

of all who are husbands and fathers themselves, and who have been or expect to be—and this is not leaving out many.

"A family presses on a man; but it is like the soldier's knapsack; if it press on him, it also presses him on, and he would thank no one for relieving him of a burden which has become familiar and dear to him.

"Palk of free-masonry, marriage is the true free-masonry, without the badge of which a man is never truly received into society—never partakes of its amenities, its charities, kindnesses, and good offices. A bachelor in the world reminds me of nothing more (beauty put aside) than of a poor canary, which, escaped from its cage, and rejoicing in its freedom, comes in all confidence into the community of the feathered tribe; and how is it received? Is its loneliness pitied—does its situation excite compassion? Quite the reverse. Every bird is eager to give it a peck; quarrels are suspended that all may unite against the stranger; it is driven from tree to tree, from field to field, until, at length, exhausted by hunger and ill-usage, it sinks down dead.

"I do not mean to say that bachelors are quite so badly treated; they do not die of ill-usage. But then they are often wished dead, and when they do die, the world feels itself relieved of a burden—of a useless appendage—of an odd piece of furniture which would fit in nowhere; but having neglected to make a place for itself when it was malleable and moveable, is now so stiff and so awkward, that it is always in the way, and the sooner it is out of the way, it is often thought, the better. A married man, however old, goes with the world—is carried on by the general movement. But the bachelor sticks—years pass and find him in the same place—he is left behind. It is useless to complain of the harshness of the world towards the inoffensive bachelor. It lies in that principle of our nature which disposes us to regard with more favorable eyes the observance of, than the departure from fixed laws, and therefore it is, I believe, that the man who commits bigamy by having two wives, is looked upon with more leniency than he who has not one. The former has, at all events, erred on the right side!

"If a bachelor (mind, I speak all along of confirmed, irreclaimable bachelors) is rich, he is fair game for all the world—to be plucked without remorse. If poor, he is to be shunned by all prudent men; for he will be sure to fasten himself on you, to haunt your house, and pester you with his company.

"Yet who can deny the superiority of that man who keeps single, in order to cancel old obligations, over him who rushes into marriage, unprepared to meet new ones? No matter. From whatever motive a man marries—however weak, or selfish, or foolish—no sooner is he married, than all his sins are forgiven him. Imaginary terrors disappear as by a touch of a magician's wand. Gloomy faces are turned into smiling ones; warnings into congratulations; reproaches into blessings. The married couple may sometimes be disposed to enquire with wonder, where was the evil of thinking to do an act which every body congratulates you upon when done!

"To 'make an end on't,' there is only one thing which can, in the estimation of the world, redeem bachelors from the unpopularity which attaches to their state—it is some claim to the admiration or gratitude of man. He must take the world to wife—father all society; and even then he gets a cold partner—an undutiful son. But if he makes a mistake; if he has deceived himself as to the extent of his talents, the amount of his self-denial; if he want either the power to benefit others, or to overcome himself, then, tormented with the prospect of a happiness which might have been his, but which he gave up for the pursuit of a happiness which cannot be—in possession neither of the great world without, nor of a little world of his own—convinced, too late, that the real evils he shunned are not half so bad as the imaginary ones which take their place—tormented with unavailing regrets—deprived of healthy desires—seeking to create disinterested ties by the only passion to which he can appeal—self-interest—and disgusted because the fruit is of the nature of the tree—suspicious, discontented, changeful, or, at best, apathetic and selfish, even when most lavish, the confirmed bachelor becomes a misanthropist, an eccentric, or a sensualist. On the other hand, should the choice of celibacy be made in a spirit of self-sacrifice—with no selfish view—should the happiness of others, and not his own, be the obstacle to marriage—should the sympathies learn to take in a wider circle, or the mental powers to concentrate themselves upon a particular study, then the confirmed bachelor may find in Friendship, Philanthropy, Fame, a substitute, at least, for that happiness which was denied to him in the domestic relations of life."

With this summing up, Gentlemen of the Shakspeare Club, I leave the matter in your hands. You have heard the arguments, and have much interest in coming to a right conclusion; for of this you may be quite sure, that, as society and the law now stand, *it is much easier to get a wife, than to get rid of her.*

F.

Every man has in his own life follies enough—in his own mind troubles enough—and in his fortune evils enough, without being curious after the affairs of others.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A CONVICT.\*

BY "V-LE."

### CHAP. VI.—OUR RECEPTION.—RETURN TO HOBART TOWN.—AN APPOINTMENT AND ITS RESULT.—A PRISONER.—THE ESCAPE.—INCIDENTS ATTENDANT ON A RUNAWAY.

ON our arrival, the captain and the whole of the party were very kindly received by Major L——, the commandant of the Island, and his amiable lady. The wounded were also sharers in the Major's humane attentions, and were immediately placed under the care of the surgeon, who exerted himself as far as possible to alleviate their sufferings. Three days after our landing, the body of the gentleman killed in our encounter with the natives, was consigned to the grave, and in a day or two following, despite all the care and attention bestowed upon him by all parties, one of the crew died also. The two bodies were laid side by side, all distinction between their rank and circumstances being laid aside; and although both had breathed their last far from their friends and home, still they were not laid in their last narrow bed without tears of sympathy and sorrow for their untimely end. After these sad events over, we remained about a month on the island, expecting every day the arrival of a government brig with provisions. It was intended, in case of the brig calling, that the captain and his friends should take their passage in her, as the ladies were extremely unwilling to venture a return voyage in the barge. Day after day, however, passed on, and no appearance of the brig. Every day's disappointment added to the uneasy state of the captain's mind, and at last it was agreed between Major L—— and him, that I should be sent back with the barge, and that I also should be entrusted with the governor's despatches. On the evening of the same day on which this arrangement was made, I was sent for and ordered to put the barge in order, so that we might be ready to start next day. I was also instructed not to touch at the scene of our unfortunate disaster, nor indeed to touch land at all in my way back. It was also intimated to me that the government despatches were to be kept in my own possession, and that when we reached Hobart Town, I was to proceed directly to the government office, and deliver them to the governor, through his principal secretary. With these commands I took my departure from the island on the following day, the Major having appointed some of the hands on the Island to take the place of those who had been wounded, who, he intended, should be sent back with the first vessel that touched on her way to Hobart Town. We were four days and three nights on our passage, but it was accomplished safely, and the instant we reached our destination, I waited on the governor with the despatches. On the receipt of them by the secretary, he ordered me to be in waiting in the event of the governor wishing to see me; this step was the more necessary, as I wished for instructions as to the manner I should employ myself till the captain's return.

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