

Matchmaking

It Is a Parental Duty—Some Notable Cases in Point—Lives Saved and Lives Wrecked.

(By an Observing Woman, in the Montreal Witness.)

It has ever been the boast of England, and of the countries which owe their origin to her, that their marriage is free from all the restraints which hedge it about among other peoples. In theory, the young of the human race in English-speaking lands are as free to choose their mates as the birds, impelled and guided by love alone. And this state of things is (also theoretically) supposed to secure the result of the greatest possible amount of married happiness.

In an ideal state of society nothing more beautiful could be imagined than these theories reduced to practice. But in human life society is not precisely like that in bird life; for with us hawks, crows and buzzards do not flock by themselves, but mingle freely with and are very prone to seek life companions among the song birds. Something may possibly work well for posterity, but is certainly hard on the gentler part of the present generation. There are many things in which the ways of the nations of oriental Europe would not commend themselves as desirable models for our imitation; but in their fashion of arranging matrimonial alliances for their children there are some points which, not of our adoption, but of adaptation to our freer social conditions. As a woman who has seen much and writing behind the shield of an anonymity, which I am assured will be sacredly preserved, I hope to be able to say some things which may help those who have not the leisure—so lacking in our hurried modern life—to do their own unaided thinking on a subject of vital importance.

In England, with all their theories about perfect freedom of choice, there is really a great deal of restraint. Not the constraint of authority, though that, too, exists in certain circles, but the restraint of social custom. Here, except in certain very limited circles, where society speaks its name with a big S—young people are left without any safeguards. American parents, whether or not they have been happy in their own married lives, seem to think that their children must do as they themselves did, and stumble or fall into matrimony as ripe apples fall from the parent tree without any guidance. If they chance to fall in pleasant places, it is well, and all their friends are pleased; if otherwise, their friends seek to help them, but it is too late, for they have been too long in the hands of the parent tree. If a young man has been in a right position, and the ripened apple has been gently shaken into its safe-keeping.

Permit me to give one or two instances illustrative of my position that parents are in duty bound to arrange for the matrimonial future of their children, and that they should not only be permitted to do so, but ought not to imply the slightest degree of coercion, or to interfere in the least with individual freedom of action on the part of sons and daughters.

In the early part of the present century a gentleman high in the councils of his country had an only son, the delight of the eyes of both father and mother. His future seemed to them to be far too precious to be left to chance. Before he was 20 years of age they had begun looking about them for a suitable wife for their son. The father had a sister married to a man of note living in another State. She recommended that her nephew be sent to make her a visit, as soon as he should have been admitted to the bar, and be introduced to several of the "suitable" young ladies of her acquaintance, at the same time naming one who would be her own choice, though she had no prospect of wealth. The still existing correspondence shows that all civilly sweet-tempered, but sometimes unreasonable, but he was "affectionate, the soul of honor," and had "no bad habits whatever." The young woman was said to be cheerful, remarkably intelligent, and evidently, in the opinion of her relatives, as well as the chief negotiator, had but one fault—she preferred to study with her brothers rather than sit with her sisters at the embroidery and quilting.

All these things were the subjects of a dozen letters passing back and forth between the negotiating parties during a period of about five months, being marked "Private," sealed and enclosed in the customary family letters. It seemed to have been perfectly understood that the young people were not to have their sensibilities alarmed by any suggestions previous to mutual acquaintance, or afterward.

In due time the young man, all unsuspecting, paid his aunt the proposed visit, and fell promptly and forever in love with a right young lady. Poor fellow! he was a victim of two might have directed his attention into the proper channel, but certainly in a married life of half a century of mutual happiness, neither husband nor wife had any suspicion that their union was the result of well-laid and executed plans. About the time of their golden wedding a granddaughter, who had been suffering to browse at will in a garret well stored with family papers, found the long-hidden correspondence. In the spirit of thoughtless fun she handed the little packet to her grandfather on this golden anniversary, and was at first very frightened at the effect it produced. As the handsome old man read the letters large tears coursed down his still ruddy cheeks. Then he silently handed them to his wife, who, as she glanced at them, and, turning to her husband with glistering eyes, softly whispered: "William, how good they were to us! I wish we had known this and had done as well for our own dear boys as our parents did for us." "So do I," he answered; and behind the branching palms which shaded them from the gaudies of the younger generations, the loving old couple tenderly kissed each other, with no one but the abashed grand-daughter to see.

They had had no daughters, only three sons, and these had, in matrimonial matters, been allowed to do as they would, it being deemed by their parents ignorant of what a kindly parental foresight had done for themselves that love was lord of all below, and that he would, as surely as in their own case, be directed by an all-

wise providence in the way he should go.

The eldest son of this happy old couple was a very handsome young man with gifts which should have made him a king among men, and would have done so had he been early married to a woman at once strong enough and loving enough to have held and directed his somewhat wandering nature. There are many such women to be found for the searching; but they are not as plentiful as pebbles, and if they were, a thoughtless youth is not likely to distinguish the unset diamond from common stones. So John—"poor John," as the family unceremoniously grew to calling him—wandered gayly on, and was at last himself captured by a very virtuous woman, for each one of his wife both worthless and wretched.

The second son, a good natured man, was fortunately taken in hand by a friendly clergyman, somewhat older than himself, and without in the least recognizing the fact, either then or later, was steered safely into a marriage with one of the loveliest of her sex. Both husband and wife knew that with the intervention of their friend they would not probably have met but it never occurred to either of them that this meeting had been carefully planned for months before by the wise friend that had seen their fitness for each other, and he prayerfully brought them together, trusting to nature to complete his work.

The third son, a man beloved by all right-minded women and most men, was unfortunately, from childhood and fatherhood, passed on into old age unmarried, because the sort of woman whom he might have loved did not appear in his limited circle, which was too absorbed in self-sacrificing labors to leave, and no one took the pains to find her for him.

It was the daughter of the second son who brought the old matchmaker's light to the young man.

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Missing Links

Gossip From Every Land Summarized for Busy Readers.

FORFAR CASTLE (Scotland) is of considerable historical interest, from the fact that it is believed to have been the place of meeting of the first Scottish parliament, convened by Malcolm Canmore. King Robert Bruce had a house in Forfar.

THE attempt of European ladies to form a league of native girls for the suppression of foot-binding in China has fallen through. One native girl is said to have put the case thus: "We are to be squeezed into a tiny, tiny object both—get husband."

THE ancient structure of Queen Margaret's Palace, South Queensferry, Linlithgowshire, is about to be sold by the proprietor. It is situated near the rock where Queen Margaret used to land when going from Dunfermline to Edinburgh, and she resided there when on these journeys.

PARIS is troubled by the fear that parrots spread consumption. Some parrots brought from Brazil died two years ago of a mysterious disease resembling consumption, and recently several persons at Versailles and Maisons-Laffitte have died of what seems to be the same disease.

AT BLACKWELL the largest battleship in the world is nearly ready for launching. It was built for the Japanese Government, and will be called the Fushi, instead of Fushi Yama, as originally intended. It is a battleship of 10,000 tons, 400 feet long, 73 feet broad and 41 feet deep.

DR. GASTOR has discovered in a heap of torn papers sent to him from Yemen, in Arabia, an ancient book of magic called "The Sword of Moses." It is written in a Syrian hand, the first part in Hebrew and the last in Arabic. It will be published with a translation and fac-similes in the transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society.

IN A biographical sketch, intended to be wholly complimentary, of a banker in Lamar, Kan., a newspaper of that town says the banker "has forged his way from a clerkship to a position in the firm." Obviously, it would be a delicate and difficult task to undertake to explain what the use of the unfortunate figure of speech was well meant.

AN irreverent negro of Senegal recently stole at Dakar the boots and breeches of the French general, commanding in chief, who had come from St. Louis to review the troops. As the general had brought no other boots with him, the review had to be delayed until substitutes that could fit had been borrowed from the officers of the post.

A CABLE will soon be laid between Iceland and the Shetland Islands, the northernmost point of the British telegraph system. The money has been subscribed, Great Britain, Iceland and Denmark jointly guaranteeing six per cent interest for a number of years. Telegram communication with stations in Iceland, lying as it does in the middle of the North Atlantic, will be of great value to meteorologists.

IT IS believed in India that the Mikado means to visit Britain next year, and that the Queen, having heard of his intention, has sent him an invitation. His Majesty will sail all the way to his yacht, surrounded by the victorious fleet which crumbled up John Chinaman. If he carries out this plan, he will make a notable precedent, for never yet has a representative of the oldest dynasty on earth ventured out of his dominions.

LORD WOLSELEY was once on a tour of inspection in the North of Ireland, and visited the garrison schools. A little girl said to him, "Do you know everything?" and, in an unguarded moment the soldier said, "Yes." "Then can 'ot tell me where yesterday is gone, and where tomorrow comes from?" Lord Wolseley was obliged to admit that he did not know. "You know," said the child, "then 'ot know everything, and my daddy do."

MGR. MERRY DEL VAL, the Pope's private chamberlain, denies that a book of Pope Leo's is in the Index Expurgatorius. The author of the book on the sanctification of the blood of the Virgin was not Cardinal Pecci, but a canon of the Cathedral of Perugia when the Pope was archbishop, who wrote the book while in exile. He was expelled without authority, and the archbishop did his best to suppress it even before it was put in the index.

WHEN the Magnificent and Majestic, England's new battleships, were put into commission the other day, crews had to be taken from two other vessels, that of the Empress of India going to the Magnificent, while the Majestic was to be taken from the Royal Sovereign. As all the vessels are needed right away, the Empress of India takes the crew of the cruiser Blake. And a new crew has been scraped together for the Royal Sovereign.

AT A meeting lately of the home mission committee of the Presbyterian Church in England, Dr. Monroe Gibson advocated the erection of halls in place of churches in working-class neighborhoods. He pointed out that Rev. John Pugh, in connection with the Welsh forward movement, had built halls in Cardiff, seated for 1,000 people, for an outlay of £2,000. They needed a forward movement in England, and he recommended the erection of similar halls in London. The further discussion of the subject was adjourned.

THE statue of the Queen, to be erected at Rangoon, has just been dispatched from England. Her Majesty is represented in a long skirt, covered with her famous Honiton lace, the same exquisite fabric forming the handkerchief she holds in her left hand. In her right hand she holds the royal scepter, and on her head is the small crown which she has adopted since assuming the title of Empress of India. The dome-like center of this crown is formed of jewels, once in the possession of good Queen Bess. Other jewels represented are in the

form of a diamond necklace, which is valued at £80,000. The whole statue, with its pedestal, will stand over 13 feet in height.

SOMETHING novel in the way of a secret society has been evolved in Maine. Instead of going back to mediaeval times for inspiration, the founders took the conditions lying next their hands, and in place of leading the officers with grandiose and grotesque titles, the understandable commonplace is drawn on. The society is called the Annabessacook Hayfot, No. 1, and the officers are: Chief haymaker, assistant haymaker, overseer, past chief haymaker, horse driver, hornblower, guard of barnyard, guard of haystack, and grand keeper of bundles.

A RUSSIAN girl had her way at Kharuk recently. Her relatives forced her to consent to marry a man she disliked. When the wedding party appeared in church, however, and the priest asked her if she would take the man, she said "No." She would not yield to remonstrance, and the party returned home and argued with her. First her parents beat her, then the bridegroom's friends beat her. She was taken back to the church weeping, and the service was begun again. But she again said "No," and the time the priest saved her from her relatives.

THE Empress Eugenie is so charmed with Desdée (Scotland) that she contemplates building a small residence near Braemar. The site which pleases her best is on the Duke of Fife's property, hidden away in a birch wood, but near to the Roman Catholic Church. The Empress always attends mass at this church on Sunday morning, driving from Aberfeldie—a distance of quite ten miles—in a wagonette; and any one seeing her sitting in the corner of that lovely vehicle would scarcely recognize the woman who once led the world of elegance and fashion, and had so much to do with the destinies of France.

A GOOD story is told of Sir William Harcourt. During his holiday at the seaside he paid a visit to a man-of-war's officer, the weather proving rather rough, the captain (an unusually small and dapper man), suggested that Sir William should sleep on board, and thoughtfully surrendered his own berth for the night, at the early hour, when the captain usually rose, the latter's sailor servant, who knew nothing of the change of berths, brought a cup of coffee to the cabin door, and knocked once or twice without receiving an answer. Somewhat alarmed, the servant popped in his head and asked: "Don't you want your coffee this morning, sir?" The only reply was in the nature of a growl, and the terrified sailor beheld a gigantic figure, turning over under the bedclothes. Dropping the cup of coffee, the faithful servant rushed to the ship's surgeon, exclaiming: "For heaven's sake, sir, come to the captain at once. He's speechless, and swollen to ten times his natural size!"

Matter-of-Fact. A Philadelphia business man tells a story to one of the papers of his own city which, he thinks, indicates a want of humor on the part of the people of Chicago. The Philadelphia man was in Chicago. He expected a money-order letter in a day or two, and to avoid trouble about identification, he went to the postoffice clerk and said to him:

"I am expecting a money-order to the amount of—dollars, and my name is—Here are a lot of letters addressed to me from a great many places, with all the initials of them; so that you see if I am not the man I claim to be, I must have murdered that man and possessed myself of his letters, and am now personating him. As that is not likely, you must admit that I am the man."

He went away. In a few days the money-order came, and the Philadelphia man came around to get it cashed. He expected to find the clerk all ready for him, but at first the clerk did not recognize him. Presently the Philadelphia man succeeded in recalling himself to the clerk's memory.

"Oh, yes," he said, quite seriously, "you're the man that murdered the other one!"

As he paid over the money, however, the Philadelphia man had no cause to complain.

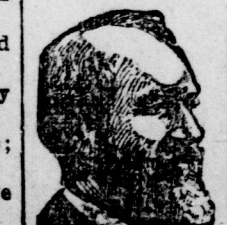
The Very Point. Any story so remarkable as to merit the name of "yarn" is pretty sure to have its weak point, which the hearers must strengthen by an effort of the imagination. Such a story was told by an old trapper in Maine one cold winter evening, as he sat with a party of friends round a roaring fire in an old country tavern. Several stories, more or less incredible, had been told, and at last the trapper, Samuel Higgins by name, took his turn.

"Well, boys," he said, stretching out his hands to the blaze, "I reckon I've been trapper in these parts long enough to tell some pooty fair-sized stories, and not stretch things any to speak of, either."

"I'd come over into Quinset 't get an inch auger 't I used—'twas two years ago come February, if I'm not mistaken—an' as I was trampin' home across the lake it come over me I wain't scarcely anything in my cabin 't eat, except potatoes an' such truck."

"Well, thinks I, a mess o' fish would relish good. No sooner said I 'done I whipped out my line, bored a hole in the ice with that auger, an' in less'n half an hour I'd kitched eight fish, an' one on 'em must 've weighed nigh onto ten pounds."

There was a short silence, and then a withered individual known as "Granther Popple" cleaned his throat and leaned forward in his chair. "How'd you git it up through that inch hole, Sam'l?" he inquired, not with incredulity, but as one anxious to be instructed about the particulars of a new and interesting phenomenon. "Granther," said Sam'l Higgins, in a cheerful roar directed toward the ear at which the old hunter held his wrinkled hand, "that's the very thing; that's the whole p'int o' the story, granther!"



Dr. Henry Thompson, the most noted physician of England, says that more than half of all diseases come from errors in diet. Garfield Tea overcomes results of bad eating habits. It is a pure, healthful, and refreshing beverage. Get a free sample from Garfield Tea Co., 271 Queen St. E., Toronto.

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