, a savage, a barbarian, but entitled to the consideration generally given to the Hottentot. I do not think woman will always be savage, though I hope she will not turn into the clear-eyed, weather-beaten mate that Mr. H. G. Wells likes to think of — for the future. She has come to look upon man as an equation that can be solved. He too, in a sense, and both are to-day much less inclined than they were fifty years ago to overlook a chance of pleasing. It is certain that men and women to-day dress more deliberately for each other than they ever did before; that they lead each other, sometimes with dutiful unwillingness, to the theatre or the country. It is very painful sometimes, this organization of pleasure, but it is necessary because dull lives are bad lives, and better fall into the river than never go to the river at all. It is dangerous and vain to take up the attitude, 'I alone am enough.' Yet many

do: as one walks along a suburban street, where every window is shut, where every dining-room has its aspidistra in a pot, one realizes that scores of people are busily heaping ashes on the once warm fire of their love.

The stranger is the alternative; he obscures small quarrels; if the stranger is beautiful, he urges to competition; if he is inferior, he soothes pride. But above all, the stranger is change, therefore hope. The stranger — an insurance against loss of personal pride; he compels adornment, for what is 'good enough for my husband' is not good enough for the lady over the way. The stranger serves the pleasure lust, this violent passion of man, and cannot harm him because the lust for pleasure, within the limits of hysteria, involves a desire for good looks, for elegance, for gayety; above all, love of pleasure was reviled of our fathers: whatever our fathers thought bad is a good thing. Our fathers did not understand certain forms of pride: there is more than pride of body in good looks, good clothes, and showing off before acquaintances: there is achievement, which means pride of conquest. I imagine that the happiest couple in the world is the one where each lives in perpetual fear that somebody will run away with the other.

Looking at it broadly, I see marriage as a Chinese puzzle, almost, not quite, insoluble. Spoiled by coldness, spoiled by ardor, spoiled by excess, spoiled by indifference, spoiled by obedience, by stupidity, by self-assertion, spoiled by familiarity, spoiled by ignorance. Spoiled in every possible way that man can invent. Spoiled by every ounce of influence a jealous or ironical world can muster, spoiled by habit, by contrast, by obtuseness quite as much as by over-close understanding. And yet it stands. It stands because there is nothing much to put into its place, because marriage

is the only road that leads a man away from his dinner when he is forty-five, or teaches a woman to preserve her complexion. It stands, like most human things, because it is the better of two bad alternatives. Only, because it stands we must not think that it will never change. All things change, otherwise one could not bear them. I suspect that marriage, which was once upon a time the taking of a woman by a man, which has now grown legalized, and may become courteous, will turn into a very skilled occupation. It will be recognized still more than now that all freedom need not be lost after putting on the wedding ring. As legal right and privilege grow, as women develop private earnings, a consciousness of worth must arise. Already women realize their value and demand its recognition. If they demand it long enough, they will get it.

I suspect that the economic problem is at the root of the marriage problem, for people are not indiscriminate in their relationships, and even Don Juan, after a while, longs to be faithful, if only somebody could teach him how to be it.

Marriage can be made close only by making divorce easy, by extending female labor. For labor makes woman less attractive and to be attractive is rather a trap: how much higher can a woman rise? But the economic freedom of woman will mean that she need not bind herself; she will be able to break away, and in those days she will be most completely bound, for who

would run away from a jail if the door were always left open?

I detest Utopia, and these things seem so far away that I am more content to take marriage as it is, in the hope that unhealthy novels, unnecessary discussions, unwholesome views, and unnatural feelings may little by little reform mankind. Meanwhile, I hold fast to the private maxim that hardly anything is unendurable if one sets up that all mankind could not give one a quite worthy mate. But there is another alleviation: understanding not only that one is married to somebody else, but also that somebody else is married to one's self, and that it is quite as hard for the other party. There are many excellent things to be done; here are a few: —

(1) Do not open each other's letters. (For one reason you might not like the contents.) And try not to look liberal if you don't even glance at the address or the postmark.

(2) Vary your pursuits, your conversation, and your clothes. If required vary your hair.

(3) If you absolutely must be sincere, let it be in private.

(4) (Especially for wives.) Find out on the honeymoon whether crying or swearing is the more effective.

(5) Once a day say to a wife, 'I love you'; — to a husband, 'How strong you are!' If the latter remark is ridiculous say, 'How clever you are!' for everybody believes that.

(6) Forgive your partner seventy times seven. Then burn the ledger.

THE BULU AND HIS WOMEN

BY JEAN KENYON MACKENZIE

THE tribes of our neighborhood in the Southern Kamerun belong to the Bantu race. If, as is supposed at this writing to be the case, the Bantu-speaking tribes occupy the southern half of Africa from the seventh degree north of the equator, our neighborhood is in the northern limit of their present occupancy. They are migratory; their drift has been south and west from the heart of Central Africa. Sir Harry Johnston fixes the approximate date at which the Bantu negro left his primal home as not more than two thousand years ago, and notes that he has over-run in his migrations the forest negro, the Nilotic negro, the Hottentot, and the Bushman.

The Bantu is betrayed entirely by his speech. He has no history except as traced and exhibited in his speech; he has no physical distinction or type — only a typical language, and no cohesion except the cohesion of language.

He has wandered, spear in hand, and the spotted skin of a leopard on his shoulder, not in a horde but in broken companies — through the forests and in the grass countries of Africa — these two thousand years. At the crossings of rivers tribes have divided; clans have divided; even families have divided as the bolder members have dared to make a crossing which the weaker ones have evaded; until to-day there are unnumbered tribes, speaking unnumbered dialects, differentiated by local customs, and governed in minor matters by dissimilar traditions. They see each other through a glass darkly.

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But the white man is a mighty hunter and has tracked them to many a secret lair by his instinct for the spoken word. By him they, who have no care beyond the tribe, are discerned as a race and are endowed with a history; and this constructive work is based, not upon a written word, or a system of hieroglyphics, but upon a spoken word. None of them but carried in those long wanderings a word — a construction — an idiom — that should betray them, the root of them, to the wise white man.

In our neighborhood there are more than ten tribes; we are speaking of the Bulu, one of the Fang divisions of the Bantu people. These, and all West Coast Bantu tribes, have been preserved until a very recent date from that Arab influence which has so much modified the custom of the Bantu people to the East. Our neighbors exhibit that 'culture most characteristically African' which is to be found, Sir Harry Johnston believes, in the forests of the Congo and among the lagoons and estuaries of the Guinea Coast.

The migrations of the Bulu draw near the coast. Other Fang tribes have reached the coast and the ultimate barrier of the sea.

You must not think of our migrations as an agitation — or a definite campaign. There is no sense of encampment in the little brown villages strung on the thread of the forest paths. Only this: ask any aged Bulu where 'his father bore him,' and he will say that he was born in a town toward the rising sun, beyond a river so