

HOW FAR ?

APRIL betrothals is on the way to becoming quite as current a phrase as April showers. The number of engagements referred to during the past month, both by cable and telegraph, as either announced or pending is exceptionally large. For some time it was understood that the interests which led to the consummation of royal marriages were for the most part political. But of late years these have been overcome. To-day the reasons are frequently financial. Seemingly the old order has passed away. Birth has ceased to be a bar—or a qualification. Ancestry is not the determining factor. "Attachments" are based on other considerations. The circle of eligibility, so far as some erratic rather than typical members of the nobility of several nations are concerned, has for a couple of centuries included beautiful prima donnas and very carnal music hall singers. But royalty has succeeded until recently in being strongly conservative—rarely, indeed, actually marrying any woman whose blood was not of the required shade of blue. However, it seems that even royalty has taken down a rail or two from its fence. Now every European or American girl with sufficient financial backing has a chance of becoming a princess or a queen. But there is another aspect to this question. It immediately appears that the present circumstances offer most fascinating opportunities to ambitious mothers and temporarily weak fathers. A certain inference may be drawn from the fact that parental instead of natural selection prevails among all semi-babbarous peoples. In some highly civilized countries, nevertheless, custom places the arrangement of children's marriages in the hands of the parents. The assertion has been made though, and no adequate refutation has been advanced, that this system results in much conjugal infelicity and other difficulties. There has been an unwritten law in English speaking countries, especially in Canada and the United States, that a son may be left to take care of himself in this regard, and that even a daughter, dutiful and obedient in all else, reserves the right to dispose of her own heart. Coronets and

sceptres are not to be sneezed at, but there is undoubtedly room for debate as to how far the will of a mother or father should be a law unto their offspring. Millionaires have the right to bestow their dollars as they please, but not their daughters. A title may be taken in exchange for a fortune. That is barter—and a good business transaction, provided one party manages to get the better of the other. But a woman cannot be given, in marriage or any other way, for anything of that kind. If American girls permit themselves to be purchased by the highest European bidder, they must expect to lose the respect of a large number of people, whose good opinion is well worth possessing and retaining—for the reason that it embodies the moral sentiment of the Christian world. Marriage is justified by love, not by the muttering of a formula. No doubt the exodus will soon decrease. It will perhaps, be a step in the direction of reform when the thing is called by its real name. The glitter may be expected to disappear gradually as the truth leaks out. More wholesome ideas in regard to matrimony should prevail on this continent. There are thousands of men engaged here in industrial and mercantile life whose names, without any prefix whatever, stand at once for ability and nobility.

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AFTER MANY
WOES

At last we have got out of the clutches of winter. It has been the severest winter that many of us have come through since our arrival on this terrestrial ball. We have reached, so to speak, the first base of spring—and May is at the bat. There seems to be every prospect for a good home run. It makes a man feel like appointing himself umpire of the weather and shouting: Safe! Having reached the point from which its operations begin, the game of summer will doubtless prove healthful, exciting and warm to both players and onlookers. The usual speculations will be made on the supposed tips given by blossoms and sprouts. And all kinds of money will be carried to the bank by those who labor and foresee.