

AN ESSAY

ON

LOVE & MATRIMONY.

BY

ZADKIEL.

“ Those awful words, ‘Till death do part,’
May well alarm the youthful heart:
No after-thought, when once a wife
The die is cast, and cast for life;
Yet thousands venture every day,
As some base passion leads the way.”

Cotton.

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Introduction.

OF all the errors into which mankind fall, there is not one more evil in its consequences than that of taking for granted that on those subjects which are termed common-place, we shall form a correct judgment without the trouble of a formal consideration. If it relate to the common events of life, no matter how important, such as the maintenance of health, the establishment of character, or the production of happiness in this life, we are apt to suppose that, on that particular score, whichever it be that presents itself to our attention, we know all about it; that there is nothing to be learned, and, in short, that we are in no danger of making any mistake.

This, I think, may be termed *thoughtlessness*; and I am sure that it is extremely common, and is an error which tends to very extensive ill consequences, and very frequently leads us astray from that path of reason and common sense which alone can conduct us safely through

the wilderness filled with briars, which we are destined to traverse in this state of existence.

We suppose, for instance, that on such a very general subject as that of *Love*, we are, as it were, instructed by nature; that we need no individual exertion to acquire a stock of right ideas, and that, therefore, when the time comes to put our knowledge in practice we shall be found ready armed for the occasion, and without doubt prepared to go through with it: which few will deny is one of the most important in the course of our earthly existence.

A very little reflection will shew that this supposition is founded in error, and that we cannot be rightly informed on that, or any other subject, which we are too indolent or too proud to examine*. Our knowledge, like the largest edifice, which is made up of a vast number of particular stones, consists of an accumulation of ideas, either gained at one period, as when we first study any art or science of which we previously knew nothing, or acquired by degrees through the whole of our former life. And thus it is that no man's knowledge at twenty is at all like the knowledge he will have at forty, because he will have gained new ideas, and will have added a vast number of new stones to the building.

If we are about to take up our residence in a

* "We frequently despise subjects which we have not examined and at the same time neglect to examine, because we despise them."

new country for life, we deem it wise to read the works of persons who may have resided there; as by that means we may be prepared for the undertaking; we may know what evils we may have to prepare against, and how we shall be best enabled to apply our particular resources to gain that degree of happiness which it is every human being's desire to embrace*.

Is it not, then, equally reasonable, that when we may be called on to enter for life upon the land of Love and Matrimony, we should know something more than mere rumour tells of the climate, the laws, the productions, and the inhabitants of that extensive country? If, indeed, to engage in love, and to bind that love by a matrimonial tie, were a work of no importance, because of no duration, then might the apathy, indifference, and inattention of the generality of people to the subject be excusable; but as the bond can only be broken by the rude hand of death, surely it becomes a person professing to guide his actions by reason, to acquire the very best possible information as to

* "There are many more shining qualities in the mind of man, but there is none more useful than discretion; it is this, indeed, which gives a value to all the rest, which sets them at work in their proper times and places, and turns them to the advantage of the person who is possessed of them. Without it learning is pedantry, and wit impertinence, virtue itself looks like weakness; the best parts only qualify a man to be more sprightly in his errors and active to his own prejudice."

the probable consequences, before he sets his hand to the instrument.

I have little doubt that the blind, infatuated neglect of this very obvious and irresistible *importance* is one of the leading causes of that fatal wretchedness which many, very many young persons plunge themselves into, when about to launch, as they imagine, into a sea of bliss; where alas! they find, to their sorrowful conviction, that its silver waves are but empty bubbles, delusive to the eye and bitter to the palate.

There have been volumes upon volumes penned upon the subject of love. Poets have made it their grand magazine, on which to draw for the subsistence of both light and heavy troops; novelists and romance writers have looked to it as the main-store for their various and ponderous tomes; while essayists and moralists have written time out of mind on the subject of Love and Matrimony until they have rendered the idea, what the reality too often becomes—an epitome of tedious folly.

All these, as it seems to me, have failed to instruct the world aright on this vastly important subject, owing to one pervading and radical error in their writings.

They have confined themselves to drawing a picture of the charms or the miseries of Love; they have been content with appealing to the passions, or enticing the imagination of their

readers, when they ought to have made these matters known to the world as worthy of the aid of cool, unbiassed, and well instructed reason. For I contend that it is *this* we should rely upon, as the only safe clue to that labyrinth where so many venture without it and meet with misery, which too often engenders vice, that creeping parasite, which spreads over the path of human life, and extends its poisonous influence to the youthful and the innocent; "for it is the property of crime to extend its mischiefs over innocence, as it is of virtue to extend its blessings over many that deserve them not."

There can be no doubt that, as far as the world has hitherto gone, the art of Love has not generally been considered as necessary to be studied as a matter of importance, like any other art or science. A few cursory lessons from parents or guardians have been deemed sufficient for placing young people of both sexes in a turnpike road to a right judgment thereon. And so much has it been kept in the background, that even where books have been penned for the express purpose of instructing youth in the ways of wisdom, such as that, in many respects, excellent work, Madame Chapone's Letters, a very brief space has been allotted to the most important point in every young person's education. Another similar work on the Instruction of Young Ladies, containing no less than ninety-three chapters, says not one word

on the matter ! Surely these writers must have contemplated the advance of a state of society where young ladies were destined to parade the lonely walks of the convent, rather than to grace and ornament the noble and interesting situations of wives and mothers.

Importance of the Subject Demonstrated.

I have spoken of the vast importance of this matter ; let me proceed to demonstrate, beyond all denial, that it is what I have declared.

To judge truly of this it is only necessary to inquire for a moment what consequences flow from a well-conducted and honourably consummated passion, and to contrast these with those which arise from a hasty, ill-digested, and viciously designed match.

But to form a correct and veritable opinion of what is, and what is not, a well-conducted passion, we must consider a little what is the *nature of Love*, and what the *object and design of Matrimony*. The nature of Love has some shades of variety in the two sexes ; yet, like the male and female, it has so many points of resemblance, that in our general view of the human body we forget the difference.

“ A youthful passion,” (says the celebrated German writer, Goëthe), “ which is conceived and cherished without any certain object, may be compared to a shell thrown from a mortar by night : it rises calmly in a brilliant track, and

seems to mix, and even to dwell for a moment, with the stars of Heaven ; but at length it falls—it bursts—consuming and destroying all around, even as itself expires.”

This is a poetical description ; but it tells us plainly of the *violence* and *force* of the feelings of the male ; for it is of *himself* the writer spoke.

On the other hand, let us see what the ablest female writer of the present day, the talented Mrs. Jameson, says of Love in the female breast. “ A woman’s affections, *however strong*, are *sentiments* when they run smooth, and become *passions* only when opposed.”

Here, then, is an essential difference in the sexes—haughty man waits not for the action of an opposing obstacle to stir him up to force and violence ; but gentle woman yields and is passive until resistance renders the quiet current a roaring torrent, breaking down all obstacles which beset its course.

Shakspeare knew well this difference in the sex ; and he depicted the effects of this opposition in the ardent soul of Juliet. She was all gentle and yielding to her lover, and had never shewn herself capable of any thing but mildness and sentiment ; as when she says,

“ I ought to be less open, ought to hide
My heart more from thee—so decorum dictates :
But where in this place would’st thou seek for truth,
If in *my* mouth thou didst not find it !”

But when her love was crossed, when Romeo had slain her kinsman, and the nurse exclaims

“ Shame come to Romeo !”

then the spirit of true affection bursts forth, and she, who was all mildness, at once fires and retorts

“ Blistered be thy tongue,
For such a wish! he was not born to shame.”

And then the strong feeling, the masculine energy breaks out ;

“ Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,
For 'tis a throne where Honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth!”

I have alluded to this *distinction* in the love of the sexes to shew the most unthinking mind that it is by no means customary for the world to *study* what the true nature of love is. This becomes evident if we consider that, such being the case, parents who wish to guide and control the love of their *daughters*, actually take the very steps to confirm their affection, by open *opposition*, which can but tend to render that which was only a sentiment an irresistible *passion*. Never, since the world began, did *opposition* eradicate affection from the heart of woman !

Let us, then, admit that there exists an immense mass of ignorance on this subject; and that, for the sake of avoiding the turmoil and the trouble, the family differences and the other thousand ill consequences which arise from this ignorance, it is first of all necessary *that we understand the nature of Love*; or, in other words, that this is a matter worthy of being, and which reason requires to be, seriously studied.

Love, in its general sense, is a peculiar compound of feelings towards the other sex; implanted in the human breast by our Allwise and Benevolent Creator. Without it man could not exist in society; all would be chaos come again.

This consequence, at least, would flow from the bringing into practice the ideas of some men on this subject;—they would have it declared that Love is a mere fancy, a visionary notion of youth, and that Marriage may and should subsist upon some other basis. They deny the divine origin of the passion. That which has been called “the honey drop in the bitter cup of human existence” they condemn as a non-entity; and, not content with thus outraging the feelings of every age and every people, they dare to oppose the high behest of the Deity, and deny their fellow creatures their right to bestow their own affections where nature points the way.

To prove what was the original intent and meaning of the system of *Marriage*, I shall quote from a well-known and rather ancient authority—the Book of Common Prayer.

Marriage, it tells us—and it tells us truly—was, ordained for three things.

“*First.* It was ordained for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.”

“*Secondly.* It was ordained for a remedy against sin.”

“*Thirdly.* It was ordained for the mutual

society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and in adversity."

Can any thing be more plain, more simple, or more expressive than these few lines? Can any one who believes that the rite of marriage was ordained at all deny that it was so for those purposes alone? Is there one word here about adding field to field, or house to house? or about eligible matches? or about fortune hunting? or the necessity of considering the new-fangled doctrines of political economy, that "population has a tendency to press upon subsistence."

I believe that these assertions of the true intent of the holy rite and practice of marriage, are founded on the principles of the Bible, and I am confident that these are themselves founded on the Rock which bears up the universe itself.

There are too many instances where the approving blessing of Heaven can scarcely be expected to fall on the heads of a newly married pair, neither of whom have had any other object in view than the gratification of caprice, love of lucre, selfish ambition, or a mere desire to change their situation in life. The effects of such marriages can hardly be other than bitter regret and lasting misery to themselves, and the fruit of those evils on the heads of their unoffending offspring. On the other hand, where a wise and prudent indulgence of mutual

affection, founded on mutual esteem, has led to an honorable marriage, free from the taint of interested motives, and established on the principle of "mutual society, help, and comfort," how different the scene.

"Thrice happy they, the happiest of their kind,
Whom gentler stars unite."

Necessity of these Subjects being a Branch of Education.

Having now, I hope, clearly shewn the importance of these interesting subjects, I shall strive to prove the wisdom and propriety of instilling clear and distinct ideas thereof, and of the importance of understanding the true character of Love, into the minds of *young people*, who from the lack of this tuition adopt hastily and furtively the most erroneous and romantic notions, that lead to future disappointments in their expectations, which I take to be one leading cause of unhappiness in the married state.

Secondly. I shall shew the folly of the present system of parents, &c. drawing a veil over the subject and forbidding young persons, especially young females, to speak even of Love and Matrimony; and I shall endeavour to prove the origin of this foolish custom, and to depict its ill consequences.

And, lastly. I shall advert to what (it appears to me) the future good of society requires to be taught and practised on these

subjects; with the commendable object of diminishing the evils and adding to the happiness of the married state in all classes and conditions of mankind.

If the father of a youth about to go into the world should devote some portion of the time, money, and attention he applies to instruct his son in the particular acquirements necessary for the line of life he is to fill, in impressing the lad with a knowledge of the nature of that passion on which his happiness must greatly depend, would this be unreasonable? His son is dear to him; he wishes to see him well established in life; and for what reason? If you ask him the question, he will say that it is his duty and his desire to see his son well established; and that if he thought his boy would be unhappy, he should himself die miserable. Ay, but the very point on which it may be demonstrated every man's chief happiness hinges in this world—the degree of domestic peace he enjoys—the mutual affection which exists between him and his partner for life, and the family quiet and prosperity which depend so much on this, *these things* and their important consequences—*this* is the very point, I say, on which this sagacious father says least of all: indeed, in too many cases nothing whatever is said upon the subject, but the young man is left to gather his information how best he may. And if we may judge by the general notions of young men on the subject of Matrimony, as evinced by their

practice, their information is scant enough; and what they have is obtained from the worst possible sources. Woman is destined to be either the purest source of happiness to them in this world of woe—to be their best friend and helpmate—or to be a continual cause of grief—a curse instead of a blessing. And yet, though this is a well known fact, how few young men have any knowledge whatsoever of the character of woman! How should they gain that knowledge? Must they seek it among boon companions at the tavern, on the race course, or inside the theatre? Must they learn this important lesson from vicious examples? or, if they be ever so steady or well conducted, can they even hope to be informed from the pulpit? The subject is thought beneath that sacred office, which perhaps may be sometimes better filled in teaching such wisdom, which Solomon thought of so much importance as to make it the subject of one half of his Proverbs, than in dilating on points of doctrine, which, to the young at least, are but a field of dry bones.

The cause of the universal neglect of such an important portion of education may be pretty clearly traced to the prejudice which exists upon the subject. If you suggest the propriety of the matter being opened to a youth, you will very generally find the father reply, that it is not *prudent* to talk to his son about love. “Oh no,” it will be said, “he will think of that soon enough; it is only putting *nonsense* into the

boy's head." The answer to this is, in the first place, that it is not by any means *nonsense*, but a very serious and important feature in human life. And in the second place, even if it were such, whether they will or not, that same nonsense will get into the boy's head; and that it will even get there much earlier than they generally expect. Now, if this be the case, would it be altogether unwise to prepare the soil for a herb that may, according to the culture it receive, turn out to be either a *profitable plant*, or a *rank and noxious weed*? But let us for a momeent inquire whether the father, who terms the instructing his son as to the nature of Love and the object of Matrimony, and how best to comport himself so as to gain that object, "the putting nonsense into his head," has himself obtained clear and distinct notions on this subject.

Public prejudice but very rarely consists with truth; for the majority of mankind are ever more the creatures of prejudice than of reason. It is much easier to adopt the opinions of the last generation than to weigh them in the scale of reason, or bring them to the touchstone of truth, by comparing them with the results of experience. Hence, we need not be surprised that many absurd and unreasonable notions still reign predominant over the conduct of society. I think a little common calculation will shew that the general opinions regarding the inutility of instructing youth in the nature of Love and

meaning of Matrimony are among the most absurd of these notions.

The duration of that brief space, the life of mortal man, has been estimated, upon the average, at about *thirty years*. This, however, includes the numerous deaths which occur during the fatal period of infancy; and as the actual existence of man, considered as a reasonable being, can be fairly stated to endure only while he possesses knowledge, while he thinks and reflects, I shall confine the period of man's life to the time which is comprised between the ages of fifteen and sixty. This is a longer time than can be proved to be enjoyed by the average number of individuals; but as I wish to put the thing in the least exaggerated point of view, we will take the space of man's life at *forty-five* years. Now, if it can be shewn that during these forty-five years there are spent thirty-five years in one situation, and the remaining ten years in another and different situation, it will not require much argument to shew that a reasonable man should provide more for the term of thirty-five than for that of ten years. But if we reflect that the average time of man's marriage is about twenty-five years of age, we shall perceive that if he live to sixty, as I have before said, the duration of his married life to that of his unmarried is in the ratio of thirty-five to ten, or just seven to two. Hence it irresistibly follows that we should keep the *longer* term, the state of *Marriage*, principally in view

when we set about to lay a foundation for his happiness, or, in other words, when we *plan the structure of his education*.

Well, then, the object of our reason being to teach us the path to happiness—for to that end the gracious gift was given—is it not to obey the design of our Maker to cast about and endeavour to discover what is the main source of happiness for this far-superior-in-duration, this chief, this leading, I may say, this *only important* period of our earthly intercourse with our fellow creatures? This should seem to be undeniable; and to dispute it, or to neglect its consideration, the result of blind and bigoted and miserable prejudice.

“Oh bnt man, proud man!
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the Angels weep.”

I think, then, it will now be admitted that, however important it may be to instruct the youth aright when about to assume the toga of manhood, as to the acquisition of knowledge, health, wealth, or dower, it is unquestionably as wise and as absolutely necessary to teach him how to ensure *happiness* in that state in which so long a proportionate period of his existence is to be developed.

If such knowledge be, then, to be taught at all, it will require but few words to prove that it should be taught correctly. All knowledge

depends on the right reception of its seeds (which are ideas) into the mental soil: if we sow the seeds of thistles, we cannot expect to reap the fruit of the fig tree; in this, as in all other things, as we sow, we must needs reap. And if we would have young people act with wisdom, we must not neglect the cultivation of their minds, and so leave them the chance notions which accident may instil, nor must we allow them to listen to the absurdities of bigotry or the follies which pride may cultivate; but we must place before them the instruction of *wisdom*, and the *results* of *reason*.

History and Origin of the present Prejudices on these Subjects.

I now intend to shew the folly of those parents who endeavour to draw a veil over the subject, and to forbid young persons, especially females, to speak even of love and matrimony. I shall first endeavour to trace the origin of this custom in modern society, and then shew its folly; which indeed must be manifest, if we reflect that it is impossible to prevent them thinking on those things; and therefore it must needs be wiser and better to guide their thoughts into the channels of truth and reason, than to let them flow over the wide and pestilential marshes of error, romance, and delusion.

There can be little doubt that the custom of parents having an entire control over the acts of their children, as regards contracting mar-

riage, had its origin in that barbarous state of society, beyond which the civilization of the eastern nations has not yet emerged. The western or European nations first imbibed their manners and customs from their Roman conquerors; these, again, acquired their ideas of civilization from the Greeks, whom they copied in all things, as the purest models (which in truth they were) of taste and refinement; and while they adopted their politeness, they also copied indiscriminately most of their domestic habits and many of their civil laws. It would require but little research to shew that the intercourse of the Greeks with the Egyptians, and their sundry military excursions into Asia, as well as the practice of their philosophers, of visiting India and other oriental nations, to learn wisdom and render themselves competent teachers of science, were the means by which the people of Greece acquired the stamp of similarity in most of their domestic customs with the oriental and semi-barbarous nations.

In all times the Orientals have treated their children, but more especially their daughters, as mere goods and chattels. If we travel from the borders of the Caspian sea down to the multitudinous cities of China, nay, if we even go to Cape Comorin itself, the *ultima thule* of India, we shall meet with one prevalent and predominant idea on this subject; which is, that a man's daughter may be purchased more readily than his horse.

In the primitive ages of Greece, females were married without any portions; indeed, their husbands usually purchased them, for the presents to her relations were termed the woman's dowry. Accordingly, they treated them as their property, which they could controul at pleasure. It is quite true that the Greeks afterwards emerged from this state of degrading barbarism; but it cannot be denied that it left an indelible stamp of slavish inferiority on the character of woman.

It is remarkable how precisely those nations which are in a state of semi-barbarism agree in their notions and customs regarding the slavery of their females, and the utter absence of liberty in the institution of matrimony.

Russia, China, Sweden, and Persia, are now immersed in this barbarous system. In China, the parents settle every thing themselves: the young people are not allowed to see each other previous to their nuptials; and the husband pays a sum of money to the bride which is tantamount to a purchase, with this exception, if, on viewing the prize, he happens to be dissatisfied with his bargain, he forfeits both money and lady. In Russia, the lady is muffled up and led home by a number of old women, the priest carrying a cross before her. The Emperor is an extensive and arbitrary match-maker, and none dare dispute a match thus provided for them. This plan is not restricted to any particular class; officers of the highest rank, and

even foreigners, have thus found themselves suddenly wedded with wives of another's choosing.

If we turn to the people of Asia in general, whether among the settled inhabitants, as the Turks, or the wandering tribes, as the Calmucks, Mingrelians, Georgians, Armenians, and others, we find them all acting on the principle, more or less, of woman being an *inferior creature*—a slave. Take an Armenian wedding as an example.*

* We went about eight o'clock in the evening, and found the house lighted up and full of the lady's friends, among whom were the priest who was to perform the service, and his wife. We passed through several ante-rooms full of people, and were finally ushered into an inner and secluded chamber, round which was a divan. On this sat cross-legged a number of Armenian ladies, and at the far corner was a motionless figure like a bust in a niche, covered with a rich veil, glittering with gold, which hung down on all sides, so as entirely to conceal her figure beneath it. The bust was the bride. Across the room was a line of men two or three deep, who stood gazing on her in silence. To gratify us, the bride permitted her veil to be raised a little; it was instantly dropped again, but the glimpse we had shewed us a slight figure and a pale face, with a countenance exceedingly pensive and joyless. Her companions, however, were of another character; they were all unveiled, and displayed faces radiant with beauty and cheerfulness. Some of them were exceedingly lovely, crowned with coronets of gold, and their long hair floating about them in extraordinary profusion down to the divan, like the veil of the bride. Though seemingly in high spirits, they spoke in whispers, and all their motions were tempered with modesty and gentleness. After some refreshments and music, an open space was cleared before the bride, on which two embroidered mats were laid. On them were placed two enormous candlesticks, containing wax tapers of a proportionable size; and between them was a third, of still greater magnitude, without a stand, but bound upright to the other two by ribands. This mysterious emblem was called the "nuptial taper:" it repre-

The Chinese may sell his daughter to marry whom he pleases; some fathers sell their daughters while infants, and others even dispose of the child before it is born, on condition that it prove to be a female. The son for whom the purchase has been made dares not refuse the father's choice. The Calmucs also frequently betroth their children before they are born. The children of the Armenians are often married during infancy; and it is exactly the same among the Georgians, who regularly sell their daughters to the slave merchants. When a Mingrelian wishes to take a wife, he must purchase her; and he must give a tolerable price for an unmarried girl, but considerably less for a woman who has been divorced.

sented the maiden state of the girl, and was to burn till that state expired: it was then extinguished, and kept as a relic of the family. The snuff of the wick became the property of the priest, who attributed to it many conjugal virtues. The priest was now called upon to perform another important ceremony. A low table was placed near the nuptial taper, covered with a white cloth. The priest took from his bosom a small crucifix, and, waving it several times in the air over the table, he uttered a benediction, and concluded with a psalm. We were curious to see what mystery was under this cloth. It was slowly lifted up, and there appeared a rich shawl, which was taken up and wrapped about the bride. This ceremony was deemed one of the most important parts of the marriage service, and is called "blessing the nuptial shawl." When these and other rites were over, we expected to see the bridegroom, but he never appeared. He was down in Galata, enjoying himself with his friends; nor was it till the end of three days that the bride was carried to him, wrapped up in her shawl, like a child in swaddling-clothes, when the husband saw her for the first time.—*Dr. Walsh's Residence in Constantinople.*

In Japan, marriages are conducted also entirely by the parents or relations; so is it in the Island of Celebes and other Asiatic Islands, especially in Bornou, where the richest man is he who possesses the greatest number of daughters. It is much the same even in Dalmatia, and among the Morlacchi, where persons are married by mere chance. The father of the future bridegroom, or some other near relation, goes to ask a young woman of such a family, having no determinate choice. On this the girls of the family are all shewn to him, and he chooses one, which is generally the eldest. The father makes little inquiry into the family that asks her; and in some cases he gives his daughter to his servant or tenant, so little are the women regarded. We need not be surprised to find the females held in such utter contempt, that, if the husband has a bedstead, the wife must sleep on the floor near it; or that, when the Morlack husband has occasion to mention his wife, he always premises, "by your leave," or afterwards begs your pardon for his want of politeness.

If we descend still lower into the regions of barbarian life, among the Moors, or other Mahomedans, or of savage life among the sable sons of Africa, we find their women held in the lowest possible estimation; considered as beings equally destitute of souls with the brute beasts, and, like them, openly sold in the markets, or bartered for a few pounds of salt, an ox, or a

sheep. And it is observable, that, exactly as we descend in the scale of civilization, the more degrading is their treatment.

The people of Morocco treat their wives merely as slaves; and no regard whatever is paid to the improvement of their minds. They carry polygamy to a vast excess; the Emperor Bensar, is said to have had *eight thousand* ladies in his harem; and it is common for princes to have as many as four or five thousand at a time; and even for a comparatively poor man to have fifty.

Among the Amatymba Caffres, the price of a wife appears to be at the highest. An English gentleman on visiting their kraal was recently asked how many wives a man has in England, and how many cattle are usually paid for one. He told the chief who asked the question, that no man could have more than *one*, and that property was not given for them, but, on the contrary, was expected *with* them. "You are a people of strange customs," replied the chief; "among us no man can procure a tolerable wife for less than *ten* good oxen, and our chiefs sometimes pay *sixty* cattle for one of superior qualities. Your women, I fear, make but indifferent wives, since no man will pay for them, and their relations must even pay the man to marry them off their hands,"

In Mundingo the price of a wife is about 200 colas (a kind of fruit), two iron bars, and two cows. In Bambouk it is but a few pounds of

salt, a little gold dust, and sometimes an ox or a sheep. But if a gentleman be aristocratic in his notions, he may for a few Dutch coins, glass ornaments, amber, coral, and other trifles, marry the daughter of a king. And among some of the miserable tribes of Africa the value a man sets on his daughter is nothing more than the price of a *bottle of brandy*! Surely the force of degradation can no farther go! The custom of marrying their children when young infants exists here also, especially in Mundingo. And universally the parents are the persons who decide the matter, even where they allow the young people to grow up first.

This is the case in the kingdom of Benin, in Madagascar, in Japan, at Sierra Leone, at Whydah, on the Gold Coast, and among the barbarous Quagas, where the interchange of presents among the parents is the ceremony of marriage. I might enumerate a vast number of other countries, where the same abominable abuse of parental authority exists. The Hot-tentots are, perhaps, among the least civilized of human beings; and they also testify by their practice the honor they pay to parental authority; for if the woman disapprove however much of the husband her friends have chosen, she is still compelled to marry. Indeed, the notions of these people are amazingly similar to those of some individuals in highly polished society, who deny their daughters the natural right to choose for themselves. And we may

trace other customs, much honored in our own land, though not founded altogether in reason, among these mere savages. The eldest son here is by law allowed to deprive his brothers and sisters of the greater portion of his father's property. Among the Hottentots, the law of primogeniture encourages the eldest son to exercise every kind of tyranny over his brothers and sisters. And when he comes of age and comes into his estate, it is expected that he should behave ill to women in general, and to his *mother* in particular, by way of evincing his contempt for every thing feminine. In fact, the first thing a youth does on being admitted into male society is to go home and bestow a good cudgelling on his mother.

I think that the affected contempt for female society, which disgraces many of our young gentlemen, may be considered as near an approximation to the savage manners of the Hottentots as the most determined dandy could desire. Indeed, when I witness an instance of this gross endeavour to retrograde in civilization, I always feel inclined to believe that the patient, if a little farther gone, would be ready to imitate his African prototype, and shake his horsewhip at his *mamma**.

* Speaking of our barbarous ancestors, the celebrated geographer, Ptolemy, says, after enumerating Britain, Galatia, Germany, Italy, Gaul, and other places, "the said nations regard women with scorn and indifference." This was written 1700 years ago; hence it may not be denied that the barbarous people of this island, the painted Picts, were only

Of all the nations of the East, Persia has made the greatest progress in civilization ; yet, even there, and to this day, we find a female regarded as one so vastly inferior to lordly man, that her very existence is scarcely recognized by her father. It is there considered an offence to inquire of a man how many daughters he may have. They live concealed in the harem, and are disposed of to the best bidder, as occasion may offer. On a recent occasion, an English Ambassador, who had received numerous marks of favour from the *Shah*, ventured to hint that he was curious to know the number of his Highness's daughters. It was a long time before he was understood, the question being so unusual. At length the King smiled, and observed that he suspected what his wish was, but that he really could not inform him, but he would send for the chief officer, who had the care of those affairs. On his appearance the Shah asked him, "How many daughters have I, Mustapha ; do you happen to know?"

just upon a level with too many of their would-be-thought refined descendants of the present day in this respect, who are less excusable, inasmuch as *they* treat with "indifference" beings many degrees more lovely than the prettiest female Pict that ever trod the fields of Gloucestershire. Nor can these young men lay claim to such superior qualities over their barbarous ancestors as would entitle them so to treat females ; for it cannot always be said of them, as Ptolemy said of the Picts and others, that "they are lovers of freedom, warlike, industrious, cleanly and high-minded ; careful of the community, brave and faithful, affectionate in their families, and perform good and kind actions."

Then, bowing to the earth, the chief officer replied with great solemnity, "Most potent light of the world, your Majesty has exactly *three hundred and seventy-three*!!"

We do not suppose that many individuals in those parts of the world have so far infringed the laws of the Malthusian philosophy as his Majesty of Persia; but yet we know that the custom of polygamy must necessarily, by giving a man many children, tend to diminish those feelings of paternal affection which are among the pleasantest and the sweetest consequences of a happy marriage.

To return to the history of the custom. The Greeks, in their earliest stages of society, copied the customs of the Orientals, in considering their children as beings over whom nature had given them an unlimited control*. And from them the Romans adopted the idea that they should have a power even over the lives of their children, which was at one period the law of Rome. And they *ever* possessed a power, as unlimited as the most barbarous of the Oriental nations, in the matter of their matrimonial engagements.

* Aristotle says, "The paternal power or authority over children is a kingly authority: wherefore Homer, when he intended to set forth *Jupiter's* kingly power over all, very well called him the *Father* of men and gods." I may here observe that this idea of a *father* is the origin of that name Jupiter, which is an abbreviation of *Jovis-pater*, or Jove the Father; which may be traced through many ancient nations; as, for example, the *Scythian* Jupiter was called *Pappæus*, or father; from whence comes the English word *papa*.

From the principles of jurisprudence followed by the Romans the first laws of the western world were copied; and to this day we follow the customs and obey the laws (though somewhat smoothed down by the wearing hand of time) that were found in Rome after having existed in Greece, and which were indubitably based upon the customs of Oriental barbarism.

The Orientals invariably consider the female sex as many degrees below the importance of the male. And not only is this the case among the Mahommedans, but we find that the Hindoos regard it as an irrefragable principle that women were created for no other purpose than to be the servant of man, and they regard women as *inherently vicious*, and, like other slave owners, accuse the victims of their own tyranny of being that which they have done all in their power to render them. "Woman," say the laws of the Hindoos, "has *six inherent failings*; in the first place, an inordinate love of dress, finery, and delicacies; in the second, an immoderate love of pleasures; thirdly, a violent irascibility; fourthly, a profound and dissembled malice; fifthly, an innate jealousy which converts the good qualities of others into bad; sixthly, a natural inclination to evil"—a sentiment that conveys more than the other five. Holding such sentiments, we need not be surprised that they declare it to be adultery if a man only look at, nod to, or smile at a married woman. The Druses are so excessively jealous,

that if a man were to inquire after the health of his friend's wife or daughter, the other would go home and put his wife and daughter to death as persons who were a disgrace to him. The Gentoos, it is well known, have a law by which the widow is compelled to burn herself to death on the funeral pile of her deceased husband. And they say that this law was originated by the custom of the women to poison their husbands: thus adding insult to injury. The Hindoos and Gentoos, like other Oriental and savage nations, marry their children while yet infants.

The result of these customs is invariably to cause an entire absence of affection, and very frequent infidelity. In the vain hope of avoiding this, the women are exposed to the most dreadful punishments for a breach of their conjugal fidelity: they are sewn up in sacks and thrown alive into the sea; they are scalded to death; they are tied to a tree in a forest and left to perish; they are buried alive; they are sold as slaves; they are scourged till they cannot move, and then left to die; they are poisoned with *upas*: in short, every device that revenge and human ingenuity can contrive is in vain had recourse to, to bring about that fidelity which can only be insured by the means nature has provided—marriage—the bond of love—the tie of mutual affection.

The horror of these barbarous punishments is well depicted in the account given by a re-

sident in Java. "There were thirteen of the Emperor's wives, who, in spite of guards and the fear of punishment, had revolted against their tyrant husband; they were condemned to suffer the dreadful death of the *upas* poison. It was in the forenoon, about eleven o'clock, when the fair criminals were led into an open space within the palace; the judge passed sentence upon them, by which they were to be poisoned with a lance dipped in *upas*. An alcoran was then presented to them, and they were forced to confess, according to the Mahomedan laws, that the sentence passed upon them was just and equitable. This they did by laying their right hand upon the alcoran, their left upon their breast, and having their eyes lifted towards heaven; the judge then held the alcoran to their lips, and they kissed it. These ceremonies over, the executioner proceeds in his fatal work. Thirteen posts, each about five feet high, had been previously erected; to these the delinquents were fastened, and their bosoms bared. They continued a short time in prayer, attended by several priests, until the judge made a signal to the executioner, when the latter produced an instrument, much like the spring lancets used by farriers to bleed horses. With this instrument, which was dipped into the gum of the *upas* tree, the unhappy creatures were pierced in the middle of the breast, and the operation was performed on all of them in less than two minutes. The sudden effects of

the poison were prodigious. In less than five minutes they were all seized with a violent tremor, attended with a *subsultus tendinum* (a sudden starting of the tendons); after which they died in the greatest agonies, calling upon God and Mahomet to have mercy on them: and in sixteen minutes they had all expired. On examining the bodies, they were full of livid spots, their faces much swollen, their colour changed to a kind of blue, and their eyes yellow."

Let it not be thought, however, that there is an absence of feeling, or of natural affection, in the daughters of the East; and that they must, therefore, be subjected to such terrible tortures, to compel them to regard their husbands. No; the contrary is the fact. If treated kindly, *they* become, what women all over the world may be rendered by affectionate treatment, beings full of the finest sentiments; in short, they, indeed, are what David has declared of man—"but a little lower than the angels." For even the sable beauty of Sierra Leone, if united to a white man, and treated as a civilized being, is true, *submissive*, and *grateful* to the utmost; in short, she uses every art to merit his kindness and his love. If the husband embark to cross the sea, the disconsolate wife accompanies him to the shore, and frequently follows him by swimming a considerable way after the vessel, till her strength is exhausted. When obliged to return, this artless child of nature gathers

up the sand on which are the last impressions of his footsteps, which she ties up in a piece of cotton, and lays under her pillow. Does not this demonstrate the truth of my proposition, that woman, if treated with equality and respect, is inherently amiable? and that it is only the contrary which renders man a sour and dissatisfied tyrant, and the other a wretched and deceitful slave?

Marriage in the Middle Ages.

If we look into the history of the middle ages, we shall find that feudal power had for a time, and in some manner, superseded parental authority. It was not the father, but the liege lord who had power to dispose of a maid in marriage: and even to command a young man to accept in wedlock not the woman he loved, but her whom the prince approved.

There is an old ballad in the reliques of Percy, which recounts a conversation between a maid of low degree and a noble of the court on whom the king had bestowed her; and, as it illustrates the custom of marriage in those ages, I will take leave to insert it.

“He brought her down full forty pound
Tied up within a glove;
‘Fair maid, I’ll give the same to thee,
Go seek another love.’”

“‘O! I’ll have none of your gold,’ she said,
‘Nor I’ll have none of your fee;
But your fair bodye I must have,
The king hath granted me.’”

"Sir William ran and fetched her, then,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
Saying, 'Fair maid, take this to thee;
My fault will ne'er be told.'"

"'Tis not the gold that shall me tempt,'
These words then answered she;
'But your own bodye I must have,
The king hath granted me.'"

That the custom of marriages being ordered by authority was prevalent all over Europe, as well as in England, is manifest. We find Boccaccio building one of his tales on it. "The fair Giletta was the daughter of a celebrated physician attached to the court of Roussillon; she is represented as a rich heiress, who rejects many suitors of worth and rank, in consequence of her secret attachment to the young Bertram de Roussillon. She cures the King of France of a grievous distemper by one of her father's prescriptions; and she asks and receives as her reward the young Count Roussillon as her wedded husband." That the idea of the young man having a will of his own was never entertained is evident, for he forsook her as soon as he had obeyed the king's imperious command; even on their wedding day. Shakspeare has immortalized the story; and he shews how much against the young lord's inclination was the match, when he makes Helena receive a letter from him, in which he says,

"Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France."

In short, we may easily prove, that, even as

late as the fourteenth century, a lady, if rich enough, might actually purchase a husband. Mrs. Jameson relates a case very much in point.

“Camiola Turinga, a rich Sicilian heiress, was the origin of Massinger’s maid of honor. She was a lady of Messina, who lived contemporary with Boccaccio. It fell out in those days that Prince Orlando of Arragon, the younger brother of the King of Sicily, having taken the command of a naval force against Naples, was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner. His ransom was fixed very high; and for some reason his brother, the King of Sicily, refused to release him from captivity, which was rendered unusually severe. Orlando, who was celebrated for his fine person and reckless valour, was apparently doomed to languish away the rest of his days in a dungeon, when Camiola devoted the half of her fortune to ransom him; but, as such an action might expose her to evil comments, she made it a condition that Orlando should marry her. The prince gladly accepted the terms, and sent her the contract of marriage, signed by his own hand; but no sooner was he at liberty, than he refused to fulfil it, and even denied all knowledge of his benefactress. Camiola appealed to the tribunal of state, produced the written contract, and described the obligations she had heaped on this ungrateful and ungenerous man: sentence was given against him, and he was adjudged to Camiola, not only as her rightful

husband, but *as a property* which, according to the laws of war in that age, *she had purchased* with her gold. The day of marriage was fixed : Orlando presented himself with a splendid retinue ; Camiola also appeared decorated as for her bridal ; but, instead of bestowing her hand on the recreant, she reproached him in the presence of all with his breach of faith, declared her utter contempt for his baseness ; and then, freely bestowing on him the sum paid for his ransom as a gift worthy of his mean soul, she turned away, and dedicated herself and her heart to heaven. In this resolution she remained inflexible, though the king and all the court united in entreaties to soften her. She took the veil ; and Orlando, henceforth regarded as one who had stained his knighthood and violated his faith, passed the rest of his life as a dishonoured man, and died in obscurity."

That this custom existed in France, is well known ; even as late as the first French revolution. For the king had still the right of disposing of any heiress ; and to this day we may perceive a remnant of it in the laws of England, which give the Lord Chancellor similar power of giving away in marriage any young lady who has the misfortune to inherit property. The brutal feudal law in France, termed *droit de soccage**, was once in full force and practice : and it was never legally set aside, though an

* I have before mentioned that it still exists, in all its plenitude, among the subjects of the tyrant of Poland.

increase of Christian knowledge and improved ideas of civilization had virtually repealed it, until the French revolution swept it and other feudal abominations away, never, let us hope, to be renewed.

It is probable that the first origin of our marriage ceremony arose from the barbarous custom of the weak being sold as slaves to the strong; for we find that *badges* were worn by slaves: and as weak and unresisting woman had none to help her, she was handed over to her new lord and master, wearing the most usual badge worn by slaves. At least, such may be supposed to have been the origin of the wedding ring. It is well known that the modern Copts are the remains of the ancient Egyptians, as the Welch are of the ancient Britons. Now we find that the Copts (whose ancestors did not suffer any severe punishment if they even *killed* their children) have the common oriental custom of betrothing their children at six or seven years of age, which is done by putting a ring on their finger. And the chief ceremony at the marriages of the savages in America, is the presenting the bride with a *collar* formed of a leather thong, to be a symbol of her slavery, and to signify that she is to do all the domestic drudgery.*

The ceremony of marriage being regarded as a religious rite, was originally introduced in the

* The character of Gerth, the swineherd, with his collar the badge of slavery, as described by Sir Walter Scott, will be here called to mind.

thirteenth century. During the reign of Pope Innocent the Sixth (Stephen d'Albert, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia), the council of Samur was held, on the 2d December, 1253. It was held "concerning the regular and secular clergy; and against *clandestine marriages*." So that we may presume that the arrangement was merely to insure publicity, and prevent people being married without the consent of their parents: and in process of time it came to be considered a *sacred* ceremony; but for nearly 1300 years after the introduction of Christianity it was merely a civil institution. It has not endured 600 years as such, and it is at length done away with by law in this country. It is rather a curious fact, that the people of Ostiac in Siberia, of whom this Pope had been Bishop, still remain Pagans. They take as many wives as they can afford, and are fond of marrying their wife's sister, which they think brings good luck; and, moreover, they have only to pay her father half the *kalym* or price paid for the first lady.*

• It was not till upwards of three hundred years after the marriage ceremony became a religious rite, that people were married *inside* the church. In 1559, the ceremony still took place at the church door. When Elizabeth of France, daughter of Henry the Second, was married to Philip the Second of Spain, the Bishop of Paris (Eustache de Bellay) performed the ceremony *at the church door* of Nôtre Dame.

When once the clergy had got the people to place the business in their hands, however, they began to turn it to good account in the way of making money. They pretended that the new married couple ought not, without their permission, to live together for three days after their marriage. To such a length did they carry their exactions by this means, that we

It is only as knowledge extended itself, and the bright beams of civilization shone forth, that the idea of the female being a party to the contract, as far as having a will of her own to accept or refuse, can be at all detected.

The Injustice and Unreasonableness of Parental Authority in these Matters.

Having now slightly traced the origin of parents treating their children as no *parties* to the marriage contract, but merely passive instruments, and quite unfit to be consulted about the matter; let us next examine how far the present remnant of that custom is founded in *justice*.

There are two parties to be considered; the parent, who gives away his daughter in marriage, or consents to the marriage of his son; and the individual, son or daughter, who is to enter upon the contract and abide all its consequences. The parent claims the first notice. He has arrived at that period of life when the passions are supposed to be cool and calmed down to the

find an Arrêt of the French Parliament appeared (March 19th, 1409), prohibiting the Bishop of Amiens and his clergy from *exacting any more money* from new married persons on that pretence. But we must remember that these were *catholic* clergy, and that there were not in those days any Dissenters. Whether, if there had been, they might have gone so far as to exact money from *them* by compelling them to be married in their churches, is a point not easily decided; but we know that such has been the case now-a-days, on the ground that the marriage ceremony is essentially a religious rite: a fact which the primitive Christians did not learn from the Apostles, and which the church itself took exactly *twelve hundred and fifty-three years* to discover!

bias of reason ; he has lived the best portion of his days ; and the remaining part of life will be less active in its pleasures, less exciting, less important than the former. He, however, has still a relish for the world, and hopes to see his child not only happy, but prosperous ; because, though the former may gratify his paternal affection, the latter will also gratify his pride, his ambition, his vanity. And though some parents might be content that their child should be *happy*, yet there are but few, perhaps none, who do not consider that it is also necessary that their child be *prosperous*. It is but human nature after all ; for we naturally consider ourselves, when we express pleasure at the success of our friends ; we consider, I say, how their success may reflect upon ourselves some degree of credit or importance. The parent has to live a few short years ; too often, “years when he has no pleasure in them.” His interest in the affair of the marriage of his child is confined to a brief space, and has but little that is of the *chief* importance to himself ; little that is personal, little that imports aught to his own happiness. It cannot be denied that he has something in the stake ; but all that I contend for is, that his interest is not lasting, is not personally important ; inasmuch, as he may himself be, in all probability, but a short time a witness to the consequences ; and, in the majority of cases, he, truly, is not long a witness. And even where he is so, he can but for very few years take any

vivid interest in the affairs of this world; because he is fast falling into the lean and slippered pantaloon; he is fast approaching "the last stage of all." On the other hand, there is to be considered the child of that parent; the young man full of fire and spirit; ardent with hope, abounding with vivacity, replete with joyous anticipations. He walks abroad with the wide world before him; life is new; hope is strong; existence itself is delightful. Moreover, he feels a new sense; for *love* has taken possession of his breast.

"It is the shew and seal of nature's truth,
When love's strong passion is impressed in youth."

He has seen one for whom he feels an affection, a passion, which prompts him to exclaim, with Hamlet,

"Forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum."

Lastly, he has *all* his happiness, the whole length of his existence in this world, depending on the issue; nay, not alone his own happiness, but the happiness of his second self, the happiness of his children, and even to his children's children.

I confess, then, that I perceive a far greater interest at stake on the side of the youth than on that of his father. And I cannot understand how it is equitable that the latter should be allowed so much control in the affair, and the

former so little. I cannot perceive any *just* reason why the experience of the father should be trusted to, where he will pay so small a share of the penalty if the consequences be unhappy. I conceive, on the contrary, that *if the child were educated* with a just and enlightened intention to enable him to judge aright on this important subject, instead of being kept in worse than Egyptian darkness, he might be safely entrusted to choose for himself a site for the building in which he must be compelled to reside for the great period of his days.

Having considered the custom and, indeed, the law of parental authority in the marriage of young persons, and shewn its origin, and I think, its *injustice*, I will now say a few words on the manner in which, it appears to me, to be opposed to *reason*.

It will hardly be denied, that children, when they grow to years of maturity, should be treated as *friends* by their parents. Nature herself seems to point out the wisdom of this principle. For when the old begin to descend into the vale of years, when they find life every day less pleasant and more burdensome, is it not evident, that they daily require more and more the soothing hand and the cheering voice of friendship? But who can they look to for unbiased and sincere affection, who, for genuine regard, sincere and disinterested consolation, *pure friendship*, in a word, but to those who are indebted to them for existence? Yet how

can friendship exist if one of the parties will oppose the desire of the other, for that which the other thinks needful to his or her happiness? It is quite reasonable that friendship should exist between parents and their children; but friendship cannot exist where authority intervenes to deny happiness to one of the parties; therefore, it follows, that the exercise of such parental authority is *inconsistent with reason*. The only argument which can be opposed to this authority being done away with in society, is the danger there would be to young people, who it is declared are unfit to judge for themselves, and would be led away by their passions to act imprudently. If the existence of unhappy marriages were to be the criterion of imprudence, I might cut short the argument by saying, that things could hardly be worse than they are. But I reply to this argument, that the monuments daily reared by all classes of society to testify the *folly* and *injustice* of the present system, could scarcely be equalled, and could never be exceeded, by that which I advocate.

The system which exists, took birth in barbarous ages, among uncivilized people. It was fostered by foul slavery, reared up by ignorance, and protected by the spirit of despotism. It is now fitly defended by prejudice and self-interest; and, as might have been expected, it has thriven under the brutal laws of feudal government, and, like the poisonous *upas* tree, it has

borne the fatal fruit of almost general domestic misery. The change I propose is merely a recourse to *reason*, through the medium of her fairest handmaid, EDUCATION. The results I anticipate are friendship between parents and their children; and love, peace, and happiness, between husbands and their wives.

**The System that Reason and the Public Good
demand to be adopted.**

Lastly, I have now only to say a few words on what, it appears to me the future good of society requires should be taught and practised on these subjects, to diminish the evils and improve the happiness of the married state.

I consider, then, that the young of both sexes should be *early* taught to regard the married state as a happy condition, in which the Almighty intended mankind to live in society. With this view they should learn what the intent and objects of it are; and they should be made to understand that there is nothing indelicate or improper in thinking or speaking of this subject: which, in truth, there is not, but which young persons are often falsely taught that there is. As a first step to happiness in this state, they should be impressed with an idea of the nature and importance of the feeling we call *love*, or the fixing the affections. At present they are falsely told that this is of no importance, and a thing not to be talked of;

that they may be afterwards more readily submitted to the tyranny of parental authority.* They should next be taught the necessity of well understanding those things which are necessary to a prudent choice; for, I do not advocate the giving them a blind liberty to choose for themselves, without *first* teaching them *how to choose aright*. The chief of these things are INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER and RELIGIOUS DISPOSITION, HEALTH OF BODY AND OF MIND, TEMPER, COMPATIBILITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES, EDUCATION and INFORMATION.

Since we have seen that it may be proved that the happiness of human life is deeply involved in the act of marrying wisely, which consists of being *guided* but not *duped* by the passion of love, how necessary is it that we teach our children this; nay, how are we called on by the united voices of nature and humanity, backed by the principles of justice and the dictates of religion, which bid us "do as we would be done

* The miserable result of this system is abundantly evident in the herds of unhappy beings whose perfect ignorance of these things has been fostered under the mistaken notion of keeping their minds *pure* thereby, and who have thus been rendered ready victims of designing men. A very little of such knowledge, and a conviction that no arbitrary authority would intervene to prevent the marriage they are almost invariably, but falsely, promised, would wonderfully diminish the progress of seduction. The female who knew that there was no occasion, no pretence for concealment, nothing to be feared by an open avowal of an attachment, would take alarm at its first insidious approach, which the apprehension of parental authority, and the entire loss of the object of her affection, at present but too often induce her to conceal, even from herself.

by," to well inform the minds of our children of the nature and importance of that passion!

That celebrated, worthy, and excellent philosopher, the founder of one of the States of America, WILLIAM PENN, expressed these sentiments on the subject:—

"Never," says William Penn, "never marry but for *love*, but see that thou love what is *lovely*."

"If love be not thy chiefest motive, thou wilt soon grow weary of the married state, and stray from thy promise to search out thy pleasures in forbidden places."

"It is the difference between pure love and impure love, that one is *fixed*, that volatile love grows, but the other wastes by enjoyment. The reason is, that one springs from a union of souls, the other from a mere union of sense."

"They that marry for *money* cannot have the true satisfaction of marriage; the more essential requisite being wanting."

And we find the same sentiments held by the excellent author of "Night Thoughts," the celebrated Dr. Young:—

"Two kindred souls alone must meet,
'Tis friendship makes the bondage sweet,
And joins their mutual loves;
Bright Venus on her rolling throne,
Is drawn by gentlest birds alone,
And Cupid's yoke the doves."

But after the foundation has been thus spoken of, let us ask what are the constituent parts of the edifice. We have mentioned in-

tegrity of character, and religious disposition. Surely, to mention the former of these, is to command universal assent to the proposition. For, if the partner of our future days be wanting in *character*, owing to misconduct, or the indulgence of vicious habits or propensities, how can we *esteem* the person? and if we cannot esteem, we cannot long continue to love.

“But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit.”

This is too true; but then it is not a consequence *inherent in our natures*, but arises from the lamentable DEFICIENCY OF OUR EDUCATION, which has hitherto left the task of removing the cataract from the lover's eyes to that able *chirurgical operator—Hymen*. The evil of which is, that, when the blindness is removed, the patient discovers himself a prisoner for life, in the castle of the Giant Despair. On this subject the talented author of *Lacon* says, “In women, we love that which is natural, we admire that which is acquired, and shun that which is artificial. But a system of education that combines the evil of all, and gives us the good of neither, that presents us with the ignorance of that which is natural, without its artlessness, and the cunning of that which is artificial without its acquirements, that gives us little to admire, less to love, and much to despise, is more calculated to procure the female a partner for the minuet than for the marriage.”

—He might have added, is more likely to *de-lude the lover* than to *delight the husband*. “It is not,” says Mrs. Jameson, “a woman’s attainments which make her amiable or un-amiable, estimable or the contrary, but her *qualities*.” Now, the reason young persons so often fall into error as to the true character of those they love, is manifestly the result of what the same lady terms “that *imperfect* education which at once cultivates and enslaves the intellect, and loads the memory, while it fetters the judgment.”

If it be granted that a good moral character be essential, it will hardly be denied, by persons looking forward to a future state, that the parent of their children should be fitted by a religious disposition, to bring up those children “in the fear and nurture of the Lord.” It is true, then, that the comfort, content, and happiness of the man or woman who marries, depend almost entirely on the conduct and character of their partner for life. It is not the amusement derived from an individual at a public entertainment, nor the interest felt in their conversation in a solitary walk, the display of accomplishments in trifles, or of talents in important matters, that can be taken as criteria of the probable degree of happiness we should enjoy if condemned to spend our days with them until death. At our uprising in the morning, at every varied meal, at our outgoings and incomings, at each diversity of amusement,

at almost every species of occupation, at every abode, and on perhaps almost every journey, in good humour and in ill, during sickness and during sorrow, in mirth and in sadness—day after day, week after week, month after month,—from year's end to year's end, until we resign our breath, we bind ourselves to live *together*; and that bond is irrevocable! Here, then, is an engagement of importance beyond all others which can be enumerated. A man may engage in one trade or profession—he may fail, and try his fortune in a second. He may settle in one or two lands, and remove for better success to a third. But if *he marry a wife*, the die is cast for aye—the deed cannot be undone. Shall we, then, hesitate to declare that we should *educate* the candidates for this interminable co-partnership, to make every endeavour to ascertain the solvency of those who are to join the firm? Must we continue to wonder if we find the neglect of this precaution lead to perpetual bankruptcy of all their domestic happiness?

The next important point to be ascertained is *health of body and of mind*. I have placed the former first, because the latter is, when it is absent, so obviously an evil, that there is less danger of its being unnoticed. But health of body is too frequently neglected. “Men,” says William Penn, “are frequently more careful in breeding their horses and dogs than their children. The former must be of the best sort for shape, strength, and courage; but as for

the latter, their own posterity, *money* shall answer all things. With such it makes the crooked straight, sets squint eyes right, cures madness, covers folly, changes ill conditions, mends the skin, gives a sweet breath, repairs honours, makes young, and works wonders." Surely, I may exclaim, that all common sense points out that the candidates for matrimony should be informed of the fatal consequences to their offspring of neglecting this important point—*health of body*. Indeed, common justice forbids the custom of entailing hereditary diseases upon the offspring; but yet how little caution the parents take upon this head, when we daily see consumption, scrofula, and numerous other diseases come before the altar of Hymen, which ought to be guarded by the goddess Hygeia alone. If their children, who have to feel all the evil consequences, were properly informed on this head, it may be supposed that "*a sound mind in a sound body*" would be a better recommendation of one sex to the other than a purse of gold, or the ability to waste time at the piano-forte.

The next point is *temper*, and a very important one it is acknowledged to be. If it were more considered, it would be a powerful inducement to young people to acquire a mastery over their angry and violent passions; and it would wonderfully spread the oil of harmony over the troubled waters of domestic infelicity. Here again the reason of the neglect is, that

the parents have no fear of the consequences on themselves—*they* will not reap the bitter fruit of perpetual jars and discord; and the young know not the serious consequences of this evil, until they have learned by experience; when it is *too late* to apply their knowledge.

We now come to *compatibility of circumstances*. There is no lack of care and painstaking on this head; and, indeed, the lessons given young persons are sometimes rather *de trop*; not that the state of society, and justice to their children, will allow that it should be thought little of, or neglected.

“ Besides you know
Prosperity's the very bond of love;
Whose fresh complexion, and whose heart together
Affliction alters.”

I do not argue for omitting the full consideration of family and connexions: but neither these, nor the importance of *money*, should ever be allowed to usurp the place of other and more important considerations. Happiness, I am of opinion, rarely exists for any length of time where such reflections occur, as Helena, in “All's well that ends well,” makes—

“ It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it—he's so far above me.”

A great disparity of circumstances, like that of age, is apt to destroy those feelings on which love is maintained. And unless there be something approximating to equality, something not altogether different in their circumstances, no

young couple can expect domestic happiness with any rational certainty ; though it is just possible that, where there exists sufficient strength of mind to overcome that feeling of difference which may be expected to arise, they may still be happy, if there be other requisites for that blessing.*

• Here I might enlarge on many points of disparity in disposition, habits, education, &c., which should be especially avoided by those who would shun the rocks of domestic infelicity ; but it must be very obvious that I am only slightly *hinting* at the general features of that form of education for young people, which may be readily filled up, if society can but be prevailed on to consider those young people as the proper agents in the business, instead of leaving all to their parents or guardians, who too often look at the subject through the telescopic lens of mere worldly advantage.

“It is important to a well-assorted marriage that the balance of nature be preserved, and that the degree of superiority incident to the higher sex should obtain in the matrimonial connexion. This rule can rarely be infringed without mischief. Manifest superiority in a woman either produces in her a feeling of disrespect towards him with whom she is associated, destructive of the reverence essential to female love, or, at least, creates a suspicion that such want of reverence is entertained. Especially when the superiority is in those mental qualities in which the manly vigour ought to be evinced ; if, in spite of this disproportion, in some instances the unsuitability is not apparent, it must be the result of great good sense on the one hand, or of great good temper on the other. Again, if inferiority, not subordination, characterize the female side, the balance is equally destroyed, and the probability of happiness still more doubtful. For the affection which will render married life happy is not the passing admiration of a pretty face, but the esteem which cherishes because it respects, and grows because it discovers intrinsic qualities to value. It may be remarked, that if marriage is to both parties a risk, it is especially so to a woman, and peculiarly to a virtuous and religious woman. In one sense, indeed, the higher her tone of feeling, the better regulated her character, the greater the hazard. For

Lastly; we come to consider *education* and *information*. According as the mind is educated it becomes strong, and is enabled to bear the buffets of fortune. And as none may expect to go through this world unscathed by sorrow, as "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," it is a matter of importance that, in choosing a companion for life, we seek among those enabled by the exercise of wisdom and philosophy to bear their own troubles, and to assist us in bearing ours with equanimity. Moreover, a well informed mind is more likely to produce the pleasant fruits of sociability; to not only mitigate our griefs, but to increase our pleasures. It is a soil in which the tree of love has the best prospect of yielding a goodly produce, and of retaining the beauty of its verdure even until the winter of life. It has been truly said that "Knowledge is Power;" and I am of opinion that it nowhere shews itself more plainly than in those situa-

though a woman of superior mind is enabled to encounter trial, and even to rise above it; though she can often smooth asperities, and so use her influence, as to prevent and cure domestic discomfort; still she is far more alive to the sorrows arising from matrimonial uncongeniality than one of a less fine mould. She knows that her duty lies in submission; that it becomes her not to oppose, rarely to remonstrate; that whilst she secretly deploras the causes of her sorrow, she must lock them up in her own bosom, and patiently endure what she cannot remedy. Indifference cannot be her refuge; neither can she seek in company and diversion to forget or to avoid her home: she must either be herself the soul and solace of married life, or the victim of conjugal unhappiness." — *Female Improvement*, by Mrs. Sandford.

tions where it empowers us to curb and to conquer the angry and discordant passions ; where it pilots us through the gulf of matrimonial existence, and enables us to avoid the rocks of jealousy, the quicksands of folly, and the whirlpools of indifference ; and at length brings us securely into the haven of mutual, lasting, and honourable affection.

When I reflect on this subject of mental cultivation, I cannot omit to mention the delight I experience at witnessing the presence of numerous young ladies at public lectures. I remember that these young ladies are to be the mothers of the next generation, and I feel gratified and convinced that *their* sons, at least, will not contemn what their mothers approved. I have observed that more ladies attend than gentlemen ; and, on quitting the lecture room, I have regretted to find that my own sex, young men from college, and others, were in great numbers lounging the streets in idleness, after attending pigeon-shooting matches, or wasting their means at billiard tables. But however I may regret to perceive the idle and dissipated habits of those young gentlemen, who think it very fine and very manly to ridicule the mental acquirements of females, I honestly confess that I feel proud of the character and conduct, in informing their minds, of my amiable and intelligent country-women *

* "A high degree of intellectual refinement in the female, is the surest pledge society can have for the improvement of the male."

A well informed woman may be safely expected to make a better wife and a better mother than one who merely excels in music, or drawing, or dancing, which, after all, are merely the accomplishments of the harem and the seraglio. Indeed, they are to be found there in far greater excellence than in any English drawing room ; and it is evident, that the origin of these accomplishments being taught young ladies was the oriental idea of their having been created chiefly to please and to amuse the lords of the creation.*

As civilization advances, let us hope that we

ON WOMAN.

“Without thee, what were unenlightened man ?
A savage roaming through the woods and wilds
In quest of prey ; and with the unfashioned fur
Rough clad ; devoid of every finer art,
And elegance of life. Nor happiness
Domestic, mixed of tenderness and care,
Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss,
Nor grace, nor love were his.”

Thompson.

* This idea of feminine inferiority was embraced by the most serious and sober of the ancients ; for we find that even STRABO, who flourished in the Augustan age, declared that “It is not possible that women should be conducted and carried on towards piety, holiness, and faith, merely by philosophic reason and truth ; but this must be done by superstition, and that not without fables and prodigious or wonderful narrations.” The best reply to which has been given by the publication of that extraordinary work on the sciences, by our country-woman Mrs. Somerville. Yet we may believe that certain reverend orators in these days hold with Strabo, if we may judge by their readiness to fill the ears of their female auditors with “*wonderful narrations.*”

may shake off these Eastern notions, which have rendered our females apparently inferior; and that they may be educated on a more rational principle, fitted for the wives, not of Oriental despots, but of free-born Englishmen. Let us hope that they will be hence considered as fit companions as well as wives; that they will no longer be the mental slaves they become by being tied to the pianoforte for many hours every day, whether they have a natural taste for music or not; but that, following the example of the French, we shall leave music for professional people, who may be hired to amuse us, while our daughters are taught more important matters. And, in short, that as regards their *minds*, our females may no longer be shackled; for the wives of freemen should themselves be free.

Conclusion.

To conclude these remarks. It is not my intention to recapitulate; but I may be permitted to add a few words by way of ending my observations. I have endeavoured to call attention to the importance of the subject of Love and Matrimony; and to shew that the customs and laws of our society in this country are founded, as far as regards those subjects, almost entirely on the remnants of barbarous practices, borrowed from the ages of antiquity and the regions of uncivilized life. I have at-

tempted to prove that our customs require to be *reformed*, with a view to render the married state, and hence the largest portion of society, less obnoxious to the charge of being, what an able writer has declared wedlock has now become, "the standing jest of fools, the curse of knaves, and the plague of most men." I have sought to demonstrate that the chief cause of the evil arises from the principle of *parental authority*; which is not, from the very constitution of mankind, capable of being practised in a disinterested and reasonable manner, or of gaining the end it has in vain sought to accomplish during a period of many hundred generations. That end is the rendering marriage, what it ought to be, *happy* in the pleasures of friendship, the enjoyments of sense and reason, and, indeed, in all the sweets of life.

I have suggested the outlines of what appears to me the only remedy for this evil: which can, I am assured, be only remedied by the practice of discretion, virtue, and good nature. These, I believe, will never predominate until our youth are *educated* to know, and duly to appreciate, their value, and the fittest manner to reduce them to practice; never, till they are first prepared for the important situation of *free agents*; never, until their parents are admonished by the public voice to remember that, instead of seeking to gratify their own desires in the marriage of their children, they should seek first to ensure the peace of mind of

those children, which no wealth can purchase, no *prosperity ensure*. And if I ask the parents to sacrifice the exercise of *power*, it is only that they may substitute the more pleasing exercise of *friendship*. Finally, it is my firm conviction, that if the young learn early in life that they shall become possessed of the sweets of *freedom* in the bestowal of their hands in matrimony, they will contemplate with rapture the enjoyments it promises, and cordially seek to acquire the knowledge which will ensure them domestic happiness. And I am equally persuaded that the possession of such *liberty* will tend to advance the love of liberty in general, the overthrow of despotism, the growth of good government; and, in short, not alone the happiness of the domestic circle, but the peace, the virtue, the prosperity, and the general happiness of CIVILIZED SOCIETY!

POSTSCRIPT.

As the customs I have alluded to in Africa and other barbarous parts may be thought to be no longer predominant, I here beg leave to introduce an extract from a letter written by Dr. Overweg, dated "Zinder, April 10, 1851." Speaking of the negroes of Mariadi, he says:—"Here, in Mariadi, as soon as a man is able to earn anything, and after he has bought no more than the most simple dress, he lays out all the rest of his fortune in the purchase of wives. If any one wishes to marry, he merely gives from four to eight dollars, or from two to four heads of cattle, to the parents of his intended, and the marriage is concluded. The man continues these

purchases according to the scale of his earnings, but in every house there are several wives."

The extravagant degree of contempt that the female sex is still treated with in India is excellently well illustrated by the following extracts from "Coleman's Mythology of the Hindus." Speaking of the Brahmans, the highest educated and superior caste, the aristocracy of India, he says:—"The *Kulena* or *Culena* Brahmans are a superior order, to whom the seat of honor is on all occasions yielded. A *Kulena* may marry his son to the daughter of a Brahman of a lower class, but can only marry his daughters to those of his own order. It was formerly—and still is to a less extent—considered a distinguished honor to unite a daughter to a *Kulena*, who, on such occasions, receives large presents from the father of the bride." This is much the same thing as occurs when a penurious noble of our land condescends to marry the daughter of a wealthy citizen. Mr. C. goes on:—"Many *Kulenas* have, in consequence, a number of wives, sometimes marrying into thirty, fifty, and even a hundred families, in various parts of Hindustan. With each of these wives the *Kulena* receives a portion, and also, as he leaves them after marriage with their parents, a handsome present when he may occasionally condescend to visit them. Sometimes he never sees them after the marriage ceremony, and sometimes visits them once in three or four years. The evils arising from these circumstances, and the neglect of the married females, are manifold. Profligacy, adultery, and a consequent destruction of unborn children, are of common occurrence among the *Kulenas*." (p. 143.) And yet the poor degraded and neglected wife, whom no ties of affection can possibly bind to such a monster in the shape of a husband, is expected at his death to perform *suttee*, that is, to

immolate herself on his funeral pile. "And if," say the *Shasters*, "she cannot burn, she must observe an inviolable chastity." And, "after the decease of a Hindu, his wife, if she live, loses entirely her consequence in his family, and is degraded to a situation little above that of a menial." Mr. Coleman justly observes that, whatever may have been the origin of female immolation and infanticide in the east, pride and avarice are the unquestionably existing causes." And I cannot help here observing, that the too frequent immolation of English females on the altars of pride and avarice is one grand source of the mighty flood of domestic misery that overwhelms this land.

Yet the magnanimity of soul that leads a Hindu widow to dare the anguish of the burning pile, full surely proves that, by proper *education*, the female mind is capable of being brought to adopt honourable and praiseworthy conduct in every portion of the globe.

Among the Beels, a degraded caste of Hindus, who are professionally thieves, the fixing of a marriage between a young couple is managed entirely by their relations. When the parents desire to marry their son, they send some friend to the parents of the girl whom they wish to become their son's bride. These make proposals, and present some (*gur*) raw sugar and arrack, which, if partaken of, shews that the proposals are accepted. Presents are then made by the bridegroom and his parents in person, and the young couple are, from that day, considered as regularly betrothed. The celebration of the marriage is afterwards fixed, according to circumstances and opportunity. During the week preceding the nuptials, which always take place on

a Saturday, mutual visits are exchanged by the families, and various ceremonies are performed.

It is remarkable that there is one caste in India which treat females with respect and affection; these are the *Kattees*. "A *Kattee* will do nothing without consulting his wife," says Coleman; and, as a necessary consequence of this common-sense line of conduct, "the female sex in Kattiwar, generally speaking, are modest, chaste, and faithful to their lords, and hospitable to strangers. They, the *Kattee* women, are more domesticated than the Rajpoot, and confine themselves solely to the duties of their families. They are often brides at seventeen and sixteen years of age, which may probably account for the strength and vigour of the race." The marriage ceremony of this irregular tribe deserves notice, as being totally opposite to all Indian notions of female treatment. A *Kattee*, to become a husband, must attack, with his friends and followers, the village where his betrothed resides, and carry her off by force. In ancient times, this was no less a trial of strength than of courage, stones and clubs were used without reserve both to force and to repel; and the disappointed lover was not unfrequently compelled to retire, covered with bruises, and wait for a more favourable occasion. The bride had the liberty of assisting her lover by all the means in her power, and the opposition ceased when her dwelling was gained by the assailants.

But of all the tribes of India, the *Koombees* seem to consider marriage in the most just and proper light. Mr. Coleman says:—"their religion strongly enjoins marriage, which is by far the most important consideration on this side the grave, and considered so essential to respectability and happi-

ness, that it is universally adopted, except by persons labouring under some incurable disease or deformity, or by the most wretched. One who has not been married is not permitted to join in certain rites and festivals; and the calamity of being without a son, to perform the obsequies and offer prayers to his name, extends beyond this world.

When a marriage is contemplated, the following points must be settled:—1st, That the parties are not of the same *cool*, or clan. They may both bear the same surname, but in this case their *dewack* or family crest must be different. Consanguinity in the female line is no ground for objection. 2d, *That the planets under which they were born are in harmony, and auspicious to the union, WHICH IS DECIDED BY THE ASTROLOGER.* 3d, That they are healthy, and without any personal defect. The amount of the portion and quality of presents to the bride are then settled, preparations are made for the marriage, *and the lucky day and moment fixed by the priest for its celebration.* The ceremony occupies three or four days." I have no doubt that many will sneer at the sensible customs of these unpretending *Koombees*, who, finding the *good results* attending this attention to the relative planetary influence in the nativities, *go on with the custom*, which they would not do if good effects did not result. I am quite sure, from having examined a vast number of nativities, that where the planets are *not* in accord, there can be no continuous affection, and, as a matter of course, no lasting happiness. This matter of examining the amount of agreement in any two nativities is one of the briefest, easiest, and simplest problems offered by astrology. It may, therefore, be as easily and correctly effected by a *Koombee* astrologer as by the ablest philosopher in Europe.

There exists, therefore, no excuse for those couples who rush madly into matrimony without having *ascertained*, through some person acquainted with the laws of astrology, whether they may expect disputes and disagreements, followed, it may be, by quarrels, hatred, separation; or peace and amity, enduring affection, lasting esteem, and mutual aid and comfort, insuring them all the joys that a well-assorted match can produce—a Life of Love and Harmony, with a prospect of Peace Eternal!

Nothing can surpass the innocent and happy lives of the *Koombees*, who are principally husbandmen, as their name imports. The *Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society* say:—"During the moonlight, throughout the year, in the fine weather, the *Koombees* are found sitting in the open air, and chanting songs in chorus, to the accompaniment of a drum and the *chandkia* (a simple stringed instrument), and listening to stories." They have many holidays, and spend much time in dancing the *tipree* dance, wherein twenty or thirty young men form a ring, each with a piece of seasoned wood a foot in length in his hand, which he strikes alternately with that of the person before and behind him, keeping time with it and his foot, while the circle moves round, keeping time to a drum and shepherd's pipe of three or four sweet and plaintive notes. Happy people! Long may ye continue in peace and happiness. a living and enduring testimony that marriage, when based on the laws of nature, as pointed out by the finger of God in the heavens, and free from the corrupt affections, and worldly love of Mammon, meets the blessing of God, even among the ignorant heathen, and insures that Peace and Happiness which His Blessing alone can confer on man and his help-mate woman!