

where divorce is increasingly regarded as more reasonable than an unhappy marriage, the demands on the amount of satisfaction which a marriage gives, of course, go up correspondingly. If there is no divorce, the choice lies between the marriage one has and no marriage—a very different sort of choice. But for the bulk of young Americans the demands have been personal and high: and these demands, expressed as they are in film, radio, and fiction, undoubtedly affect those whose faith gives them no such freedom to liquidate their mistakes as well as the others. Their common American culture teaches them all to make high personal demands on marriage.

### Social Support withdrawn

When it is not wartime, a marriage based on personal choice is given a great deal of help by the community, by family, friends, and business associates. However unsuitable the match, the bride and groom usually have friends in common who treat them as if they were married for good, expect them to share a common residence, go out together, eat together, and keep their clothes in the same place. If the young people are not to be labelled as too feather-headed even for their most youthful associates they have to give it a try. This means in practice that the growing pains of the new marriage are not allowed to disrupt it. The young husband may fling out of the house in anger in the morning, but he comes home at night because that, after all, is where his clothes are, where he sleeps. People would be surprised if he slept somewhere else; they would talk. Quarrels begun over the badly made breakfast in the morning can be composed in the quietness of the night, over and over again. The often oddly matched pair get used to each other. Although originally they may have had nothing more in common than a dance step or two, they come to share a common life, made nostalgic by the times when eating an uncertainly cooked dish has preceded an evening of great tenderness.

Within this circle of habituation children are born, and the young parents, following the course of their own parents, come to feel that they and the children

belong together. Thus, the majority of marriages succeed, at least in discharging their chief functions, providing affectionate companionship for people in pairs, and affording the only way we know to bring children up to be mature, responsible human beings.



The most serious thing that happens in wartime is that all this social support, this gentle, continuous, unremitting social pressure which keeps the two under one roof long enough for them to get used to each other, is withdrawn. Honeymoons are begun and ended under the eye of strangers, who probably suspect the "newly-weds" of not being married at all—an attitude which is very dampening to the formation of a new family. As the bride says farewell to her soldier husband, people mutter about the morals of soldiers if her kiss is long and fervent. She returns alone, to a world whose only recognition that she is married will be a negative one—disapproval if she has any fun. He goes back to camp to be "kidded." There is no continuing common roof, no small bedroom in which their clothes hang side by side. Even when the young soldier's wife follows her husband, the uncertain and precarious conditions of camp-following provide only a slight frame for a developing marriage.

### Fathers by Air Mail

Then, the babies are born with their fathers far away. Literature is replete with tales of the young father walking the floor of the hospital waiting-room and taking the birth harder than the wife. But of such stuff fatherhood is built, and motherhood also, in our society. You can't withdraw this