

MARRYING FOR MONEY

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venience: some attraction must always come first on the list, whatever others may follow. Thus, if it is your bridegroom's material means which dazzle your eyes, you must necessarily be a little blinded to his other aspects. A bright, golden veil will be always between you and your choice. So long as you do not grow tired of looking at the veil instead of at the man, or it is not torn away by cruel circumstance, all is well. Life's actions and reactions being what they are, though, it is quite probable that one or other of these events may come to pass.

We all know how violent and persistent are the fluctuations of the money market; almost as violent as the fluctuations of the human fancy. We know that what makes millions at one time will not make a brass farthing at another, and that what appears desirable to Miss Brown at twenty may not seem so to Mrs. Jones at forty. The golden veil having thus been rent, or ceased to please, the next object of existence upon which the eye must fall is the man behind the veil. What of him in his nakedness? Will he prove equally attractive, or a symbol of remorse? Will he represent the unpaid bill of the marriage made *de connoissance*?

There are merciful exceptions to every rule, and to suggest that there be pinned upon the breast of every marriageable man the legend: "Is he rich? Then trust him not" is the last desire of the writer of this article. But it must be taken into account, not only that money has been made by the wrong sorts of people lately (owing to the sad fact that the wrong sorts of goods have proved most acceptable to the public), but that the money-making temperament is necessarily forged among a very low collection of ideals, of which the paramount one is that of getting the most out of other people for the least one can give in return.

The woman marrying a prosperous man of to-day may be quite sure that he has in order to keep his position, to compete upon their own grounds with scoundrels and swindlers stirred up in vast numbers by the war and the awful life-struggle which it has imposed upon human kind. In the heat and fury of a battle one is not particular about whose face one steps upon: one becomes callous, distinctly in the frame of mind to give as good as one gets, and these qualities, engendered in prosperous man by his eternal financial tussle, are not so easy to confine to office routine as wives may hope. After a time they stick; they become part of character and thus react upon the partner at home. From seeing all the world as your enemy it is not a long way to seeing your wife in the same light.

In a sense she is responsible for it all. To win and support her this difficult and wearisome business of

swindling the swindlers has to be carried on. The husband suddenly perceives that his wife is getting something out of him for nothing. There she sits, snug at home, spending the money in pursuit of which his grey hairs are going down with sorrow, etc. Now observe his sound business instincts thoroughly roused! He is being cheated. Somebody is getting something for nothing; a monstrosity. He rushes home, storms, contradicts her flatly at the dinner-table, or takes another lady out to supper, according to his taste in revenges. The first instalment of the bill for Cæsus is due.

This brings us to another aspect of the question, not perhaps seriously considered by women for the reasons respectfully hinted at in the beginning of the article. Since whatever we have in this world we must earn some way or another, the woman who marries for money must be prepared to do all that "to marry" used to imply in the days when all women with a few exceptions, were financially dependent upon their husbands—or else to pay for her keep in some other manner, possibly not so pleasant withal. In a more primitive state of civilisation the woman really did contribute her fair share in the task of sustenance, to set against that of her mate. But now she has few or no children, the work of the house is done for her by servants—whom her husband pays—or by labour-saving devices—which he buys. It is only in human nature that her spouse should take it out of her in some fashion or other.

I know a woman who earns her luxurious life in the sweat of her brow by putting up with her husband's violent tempers. This is not the most dignified form of labour for one's bread which can be imagined. She chose it with her eyes shut, and now she rightly rebels against it. The law, unfortunately, has not much sympathy for those who buy with their eyes shut, and makes it difficult for them to exchange their bad bargains. There are, of course, husbands of angelic temperament who ask nothing in return for the material comforts they supply. In these cases, be sure, the wives take out their obligations in demands upon themselves. They pay in currency of ill-health, ennui, hysteria in one form or another. Rich, leisured wives are full of these ailments. I am afraid that my advice to a great many of them would be to give up the obligatory money which means so little—or so much of misery endured, and find some means of earning what they require by the fruit of their own labours. Work is more healthy than suffering other people's megrims with a beautiful patience, your mind meanwhile clinging for consolation to a large bank balance.

This is not an article in heated support of the love-in-a-cottage theory against all others. It takes all

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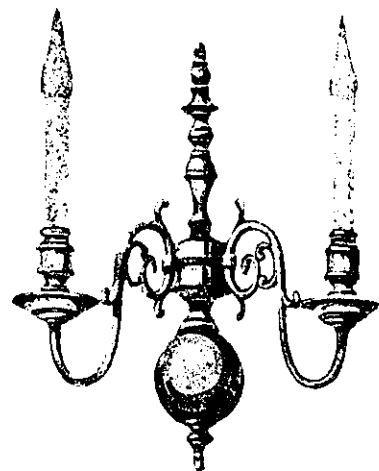
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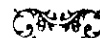
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