

**MAIDEN,  
PREPARE TO  
BECOME A  
HAPPY WIFE  
AND MOTHER...**

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## NOTE.

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IN sending my little Tract into the world, I wish to offer a few words of explanation. Having long been of opinion that the subject it discusses is of the deepest importance, I was led to put my ideas into form, with a view to their being available to those who might be influenced by them. That I might judge whether they were suitable for the contemplated purpose, I took the opportunity, on different occasions, to read them to marriageable girls in the presence of their mothers; and then, finding that they cordially approved them, I sent them to press. I afterwards submitted the proofs to several friends on whose judgement I could rely, asking them to assist me to improve them. To this request I had several very kind answers, with valuable suggestions, most of which I have adopted, and for which I hereby tender my best thanks.

One esteemed lady, in returning the proof, kindly says :—‘ I must express my entire approval of all the

excellent advice given with so much fidelity and brevity. The subject is one as important to parents as to children.'

I think it well also to mention that, some time ago, I published a penny pamphlet, '*Is the Pleasure worth the Penalty? A common-sense view of the leading vice of the age.*' It is of a very different character from the present, but with a similar object, and is addressed chiefly to young men. I have the pleasure to know that it has been deemed highly useful, not only by gentlemen, but also by ladies, some of whom have not hesitated to assist in circulating it.

It will, I hope, be a source of gratification to some of my fair readers to know that the author of an old school acquaintance—*Butter's Spelling*—is still among them, enjoying the great pleasure of doing his best to contribute to their welfare.

H. B.

## MAIDEN, PREPARE

TO BECOME A HAPPY WIFE AND MOTHER.

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MY DEAR GIRL,

Let me begin by telling you that I have had the honor, for several years, of being a grandpa; still, I am not at all too old to feel a lively interest in the welfare of all my fellow-creatures, especially the fairer portion of them. I wish then to address you on a subject which, I have little doubt, frequently and agreeably occupies your thoughts. Not to keep you in suspense, I will tell you at once that I allude chiefly to MARRIAGE. This I regard as the most important matter on which you will ever have to decide; and as I think I can assist you in reference to it, I will now endeavour to do so. Bear with me if I adopt a rather familiar style, and you can find plenty of faults in what I have to say, and also some repetitions. I am sure you will allow it is well meant. I dare say much of it has often been said before, and better said; but you may not have met with it. Some of it I expect is new.

Here let me remark that, if I shall be the means of giving you any useful hints, I beg you not to fail to thank God for it; for it is He who gives me both the ability and the will to do it.

Advice on this subject, I feel assured, is very much wanted; for, as far as I know, marriage is not often

talked of in families—at least as it ought to be ; nor is it much alluded to in the pulpit ; and the result is that young people commonly get their notions about it from those only a little older than themselves, and who therefore know but little more than they do ; or from those who form their opinions from the abuses they see of it, and so hold degrading and unworthy ideas respecting it. Sometimes all that is known about it amounts to this—that it is a delightful thing to be married.

It is quite true that it often is, and always ought to be, delightful ; still, you know, it is frequently quite the reverse. You cannot then be too cautious in the matter.

Nothing can be more orderly, right, proper, and holy than marriage. It is not, however, quite so simple an affair as you may fancy. Every good thing—and this is one of the best—requires some effort to obtain it ; and unless you take the right course, you must not expect to succeed.

You may often see a young woman who, from not entertaining correct views on the point, is certainly taking a wrong course ; her endeavour being rather to make what she considers a good match, than, by acquiring kind and orderly habits, to qualify herself to become worthy of a worthy husband.

That the best things are liable to the greatest abuses is notorious ; and from the lamentable fact that marriage is often abused, we may fairly infer its pre-eminent worth. In truth there is nothing more valuable. It is then highly injurious to entertain low notions respecting it ; and men who indulge in loose conversation on the subject are likely, at the same time, to think meanly of women. Beware of them ; and if you hear them expressing such opinions in your presence, withdraw from them at once

as unworthy of your company. Never fear but they will respect you the more for the rebuke.

Of course, you are looking forward to settling happily, and will do your best for that purpose. On this let me remark that all happiness—that is, all that is genuine, and therefore worthy of the name—comes from connection with the One great source of all good ; and He has freely and fully provided all the means necessary for our being happy, both here and hereafter. He has placed each of us where it is best for us to be, and in the circumstances that are best for us at the time ; and this applies to you and to me now. How much soever appearances may be to the contrary, He cares as much for each of us as if we were the sole objects of His care. It is only by doing our duty, in humble dependence on His assistance, which He never withholds, that we can be happy. It behoves you then to consider well what is your duty, in order that you may do it, and may enjoy the blessings He is so ready to bestow. I hope you have been a loving and dutiful daughter, an affectionate sister, and a faithful friend ; then you may have good ground of hope for the future.

When a prospect of marriage occurs, you cannot do better than consult your mother, aunt, or other discreet relative that has your welfare at heart, from whom you may reasonably expect the best and most disinterested advice ; and this it will be well for you to be guided by. Women of mature years can judge far better than you whether a man is likely to make a good husband. You should likewise quietly and cautiously make your own observations among your married acquaintance, especially where you believe there is a comfortable and happy home.



You will doubtless find that, to a very great extent, this happy home depends on the wife's management and economy. Very often it happens that, where two husbands have the same income, with the same number of children, there will be comfort in the one home and discomfort in the other. Now there must be a reason for this; and you should endeavour to find it out, and profit by the lesson. It is said, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness;' and truly the value of cleanliness cannot be overrated. In point of time it should go before godliness; for where there is not cleanliness there can hardly be godliness; and the health of body and mind are greatly dependent on these two. Moreover, where can there be complete happiness without health?

You know full well that most young men—and most young women too—are desirous of marrying and having a family; but they do not sufficiently consider that it is God who gives them this desire, and that for the wisest of purposes; not only that this world may be peopled, but also that its inhabitants may be prepared for heaven.

Nothing is more certain than that marriage affords the fairest opportunities for preparing for a better world. In it we have others dearer than ourselves to think about and provide for; and, in doing so, we have often to practise that very useful virtue—self-denial. Let me here impress upon you most deeply, that it is only by making others happy that we can become happy ourselves. The angels, we may be assured, are happy, because they are always actively good; and for a similar reason it is that God Himself is infinitely happy. If you try to secure your own happiness by any other means than a faithful dis-



charge of your duty to God and your neighbour, you will certainly and deservedly fail.

I dare say you find that young men are fond of your company and of paying you every polite attention ; and you, as a right-minded woman, are well pleased to be so treated. It is due to you *as a woman*. Now each of them is—or ought to be—looking out for a wife ; and it is well that you should know this. It is, too, more important than you perhaps are aware that you should be carefully making your own observations, so that, when the time arrives for one of them to ask you to become his wife, you may not be taken by surprise, but may know how to act on the occasion.

Let me here caution you against a failing that is common among young women : I mean that of making themselves too cheap. They feel flattered by the attentions paid to them, and are not sufficiently aware that many young men are fond of indulging in flattery ; and such, if they find a young woman weak enough to be pleased with it, will perhaps play upon her feelings and gain her affections, without having any honorable intentions towards her.

As a protection against such, I recommend you to have a proper respect for yourself, and to consider with what object or purpose you receive their attentions. If you respond without an object, you may be doing them wrong ; if you accept them when they have no right intentions, you allow them to wrong you. For this purpose consider well what you are—a human being intended for an eternity of bliss. God has made you a WOMAN ; and, believe me, as there is no fairer so there is no nobler creature than woman. She is formed to be her husband's help-mate and the mother of his children ; and the all-important

work of training these for heaven depends mainly upon her. Great, then, is her responsibility ; but God has given her the requisite love and power to do her duty with satisfaction and delight. He has placed you in this beautiful world that by doing your duty as daughter, sister, wife, mother, and friend, you may become fitted to enter His heavenly kingdom.

There is no state of life more honorable, useful, and happy than that of a wife and mother. There must and ever will be inequalities of station, but happiness is equally attainable in them all. To be happy, however, you must be good : of course, I do not mean absolutely good ; for ‘there is none good but One ;’ but I mean that you should be relatively good, and should aim at becoming better and more innocent as you advance in life. Now you cannot respect yourself unless you know that you are worthy of respect ; and if you do not respect yourself, you cannot expect that anybody else will ; and in such case you will not be worthy of the love of any good man, and none such will be likely to pay court to you. If, however, you take the right means, in which I include prayer for divine guidance, you will have the respect and friendship of all your acquaintance ; and then in God’s own time and, let me add, without your seeking it, the man whom you can make happy, and who can make you happy, will present himself and propose to make you his wife, if it be God’s will that you should become one.

Here are two very important points for your consideration : first, that it should be your constant endeavour to make your husband happy ; and, second, that, before you consent to marry him, you should ascertain that he has those qualifications that will secure your happiness.

It most nearly concerns yourself that you do your duty to God and your neighbour at all times, so that it becomes your habit; and you will find it much easier, and safer too, to do it every day rather than only on particular occasions; for this would require a special effort, and for the time, perhaps, put you into a state of excitement, which, in all probability, would be succeeded by a depression of spirits. What you should rather aim at is a uniformly cheerful state of mind resulting from a conscious and confident dependence on Providence. If your husband knows from experience that such is your character, he cannot fail, provided he be worthy of you, to be content and happy.

It is the nature of young women to be affectionate, and it is pleasant and usual for them to have several dear friends enjoying more or less of their confidence. Among these may be included some of their male acquaintance. Now, while they may esteem each of these as they would a dear cousin, they should know, and should act upon the knowledge, that it is only to *one* they can give their unlimited confidence and undivided affection as a wife. It is the height of cruelty and wickedness for either a man or a woman to trifle with another's affections. Such base conduct has cost many a young woman her health and peace, and even her life, and cannot therefore be too much deprecated and avoided.

Let me then advise you to be very cautious before you allow a young man to pay you such marked attentions as may lead to marriage. It is not, you know, to terminate in seven years, like an apprenticeship or a commercial partnership, but it is an engagement for the life of one of the parties. I want you then to profit by the experience of others, too many of whom enter into marriage from light

and low considerations ; and not to settle in life till you, and also your friends, see that there is a reasonable prospect of your securing happiness, as well as comfort and a respectable position.

When a young woman has property, or expects it, or is possessed of superior personal attractions, she should be especially prudent in her conduct towards the numerous admirers which such qualifications usually attract. No woman should allow herself to accept the attentions of any man who does not possess those sterling qualities which will command her respect, or whose love is directed to her fortune or beauty rather than to herself. On such a one she can place no reliance ; for, should illness or misfortune overtake her, she may find herself deprived of that love which she had valued as the great treasure of her life. Possessed of this, she feels that earthly riches are but of secondary importance, and that the want of them can never make her poor.

Moreover, a worthier man than any of her interested suitors may have a sincere respect and affection for her, but be kept in the background by the over-zealous attentions of his rivals. Still, if she has sufficient self-command to patiently and calmly investigate their general private character, she may find reason to decline their suit, and may discover that the more modest and retiring youth is the one that is deserving of her love.

While on this subject, let me caution you against the foolish affectation which some girls practise in order to attract the attention of young men. In their company, be natural in your manners, open and friendly, and ready to converse on general subjects ; not appearing to expect that everyone who pays you the ordinary courtesies of society

is going to fall in love with you. This mode of behaviour, which is more common with those who are vain of their beauty than with others, frequently leads to such young women being more neglected than their less pretending sisters; for prudent young men, who are impressed with the necessity of a right decision in the all-important step of marriage, instinctively shrink from those who seem unwilling to give them a fair opportunity of judging whether their hearts and minds are as attractive as their persons.

You may innocently admire many a young man for the noble qualities God has bestowed upon him, without at all entertaining the idea either that he would make you happy as his wife, or you him as your husband. Thank God, we are constituted of such different temperaments that all may find suitable partners without clashing with others' tastes, if they will only be content to watch and wait.

It is the part of a young man to *watch*, to be actively desirous of meeting with a suitable partner. In doing this, his first consideration should be to seek for such a one as he can make happy; not to look primarily for beauty, fortune, wit, or accomplishments—things all very good in themselves, but by no means constituting the essentials of happiness. If he is influenced by pure and simple motives, he will not find, or expect to find, more than one that can satisfy his desire; and he will not be in much danger of exciting the envy or the rivalry of his companions.

On the other hand, it is becoming in a young woman to *wait* patiently, till, from the assiduous and respectful attentions of a young man, she can have no doubt that he



is in earnest; when, and not before, she may freely give him her company, and with every expectation of a happy result. Be assured that no sensible young man is ever attracted by a young woman whom he sees on the lookout for a lover: he is more likely to think meanly of her, and to avoid her society.

It may, however, happen that a young man makes the offer before the young woman knows enough of him for it to be right for her to accept it, and before he on his part ought to take the step. In such case it would be well for her, even supposing she is inclined to like him, to tell him that he has taken her by surprise, and that she cannot think of entering on so important a subject without consulting her friends, to whom she accordingly refers him. It would then become their duty to intimate to him that, although his attentions are agreeable to them, he must wait a while, till, from further acquaintance, they are enabled to judge whether it will conduce to the mutual happiness of their daughter and himself for her to accept the offer he has so kindly made.

But it is not only young men who are apt to be hasty in these matters: it is, as is well known, not uncommon for parents, especially mothers, very soon after a young man has begun to pay attention to their daughter, to give him to understand that they wish to know his intentions in reference to her. By such proceedings a young man may be taken aback, and either be hurried into a match which turns out unhappily, or be led to withdraw from a union which might have resulted in the happiness of all the parties concerned.

That your parents should wish you to be married is only natural, especially if their own marriage has been a



happy one. It will be gratifying to them to see a worthy young man paying attention to you, and, most probably, they will let things take their own course. Marriage is too important a matter to admit of being hastened.

There are, I am aware, unwise parents who, from various motives, will throw obstacles in the way of young people who are desirous of coming together. Some are so selfish as to be unwilling to part with their daughter, preferring their own happiness to hers. Others are so silly as to think no ordinary man good enough for her, and therefore, if they had their own way, would leave her to become an old maid. Fortunately, such short-sighted people are not unfrequently outwitted.

If your parents are—as I hope they are—reasonable in their views and expectations, one of the chief concerns of their life will be the promotion of your happiness; and it behoves you to pay the utmost deference to their opinion; and should they, from circumstances they become aware of, deem it advisable that you should either postpone or even break off an engagement, they will, doubtless, give you such weighty reasons as will justify you in acting on their advice. Where, however, as sometimes happens, they unwisely refuse their consent to their child's marriage, at a time when she well knows, from her own feelings, and also from the sanction she receives from the opinion of trustworthy and judicious friends, that she would be making a real sacrifice were she to comply with their wishes,—if, I say, under such circumstances, she acts disobediently and marries the man she loves, more blame attaches to the parents than to herself; and the sooner they forgive her the better.

It is very common for young men, when going into

the company of young women, together with their best dress to put on their best behaviour : in fact, to assume a character which is not their natural one, but far superior to it. Some hold the opinion that 'All is fair in love and war.' To me it appears there cannot be greater folly and wickedness than for young people who are thinking of marrying to attempt to deceive each other. What is the good of it? A very short period of married life will entirely dispel the illusion. I suppose people of the world may think it fair to overreach one another in their dealings, saying, 'Everyone for himself.' They have no intention of seeking to promote the other's happiness: present gain is all they want. But a married pair, to be happy, must respect and esteem, as well as love, each other; and this cannot be attained except by the constant endeavour to *be* as well as to *appear* true and good.

That young men should behave well in the presence of women is only natural and right. None but a fool would do otherwise. But you, long before you think of marrying, should take all fair means to learn what are the general conduct and habits of your male acquaintance, in their family circle and with their daily connections. Are they good-humoured and kind—able to bear the troubles they meet with? are they industrious, frugal, temperate, religious, chaste? Have they had the prudence to insure against sickness and death? or, on the other hand, are they addicted to drinking, smoking, betting, keeping late hours, frequenting casinos, &c.? Your mother and other prudent friends will assist you to find this out. Those who do not come up to the proper standard, however agreeable they may be as acquaintance, certainly cannot make good husbands. In the company of such, it behoves you to be

well on your guard, and accept no attention from them. Should you marry such a one, you would be sure to be miserable.

While, however, it is quite right that you should be careful about the character of the young man who is paying court to you, it is of far more importance to you that you should be careful about your own, and this whether you marry or not. Indeed, a chief object in our being placed in this world is that we may acquire good habits, and so be fitted to associate with 'the just made perfect in heaven.'

Many persons of both sexes, however amiable and pure their minds may be, should conscientiously abstain from marriage. This applies to all who have a tendency to consumption, scrofula, insanity, or any other of those diseases which are so frequently transmitted to offspring. This very important matter is not sufficiently known, and therefore is not attended to as it ought to be; hence the great amount of sickness and early death among children.

The tendency to inherit qualities is very evident in the case of drunkards, whose children are often inclined to practise the vice of their parents. The children of the blind and of the deaf and dumb are also liable to be afflicted as their parents were. These facts go far to show that it is literally true that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. It is, however, gratifying to know—and there are many well-attested cases to prove it—that, whereas the children born to a man while he was addicted to drunkenness were similarly addicted to that vice, those born after he gave up his vicious indulgence, and by that means improved his bodily health, were free from the evil tendency.

One strong reason why near relations should not intermarry is that, as the same general tendencies prevail in families, when the parents are nearly related, they are very likely to have the same evil tendency, whatever that may be; and, therefore, there is a great probability that their children will also have the same, but more strongly developed; and, consequently, the difficulty of their overcoming it will be much increased.

How plainly then is it the duty of those about to marry, as well as of those who are married, to strive to their utmost, with God's help, to overcome disorderly habits of every kind; for, be assured, it is only by such means they can hope to be blessed with good and healthy children, and thereby contribute to their own happiness, and at the same time to the improvement of the race as subjects both of this world and of heaven.

As it is by no means certain that you will marry, and the time may come when it will no longer be convenient to your parents to support you, it will be good for you, keeping these contingencies in mind, to qualify yourself to earn your own maintenance by some honest industry. You will then have a right feeling of independence, and not be tempted to marry, as too many young women do, not from the true principle of sincere affection, but mainly for a living. They may thus obtain a competency, and jog on comfortably; but they have no right to expect that genuine happiness which I recommend you to aim at. When, too, you see so many left widows, with small families, and, as we say, totally unprovided for, you will become sensible of the soundness of the advice I am offering you. As the Lord's tender mercies are over all His works, it is evident, from what is occurring around us,

that trouble and adversity are better suited to the state of some people, to prepare them for their eternal destination, than any amount of prosperity would be. The poor are no less His children than the rich, and He cares equally, that is, infinitely, for them all. It is certainly wise, then, to be prepared to meet adversity, should He suffer it to come upon you.

Again, suppose you should not have any suitable offer of marriage, such as you would feel it your duty to accept, you are not on that account to be disheartened, and fancy yourself overlooked by Providence. Single life is evidently the best for some persons : they escape many troubles which perhaps they would find it very hard to bear. There are many ways in which single people can lead a useful life, and be as happy as the day is long. No one that is actively useful can be unhappy. What do you see around you? Many, I admit, who are not so happy as we should like them to be ; but in most cases, if we could fully investigate the matter, it would perhaps be found to have arisen from their thinking too much about themselves and not enough for others. But, on the other hand, it not unfrequently happens, when a woman is left, and sees that the support and welfare of herself and her children depend on her own exertions, she is enabled so successfully to put forth her energies, and to employ her talents, which, till she needed them, she hardly knew she possessed, as to surprise both herself and the most sanguine of her friends.

Now, it must be confessed that we are fallen creatures, and therefore prone to evil. We are consequently always in danger of going wrong and forming bad habits ; but our heavenly Father watches over us at all times, and gives us



power 'to refuse the evil and choose the good.' We are, I know full well, too much inclined to yield to evil influences; still, as we always have divine aid if we implore it, I am not sure that, on the whole, it is not as easy to acquire good habits as bad ones. This much is certain, that whichever we acquire—good or bad—they are likely to remain with us, and are not easily to be got rid of.

Among the subjects deserving attention, as affecting our happiness, is one on which perhaps I am not entitled to say much. I refer to dress. Now, I hold it to be a duty for people to dress well, that is, according to their position, means, and age; and this not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of giving pleasure to others. It is, I admit, difficult to determine how much of one's income should be devoted to dress; but I think few will deny that, at present, dress occupies too much time, attention, and money. For my own part, I confess, I am most affected by female dress; and although I certainly like to see women well dressed, and would rather see them a little too fine than slovenly, I am often pained at witnessing the extravagance and, to me, ridiculous taste exhibited. Whenever I see a handsome and expensive dress trailing in the dirt, I regard it as culpable waste and in bad taste; and when I see it accidentally trodden on, I rather enjoy the fun. I am inclined to believe that many women can hardly find time or opportunity to perform any useful duty: they have quite as much as they, poor things, can do, to take care of their dress. I also believe—and this is the serious point of the matter—that many a young man is deterred from soliciting a maiden in marriage, by knowing that his means would not enable him to let her dress as he is accustomed to see her; and this is doubtless



one of the many reasons why so many of both sexes remain unmarried. I hold, too, that whatever forms an obstacle to marriage has a tendency, at the same time, to obstruct the entrance to heaven.

I will now allude to some of the duties which will devolve upon you as a wife; and recollect that it is on the faithful discharge of these duties that your happiness, here and hereafter, mainly depends. All labor is honorable, and you know who it is that says, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Being married, you must make your husband feel, 'There's no place like home.' His business will probably take him from home most of the day; and it should be your care—as I doubt not it will be your delight—to see to his comfort, both before he starts and when he returns. It may sometimes happen, in his fighting the battle of life, that he has to encounter much that is unpleasant, and he may return home depressed. You will then have to cheer him; and be assured, no one can do it so effectually, so pleasantly, aye, and so easily, as yourself.

And I would here caution you against giving way to little misunderstandings in early married life. Sometimes trifling matters, for want of some forbearance or concession on one side or the other, perhaps on both sides, accumulate into serious results. These differences might be avoided by married partners studying each other's peculiarities of character, with the aim of mutually correcting, in a kindly spirit, any wrong tendency or temper which may sometimes show itself. Should you find you have inadvertently given pain or uneasiness to your husband, do not rest until you have ascertained the cause of his disquiet, and succeeded in allaying the unhappy feeling. The earnest

- desire to please each other should by no means terminate on the wedding-day, but be as studiously continued through married life. Each should always endeavour to think the best of the other, and instantly reject every thought that might tend to weaken the bond of mutual preference and perfect trust.

If he be wise, he will leave the housekeeping entirely to you; his time and attention can be better employed elsewhere. To enable you to do this wisely, you should, long before you marry, become familiar with the quality and prices of articles of consumption, and where they can be best obtained. Every wife should be able to cook well, whether she has to do it herself or not. Health and good humor greatly depend upon the food's being of good quality, well cooked, and nicely served up. She should also be able, if needful, to make and mend her own and children's clothes.

As all people are liable to illness, every young woman should aim at being an efficient nurse. In case of illness, it is now generally admitted that good nursing is of more value than medicine. To a sick husband a little gruel or other trifle prepared and given by a wife's own hand will confer much more benefit than if prepared and given by another. Should it happen to you to fall ill, you may expect your husband will do his best; but you must not be surprised if he is not your equal in that department. Nursing is one of the many useful things which women can do better than men. A practical knowledge of nursing will enable you to be useful beyond your own family, and will enhance your value as a neighbour.

You have often, I trust, experienced the pleasure of serving others from disinterested motives, and found that

the pleasure has been deeper and purer when you have engaged in doing good to those who could not make you any return. This you have found to be the case whenever you have had charge of a baby—one of those little ones of whom the Lord says: ‘Their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in Heaven.’ You have perhaps been surprised to find how easy it was to perform such a duty; and let me assure you that you may always expect to find it easy to perform your duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call you. He never requires anything from any of his creatures beyond what He gives them power to do. He is no hard task-master. You have only to look to Him, and do your best, and then you may safely leave the result in His hands. Our Lord, you know, says, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Of all God’s creatures, I know no happier one than a young mother with a good husband and a healthy baby. I say a *healthy* baby, for that implies healthy parents, especially a healthy mother. She may justly feel proud that God has entrusted a young immortal to her care, and she should at all times bear in mind that it is His gift. While it is on all hands considered honorable to hold a commission from the Sovereign and to fill a high office, contributing to the welfare of many people, a mother may feel her office, at least, as honorable, seeing that she has entrusted to her the rearing and training of an immortal being, and that she holds her commission direct from the King of kings. For, recollect, it is only by God’s blessing that she becomes a mother; for such is the present state of society that many very worthy married people have not the privilege of offspring, although they are intensely

fond of children, and seem to have no other earthly want. They may nevertheless be very useful and, therefore, happy in a different sphere, by the adoption of nephews and nieces, or in some similar way.

At the birth of her first child, there is opened in the mother's heart a new well of love, such as she had not known before: and although she may fancy that this is all spent upon her babe, it is not so; for she loves her God, her husband, and everybody else better than ever. The father, too, is similarly affected: he also has a warmer love for his wife and for all his connections.

A similar idea is well expressed by Möhler, a German writer, who says:—‘The power of selfishness, which is inwoven with our whole being, is altogether broken by marriage; and, by degrees, love, becoming more and more pure, takes its place. When a man marries, he gives himself up entirely to *another* being: in this affair of life he first goes out of himself, and inflicts the first deadly wound on his egotism. By every child with which his marriage is blessed, Nature renews the same attack on his selfhood; causes him to live less for himself, and more—even without being distinctly conscious of it—for others: his heart expands in proportion as the claimants upon it increase; and, bursting the bonds of its former narrow exclusiveness, it eventually extends its sympathies to all around.’

Whenever a mother is supplying her baby with the food which God has so wisely provided for it, or is ministering to any other of its numerous and increasing wants, she may feel that everything she does for it is pleasing to her heavenly Father, and has its immediate reward in the delight she experiences in the act.

I can fancy that, when a mother has washed her baby, and, before she dresses it, has a good romp with it, smothering it with kisses, calling it all the beauties and darlings and pets and jewels she can think of, and talking any amount of nonsense at the top of her voice—the baby all the while cooing, chirping, or even screaming with delight; at such a time, I say, I can easily fancy that the angels are looking on approvingly and enjoying the scene. And why not? ‘Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.’

From the time that an infant first becomes conscious of its wants, and long afterwards, it looks to its mother to supply them all, fully believing her able to do it. She is, in fact, in place of God to it; and it would be well for many of us if we trusted our heavenly Father as simply and as fully as the infant does its earthly mother.

Those who know no better, when they see a mother patiently watching her sleeping babe, might wonder that she does not feel the want of company. She has, however, company that they know not of, and of which even she herself may not be conscious. If only our eyes were open, we might see that she is not the only one that is so engaged—that angels are also occupied in watching the babe and in supporting her. I entirely agree with Dr. Watts, where, in his ‘Cradle Hymn,’ he makes the mother say:—

Hush! my babe, lie still and slumber,  
Holy angels guard thy bed!

You probably know the beautiful Irish superstition that, when a baby smiles in its sleep, the angels are whispering to it.

Before I became a father, I took little or no interest in babies; I rather thought them troublesome things. But

the arrival of one of my own wrought a great change in me. It enlarged at once my views and my heart, and I had higher and stronger motives to exertion. My interest in them has not yet begun to weaken; and I have no reason to think it ever will.

Girls are differently constituted from boys. God makes the intellect predominate in males, and affection in females. Accordingly, a little girl early shows a love for a doll, regarding it quite as her baby, and never taking into account that it is not alive. She has many of a mother's cares and anxieties, as well as pleasures about it, indeed as many as she is then capable of. It is a constant source of amusement and employment to her. In all this, we may plainly see the hand of Providence: it forms a suitable introduction to some of the interesting and important duties which will devolve on her if it should be His good pleasure for her to become a mother.

The other day, I met a group of four or five little girls, the principal one, some nine years old, very carefully carrying a baby. On my saying to her, 'You seem almost as pleased as if it were your own baby,' she gave me an innocent smile, and said—rather proudly, I thought—'It is my own, please, sir.' I took it she was the sister, and not a hired nurse.

You will, I dare say, readily see the object I now have in view. It is that I wish to impress on you how desirable it is that you should take every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the habits and wants of babies, and the best way of managing them. The more you have to do with them the more you will like the labor, and the easier and more delightful it will become. It is fair that, before you have children of your own, you should get



your knowledge as to the management of them, by experience with other people's. I take it for granted you will at all times do your best for them. You will then have but little cause to fear accident; and if accident should happen—as, with all your care, it sometimes will—you will have more confidence in your powers, and will be more likely to do what is best at the moment, than if you were unused to children. Much of the disease and early death that happen among children arises from the ignorance of the mothers; who, however, are often much more to be pitied than blamed in the matter. They had never been properly taught their duties towards their future offspring.

It will be very advantageous to you to procure some of the excellent little Tracts\* issued by the *Ladies' Sanitary Association*. They contain much valuable information respecting health and other kindred subjects; and they are written in so plain a style that simple people cannot fail to understand them. Some of them I consider so suitable to young women about to marry that I have not hesitated to place them in their hands. I would especially mention 'The Health of Mothers' and 'How to Manage a Baby.' These, I feel assured, are calculated to save the lives of many infants and not a few mothers.

Few mothers are, perhaps, sufficiently aware of the great influence which their manners, habits, and conversation have upon the tender minds of their children, even from birth. The child should grow up with a feeling of reverence for its parents, which can only be the case when

\* Published by S. W. Partridge & Co., 9 Paternoster Row. They may be ordered of any bookseller.

wisdom as well as affection is exercised in its bringing up. Hence the necessity of the mother's fitting herself, both *intellectually* and *morally*, for her sacred office, that the child may become accustomed to yield perfect obedience to her wishes from a principle of love, and may acquire, as it advances in life, the habit of yielding a like obedience to that which is right.

As you well know that you are not perfect yourself, you must be prepared to find that your husband also has his imperfections; and it is no unimportant part of your duty to help him to get rid of them. Indeed it is one of the highest uses of marriage for each partner to assist the other on the journey to the heavenly Canaan. But, before you attempt to point out a fault in him, consider how you had best proceed, so as to attain your object; for, unless you adopt a judicious mode, and an affectionate as well as an earnest manner, you may do as much harm as good. You must also carefully watch your opportunity; for what would be favorably received at one time, and under certain circumstances, might, under other circumstances, give offence, and altogether fail of the good effect intended and hoped for. You do not know how powerful you may be for good to your husband. There is much truth in the saying, 'A man is what a woman makes him.'

Respecting the good influence of virtuous love, Tennyson says:—

For indeed I know  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach him thought, and amiable words,  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

Previous to your marriage, it will be expedient for you not to give your lover that full and unlimited confidence which it will be your duty—and your inclination, too—to give him when he becomes your husband. I refer chiefly to family and other private matters, not to anything he ought to know to enable him to judge of your character and position. Many unhappy marriages have been brought about through the young woman's letting it be known that she has 'great expectations.' A worthless fellow may, in consequence, have succeeded in winning her hand. God knows your inmost thoughts, and you should never entertain any that you would wish to conceal from your husband. By adopting an open and confidential course with him, you will encourage him to do the same; and you may thereby have the opportunity of lightening some of the troubles he may have to encounter in business. It is right that you should let him see and feel—I do not say *bear*—that you love him better than yourself. This is a Christian duty, and applies to him as much as to you.

There is another point to which I must just allude before concluding this address. It is doubtless the order of Providence for marriages to take place, when possible, on our arriving at years of maturity. But I would guard you against the evil results of *too early* marriages, before either body or mind is perfectly matured. We scarcely need consult either medical or moral science to satisfy ourselves on this by no means trifling point. We may find in society too many sad instances of such immature and indiscreet unions. The minds of young persons should be expanded by a certain amount of experience in the world before entering upon engagements involving so many momentous duties. 'Marriage,' says Mrs. Strutt, in the *Feminine Soul*,

‘in the summer season of existence, when nature and reason unite to proclaim its desirableness, is the safe-guard of virtue, the most powerful incentive to industry and economy, and the well-spring of domestic bliss—

That only good

Of Paradise that has survived the fall.’

In your daily walks abroad, if you examine the countenances of those you meet, you will doubtless be led to conclude that there is a great deal of disease and misery in the world; but, judging from my own observation, I think you will find that the greater number of persons exhibit signs of health and happiness. Much of the disease and misery with which the world is afflicted, is the direct result of the misconduct of the individuals themselves; but no little of it is attributable to their parents, who have neglected or violated God’s laws of health, their misconduct thus affecting their descendants ‘to the third and fourth generation.’ I cannot, therefore, too much impress upon you the importance of your honestly trying to find out any bad habits to which you are inclined, with a view to getting rid of them, one by one, and supplying their place by good habits. By pursuing this course, you will not only do much for your own happiness but also for that of your children, if God should bless you with a family. Children, you know, are often striking likenesses of their parents; and in their minds and habits, they likewise often resemble them. You should strive then to be good, not from mere self-love, and that you may get to heaven, but because your duty to others requires it.

Earl Granville, when laying the foundation stone of the Alexandra Orphanage, Hornsey Rise, July 6, 1867,

thus expressed himself in reference to the great value of children:—‘Few will deny that a child is “an inestimable loan,” as it has been called, or refuse to acknowledge, with one of our greatest poets, that “the world would be somewhat a melancholy one if there were no children to gladden it.” Children, more than any other earthly thing, equalise the conditions of society—to rich and poor they bring an interest, a pleasure, and an elevation, which nothing else that is earthly does.’

Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, unless they are inconsistent, will let their religion influence every action of their lives. They will do this from habit, and therefore without effort. Now young people, before they think of engaging themselves, should clearly know each other’s peculiar views of religion; because, if they differ seriously on this point, there is danger of its interfering with that full confidence which is so essential to happiness.

Maid, choosing man, remember this :

You take his nature with his name.

Ask, too, what his religion is ;

For you will soon be of the same.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

Perhaps you may think that, in what I have said, I am expecting too much from you; that I am setting up too high a standard for you to follow. I do not think so. I believe it is God’s good will and pleasure that you should be happy here and hereafter, and He has amply provided the means for your becoming so. You will sometimes fail in your best-intentioned efforts, but then you must renew them; and if you trust to Him for strength, you may rely on succeeding at last. He never requires or expects of us what we cannot easily do.

You know, nearly as well as I do, that in your passage through life you will have to encounter your own share of troubles. It is, however, no part of my object to dwell upon them; I leave that to others. Mine has been a more pleasant task. You see that I am desirous to encourage you in the practice of everything that is good and right and beautiful, well assured that, in God's good time, you will have your reward.

Hoping you will kindly accept this advice in the spirit in which it is given, I subscribe myself,

Your affectionate Friend,

H. BUTTER.

NORTON VILLA, 249 CAMDEN ROAD, LONDON, N.:

*April 21, 1868.*

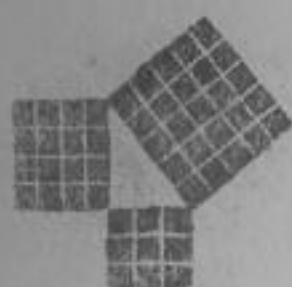
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