

horses. Who on earth can this be?" returned the squire, the sound of carriage wheels causing the final question.

It was instantly answered by the arrival of Miss Saucy, driven by her mistress. They pulled up right in face of Silverking and his burden. Ben speedily jumped out.

"Mrs. Richards tells me you have had some sort of a spill," said Miss Dulcey. "What's the matter? Weatherley is about to faint. Help him off, Ben. Why, you've turned good Samaritan, Hewson. But I know you don't like your right hand to know what your

left does, so I'll take him home, and nobody will be the wiser."

"I'm—all—right," muttered Weatherley.

"You don't look so, to judge from your bandage," said Miss Dulcey.

The squire and Ben helped the boy off the horse, and led him to the pony-carriage.

"I would have taken him to the Court, but he preferred coming home," said the squire to his sister, with a sort of apologetic manner. Then to Ben—"Either come or send this evening to let me know how he is."

"Indeed I'm all right now," said Weatherley, and he spoke without hesitation.

The squire shook hands with his sister, and then took Weatherley's and grasped it firmly. Without another word, he turned, and remounted the horse which Ben was holding. He reined Silverking in for a moment to watch Miss Dulcey drive off, and to see that his grandson kept his seat, then muttering, "He's a fine fellow," rode homewards, followed by his hound.

(To be continued.)

## OUR GIRLS WEDDED.

By J. ROGERS REES, Author of "The Pleasures of a Bookworm," etc.

I.



FATHER finds undoubted incitement to reflection and reverie as he sits with his wife by the fireside on an evening immediately subsequent to their only daughter's wedding. He dreamily reviews his own happiness, past and present, and casts many fond wishes after his daughter. He remembers, perchance, the time when his own loved wife—now sitting as a queen beside him—was called away from their home for a season, at the bidding of duty or in search of health, and how, on news of her immediate return, his heart jumped out to meet her, and his voice found its forgotten music in the lines of Sir Noel Paton (I will not call them sweet and tender and true, for when they get hold of a man they are more than all this):—

"With the sunshine and the swallows and the flowers,  
She is coming, my beloved, o'er the sea;  
And I sit alone and count the weary hours  
Till she cometh in her beauty back to me.

\* \* \*

No more the shiv'ring North complains,  
But blithe birds twitter in the crimson dawn;  
No more the fairy frost flow'rs fret the panes,  
But snowdrops gleam by garden-path and lawn.  
And at times a white cloud wingeth,  
From the South-land up, and bringeth  
A warm wind, odour laden,  
From the bow'rs of that fair Aden,  
Where she lingers by the blue Tyrrhenian Sea,

And I turn my lips to meet  
Those kisses faint and sweet,  
For I know from hers they've brought  
The message, rapture fraught,  
'I am coming, love, with summer, home  
to thee!'"

So much for the past and himself; his faith in the future for his daughter also leads him into song—

"O, but she will love him truly!  
He shall have a cheerful home;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come."\*

But we must not suffer all the songs and wise words about marriage to linger with the old gentleman by the fireside. Some come and visit us in our quiet study on the Wiltshire downs; and we would fain have them writ large for the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. The wheel of association has made a turn, and little thoughts peep out with gentle clamour and cling round the pondering attitude of our old friend who has given his daughter to another. And so let us quietly leave him.

II.

HOWEVER elevating a lover's affection may prove, it is the quiet, undoubted love of wedlock that inspires to manliest endeavours and highest achievements on the one side, and to womanliest serenity and sweetest trust on the other. The true wife is she who, having as a girl fulfilled the youth's ideal, further ministers to his ideal under the fair conditions of wifehood. "Her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth down among the elders of the land. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

It is perhaps well to consider for a moment how far this ideal use of a wife's tongue, as set forth in the Proverbs of Solomon, transcends the misuse of the same instrument according to the accepted proverbs of the multitude. English folk say: "A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail"; the Welsh: "A woman's strength is in her tongue," and "Arthur could not tame a woman's tongue"; the Italians: "Three women and three geese make a market"; the Danes: "All women are good Lutherans—they would rather preach than bear mass"; and the Chinese: "A woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust." In Auvergne it is current that

"Foxes are all tail and women all tongue"; and in Spain that you should tell a woman and a magpie what you wish known in the market place. According to an old legend it appears that Noah's wife was addicted to spending her time in talking with her neighbours. It is said she even refused at first to go into the Ark, and bade her husband voyage forth without her, because he was leaving her gossips to drown.

But to return to Solomon's wisdom: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and catcheth not the bread of idleness," and is, as a consequence, well rewarded, for "her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Methinks Allan Ramsey must have had these last sentences very close to his mind when he caused one of his characters to say—

"For the maist thrifty man could never get  
A weel-stored room, unless his wife wad let;  
Wherefore nocht shall be wanting on my part  
To gather wealth to raise my shepherd's heart.  
Whate'er he wins I'll guide wi' canny care,  
And win the vogue at market, trou, or fair,  
For halesom, clean, cheap, and sufficient ware.  
A flock o' lambs, cheese, butter, and some woo  
Shall first be sald to pay the laird his due;  
Syne a' behind's our ain. Thus, without fear,  
Wi' love and rowth, we through the world will steer;  
And when my Pate in bairns and gear grows rife,  
He'll bless the day he gat me for his wife."

Goethe uttered much the same truth when he wrote: "How few are the men to whom it is given to return regularly like a star, to command their days as they command their evenings, to form for themselves their household instrument, to sow and to reap, to gain and to expend, and to travel round their circle with perpetual success and peace and love. It is when a woman has attained this inward (household) mastery that she truly makes the husband whom she loves a master; her attention will acquire all sorts of knowledge; her activity will turn them all to profit. Thus is she dependent upon no one, and she procures her husband genuine independence—that which is interior and domestic; whatever he possesses he beholds secured; what he

\* Tennyson's "The Lord of Burleigh."

earns, well employed; and thus he can direct his mind to lofty objects, and if fortune favours he may act in the State the same character which so well becomes his wife at home."

Mrs. Mayo, in a recent number of the *Sun*, refers to the prevalence of a false conception of wifehood and motherhood, and hesitates not to blame women for it. "A social state," she says, "is in its soundest condition the more its women are absorbed in its homes, in the strenuous and happy duties of wifehood and motherhood; and we claim that if it fails to maintain that condition the lion's share of the blame rests at the door of those women who, being already wives and mothers, are really 'the governing class' of their own sex."

It must have been a very spurious imitation of God's handiwork in womanhood that caused one of Fielding's characters, with even more moroseness than Aristotle himself, to refer to the sex as animals of domestic use, of "some-what higher consideration" than cats, since their offices were of "rather more importance!"

### III.

If the seriousness of the matter could only be thrust into the background out of sight, the petty misunderstandings in the married life of authors and artists might almost be considered a subject for jest. But this unhappiness is by no means universal in the crafts. In one of Tom Hood's letters to his wife he thus writes: "I never was anything, dearest, till I knew you, and I have been a better, happier, and more prosperous man ever since. Lay by that truth in lavender, sweetest, and remind me of it when I fail." Aldrich dedicates his little book of selected "Lyrics and Sonnets" to his wife in these lines:—

"Take them and keep them,  
Silvery thorn and flower,  
Plucked just at random  
In the rosy weather;  
Snowdrops and pansies,  
Sprigs of wayside heather,  
And five-leaved wild rose  
Dead within an hour.

"Take them and keep them:  
Who can tell? some day, dear  
(Though they be withered,  
Flower and thorn and blossom),  
Held for an instant  
Up against thy bosom,  
They might make December  
Seem to thee like May, dear!"

Mr. Henley also inscribes his "Book of Verses" to his wife—

"Take, dear, my little sheaf of songs,  
For, old or new,  
All that is good in them belongs  
Only to you."

One scarcely likes even to believe that there are in the world at present wives of the kind which used to curse the lives of some of our artists. It appears that Albert Dürer's wife was a shrew, and compelled her husband to drudge at his profession during every possible hour, merely to gratify her own sordid passion. Berghem's "helpmeet," whenever she thought her husband weary at his work, and taking a little of the rest of indolence, would rouse him up by thumping a stick against the ceiling, to which the obedient artist had to answer by stamping his foot to indicate that he was not napping.

I wonder how many of our readers have heard of the wife who used to punish her husband with her tongue, whilst the husband retaliated with the leather strap, each quoting in turn the old line: "Castigo te non quod odium habeam, sed quod amem." (I chastise thee not out of hatred, but out of love.) For ourselves, we must confess that such evidences of un-

bounded affection are beyond even our lively imagination.

Dr. Watts, in his poem "Few Happy Matches," favours the ingenious theory that souls come forth in pairs, male and female, and accounts for the fact of there being so many unhappy marriages by supposing that souls often lose their partners on the way to this lower world. Happy marriages seem to depend on the safe arrival of these twin souls, and their subsequent finding each other out in earth life. 'Tis quite an idea for a novelist to elaborate, whatever else might be said of it.

I should very much like to know what kind of a man he was who first formulated the proverb: "Marriages are made in heaven." Was his utterance a thanksgiving for a suitable helpmeet? or was it rather a philosophical reflection from which he sought to suck consolation in the momentary intervals of a stormy domestic career? The saying seems to me but a fragment of the old blind belief in the inevitable tread of destiny, and on a par with such a declaration as: "Whatever is to be, must be." Shakespeare uses it in one of his plays, and avers—

"The ancient saying is no heresy."

The French version of it is: "Marriages are written in heaven." (Les mariages sont écrits dans le ciel.) The immense popularity enjoyed by this assertion must certainly be due to the fact that it furnishes a good broad apology for all sorts of mad marriages. What need, forsooth, have youths and maidens to think carefully about such a step, or to ponder over their mutual fitness or unfitness for each other, when they have at hand a ready-made excuse for anything that might subsequently occur? If the union turns out to be an unhappy one, the blame is all laid at the gate of heaven. The Scotch admit that "If marriages be made in heaven, some had few friends there."

### IV.

IN order that a marriage should prove happy a certain element of comradeship must needs exist between husband and wife. Chaucer said of his carpenter—

"He knew not Cato, for his wit was rude,  
That bade a man wed his similitude,  
Men should wedden after their estate."

In the old-world story of "Gudbrand of the Mountain-side," we have a charmingly simple picture of domestic harmony: "He and his wife lived in such agreement together, and were so well matched, that whatever the husband did seemed to the wife so well done that it could not be done better; let him therefore act as he might she was equally well pleased."

"Husband and wife," writes quaint William Secker, "should be like two candles burning together, which make the house more light-some, or like two fragrant flowers bound up in one nosegay, that augment its sweetness; or like two well-tuned instruments, which, sounding together, make the more melodious music." We might add here Goethe's saying: "Two hearts that love each other are as two magnetic needles; whatever moves the one must move the other with it."

These utterances seem to form a running commentary on the good old exhortation: "Be ye not unequally yoked together."

All men and women have their failings, and it is a blessed thing between husband and wife when mutual love causes these to appear as only trifles. Why should we always multiply the blots on the sun's face and the mountains in the moon's? In every household bearance and forbearance will do much to gild our daily life. No little fault should be permitted to disturb the great love sitting enthroned in the heart. "Who would trample upon

a jewel because it is fallen in the dirt? or throw away a heap of wheat on account of a little chaff in it? or despise a golden wedge because it retains some dross?" Roses must needs have prickles; but the wise finger whilst plucking the blossoms moves considerably between the thorns.

Anyone who doubts the willingness of wedded affection to relinquish grasp of everything so long as love but remains, should read the sweet little fragment entitled "The Wife," in Washington Irving's "Sketch-book," with its preliminary lines from Middleton:—

"The treasures of the deep are not so precious  
As are the concealed comforts of a man  
Locked up in woman's love. I scent the air  
Of blessings, when I come but near the  
house.  
What a delicious breath marriage sends  
forth!"

The loving-kindness of God is ever present in the world, manifesting itself in various ways. To the husband and wife, who, like Darby and Joan, can look back over happy years of wedlock, there is not much difficulty in seeing where this Divine loving-kindness has been evident with them. They are each to the other so much that they realise no call to even think of marriage as an abstract lottery. It has been a God-given blessing, and they are thankful with a thankfulness too deep to need the expression of syllables. An artist in words may, however, set the experience down for others to dwell on, using, perchance, the imagery of Jean Paul Richter, who thus picturesquely wrote of a similar case:—"The goddess of love and the angel of peace conducted our married pair on tracts running over full meadows, through the spring; and on footpaths hidden by high cornfields, through the summer; and autumn, as they advanced towards winter, spread her marbled leaves under their feet. And thus they arrived before the low dark gate of winter, full of life, full of love, trustful, and contented."

"There be some souls  
For which love is enough, content to bear  
From youth to age, from chestnut locks to  
grey,  
The load of common, uneventful life  
And penury."

And yet, what life really is "common" and "uneventful" when smiled upon by the constancy of daily love? Years of faithful devotion light up the most ordinary existence with a glory which naught else can supply. "Love, the charioteer, is easily tripped; while honest jog-trot love keeps his legs to the end."

There are some people who "don't want to be married." Very well, let them be! Carlyle, in his supremest manner, writes his professor down in "Sartor Resartus" as a man who would never wed: "To the professor women are henceforth pieces of art, of celestial art, indeed; which celestial pieces he glories to survey in galleries, but has lost thought of purchasing." So much for the unmarried man; now for the woman. "Many a woman," says Mrs. Mayo, "who might be happily married if she would be content with one or two new frocks, and two or three true friends and an easily managed little house, is left in spinsterhood" because her expectations are so immense. And, for the good of humanity, methinks she had better remain in her single blessedness, for "The ideal which the wife and mother makes for herself, the manner in which she understands duty and life, contain the fate of the community. Woman is the salvation or destruction of the family. She carries its destinies in the folds of her mantle."\*

\* Amiel's "Journal."