

AS THE ANGELS WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN

They Neither Marry, Nor Are Given in Marriage

HUGH A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

S AID A great writer, some fifty years ago, "Marriage, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation." Fifty years ago, such a statement was like the voice of one crying in the wilderness; to-day it is the commonplace of the street-corners.

What are we going to do about it?

It is evident enough what we *are* doing about it—at any rate the vast majority of us: we are lifting up our voices and weeping over it. We are deploring the decadence of our day; we are eulogizing the high principles of our fathers, and sitting on the housetops looking for the advent of some great revivalist. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The human mind is fearful of nothing so much as change. It does not object to variety; indeed, in most cases, it demands variety, but real fundamental change can only be brought about through much travail. The human mind will hail with all honor the man who invents a new flavor for a rice-pudding, but the man who has the temerity to advocate the abolition of rice-pudding will be ridden out of town.

On no other one subject, it may be ventured, does the human mind more cordially hate to face facts

than on the question of marriage, or more stubbornly refuse to envisage the possibility of radical change. The man who even so much as hints at such a suggestion is promptly written down, and written off, by the vast majority of Christian people at any rate, as a moral outlaw and an enemy of religion. No matter how much circumstances may proclaim to the contrary, marriage is still regarded as the "settled fact," and the terrible violence it suffers is always held to be the result of a depraved condition which must be redeemed, and never of a fuller and higher understanding of life which cannot be gainsaid. Human nature is ever seen as "going to the dogs," and never as ascending up into heaven. The world is forever looking *back* on its golden age. "When I was a boy" has been at once the pride and the reproach of each second generation since generations began.

"When I was a boy" marriages were real marriages, homes were real homes, children were real children, and parents were real parents. Divorce was a terrible, almost unthinkable, last resort; home was one grand fireside, one perfect elegy of comfort and joyful unquestioned duty; children were always obedient,

parents always loving, or, if ever stern, then cruel only to be kind.

And then one day there set in the terrible change. A country doctor in the north of Ireland, in the cool of a summer evening, was watering his garden. From one strategic point to another, he trailed his garden-hose, and, as he did so, he noticed how pliable it was, how resilient, how naturally it twined itself into rings and wheels. And then, suddenly, like a flash, it all came to him. Within a few days, he had fitted a portion of the garden-hose to his child's mail-cart, and the first rubber tires were on the road.

I do not know whether that was the beginning of it all, but from that day it has never stopped. The bone-shaker was transformed overnight, and before the world knew where it was, every boy within hail of civilization was clamoring for a bicycle "with Dunlop tires," and every man too. Then small sisters in short skirts made contracts with small brothers to ride their machines, and elder sisters began to wish they were not so elder. And they wished and wished until at last they began to wonder why they should not ride anyway. So in due time there appeared the "ladies' machine," grudgingly and dubiously accepted; and then, without warning, came Mrs. Bloomer. From one end of Christendom to the other she was reprobated. The small boy hooted at her; the eminent divine straitly anathematized her; the plain man and woman, stricken to the depths of their orthodox souls, would have none of her. But, while the fight raged, the great world at large, men and women, boys and girls, was

mounting its wheel and riding away from home, gaining a wider sense of things, going to places it had never gone to before, enjoying experiences it had never dreamed of. From that day to this the world has never stopped riding away from home, away from the stated, the fixed, and the settled, into the realm where "all things are yours."

In the van of this great movement the woman and the girl have always held foremost place. "When I was a boy" the only profession open to women was the nursing profession; to-day no profession is closed against her. "When I was a boy" every nice girl was taught to blush if she inadvertently displayed an ankle; to-day ankles are like the foreshore at ebb-tide. "When I was a boy" the mysteries and intimacies of a woman's dress constituted a recognized palpitating subject for innuendo and gigglement; to-day there is nothing left either to poke our male friends in the ribs about or deliciously to giggle over with our lady acquaintances.

"Short skirts,
Bare knees,
Smoke where you like,
Go where you please."

And yet, though all the world is thus turned upside down, though accustomed standards all round us have changed past all recognition, though the sky-scrapers of the new earth are shouldering their way up to heaven, yet do we fearfully and tearfully seek to hold what we call the marriage covenant in the two-story brownstone of our fathers and their fathers before them.

Can it really be done?

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EVANSVILLE
1911

I wonder. The answer, it seems to me, depends very largely on our fundamental attitude toward life. If we are willing to accept the debit and credit view of life, the rewards and punishments so dear to the heart of Samuel Butler; if we feel bound to accept the views that righteousness inheres alone in faithful observance of a certain fixed code and that any departure from that code is sin, that this world is simply one long arbitrary obedience test, satisfaction of which will admit us to heaven, while failure to satisfy it will precipitate us into hell; if this is our view, then are we justified in rising in Jonathan Edwards's wrath, and insisting that though the sky-scrapers of all other human activities and relationships push their heads above the clouds into heaven, the marriage relation be restrained within its brownstone walls on the earth.

If, on the other hand, we see life—as it seems to me it must surely be seen—as an infinite progression, out of the fantasies of a material consciousness, out of the absurd twice-two-is-five of everyday life, into the great twice-two-is-four of being justly apprehended; if we thus see life, then must we see also that in this life there can be no mistakes, only experience. The advancing tide ebbs and flows, it swirls and eddies and throws itself hither and yon, but it steadily climbs the beach. We never doubt that it will ultimately reach its goal. Though the backwash skurries to meet the oncoming wave, and scatters it skyward in a thousand tufts of foam, though the eddy swirls around aimlessly and the waters meander drunkenly in all directions but the right one, we are

never for a moment in doubt that every movement represents progress, and that the tide is on the way. So, it has always seemed to me, must this thing we call life be regarded. And if this is so, then instead of viewing every change with distrust we must welcome it with favor. Instead of seeing in it merely men and women going to the dogs, we must see in it men and women mounting to heaven. If marriage, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation, then instead of wailing and whimpering and scolding over it, had we not better bestir ourselves to a new faith, wait with our loins girt for the inevitable emergence of the new firmament, willing, meanwhile, to leave the old landmarks and be glad to see them disappear? The greatest enemy of real progress is the man who insists on patching the past.

All through the ages, but more intensively than ever before during the past fifty years, the struggle of man has been toward individual liberty and individual completeness. He has sought it spiritually, and he has sought it materially, and every year that passes finds him more surely than ever before the man in possession. He speaks to the ends of the earth; he flies to the uttermost parts of the sea; he demands, and, in spite of all stiflement, demands again—and makes ever more good his claim—he demands the right to think as he pleases. And in spite of all evidence to the contrary, he claims to be master of his own soul and to look for his happiness, not through a material, but through a spiritual sense of things

Do I hear a great roar of Homeric laughter? Do I see a thousand incredulous fingers pointing to the jazz mania, the bob mania, the hose mania, the Oxford-bag mania of our wonderful day and age? Do I hear a thousand indignant voices raised in protest, their owners, kind souls, stricken to the heart at the stampede from the old ways they see all around them? Do I hear them denouncing every phase of "modern life," and winding up with a grand orgy of denunciation of the modern attack on the marriage covenant? Well, I cannot help it. I can only humbly repeat with the writer of Genesis, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

And it all is surely good, even the attack on the marriage covenant. The struggle of man is toward completeness. He begins to work out his problem as a child, in bonds, not only bonds imposed, but bonds eagerly and tearfully sought. Inevitably, stage by stage, his story is the child's story. For the child not only submits, however grudgingly at times, to the bonds imposed by authority, but he eagerly demands the bonds involved by his dependence. His happiness is not complete or even remotely possible without the sense of protection of a grown-up presence, or without the love afforded him by some one his very own. But as he grows up, he learns to stand alone. His mother's or his father's word is no longer a law unto him; he is no longer gripped by a nameless fear when they are not close at hand. He is still a son, and may still hold a relationship to them which is truly great and grand, but

it is an entirely different relationship.

All of which leads on to this. If the growing up of the child were so slow as to cover a period of thousands of years, and so be comparable to the growing up of the race, there would inevitably, sooner or later, develop a transition period when the fearful ones of that time would cry out, "The relationship of child and parent, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation." And it would go on losing it. To their sense of things the situation would get worse and worse and more utterly outrageous. Every effort would be made to stem the tide. A thousand Mrs. Partingtons with new brooms would rush to the rescue. Sermons would be preached on the subject, and books would be written. Bishops would issue pastorals, and popes would send out encyclicals, and all the time nothing would be happening but the unfolding of a higher sense of freedom and completeness, and the development of a new relationship far better than the old.

And so it is in this other matter. The world is growing up, that is all, and in the marriage relation is putting away childish things. In all directions woman is claiming her freedom, freedom to work, freedom to earn, freedom to come and go as she pleases. The fiction of dependence upon which rested the whole superstructure of "chivalry" is vanished away. Much as it may shock us, however, the bald fact remains that thousands and thousands, millions of women to-day could bring up a family without the aid of a husband at all. It must be clear enough,

then, that whatever the special union of the sexes which the world calls marriage may be, entirely different demands are being made on it to-day than were being made fifty years ago. Is it any wonder that the certainty of its foundation is becoming impaired? And should it be regarded as an outrage on morality to envisage the possibility of some radical change, in which, maybe, the bonds of a legal contract would be abolished, and the new relationship be given free course to develop itself in the new age?

We need not be afraid. The ladder set up from earth to heaven is a long one. Countless millions have not yet set their foot on the first rung. For more ages than we need take stock of, men and women will eagerly demand that they be legally bound together, and, for all who so desire it, such bonds should be supplied. At the same time, we should fairly and squarely face the fact that the years as they pass must see an ever growing army of men and women who are beginning to catch a glimpse of the inevitable, who are beginning to see that completeness does not consist in the physical union of man and woman, but in the recognition and development, by the man, of the woman within him, and, by the woman, of the man which forever lies in the depths of her own soul. And having so seen, men and women will claim the right to work side by side, free and independent, instead of crowding back into the acorn where the twain are one *flesh*.

As this vision grows clearer, as the spiritual man with his limitless outlook is ever held less and less in the

grasp of the material, the great fact will at last emerge that all the so-called human relationships are but the manifestation to our present state of consciousness of the one great cause, the one great Principle of which we are the effect.

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

It was this same man whose last thoughts, as he hung nailed to a cross, were for his mother. We need never be afraid to face the new day.

And so the anxious and fearful may take heart of grace, while the courageous and far-seeing should push fearlessly on. They will have need of much patience and much faith. The material man with his hatreds, his fears, his lusts, and his make-believe will fight to the last ditch against the onward movement of spirit, and at no point in the field will the struggle be more severe than around this battered blockhouse of the old concept of marriage.

But the man who saw so many things clearly has penetrated far on into time, to a period long after the last thunderclap of this struggle shall have faded away into silence, and has left this record:

"When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

THOSE QUARRELSOME BONAPARTES

VII—By Cleopatra's River

ROBERT GORDON ANDERSON

NAPOLEON was not accustomed to linger on the scene, once the footlights were dimmed. In fact, he usually preceded the curtain. So on Christmas in the year VI of the Republic, 1797 of Our Lord, the commander-in-chief came up from Italy, by way of Rastadt, where he had been conducting sundry little negotiations, and entered Paris, with the cries of Noël ringing faintly in his ears. He had been born, said Letizia on that memorable day back in Ajaccio, as our Saviour had been, without pomp and after a journey. But a new kind of savior was then more to the relish of most of the French people; one who came riding with a challenge on his lips instead of a beatitude.

But it was all to be expected, with memories so fresh of creaking tumbrils, and heads held up by the forelock, and succeeding these, an effete and inefficient oligarchy of Moulins and Barras robbing the exchequer in private and flaunting their scant-clad mistresses in the public gardens. One may admit the ultimate dominion of the spirit; but the millennium is such a long way off; and it is only human to hail a more practical leader—in the year 1797 of Our Lord, the year VI of the infant Republic.

They received him in the Luxem-

bourg Palace with something of acclaim and not a little of splendor; with heads uncovered, and be vies of beautiful ladies thronging the corridors. True, a little of coldness characterized the ceremonies. He did not thrust himself forward—they did that for him—and to disarm suspicion, he appeared in a blue and white uniform that was conspicuously plain when contrasted with the flamboyant plumes and tunics of the Directors. But the Directors could not guess his intentions, while he, though preserving an impressively calm demeanor, felt inwardly a little ill at ease. Indeed there was embarrassment everywhere, for the audience studied him covertly, as the staff of a counting-house might study a visitor inspecting the establishment, with the possible intention of taking it over, employees and all. An untoward incident occurred just as he began to address them in his jerky but vibrant phrases: a young man fell from the topmost gallery to the marble floor, his blood splashing the Greek gowns and the pink and white bosoms of the ladies. This accident was scarcely reassuring.

Nevertheless, he had brought them trophies, much moneys, and many kingdoms. And he had trumped the Royalists. For old