

# THE ANTIDOTE

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## YOKE FELLOWS.

A fretful person with a passionate one is a very unpromising arrangement; fretfulness does not awe passion, and is supremely irritating, while passion gives fretfulness the desired and bitter grievance on which it feeds and sickens. Two nervous persons will infallibly vex each others' nervousness into a misery for each and both, but the harnessing of a nervous with a phlegmatic person will drive the nervous partner to the extremes of the infirmity, and will develop in the phlegmatic person the latent unamiable temper, which unless phlegm is sheer stupidity, is sure to be united to it. Nervous people, in fact, ought not to be yoke-fellows at all; if marriage fits them it is in its more esoteric ideal. But in saying this reference is made only to nervousness as that irritability of physical rather than mental weakness which, though lessening intellectual strength, frequently goes with intellectual activity. Nervousness, as another name for ill temper, cowardly agitations, or excitable silliness, is likely to be very inconvenient in yoke fellowship, especially in the rather rare cases of its being the attribute of the male partner; but not being incurable, it is comparatively harmless where one of the partners is of a frankly good-tempered obstinateness.

But, be the tempers what they may, the great safety lies in the commingling of a secure affection with a certain healthy indifference—indifference is not a fair word for it, but the right one does not exist—which belongs to a respectable married life. Love with the wooing left in it, is a sensitive and fault-finding passion, not wholly satisfied with its own sufficiency for deserving the return it desires, and keenly aware of coldness or rebuke. But love at its ease as statutory affection, with its reciprocal rights, content to have given

and to have got and have done with it, is a good-tempered purblind humor, that has nothing to desire, and takes its response for granted. It is tolerant of shortcomings, but it does not perceive them, and misses no tendencies, for it would be bored by them; it takes good will and loyalty as a matter for granted on both sides and is content. It gives no trouble to anybody and is there for use when wanted. It has Tallyrand's element of safety, "point de zèle," and so takes the good that comes and gives the good it may without the mistakes of anxiety and the disappointments of enthusiasm.

When two people, who on the whole think well of each other, and who are bound together by duty and common interests, like each other thus genuinely but not to any disturbing extent, they very rarely take to quarrelling for its own sake. They have no such need of each other as to be irritable for lack of attention and disposed to scold as the next thing to petting. And if they do not quarrel out of good will they have still less temptation to do so out of ill-will. Their quarrels will surely be on real grounds—about something in which their wishes are different and one of them must yield something—in which the decision involves a definite result. They will not frown and pout about mere lovers' wrongs, coldness and neglect and such undemonstrable commissions and omissions; their disputes will be more practicable and will be easier to end, because there will be something to end them by.

It does not follow however, that because disputes are on real grounds they should be important ones. The questions which bring husband and wife or other house mates by the ears are not likely to be large ones, matters of faith and principle or important acts where there is faith or principle to guide and conscience to be respected on either side. The issues that trouble domestic calm are, in the details of common life, trifles that cannot be left undecided because something has to be done or left undone, and the doing or leaving undone affects personal comfort or taste. If such differences did not arise, as they will do in every home, mere sedative good-will

would suffice for peace; but to be sure such peace might be as Paley said; "mighty dull;" and quarrels on trifles, unless they are accumulative, do not leave great mischief behind them.

It is natural in speaking of yoke-fellows to refer specially to married people; but there are persons, spinster sisters, for instance, no less locked together, although there is no law to enforce the bond. They are in more than couples sometimes; but the reciprocal influence of each others, comfort is, of course, less among three than between two in quite other than arithmetical proportion. They live together not because they feel themselves companions by inclination and fitness, but because the relationship, or some other circumstance, has thrown them together and kept them together, and they recognise the propriety of the arrangement. Such unions are often quite as indissoluble as the bond between man and wife; and in them too one often sees the same no-reason in particular that each of the yoke-fellows should not have been as happy with any other, the success of the arrangement bringing about all the advantages that could have appreciated.

The wonder is not that yoke-fellows bicker sometimes, but that they get on so well together usually; and whatever affection may be deeper or higher there seems to be nothing more honest in the wear than the liking by habit of yoke-fellows, husband and wife, sisters, or however joined.

(The end.)



## To Subscribers in Arrears.

A large number of subscribers in arrears for their "Antidote,"—only one dollar a year—will kindly pardon the abrupt open reminder sent them a few weeks ago. The official instructions were carried out too literally. The aggregate amount is considerable, although payable in advance. The names are as good as can be found in the directory, but the sum is so trifling that it is easily forgotten. One in five or ten responded; two took offense and asked us to forbear.

He now unpacks his ulsterette,  
On which no winter storms have beaten,  
But the moths have greatly changed the style,  
For it is now an ulster eaten.