

SALMO'S TALK ON MARRIAGE

Fugitive marriage is to be deplored because it almost always implies a woman's descent from a higher plane to a lower. If the man was of a higher plane, or the marriage an equality, there would be no objections and hence no inducement to clandestinity. In almost all cases it means the lowering of womanhood. Observe this law: a man marrying a woman beneath him in society may rise to any eminence that he himself may reach; but if a woman marry a man beneath her in society, she always goes down to his level. That is a law inexorable and there are no exceptions. Is any woman so high that she can afford to plot for her own debasement? There is not a state in the American Union that has not for the last twenty years furnished an instance of the sudden departure of some intelligent woman from an affluent home to spend her life with some one who can make three dollars a day, provided he keeps very busy. Well, many a man has lived on three dollars a day and been happy, but he undertakes a big contract when with three dollars a day he attempts to support some one who has lived in a home that cost twenty thousand per annum. This has been about the history of most of such conjunctions of simplicity and extravagance: the marriage of ox and eagle. The first year they get on tolerably well, for it is odd and romantic, and assisted by applause of people who admire outlawry. The second year the couple settle down into complete dislike of each other. The third year they separate and seek for a divorce, or, as is more probable, the man becomes a drunkard and the woman a blackened widow of the street. "Satan waters an sweet, and the bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there."

These transient marriages are also to be deplored because in most instances they are executed in defiance of parental wisdom and kindness. Most parents are anxious for the welfare of a child. If they make vehement and determined opposition it is largely because it is a match unfit to be made, and they can see for their daughter nothing but wretchedness in that direction. They have honor and wise appreciation, for in stance, of the certain domestic demerit that comes from alcoholism in a young man. They realize what an idiot a woman is who marries a man who has not brains or industry enough to earn a livelihood for a family. No bureau of statistics can tell us the number of women who, after being urged to support their selves and their husbands, if the husband becomes an invalid, it is a beautiful thing to see a wife uncompromisingly, by needle or pen or yard stick or washing-machine, support the home. But these great lazy masochists that stand around with hands in their pocket, allowing the wife with her weak arm to fight for bread, need to be reorganized from society. There are innumerable instances in these cities, where the wife pays the rent, and meets all the family expenses, and furnishes the tobacco and the beer for the lord of the household. No wonder parents put on all the breaks to stop such a train of disasters. They have too often seen the gold ring put on the finger at the altar, turning out to be the iron link of a chain of domestic servitude. What a farce it is for a man who cannot support himself and not a cent in the world, to take a ring which he purchased by money stolen from his grandmother's cupboard and put it on the finger of the bride, saying: "With this ring I thee wed and with my worldly goods I the endow."

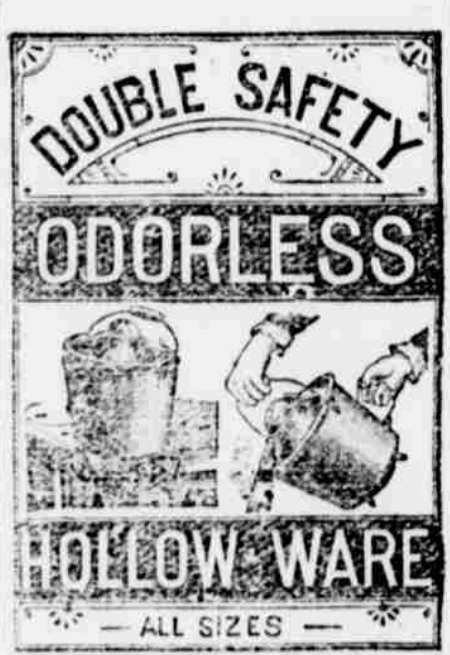
It is surprising to see how some women will marry men knowing nothing about them. No merchant or mercantile would sell a hundred dollars worth of goods on credit, without knowing whether the customer was worthy of being trusted. No man or woman would buy a house with encumbrances of mortgages and liens and judgments against it unexamined, and yet there is not a hour of the day or night for the last ten years, there have not been women by heavy marriage entrusting their earthly happiness to men about whose honesty they know nothing, or who are encountered with liens and judgments and first mortgages and second mortgages, and third mortgages of evil habits. No wonder that in such circumstances there is conjunction of the verb in question, pass from the subjunctive mood to the indicative, and from the indicative to the imperative. In nearly all the cases of escapee that you will hear of the rest of your lives, there will be a heading leap over the barriers of parental counsel, sense and forethought. "Intolerable waters an sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there."

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