



FIRST STEPS IN COURTSHIP.

IT would be out of place in these pages to grapple with a subject so large as that of Love in its various phases: a theme that must be left to poets, novelists, and moralists to dilate upon. It is sufficient for our purpose to recognize the existence of this, the most universal—the most powerful—of human passions, when venturing to offer our counsel and guidance to those of both sexes who, under its promptings, have resolved to become votaries of Hymen, but who, from imperfect knowledge of conventional usages, are naturally apprehensive that at every step they take they may render themselves liable to misconception, ridicule, or censure.

We will take it for granted, then, that a gentleman has in one way or another become fascinated by a fair lady—possibly a recent acquaintance—whom he is most anxious to know more particularly. His heart already feels “the inly touch of love,” and his most ardent wish is to have that love returned.

At this point we venture to give him a word of serious advice. We urge him, before he ventures to take any step towards the pursuit of this object, to consider well his position and prospects in life, and reflect whether they are such as to justify him in deliberately seeking to win the young lady's affections, with the view of making her his wife at no distant period. Should he, after such a review of his affairs, feel satisfied that he can proceed honorably, he may then use fair opportunities to ascertain the estimation in which the young lady, as well as her family, is held by friends. It is perhaps needless to add, that all possible delicacy and caution must be observed in making such inquiries, so as to avoid compromising the lady herself in the slightest degree. When he has satisfied himself on this head, and found no insurmountable impediment in his way, his next endeavor will be, through the mediation of a common friend, to procure an introduction to the lady's family. Those who undertake such an office incur no slight responsibility, and are, of course, expected to be

scrupulously careful in performing it, and to communicate all they happen to know affecting the character and circumstances of the individual they introduce.

We will now reverse the picture, and see how matters stand on the fair one's side.

First, let us hope that the inclination is mutual; at all events that the lady views her admirer with preference, that she deems him not unworthy of her favorable regard, and that his attentions are agreeable to her. It is true her heart may not yet be won: she has to be wooed; and what fair daughter of Eve has not hailed with rapture that brightest day in the springtide of her life? She has probably first met the gentleman at a ball, or other festive occasion, where the excitement of the scene has reflected on every object around a roseate tint. We are to suppose, of course, that in looks, manners, and address, her incipient admirer is not below her ideal standard in gentlemanly attributes. His respectful approaches to her—in soliciting her hand as a partner in the dance, etc.—have first awakened on her part a slight feeling of interest towards him. This mutual feeling of interest, once established, soon “grows by what it feeds on.” The exaltation of the whole scene favors its development, and it can hardly be wondered at if both parties leave judgment “out in the cold” while enjoying each other's society, and possibly already pleasantly occupied in building “castles in the air.” Whatever may eventually come of it, the fair one is conscious for the nonce of being unusually happy. This emotion is not likely to be diminished when she finds herself the object of general attention—accompanied, it may be, by the display of a little envy among rival beauties—owing to the assiduous homage of her admirer. At length, prudence whispers that he is to her, as yet, a comparative stranger; and with a modest reserve she endeavors to retire from his observation, so as not to seem to encourage his attentions. The gentleman's ardor, however, is not to be thus checked; he again solicits her to be his partner in a dance. She finds it hard, very hard, to refuse him; and both, yielding at last to the alluring influences by which they are surrounded, discover at the moment of parting that

a new and delightful sensation has been awakened in their hearts.

At a juncture so critical in the life of a young, inexperienced woman as that when she begins to form an attachment for one of the opposite sex—at a moment when she needs the very best advice, accompanied with a considerate regard for her overwrought feelings—the very best course she can take is to confide the secret of her heart to that truest and most loving of friends—her mother. Fortunate is the daughter who has not been deprived of that wisest and tenderest of counselors—whose experience of life, whose prudence and sagacity, whose anxious care and appreciation of her child's sentiments, and whose awakened recollections of her own trysting days, qualify and entitle her, above all other beings, to counsel and comfort her trusting child, and to claim her confidence. Let the timid girl then pour forth into her mother's ear the flood of her pent-up feelings. Let her endeavor to distrust her own judgment, and seek hope, guidance, and support from one who, she well knows, will not deceive or mislead her. The confidence thus established will be productive of the most beneficial results—by securing the daughter's obedience to her parent's advice, and her willing adoption of the observances prescribed by etiquette, which, as the courtship progresses, that parent will not fail to recommend as strictly essential in this phase of life. Where a young woman has had the misfortune to be deprived of her mother, she should at such a period endeavor to find her next best counselor in some female relative, or other trustworthy friend.

We are to suppose that favorable opportunities for meeting have occurred, until, by and by, both the lady and her admirer have come to regard each other with such warm feelings of inclination as to have a constant craving for each other's society. Other eyes have in the meantime not failed to notice the symptoms of a growing attachment; and some "kind friends" have, no doubt, even set them down as already engaged.

The admirer of the fair one is, indeed, so much enamored as to be unable longer to retain his secret within his own breast; and not being without hope that his attachment is reciprocated, resolves on seeking an introduction to the lady's family preparatory to his making a formal declaration of love.

It is possible, however, that the lover's endeavors to procure the desired introduction may fail of success, although where no material difference of social position exists, this difficulty will be found to occur less frequently than might at first be supposed. He must then discreetly adopt measures to bring himself, in some degree, under the fair one's notice: such, for instance, as attending the place of worship which she frequents, meeting her, so often as to be manifestly for the purpose, in the course of her promenades, etc. He will thus soon be able to judge—even without speaking to the lady—whether his further attentions will be distasteful to her. The signs of this on the lady's part, though of the most trifling nature, and in no way compromising her, will be unmistakable: for, as the poet tells us in speaking of the sex:—

"He gave them but one tongue to say us 'Nay,'
And two fond eyes to grant!"

Should her demeanor be decidedly discouraging, any perseverance on his part would be ungentlemanly and highly indecorous. But, on the other hand, should a timid blush intimate doubt, or a gentle smile lurking in the half-dropped eye give pleasing challenge to further parley, when possible he may venture to write—not to the lady—that would be the opening of a clandestine correspondence; an unworthy course, where every act should be open and straightforward, as tending to manly and honorable ends—but to the father or guardian, through the agency of a common friend where feasible, or, in some instances, to the party at whose residence the lady may be staying. In his letter he ought first to state his position in life and prospects, as well as mention his family connections; and then request permission to visit the family, as a preliminary step to paying his addresses to the object of his admiration.

By this course he in no wise compromises either himself or the lady, but leaves open to both, at any future period, an opportunity of retiring from the position of courtship taken up on the one side, and of receiving addresses on the other, without laying either party open to the accusation of fickleness or jilting.

ETIQUETTE OF COURTSHIP.

In whatever way the attachment may have originated, whether resulting from old association or from a recent acquaintanceship between the lovers, we will assume that the courtship is so far in a favorable train that the lady's admirer has succeeded in obtaining an introduction to her family, and that he is about to be received in their domestic circle on the footing of a welcome visitor, if not yet in the light of a probationary suitor.

In the first place, matters will in all probability be found to amble on so calmly, that the enamored pair may seldom find it needful to consult the rules of etiquette; but in the latter, its rules must be attentively observed, or "the course of true love" will assuredly not run smooth.

Young people are naturally prone to seek the company of those they love; and as their impulses are often at such times impatient of control, etiquette prescribes cautionary rules for the purpose of averting the mischief that unchecked intercourse and incautious familiarity might give rise to. For instance, a couple known to be attached to each other should never, unless when old acquaintances, be left alone for any length of time, nor be allowed to meet in any other place than the lady's home—particularly at balls, concerts, and other public places—except in the presence of a third party. This, as a general rule, should be carefully observed, although exceptions may occasionally occur under special circumstances.

WHAT THE LADY SHOULD OBSERVE DURING COURTSHIP.

A lady should be particular during the early days of courtship—while still retaining some clearness of mental vision—to observe the manner in which her suitor comports himself to other ladies. If he behave with ease and courtesy, without freedom or the slightest approach to license in manner or conversation; if he never speak slightly of the sex, and

is ever ready to honor its virtues and defend its weakness; she may continue to incline towards him a willing ear. His habits and his conduct must awaken her vigilant attention before it be too late. Should he come to visit her at irregular hours; should he exhibit a vague or wandering attention—give proofs of a want of punctuality—show disrespect for age—sneer at things sacred, or absent himself from regular attendance at divine service—or evince an inclination to expensive pleasures beyond his means, or to low and vulgar amusements; should he be foppish, eccentric, or very slovenly in his dress; or display a frivolity of mind, and an absence of well-directed energy in his worldly pursuits; let the young lady, we say, while there is yet time, eschew that gentleman's acquaintance, and allow it gently to drop. The effort, at whatever cost to her feelings, must be made, if she have any regard for her future happiness and self-respect. The proper course then to take is to intimate her distaste, and the causes that have given rise to it, to her parents or guardian, who will be pretty sure to sympathize with her, and to take measures for facilitating the retirement of the gentleman from his pretensions.

WHAT THE GENTLEMAN SHOULD OBSERVE DURING COURTSHIP.

It would be well also for the suitor, on his part, during the first few weeks of courtship, carefully to observe the conduct of the young lady in her own family, and the degree of estimation in which she is held by them, as well as among her intimate friends. If she be attentive to her duties; respectful and affectionate to her parents; kind and forbearing to her brothers and sisters; not easily ruffled in temper; if her mind be prone to cheerfulness and to hopeful aspiration, instead of to the display of a morbid anxiety and dread of coming evil; if her pleasures and enjoyments be those which chiefly center in home; if her words be characterized by benevolence, goodwill, and charity: then we say, let him not hesitate, but hasten to enshrine so precious a gem in the casket of his affections. But if, on the other hand, he should find that he has been attracted by the tricksome affectation and heartless allurements of a flirt, ready to bestow smiles on all, but with a heart for none; if she who has succeeded for a time in fascinating him be of uneven temper, easily provoked, and slow to be appeased; fond of showy dress, and eager for admiration; ecstatic about trifles, frivolous in her tastes, and weak and wavering in performing her duties; if her religious observances are merely the formality of lip-service; if she be petulant to her friends, pert and disrespectful to her parents, overbearing to her inferiors; if pride, vanity, and affectation be her characteristics; if she be inconstant in her friendships; gaudy and slovenly, rather than neat and scrupulously clean, in attire and personal habits; then we counsel the gentleman to retire as speedily, but as politely, as possible from the pursuit of an object unworthy of his admiration and love; nor dread that the lady's friends—who must know her better than he can do—will call him to account for withdrawing from the field.

But we will take it for granted that all goes on well; that the parties are, on sufficient acquaintance, pleased with each

other, and that the gentleman is eager to prove the sincerity of his affectionate regard by giving some substantial token of his love and homage to the fair one. This brings us to the question of

PRESENTS,

a point on which certain observances of etiquette must not be disregarded. A lady, for instance, cannot with propriety accept presents from a gentleman *previously* to his having made proposals of marriage. She would by so doing incur an obligation at once embarrassing and unbecoming. Should, however, the gentleman insist on making her a present—as of some trifling object of jewelry, etc.—there must be no secret about it. Let the young lady take an early opportunity of saying to her admirer, in the presence of her father or mother, "I am much obliged to you for that ring (or other trinket, as the case may be) which you kindly offered me the other day, and which I shall be most happy to accept, if my parents do not object;" and let her say this in a manner which, while it increases the obligation, will divest it altogether of impropriety, from having been conferred under the sanction of her parents.

We have now reached that stage in the progress of the Courtship, where budding affection, having developed into mature growth, encourages the lover to make

THE PROPOSAL.

When about to take this step, the suitor's first difficulty is how to get a favorable opportunity; and next, having got the chance, how to screw his courage up to give utterance to the "declaration." A declaration in writing should certainly be avoided where the lover can by any possibility get at the lady's ear. But there are cases where this is so difficult that an impatient lover cannot be restrained from adopting the agency of a *billet-doux* in declaring his passion.

The lady, before proposal, is generally prepared for it. It is seldom that such an avowal comes without some previous indications of look and manner on the part of the admirer, which can hardly fail of being understood. She may not, indeed, consider herself engaged; and although nearly certain of the conquest she has made, may yet have her misgivings. Some gentlemen dread to ask, lest they should be refused. Many pause just at the point, and refrain from anything like ardor in their professions of attachment until they feel confident, that they may be spared the mortification and ridicule that is supposed to attach to being rejected, in addition to the pain of disappointed hope. This hesitation when the mind is made up is wrong; but it does often occur, and we suppose ever will do so, with persons of great timidity of character. By it both parties are kept needlessly on the fret, until the long-looked-for opportunity unexpectedly arrives, when the flood-gates of feeling are loosened, and the full tide of mutual affection gushes forth uncontrolled. It is, however, at this moment—the agony-point to the embarrassed lover, who "doats yet doubts"—whose suppressed feelings rendered him morbidly sensitive—that a lady should be especially careful lest any show of either prudery or coquetry on her part should lose to her forever the object of her choice. True love is generally delicate and timid, and may easily be scared by af-

fect indifference, through feelings of wounded pride. A lover needs very little to assure him of the reciprocation of his attachment: a glance, a single pressure of the hand, a whispered syllable, on the part of the loved one, will suffice to confirm his hopes,

REFUSAL BY THE YOUNG LADY.

When a lady rejects the proposal of a gentleman, her behavior should be characterized by the most delicate feeling toward some who, in offering her his hand, has proved his desire to confer upon her, by this implied preference for her above all other women, the greatest honor it is in his power to offer. Therefore, if she have no love for him, she ought at least to evince a tender regard for his feelings; and in the event of her being previously engaged, should at once acquaint him with the fact. No right-minded man would desire to persist in a suit, when he well knew that the object of his admiration had already disposed of her heart.

When a gentleman makes an offer of his hand by letter, the letter must be answered, and certainly not returned, should the answer be a refusal; unless, indeed, when from a previous repulse, or some other particular and special circumstance, such an offer may be regarded by the lady or her relatives as presumptuous and intrusive. Under such circumstances, the letter may be placed by the lady in the hands of her parents or guardian, to be dealt with by them as they may deem most advisable.

No woman of proper feeling would regard her rejection of an offer of marriage from a worthy man as a matter of triumph; her feeling on such an occasion should be one of regretful sympathy with him for the pain she is unavoidably compelled to inflict. Nor should such a rejection be unaccompanied with some degree of self-examination on her part, to discern whether any lightness of demeanor or tendency to flirtation may have given rise to a false hope of her favoring his suit. At all events, no lady should ever treat the man who has so honored her with the slightest disrespect or frivolous disregard, nor ever unfeelingly parade a more favored suitor before one whom she has refused.

CONDUCT OF THE GENTLEMAN WHEN HIS ADDRESSES ARE REJECTED.

The conduct of the gentleman under such distressing circumstances should be characterized by extreme delicacy and a chivalrous resolve to avoid occasioning any possible annoyance or uneasiness to the fair author of his pain. If, however, he should have reason to suppose that his rejection has resulted from mere indifference to his suit, he need not altogether retire from the field, but may endeavor to kindle a feeling of regard and sympathy for the patient endurance of his disappointment, and for his continued but respectful endeavors to please the lukewarm fair one. But in case of avowed or evident preference for another, it becomes imperative upon him, as a gentleman, to withdraw at once, and so relieve the lady of any obstacle, that his presence or pretensions may occasion, to the furtherance of her obvious wishes. A pertinacious continuance of his attentions, on the part of one who has been

distinctly rejected, is an insult deserving of the severest reprobation. Although the weakness of her sex, which ought to be her protection, frequently prevents a woman from forcibly breaking off an acquaintance thus annoyingly forced upon her, she rarely fails to resent such impertinence by that sharpest of woman's weapons, a keen-edged but courteous ridicule, which few men can bear up against.

REFUSAL BY THE LADY'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.

It may happen that both the lady and her suitor are willing, but that the parents or guardians of the former, on being referred to, deem the connection unfitting, and refuse their consent. In this state of matters, the first thing a man of sense, proper feeling, and candor should do, is to endeavor to learn the objections of the parents, to see whether they cannot be removed. If they are based on his present insufficiency of means, a lover of a persevering spirit may effect much in removing apprehension on that score, by cheerfully submitting to a reasonable time of probation, in the hope of amelioration in his worldly circumstances. Happiness delayed will be none the less precious when love has stood the test of constancy and the trial of time. Should the objection be founded on inequality of social position, the parties, if young, may wait until matured age shall ripen their judgment and place the future more at their own disposal. A clandestine marriage should be peremptorily declined. In too many cases it is a fraud committed by an elder and more experienced party upon one whose ignorance of the world's ways, and whose confiding tenderness appeal to him for protection even against himself. In nearly all the instances we have known of such marriages, the result proved the step to have been ill-judged, imprudent, and highly injurious to the reputation of one party, and in the long run detrimental to the happiness of both.

CONDUCT OF THE ENGAGED COUPLE.

The conduct of the bridegroom-elect should be marked by a gallant and affectionate assiduity towards his lady-love—a *denouement* easily felt and understood, but not so easy to define. That of the lady towards him should manifest delicacy, tenderness, and confidence: while looking for his thorough devotion to herself, she should not captiously take offense and show airs at his showing the same kind of attention to other ladies as she, in her turn, would not hesitate to receive from the other sex.

In the behavior of a gentleman towards his betrothed in public, little difference should be perceptible from his demeanor to other ladies, except in those minute attentions which none but those who love can properly understand or appreciate.

In private, the slightest approach to indecorous familiarity must be avoided; indeed it is pretty certain to be resented by every woman who deserves to be a bride. The lady's honor is now in her lover's hands, and he should never forget in his demeanor to and before her that that lady is to be his future wife.

It is the privilege of the betrothed lover, as it is also his

duty, to give advice to the fair one who now implicitly confides in him. Should he detect a fault, should he observe failings which he would wish removed or amended, let him avail himself of this season, so favorable for the frank interchange of thought between the betrothed pair, to urge their correction. He will find a ready listener; and any judicious counsel offered to her by him will now be gratefully received, and remembered in after life. After marriage it may be too late; for advice on trivial points of conduct may then not improbably be resented by the wife as an unnecessary interference; now, the fair and loving creature is disposed like pliant wax in his hands to mold herself to his reasonable wishes in all things.

CONDUCT OF THE LADY DURING HER BETROTHAL.

A lady is not expected to keep aloof from society on her engagement, nor to debar herself from the customary attentions and courtesies of her male acquaintances generally; but she should, while accepting them cheerfully, maintain such a prudent reserve, as to intimate that they are viewed by her as mere acts of ordinary courtesy and friendship. In all places of public amusement—at balls, the opera, etc.—for a lady to be seen with any other cavalier than her avowed lover, in close attendance upon her, would expose her to the imputation of flirtation. She will naturally take pains at such a period to observe the taste of her lover in regard to her costume, and strive carefully to follow it, for all men desire to have their taste and wishes on such apparent trifles gratified. She should at the same time observe much delicacy in regard to dress, and be careful to avoid any unseemly display of her charms; lovers are naturally jealous of observation under such circumstances. It is a mistake not seldom made by women, to suppose their suitors will be pleased by the glowing admiration expressed by other men for the object of *their* passion. Most lovers, on the contrary, we believe, would prefer to withdraw their prize from general observation until the happy moment for their union has arrived.

CONDUCT OF THE GENTLEMAN TOWARDS THE FAMILY OF HIS BETROTHED.

The lover, having now secured his position, should use discretion and tact in his intercourse with the lady's family, and take care that his visits be not deemed too frequent—so as to be really inconvenient to them. He should accommodate himself as much as possible to their habits and ways, and be ever ready and attentive to consult their wishes. Marked attention, and in most cases affectionate kindness, to the lady's mother ought to be shown; such respectful homage will secure for him many advantages in his present position. He must not, however, presume to take his stand yet as a member of the family, nor exhibit an obtrusive familiarity in manner and conversation. Should a disruption of the engagement from some unexpected cause ensue, it is obvious that any such premature assumption would lead to very embarrassing results. In short, his conduct should be such as to win for himself the esteem and affection of all the family, and dis-

pose them ever to welcome and desire his presence, rather than regard him as an intruder.

CONDUCT OF THE LADY ON RETIRING FROM HER ENGAGEMENT.

Should this step unhappily be found necessary on the lady's part, the truth should be spoken, and the reasons frankly given; there must be no room left for the suspicion of its having originated in caprice or injustice. The case should be so put that the gentleman himself must see and acknowledge the justice of the painful decision arrived at. Incompatible habits, ungentlemanly actions, anything tending to diminish that respect for the lover which should be felt for the husband; inconstancy, ill-governed temper—all of which, not to mention other obvious objections—are to be considered as sufficient reasons for terminating an engagement. The communication should be made as tenderly as possible; room may be left in mere venial cases for reformation; but all that is done must be so managed that not the slightest shadow of fickleness or want of faith may rest upon the character of the lady. It must be remembered, however, that the termination of an engagement by a lady has the privilege of passing unchallenged; a lady not being *bound* to declare any other reason than her will. Nevertheless she owes it to her own reputation that her decision should rest on a sufficient foundation, and be unmistakeably pronounced.

CONDUCT OF THE GENTLEMAN ON RETIRING FROM HIS ENGAGEMENT.

We hardly know how to approach this portion of our subject. The reasons must be strong indeed that can sufficiently justify a man, placed in the position of an accepted suitor, in severing the ties by which he has bound himself to a lady with the avowed intention of making her his wife. His reasons for breaking off his engagement must be such as will not merely satisfy his own conscience, but will justify him in the eyes of the world. If the fault be on the lady's side, great reserve and delicacy will be observed by any man of honor. If, on the other hand, the imperative force of circumstances, such as loss of fortune, or some other unexpected calamity to himself, may be the cause, then must the reason be clearly and fully explained, in such a manner as to soothe the painful feelings which such a result must necessarily occasion to the lady and her friends. It is scarcely necessary to point out the necessity for observing great caution in all that relates to the antecedents of an engagement that has been broken off; especially the return on either side of presents and of all letters that have passed.

This last allusion brings us to the consideration of

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter-writing is one great test of ability and cultivation, as respects both sexes. The imperfections of education may be to some extent concealed or glossed over in conversation, but cannot fail to stand out conspicuously in a letter. An ill-written letter infallibly betrays the vulgarity and ignorance indicative of a mean social position.

But there is something more to be guarded against than even bad writing and worse spelling in a correspondence: *saying too much*—writing that kind of matter which will not *bear to be read* by other eyes than those for which it was originally intended. That this is too frequently done is amply proved by the love letters often read in a court of law, the most affecting passages from which occasion “roars of laughter” and the derisive comments of merry-making counsel. Occurrences of this kind prove how frequently letters are not returned or burned when an affair of the heart is broken off. Correspondence between lovers should at all events be tempered with discretion; and on the lady’s part particularly, her affectionate expressions should not degenerate into a silly style of fondness.

It is as well to remark here, that in correspondence between a couple not actually engaged, the use of Christian names in addressing each other should be avoided.

DEMEANOR OF THE SUITOR DURING COURTSHIP.

The manners of a gentleman are ever characterized by urbanity and a becoming consideration for the feelings and wishes of others, and by a readiness to practice self-denial. But the very nature of courtship requires the fullest exercise of these excellent qualities on his part. The lover should carefully accommodate his tone and bearing, whether cheerful or serious, to the mood for the time of his lady-love, whose slightest wish must be his law. In his assiduities to her he must allow of no stint; though hindered by time, distance, or fatigue, he must strive to make his professional and social duties bend to his homage at the shrine of love. All this can be done, moreover, by a man of excellent sense with perfect propriety. Indeed, the world will not only commend him for such devoted gallantry, but will be pretty sure to censure him for any short-coming in his performance of such devoirs.

It is, perhaps, needless to observe that at such a period a gentleman should be scrupulously neat, without appearing particular, in his attire. We shall not attempt to prescribe what he should wear, as that must, of course, depend on the times of the day when his visits are paid, and other circumstances, such as meeting a party of friends, going to the theater, etc., with the lady.

SHOULD A COURTSHIP BE SHORT OR LONG?

The answer to this question must depend on the previous acquaintanceship, connection, or relationship of the parties, as well as on their present circumstances, and the position of their parents. In case of relationship or old acquaintanceship subsisting between the families, when the courtship, declaration, and engagement have followed each other rapidly, a short wooing is preferable to a long one, should other circumstances not create an obstacle. Indeed, as a general rule, we are disposed strongly to recommend a short courtship. A man is never well settled in the saddle of his fortunes until he be married. He wants spring, purpose, and aim; and, above all, he wants a *home* as the center of his efforts. Some portion of inconvenience, therefore, may be risked to obtain this; in fact, it often occurs that by waiting too long the

freshness of life is worn off, and that the generous glow of early feelings becomes tamed down to lukewarmness by a too prudent delaying; while a slight sacrifice of ambition or self-indulgence on the part of the gentleman, and a little descent from pride of station on the lady’s side, might have insured years of satisfied love and happy wedded life.

On the other hand, we would recommend a long courtship as advisable when—the friends on both sides favoring the match—it happens that the fortune of neither party will prudently allow an immediate marriage. The gentleman, we will suppose, has his way to make in his profession or business, and is desirous not to involve the object of his affection in the distressing inconvenience, if not the misery, of straitened means. He reflects that for a lady it is an actual degradation, however love may ennoble the motive of her submission, to descend from her former footing in society. He feels, therefore, that this risk ought not to be incurred. For, although the noble and loving spirit of a wife might enable her to bear up cheerfully against misfortune, and by her endearments soothe the broken spirit of her husband; yet the lover who would willfully, at the outset of wedded life, expose his devoted helpmate to the ordeal of poverty, would be deservedly scouted as selfish and unworthy. These, then, are among the circumstances which warrant a lengthened engagement, and it should be the endeavor of the lady’s friends to approve such cautious delay, and do all they can to assist the lover in his efforts to abridge it. The lady’s father should regard the lover in the light of another son added to his family, and spare no pains to promote his interests in life, while the lady’s mother should do everything in her power, by those small attentions which a mother understands so well, to make the protracted engagement agreeable to him, and as enduring as possible to her daughter.

PRELIMINARY ETIQUETTE OF A WEDDING.

Whether the term of courtship may have been long or short—according to the requirements of the case—the time will at last arrive for

FIXING THE DAY.

While it is the gentleman’s province to press for the earliest possible opportunity, it is the lady’s privilege to name the happy day; not but that the bridegroom-elect must, after all, issue the fiat, for he has much to consider and prepare for beforehand: for instance, to settle where it will be most convenient to spend the honeymoon—a point which must depend on the season of the year, on his own vocation, and other circumstances. At this advanced state of affairs, we must not overlook the important question of

THE BRIDAL TROUSSEAU AND THE WEDDING PRESENTS.

Wedding presents must be sent always to the *bride*, never to the bridegroom, though they be given by friends of the latter. They should be sent during the week previous to the wedding day, as it is customary to display them before the ceremony.

Two cards folded in the invitation in the envelope are sent

with the wedding invitation. The invitation is in the name of the bride's mother, or, if she is not living, the relative or friend nearest the bride :

MRS. NICHOLAS RUTH

AT HOME,

Tuesday, November 18th,

FROM 11 TILL 2 O'CLOCK.

No. 86 W. 47TH STREET.

The two cards, one large and one small, are folded in this invitation. Upon the large card is engraved :

MR. AND MRS. W. F. JOHNSON

On the smaller one :

MISS ROSIE RUTH.

If the young people "receive" after their return from the bridal tour, and there is no wedding-day reception, the following card is sent out :

MR. AND MRS. W. F. JOHNSON

AT HOME,

Thursday, December 28th,

FROM 11 TILL 2 O'CLOCK,

No. 50 E. 63D STREET.

Or,

MR. AND MRS. W. F. JOHNSON

AT HOME,

Thursdays in December.

FROM 11 TILL 2 O'CLOCK.

No. 50 E. 63D STREET.

The bridal calls are not expected to be returned until the last day of reception.

The bridegroom gives to the first groomsman the control of the ceremony and money for the necessary expenses. The first groomsman presents the bouquet to the bride, leads the visitors up to the young couple for the words of congratulation, gives the clergyman his fee, engages the carriages, secures tickets, checks baggage, secures pleasant seats, if the happy pair start by rail for the "moon;" and, in short, makes all arrangements.

If the wedding takes place in church, the front seats in the body of the church are reserved for the relatives of the young couple. The bride must not be kept waiting. The clergyman should be within the rails, the bridegroom and grooms-men should be in the vestry-room by the time the bride is due at the church. The bridesmaids should receive the bride in the vestibule.

The bridal party meet in the vestry-room. Then the bride, leaning on the arm of her father, leads the procession; the bridegroom, with the bride's mother upon his arm, follows; then groomsmen and bridesmaids in couples follow.

At the altar the bridegroom receives the bride, and the ceremony begins. The groomsman stand behind the bridegroom, the bridesmaids behind the bride. In some churches, the bride and bridegroom remove the right hand glove; in others it is not considered essential. The bride stands on the left of the groom.

When the wedding takes place at the house of the bride, the bridal party is grouped behind folding doors or curtains ere their friends see them. If, however, this is not convenient, they enter in the same order as in church.

The first bridesmaid removes the bride's left hand glove for the ring.

After the ceremony the bride and groom go in the same carriage from the church to the house, or from the house to the railway depot or boat.

The bride does not change her dress until she assumes her traveling dress. Her wedding gown is worn at the breakfast.

Friends of the family should call upon the mother of the bride during the two weeks after the wedding.

Mourning must not be worn at a wedding. Even in the case of a widowed mother to either of the happy pair, it is customary to wear gray, or some neutral tint.

It is no longer the fashion at a wedding or wedding reception to congratulate the bride; it is the bridegroom who receives congratulations; the bride wishes for her future happiness. The bride is spoken to first.

The day being fixed for the wedding, the bride's father now presents her with a sum of money for her trousseau, according to her rank in life. A few days previously to the wedding, presents are also made to the bride by relations and intimate friends, varying in amount and value according to their degrees of relationship and friendship—such as plate, furniture, jewelry, and articles of ornament, as well as of utility, to the newly-married lady in her future station. These, together with her wedding dresses, etc., it is customary to exhibit to the intimate friends of the bride a day or two before her marriage.

DUTY OF A BRIDEGROOM-ELECT.

The bridegroom-elect has, on the eve of matrimony, no little business to transact. His first care is to look after a house suitable for his future home, and then, assisted by the taste of his chosen helpmate, to take steps to furnish it in a becoming style. He must also, if engaged in business, make arrangements for a month's absence; in fact, bring together all matters into a focus, so as to be readily manageable when, after the honeymoon, he shall take the reins himself. He will do well to burn most of his bachelor letters, and to part with, it may be, some few of his bachelor connections; and he should communicate, in an easy, informal way, to his acquaintances generally, the close approach of so important a change in his condition. Not to do this might hereafter lead to inconvenience and cause no little annoyance.

We must now speak of

BUYING THE RING.

It is the gentleman's business to buy the ring; *and let him take special care not to forget it*; for such an awkward mistake has frequently happened. The ring should be, we need

scarcely say, of the very purest gold, but substantial. There are three reasons for this: first, that it may not break—a source of great trouble to the young wife; secondly, that it may not slip off the finger without being missed—few husbands being pleased to hear that their wives have lost their wedding rings; and thirdly, that it may last out the lifetime of the loving recipient, even should that life be protracted to the extreme extent. To get the right size required is not one of the least interesting of the delicate mysteries of love. A not unusual method is to get a sister of the fair one to lend one of the lady's rings to enable the jeweler to select the proper size. Care must be taken, however, that it is not too large. Some audacious suitors, rendered bold by their favored position, have been even known presumptuously to try the ring on the patient finger of the bride elect; and it has rarely happened in such cases that the ring has been refused, or sent back to be changed.

WHO SHOULD BE ASKED TO THE WEDDING.

The wedding should take place at the house of the bride's parents or guardians. The parties who ought to be asked are the father and mother of the gentleman, the brothers and sisters (their wives and husbands also, if married), and indeed the immediate relations and favored friends of both parties. Old family friends on the bride's side should also receive invitations—the *rationale* or original intention of this wedding assemblage being to give publicity to the fact that the bride is leaving her paternal home with the consent and approbation of her parents.

On this occasion the bridegroom has the privilege of asking any friends he may choose to the wedding; but no friend has a right to feel affronted at not being invited, since, were all the friends on either side assembled, the wedding breakfast would be an inconveniently crowded reception rather than an impressive ceremonial. It is, however, considered a matter of friendly attention on the part of those who cannot be invited, to be present at the ceremony in the church.

WHO SHOULD BE BRIDESMAIDS.

The bridesmaids should include the unmarried sisters of the bride; but it is considered an anomaly for an elder sister to perform this function. The pleasing novelty for several years past of an addition to the number of bridesmaids, varying from two to eight, and sometimes more, has added greatly to the interest in weddings, the bride being thus enabled to diffuse a portion of her own happiness among the most intimate of her younger friends. One lady is always appointed principal bridesmaid, and has the bride in her charge; it is also her duty to take care that the other bridesmaids have the wedding favors in readiness. On the second bridesmaid devolves, with her principal, the duty of sending out the cards; and on the third bridesmaid, in conjunction with the remaining beauties of her choir, the onerous office of attending to certain ministrations and mysteries connected with the wedding cake.

OF THE BRIDEGROOMSMEN.

It behooves a bridegroom to be exceedingly particular in the

selection of the friends who, as groomsmen, are to be his companions and assistants on the occasion of his wedding. Their number is limited to that of the bridesmaids; one for each. It is unnecessary to add that very much of the social pleasure of the day will depend on their proper mating. Young and unmarried they must be, handsome they should be, good-humored they cannot fail to be, well dressed they will of course take good care to be. Let the bridegroom diligently con over his circle of friends, and select the comeliest and the pleasantest fellows for his own train. The principal bridegroomsmen, styled his "best man," has, for the day, the special charge of the bridegroom; and the last warning we would give him is, to take care that, when the bridegroom puts on his wedding waistcoat, he does not omit to put the wedding ring into the corner of the left-hand pocket. The dress of a groomsmen should be light and elegant; a dress coat, formerly considered indispensable, is no longer adopted.

ETIQUETTE OF A WEDDING.

The parties being assembled on the wedding morning in the drawing-room of the residence of the bride's father (unless, as sometimes happens, the breakfast is spread in that room), the happy *cortège* should proceed to the church in the following order:—

In the first carriage, the bride's mother and the parents of the bridegroom.

In the second and third carriages, bridesmaids.

Other carriages with the bride's friends.

In the last carriage, the bride and her father.

COSTUME OF THE BRIDE.

A bride's costume should be white, or some hue as close as possible to it.

COSTUME OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

Formerly it was not considered to be in good taste for a gentleman to be married in a black coat. More latitude is now allowed in the costume of a bridegroom, the style now adopted being what is termed morning dress: a frock coat, light trowsers, white waistcoat, ornamental tie, and white or gray gloves.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

The bridegroom stands at the right hand of the bride. The father stands just behind her, so as to be in readiness to give her hand at the proper moment to the bridegroom. The principal bridesmaid stands on the left of the bride, ready to take off the bride's glove, which she keeps as a perquisite and prize of her office.

THE WORDS "I WILL"

are to be pronounced distinctly and audibly by both parties, such being the all-important part of the ceremony as respects themselves; the public delivery, before the priest, by the father of his daughter to the bridegroom, being an evidence of his assent; the silence which follows the inquiry for "cause or just impediment" testifying that of society in general; and the "I will" being the declaration of the bride and

bridegroom that they are voluntary parties to their holy union in marriage.

THE WORDS "HONOR AND OBEY"

must also be distinctly spoken by the bride. They constitute an essential part of the obligation and contract of matrimony on her part.

AFTER THE CEREMONY

the clergyman usually shakes hands with the bride and bridegroom, and the bride's father and mother, and a general congratulation ensues.

THE RETURN HOME.

The bridegroom now leads the bride out of the church, and the happy pair return homeward in the first carriage. The father and mother follow in the next. The rest "stand not on the order of their going," but start off in such wise as they can best contrive.

THE WEDDING BREAKFAST.

The bride and bridegroom sit together at the center of the table, in front of the wedding cake, the clergyman who performed the ceremony taking his place opposite to them. The top and bottom of the table are occupied by the father and mother of the bride. The principal bridesmaid sits to the left of the bride, and the principal bridegroomsman on the left of the bridegroom. It may not be unnecessary to say that it is customary for the ladies to wear their bonnets just as they came from the church. The bridesmaids cut the cake into small pieces, which are not eaten until the health of the bride is proposed. This is usually done by the officiating clergyman, or by an old and cherished friend of the family of the bridegroom. The bridegroom returns thanks for the bride and for himself. The health of the bride's parents is then proposed, and is followed by those of the principal personages present, the toast of the bridesmaids being generally one of the pleasantest features of the festal ceremony. After about two hours, the principal bridesmaid leads the bride out of the room as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the party or attract attention. Shortly after—it may be in about ten minutes—the absence of the bride being noticed, the rest of the ladies retire. Then it is that the bridegroom has a few *melancholy* moments to bid adieu to his bachelor friends, and he then generally receives some hints on the subject in a short address from one of them, to which he is of course expected to respond. He then withdraws for a few moments, and returns after having made a slight addition to his toilet, in readiness for traveling.

DEPARTURE FOR THE HONEYMOON.

The young bride, divested of her bridal attire, and quietly costumed for the journey, now bids farewell to her bridesmaids and lady friends. A few tears spring to her gentle eyes as she takes a last look at the home she is now leaving. The servants venture to crowd about her with their humble but heartfelt congratulations; finally, she falls weeping on her mother's bosom. A short cough is heard, as of some one summoning

up resolution to hide emotion. It is her father. He dares not trust his voice; but holds out his hand, gives her an affectionate kiss, and then leads her, half turning back, down the stairs and through the hall, to the door, where he delivers her as a precious charge to her husband, who hands her quickly into the carriage, springs in after her, waves his hand to the party who appear crowding at the window, half smiles at the throng about the door, then, amidst a shower of old slippers—missiles of good-luck sent flying after the happy pair—gives the word, and they are off, and started on the long-hoped-for voyage!

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO A NEWLY-MARRIED COUPLE.

Our advice to the husband will be brief. Let him have no concealments from his wife, but remember that their interests are mutual; that, as she must suffer the pains of every loss, as well as share the advantages of every success, in his career in life, she has therefore a right to know the risks she may be made to undergo. We do not say that it is necessary, or advisable, or even fair, to harass a wife's mind with the details of business; but where a change of circumstances—not for the better—is anticipated or risked, let her by all means be made acquainted with the fact in good time. Many a kind husband almost breaks his young wife's fond heart by an alteration in his manner, which she cannot but detect, but from ignorance of the cause very probably attributes to a wrong motive; while he, poor fellow, all the while out of pure tenderness, is endeavoring to conceal from her tidings—which must come out at last—of ruined hopes or failure in speculation; whereas, had she but known the danger beforehand, she would have alleviated his fears on her account, and by cheerful resignation have taken out half the sting of his disappointment. Let no man think lightly of the opinion of his wife in times of difficulty. Women have generally more acuteness of perception than men; and in moments of peril, or in circumstances that involve a crisis or turning-point in life, they have usually more resolution and greater instinctive judgment.

We recommend that every husband from the first should make his wife an allowance for ordinary household expenses—which he should pay weekly or monthly—and for the expenditure of which he should not, unless for some urgent reason, call her to account. A tolerably sure guide in estimating the amount of this item, which does not include rent, taxes, servants' wages, coals, or candles, etc., is to remember that in a small middle-class family, not exceeding *four*, the expense of each person for ordinary food amounts to fifteen shillings weekly; beyond that number to ten shillings weekly for each extra person, servant or otherwise. This estimate does not, of course, provide for wine or food of a luxurious kind. The largest establishment, indeed, may be safely calculated on the same scale.

A wife should also receive a stated allowance for dress, within which limit she ought always to restrict her expenses. Any excess of expenditure under this head should be left to the moderate kindness of her husband to concede. Nothing is more contemptible than for a woman to have perpetually to ask her husband for small sums for housekeeping expenses—

nothing more annoying and humiliating than to have to apply to him always for money for her own private use—nothing more disgusting than to see a man “molly-coddling” about marketing, and rummaging about for cheap articles of all kinds.

Let the husband beware, when things go wrong with him in business affairs, of venting his bitter feelings of disappointment and despair in the presence of his wife and family; feelings which, while abroad, he finds it practicable to restrain. It is as unjust as it is impolitic to indulge in such a habit.

A wife having married the man she loves above all others, must be expected in her turn to pay some court to him. Before marriage she has, doubtless, been made his idol. Every moment he could spare, and perhaps many more than he could properly so appropriate, have been devoted to her. How anxiously has he not revolved in his mind his worldly chances of making her happy! How often has he not had to reflect, before he made the proposal of marriage, whether he should be acting dishonorably towards her by incurring the risk, for the selfish motive of his own gratification, of placing her in a worse position than the one she occupied at home! And still more than this, he must have had to consider with anxiety the probability of having to provide for an increasing family, with all its concomitant expenses.

We say, then, that being married, and the honeymoon over, the husband must necessarily return to his usual occupations, which will, in all probability, engage the greater part of his thoughts, for he will now be desirous to have it in his power to procure various little indulgences for his wife's sake which he never would have dreamed of for his own. He comes to his home weary and fatigued; his young wife has had but her pleasures to gratify, or the quiet routine of her domestic duties to attend to, while he has been toiling through the day to enable her to gratify these pleasures and to fulfill these duties. Let, then, the dear, tired husband, at the close of his daily labors, be made welcome by the endearments of his loving spouse—let him be free from the care of having to satisfy the caprices of a petted wife. Let her now take her turn in paying those many little love-begotten attentions which married men look for to soothe them—let her reciprocate that devotion to herself, which, from the early hours of their love, he cherished for her, by her ever-ready endeavors to make him happy and his home attractive.

In the presence of other persons, however, married people should refrain from fulsome expressions of endearment to each other, the use of which, although a common practice, is really a mark of bad taste. It is desirable also to caution them against adopting the too prevalent vulgarism of calling each other, or indeed any person whatever, merely by the initial letter of their surname.

A married woman should always be very careful how she receives personal compliments. She should never court them, nor ever feel flattered by them, whether in her husband's presence or not. If in his presence, they can hardly fail to be distasteful to him; if in his absence, a lady, by a dignified demeanor, may always convince an assiduous admirer that his

attentions are not well received, and at once and for ever stop all familiar advances. In case of insult, a wife should immediately make her husband acquainted therewith; as the only chance of safety to a villain lies in the concealment of such things by a lady from dread of consequences, to her husband. From that moment he has her at advantage, and may very likely work on deliberately to the undermining of her character. He is thus enabled to play upon her fears, and taunt her with their mutual secret and its concealment, until she may be involved, guilelessly, in a web of apparent guilt, from which she can never extricate herself without risking the happiness of her future life.

Not the least useful piece of advice—homely though it be—that we can offer to newly-married ladies, is to remind them that husbands are men, and that men must eat. We can tell them, moreover, that men attach no small importance to this very essential operation, and that a very effectual way to keep them in good humor, as well as good condition, is for wives to study their husbands' peculiar likes and dislikes in this matter. Let the wife try, therefore, if she have not already done so, to get up a little knowledge of the art of *ordering* dinner, to say the least of it. This task, if she be disposed to learn it, will in time be easy enough; moreover, if in addition she should acquire some practical knowledge of cookery, she will find ample reward in the gratification it will be the means of affording her husband.

Servants are difficult subjects for a young wife to handle; she generally either spoils them by indulgence, or ruins them by finding fault unfairly. At last they either get the better of her, or she is voted too bad for them. The art lies in steady command and management of yourself as well as them.

An observance of the few following rules will in all probability insure a life of domestic harmony, peace, and comfort:—

To hear as little as possible whatever is to the prejudice of others; to believe nothing of the kind until you are compelled to admit the truth of it; never to take part in the circulation of evil report and idle gossip; always to moderate, as far as possible, harsh and unkind expressions reflecting upon others; always to believe that if the other side were heard, a very different account might be given of the matter.

In conclusion, we say emphatically to the newly-wedded wife, that attention to these practical hints will prolong her honeymoon throughout the whole period of wedded life, and cause her husband, as each year adds to the sum of his happiness, to bless the day when he first chose her as the nucleus round which he might consolidate the inestimable blessings of HOME.

“How fair is home, in fancy's pictured theme,
In wedded life, in love's romantic dream!
Thence springs each hope, there every spring returns,
Pure as the flame that upward, heavenward burns;
There sits the wife, whose radiant smile is given—
The daily sun of the domestic heaven;
And when calm evening sheds a secret power,
Her looks of love imparadise the hour;
While children round, a beauteous train, appear,
Attendant stars, revolving in her sphere.”

—HOLLAND'S *Hopes of Matrimony*