

CHAPTER VI - MARRIAGE.

314

When our great Teacher went to John to be baptized, not having reached his motive, the good patriarch was astounded, and reading his thoughts, Jesus prefaced his purpose saying, "Suffer these things to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," that is, yield obedience to common forms, until you reach the understanding of their spiritual significance. Marriage is the only legal and moral form among the higher species, for generation, and until the spiritual creation is discerned and the union of male and female apprehended in its Soul-sense, this rite should continue under such moral regulations as secure increasing virtue. Infidelity to the marriage covenant is the social scourge of all peoples; the pestilence that wasteth and walketh at noon-day. The commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is not less imperative, than "Thou shalt not kill." Virtue is the basis of civilization and progress; without it there is no true foundation to society, and it were utterly impossible to attain the Science of Life; but virtue should be recognized; and the fear to take responsible posts of duty lest the vicious misjudge you, be wholly removed. Owing to the shocking depravity of mankind, chastity is looked at suspiciously; it requires more moral courage for woman to meet the low estimates in society of virtue, than to help lift its standard from the dust.

315

The last infirmity of error that would fasten itself on society, to see it hop and hobble under a new burden of guilt, is named "free love"; wherein "they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not," but the boldness of depravity will show its deformity. A union of the masculine and feminine mind seems requisite for completeness; the former reaches a higher tone from communion with the latter; and the latter gains courage and strength from the former; therefore, these different individualities meet and demand each other, and their true harmony is oneness of Soul. Woman should be loving, pure, and strong. Man, tender, intellectual, controlling; the attraction between the sexes will be perpetual only as it is pure and true, and like the seasons, brings its sweet changes and renewal. Beauty, wealth, or fame is incompetent to meet the demands of the affections, and should never waver the balance against the more honest claims of intellect, goodness, and virtue. Happiness is spiritual, born of Truth and Love; it is unselfish; therefore it cannot exist alone, but requires an object to cherish. Our affections are not poured forth vainly, when meeting no return; they enrich the being, enlarging, purifying and elevating it. The wintry blasts of earth may transplant the flowers of affection, or scatter them to the winds; but sundering ties of flesh, unites us to God, where Love supports the struggling heart, until it ceases to sigh over earth, and folds its wings for heaven.

Marriage is blest or unblest, according to the disappointment it incurs, or the motive it fulfills. To happily existence by constant intercourse with those adapted to elevate it is the true motive for marriage;

316

wedlock gives pinions to joy, or trails its drooping wings in dust. Notes are illy arranged that produce discord; tones of mind may be different, but they should be concordant, to blend harmoniously. Unselfish ambition, nobler motives for existence, increased harmony, happiness and usefulness, because the different elements of mind meet and mingle, finding in union there is strength -- is the true marriage. Let there be moral freedom in wedlock; never contract the limit of worthy deeds by a selfish exaction of all one's time and thoughts. With additional joys, benevolence should grow more diffusive, for the narrowness and jealousy that would confine a wife or husband forever at home, will not promote the sweet interchange of confidence that comes of love; while a wandering desire for incessant amusement outside the home circle is a poor augury for happiness. Home is the dearest spot on earth, and should be the center, but not the boundary of the affections. Said the peasant bride to her lover, "Two eat no more together than when they are separate," and this should furnish the hint, that a wife ought not to enter into vulgar extravagance, or stupid ease, because another supplies her wants. Wealth may obviate the necessity- for toil or ill nature in the marriage relation, but nothing can shirk its cares. "She that is married careth for her husband, how she may please him," and this is the very thing it is pleasant to do. Matrimony should be entered into with a full recognition of its enduring obligations, and the most tender solicitude for each other's happiness and approbation should wait on all its years. Mutual compromises preserve a compact that might otherwise become burdensome. Man should

317

not be required to participate in all the annoyances and cares of domestic economy, or woman to understand political economy; but fulfilling the different demands of separate spheres, their sympathies may blend to comfort, cheer and sustain each other, thus hallowing the copartnership of interests and affection whereon the heart leans and is at peace. Tender words, and unselfish care for what promotes the respect and happiness of thy wife, is more salutary in prolonging her smiles and health, than stolid indifference, or jealousy; husbands, hear this, and remember how slight a thing might have spared the old trysting times. It is too late after marriage to grumble over disparities of dispositions; a mutual understanding should exist before, and continue ever after this union. Deception is fatal to happiness. The nuptial vow is never annulled so long as its moral obligations are preserved, but the frequency of divorce shows the sacredness of this relation losing its puritanical character, and that some fatal mistake is undermining its true basis. A separation takes place when the motives for marriage are not suited to individual progress and happiness. The science of being inevitably lifts us higher in the scale of harmony, and will ultimately shake off all shackles that fetter the mind, ripe for advancement. Therefore, to avoid a disruption in the marriage relation, mutual tastes, joys, and aspirations are necessary to form a happy companionship. The beautiful, is the good in character, that clasps the indissoluble links of affection.

A mother's affection cannot be separated from her child, embracing as it does, purity and Truth, both of which are immortal,

therefore it lives on under all

318

difficulties. From the very logic of events, we learn the selfish and impure are all that is fleeting, and that Wisdom will ultimately separate what it hath not joined together.

Marriage should improve the species, become a barrier to vice, a protection to woman, a strength to man, and a center for the affections. This, however, in a majority of cases, is not its present tendency; and because the education of our higher natures is neglected for other considerations, frivolous amusements, adornments of the person, passion, display, and pride. An ill-attuned ear calls discord harmony, not apprehending concord; so personal sense, discerning not the true happiness of being, places it on a false basis; but science corrects the discord and teaches us Life's sweeter harmonies. Soul hath infinite resources wherewith to bless mankind, and happiness were more readily attained and secure in our keeping if sought of Soul. The higher order of enjoyments are all that satisfy the cravings of immortal man; we cannot circumscribe our happiness within the limits of wealth or fame. The good we possess should have ascendancy over the evil, and the spiritual over the animal, or happiness is never reached. This would improve progeny, diminish crime, give higher aims to ambition, and prepare the way for science. The offspring of such parents would inherit more intellect, better balanced minds, and sounder constitutions. If some fortuitous circumstance places in the arms of gross parents a more spiritual offspring, the beautiful child early droops and dies, like a tropical flower dropped amid Alpine snows;

or marrying reproduces in the helpless offspring the grosser traits of

319

her ancestors. What hope of happiness, or noble ambition hovers around the child inheriting propensities that must be overcome, or reduce him to a loathsome wreck. For propagating the human species, is there not greater responsibility than for your garden culture, or the stock of your flocks and herds? Nothing should be transmitted to offspring unworthy to perpetuate. The formation and education of even mortal mind, must improve before the millennium. The most important education of the infant is to keep it mentally free from impurity, and let mind develop the body harmoniously; mind, and not matter, should govern the physical. For parents to create a desire in their child for incessant amusement, always to have some demand on hand to be fed, rocked, tossed, or talked to, and afterwards complain of their child's fretfulness, or in after years of its frivolity, - all of which they have occasioned, is art error.

Yielding one's thoughts to contemplate physical wants surely produces them. A single requirement beyond what is necessary to meet the most modest needs of the babe is hurtful. The condition of the stomach, bowels, food, clothing, etc., is of no serious import to your child. Your views regarding them will produce the only result they can have on the health of your child. The daily ablution of an infant is not more natural or necessary than to take a fish out of water and cover it with dirt, once a clay, that it may thrive better in its natural element. Cleanliness is next to godliness, but washing should be only to keep the

body clean, and this can be done with less than daily scrubbing the whole surface.'

320

Giving drugs to infants, noticing every symptom of flatulency, or constantly directing your mind to them, laden with beliefs of disease, laws of health, sickness, and death, conveys your mental image to their bodies and stamps it there, making it probable at any time to be reproduced in the disease you fear. Your child can have worms if you say so, or whatever fear the mind holds, relative to that body; it is thus you lay the foundation of disease and death, and educate your child into discord and. out of harmony. The entire education of children should be only such as will form habits of obedience to moral and spiritual law; there is no physical law to be consulted.

Taking less thought "what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink," will do much more than you are aware of for the health of rising generations. Children should be allowed to remain children in knowledge, and become men and women through the understanding of their spiritual being. We should not think for a moment a law of matter outside of ourselves can harm our babe, for it cannot. Intelligence outside of matter, that forms the bud and blossom will regulate the body, even as it clothes the lily, if we do not interfere by some belief. The higher nature of man is not governed by the lower; this would annul the order of Wisdom; the false views we entertain of being, hide the eternal harmony and produce the ills of which we complain. Because the belief of intelligent matter is accepted, and the opposite science of mind rejected, shall we submit it is true, or that,

the so-called laws of sense are superior to laws of Soul? You would never conclude a flannel is better to ward off pulmonary disease than the Intelligence that

321

forms the body, if you understand the science of being. Man is the offspring of Spirit; the beautiful, good and pure are his ancestors ; his origin is not brute instinct, nor does he pass through material conditions up to man. Spirit is his primitive and ultimate being, and God his Father.

The rights of woman are discussed on grounds that seem to us not the most important. Law establishes a very unnatural difference between the rights of the two sexes; but science furnishes no precedent for such injustice, and civilization brings, in some measure, its mitigation, therefore it is a marvel that society should accord her less than either. Our laws are not impartial, to say the least, relative to the person, property, and parental claims of the two sexes; and if the elective enfranchisement of woman would remedy this evil without incurring difficulties of greater magnitude, we hope it will be effected. A very tenable means at present, is to improve society in general, and achieve a nobler manhood to frame our laws. If a dissolute husband deserts his wife, it should not follow that the wronged and perchance impoverished woman cannot collect her own wages, or enter into agreements, hold real estate, deposit funds, or surely claim her own offspring free from his right of interference. A want of reciprocity in society is a great want that the selfishness of the world has occasioned. Our forefathers exercised their faith in the direction St. James taught, " To visit the fatherless and widows, and keep

yourself unspotted from the world "; but ostentation, the master of ceremonies, and stereotyped belief have ruled out primitive Christianity, so that when a man would lend a helping

322

hand to some noble woman, struggling alone with adversity, his more prudent wife saith "'Tis never beat to interfere with thy neighbor's business."

Again, a wife is withheld from the ready aid her Sympathy and charity would afford, by some domestic tyrant. The time cometh when marriage will be a union of hearts; and again, the time cometh when there will be no marrying or giving in marriage, but we shall be as the angels; the Soul rejoicing in its own mate wherein the masculine Wisdom and feminine Love are embraced in the understanding. Because progeny needs to be improved, let marriage continue, and permit no breaking down of law whereby a worse state of society is produced, than at present.

Puritanical honesty and virtue should be the stability of this covenant; Soul will ultimately claim its own, and the voices of personal sense be hushed. Marriage should be the school of virtue, and offspring the germ of man's highest nature. Christ, Truth, should be present at the altar, to turn the water into wine, giving inspiration to understanding, whereby man's spiritual origin and existence are discerned. If the foundations of affection are consistent with progress, its vows will be strong and enduring. Divorces inform the age that some fundamental error in this union is the source of its discord. To pin the science, hence the harmony of this relation,

we should regard it more metaphysically and less physically.

The broad-cast power of evil so conspicuous to-day, is the materialism of the age struggling against the spiritual era, that advances; beholding the world's lack of Christianity, and the powerlessness of promises, to

323

make good husbands or wives, mind will at length demand a higher affection, and ferment on this and many other subjects, until it settles down on an improved understanding. But the fermentation of fluids is not pleasant, during this nondescript stage, and matrimony that was once a fixed fact, is not so desirable on a slippery foundation.

The mental chemicalization that has brought infidelity to the surface, will as surely throw it off, and marriage will settle down purer after the scum is expelled. "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head." They teach us not to lean upon earth, it is a broken reed, that pierces to the heart. We do not half remember this in the sunshine of joy and prosperity. But sorrow is more salutary, and points us from the cross to the crown prepared for those who pass to their reward through much tribulation. Trials are but proofs of God's care for his children. When spiritual development takes place it germinates not from seed sown in the soil of earthly hopes; rather do these decay to propagate anew in Spirit those higher joys that have no taint of earth, and thus our experiences go up higher, and a point is won in progress.

In conjugal felicity, it is well to remember how fleeting are the joys of earth, and be grateful for them. In conjugal infelicity, separate not if there is no moral demand for this; far better wait the logic of events, than for a wife precipitately to leave a husband, or a husband his wife, for if one is better than the other, this other pre-eminently needs good company. Socrates considered patience salutary under such circumstances,

324

making his Xanthippe a discipline for his philosophy. Sorrow has its reward, and never leaves man where it found him; it is the furnace that separates the gold from the dross, and gives back the image of God. The cup our Father hath given, shall we not drink it? and learn the lesson He inculcates.

When the ocean is stirred by a storm, the clouds lower, the wind screams through the straitened canvas, and waves lift themselves to mountains, we ask the helmsman, "Do you know your course, and can you steer your vessel amid the storm?" Even the dauntless seaman is not sure of his fate, well knowing the science of navigation is not equal to the Science of God; but acting up to his highest understanding, firm at the post of duty, awaits the issue. Thus should we deport ourself in the seething ocean of sorrow, hoping and working, stick to the wreck, until the logic of events precipitates the doom, or sunshine gladdens the wave.

The possibility that animal natures give more force to character than the spiritual, is too absurd to consider, when we remember the exemplar of man healed the sick,

raised the dead, and commanded even the winds and waves to obey him, through the ascendancy of the spiritual over the material. What we avail ourselves of God, is as potent with us as it was with Jesus, and our want of spiritual strength speaks the rebuke it deserves; and our limited demonstration puts to shame the labor of centuries. We should hold our body not so much in personal, as spiritual consciousness, even as the orange we have just eaten, and of which only the idea is left, then would there be neither

325

pain nor sin. Systems of physic and systems of doctrines treat of the pleasures and pains of personal sense; but Christ takes them all away, and the epoch approaches when to understand this Principle of being, will form the basis of all harmony and progress. At present we live ridiculously for fear of being thought ridiculous; are slaves to fashion, appetite, and sense; in the future we shall learn Soul is an architect that makes men and women beautiful, noble, and not to be blotted out. We ought to weary of the fleeting and false, hence, of personal sense, and cherish nothing that hinders our highest self-hood.

Frugality is essential to domestic prosperity, and so is affection; but to silence the voice of conscience to gain wealth, is trade without profit. The genius of woman shrinks from controversy with a knave, or a fool. A man respects the reputation of a woman, but a mouse will gnaw in the dark a spotless garment. Culture and refinement are not things of the toilet, but reflections of head and heart. Innocence is a gem, worn unconscious of pick-pockets. Husbands that dissipate care

in the club, are poor stocks in ready markets. A husband is the best friend, or worst enemy of his wife. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty vain, but a woman of Wisdom, should be praised." A bad woman is a loathsome leprosy, dangerous to all that approach her. In marriage, avoid disparity in ages, tastes, or education, and make choice only of those qualities that wear well. Jealousy is the grave of affection; mistrust where confidence is due touches with mildew the flowers of Eden, and scatters to the four winds the leaves of love. A bridal altar is the

326

verge of a new existence; wherein the old is fading out of the experience, to admit the new; two beings mingling into one; be not in haste to take the vow, "until death do us part," but consider well its obligations, responsibilities, and relations to all your future happiness; "judge before friendship, then confide till death."