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WOMAN AND MARRIAGE.

BY RUFUS REDDY.

The other day I received the following terse and explicit missive:

"Dear Mr. Reddy—I've decided to marry, what do you think of it? Your young friend JOHN."

So John is about to marry. I think a lot about it, John, a lot about it, but I do not see what I might say upon the subject, that will have any effect upon your decision. No, none whatever. A man who has made up his mind to marry is a difficult animal to head off, very difficult. John is not the first man who has contemplated marriage, and who did marry, not by any means. To enumerate the number in round figures, we will suppose that since the creation of the world some fourteen billions of men, more or less, have entered that uncertain state. Now were it possible for these fourteen billions to be condensed, as it were, into one reasoning being, gifted with the experience of its whole multifarious source, to such an enquiry, I say, this composite being would place its ponderous hand upon the trembling shoulder of my youthful enquirer, and utter this kindly warning: "Young man, beware," and what would be the effect of this caution? Nothing whatever. No, John, man will marry, and marry, and continue to marry, till Gabriel stands upon the pinnacle of yonder tower, with trumpet in one hand, and with the other beckoning towards the cemetery, and this fair creature who has bound you with those mysterious chains. How fair she is to look upon, I suppose, eh, John? They are all that, and how gently she nestles upon your shoulder so trustingly, eh? Happy young man. But women do not always nestle after marriage John, not always. Sometimes they hustle, and when they hustle, you hustle my boy—yes, in fact we all hustle. But there are times, nevertheless, young man; long after the poetry of "love's young dream" has been rubbed off the corrugated walls of every day life; even in later days

they will nestle. Nestle, while you slumber, upon the purse to be found in those garments which hang over the back of the old oak chair, and leave it as bloodless as the aborigine, when the vampire rises from his sleeping form.

Women are strange creatures John. Do not think because you have been courting this nestler for a few months, that you understand her, and can read her through. Women are about as easily read John, as a heavily bound book with its covers closed. Character is usually read through the lenses of reflection. The emotions and sentiments the would-be reader possesses, he thinks he sees reflected in some degree in the person he is attempting to read. This is our mistake in reading woman. We read them as men, from which they are as different and widely separated as the north is from the south. Man is made up of facts, woman of sentiment. Man is of the earth muddy, woman of the angels heavenly. If there are women who do not reach this standard, it is owing to their contact with this masculine mud. John, we joke of their frivolities, their vanities. We poke fun at the lover because he has discovered a being upon whom he is certain heaven has cast an extra coating of its rays; while to us she may appear but the gaudy butterfly. This butterfly is the creature who all the same, in the days of trial, will stick to you till death. If marriage is not what it should be, John, we men have made it so. We drag too much of our earthly facts into it, and not enough of the womanly sentiment. Karr, the celebrated French writer, says: "Never attempt to prove anything to a woman by facts; she believes only according to her feelings." This may appear at first sight satirical. But upon it may be based the foundation of woman's steadfastness. I once visited our Provincial Penitentiary, near the city of Montreal, and noticed several tastily fitted up cottages near the grim walls of the prison, and on enquiry discovered that several of these dwellings were inhabited by the wives of convicts confined near by. These faithful women believed according to their feelings. Though jury had found their erring husbands guilty,—though judge had condemned,—though the world said guilty,—these guilty culprits, to their wives declared their innocence, and that was enough. To these wives they were innocent, and they left all to be near those made doubly dear by their persecutions. This, John, is frail forlorn woman. Let us now consider how man would act under similar circumstances. A pale blue streak would be noticed passing swiftly along, with

Ottawa as its objective point. As it moderates its movements in the neighborhood of the Parliament buildings, though sworn to protect until death us do part, your valiant husband would now be recognized, with well established bill, seeking the aid of the senate to accelerate the swing of death's tardy scythe. This, John, is man, that perambulating heap of pomposity, called man. If you have a true woman, John, perhaps you'd prefer to have her called a girl, for there is something supremely sweet in that short word girl, especially when it has reference to "my girl." If you have a true girl, stick to her and marry her. Though you will have your dark days, though clouds will mingle with sunshine, still may you in after years rest your hand upon that stooped and withered shoulder, and look into that face, robbed long since of all its brightness and from which the bloom of youth, so pleasant now to look upon, has disappeared for ever, and say: "She is all the world to me. God bless her."

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