

the patient, half-fed drudge who has slaved for him so long, he has but to "get a bill" and he is free to woo and marry again. He is not likely to kindle a heartsome blaze upon the domestic altar!

But, upon the whole, I believe that, owing to downright true love, to conscience, and to the sound sense and large good-humor characteristic of the American, the vast majority of marriages in this country are happy.

How can we decide whether the credit of this is due to the husband or the wife?

REBECCA HARDING DAVIS.

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It is a trite but very true saying that "it takes two to make a quarrel." And in answering the question which forms the title of this article, I desire to premise in behalf of my sex that, if women are to blame for the unhappiness of marriage, men also have their share of that unpleasant responsibility. But this is not the question of the moment; it is simply a *caveat*; and to be true to the facts in the case it must be allowed that women are often seriously and recklessly in fault when the marriage relation is not only unhappy, but disgraceful.

For, *first*, women often marry from wrong and inexcusable motives, and this first step in a mistaken direction leads them all astray and always downward; nor is the descent easy or agreeable. I do not hold to the sentimental and romantic notion that women should marry only from love, for that capricious passion may fasten itself, as too often it does, on an utterly unworthy person, and when the brief illusion is over, the gay blossoms of imagination and the fire-lights of passion all faded, there is left to the disgusted and disappointed woman only a perpetual and ghastly skeleton, not always in the closet. But I do not believe that a woman should marry without love: the degradation of body and soul implied in such a relation not only makes the bond a galling chain, but alienates from the wife any respect or admiration that a husband should feel for her, and rapidly degrades her character in its integral nature.

When a woman marries for money, she puts herself at once on a level with the class of women who are the lowest order of humanity. That her sale of herself is legalized does not alter its real *morale*. She is actually one of the outcasts of her sex in

heart and soul, however she may try to delude herself with a ceremonial respectability. To a woman who takes this step happiness in marriage is impossible; neither affection nor respect can live in a venal atmosphere, and when these are wanting marriage becomes a dreadful imprisonment for life. The same rule obtains when a woman marries for a home, as that motive is but a modification of the other. Yet how many women sell themselves in both these ways, and then wonder that they are not happy, and therefore revile marriage!

Again, *secondly*, women are unhappy in marriage because they enter into that condition with entirely mistaken views of their relation and responsibility: petted and indulged at home, they expect to be equally indulged and petted by the adoring lover, who in a very brief time becomes the every-day husband, and expects his wife to become, in the language of Scripture, "a help-meet unto him." It would be as easy for an orchid to become a cabbage as for a gay, spoiled girl to become at once a good housewife and an unselfish mother; and the deep and bitter consciousness of this inevitable fact has made many a woman melancholy and fretful—two traits which peculiarly exasperate the average man and make his home a real desert. If our mothers would train their daughters to the ordinary duties of daily life, and instruct them in patience and unselfishness, instead of so-called accomplishments, there would be no need of asking if marriage is a failure.

*Thirdly*, women make married life unhappy because the average woman is impatient. If things arise in her young experience which are new and painful, she either does battle with them in an ignorant and futile fashion, or yields to tears and despair; she wants "the mills of the gods" to grind with impossible speed, and resents the fact that she must wait months and years for her grist, whatever it may be. She cannot wait for time to allay the waves that beat upon her, or to calm the winds that blow roughly; she has not the sense to reflect that her position is new and strange, and only the attrition of recurrent days can make such a position either easy or agreeable; she resents the thorns on her roses, instead of trying to blunt them, and in her impatient passion pulls up roses and all. Two women cannot live together without patience on both sides; much less can a woman and a man live in peace without this home angel forever interposing its quiet voice.

*Fourthly*, women are exacting both by nature and education; especially in these latter days when the whole aim of the so-called "weaker" sex seems to be to arrogate to itself the strength, authority, and capacity of man. A woman who desires to be her husband's equal, not only resents his natural place as the head of the family, and affronts his innate mastery, but because she is really, after all, only a woman, she also demands those cares and attentions that the feminine soul considers its right. No woman, in spite of modern opinion and effort to that end, can fill a man's place in the world or at home. The Creator who made them two separate sorts has never undone his work; and his creatures never can undo it. The primitive intent of matrimony was not a "partnership" or a state of "equality," but a headship vested in the stronger party to the contract, under which the weaker party should receive affection, protection, and care; yielding due respect and obedience to this God-given authority. In such an association the woman found peace, security, and happiness; and the man was blessed in a home where he was king and priest, loved and obeyed. Here children were welcomed and nurtured into goodly manhood and womanhood; there was order in these families; obedience instead of emancipation; calm instead of tumult; respect in place of revolt and impertinence.

While a woman exacts from her husband every attention and care and caress that she considers her due, while she wants everything in life to yield to her capricious humor, she cannot expect that he will be contented with her demands, or happy either in giving or refusing. Nor if she exacts from him the treatment due to another man, arrogates to herself the position of a mere business partner, and an equal in every point, will she be able to find happiness in so unnatural an attitude. Either mode of exaction is calculated to destroy the beautiful rest and shelter of a real home, a true marriage.

*Fifthly*, women are inconsiderate. They are not constitutionally as selfish as men, but they find it hard to understand the nature of men, and judge them by their own standard, perhaps never in a life-time discovering that men are ruled by other laws and motives than those which govern women.

That a woman should be unpunctual, extravagant, given to gossip, seems to her a small matter; but to most men punctuality is a necessity of existence; to be late at their place of business,

at an appointment, a railway train, a steamer, deranges their whole scheme of life for the time, and the disregard of woman for this one thing is often the beginning of discomfort in the home. Nor can a man's respect or affection last long for a wife who lavishly squanders the money he works hard to acquire; it has a value in his eyes that is the natural result of his labor to obtain it, and he cannot have patience with the reckless hand that scatters without a thought, for purposes of vanity or pleasure, the golden grains he has gathered one at a time. A milliner's or dressmaker's bill is too apt to be the tiny seed from which springs a perennial thistle by the threshold of home. Nor is it conducive to family happiness to have the conversation in those hours when there is any time for family intercourse, devoted to the faults and follies of mutual friends; the "unruly member" has kindled many a fire that has eaten away "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends."

*Lastly*, women are almost always jealous. It seems well-nigh impossible for the average woman to believe that her husband can admire another woman without being faithless, at least in heart, to his wife. Nor does she stop here. I have known women acridly jealous of their husbands' affection for their own relatives. I have known instances where a wife was deeply incensed because her husband was devoted to his invalid father, though not at all to her real neglect. Mothers are sometimes jealous of their own children; though more frequently they neglect the father of a child openly and persistently for the child itself, and seem to have no longer any affection for the other parent, so deeply are they absorbed in their mutual offspring. Jealousy is a trait that has a reciprocal influence; a jealous woman is "cruel as the grave"; she can neither awaken nor retain affection, and the man of whom she is jealous considers his own unhappiness and her suspicions ample excuse for indulging in the very aberrations of which he is suspected.

Let women give themselves to the cultivation of their womanly virtues; become patient, considerate, submissive, and gentle; cease to be exacting, extravagant, and jealous; let them consider that marriage is a condition that can be made blessed or cursed according to their use of it, and give their whole hearts to rendering it what it should be; let them take counsel of the wisdom which is from above—for no relation in life has more explicit

direction given for its guidance in Holy Scripture—and act in this supreme and lasting position as Christian women should ;—and marriage would cease to be a failure ; no longer be shunned and sneered at ; and that primal and sacred fiat of the Creator would be fulfilled—“And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone ; I will make him a help-meet for him.”

ROSE TERRY COOKE.

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THE whole system of marrying and giving in marriage, as it exists in this country, is founded upon a blunder. But for the sturdy corner-stone of reciprocal affection, absolute ruin must have overtaken it long ago, as the natural result of a compact entered into under false pretences.

From the time the baby-girl is “fie-fied” into unnatural shame if she offers her lips to her boy-sweetheart, until the fateful hour in which the blushing maiden is over-persuaded into setting the wedding-day, women are, notwithstanding all this coy show of bashful unwillingness, trained into the idea that their lives would be awry and unfinished without marriage. The conventional farce deceives nobody—least of all herself and lover ; yet it is religiously played out in the sight of a knowing and grinning public.

I was once at a very amateur Jarley wax-works show, when the exhibitor achieved the solitary hit of the evening by reversing the positions of the “ Beautiful Maiden pursued by the Indian ” at the terminus of their track, announcing gravely the title of the group, as she set them again in motion.

The change of relative attitudes effected by matrimony is as sudden and thorough, and, but for the pity of it, would be as laughable. The beautiful maiden, hunted for her heart, flies, plaining as dramatically, if not as frantically, as when her scalp is the pursuer’s object. The more reluctant in seeming, the richer the prize. From the instant of introduction to that of departure upon the bridal tour, the character of the chase remains unaltered. Should the girl avow frankly, when her wooer solicits her to marry him, that she had already divined his intentions and would have broken her heart had he not come to the point, he would be shocked and chilled. Even after betrothal, the masculine lover maintains the initiative, submits to his fair one’s caprices,