

RULES FOR PERSONS ABOUT TO MARRY.

The following code of laws for the regulation of married life are said to have been drawn up by a gentleman for the guidance of his son and the lady to whom his son was about to marry:—

1. When people are making love, everything is so fair and so bright that they are disposed to think each other something more than human, and scarcely liable to the frailties of human nature. Perhaps it would be well if people would divest themselves of this notion; because, by so doing, it might prevent disappointment after marriage, when contact must necessarily make them acquainted with many frailties which the most perfect human being cannot be without.

2. Want of money is generally looked upon as one of the principal sources of unhappiness in the married state; but Coleridge, the poet, said:—"If you show me one couple who are unhappy from want of money, I will show you ten who are unhappy from other causes." He alluded to incompatibility of temper, or what is more to the point, a neglect of managing temper and temperament in a proper manner; for it is certain that if people take the trouble they can make themselves agreeable to each other, so as to live in harmony even under any circumstances.

3. It has been wisely said that those little courtesies and attentions which people pay to each other before marriage in order to gain affection, ought to be continued after marriage in order to retain it. If it is worth gaining it is worth retaining.

4. Husbands and wives sometimes express a great desire to be able to rule their partners. It cannot be questioned that those persons rule with the most absolute sway who are the most beloved. Is it not true that those officers in the army and navy who are most liked by their men, are the most readily obeyed? The same principle holds good in domestic life.

5. Money is a useful and valuable thing, and ought not to be thoughtlessly spent. Dr. Johnson said that the end and aim of every man's ambition were to erect to himself a comfortable home. There cannot be a prosperous home where there is an extravagant wife. On the other hand, an extravagant husband has power to bring ruin and desolation upon his wife and family, without their having the legal ability to restrain him. A wise economy is a great virtue.

6. A good wife makes a good husband; and so, also, a good husband makes a good wife.

7. Beware of the first quarrel. An angry word spoken in heat may do incalculable mischief. It may endanger the affection which was established by dint of many acts of attention before marriage, and which is worth more than gold to man and wife.

8. It is not in the nature of things that two people should live constantly together and not offend each other sometimes—not intentionally, perhaps, but inadvertently. Every unintentional offence ought to be easily forgiven; for where no wrong was intended no great wrong has been inflicted. It would be well, however, if persons studied not to give offence, even unintentionally.

9. Never refuse the offer of reconciliation.

10. Always forgive when forgiveness is asked for.

11. Surely some persons are in error who fall into a state of listless indifference after marriage, and fancy that there is no necessity for further trouble about love and affection, and all that sort of thing. It is said in No. 3, that the affection which was gained before marriage by acts of politeness, and many like attentions, is worth retaining after marriage by a continuance of those attentions. It is certain that love heightens every joy; and without love no joy can possess its true sweetness. If this be so, it needs no argument to prove how necessary to happiness it is to cultivate love.

12. The mistress is at the head of the domestic department. The servants take their cue from her. If she superintends her household with industry and care, they follow her in performing their duties well; but if she fails in the virtue of activity, confusion soon enters her house.

13. Take everything well that is well meant. Owing to the weakness of human nature, few people are able to perform great and good deeds. But a good intention shows a good heart.