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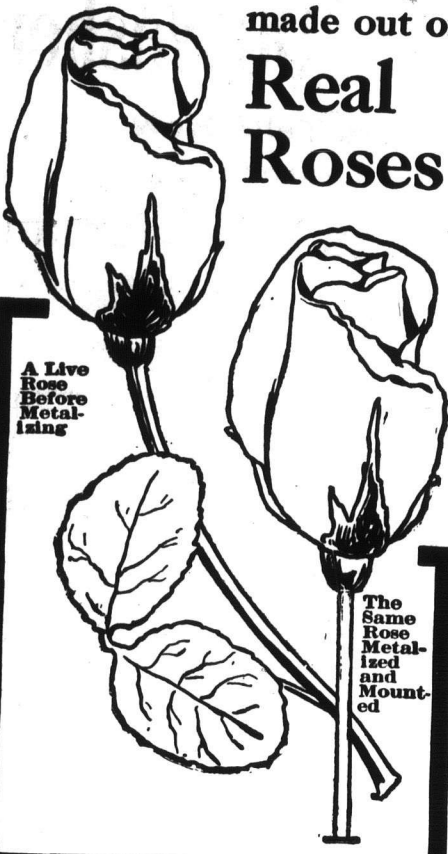


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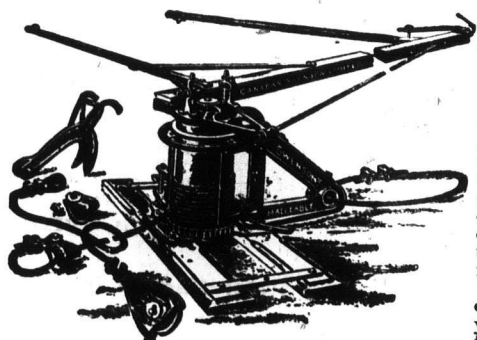
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## The Indissolubility of the True Marriage.

By Lloyd Starr.

If a woman has been left a widow, has she a right to marry again?  
If a man has been left a widower, has he a right to marry again?

The subject is an old one—a very old one—but it is continually assuming new phases. The latest phase is the facility with which modern disciples of the creed answer the questions for themselves in the affirmative, a phase which makes one wonder if the *Esprit De Corps* of matrimony is waning and if constancy is a departed jewel.

We read a great deal in our time about the multiplicity of divorces, the laxity of the divorce law, and the consequent dire effects on our future manhood and womanhood; but never a word do we read about the second marriage, not the result of a divorce, but of a death. The mental attitude which harbors this ability to love again ostensibly is everywhere regarded as a rightful part of our earthly existence.

Let us see if such a view can be defended: Suppose a man takes to himself a woman totally unsuited for him—the friction increasing with the years—that man never truthfully interpreted his marriage vows, could not "love her, comfort her, honor—her" in life nor grieve for her in death. That man never was married. On the grounds of divine inheritance is he not therefore entitled to a true union?

But the man who seeks and finds the woman of his heart, and, until death intervenes, lives happily in her company—that man truthfully interpreted his marriage vows, could "love her, comfort her, honor—her" in life and grieve for her in death. That man was married. On what grounds, therefore, is he entitled to another union?

Some of the arguments adduced in favor of this second marriage where there has already been a first and true marriage run as follows:

"His wedded life was blissful, but it had an early and sorrowful termination. He took unto himself another wife to show that, while matrimony has tribulations, still it is a success."

Or "Papa felt so lonely without a companion, felt so lonely he couldn't endure it."

Or "She had three children to bring up and drew very little life-insurance. That was why she accepted him."

Or Mr. — believed his motherless boy needed a woman's directing hand."

If a man's wedded life was blissful through the agency of love, and then miserable through the agency of death, the causes that made his life blissful and miserable do not end. They live as an experience. They are an indissoluble part of him and all that he has been. He cannot escape from these causes by inviting a second union. He cannot escape from them unless he escapes from himself, because the true companionship of life is God-given, God-guided; and what is God-given, God-guided, is in essence perennial. The grave is no interceptor.

Modification of this view must tend to give marriage—divest of all institutions—the savor of commercialism, drag it down to the level of brute creation where blind instinct prevails, and where devotion is purely sexual.

As to Argument No. 2, an affectionate man naturally feels lonely when his wife, in truth, is no longer his earthly helpmate. But, in the majority of cases, is that loneliness not shared by children—his children? The loss of the mother to them is just as mournful as the loss of the wife to him. And what redress have the children? None now, though some day it may become fashionable for a son to take unto himself a foster-father when his own father dies, a daughter a foster-mother when her own mother dies, instead of as at present both being taken unto foster-fathers and mothers.

If a widow has three children to educate and little monetary assistance she appears to be on the sympathy of the world. Yet that in itself is insufficient

justification for a second marriage. If the woman is imbued with the sacredness of the first marriage she will not permit herself to think of a second marriage. She will look to the world and her ability to make the best of a sad situation. She will know these sad situations exist for the exalted as well as for the humble—make up life's crises. And she will know that the Crown of Wild Olive is not for those who flee from the crises, but for those who face them.

We have many instances where courageous women have endured the varying trials of widowhood and consequently won the love and reverence of their children as they never could have done in the role of second mother. And we have instances, too, where homes have been swept by calamity and where maidens with sweat of brow, have watched over baby brothers and sisters, and grown grander in God's image for having done so. Yet we do not hear of any plan whereby such noble characters are to be superannuated in their non-earning days. Is the widow entitled to alleviation but not the maiden?

The fact that a widower has a wayward boy is scarcely valid reason for marrying again. There are numbers of homes where fathers and mothers are both living and where continuous battle is being waged against the symptoms of insurrection in a youth. If the mother who surely understands her offspring cannot rule the boy, can a mother who is a total stranger to him? If the boy is able to face the world, the step-mother will find little difficulty in driving him from home. But that is not ruling him. It is not ruling herself.

In the foregoing we have a survey of a few of the arguments adduced in favor of second marriage, where there has already been a first and true marriage, with reasons both from practical and sentimental viewpoints, why those arguments are considered untenable. Now, let us turn to history that we may observe how the sacredness and beauty of marriage—first and only marriage—operates on the human mind. Perhaps from these glimpses of the famous dead—here a poet singing of love and living the antithesis of it; here a poet at oneness with himself and his Hymen—we may arrive at a more appreciable understanding of the omnipotence of the connubial law than did our forefathers.

The world looked serenely on Longfellow's unions—saw one eventful period succeeded by another—yet the world knew, or ought to have known, that as the poet's first union was a true union, only an effacement of the memory of it could make a second union possible.

The world looked on Burns as the husband of Jean Armour, saw him go to the fields like a man in a maze, saw him meander in to write on the "departed shade" and the groans that "rend the breast." Yet did the world wonder how so proud a spirit as Burns could ever have resolved himself into that state whereby he could accept the shadow marriage because he had lost the substance marriage?

The world looked on Josephine, relict of a great and distinguished soldier, saw Napoleon espouse her and rejoiced at the good fortune. And, if the East Wind of humiliation did not sweep across her pathway, the world might have continued to think her fortunate. Yet would not Josephine, the inflexible widow of a Beauharnais have been a more worthy character to dote upon than Josephine, the ambitious for power, the ambitious for wealth, and the profligate of inconstancy when such was essential to the realization of these sordid ambitions?

The world looked on Lowell's overwhelming grief at the death of his first wife and, perhaps, ventured to believe that one who could sing

"I love her with a love as still  
As a broad river's peaceful might,"