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A Song to March To

By DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

WHEN doctors are talking of the medical information to cope with the new modern complexities of marriage and parenthood, and psychiatrists of mental analyses, social workers of economic difficulties, alienists of the dark problems of unbalance, what can a mere wife and mother and housekeeper have to add? Certainly nothing definite and concrete in detail . . . if for no other reason than that life has taught her a distrust of too-carefully laid out programs of any sort when human beings are concerned.

And yet there is something I feel like calling out, in my unprofessional way, with my heart in my voice. *Nothing is more needed as a foundation for these personal relationships than a state of mind, a song to march to, some stirring fanfare, the sort of bright brazen challenge which from the beginning of time has stirred human blood to action.* "The song of the Lord began with trumpets," says the Bible somewhere. In the scientific thinking which is an absolute prerequisite of accurate advance, we cannot forget the wholehearted joy in the possibilities of success which is the only thing that makes possible any advance at all, accurate or fumbling.

As I look around me, in these years, upon the anxious thoughtful faces of people who are thinking about modern marriage and parenthood, and read the apprehensive screeds of many of those who write about the changes in those institutions, I am dismayed by the absence of what I had thought one virtue always to be counted on in our pioneer America—the virtue of courage and cheer and hopefulness in turning the face towards the future and away from the past. I am astonished by the careworn taking thought as to the dangers and difficulties, and the absence of hurrahs over the prize to be won. We are all brought up on the story of the Pilgrims and of the stoutheartedness of those ancestors of ours who did not, one of them, turn back towards the established past and, frightened by the unknown, return to England when the Mayflower returned. What has become of that pioneering spirit, and that other one which sent strong men and women adventurously out to conquer the new continent?

In all the talk about the unknown future of marriage and

parenthood I hear no echo of the instinctive rush of high spirits over obstacles to conquer, none of our old traditional delight in exploring and taming the unknown. We seem to be heavily stooping over the broken pieces of the past, rather than plunging our hands eagerly into the plastic clay of the future.

Is it possible that we don't recognize the situation as the moral equivalent of the material one faced by our forefathers, out of which they created our present world, materially so marvelous, wherein materially we are so astonishingly at our ease? Here we stand, facing a new world of human relationship, as new as America was to those English people three centuries ago. There it lies, waiting for us to shape it into the background of strong and healthy and happy lives for our descendants. Even if we would we cannot retreat into the old world of the past. There is no moral Mayflower that could possibly carry us back to bring up our families along the lines fixed by the old traditions. We must move forward, pushed by the irresistible momentum of change; we might at least, even the most timid or thought-taking among us, make a virtue of necessity, and step off boldly into the unknown world, with that alert self-possessed eye which alone can discern and shape the new possibilities in a new region.

THERE is no denying that we are leaving behind us some sweet and pleasant aspects of life which will never be seen again. So did the Pilgrims. Never were they or their descendants to know again the pleasant comfortable leisure of well-to-do people attended and served by a class who were resigned to being considered only half human. The pleasant repose of the older home when the women and the younger generation had no thought of being allowed wholly human dignity or freedom of action, is gone forever. There is no denying that the rule of autocracy is simpler and often quieter than any other form of organization. But we cannot return to it even if we would and in our hearts we know that we would now find something so ignoble and base as the foundations of such peace and quietness that we could not endure it, either as autocrat or as serf.

No, we cannot live ourselves back to the old quietly ordered world with its unquestioned traditions and standards.

But why this uneasiness about what is before us? Why this absence of stout-hearted self-confidence that we can find our way about in it without losing our way? What *is* before us? I'll tell you. As wonderful an opportunity as the human race has ever seen for the exercise of the most deeply satisfying of all our instincts, the instinct to create. It is a truism that only those human beings are healthy and happy who are creating something. Human beings starve and die morally if they are denied creative occupation. The happiness of a poverty-stricken unknown artist compared to the stuffy, idle rich man is proverbial, a platitude worn threadbare because of its very truth.

NOW, before every one of us, since every one has personal relations, lies a whole new world to be shaped by creative instinct. There lie the raw materials of glory—the same old primitively necessary human ties without which the race has never been able to exist a moment . . . mating, parenthood, responsibility of one for another. Broken and gone are many of the ugly old fetters which hampered the movements of all, and rubbed raw sores on the limbs of many. Some order and discipline there must be—such is the essence of creative art which by order and discipline and intelligence and inspiration creates something finished and beautiful out of raw material. Out of the capacity to scream aloud, the creative impulse has made Wagnerian operas. Out of the hardness and heaviness of stone, it has built up cathedrals to the glory of God. There lies our raw material—the relationship between men and women, between parents and their children.

We know from the core of our beings that beautiful things can be made of such relationships, and the glowing certainty of this seems to me to be the first element in any training to cope with them.

The moral Mayflower has landed us on a stern and rock-bound coast with a whole new world before us, rich with dangers, rich beyond imaginings with lovely possibilities.

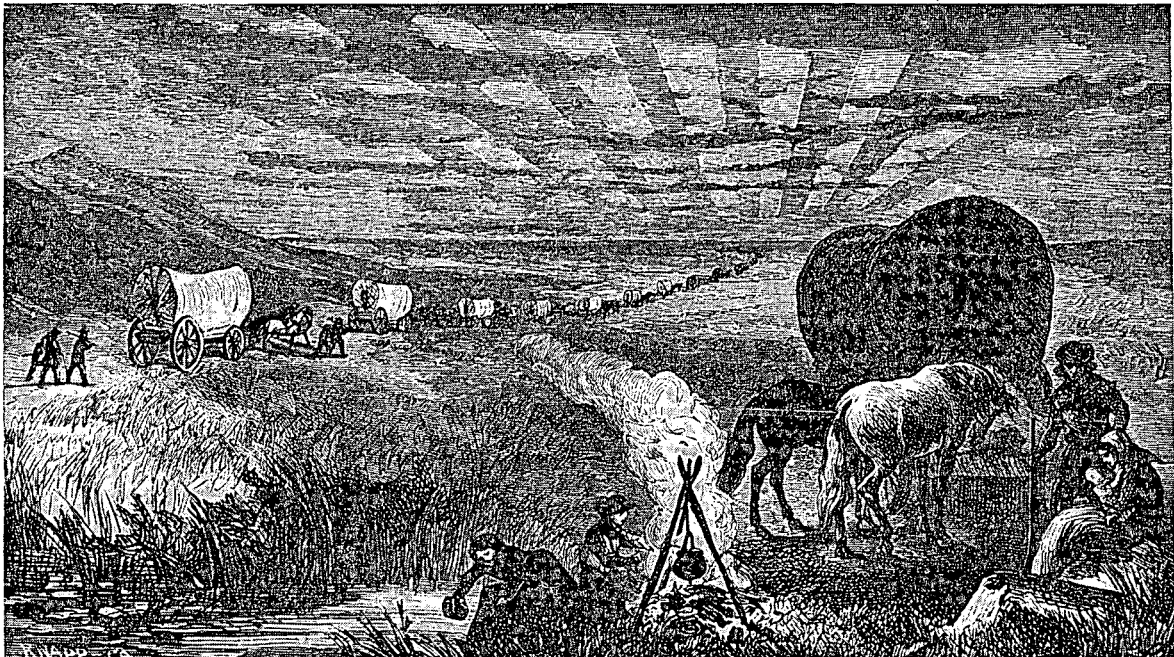
Careful thought and training, as to diet, psychology, household budgets, physical sex-relations are necessary for the new task. Yes, of course, but they will achieve nothing but weariness of spirit if they are not warmed and vitalized by a glowing sense of the new possibilities for happiness and growth and honesty and strength in the new family.

We are Americans all. Every one of us is, on this continent only because we or our fathers preferred to shape new material into new life, rather than live on in the old forms. We are every one of us of the race of pioneers. Here is a new frontier to be conquered, a new spiritual region to be subdued. Now is the time for the old half-humorous, wholly dauntless pioneer spirit to burn up bravely and boldly. On the covered wagons crawling over the illimitable plains at a snail's pace, they blazoned out "Pike's Peak or bust" . . . and built one of the finest cities in the world at the foot of Pike's Peak.

Let us hang out a banner bearing some such device as "Free and happy homes or bust," and see before us not the difficulties and complexities of the road, not even the shadowy wayside cemeteries for the fallen, but the bright beauty of the goal.

No human beings ever had a brighter goal before them. To learn how to live nobly and wisely with a true mate, to learn how to help the younger generation with one's experience and not to hamper it, to learn how to help less favored human beings on towards this goal . . . never did any generation have a richer or more rewarding frontier to conquer.

It is all very well to observe that the bridges are not yet built, nor the roads made that lead into it. But not too much wrinkling of the brows over these, if you please, not too much heaviness of heart over occasional dangerous fords to cross, not too much appearance of anxiety on the part of the leaders—lest the rank and file lose heart, forget the glory of the struggle and the golden rewards for those who succeed.



From *Our New West*, by Samuel Bowles, Hartford Publishing Company, 1869

Emigrants crossing the plains

The Great American Family

Who Are We?

By LOUIS I. DUBLIN



HE family, that tottering old institution, as some cynics depict it, is still the very foundation of our civilization. It continues to determine our individual as well as our national well-being. The family provides both nature and nurture for the individual; it is the source of continuity and the carrier of tradition for the state. That is why the family has always been zealously protected by organized authority, including church and state. Every tendency toward change in the form of family structure has been fought by them tooth and nail. One would expect, therefore, that both official and private agencies would make the family the unit of observation and note carefully every variety of family organization and would provide a wealth of information on its development.

But, probably because of the highly intangible values involved, the problems of family well-being have resisted stubbornly and effectively the introduction of any attempt at measurement and of appraisal. There are almost no sound facts upon which a constructive social program may be built. Yet there is already, thanks to the newer ideals of social work, a growing interest in facts underlying family-life. It is now realized that if social work is to become truly scientific and to be based upon principles rather than random feelings of generosity and pity, it must be guided by the same methods of accounting and the same criteria of success and failure that are applied to other human activities.

A serious difficulty arises at the very beginning because of the varied conceptions of the family. There is first the "natural" family which, in its simplest form, consists of parents and their unmarried children, whether living at home or away. Under this head we must distinguish between complete and incomplete families, and these may be still further divided into broken and unbroken families. As against the natural family, there is the "economic" family, an aggregation of persons living under the same roof and sharing the same table, though not necessarily united by ties of blood or marriage. The state has found it possible to record the facts for the economic family only. As a result, we find in the census returns every variety of family unit represented though the great majority are true natural families. Despite this drawback, census figures do throw considerable light on the present organization of the family; especially with regard to the trend in family organization, and we have no choice but to use them.

According to the census of 1920, there were 24,351,677 families in the United States and, in 1927 there are probably close to twenty-seven and a half million. Since the total population is now about one hundred and seventeen millions, the average number of persons in the family group is 4.3. The size of the family has decreased slowly and regularly from the beginning of our national history. Families with seven or eight children were the rule in the early period, but by 1850 the average number of persons in the

census family was 5.6. The largest families are found in the southern states, the smallest on the Pacific Coast. Other geographical areas show very little variation from the average. There is a widespread tendency throughout the country for the rural family to be larger than the urban family. In 1920, the figures were 4.5 and 4.2 persons respectively. The size of the family varies with the prevailing industries, the housing facilities, the religious affiliations and even with the racial traditions of groups of people. It would be very interesting to know the size of families in the various sections of the country classified according to color and nativity of the parents, but unfortunately, these figures are not available. We do know, however, that immigrant families are larger than those of native stock.

Families are formed through the institution of marriage. In 1925, there occurred in the United States 10.2 marriages per thousand of population; and as each marriage involves two persons, one marriage was recorded that year for every fifty people in the country. Our marriage-rates have always been and still are relatively high as compared with other countries. England and Wales in 1924 showed a marriage-rate of 7.7 per thousand; Germany in the same year, an even lower figure, 7.1. But both these rates undoubtedly reflect the post-war excess of women of marriageable age. Opportunities for marriage in America are very favorable, because of the age and sex composition of the population and the excellent economic conditions prevailing. Marriage-rates reflect quickly the state of well-being of the people, the rise and fall of employment and of wage levels.

THE highest marriage-rates for the country are in the area which includes Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi; the lowest in the New England states. Considering individual states, Florida shows the highest rate and Delaware the lowest. Although the marriage-rate may be expected to vary it is difficult to reconcile the eighty marriages in Florida for each thousand unmarried people fifteen years of age and over, with the Delaware figure of only eighteen for the same age-group. Rural life influences the marriage-rate favorably; city life apparently causes a diminution of about 10 per cent in the marriage-rate.

Marriage registration for the country as a whole began in 1887. In that year, the marriage-rate was 8.7 per thousand of population. By 1900 it had risen to 9.3 and since 1905 the crude marriage-rate has remained above 10 per thousand. There can be no doubt that the marriage-rate has slowly but consistently increased during the last forty years. In an extremely interesting paper, W. F. Ogburn has recently shown that in 1920 about three-fifths of all persons 15 years of age and over were married, and of those 45 years of age and over, 90 per cent either were or had at one time been married. In the early age groups, there are more married women than men; among older people, the situation is reversed. The steady increase in the marri-