

The Marriage Aid.

A Monthly Journal, Devoted to the Interests of all Unmarried Persons.

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Just as Well.

Time was, the knight of noble fame
Declared in doughty deed his love;
His battle-cry his lady's name:
The plume upon his crest her glory
'T is by our times denied to me
With lance in rest my love to tell
Yet this true heart can beat for thee
Just as well.

Time was, when, at the midnight hour,
With soft harmonious serenade,
The minstrel 'neath his lady's bower
Ambassador of music made;
I bring nor madolin nor lute,
No dulcet strains my secret tell,
Love, always blind thrives sometimes mate
Just as well.

Be mine the task thy fame to shield,
The joy thy lot to share, and I,
True loyal knight, on life's stern field
For thee, dear love, will live or die,
Though 't is my lot in later days
Amid unlovely things to dwell,
I still can love thee, sweet! for a
Just as well.

A WINSOME WIFE.

"What!" cried Mrs. Mowatt in shrill accents of dismay. "Marry Bess Harding! Why, Joshua, you ain't never in earnest, be you?"

Joshua Mowatt's broad, good-humored face brightened into a smile.

"Well, I rather think I am," said he. "At any rate, I'm engaged to her, and we've set the day for the 30th of May."

"Without asking me!"

"You're not one of the contracting parties," laughingly retorted Joshua. "But, seriously, mother, dear, it was only settled definitely last night, and I was coming to tell you when you met me half-way with the milk-pail in your hand."

Mrs. Mowatt screwed up her lips like a button, her little eyes sparkled with electric fire.

"She shall never come into this house," said she, venomously.

"Mother, don't," pleaded Joshua, with a pained look in his honest face. "Remember what your father were young?"

"But your father had a little common sense," sharply retorted Mrs. Mowatt. "and I was a hard-working farmer's daughter—not one of your dancing, frolicking gipsies who spend their whole time in candy-pulls and apron-parties, and all that kind of nonsense."

"And you will find, mother," urged the young man, "that Bess will be just as good a wife as you were."

"Pshaw!" was Mrs. Mowatt's curt rejoinder. "When you know perfectly well that it was the dearest wish of my heart to see you married to your cousin, Nancy Simpson?"

Joshua shook his head.

"Nancy never would suit me," he said. "She is one of these cold, quiet, serpent-like women that go gilding about like the ghost in a play. And I'm not vain enough to suppose that I correspond with her ideas any better than she does with mine."

"Well," said Mrs. Mowatt severely, "you've made your bed, and you must lie on it, Joshua. That's all I've got to say on the subject."

"But you will come to see her, mother?"

"No, I won't."

"You will welcome her to a daughter's place in your heart? For my sake, mother," vehemently pleaded Joshua.

betokened his repressed agony. "You are not strong enough, Bess, to endure this trial by yourself."

Mrs. Mowatt, however, refused to come.

"My son married to suit himself," she said.

"Now let his true lady nurse him up!"

Yet all the while her heart yearned for one look at her son's face, one sound of his voice.

If it had not been for Bess, how gladly would she have hastened to his side!

And now ensued real trouble. The little money which the young couple had saved was soon scattered. Everything went at loose ends, and Bess began to count the very pennies at the bottom of her purse.

"But, Joshua," she said, "I thought Mrs. Mowatt was rich?"

"My mother is well off," Joshua answered sadly, "but the property is all in her own name, and she has never offered me any of it. Can't you see, Bess, darling, that I would rather die than ask her for a cent of it?"

Bess looked at him with troubled eyes.

"What shall I do?" she asked herself. "Can I sit here and see him suffer for the very necessaries of life?"

Just at that time a letter came to her—a letter from a city friend who had once spent a summer in Blooming Vale.

"Darling Bess—Don't be amazed at what I am going to ask you. I am to have a Christmas party for my attic girls, and I do so long for some of the cream cakes and sugared nuts, and delicious chocolate caramels that you used to make when you boarded with your aunt at Blooming Vale. I enclose a ten dollar bill. Please send the goodies by express, just as soon as you can possibly make them. I shall be ever, lovingly your friend,
LAURA"

The joyous tears came into Bess Mowatt's eyes as she sat looking at the bill neatly folded into the letter. It was not only a ten dollar greenback—it represented health, and strength, and ease for Joshua—it seemed to open to her the gates of escape from all the petty tortures of this poverty-stricken life.

"Why have I never thought of it before?" she questioned herself.

She made haste to prepare the caramels, the dainty cream-bars, the walnuts enclosed in a crystal garment of translucent sweetness, and with them she enclosed a letter, begging Mrs. Gerinan to open an agency for her with one of the prominent confectioners in New York. And then she ordered a barrel of sugar, all manner of dainties and flavars, and went up to the garret to crack all the butter-nuts and hickory nuts which were left from the last autumn's store.

"To be sure it is only an experiment," she thought.

"But I hope—I believe—it may succeed. The doctor says Joshua will not be strong enough to go out of doors until spring. Our expenses are continually draining us, and there is nothing coming in. Oh, it must succeed."

It did succeed. Mrs. Mowatt's delicate home-made confections, in pretty hand-painted boxes, tied with colored ribbons, became the fashion.

Everybody asked for them, everybody bought them. Bess was obliged to hire assistants, and transfer her working quarters to the old unused wing of the house. Money came in with a promptness and a steady flow which seemed to the young wife almost a Golconda.

There was no lack now of good old port wine, refreshing fruit, strengthening food for the invalid.

The farm house was painted anew, needful machinery was ordered for farm purposes, new furniture came in, and Bess even indulged in the—hitherto unheard-of luxury of a black silk dress.

"Bess, you are a good fairy," said Joshua exultantly. "A regular enchantress."

But one day Bess came in with a sober face.

"What's the matter?" said Joshua. "Has our new bank failed? Is the maple candy scorched? Or has the kitten tumbled into the boiling kettle of

And thereafter the three were blissfully happy together, even though the new railway shares were so much waste paper.

Joshua managed the farm, Bess kept up the fancy confectionery branch of the business, and Mrs. Mowatt the elder delighted in the housekeeping.

But she looks at Bess, and says, with tears in her eyes.

"What would ever become of us, darling, if it wasn't for you?"

YOUTHFUL MARRIAGE.

(Bobby's Independent.)

The statistics of births and deaths in the United States bear strong testimony in support of the statement that the American race is losing its power of reproduction. As might naturally be expected it is the cities which furnish the most conclusive evidence, the rural districts not yet having been subjected to the influences which restrain or destroy the reproductive power. The last census shows that the American married couples have an average of less than two children, and in the great cities the proportion of children is still less. The fact is made apparent that whilst the American male devotes his life to business, money grabbing and speculation, the female devotes herself to society and dress. Neither wish to be burdened by children, and consequently adopt expedients of such a nature that the reproductive power is greatly weakened, and this process continued through successive generations results in that power being lost. There is consequently some danger of the American race becoming extinct, and it is alleged that it is even now preserved from extinction chiefly by the constant arrival of immigrants from Europe, whose untainted constitutions impart vitality to the exhausted energies of the native born Americans. In these facts, as disclosed by the census, there is matter for grave consideration, and the conclusion is irresistibly forced upon all thoughtful minds that Nature herself is joining hands with the Communists and Socialists to bring about such a change in the social condition of the people as will restore, not only the weakened or lost reproductive power, but also that home love, family affection, and domesticity, the absence of which is one of the marked characteristics of American civilization. The first signs of the approaching changes are already visible to those who look beneath the surface, and among them may be noted the extension of what are called Mutual Marriage Aid Associations. These societies are becoming very numerous, and are apparently doing useful work. It has been usual to sneer at such societies, and to ridicule them but as now constituted they are deserving of approval, for they partake largely of the nature of Life Assurance.

Thus, a young man, of a prudent character, who contemplates marriage in the future, can join one of these societies and by payment of a monthly sum he becomes entitled to a lump sum on marriage at the end of ten years, or he can convert that lump sum into an annuity for himself or for his children on attaining a certain specified age. The youthful aspirant for a provident marriage, who at sixteen years of age pays two dollars a month to an Association will be entitled on marriage at the age of twenty-six to an annuity which will keep him for the rest of his life above actual want, or if re-invested it would provide a handsome sum for each of three children on their each attaining the age of twenty-one. In such a plan as this there is nothing to ridicule. It is a wise provision of thoughtful and responsible men, and if generally adopted would lead to the most important social results. The real question is as to whether such associations should be

only to said Division "B." This plan is calculated to attract and gain the support and attention of a certain class of unmarried people, who have not yet taken advantage of the plan heretofore offered by this Association. Among the distinctive features of this plan is the modification of the payments to be made by the member and the amount paid by the Association to the members on their marriage, and the security to members on this plan, which will amount to thousands of dollars in the reserve fund, and it will be observed that the stronger the membership, the reserve accumulates in proportion.

The prudent plans and system of this Association, place the young people in Canada in a position to unite their efforts and savings to their own individual welfare, and all stand in the same light as regards the other. The mere fact that the applicant in this Association is the person directly benefited, should be sufficient in itself to induce every unmarried person to become a member.

A young man will find that if he simply invests the amount spent foolishly, and devotes his surplus to something that will prove a benefit to him through life, a vast change in his future would take place. We would say to all unmarried persons, take out one or more certificates in this Association, the cost is trifling, and in fact they owe it to themselves to do so. All young men mean to marry at some time in their lives, and it is their bounden duty to make their homes as pleasant as possible.

Over \$70,000 has been paid during the past year by this Association. Call on or address the agent, A. C. McMahon, Sec'y, Mechanics' Institute.

A Small Boy's Long Tongue.

"I don't altogether like this young man Millikin who comes here to see you so often. I hear that he is nothing but a poor dry goods clerk," is what the head of the family said to his daughter one day at the dinner table.

"He is a very nice young gentleman," replied the daughter. "Besides, he is something more than a 'poor dry goods clerk.' He gets a large salary, and is manager of one of the departments, and expects some day to have an interest in the business."

I hope he may," responded the old man, "but he strikes me as very flippant, impertinent young person, and in my opinion he should be sat down upon."

"Well, I have invited him to take tea with us this evening," said the daughter, "and I hope you will treat him politely at least. You will find him a very different person from what you suppose him to be."

Oh, I'll treat him politely enough," he said.

That evening Mr. Millikin appeared at supper, and made a most favorable impression upon the old gentleman. "He is a clever young fellow after all," he thought. "I have done him an injustice."

It was just here that Bobby spoke out. Bobby was a well-meaning little boy, but too talkative."

"Papa," he ventured, "you know what you said to-day at dinner about Mr. Millikin that he was an impertinent young man and ought to be sat down upon—"

"Silence, sir!" shouted the father, swallowing a mouthful of hot potato.

But the little fellow would't silence. "It's all right," he continued confidently, but in a whisper loud enough to be heard out of doors, "he has been sat down upon. Sister sat down on him last night for two hours."

After this the dinner went on more quietly, owing to Bobby's sudden and very jerky departure.

Felt the Situation.

A German farmer was on trial in one of the justice