

for and wait upon a mother, when there is not enough money to keep a *bonne*, then I care not for their opinion; and if the *curé* says I am right, I regard no one else but *le bon Dieu*."

In her excitement Agnes had lapsed into many foreign modes of expression, though generally her English was unusually fluent and pure.

Mrs. Chisholm smiled again, and softly stroked the flushed cheek, saying, "Smooth your ruffled plumes, my daughter. I but said it to try you. We will make the experiment for a year, and maybe then——. I shall be glad for you to be near friends; so write to Mrs. Durham, and give her *carte blanche* for the furniture up to forty pounds, thanking her most earnestly from me for her kindness to the fatherless and widow."

The decisive letter was accordingly written,

and, on that day three weeks, mother and daughter alighted at the little country station of Ashley, the nearest to Winton, and were met on the platform by Mr. Durham and his wife, the former a tall delicate-looking man of forty-five, the latter at least ten years younger, and very pretty.

"As the weather is so uncertain, we have borrowed a closed carriage for you, dear Mrs. Chisholm," said the clergyman. "My wife will go with you; and if Miss Chisholm will help me to count and find the right number of packages, I will follow with them in the light cart."

"But, indeed, I do not like that," began Agnes, when she was interrupted by Mrs. Durham. "No matter what you like, my dear; we settled it as we drove to the station in that selfsame cart, and I good-naturedly allow him to drive it back, the shaking being good for

his liver, while I endure the self-denial of sitting in the lap of luxury—otherwise, our good squire's brougham. Now, no more nonsense; jump in, and don't keep your mother waiting."

So rattling on, and all the while tenderly watching over and helping the invalid, Mrs. Durham led the way to the luxurious carriage awaiting them, followed, after a momentary colloquy with the rector, by Agnes, who, entering into the spirit of her hosts *pro tem.*, responded gaily to the nonsensical stream of chatter as they rolled smoothly along, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the tired look on her mother's face relax; and before they reached Hope Cottage a merry laugh had issued from the lips to which any sounds but those of sorrow had long been strangers.

(To be continued.)

## WHISPERS TO OUR WEDDED GIRLS.

By A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.



popular question of a recent season in the newspaper press was, "Is marriage a failure?" In the abstract the answer is simple enough, for believers in Revelation. The Bible tells us, "It is not good for man to be alone;" and, "Let

the younger women marry," which, of course, implies that,

for mankind at large, marriage is the best and happiest condition, though naturally there are exceptions to this as to every general rule. But there can be no manner of doubt that many individual marriages are failures, though on the face of things there seems no reason whatever why they should have turned out so. Two young people with good health, sufficient (if not abundant) means of maintenance, warmly attached to one another, equal in rank and position, surrounded by affectionate friends and well-wishers, start cheerfully and hopefully in their wedded course. There seems every reason to expect happiness; but a cloud soon comes over the sunny landscape, and husband and wife alike feel that they are disillusioned! They make no open stir about it; they scarcely admit the truth to themselves. They plod on, wearily enough, sometimes, in the dull routine of ordinary life. The husband gives his mind to his profession or business, the wife endeavours to occupy her heart with home duties and social pleasures; but the brightness and zest of existence have vanished. How does this come about? Why should it so often happen? I cannot but believe that it arises very often from mere want of consideration, on one side or both, at the outset. When the position is new and everything delightful, then is the time to begin to cultivate the little courtesies, the thoughtful attentions, the loving sympathies, which render married life, when it is truly "successful," one long honeymoon, and home a veritable paradise.

There is doubtless much that might with advantage be said to young husbands on these points; but as we are writing for "married girls," we shall devote the main part of our attention to their side of the question. Still, we may just observe, in passing, that men are often extremely inconsiderate, from ignorance as well as from selfishness. How often,

in the lower classes, young men will let the girls with whom they are "keeping company," be on their feet almost the whole day when they take them out. The long walks, which are pleasant and healthy for the man, are most fatiguing, and often really injurious, to the health of the girl. Yet her pleasure in her lover's society, and the desire to make herself agreeable, prevent her from complaining, and even nerve her to keep up the appearance of enjoyment long after she would give worlds for a cup of tea and a quiet hour or two's rest. Young husbands, too, in higher circles, are often most blameworthy in their disregard of their wives' health and comfort. They will urge them to exertions above their strength, in the way of walking, or evening dissipations, and keep them waiting for meals till they are faint and exhausted, quite unnecessarily, while they are chatting with a friend, or looking over the reviews at the club. Even where the husband is forced to be irregular by business or other duties, a very little unselfish consideration would dictate the enactment of a rule that dinner or supper should be served if the master were not in by a quarter of an hour after the time fixed. The more unselfish and willing to sacrifice herself the wife may be, the more objectionable and heartless is the husband's want of thought for her.

But too often the wife fails to realise the fact that she should be a helpmeet and companion to her husband. She may love him truly, be a devoted mother to his children, and an excellent housekeeper, and yet disappoint him, and be disappointed herself, if she prove deficient in that intelligent sympathy which—whatever may be said to the contrary—men appreciate quite as much as do women. We all know how public men are helped or hindered by their wives. Who has not heard of Lady Beaconsfield's concealing the fact that her husband had crushed her finger in the carriage door till he had safely disappeared within the House of Commons, lest it should distract his mind on the eve of one of his great speeches? When the footman released her she fainted, so the pain must have been considerable. Not every woman would be physically capable of such self-control as this, but every woman might take as keen an interest in her husband's affairs.

Lady Palmerston is always said to have contributed very largely to the popularity and success of her husband, by the manner in which she laid herself out to assist him in her social life.

Lord Shaftesbury tells us that we owe his noble career of active benevolence in a great degree to his wife. He would not give himself up to the public, and break through the pleasant restraints of a happy home, without her consent. But while fully appreciating all the disagreeable consequences to herself, and all the obloquy, misconception, and ridicule which would undoubtedly be Lord Shaftesbury's portion, in days when "slumming" had not been added to the list of fashionable diversions, and philanthropy was not in vogue, she heartily encouraged his aspirations, and backed him up by all means in her power.

At the other end of the social scale, it is universally acknowledged that a man's well-being and prosperity depend as much upon his wife as himself. If she does not consider his comfort, if she is short-tempered, or self-indulgent, or careless, the home and the man usually go down hill together as speedily as may be. Why, then, should a wife in the middle-class assume (as we fancy many do, tacitly, if not openly), that interest in her husband's professional or business pursuits is superfluous? We have often known most disastrous effects follow from the acting out of this theory. We remember a case of a well-to-do tradesman who married a pretty girl of much lower status than himself. He behaved with more prudence than men in his position usually do, for he had the girl educated very fairly for her future station before he married her. As a wife, however, she showed herself utterly indisposed to interest herself in the important question of ways and means. On the contrary, she spent the worthy man's money with a lavish hand, encouraged her children in ostentation and extravagance, set up a suburban establishment with extra servants when he was on the verge of bankruptcy, and at length brought about his complete and total ruin. If she had taken an interest in his business, curtailed her domestic expenses, and brought up her children to work and live as became their rank in life, so as to be a comfort and help to their harassed and too-indulgent father, he might not, in his old age, have had to exchange a master's for a servant's place.

In professional circles it is not necessary for a wife to be learned in the law or in medicine in order to help her husband with real and definite sympathy. She may remember the names of his clients or patients, take care to ask how a case ended in which he took a part,

listen with interest to any anecdotes or details he may repeat to her about his outdoor life, and take pains to understand as much as he may choose to explain to her of the state of his affairs.

It is a great mistake for a wife to be always full of her own little concerns, to the exclusion of her husband's; to make it evident to him that she thinks her new bonnet much more interesting than his new book; that she cares much more about Freddy's cold or Lily's chilblains, than his hoarseness or threatenings of gout. To check the stream of his confidences by a torrent of grumbling about impertinent servants, bad coals, baby's teething, and the hundred and one petty difficulties of domestic life, is injudicious as well as inconsiderate. It tends to make the husband weary of his wife's companionship, and always willing to exchange an evening at home for any reasonable alternative that may offer. Or it leads him to interfere in the household in a manner destructive in the end to the wife's comfort and due authority, however she may appreciate it at the beginning. In either case it is adding needlessly to the man's burden; he ought to have as few home cares to bear as possible. Of course, in emergencies his masculine strength of will, and presumably superior judgment, are always there for the wife to fall back upon; but in the ordinary routine of daily life we strongly advise our married girls to set themselves resolutely to manage their own maids, and overcome their own difficulties.

We must observe here, however, that the husband ought to do his part. He has no right to complain that his wife is not a model housekeeper if he is irregular in supplying her weekly allowance for expenses. We have heard of cases where the husband continually left his wife without money for a day or two, and yet was annoyed if she ran up bills, or failed to provide the ordinary comforts for which she had no means of paying. Nothing is more humiliating to a lady than to be compelled to ask the laundress to wait a week for her money; to be unable to pay the man

who repairs the children's shoes when he brings them home; to have to borrow of the servants, or send away a hamper for want of the necessary shilling to pay the carrier, and all because her husband forgot to sign the cheque, or promised to get gold from the bank, and, being busy, put it off till the next day.

Some wives bring these troubles on themselves by their own want of consideration. They are, in fact, thoroughly untrustworthy where money is concerned. They have a private allowance and a housekeeping one, and instead of honourably keeping them apart, they indulge themselves at the expense of the house, so that they never have a penny in hand. A prudent wife will take care that housekeeping money is used for housekeeping, and will aim at always keeping a small sum in hand in case of any unexpected extra demand.

In how many cases—

"The little rift within the lute  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening, slowly silence all,"

begins about some trifle of this kind. The husband is full of his important affairs, and fails to consider his wife's feelings; the wife, young and foolish perhaps, and too conceited to learn from more experienced housekeepers, wastes her husband's substance unthinkingly, and feels herself aggrieved when he shows his natural vexation, perhaps not in the most conciliatory manner.

As years pass on domestic jars become more common; children hear and imitate the snappish tones and harsh words of their elders. Love withers and dies in so uncongenial an atmosphere. *Home* becomes a mere name, a place for eating and sleeping, and, in some cases, a sphere of work; but rest and comfort are no longer connected with the thought of home-coming. Sons have no sweet memories to help them to keep in the right path when they go out into the world. Daughters snatch eagerly at the first chance of escaping from the parental roof, and too often discover

that they have but exchanged bad for worse as far as happiness is concerned. The old age of the lonely parents is dreary and forlorn. They have long ceased to find pleasure in one another's society; fault-finding on both sides is a confirmed habit, and the long evenings, which might be so peaceful and enjoyable in spite of the weakness and infirmities of advancing age, are spent in querulous complaints or irritating sarcasms.

Patience, forbearance, and unselfishness, exercised in little things in the early days of married life, when the future seemed so full of untasted joy, and sorrow a shadowy form hardly realised as a possible reality, might have prevented the disenchantment and sad disappointment of after times, and converted the bitter waters of unavailing regret into the sparkling wine of satisfied affection—the purest bliss, perhaps, that earth can afford.

But earth is not all. We write for Christian girls—for Christian wives. You have to face eternity; and how will you feel, when you draw near to "that bourne from which no traveller returns," if you are conscious that your carelessness, coldness, want of sympathy, or self-indulgence, has driven your husband further from God, or implanted in your children's minds a prejudice against religion? You may feel humbly confident that your shortcomings are forgiven, and, with all your other sins, mercifully hidden in the shadow of the Cross; but will it not embitter your last hours to feel that you leave behind you loved ones whom you have hindered rather than helped on the road to heaven? On the other hand, how sweet would it be to feel that you had striven persistently, if feebly, to resist the little temptations, to do the little duties, to overcome the little difficulties, to meet the little requirements of everyday life: striven, in short, to "show piety at home." Then might you hope to hear the welcome words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

VARIETIES.

ARITHMETIC AND DRESSMAKING.

*Teacher*: "If your mother had twenty-five yards of stuff, and made a dress requiring but eighteen yards, how much would she have left?"

*Little Girl*: "Mamma can't make her own dresses. She has tried often, but they are always too—"

*Teacher*: "Suppose she sent it to a dressmaker, how much would the dressmaker send back?"

*Little Girl*: "Depends on which dressmaker she sent it to. Some wouldn't send back any."

*Teacher*: "Suppose she sent it to an honest one?"

*Little Girl*: "Some of the honestest ones cut things to waste, so that there is never anything left, no matter how much you send them."

HOW TO BE HAPPY.—Nothing contributes more to the animal spirits than benevolence. There are always people within reach whom you can very easily make happy, and the unselfish communication of happiness has the happy quality of reflecting itself.

GOLDEN SILENCE.—It is a well-established truth that an ounce of keep-your-mouth-shut is better than a pound of explanations after you have said it.

LIFELONG COMPANIONS.

An elderly lady went to an English country market one day to buy a Christmas goose. At the stall where she called, two live geese were exposed for sale, both in custody of a cherry-faced country lass.

The little maid would not sell one goose without the other.

Remembering that a friend had expressed a wish for a Christmas bird, the customer was easily prevailed on to take both. But as she was concluding the bargain, it occurred to her to ask the maid why she had refused to sell the geese separately.

"If you please, ma'am," was the naïve reply, "mother said as how the geese had lived together fifteen years, and it would be cruel to part them!"

FALLING ASLEEP.—Sir Thomas Moore was so struck by the analogies between sleep and death that he would never trust himself to the tender mercies of "Nature's soft nurse" till he had prayed to Heaven for protection.

BODY AND MIND.—There are people who dress their bodies in the height of fashion and let their minds go in rags.

WHERE PRAISE IS DUE.—To give heartfelt praise to noble actions is, in some measure, making them our own.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC II.

The young aspirant, by good fortune led,  
Has boldly followed wheresoe'er she  
beckon'd;  
With judgment cool and clear, unbiased head,  
He lets my first be tempered by my second.

1. Nestling within a valley picturesque and grand,  
A village offers tourists rest at little cost;  
While near at hand those jagged Alpine summits stand,  
In scaling which so many precious lives are lost.

2. The loving sister who preserved her brother's life  
By aiding his escape when murder's hand was near;  
In grateful memory he gave her to be wife  
To his heroic cousin and companion dear.

3. A science that is hard at first to comprehend,  
And oft will weary hours of drudgery entail;  
Yet wonderful results its patient toil attend,  
And, lacking it, no education can avail.

4. Where'er I set my foot, there firmly I remain,  
Inflexible and pertinacious do I prove;  
All efforts to disturb me you will find are vain,  
Despite your ingenuity to make me move.

XIMENA.