

# MARRIAGE:

AN

*Inspirational Discourse,*

DELIVERED BY

MISS EMMA HARDINGE,

AT THE

MELODEON, BOSTON,

SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 13, 1859.

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PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY JAMES M. W. YERRINTON.

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BOSTON:

HUBBARD W. SWETT, 128 WASHINGTON ST.

1859.

# MARRIAGE.

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"AND THEY TWAIN SHALL BE ONE FLESH." "FOR IN THE RESURRECTION, THEY NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, BUT ARE AS THE ANGELS OF GOD IN HEAVEN."

THE echoes from the far-off shore, where the spirit of change is assuredly guiding the bark of humanity, syllable out the word, "WOMAN;" and with it, the still more portentous word, "MARRIAGE." We say "portentous," not in view of the cries from broken hearts, which, in this generation, go up to God for help; not in view of the restless desire for change, for yet more freedom, or a yet wider scope for the vice of sensuality — which with loud and blustering tongue cries for redress; no, nor yet in view of the many evils which in this connection afflict the rising generation; but, at this peculiar era, when society is preparing to cast the shell of matter, and eliminate itself into the butterfly of spirit, when the world is obviously in a transition state, when the restless elements of change, like foam upon the surface of the ocean, mark the force of the whirlpool surging beneath, — in view of the signs of the times, in view of the mighty influence which this generation is destined to exercise upon forthcoming generations, we ask your attention to one of the integral parts of that spiritualistic movement which is to elevate man from the animal into the angel, which is to build the New Jerusalem, and create a new heaven and a new earth, so we ask your attention this night to the subject of Marriage. Why should we not? The word is looked upon as something either too sacred or delicate, fraught with too momentous or too insignificant a meaning to be discussed in public, and by a woman. O shining Truth! radiant child of light! what hast thou to fear from being presented before the eyes of the truth-seeker and truth-lover? Who that ever beholds thee in thy robe spun of immortal sunbeams, with thy head filleted with ornaments of purity, and rainbows all aggregated into the pure white of which thy-

self is fashioned, — who that ever beholds this beautiful child of God, who that ever listens to this word from the lips of Truth, need fear to present it to men, women, and children. It is the matron which guards the purity, the honor of woman; it is the power which makes man's knowledge strength, in practice, in time and in eternity; and therefore it is that as a truth-lover, a truth-seeker, or, at least, as one who desires to speak and to act truth in her own person, that your speaker has been selected this night to give you some hints, at least, upon the subject of Marriage. Not upon the marriage law; — understand, we have no suggestions to make concerning either the fettering or the breaking of the marriage law. Our object will be prevention, not remedy. Our address will be exclusively upon the conditions at the other end of the chain, not upon that which either man or woman now regards as a fetter. We propose an inquiry upon the best means of silencing the cry by preventing the cause of it.

Again, we desire all who listen to this address to note that we record our belief that law and restraint were made alone for the villains of society. When we speak of law and restraint, be assured that we simply speak of that which grows out of the existence of conditions necessary to be restrained. The man or the woman who is a law unto himself or herself, feels no yoke in the bond, although they recognize the necessity that such a bond should hedge in those who are not yet qualified to be "a law unto themselves." Let all such, therefore, accept of the suggestions we make as applying to the necessity, where it exists. If they feel they will be useful, they are bound with us to rise in all the strength of truth and humanity, and give to the world that which it needs, some answer to the demand which at last

appears upon the surface of life, for redress concerning the present condition of marriage.

What is the cry? On the one hand, it is for the total abrogation of this law; on the other, it is for hedging it round with yet more stringent conditions. Let us present to you, in the spirit of fairness and candor, the facts which we can see must inevitably — not which are likely, merely, but which must inevitably grow out of both these demands.

The total abrogation of the marriage law we assert to be the total abrogation of that line of demarcation which separates man from the animal; back to the animal he must go. Can man be a law unto himself? He is not so fashioned by his own institutions. Woman can, for reasons which I shall hereafter show you. In the present condition of society, with crying evils and corruption at its very heart, you may as well attempt to break down all means of moral restraint which now hedge in the worst criminal, as to break down the marriage law, without substituting something in its place, we care not what, which will stamp upon the union of man and woman something more than what is termed mere animal instinct. You talk of animal instinct! Go to the bird — go to the animal! Behold its fidelity to its mate! Behold its acting out of that law of nature which has made the male and the female halves of one whole — arbitrary halves! You cannot hope to produce the union of two or more substances by hastily throwing them together, or without consulting the scientific relation that exists between them. You cannot hope to outwork a new combination in nature any where, without you amalgamate the particles, in due and scientific proportions; and every bird on the wing, and every animal that roams the plain, tell you the same lesson, — fidelity to nature in the choice of its mate, fidelity to that mate when once chosen. Ay, if it must be so, go to Nature, and learn a lesson of the relations that man and woman occupy to each other. But when you take the animal in its civilized condition, you have another tale. In the forest, on the plain, there are no hereditary diseases among animals or birds. There is no break in the natural law of life, which eliminates these creatures from infancy to natural decay; but the moment you enter within the pale of civilization, you find the

diseases that exist in the physical system of man transmitted alike to your animals and your vegetables, and with them the diseased appetites which you find not ever where the animal exists in his wild and free condition. Judge, then, by Nature, as she stands, and not by that animal nature which has been trained by man, and inherited and partakes of the vices of man. When we speak, therefore, of learning from the kingdom below ourselves, we speak of the arbitrary law which Nature, in her inherent goodness, has stamped upon all things, before which man appears in the form of a perversion of God's grand dual law of the affinity between two, and only two, well-assorted substances, to produce a third.

Now, we consider the marriage law, as it at present stands, as a means for checking vice and sensuality, a failure, because it does not meet the cause of the evil; it simply deals with effects: and while you propose to perpetuate it, or renew it in any form, it matters not what, you simply duplicate whatever evils may be complained of, without in the least diminishing the amount of corruption which really lies at the root of the whole system. It is vain for us to attempt to cite illustrations of the miseries resulting from ill-assorted unions, — of the bitterness and the crime resulting from a heartless, spiritless dragging on of a chain which merely fetters two beings together in externality, but separates them as widely asunder as the poles in the true marriage of nature.

We have spoken with candor of both the positions which man appears to advocate. Is there no position where we can find the equilibrium? We represented to you to-day that woman stands related to man as a polarity. She stands by Nature upon one pole, man on the other. The axis of equilibrium must be perfect between them, in order to produce the results which a natural union should outwork. Can we not find the secret of this equilibrium? We believe we can. When we endeavor to discover the causes which lie at the root of the whole system of corruption, wherever it exists, in the marriage relation, we discover that they are two — polygamy, and the treating of marriage as a lottery. You will say, "Polygamy is not practised to-day; it is a crime, or an institution, which may have given to the generation of the present day the inheritance of

certain falsities, certain errors and mistakes, which may have entailed degradation upon woman in the past, and therefore the race has not yet freed itself from the result of that degradation." But we take the opposite position, and declare that, however monstrous the institution of polygamy may have been in past ages, it is practised in a still more monstrous form in the nineteenth century. It is practised in such a form, that until it is legislated for, and removed out of the heart of society, we have no hope to see a generation of noble and upright men and women; no hope to place the marriage relation in its just and equitable point of view. Tracing the history of the past, and observing in that history the conditions of the nations of the East, where polygamy was especially practised, we observe a deterioration of the physique of man, and especially a deterioration of the mind and character of woman. We observe, also, murder, rapine, and war, ever as the results growing out of a struggle for the succession between the offspring of these most hapless and ill-fated associations. We observe such nations invariably sinking to decay. Every kingdom, every land, where polygamy was practised is now slumbering with the past. The spirit of the institution of polygamy has passed out of the recognition of orderly society, but its foul and loathsome shadow broods over us like an evil spirit to-day.

Observe the cause for the institution of polygamy. We spoke this day of the recognition, in the early history of the race, of physical force as the governing principle, and hence that man, of necessity, assumed his place in the lordship of the world. Strength was needed—power, force. The world had to be carved out by the strong hand of man, and woman must rank where she could. As the governing principle was mere material strength, all those attributes of the affectional nature and the graces of intellect which make the characteristics of woman, were lightly held in the estimation of the world; and man sought, in many women, for the one quality which should balance his own sovereignty. Man sought to find, in the union of many, that which he felt to be an absolute necessity of his own being—a companion or helpmeet for himself. He could not recognize that the intellectual and spiritual nature in humanity was

that helpmeet for him. He did not find the element of strength in woman, and therefore he treated her as a mere toy, an appendage to his household, a means, simply, for the reproduction of the species. As the intellect of the race began to grow in the ascendant, so did this idea diminish in inverse ratio. Man, towering in intellect, never could regard woman as a toy; never could treat her as a being inferior to himself in the very qualities in which his intellect took most delight; and hence polygamy, with the advance of knowledge, began to appear in odious colors, unnatural, and unworthy of a place among the institutions of civilization. But, unhappily, as we stated, the spirit of polygamy remains stamped upon the organism of man. Yourselves will recognize, that in nations that are accustomed to be oppressed, the spirit of falsehood prevails. This grows, first, out of the necessity for protection. The oppressed or captive race resorts to deception and subterfuge to protect themselves. The next generation inherit the habit, and the habit grows into an organism; so that, in the course of time, the very characters of nations are changed by the positions into which they have been arbitrarily forced by others. Even so man, accustomed to regard this worst species of sensuality as an attribute of his peculiar being, it had become a part of his organic nature. Society now denounces it; but O, Society, thou hypocrite! thou hast torn off the scarlet robe of Babylon, thou hast wrapped thyself around with the name of purity, but cherished in thy bosom the viper that is corrupting the very heart and soul of society in the guise of secret polygamy. *Secret*, did I say? Visit the aristocratic saloons of Europe; visit the courts where the word *gallantry* is so well understood; look upon those houses which it is a shame even for pure lips to name; regard the army of Magdalens that, night after night, patrol your city's street, and then say if polygamy be not practised! Hear the heartless sneer of the cold coquette when she is told that he by whom she designs to become the mother of the rising generation is celebrated for his *gallantry*! Were you to tell her that her chosen husband was a polygamist, she would look upon you with horror; but when you tell her he is a man of *gallantry*, he becomes an object infinitely to be admired by the cold coquette, and the still more

heartless hypocrite, Society. Society applauds this crime. Society places it upon the very apex of admiration, and calls the triumph over martyred honor and ruined purity *gallantry*! Think of those frail and degraded women who are hooted from society, tabooed, trampled into the dust, if, in search of a bit of bread, they practise, in one instance, that crime which men are lauded to the skies for practising in a hundred!

We may speak bitterly, but we speak with the love of father, brother, husband, and child welling up in our hearts, and longing, O, longing, to call down the Angel of Purity, and show to man, by the light in her clear eyes, reflecting therein the depth of soul which reveals Truth to be what we pronounced it this day, of no sex, no age, no class, or condition, but to be that divine pulse-beat by which God himself has written his heart in nature, — to show man what a foul and hideous thing he consents to let Society make of him.

There is one other view which we could ask you to take of this institution, sanctioned, but not legislated for, by Society. The voice that now speaks to you has been employed in numbering the wretched beings that, night after night, in *borrowed* array, in flaunting silks and meretricious paint, tread your city streets, to carry on this most fearful of all commerce, and we have learned that out of every hundred, ninety have been driven to the streets by want — from lack of bread or clothing! Ten only, out of the hundred, resort there from perverted inclination. Sensuality does not belong to woman. We can make this claim. She has not inherited it. The institutions of the past have fastened it upon man as his peculiar and controlling vice. With woman, it is the exception. When you trace the history of these unhappy ones, you will find that either from idleness or folly, the inclinations which might have called an angel down from the skies to match their own radiant purity, have been perverted in the education of ten out of a hundred. In the remaining ninety, the Magdalens of life have either been trained to this frightful commerce or driven to it for bread!

We dare not now trespass either on your time or sympathy to show you the many steps by which these poor, broken, bleeding hearts, homeless wanderers, wretched outcasts, shut out from the sweet voice of sym-

pathy, shut out from the tender love of woman, with no hand of father, mother, or friend to raise them up from the dust, with none to wipe away the foul stain of pollution from their poor painted faces, — O, heaven and earth! could we trace out this fearful declination from the innocent cherub who, with golden curls and precious little hands twined around your neck in its purity and innocence, giving promise of an angel that should lead man up to the skies, down to the pale thing that, too often, sinks beneath the turbid waters of your city rivers, with a broken heart, — could we trace these steps, O man! you would shut close, with a cry of indignation, all the gates of society against the practice of the terrible vice of modern polygamy. Shall it not be so? We know, we feel it must be so. Man does not know the vice he commits. Man does not know it, for wanton, cruel, hypocritical Society has never told him of it. Not knowing it, he practises it day by day.

Here is one of those crimes — for *crime* it is, we can give it no other name — which, above all others, destroys all hope of equality, of happiness in the married life. The very same feeling which induced the ancients to seek in many an equilibrium for the man's powers, hopes, aspirations, prevails to-day. The association with those unhappy females — we are speaking now of those who come especially under the false conditions of which we spoke; we do not address ourselves to those of whom we shall hereafter present you a picture, who have found in married life the real philosopher's stone, which converts all coarse, rude materiality into the gold of spirit joy and happiness; we are speaking to those who have need of our address, and to them we would say, — that association with these unhappy females, excluded as they necessarily are from all chance of purification and elevation, from all chance of becoming worthy associates of man, must of necessity be most injurious to their spirits, and to their habits, to say nothing of their physical systems. Here, at once, is a reason why the home is considered tame, why the domestic hearth does not concentrate upon it all those thoughts, hopes, wishes, aspirations, which the wife demands. Here, at once, appears the reason why the courtesan arrays herself in all those meretricious attractions which

captivate by their externality, but leave the soul and affections untouched.

We shall hereafter have to show you still further errors and wrongs growing out of the practice of polygamy. We are now compelled to invite your attention to that most fatal mistake which this same society makes when it dares to say, in the face of Nature, that marriage is a lottery. Is it a lottery? Does the artist, when he has two colors before him, regard the act of assimilating those two colors in order to produce another color, a lottery? Does the chemist treat his gases as a lottery when he assimilates any two in order to produce a third? Do you, in any other act of life, — in grafting trees, in the combination of material substances, in the association of minds, in the education of your children, in aught but the marriage of your sons and daughters, — do you treat any compound in Nature as a lottery except marriage? and can you expect that, so treating marriage, you ever can produce, unless by accident, that result which Nature demands of the union of man and woman? Nature demands the reproduction of a progressive and an advanced species. Nature demands something more. The union of the physique is not the only object of Nature. There is a long eternity in which the union of the two spirits is to grow and form into that most precious, most highly-cherished of all relations, which represents a perfect heaven in the union of these two. What do you require for a combination either of the physical or the mental system? We will tell you. We are once again proposing to give you, not legislation, but what we offered to woman this afternoon — that which she can practise for herself, that which every parent and guardian can practise for themselves. We have no hope that legislators will take this matter into their serious consideration; we do not see that dollars and cents are to be coined out of it; we do not see that the nation's colonies are to be extended, that her broad arms can grasp more power, or that she can take a higher position among the nations; and, therefore, to the voice of public opinion, to the sense of public justice, to the pulsations of living, throbbing human hearts, we must appeal, to right whatever exists of wrong in this direction.

Parents and guardians! we would ask you to educate male and female children both in

view of the fact, that the mission of every human creature is to become a wife and mother, or a husband and father. There are exceptional cases, cases where the calls of life need a concentrated and isolated duty, cases where there are mental or physical disabilities, to which we shall refer; but these, as we stated, are exceptional cases; the rule of life is the natural, rational, scientific union of the two substances which are called male and female, throughout Nature.

We now ask, are there any disabilities, and if so, how are they to be removed? How commence? What mode of education is necessary to fit men and women for entering this state? — not as you educate your daughters, merely to place them in a condition where they may form a marriage, but to educate them for fulfilling the duties of the state called marriage? To do this, it is necessary (as we told you to-day) that each child should be instructed in physiology and such branches of anatomy and mentality as will enable them to understand themselves — their minds, their capacities, their physical systems. The next point is, to make them sufficiently judgmatical to select their associates. They do so in every other branch of life, — their friends, their companions, their teachers, their object, their mission, — but the marriage state must still be regarded as a lottery, and the union from which is to spring a new being, to be trained and fitted for heaven, must be formed precisely as the accidents of life shall determine. Surely, *surely*, this should not be. There are both physical and mental disabilities which should be considered. We would have parents and guardians, or the voice of society, sternly repudiate those who have the cruelty or inhumanity to force upon posterity their diseased mental or physical conditions. We say that such an act is not alone reprehensible, it is murderous, to that posterity which is to succeed.

But we hear the voice of Humanity, on the other side, crying out, "Shall the suffering, shall the afflicted, shall those who must of necessity entail disease, mental and physical, upon their offspring, — shall these be debarred from the joys of wedded life?" We respond, *for one generation, Yes!* Folly and disease will then end; disabilities will cease. In two points of view, we regard this as the only way of escape from that terrible denun-



uation—"He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation." In the first place, it will excite the active care of those who profess to deal in the remedial art to look into *causes*, and see how the mental and physical structure of men may be prepared for the better fulfilment of their mission; and, in the second place, it will inevitably cut off succession from this perpetual and ever-increasing inheritance of mental and physical disease. In two generations this would be ended. O, bright and glorious future! Generation of the nineteenth century! will you not do something for the unborn millions of the future, even in this act of martyrdom and self-sacrifice?

Again, we would claim that it is equally reprehensible, and should equally come within the scope of public opinion and private censure, for two persons to undertake the responsibility of bringing beings into the world without making some provision for them; of bringing into existence a multitude of helpless, hapless little creatures, without food to put into their mouths, clothing to cover them, or houses to shelter them. Again the voice of pseudo Humanity cries—"Shall the poor, the abject, the wretched, be condemned, in addition to their wretchedness, to take upon themselves the doom of loneliness?" We deny that they would do so. The world is a better world than man gives it credit for. Show that world how to work in the right direction, and no appeal will be made in vain. We never yet found the voice of justice or reason appealing to public opinion, that a noble and generous response did not ensue. Now, appeal to the heart of public humanity, and say that there are noble young men, generous, high-souled young women, waiting for work, asking for the means to fashion for themselves a place and a name in the world, and you will find society, stirred by the voice of philanthropy, forming itself into one great, world-wide humanitarian society to meet this new demand. O, the world has a strong sympathy with generous, loving young hearts, that look into the eyes of some being, and see there the whole sunlight of existence concentrated. The world is full of sympathy for the heart which beats in any individual bosom in response to some other individual heart; and the world will never refuse to stretch out a

hand to help the industrious, and those who will assume, not alone the responsibility of a place in society, but add to the weight, the interest, the value, and the benefit of that society. It is against the idle, the importunate, it is against those who recklessly, because ignorantly, rush into responsibilities which they cannot meet, that the steeled heart of the world is shut. You may open it when you will, only apply the wedge of reason, only attack it in the name of that most beautiful, that most divine of all feelings, the generous, all-pervading love principle stamped in Nature. We have no fear, then, that our young men and our young women will long be secluded or cut off from the work room, from the machine room, or from any of those positions which their situation in life qualifies them to fill, if they wait and ask the good world to bestow upon them the precious prize of loving companions, in answer to their industrious effort to maintain them.

Again, it will stimulate those who are desirous to enter into this holy relation to labor for themselves. It will stimulate parents to educate their children with a view to this very condition. It will cause a healthful action throughout society, which will benefit all classes, the lowest as well as the highest.

Also, we claim that there should be mutual adaptation in the man and woman before they are united in marriage, and that parents, guardians, and friends should see to it that there is such an adaptation, both in the moral and physical condition of the contracting parties. Observe, we have denounced polygamy, because we design to leave no opening for the vices of society to creep in and remove all the force, all the energy, all the happiness which belongs to a rational marriage, and to marriage alone. Assuming, then, that polygamy is trampled in the dust by the strong heel of Right, assuming that it lies where it should long since have lain, in the tomb of buried barbarisms, that its requiem has been sung in the midst of that savageism from which it sprung,—assuming, then, that this polygamy is no more, and that our interest is concentrated upon the formation of well-ordered, well-adapted marriages, the only further disability which we can notice is the known existence of an evil disposition or immorality in the man or the woman. A known drunkard, a

known gambler, a known tyrant, a morose, savage or cruel man, is unfitted for marriage. The man or the woman who would select for his or her companion a person known to be guilty of these monstrosities must have some moral obliquity in their natures, which parents, guardians, and the voice of public opinion should seek to correct. When marriages have been contracted in ignorance of the existence of these crimes, then we say it is an equal immorality, an equal monstrosity, in society or friends, parents or guardians, to bind the hopeless victims to the state of that immorality. Loose them, free them, as you would take the pure flower from the atmosphere of corruption. In doing so; you perform a double duty, — you protect the victim, and you read one of the sternest and grandest lessons which society, with marriage made holy, would bestow upon him or her who failed to fulfil the obligations of marriage; and not until they could produce from parents or guardians, or the same great censor, public opinion, the evidence that they were capable of governing themselves, and being helpmeets for their companions, should they again be permitted to assume the terrible responsibility of corrupting other human souls besides themselves.

We now consider that both the disabilities and also the qualifications for entering the marriage state have been laid before you. We only ask you to reflect for yourselves upon the enormous results that would spring from organized bodies of persons, capable of judging, capable of determining, capable of pointing out the merits and demerits of the system we have laid before you, and elaborating the many details which would of necessity grow out of our most imperfect sketch. O the glorious race of men and women, O the noble minds and noble forms, perfect in health, towering in intellect, which must be the result of such organizations!

Now, wives, husbands, look abroad upon the world's history, and see where this most glorious, this inevitable relationship between man and woman has conducted the race. Was there ever a period when the love of woman did not hallow the strength of man, did not nerve him to unsheathe the sword against oppression, did not stimulate painter, poet, artist, soldier, husband, lover, friend, to all the deeds of worth and excellence that history has recorded? On the plains of Pal-

estine, every arm that was foremost in battle, every noble head that was laid low, was dedicated to some fair and beautiful woman, and so dedicated in the hope that she would one day shine "the bright particular star" of his special destiny. On the plains of later days, the plains of science, of art, the spheres of intellect, of use, and intelligence, *woman*, ever *woman*, has been the pole-star of man's hope. And what has woman, in her capacity as wife, brought to man? In the dungeon, on the scaffold, she has stood beside him, and, insensible to shame, insensible to the world's scorn, insensible to all but that deep, devoted love which the pure and unselfish wife of one man, the half of the one being, can only know, will ever manifest. O man! hunted down by society, lacerated in heart, poor, penniless, bleeding, wounded, come back, come back, stricken deer as thou art, to the bosom of thy wife, the true, the holy, the devoted *one* wife! There shalt thou find the perfect human image of thy Father in heaven; there shalt thou find a love second to none but his; there shalt thou find a devotion which knows no limit but the shoreless waves of eternity. In the cotter's little Saturday night gatherings, in the Sabbath meetings of the poor workman, in the humblest cot, in the most desolate and man-forsaken regions of poverty and suffering, there the heart of woman has sown those tendrils of pure love, that have bound together man and woman in the holy tie of marriage.

And thou old man! with fluttering white locks, how fondly dost thou look into the wrinkled face of that poor faithful companion, who has toiled with thee along the steep and weary pilgrimage of life, until both are ready to sink into the grave, not alone hand in hand, but heart in heart! O, noble, aspiring young man, with eagle eye, and soul leaping forward to battle in the world's strife, canst thou, darest thou go forward without the love of woman as a shield, without the sacred name of woman bound up in thy heart of hearts, a talisman to thee against the persecution and scorn and oppression which the world may bring against thee? You cannot measure the word love, except you can gauge the height and depth of eternity. Will you not make it holy? will you not do something to make it more sacred than the cold, empty, formal name of marriage this day proclaims



it to be? Marriages there are on every hand, in every home, so sacred, so precious, so truly spiritual, as to convince us that God himself is the priest who has joined them together. But where are the mates — where are the two parts of this most sacred union? On the one hand, you find sensuality roaming the world under the pretence of searching for his affinity. Doing what? Making a mistake, either through ignorance or design; breaking through the trammels of society, and reduplicating his mistake fifty fold. Is this doing good? Is this making the marriage tie, or breaking it? It does not touch marriage at all. It is simply giving loose rein, perhaps through ignorance, to sensuality. We denounce it as one of the most pernicious and fatal mistakes which society can sanction, in the so-called reforms of the day. On the other hand, what do you see? There are wretched women, or helpless, broken-hearted, spiritless men, bound in unequal ties, in matches formed from "expediency." O, we loathe the word! Men and women! you who are fathers, mothers, guardians! know this: it is a crime against God if you dare to force into a union two beings whom Nature herself, the great High Priest of life, has not called into that union. Men and women, guardians and parents! you perform an equal act of desecration against Heaven when you dare to interfere with parental authority, to separate that which the voice of Nature has proclaimed shall be bound together in holy wedlock, where there are none of the external disabilities which society justly regards as sufficient reason why the union should not be consummated. So long as these disabilities of physical or mental condition are provided for by society, neither parent, guardian, or friend, has a right to abstract one rose-leaf from that full and perfect flower which God himself has fashioned and bestowed upon man and woman under the name of marriage. So long as those disabilities that we have stated, and others that wisdom, affection, and care for the race will suggest, are regarded, men and women violate the first law of Nature when they form matches for what is termed "expediency." O terrible name! Is Nature expedient? Ay, is she? She fashioned the sunlight, and she fashioned the earth which needs that sunlight, and gives, in return, the emanations which sur-

round it with the fiery mists that make it shine; she fashioned its satellite, the moon, and she gave, between the earth and that moon, that inevitable law of attraction which binds them both in the order of creation, which sustains them both by virtue of the mutual attraction which prevails between them; and Nature, when she made the sun of human affection, and the moon of human love, marked the line of attraction arbitrarily between these, as she has between the bodies that are revolving in space. Let not man place the hand of authority, nor bind the fetter of his iron yoke upon this most sacred, most natural tie. Men and women soon recognize the sweet voice of Nature, which speaks in that unselfish love which would lie down and die for the thing it has selected from the midst of the world to be the polar star of its hopes.

O, beautiful love! Far deeper, far more glowing, far more gracious and beautiful than ever poet sung or painter represented in color, is the union between those outreaching minds that feel they have supplied the lack which nature has devolved upon some being of the opposite sex to supply. O, surely, surely, the whisper which the voice of attraction itself pronounces in the ears of those who love the call which Nature herself, in the out-yearnings of affection, sounds in the ears of those who love, should render holy this union between the two halves of the perfect angel.

We have offered our suggestions upon this subject in all good faith. May God himself enlighten our counsels! May the spirits of the pure and the holy, those who, in life, have labored and toiled and laid down their lives for those they loved, be about us this night, and hallow the counsel we now give, direct the reason which is seeking to find, not a remedy or a palliation, but a prevention for that most terrible vice, sensuality, for that most fatal mistake which treats marriage as a lottery.

O thou high priest of marriage, our father and our mother God, O radiant sun and glowing moon, O shining stars and free and bounteous air, — all sing of love, all tell of the harmonic bond of mutual relationship and mutual dependence as the golden fillet that binds creation round the brow of its Maker, — all make holy this most sacred and precious embodiment of

all that is progressive, all that is great and sublime in Nature—the union of the two sexes. Can we find the true law? We shall read it in Nature; for it is stamped every where. We ask but that man will inquire; we ask but that woman will be true to herself, will assert her own sovereignty—her sovereignty in purity, her sovereignty in her right to do more for man than she has hitherto been permitted to do—to be a helpmeet for him. We ask that woman shall be true to those helpless beings whom she has taken upon herself the responsibility of giving to the world. We ask that she may not consent that they shall be fashioned in crime or vice, mistake or folly, or grow up in ignorance. We ask that the blessed and glorious future shall become the embodiment of all the promises of seers and

prophets, when, on the mountain tops of time, they beheld each man sitting beneath his own vine and fig tree, when they have perceived that there was no more sorrow, no more sighing, when they felt that the Lord was the light of the beautiful city, when they perceived that each man and woman was a “law unto themselves,” that each one knew the Lord, of which each man and woman is the microcosm, the model. “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect,” and O, fashion the rising generation, if you cannot yourselves, in that perfection which is attainable by all!

We now invite a few questions, either on the subject of the addresses this day, or any other kindred to them, upon which our intelligence may be supposed to be of use.

Dr. GARDNER stated that two questions had been handed him, which he would read. First—“Does conjugal love exist in heaven?”

Miss HARDINGE.—Forever, ay, forever! Conjugal love is really the yearning of the soul for its half—for its mate; it is that attraction which binds together the moon and tides, the sun and earth. Conjugal affection is in men and women the real principle of attraction which combines and constitutes all the substances in Nature. It is, therefore, an eternal principle.

Second question.—“Is there such a thing as pure, unmixed love?”

Miss HARDINGE.—What is love but the power of God? Have we ever asked ourselves if we can love God, whom we have not seen, whom we know only through his

works? And yet there have been moments when we have all felt that the heart, too full for utterance, longed to expend itself upon the Giver of all our bounties. We call this worship of God, love to God. Precisely the same feeling is that which goes forth in pure, unutterable love to God’s creatures. There are many, ay, *many*, in this place, who love with purity, love unutterably. It is that love which, first emanating from self, finds a second self in some thing or person in Nature.

We must this night not tax the attention of this assembly further. We simply desire to announce that when we address you, on next Sunday afternoon, our subject will be “A Vision of Little Children,” and in the evening, “The World’s Reformers.”