

Should Consumptives Marry?*

SOME men, in their zeal to save human life, recently have ridden the false theory of heredity of consumption so far as to want to forbid by law marriage to all consumptives. The enactment of such a law would be utterly unwarranted.

Consumption is not inherited. On the contrary, immunity gradually comes to those in whose ancestry the disease has existed.

What immunity the white race enjoys has come to it through heredity. It is to children of consumptive parents that we owe the protection we now possess.

Life, therefore, would not be saved by prohibition of marriage between consumptives. On the contrary, the conserving power of nature would be handicapped in its operation.

Besides, prohibition of marriage would not prevent consumptives from having offspring. Unnatural laws always defeat themselves.

It merely would put burdens upon the children of consumptives to cripple them in their struggle for existence. It would destroy life instead of saving it.

There is no good reason why consumptives should not marry, so far as the offspring is concerned. There is good reason, however, why they should not marry on their own account.

Celibacy is conducive to recovery from consumption, while married life may be an impediment. It is only the celibate who can devote all his energy, thought and resources to one cause—that of getting well.

To the woman marriage brings the burdens of motherhood, which often have a peculiarly quickening influence on tuberculosis. Many a young consumptive mother gets her shroud shortly after she has purchased the christening frock for her babe.

To the man, too, the duties of married life are a serious impediment to recovery. Many a young man has sacrificed his chances of recovery on the altar of Hymen.

There are times, conditions and circumstances, however, when marriage lessens the burdens of life. What is gained in this way may more than counterbalance what is risked in the married state.

It then is necessary to consider carefully both sides and choose that which offers the best chance of recovery. If the marriage state is entered upon, however, it should be understood by both parties that everything must be subservient to the recovery of the stricken one.

The fact that tuberculosis is contagious should not be lost sight of in considering the question of marriage. The healthy party to the marriage contract runs some risk of getting the disease.

The relationship between husband and wife is so intimate that even with great care there may be given opportunity in moments of forgetfulness for conveyance of the disease. Husband and wife, indeed, frequently contract the disease from one another.

A consumptive, therefore, should carefully consider, before marrying, whether he is willing to expose the person whom he is about to marry, to the danger of getting his disease. As a matter of honor, he should inform the party of his ailment and of the danger from it.

A person considering the question of marrying a consumptive should carefully weigh the risk and the burdens which he is assuming. Unless he can go into the matter in a spirit of self-sacrifice, he should not take the step.

Even when the consumptive has recovered his physical health there may be danger to the person whom he marries. He still may be giving off tubercle bacilli.

There are many cases on record where men and women have given the disease to two or three consorts in succession without themselves going under. In such cases there is fair health, but never complete recovery.

Then, too, the dormant disease may again break out after marriage. The burdens and responsibilities of married life may sufficiently depress the system to enable the disease again to get a start.

A healthy person about to marry a consumptive should have all these things before him. If he is willing to take all the chances, to carry the burdens, and to make the necessary sacrifice for the person whom he is about to marry, none should have a right to interfere.

*Chapter from "Consumption, a Curable and Preventable Disease," by Laurence F. Flick, M.D.

ALL HONOR TO THE WOMEN

The ladies, more power to them, are beginning to see the advisability of carrying in their clothes as little as possible of the civic dirt. Whereas a few months ago skirts which dragged upon or touched the ground were the vogue, one notices now the reign of the trim, cleanly skirt, reaching only to the shoe tops.—*Sunday World*.