

an inevitable consequence of social conditions. And there is another inevitable consequence in contrast: the age of graduation in colleges and professional schools is increasing. The average age of graduation at Harvard is above 22. To this add four years for a profession, and you have the young man an embryo bread winner at 26. Nothing is more significant of the evil tendencies of American civilization than these increasing contrasts.

THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM—A PRIMARY DISTINCTION.

Evidence of revived interest in problems relating to marriage presses upon us from many directions. The recrudescence of the Mormon question in its polygamous aspects is one very large and significant fact. Recent monitoring action by the less ecclesiastical church denominations is another. Considered by themselves there is nothing portentous about these facts. They might imply no more than a tendency toward greater institutional strictness with reference to marital obligations. But when the circumstances out of which they spring are considered, they become much more seriously significant than any previous expressions of solicitude for the marriage relation have proved or have even appeared. For they are manifestly in the nature of a protest against a loosening of public sentiment.

That common regard for the marriage institution is losing some strength, is to be inferred not only from the two large facts mentioned above; it is indicated in a thousand other ways. Serious arguments against marriage are frequently tolerated where once they were "taboo," and a considerable proportion of the people are either candidly indifferent or avowedly hostile to marriage sanctions. More significant still is the patent fact that so many who incline to respect the marriage institution are quite frankly "open to conviction."

What better evidence of this loosened state of the public mind could be required, than the character of the discussion that has followed the recent prediction of the greatest English novelist,

George Meredith, that marriages will some time be contracted, not for life, but only for a definite period—say for ten years. The freedom with which this prediction is discussed in quarters where conventionality usually holds sway, is it not very significant? Yet it is no different from the freedom with which every fad involving indifference to conventional marriage is discussed. The discussion is more extensive geographically, and that is all. The fact cannot be blinked that an ominous division regarding the sacredness of marriage is taking place in common thought.

In these circumstances some primary observations on the nature of marriage, with reference especially to the essential difference between marriage itself and marriage ceremonials, may be pertinent and possibly helpful.

By many persons, perhaps by most of us, the marriage ceremonial and marriage itself are regarded as identical. Seldom is the truth distinctly recognized, that the ceremonials are only formalities declaratory of marriage. Yet marriage formalities are essentially as different from marriage itself as are words and phrases from the thoughts they express.

In very great degree, no doubt, the confusion of these two things, this disposition to regard marriage ceremonials as marriage, is responsible for the tendency to question the sacredness of the marriage relation. It has provoked a controversy which, while seeming to turn on the question of the sanctity of marriage, really turns on the question of the sanctity of the ceremonial. There is in reality much less hostility to marriage itself than might be inferred from the hostility to marriage as a conventionality.

It would be strange if the idolatrous idea that the ceremonial is the marriage were not common. Modern idolatry assumes many guises. The Bible volume, for instance, or its archaic phrasing, rather than the spiritual principles it embodies, excites the reverence of formal pietists. Similarly churchly throngs are more impressed with the externalities of church rituals than with the re-

ligious truths they symbolize. In another relation, the flag of our country rather than the ideals it may represent, makes the blood of perfunctory patriots run faster. The externals in everything rather than the internals in anything, the shadow rather than the substance, the symbol rather than the thing symbolized—it is this that impresses both "the lower mob and the upper." It would be marvelous, therefore, if marriage ceremonials were not popularly mistaken for the intimate and sacred human relationship which these ceremonials only symbolize or shadow forth.

Truly, marriage must be something other than marriage ceremonials—something distinct and different. If the ceremonials have any sanctity at all, their sanctity must be derivative, not original; and it must be derived from marriage itself, which has a sacredness peculiarly and primarily its own.

Although marriage ceremonials may be declaratory of marriage, and may create civil and ecclesiastical obligations, they no more make marriages than the crown makes a king or baptism makes a Christian. The symbols are not the substance. Whether the marriage ceremony be a perfunctory proceeding before a civil magistrate, or an informal public declaration by the parties, or a legal inference from marital conduct, or the most solemn rites of a church—it is neither more nor less than a formality, whereby the fact of marriage itself is certified to society and its obligations proclaimed. The ceremonial is the symbol; marriage itself is the substance.

From this it by no means follows that marriage ceremonials, mere conventionalities though they be, are only empty forms. They may be extremely useful, even indispensable. As military dress does not make a soldier, neither do marriage ceremonials make marriage; yet, as military dress proclaims the wearer's military station, so do marriage ceremonials proclaim the marriage state.

They may do it falsely, even as military dress may be worn falsely. But instances of false participation in marriage ceremonials are not enough to disprove

the genuineness nor to condemn the usefulness of these ceremonials in general.

The point we emphasize here, however, is not the value or legitimacy of marriage ceremonials, but the fact that there is an essential difference between the ceremonial and the marriage itself,—a difference that should always be distinguished.

We are well aware that it may be easier to insist upon this difference strenuously than to distinguish it exactly. But it can be well enough distinguished for all the purposes of practical discussion.

At any rate, we shall come pretty close to a working definition if we specify marriage-love as an element absolutely essential to marriage, but not to marriage ceremonials. Few persons would deny that marriage itself depends, as the marriage ceremonial does not, upon the complete union of one man and one woman through abiding love.

Love is manifestly essential. No union can be a marriage, let the ceremony be never so impressive and authoritative, if love be absent. Is it not equally clear that the love necessary to constitute marriage must be in its nature abiding? Affectionate emotions, stirred by beauty of face or figure, or by strength of body or brain, cannot constitute marriage-love, if marriage itself is more than a momentary passion; and that it is more than this, all who have been truly married know. Marriage is not a passion, tender and fleeting; it is a full-rounded life.

Affectionate emotions inspired by physical attractiveness may attend upon marriage; but they are not necessarily of it. Since physical attractions are transitory, love for them merely is in its nature ephemeral. This is true also of intellectual attractions, such as cleverness, brilliancy and the like. All are ephemeral, and ephemeral love is not marriage-love. The love that characterizes marriage must be of that kind which alone is capable of permanently welding together one man and one woman into a single intellectual and moral being.

Singleness of being in marriage does not mean, of course, that

either of the parties shall be master of the other. Marriage implies cooperation, not despotism.

Neither does it mean that there must be absolute agreement between the parties. As no individual mind can be in agreement even with itself in everything and all the time, identity of intellectual and moral existence in marriage does not necessitate agreement in everything and all the time of two minds.

What is meant by singleness of being in marriage is the almost obvious idea that the parties to a genuine marriage must be in love, each with the higher intellectual qualities and the deeper moral impulses of the other. This is love for the embodied character. It is love for the durable qualities of the marriage partner. It is therefore the type of love that endures, the kind that is abiding in its nature.

Yet marriage-love, abiding though it is in its nature, may often prove to be ephemeral in fact.

The paradox is not unique. Many things besides marriage-love may prove to be ephemeral in fact though they are abiding in their nature. Human life is one. Although human life is in fact often cut off long before three-score-and-ten, it nevertheless comprehends infancy, youth, manhood and age in its nature.

Similarly marriage love, which is abiding in its nature, may prove in particular instances to be ephemeral in fact. One of the parties to a marriage originally genuine, because originally cemented with mutual love of that abiding kind which unifies, love by each for the character-building tendencies of the other, may decide to alter those tendencies. With this diversification in the character-building of the parties, the love that has made their union a true marriage can make it so no longer. Since the indispensable condition of unifying love (complementary functions in character-building) no longer exists in those persons, their unifying love dissolves and their marriage terminates. Obligations resulting from the ceremonial may survive, and rightly so; but the marriage itself is dead.

The man and the woman who

love the same indestructible ideals, in the same general and fundamental way, and discover each in the other—instinctively, it may be, rather than reflectively—a complementary embodiment of those ideals, are mutually under the influence of marriage-love. Intellectually and morally they are thereby made to grow together as one. This would seem to be in harmony with the nature of things.

But if either ceases to love those ideals in that fundamental way, then marriage-love tends to disintegrate and they cease to love each other with the love that unifies. This also seems to be in harmony with the nature of things.

In the one condition they are married essentially, irrespective of ceremonials. In the other they are divorced essentially, irrespective of civil or ecclesiastical sanctions.

Whether this essential marriage should be shadowed forth by ceremonials; whether this essential divorce warrants the formality of civil divorce; whether either civil or ecclesiastical law should tolerate marriages of divorced persons—these questions still remain. So does the question of institutional polygamy. So do all the questions that are colloquially alluded to by the term "free love." So also do the questions that George Meredith has raised by his prediction of marriages for limited periods, whereby the love that makes the marriage would be prejudged to be ephemeral. So may a host of other questions. The marriage problem in all its ramifications is not solved by distinguishing marriage from marriage ceremonials.

But that distinction is the necessary first step in the process of solution. Marriage ceremonials are one thing, marriage itself is another and different thing. Between mere conventional ceremonials proclaiming marriage, and the anterior moral and spiritual fact thereby proclaimed, there must be a complete mental insulation as the primary condition of any rational discussion of the marriage problem.

The worst tyrants are those who know no law but the indulgence of their own benevolence.—Life.