

MENTAL EQUIPMENT
FOR

Married life



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P.V. KANAL

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BY

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FEROZEPORE CITY, PUNJAB (INDIA)

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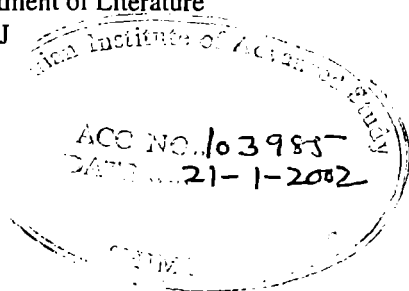


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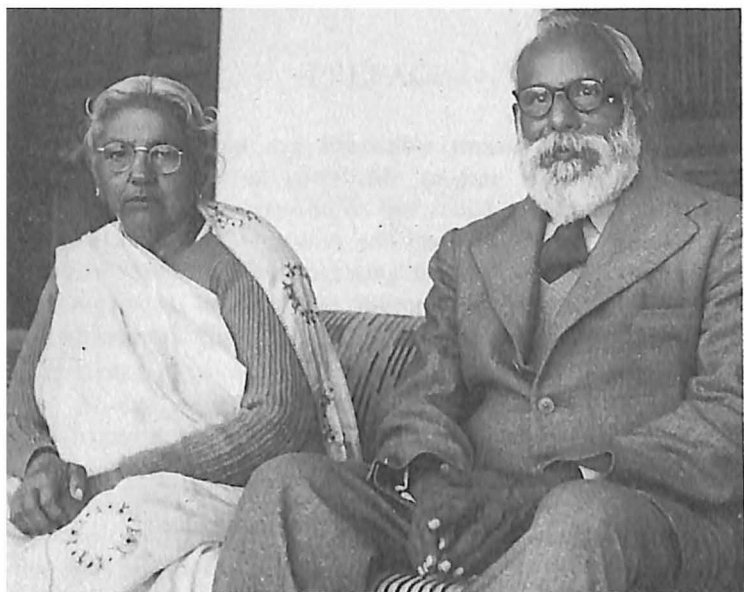
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SHRIMATI & SHRIMAN PARASHURAM VEERUMAL KANAL

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
IN HOMAGE
TO
SHRIMATI SARASWATI DEVI KANAL
WHO WITH THE AUTHOR
LIVED AN IDEAL AND INSPIRING
MARRIED LIFE

PREFACE

There is rapid and irresistible transition going on from authoritative forms of social life to free human associations. Married life is no exception to this social evolution. The young adults exercise both freedom and choice to enter, maintain and terminate wedlock. The increasing facilities for separation which modern divorce law provides, mirror how the present society has handed over its future to the unfettered decisions of its younger generation.

To-day we are socially mature to understand the evils that attend transition and we realize how transition must be cultivated to bring forth the rich harvest of happy and progressive human relationships. Transition as such is characterised by an uncritical wholesale rejection of the past as well as uncritical acceptance of the new. It blunders into thinking that new opportunities are themselves the ends and solutions of human relationships. It is through trial and error, through wasteful social experience, practically through shock of the squalor and misery in mutual relationship that attend transition, that social leadership awakens to the consciousness and need for education so that individuals may exploit the new opportunities of transition to their individual and social happiness and evolution.

Transition or change over does not itself bear the light and carry the strength to enter into the promised land of beauty and joy. Transition must be led by scientific truth and emotional maturity. The Western social leadership realizes today how married life has become a dog-and-cat life and how the young adolescents must be educated into certain basic attitudes which alone can equip them to use free association in marriage to mutual growth and happiness. India is fortunate in its present Renaissance. The movement from authoritative basis of human relationship to free but mature emotional relationship had been conducted by Shri Satyanand Agnihotri. It was the chief motif of His life to discover the principles of social engineering and apply them systematically to the lives of individuals. To this end He founded the Society of Dev Samaj, whose primary work is to evolve healthy and happy human relationships.

The present book is by his famous disciple, Shriman P.V. Kanal. He was Principal as well as Professor and Head of the Philosophy, Psychology and Home-Making Departments in the Dev Samaj College for Women, Ferozepore City. The essays in the present book arise out of scientific studies in the form of group therapy, individual sittings and interviews, no less due to the spark of spiritual wisdom that transcends the scientific techniques and reaches the heart of things. In the light of his Master his uncanny powers of social perception made him see the simple truths in human relations with unusual sensitiveness and strength. He gave the fruits of his studies in the form of talks and sermons to his students and his congregations.

These essays appeared in the form of a serial in the Dev Samaj's journal, *The Science-Grounded Religion*. As the talks and sermons provided unmistakable proof of their invaluable service in building up mature and happy homes, so also the essays inspired its readers to renewed better relationships. They possess biblical directness, simplicity and inspiration.

These essays were dictated by the author in 1951, when he was struck with paralysis. But his indomitable will would not accept this hurdle to hinder the mission of his life to build up happy human relationships in the light and footsteps of his Master.

We are grateful to the Dev Samaj Council for permitting us to publish this consolidated edition of these essays.

April 13, 1955.

—Publishers.

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I

GRATITUDE

Some year ago I received a message from a respected and aged lady known to me, that she wished to see me in her house in the evening when I was free. I went there. I found her sitting in a room in a great worry. "I have something to tell you," she said "and I hope you will satisfy my desire." I said, "I will feel it a privilege to be of any service to you." I requested her to open her mind to me without any hesitation. She said, "Tell my husband to take his meals at home." I was surprised to hear all this. I asked her, "Is he offended with you?" She said, "Of course, not. You know his temper; how kind he is to me. He does not take his meals at home because I have grown very old and he thinks it wrong to burden an old woman with the task of cooking for him." I said, "This is a noble move on his side. What objections should you have to respect his feelings?" On hearing this, tears came to her eyes and in a sobbing tone she said, "Shrimanji, fifty years ago, my parents entrusted me to his care by a wedding ceremony. Since then, for the whole of half a century, he has been not only kind and considerate to me but the bulwark of my life. I have lived my life comfortably under his kind shelter. Is it seemly for me not to cook two *chapaties* for him in his old age?"

I was deeply touched by her expressions. The gratitude she felt for her husband moved me. I immediately went to the good old husband and talked to him about the wife's feelings. The husband said, "Shrimanji, I am grateful to her for her feelings. I wish I had a servant to cook for us both. But if I cannot do that, I should not burden her old body with the task of cooking for me and attending to my dietary demands. It would be a hard problem for me to see her overburdened with this work and take my meals peacefully." I requested him to meet his wife and humour her.

Such was the attitude of two grateful hearts to each other. Can such a couple ever create a miserable home? They become non-complaining against each other from selfish points of view. Such parents create an atmosphere of mutual trust, faith, hope, service

and sacrifice for all their children. Noble parents create noble families and noble families create noble societies.

While gratitude creates mutual trust, loyalty and love, ingratitude creates a miserable home and a hellish family.

One day a lady of a rich and well-educated family who was married to an Imperial Service man and who was known to me, asked for an interview. She fixed a day and told me that I should be able to spare two hours for her. "I want to talk to you", she said, "on a very personal and private matter and seek your advice."

On the fixed day she came and she revealed to me the story of her life which amazed and pained me. She said, "We both, husband and wife, entered into wedlock 25 years ago. Out of these 25 years we have been living a maladjusted life for the last 23 years. We have to keep up appearances. In our social life we pass for a devoted couple. But at home, we hardly have a heart-to-heart talk or even a moment of love and regard." The following dialogue took place between us :—

"Have you all these 25 years lived together under the same roof and taken your meals together on the same table ?"

"Yes, we have lived all these 25 years under the same roof. We have brought up a family of fine and handsome children. We attend social functions together. We go together to attend social calls. As far as possible we have not let the world know that we are living a dog and a cat life."

"Have you been able to keep this mask even before your servants ?"

"So far as the servants are concerned, some of them are very old and they know all about our life. But this much I know that they never talk to anyone else outside the family ?"

"What is the root cause of your estranged feelings ?"

"The root cause of all our troubles lies in our fine children who have no direct hand in our misery—who even indirectly cannot be held responsible for our friction."

"Please explain this riddle to me."

"We both dote upon our children. But we both violently differ upon the way of educating them. My husband wishes to give them foreign education while I wish to keep them with me and give them whatever education is available in India."

"What about the children ? Whom do they like to obey ?"

“Of course, they like to obey me because I am their mother. I love them more intensely than their father. In our mutual quarrels the children gather round me.”

“Who among you both is more highly educated ?”

“Of course, my husband is more highly educated.”

“In the matter of educating the children, who is a better guide ?”

“Has not your husband a claim upon the children ? For the last 25 years you have lived under his roof and you have enjoyed his shelter and shared his fame and name. If you are the mother of the children, he is their father. Whatever blessing you feel in having your children around you, they are due to your husband’s partnership and comradeship. Does it never strike you that you and your children are living delightfully together under the roof and care of your husband ? He is the father of the family leading a lonely life and perhaps wishing he were not alive ?”

She was deeply touched by my talk. She said, “I am sorry. This side of the question never struck me. I was so hopelessly absorbed in myself that it never occurred to me that my dear husband is the father of my dear children and that while I am profiting by his home, his earnings, his live of my children, I deny to him my love which he deserves, love of my children to which he is entitled and the happy home which I am duty bound to create for him.”

“I am glad to hear that you have remembered your part of duty. the relation of husband and wife is so close, so intimate and so important that one is surprised to hear bitter talk of wife and husband against each other. All great functions of life viz., having some home, some financial interests, some comradeship, weals and woes and begetting and bringing up the children and other interests, centre round the children. How can people afford to lead a maladjusted life and thus not unoften break a home and endanger the destiny of children who innocently suffer by the mistakes of the parents ?”

The distinguished lady who had a two-hour talk with me had no true feeling of gratitude. She received favours but felt no indebtedness. She enjoyed many blessings which she received from her husband but of which she was unconscious. Her vanity that she was a superior being, darkened her vision about the great merits of her husband. while the gratitude which the old lady felt

for her husband sweetened even the sunset of their life, the absence of gratitude embittered 23 years out of this highly placed couple who deserved a better of life. This couple happily started a better and sweeter life, after 23 years, because the wife woke up to the sense of gratitude in relation to her husband.

II

MUTUAL TRUST

Mutual trust is the most cementing bond in matrimonial life. While mutual trust produces heavenly homes, lack of mutual trust produces acute agony and hellish homes.

Once I came across a case which has left an indelible impression upon my heart. A homeopath was called in to give his opinion and prescribe some medicine for a strange mental case. I was then in college. The homeopath was my neighbour. He asked me to accompany him to study a strange case. We both went. Our host was a wealthy man who greeted us in his house and then called a neighbouring woman to reveal her sorrow to the doctor. She narrated her story as under :

"I am married to the only son of a well-to-do family. My husband, a young man, manifests a strange behaviour. He does not let me go anywhere. Once I went to attend the marriage of one of my sisters in a neighbouring village. I had hardly reached there when I found my husband standing with folded hands appealing to me to come to him and listen to him for a few minutes. I went to him. We had a talk in a lonely place. He said in a beseeching tone, 'Darling wife, accompany me home. If you refuse to do so, I shall commit suicide. I asked him, 'What has come over you ?' He said, 'I don't feel you are safe when you are away from me.' I told him, 'Have you any doubts about my character ?' He said, 'When you are in my presence, you are all perfect. But when once you are away from me, doubts begin to haunt me about your purity and loyalty'. My friend, the doctor, asked her, "How long ago had he such hauntings ?" "He has been haunted by doubts since three or four years. He has now given up his job. Day and night he is sitting by me. If I go to the bathroom, he at first enters the bathroom to see that there is nobody there and then allows me to go in and keeps standing outside as long as I am in. His present attitude has gone beyond endurance. He keeps me sitting on his own cot and even with a stick in his hand he tries to find out if there is anybody sitting under the cot. My husband has made my life very miserable.

In all other respects he is very kind and considerate to me. But in this respect he is absolutely mad.”

My friend, the doctor, asked her to go into another room and called her husband. Very sympathetically the doctor asked him, “Seth sahib, do you suspect the character of your wife ? In that case you can let her go to her father’s house and you marry a second wife.” He said, “Doctor sahib, I have absolute faith in my wife but I don’t know what has happened to me that I suspect her when she is shut off from my view.”

“Did you suffer from this feeling of mistrust when you married her ?”

“My wife deserves the best in life. When I married her I trusted her. I was fond of talking in praise of her. Then one day one of my friends gave me a book called *Istri Charitra* (Intrigues of Women.) That book changed me. I began to suspect every woman, even my mother. I wish I had not read the book. I wish such books were banned. But the mischief was done and I am the victim. I weep when my wife weeps at my conduct. My wife had heard that you could cure me of this. I shall feel grateful if you can help me. I envy those who have mutual trust. I pity those who lack it. Matrimonial life needs the presence of mutual trust.”

I returned home with the doctor. He started treatment of the patient. But I doubt if he cured him.

While this pitiable case came in my experience, I read about another incident of the life of another couple which is equally painful and which reveals the need of mutual trust in matrimonial life.

A doctor gave an incident of his life. It was published as a true story.

This doctor fell in love with a good woman with whom he got engaged. He had made it a rule of his life to conceal nothing from his wife respecting his sexual life. Before he got engaged to her he had kept a mistress with whom he had a clear understanding that he would not marry her.

Two or three months after his engagement—when he had completely given up his relations with his mistress—this mistress met him on the way. She revealed to him that she was carrying his baby and that he had to maintain the baby up to 21 years. He was an honourable man. He felt it was his duty to maintain the child who was his own whether he was married to its mother or not. In

order to keep up his honour he felt he must break the engagement if his finance objected to this chapter of his life. So he went straight to her and disclosed the whole story. She was very fond of him. She congratulated him on his honesty and promised to maintain the child if he was born.

The doctor felt happy. He assured his mistress of his honourable help but it so happened that the fears of the mistress turned out to be false. She got no child and so the doctor was spared the trouble.

But something uncanny was to happen. The doctor was happily married. For five or six years his wife refused to be a mother. She called her young brother and doted upon him as if he were his own child. This young man when he grew up fell under the charms of a wicked woman. He was tolerated because his sister, the doctor's wife, was very fond of him.

This brother died in an accident. His suspected mistress carried a baby. She knew that the baby's father was dead. She wanted the baby to be maintained for 21 years, so she hit upon a plan. She accused the doctor of being the father of her expected child. She went to him and told him so. The doctor was taken aback. He knew his character was very well-known in public and nobody would believe the wicked woman. But he felt pained all the same. In order to relieve himself of his sorrow, he went straight to his wife and told her the agony of his heart. Instead of consoling her husband and assuring him of her faith in him, she turned against him and said, "You went wrong before marriage and I forgave you because you were at least honest. This time you have committed the same sin and instead of honestly admitting it, you add insult to injury by denying your crime. I don't trust you, but as you are a doctor, I, as your wife, don't want to expose you. In our public life we shall keep up appearance of devotion and loyalty, but in our private life we shall live as complete strangers. From today we cease to be husband and wife!"

For twenty-one years that child was being maintained by that doctor and he and his wife lived as total strangers.

After twenty-one years the doctor's wife was sent a telegram by a hospital surgeon to see a patient who remembered her. She went there. The patient was that wicked woman. Before her death she wanted to make a confession. She told her plainly : "that baby was her brother's baby and not the doctor's baby."

This news shook the woman and she shivered like an aspen leaf. She came broken-hearted and apologised to her husband but the husband deeply groaned under the blow and said, "Your late repentance is of no use. Your absence of trust has made my life desolate and your life a desert." How essential it is for a husband and wife to have mutual trust in each other !

While these two sad experiences reveal the dark chapter of matrimonial life, there are other instances which reveal the bright side of it.

A distinguished lady doctor once told me, "Look at that stupid Savitri. She says her husband is absolutely above reproach and that she has absolute trust in him." I said, "Is there anything surprising about it ? I myself have absolute faith in my own wife." The lady doctor said, "A woman can be called absolutely trust-worthy but a man cannot be." I told her, "However, I would meet the woman who has filled you with surprise."

I met that good wife. She was hardly 25 years of age. I asked her if it was true that she had absolute faith in her husband. She said, "How can I lack faith in a person who is all gold."

"How do you know that he is all gold ?"

"I know from the study of his life. He has no heart for any other woman. All women who have come in contact with him grew jealous of me in this respect that I have a cent per cent loyal husband."

I was deeply impressed and blessed her on her attitude. While the first two cases show lack of mutual trust, the last example shows the brightest side of the presence of trust. Such examples can be multiplied.

III

LOYALTY

Loyalty of husband and wife to each other is most essential. Loyalty is faithfulness to each other.

Absence of loyalty has produced terrible tragedies and miseries.

I read a true confession from the life of a woman who at a late stage in life ran away with a rich man proving disloyal to her husband. she said that she had married a good man who was her class-mate and who was deeply attached to her. Both married as soon as they completed their education and started life together. The husband took her advice in all affairs of his life. They were blessed with three children. Two of their children, a boy and a girl, had married. Both of them had been blessed with a child each.

It was at this stage of life that a very wealthy business man arrived in their house and lived there as their guest. The wealthy man was in need of a reliable agent for his business centre in that town. The good man was recommended to the wealthy man as a reliable agent. The wealthy man lived there for some weeks. The good man's wife attended to this wealthy man as a special guest. The wealthy man and the good man's wife felt an attraction for each other. One day they left the house together, never to return. This middle-aged woman under the baneful influence of sexual passion deserted her noble husband and her good children and thereby caused an upheaval in the family.

For nearly one year she remained in the intoxication of the new-found love and did not remember the havoc she had caused in her old house.

After one year, her 'mother love' awakened in her the memories of her beloved children and she wrote two letters—one to her son and the other to her daughter—appealing to them to excuse her desertion and to give her the privilege of writing letters to them. The son wrote back to her something like this .

"Dear mother, don't please ever write any letter to me. I don't want to be reminded that you exist. When I took at my father I feel

as if you have cruelly slapped a most innocent child. My good father did not deserve such a treatment at your hands. So far as we children are concerned, mother dear, you have mangled my faith in the purity and loyalty of womanhood, including my wife. Do you know what that means to me ? I would, therefore, request you to forget that we exist and we, on our part, shall never remember you."

This woman's husband died after three years. The local papers announced that the good man died due to the shock of the desertion of his wife.

Do disloyal partners ever realise the wreckage and ruin they cause in the family they leave behind ?

The foolish woman mentioned above tried to appease her conscience by thinking that since she had learnt to love the wealthy man, her married life with her own husband had ceased. But such 'false philosophies' cannot convert a serious crime into a virtue.

When the gateway for divorce is laid open, the greatest hammer blow is struck at the loyalty of home-life. The very idea that one can successfully abandon the other partner is most suicidal.

Loyal husbands and wives are found all over the world though they are few and far between. Loyal husbands and wives cling to each other and serve each other even during the sunset of life. It is said of the great Prime Minister Gladstone that once some distinguished person went to see him when he was above 90 years of age. He saw him sitting on a couch with his hand clasped in the hands of his devoted and loyal wife. She not only soothed him in the prime of his life but she soothed him more devotedly in the sunset of his life. When Gladstone died she accompanied the bier the male members of the royal family took the hands of the wife of Gladstone and kissed them on bended knees. After the royal family the earls and the dukes and the peers of the realm and other distinguished personalities, one after another, paid their homage because this great lady had established a record of loyal service to her husband. A leading journal wrote, "She came as a widow but returned as a bride"—so deeply honoured was she in the Abbey.

Loyalty in married life is based upon the fact that marriage is a life-long relationship and that loyalty is as indispensable to it as breath is to life. It is not based upon business considerations. A mother loves her child because it is her child and not because it is

beautiful or talented or a good earner for the family. I have seen mothers devoting more love on weak or imbecile children, preferring to live with them than with healthy and rich children. In the same way, a wife is loyal to her husband because he is *her* husband and not because he is wealthy or talented. It is a common sight to see a woman doting in love and loyalty on her husband merely because he is *her* husband. In the same way, I have seen, though in rare cases, husbands doting upon their simple-natured, dark-complexioned and little educated wives merely because they are *their* wives.

I read a story of an idiot's wife. A very wealthy man had two sons—one a sound and normal man and the other an idiot. Because of his great wealth even his idiot son could get a sound, normal wife. Her loving and loyal heart got so devotedly attached to the idiot that she considered the service of her idiot husband the mission of her life.

Her father-in-law died. The elder son naturally became the controller of the family business. One day the idiot husband went weeping to his wife complaining against the cashier that he had refused to give him the money for his pocket expenses. The devoted wife got infuriated. She took up a whip in her hand and taking her husband with herself she rushed into the office. She asked the cashier why he had refused paying money to his boss—her husband. The cashier said, "Such are my instructions from the Seth sahib." The woman got irritated and said, "Is not my husband the Seth?" So saying she gave him a sound thrashing and told her idiot husband to open the box and take as much money as he liked. When the elder brother heard of this he took the woman to task. She thundered at him and said, "Is not my husband your brother and is he not entitled to half the property?" "No," came the prompt reply. "Go to the court to claim a share." She said, "So long as I am alive, nobody would dare rob my husband of his share." So saying she went home determined to fight for her husband's rights. She engaged the services of good lawyers and, after she had fought the case for several years she won. So long as her husband lived, she lived for him and not for any other object. This was a case of wonderful loyalty of a powerful woman to an idiot husband. She was her husband's greatest refuge and greatest consolation.

IV

MUTUAL RESPECT

Every husband must respect his wife in his daily life and every wife must respect her husband in her daily life if both, as parents, desire to build a home having dignity and peace.

Wedlock is the most intimate relationship and as the married couples have to live with each other and for each other, there is a danger of familiarity breeding contempt. After some time even bitter words are exchanged between husband and wife and some impatient husbands in their moments of anger even beat their wives. There is no greater blunder ever committed in life by a married couple than that of exchanging hot words and dealing hard blows.

Once while I was going to the railway station from my home in a district town, I passed through a street where a gruesome sight faced me. I found two young men beating an old man. I ran to the spot and to my horror, I learnt that the old man, who was flung on the ground by the youngmen, was their own real father. Seeing me, the youngmen left their father and I lifted him up. I went to his house in the same street and met his wife. I said to the lady, "What led to the unhappy quarrel ? Did you know that your husband was being beaten by your own children ?" She replied, "I am sorry for what has happened. But you know a son cannot bear the sight of his mother being beaten even by his father. My husband got angry with me on some domestic affair. As I protested, he gave me a severe kick. My sons lost their self-control and the unhappy quarrel between the father and the sons was the outcome of the kick given to me." As I had to catch the train I had to leave in haste. But throughout the journey to my professional centre, the sight of the sons beating their father haunted me. The husband's kicking of his wife deeply pained me. And yet I was told that the husband was literally mad after his wife. He had left service to be

always near his wife. He perhaps *loved* her but I am sure he *did not respect* her.

Years after, a top-ranking officer while talking to me about the *Niti* (Moral Inspiration sermons) periods, that I took in the college, frankly told me, "By all means, teach the girls to love their husbands but more than that teach them to *respect* their husbands. By respecting each other they will avoid the use of harsh and undignified words. Exchange of blows would be something impossible for them. I always tell my wife, '*Love me less but respect me more.*' "

I had first-hand knowledge of a telling incident. A highly educated husband who loved his wife all right, but respected her less, got angry with her before he left for his office. He used undignified language. Tears rose to this good woman's eyes. Her son aged about five years saw this unhappy quarrel and looked wistfully at his mother who was brushing off tears.

The husband returned from office. Whenever he used to return from his office, his first act was to embrace and kiss his son. This day, also, he went to embrace his son. "Don't touch me !" the child cried. "You have rebuked my mother. She shed tears. I hate you."

The father said that no sermons, even from an apostle, would have had half the appeal to him as the innocent words of his dearest child did. "From that day I refrained from talking harshly to my wife. Since then I have learnt the value of the advice given to me, '*Love your partner less but respect her more.*' "

Lots of tragedies have happened in life because the married couples think that it is love that matters and not mutual respect. Some couples say that love is all that should prevail in home life. Mutual respect would produce frigidity and formality. I don't agree with them. Mutual respect is not inconsistent with love. On the contrary, it sanctifies and strengthens it.

I remember the case of a girl student whom her mother accompanied for admission to my college. There was nothing particular in this but I was amazed when one day I got perhaps a registered letter in which the father had requested me to persuade the girl to complete her degree examination and that he was prepared to deposit with me ten thousand rupees in her name just to assure her that he was in earnest about her education.

I called the girl and gave her the letter to read. She burst forth, "I don't want to touch even a pie of his money. I depend upon my

mother and I shall continue to depend upon her. My father and my mother live apart. I have made my choice. I live with my mother."

I was first simply stunned to hear the girl when she practically disowned her father. The cause of the quarrel between them was the absence of respect for the wife.

He was an educationist who one day came to see me. He was interested in a young man who was a headmaster in a school and professor of our college. The educationist wanted me to withdraw my objections to the young man's second marriage. How could I directly or indirectly contenance bigamy ? Such was the reply that I gave to the educationist.

The story that was revealed to me is connected with my present theme. The young man was as highly educated as he was handsome. He married, in the prime of his youth a very pretty girl. Before they could adjust their relationship with each other, they broke into a quarrel and exchanged hot words. The husband in the prime of his youth got out of control and gave a dashing slap on her face. The young girl screamed out of sheer insult. She left his house never to return. The husband sent apologies. Mutual friends tried to pacify her and bring about concord in the life of the couple.

While winding up his story the educationist said, "How is the young man now to blame ? He is very fond of her but she says she has been insulted beyond cure."

This is an extreme case. Such sensitive souls are few. But they do exist and it is the bounden duty of every couple to add to love the elixir of mutual respect.

It is my permanent advice to young couples that when they are blessed with children their conduct towards each other should be of deep respect for each other. I have seen many tragedies darkening the lives of children because the parents created hell in their homes by mutual disrespect. I know of a family where the married couple broke their home on a difference of opinion. They had perhaps two sons. One of the sons who lived with his mother wanted also the father's love. He went to the father to bring about peace and amity between his parents. The father received him with a cold shoulder and, it is said, talked ill of the boy's mother. The boy, it is said, sobbed out his sorrow and even lost the balance of his mind. For a long time he was in a mental hospital. The mother's sorrow can be imagined. She had appealed to her husband in a plaintive tone to make up the differences and give a united and peaceful home to the

children. The father stood adamant and the home was wrecked. My diagnosis of the whole situation is that there was lack of mutual respect among the parents. The net result of this absence was their permanent separation and the wrecking of the life of the child. My appeal to parents is that for the sake of children and a heavenly home, base your lives on *mutual respect*.

CHASTITY, PURITY AND HOLY LIFE

A great function of wedded life is procreation and progress of human children. The parents must not forget that they contribute to the heredity of children and provide for them an atmosphere by their general behaviour. Children consider their parents ideals for them. Children feel proud of good parents and feel ashamed of bad parents. Parents should never forget that their example of life is considered by their children as something worthy of their imitation.

Some years ago, I was putting up in a Sindhi Dharamsala at Bombay when I saw a child of about seven years smoking a cigarette. I snatched the cigarette from the boy and reprimanded him. When I went down on my mission, I found the same child standing by his father who seemed to be a hard smoker. I told him, "My friend you should give up smoking, if not for your own good, at least for the good of your child who stands by you. The boys learn to imitate their parents." To my surprise the father said, "I regret I am not able to give up smoking, but my son can never dare to imitate my example." I smiled and said, "My friend, just now while your child was about to come down to you, I found him smoking. I myself snatched the cigarette from his mouth."

The father very strongly slapped his son, saying, "Smoking is poison for children. Wait till you grow old like me !"

This father was as incorrigible as millions of other fathers who set an example for their children in drinking, dishonesty and evil or corrupt life.

One day a double graduate young man attracted the love of a girl who was B.A., B.T. and whom he liked to marry. He was all praises for the girl and yet he delayed his wedding perhaps too long. Many months after, we met again. I enquired of him if he had married the girl. To my great astonishment he informed me that he had given up the idea of marrying her. The following dialogue took place between us :

“What led you to break off the marriage proposal ?”

“I came to know that the girl’s father was living in a separate house with his mistress. Though he lived, dined and passed his time mainly with his first wife and children, he passed nights with his mistress. I could not make up my mind to be the son-in-law of such a corrupt man.”

“Is he kind and considerate to his children ?”

“Yes, he is very kind to his children and considerate to his first wife.”

“Does he thrust presence of his mistress on his first wife and children ?”

“No, he does not.”

“How does it affect you, if you marry the girl and live with her in your town which is far off from her parental town ?”

“Marriage means some children. I don’t want my children to know that their grandfather was a corrupt man. Man imitates evil more quickly than good. I can’t take the risk of evil spreading in my family.”

The young man did not marry the girl. The girl knew why he had not married her. Thus a bad father by his bad example destroyed the chances of the happy marriage of his daughter.

I met a case of a father of a number of children sliding down into an evil life. Though his first wife was alive and she had blessed him with a number of children, he fell in illicit love with another woman for whom he arranged separate accommodation and with whom he lived a settled home life. Thus he had two domestic arrangements—one with his first and wedded wife and the second with his keep or concubine. One day something strange happened. One of his children who was a married man fell under the charms of another grown-up girl. The grown-up girl was living with her mother and sister. Her father, too, had deserted his first wife, that is to say, the girl’s mother. Thus both the young man and the young girl had sorry instances in their families to imitate and deform life.

One day a frontier town was shaken to its foundations by the news that the daughter of a Rai Bahadur had flouted her parents and gone and lived in a brothel. When some good man approached her to return home just for the sake of the honour of her respectable family, she burst out, “When had the honour of my father’s respectable family gone when he (my father) arranged

nautches of dancing girls and made shameful approaches to these girls of ill repute and showed us that he was more inclined to honour the prostitutes than the ladies of his house who simply hungered for the love of my father ? I saw all this and I came to the conclusion that in order to win the love of men one should rather be a dancing girl than a caged bird in a gilded home. This is why I have chosen a kind of life which even my father honoured more than he should have."

Thus this daughter of the Rai Bahadur lived and died as a prostitute. Parents do not often realise that they are ideals for their children and the bad example of their life has a fatal effect upon the morals of children. The parents should, therefore, beware of how they live their daily life.

I was in college when a handsome son of a *tehsildar* passed his M.A., L.L.B. examinations and secured a *sanad* for practising in a high court. His father was a notorious bribe-taker who made a pile by unlawful means. One day I went to see the *tehsildar* in his camp at some far off station. During the course of conversation he said, "My son, I am reaping the harvest of my mother's blessings. She had said to me that I would always have gold *mohars* in my pocket." So saying he took out his purse and emptied it on his left hand. Several gold *mohars* flowed out of his purse.

I knew that he was a corrupt man. I used to pity his life. He was to retire after six months and he made quick strides to gather a rich harvest of gold *mohars*. Government officers who were on the look-out for catching him red-handed did ultimately succeed. He was suspended and arrested. Prosecution was launched against him. He spent thousands. His son was constantly by his side. The net result was that the father was convicted and heavily fined. The son who had imitated his father was also duly convicted of professional misconduct and his *sanad* was forfeited.

There are children who simply worship their parents as gods. I once read in a paper that one captain had dared to write something against the domestic purity of life of the great Commoner-Prime Minister Gladstone. The great Commoner's son, Lord Gladstone, filed a suit against the captain. The captain came to his senses when he learnt that he had no case and that he would be convicted. He approached the court to persuade Lord Gladstone to accept his apologies. Lord Gladstone said, "No, my Lord, I cannot forgive this man. He has insulted my noble father. I am proud to say that

the relation between my parents was perfect." It is perfect parents in any moral line who also produce perfect children who are justly proud of them.

One day while standing upon the shores of the great Indus, I met a man who told me that at the spot I was standing, a great and moving tragedy had taken place. A young man had committed suicide by drowning himself. I just asked him. "Why did the young man end his own precious life ?" The man said that the tragedy was due to the boy's mother having gone and lived with a well-to-do man. The boy appealed to her to renounce that way of life as it brought shame on him. The mother showed unwillingness to abandon her laxity as that was an easy life. The boy got the shock of his life and found relief in suicide.

How very essential it is for parents to lead a pure and holy life !

One day, I read in *The Strand Magazine* the story of a grown-up child who shot himself dead when he was convinced that his mother was not the legally wedded wife of his father whom she was to marry when he returned from war but who died on the battlefield before his parents could be legally married. He felt himself small before his companions and found relief in death.

VI

PRIORITY TO MARITAL TIES

A matrimonial alliance demands exclusive love and attachment of married couples for each other. Once this attachment and devotion grows less, domestic misery quickly follows.

One day I went to a frontier town where my relations lived. That very evening I went to see my relations. I saw a strange sight. My relations, two young, stalwart business men, were talking ferociously to their sister's husband who was dependent upon them for service and employment. The brother-in-law perhaps felt the insult and threatened to leave their service. The masters thundered at him saying, "*You* are dependent upon us for your maintenance and not *we* upon you." The insulted brother-in-law retorted back, "I will rather die of starvation than look to you for my maintenance." So saying he took his belongings and left the palatial office.

As soon as he left the firm, I heard a girl aged about twenty-two loudly saying, "Please wait, I am going to join you." The mother of the girl felt stunned, and she said, "Dear daughter, if you follow him you will have nothing but starvation to face. If you stay here, his poverty and his love for you might bring him back to you and to good employment." Strange was the reply that the girl gave. She said, "Mother dear, I don't gamble with life. You entrusted me to his care. He is my husband. Wherever he goes, I go. If he meets poverty, I will soothe his sorrows. If he succeeds in life, I will enjoy the benefits of his love and honour. So please don't stop me, I shall go with him." So saying, she came down the staircase and followed her so-called worthless husband.

The mother and brothers of the girl wept tears of sorrow at the girl's parting from them and asked me, "Was not the girl foolish in taking that step?" I said, "Her's was the most sensible step. Two souls who are united by wedlock have to stand by each other in weal and woe, sorrow and suffering, poverty and riches, health and disease, etc."

I met the family about two years later. I asked the mother and the brothers about the fate of that couple. They enthusiastically said, "She has made a saint of her husband. As a priest her husband has made a great name and honoured the family which had considered him worthless."

When I met the young man, I said, "I am happy you have proved a success." He said, "I thank my wife who has made a man of me. If she had not stood by me at that time I would have been a wrecked soul. That one right step made of me a new man."

Such is the influence of a wife upon a husband—the wife who stands by her husband in all vicissitudes of life.

I met another couple. Both husband and wife were my students. I used to wonder that whenever the husband talked to me about his wife, he used to say, "She is an angel. She had made life possible for me." I enquired of him as to what, in the behaviour of his wife, had so impressed him. He said, "She lives for me ! She has stood by me in straitened circumstances. She never complains that my pay is small and I am strictly honest. She tries to make my life comfortable even in the comparatively small salary I am drawing. She demands no costly ornaments. She never likes to go and live with her rich father just to escape my poverty. She always tells me, "My place is by your side. If you become a king, I am your queen. If you become a fakir, I shall be a co-fakir with you and feel proud to be such.' "

I have actually seen this couple living their life and I can safely say that this pair has taught me to believe that a devoted wife is nature's greatest gift to man.

One day I was at the feet of my Master when a highly paid gazetted officer came to have his *darshan*. At that time there was present at the feet of the Master, a poor couple whose combined pay was about sixty rupees. This gazetted officer drawing a salary of hundreds of rupees said to the Master with folded hands, "Lord, I am a gazetted officer. I am drawing hundreds of rupees per month but I am not one-tenth as happy as this pair whose combined pay compared to mine is very meagre and yet they live a divine life. They go to the school together to teach. When they return from the school, they go together for a walk. When the congregational meetings take place, both go there together. The wife cooks for the husband. The husband is present there by her side, giving her the blessing of his company and his appreciation and thanks for what she is doing for him."

This blessed pair was a beacon light for many couples to live a blessed and happy wedded life. The secret of their happy life was that they lived for each other. They valued each other's company more than anybody else's. They lived a wonderfully economic life. They so managed their home affairs that even out of their meagre income they saved something for a rainy day.

I often went to them to express my appreciation for their life and I often quoted in my sermons the ideal of life this young pair lived because they lived for each other.

Those married people who ignore this great fact bring disaster on domestic life. There was a lady who was so much attached to her mother that she definitely gave priority to her mother over her husband. Her husband was a highly educated man who loved his wife and tried to keep her happy and contented. This woman had the habit of very frequently going to her mother's house in the same town. So long as there was no conflict of interests, all went on smoothly. But after a number of years when some children blessed the wedlock, the father could not bear their separation especially when he returned from work. Time came when on some occasion the mother appealed to her son-in-law to permit her daughter and children to stay with her for a month. Very grudgingly the husband agreed to this long separation. When the month was over, the wife did not return. The husband went to fetch her. The wife told her husband to extend her leave by a fortnight more as the mother was not well. The husband had to return, disappointed and sore at heart. After the lapse of a fortnight, he again went to fetch her. The wife again showed unwillingness to return merely for the sake of her mother. The husband, thereupon, naturally got furious and the following talk ensued :

"If you don't return now, I shall never again come to fetch you."

"You should not become so very unreasonable. Has not my mother any claim on my service ?"

"She has a claim upon your services and I permit her to keep you permanently."

At this time the mother who had overheard this talk, came out and said, "My son, don't be stiff-necked. If you are willing to permit her to be with me all her life, do not for a moment think that I will fall at your feet to take her back. By all means leave her with me and you go and marry another."

The husband took his children with him leaving his wife with her mother. It was reported to me that the husband did not bring home his wife for the next 20 years. The foolish wife had made a choice between her husband and her mother. She had chosen a wrong alternative and she suffered woefully. It is said that when the children grew up to be adults, they brought about a reconciliation.

This story made a deep impression upon me and I realised that the husband should have priority in the heart of his wife above all things and persons in the domestic world.

There is a story of a woman who married a government servant drawing a very decent salary. He was given to taking bribes also. His income, therefore, was very big.

This married woman was taught by her mother that in married life, money mattered above everything including a husband. The woman had learnt this lesson very well. She had, therefore, succeeded in influencing her husband to place every pie in her charge. Under the wrong advice of her mother she converted all cash into jewellery. It is said she had jewellery worth about thirty thousand in her possession.

It so happened that he got involved in a criminal case for defalcations amounting to Rs. 10,000. His immediate boss told him to arrange to pay back the money to the treasury and he would suppress the matter. The husband considered the kindness of his boss as something providential. So he went running to his wife and disclosed the case to her saying, "Give me Rs. 10,000 and I would escape punishment and retain my job." The wife kicked up a row saying, "What if you go to jail for sometime? Rs. 10,000 can't be had everytime." The husband knew that his case was lost. He surrendered himself to the court and got two years' servitude.

The foolish wife and her mother had to leave the town in a boat. The boat capsized on the way and her treasury box sank in the river. She thus lost both, her husband and money.

The example of how domestic happiness has been devastated by giving priority where it is not due and denying it where it is due, can be multiplied into a legion. I maintain that after marriage a husband and his wife should give priority to each other's love and trust, faith and loyalty, service and sacrifice, if they want to produce and maintain divine families.

VII

MUTUAL SERVICE—A PRIVILEGE

It was perhaps in the early years of this century that I came across a book which contained a very interesting and instructive story.

A very wealthy zamindar called a "raja" had an only daughter. When she grew to be of a marriageable age, he felt the need of getting her married. As she was the only child of her parents, both her father and mother wanted to give her in marriage to a boy of their own caste, who should be willing to stay with them permanently.

The father went about searching for a boy who should be poor and whose parents should be willing to permit the boy to adopt his wife's home as his own home. He went about from one good school to another in search of an intelligent and promising boy. He was fortunate enough to find such a boy in a school where he ranked as a top boy. The headmaster liked the boy very much. The zamindar talked to the boy on the details of his family and took his home address. The boy was the son of a widow. The zamindar one day went and saw the widow in her house. He laid out his whole plan before her. He told her, "Shrimatiji, I have seen and liked your boy. Your son is very promising. I am rich enough to give him the highest Indian education. If he wishes to proceed to foreign parts, I can take him myself to England along with his wife and settle both in a very decent and honourable family and keep him and his wife there till he completes his foreign education. If you agree to part with your son, we shall be making his destiny."

The woman said, "Raja Sahib, I feel honoured by your kind offer, but my son is my only child. He is the main consolation of my life. I can't part with him. However, I shall place your offer before him and let you know my decision after a few days."

The raja, however, did not let the grass grow under his feet. He saw the boy more than once. The boy was tempted by the promise of a bright future before him.

In short, the raja's offer was accepted. The boy was duly married to his daughter and with great honour taken to the bride's house.

The boy justified the expectation cherished about him. He was at the top of successful students in Matric. He passed the Intermediate with great credit. Life went on congenially with the boy till at last a dark cloud as big as a thumb appeared on the horizon of the boy's life and threatened to darken his future. His wife gradually came to realise that her husband was dependent upon her. Instead of considering it a privilege to help her partner in life, she began to feel the fumes of supremacy. It is said that even a worm crawls. This young man was not a worm. He was a bright human being. He tried to bear up with the insult as he felt that he was receiving favours also. However, a day came when the last straw broke the camel's back. He said to his wife, "Darling, don't make me feel that I am a beggar and an inferior being. I am after all your husband. I deserve that much respect at least which an ordinary husband gets in life. I am thankful to your parents that they have given me all the amenities of life and progress, but it was a part of the contract made by your father with my mother. I have tried to maintain gratitude for your family and respect you as my partner. If you do not show the same respect for me, I may have to take the last step and break with your family." His wife said, "What will you do if you break with me ? You will simply starve in life." The foolish girl said, "Do what you can ! That won't effect me. I feel that by living with me you are enjoying a princely life. You should not forget that." I shall never forget," he said, "this day and the talk we have had. Nor shall you ever forget this day and this talk." So saying he got up and left the room.

That night at about 4 a.m. she woke up to find that her husband's bed was vacant. She ran to her mother's room and sobbed out the news that her husband had left. The mother enquired from the *chowkidar* if he had seen her son-in-law leaving the gate. The *chowkidar* narrated the whole story of the boy's leaving the house and handed over the young man's letter to his wife, the princess. In that letter he had assured her that if ever he returned to her he would do so as worthy of her even financially.

Year rolled by. Sense had come to the arrogant girl. She slept on the ground. She had given up living on rich diet. She lived on a poor man's diet. She gave up rich dresses and dressed like a nun.

One day a man in rags entered the place. He asked the *chowkidar* to tell the princess that her husband has come to see her. The girl, who had grown very humble and tender, rushed towards the place where the husband stood and went and fell at his feet apologising to him for the misery she had brought in their life. Without mincing matters the young man told her, "I have come to offer you my poor home. You shall have to leave your father's house and leave behind everything that belongs to him. You will put on the dress I earn for you. You will take the food I earn for you. You will live in the hut I have built for you. If you agree to live with me for my sake, I shall live and die for you."

While he was talking, the parents of the girl had appeared and they heard the last sentences. The girl said very bluntly to her parents. "My husband has come. I shall go with him wherever he goes. If he is a king, I am his queen. If he is a *faqir* I am a *faquirni*." Both left the place immediately afterwards.

When the young man took his wife to his house, she realised that her husband had not wasted his time. He had achieved his destiny. He had become a well-known pleader. Thus ended the tragedy which the vanity of the girl had invoked on the head of both—herself and her husband. The wife had come to realise that mutual service by a wife and husband was a privilege and not something to be arrogant about.

While this is the story that I had read, there is an instance that happened to come in my way experience and which has impressed me very much.

A young man joined my college. I knew that his parents would not be able to defray his expenses. Therefore, I just asked him. "Dear son, who will help you throughout the two years of your college life?" He smiled and said, "My wife is maintaining me. She is a trained teacher. She has asked me to pass B.A. and she would help me." I asked, "What is her attitude towards you when she defrays all your expenses and knows that you are dependent upon her?" He said, "Her attitude is simply marvellous. Every month she brings her salary and keeps it at my feet, saying, 'My beloved husband, I feel it an honour to be of this slight service to you. Favour me by accepting it.' "

I had the *darshan* of this lady. Though she is dead and gone, her example of life is always before me. And whenever I remember her, I tender to her the homage of my heart.

I have come across several cases of married people and I have constantly observed that those married couples, who consider mutual service of each other as a privilege, make their life sweet and heavenly. But those, who feed by mutual service the vanity and arrogance of their hearts, made their life bitter and hellish.

VIII

HIGHER PURPOSES OF LIFE

“What is the import of the marriage relation ?” My Guru rightly says : “Before the pair is wedded, the bride is an ordinary person and so is the bride-groom. By means of the wedding ceremony they are brought together. Now that is the basis of that union ordinarily ? As a rule, it is the gratification of sexual desire which is at the bottom of the union. Frequently, the thoughts and actions of the bride and bride groom have their spring in this desire. *They have no higher purpose about their married life.* They almost never talk with each other about the evolution or improvement of their soul life. They never talk of the ways and means of getting freedom from an evil, wrong or sinful course of life. Ordinarily they hold no councils to make their family circle nobler and higher or to make their own relation *dharmic* (productive of a higher life).

“How can this relation be pure and higher when the married couple look upon each other with an eye of lust ? How can their relation be noble when the pair indulges only in sexual talk and sexual jokes ?”

At another place, he says, “Sexual desire is not in itself an evil. In the absence of this function there can be no propagation of the species and no perpetuation of human race. But slavery to this desire robs a man of the blessings of youth and renders him bankrupt in the world of mental and moral life. This is the reason why most of our people maintain and enjoy youth only for a limited period. How painful is such a destiny of our boys and girls, men and women ? Can our race or nation advance in strength and vigour when the children of such weak people are brought into this world ? The spirit of *Brahmcharya*, therefore, is one great necessity for man, not only when he is unmarried but even when he is duly wedded and has a partner in life. It is, therefore, a supreme necessity that one should get freedom from the slavery of lust. In the absence of such a freedom the marriage relation can never become holy and pure. Nor would a man in the absence of

such a freedom be able to cherish feelings of true respect for woman-kind and the attitude of man towards woman in general would never grow higher and nobler.

A writer has remarked : "The civilized state of any race or nation has to be gauged from the amount of true respect which men feel for women and the nature of relation which man establishes with the fair sex. It has further to be gauged from the fact whether they can cooperate and work in matters relating to the higher purpose in life."

My Guru not only taught this philosophy of sex relation but lived that philosophy too. According to custom he was married early when he could not exercise self-determination. He was nearly 12 years of age while his wife, who was the only child of her parents, was aged only 11 years. She was, as was to be expected in those times, completely illiterate. When she passed away on the 25th December, 1980, a gentleman from Multan thus wrote about her, "She belonged to the class of those who deserve the title of the Emancipators of Women."

Another gentleman wrote about her, "She was not an ordinary woman. This land has really suffered a heavy loss by her death as we expected great work from her in the national uplift."

A gentleman from Ambala wrote, "I would not have suffered so much pain on the death of my own wife as I have suffered on the death of your wife. The passing away of such a pure and good woman who did so much good for our country is not only a dead loss for you and for me but it is a source of shock and loss for all the Punjab women."

How an altogether illiterate girl, who was born and married in the family of most orthodox Brahmins, which observed strict *pardah* and which had an antipathy for education and the participation of women in public affairs, should have risen on the national firmament as one of the brightest stars among women, is a story not without lessons for us and is a living illustration of the unique type of relationship which my Guru—Bhagwan Devatma—bore to her. It shows that this unique pair lived life on the basis of supreme purpose.

My Bhagwan truly said :

"It is expected of a truly educated man to find joy and enthusiasm in spreading the light of education. But we often find that a Hindu who is himself educated does not like to educate his

own wife, owing to the influence of superstition or slavery to a low nature. The orthodox woman neither likes to be herself educated nor permits her women relations to be educated.”

Bhagwan educated his wife himself. She was educated by Bhagwan not only in Hindi and Bengali but even in English. Bhagwan appointed a tutor also to teach her English.

Whatever new knowledge Bhagwan acquired from his study, he shared it with his illustrious wife. The result was that Bhagwan’s wife, revered Shrimati Lilawati, acquired deep and extensive knowledge of social, moral, political, spiritual matters. The world of her information and knowledge was wider and more extensive than that of millions of men. She did not keep her knowledge to herself. She engaged herself in the cause of the emancipation and uplift of women.

Shrimati Lilawatiji lived an ideal home life. She responded completely to Bhagwan’s anxiety and efforts to make her heart higher and nobler. As Bhagwan Devatma proved a most loyal and loving husband to her, she also lived as his ideal consort—a chaste, loyal, loving and devoted partner of Bhagwan in the most difficult path of his higher life.

How Bhagwan Devatma felt her loss when Shrimati Lilawatiji passed away at the end of the year 1880 is thus described by him :

“In the end of the year 1880, a great calamity befell me. I lost her who was my most devoted friend, my one faithful companion in the path of the higher life, my constant sharer in weal and woe—my own beloved wife. What a tremendous loss ! What a most painful and disheartening catastrophe for a lonely, unique traveller on the path of higher life like myself, who should have lost the one and the only fellow traveller and one true comforter, the one true, great inspirer and a loyal friend like her. This irreparable loss filled my heart with great sorrow.”

What a tribute by the Divine Soul to His life partner ! We wish and pray more wedded pairs might learn to feel, to know and to live the great truth that married life is to be based upon higher purposes of life !

IX

SELFLESSNESS TOWARDS THE HUSBAND'S RELATIONS

It is the wife who in our homes adopts her husband's home and relatives as her home and relatives. She is, therefore expected to herald the reign of peace and harmony in her new home and among her new relatives.

I heard a letter addressed to one of my college girls by her brother's wife. This brother was the main support of family. He was the eldest child of the family. He had to maintain and educate his father's children, some of whom were in college. All, therefore, rested with the wife whether to influence her husband to minister to his father's family or to leave them in the lurch. This wife wrote to her sister-in-law studying in my college something like this :

"I have come to serve and build your family. I have told your brother that his prior duty is towards you all. We have divided your brother's pay, setting apart a large portion of his income for the family and a respectable minimum for us both. So please write to me openly what your needs are and I shall see that they are fully satisfied."

This letter sent a thrill of joy and thankfulness in the family. Tears rose in the eyes of the addressee and she told me what a blessing it was to have such an angel for one's eldest sister-in-law.

This is the right attitude for a wife.

The wrong attitude of a wife is apparent from the following true story contributed by a husband in a true story journal.

He wrote that he was a shy man and, therefore, naturally avoided women. He never attended any mixed functions. He was quite at home with men but felt very awkward with women.

Once he had to attend a mixed social function. A girl present there in that social function understood his awkwardness and felt sympathy for him. She went to him and engaged him in talk. That broke the ice. Gradually this girl taught him dancing, so popular with Western nations. She taught him how to make himself at home at social functions.

This young man felt grateful to the girl and felt in love with her. In this usual awkward way he expressed his devotion to her. The girl agreed to marry him and they were married. The young man was anxious to do everything to make her happy.

But it is said that the girl was selfish. Her attitude towards her new home was quite wrong. So started a career of selfishness.

As soon as she married him, she asked him to engage for her a woman cook. After some days, he found her sitting at home in a tired and dejected mood. He loved her. He could not bear to see her in a dejected mood. So he naturally asked the reason why she was sad. This selfish woman said that one servant was not enough for her, as she could attend only to cooking. There were other domestic chores which were a constant strain on her. She requested him to engage another servant. He satisfied her wish.

After a year or so her good-for-nothing brother who had been a failure in business appealed to her to prevail upon her husband to lend to him two thousand pounds. This selfish woman did not care to enquire whether her husband could afford that amount. Her anxiety was to please her brother. She compelled her husband, against his better judgment, to part with the heavy amount. This step left the husband in straitened conditions. .

He at last opened his mind to her. He told her plainly that he was in hard circumstances and he requested her to reduce her personal expenses. He made a budget for every month but she persisted in going beyond the limit of the budgeted expenditure.

Then her sister lost her husband. She invited her widowed sister with her baby son to come to live with her for sometime. But this sister prolonged her stay indefinitely. Soon after this burden, the good-for-nothing brother again appeared on the scene. He persuaded her to force her husband to lend him one thousand pounds more as without that help he would face ruin. This selfish woman who lived primarily for her parental relations and for her selfish ends, created a row in the family and did not rest till she compelled her husband to part with the money.

Her husband gave her a bit of his mind and left her for ever.

This is the wrong attitude of mind of a wife towards her husband's home and relations and this wrong attitude produces great domestic misery and brings about ruin of homes.

There are cases in which the young wives feel for their husbands and not for their relatives.

I was informed of a case which pained me considerably. A young son, who was earning a lot, married. His wife loved him but she did not want any other power in the family to rule her husband. So she gradually prevailed upon her husband to check his mother's power over him. Hard days confronted the mother. She could not bear to be constantly nagged both by her son and daughter-in-law. At last, life became intolerable for her and she left her son's house out of sheer disgust. She had to maintain herself. So she adopted the humble profession of fetching water for rich families. The neighbours saw her. They condemned the daughter-in-law, but she was rich enough to win over the neighbours. This poor mother, it is said, died in a rented room, forlorn and neglected, when her son and daughter-in-law rolled in riches. Cases of such sons are not rare. The persons responsible for such tragedies are new brides who enter their husband's families with the set purpose of appropriating their husbands and their property for themselves or their parental relations.

I have seen a family where the husband and wife have parted merely on the ground that the husband had refused to break with his parents and his brothers and sisters and live with her in a separate house and separate environments. It is said that the husband's constant complaint is that he is rebuked by the friends and the relatives of the wife's family. "But how can I break with those who have brought me up and educated me and without whose help and love I cannot have peace and prosperity!"

One does not know who is in the right. But the wife insists upon her husband's breaking with his parents and parental home. She is bearing a wrong attitude of mind. If the wife and the husband are having no home, it is the fault of the wife, if it is true that she insists upon her husband deserting his people just to please her.

A great writer tried to solve this kind of family tangle. He created a character of a stepmother. The stepmother was the daughter of a poor man and was married to an aged millionaire. The millionaire had one grown-up son and one grown-up daughter from his first wife. These stepchildren gave the stepmother a cold shoulder and assumed a frozen attitude towards her. The stepmother realised that she had been thrust into an unwelcome and adverse atmosphere. This stepmother wanted to win over her stepchildren by love and service. By her daily behaviour she

showed her stepson that she was not an intruder but a devoted servant of the family. The stepson was won over. When he married, she gave half the ornaments of the boy's real mother to his wife.

The step-daughter-in-law had been poisoned by her relations and she began to talk ill to her husband. One night when the daughter-in-law talked ill of the mother-in-law to her husband, he got furious with her and left the bedroom. While going down the staircase, he had to pass by the door of the bedroom of the stepmother. The stepmother saw him and she followed him to the drawing-room. The son disclosed to her the cause of his misery. "What is her grievance against me ?" asked the mother. The son replied, that she "thinks that as you possess the bunch of keys of the house, her future is not safe." The stepmother silently went up to the room of her step-daughter-in-law. She embraced her and said : "Here is the bunch of keys of the house. You manage the house and I shall be happy." This generous gesture moved the young girl to sobs. She refused to take the bunch of keys and said : "Never again shall I be misled by detractors !"

The last step which the author dealt with was with regard to the young married step-daughter. She managed to bring her to her father's house and placed the box of jewellery in her lap and said : "Here is your real mother's treasure which she left for you and your brother. I divided it in two parts, giving one to your brother on his marriage and reserved the other half for you, which I give you now."

The author suggested that selflessness is the panacea for all domestic ills.

The above was the story that I read. But I came across a real case too. One big millionaire had four sons. They were living a harmonious life till his sons were married. The four daughters-in-law disturbed the peace of the family. The father of the family at last decided to separate his four sons. The date for the family partition had been fixed when suddenly one of the daughters-in-law died. The partition was delayed till the widower son was remarried.

After about two years of the marriage the new bride fell seriously ill. The whole family was moved with anxiety about the girl. All the other three daughters-in-law and their husbands devoted themselves in her service. I asked the eldest daughter-in-

law : “Why all of you feel so deeply concerned about her” She said : “You know that before her marriage, all the four sons of the family had decided to partition the property. From the time this new bride has come, the whole atmosphere has changed. She placed herself, her valuable ornaments and precious clothes at the disposal of her three sisters-in-law. We used to cook for the family by turns. But this heavenly girl cooked for us all whenever we were in need. She lent us ornaments and clothes whenever we were in need of them. We all have been changed. We do not desire to separate. My father-in-law, especially, has become broken-hearted at seeing her so seriously ill. He told one doctor : “I shall give you half my property if you save her.”

Alas, she could not be saved and died. The cementing factor of an unselfish girl vanished, the family divided never to unite again.

Most of the families suffer rack and ruin because the brides that enter such families are selfish.

X

LITTLE THINGS SAVE MARRIAGES FROM RACK AND RUIN

There are certain 'little' but good things which, if observed by a wife, produce amazing results in creating a heavenly home.

One day I read an article with the catching headline : "How I saved my home from breaking by divorce." The writer wrote something like this :—

"I married a young man out of pure love. We passed happy twelve months I scented some coldness in the attitude of my husband. I struggled everyday to melt my husband's heart but the more I tried, the greater grew the complication. I at last decided to ask my husband to part. But before I wanted to take the tragic step I resolved to consult a wise old woman in our neighbourhood who was known for her common sense and sympathy. I opened out my heart to her as to how I had struggled to please my husband and how I had failed. She calmly heard me. She asked me as to how I greeted my husband when he came from office. I said 'I place before him the list of things needed for the house and sent him to the market to purchase them.' She asked, 'When do you feed him ?' 'I feed him when he comes back !' I returned.

"The old woman was wise. She kept silent and simply said : 'I shall come to you tomorrow when your husband goes to office. I will save your husband and home. I wonder why your home has not broken before this !'

"The next day, she came to my house and, with the help of my domestic servants, overhauled my whole house and made it so neat and attractive. Then she overhauled the dining room and prepared a fine dining table. She placed fruits and other things neatly and in order.

"She asked me to put on my neatest dress and look smart."

After a few hours' work she told me : 'As the office time is drawing nigh, you go in advance to welcome him home. Don't

worry him with your talk. Allow him to speak. Bring him directly to the table, and silently serve him. Don't forget to keep a neat home, neat table and be yourself neat and smart. You come and tell me the result.'

"I did as I was instructed. Immediately after he had taken his rich tea, he smiled sweetly and said : 'Darling, where is your list today ?' 'I shall give the list,' I said, 'in its proper time.' With a gesture of love, he said : 'Darling wife, you do not know how happy you have made me. You have saved me my home and the queen of my home !' "

This story pleased many a reader. There are good many writers who advise wives on how to make their homes lovely.

One Reverend Father gave a very valuable advice to a wife which we quote below :

"First and especially, I would remind a wife that she must keep the home in good order. A man appreciates a beautiful home perhaps even more than a woman does, because he is in it for less time. Let the sun stream through your windows upon rooms tastefully arranged...."

I can illustrate from my personal experience about the utility of such an advice. Once I visited my relatives and I was shocked to see their house in a great uproar. The husband was shouting at his wife and the wife was shouting at her husband. The cause of the quarrel was that the house was in disorder. The things were lying at sixes and sevens. The husband said : "Today is Sunday—my free day. I expect to find a neat and tidy home. Instead of that I find a dirty and disorderly home. Where should I go for peace and rest ?" the wife said : "Lalaji has become most fastidious. What is wrong with my house ? A house blessed by children must present things in disorder. This is bound to happen in a home where children play."

I considered the husband to be right but could not tell the wife that it was so.

The second advice which the Reverend Father gave was this :

"Let the wife, too, always remember to be neat and smart, even when she is quite alone with her husband. A man likes to see his wife well turned out. And it is her business to look pleasing in his eyes. Many women dress to please all other women. Consequently, they overdress. Let every woman consult her husband's taste rather than that of her modiste."

This is also a very good advice. Once a smart young educated person who was being reprimanded for disloyalty to his wife suddenly burst out in anger. "Gentlemen, have you seen my wife at home ? She dresses in an extremely bad manner. When I see her, I get profoundly shocked and run to the so-called bad women. They at least have a sense of neatness and some good taste when they dress. Teach my wife to be neat and smart, especially when she is at home, and I will return home from office."

I was profoundly impressed by his out-burst. Several young men are driven into the arms of mistresses merely because their wives keep disorderly homes and do not dress to be neat and smart even when they are quite alone with their husbands.

The third advice that the Reverend Father gave to a wife was also a sound one. He said :

"Do not get into the habit of contradicting all your husband's cherished views from mere perversity, but study to gratify, within reasonable limits, even his whims and fancies. Woman has no monopoly of fads."

This is most valuable advice. Once a highly respected elderly woman—the head of a good family—very sadly disclosed to me :

"One of my sons has recently married. The young wife has one very great defect. She contradicts everyone in our family. She joins even outsiders in criticising our cherished views. She is so perverse that she does not realise that by decrying her husband's family, she is bringing herself into disrepute and doing no service to her husband. She does not realise that she is a part of the family. With her family's honour, her own honour rises. With her family's dishonour she gets, as her share, something substantial of the dishonour. She does not realise that her spirit of contradicting her husband and his relatives is costing her, by slow degrees, the love of the family which she needs. This form of perversity kills all sweetness and love in matrimonial relations."

These suggestions are in themselves small things but they produce long-range consequences. Most of our sweet ties would be saved if the brides or the wives paid special attention to them.

Once my children came running to me crying. I asked them why they were crying. They said, naming a neighbour, "Father, he slapped his wife on her face and she fell head-long on the threshold !" They had never in their life seen a woman being beaten. So they cried.

I sent for the man and enquired about the facts. He was my student. He said : "Sir, my wife has the habit of eternally speaking when I am talking to somebody. I have often told her that she should keep silent when I am talking to my friends. I often requested her to listen rather than to speak. But she does not take lesson from my counsels. Today, I lost my temper and became violent. I regret what I have done, but I was helpless."

Several other husbands also have complained about this attitude of their wives. I wish all women and even men learnt more to listen than to talk.

XI

JEALOUSY

There are certain heart forces which are fatal enemies of a peaceful wedded life. One of them is jealousy.

There was a lady who wrote out her confession, how she had brought about her own widowhood and the desolation of home life.

She married a young man whom she considered in every way perfect. When she fell in love with her future husband, this noble young man had told her the story of his past life. He confided in her that from his childhood he was deeply devoted to a young girl who was his playmate and classmate. They lived and loved, played and studied together for a number of years till both of them grew mature. They did not marry because they realised that they loved each other in terms of brother and sister and could not bear to love each other in terms of husband and wife. When this consciousness had deepened in them, the young man was permitted by his friendly sister to settle down as soon he got a girl of his choice. Now that the young man had got a woman of his choice, he introduced her to that sister and revealed to her the story of his attachment. "There was nothing to stand in the way of our marriage if we had loved that way. But though we devotedly love each other there is nothing to make us disloyal to our chosen partners in life," he said.

The chosen bride assured the young man of her full faith in him and she accepted the condition that she would let the brother and the sister meet as often as they pleased under the roof of the brother or the roof of the sister.

They were duly married. For a year at least they lived a life of perfect harmony and happiness and the sister met them under their roof very often. Nothing ill happened till at last one day the woman saw the serpent of jealousy coiled round her heart. Her attitude naturally underwent a change. The sister scented it. She saw the danger ahead. So she stopped going to her brother's house. When

she suddenly stopped going to him, the brother sought out a way to see her. She confessed her suspicions and asked him to study the situation.

The brother was convinced that his wife had suspicions. So he stopped meeting the sister. The separation became long and acute. The brother began to live a sad and gloomy life. His wife witnessed the change. She was sorry to see how her jealousy was costing her both the husband's love and happiness. She wrote a letter to the sister to kindly visit their home. She did not inform her husband about this till the sister arrived in their house. The brother felt extremely delighted to see his sister and asked her about the reason of her kind visit. She told him how his wife had appealed to her to visit her house as all the peace and happiness of their home depended upon her visit. The brother rushed to his wife's room and lavished all affections on her for her kindness and considerateness.

The sister stayed there perhaps longer than the jealousy stricken heart could bear. She had to ask her husband to request the sister to go and come back after some reasonable length of time.

For months together the sister stayed away. The husband began to feel the absence of his sister. His feeling of sadness went on getting intense day by day. The wife watched the situation and when she felt that the matter was growing from bad to worse and the strain of separation weighing heavily upon her husband might end in the dissolution of the tie, she appealed to him to excuse her and send for the sister and keep her under the roof as long as he pleased, even, for ever. She said that she would simply feel delighted to see him happy and contented.

The sister came to their house and she tried to make her stay as harmless and as loving as she could. Time went on smoothly. In whatever step the sister took, she consulted the house-wife.

But fate seemed to go against them. One evening both the brother and the sister went out in a car for an excursion.

They entered a forest and, as ill luck would have it, lost their way. The whole dark night they tried to find their path and it was only by the break of day that they were able to find their way out. The house-wife was naturally worried but the worse that happened was that her old serpent of suspicion woke up and a feeling of jealousy consumed her heart. Instead of greeting her husband on their safe return, she chided them furiously. The husband was stung to the quick. He took his sister in the same car to the station

and saw her off. When he returned home, his wife, maddened by jealousy, scolded him once more. The husband could not tolerate it. He left the house in the car, never again to return. His car, driven by him in his mad fury, collided against a tree and was smashed to pieces, causing his instantaneous death.

After he had left, sense dawned on the wife. She regretted her conduct and yearned for his return. It broke her heart when she was informed of the accident to her husband whose dead body was carried to her house.

Her jealousy robbed her of the presence and love of one whom, she confessed, she loved most madly. She muttered then : "If we but valued our dear ones during their life as we miss and value them after their death, we would be saved a lot of tragedies and miseries. If by any means my husband were to return to me as living, I would rather wish to be his maid-servant than a task-master". There is no doubt that jealousy not only corrupts the possessor but also robs him or her of peace and happiness in various close relations.

Once I was standing at a crossing when a four-wheeled carriage drawn by a beautiful horse passed by. That carriage was occupied by a rich lady who was beautifully bedecked with ornaments and costly dresses. A woman, who stood by, began to say : "How fortunate is this lady ! She has everything in life which we value." A passer-by said : "She has everything but the blessing of motherhood. She is childless." The passer-by came and stood by me and said, "These poor women or others who envy this rich lady do not know what a miserable life she lives." I asked him : "What is the trouble with her ?" He said : "Her greatest trouble is that she is jealous of every woman who gets confined and is blessed with a child. She is not able to eat anything the day she learns that someone in that small town had been blessed with a child. She creates hell in the family. Her husband is very fond of her. He has suggested to her many times to adopt a child. She refuses to adopt another woman's child but is a victim to jealousy all the time. The husband complains that he has everything good but his wife's jealousy robs him of peace and happiness in life."

One girl wrote a true story of her life which I express in my own words as under. She said :

"I am the younger of two sisters in our family. My eldest sister was always a prize-winner in the school. I won no prize. But I was

the pet child of my mother. I used to influence her to get me the prize-books or things won by my elder sister much against my sister's wishes. In fact I was jealous of my eldest sister. I was jealous of her loads, of her ability to win prizes and of the love and esteem in which she was held by all she knew."

"My eldest sister was fortunate in winning the affection of a very decent and noble young man. They were engaged while I was in college. Their date of marriage was fixed. I was informed of the date. But before the marriage took place my father fell seriously ill and he was advised to go to a sanitorium. My sister postponed the marriage and accompanied the father to the sanitorium. When I reached home, I heard about the postponement. I felt sorry but when I saw my would-be brother-in-law, I was very much fascinated by him. I hated my sister for having such a husband. I *determined to steal* my sister's would-be husband.

I managed some way to entangle him in my meshes. He had no option left but to marry me. When I had caught him in my trap completely, I made haste to marry him. My mother, who was hopelessly attached to me, co-operated with me in every way. She saw nothing wrong in this.

"My mother gave intimation to my elder sister about the date of the marriage between her fiance and myself. My sister was deeply hurt at the injustice done to her and my ailing father collapsed due to the shock.

"I married my sister's affianced husband. My jealousy did not stop there. Not only did I rob my sister of her husband but I could not bear my husband even talking to my sister when she returned. One day, several months after the marriage, I saw my husband engrossed in serious conversation with her at the foot of the staircase. I shouted at them. I cried curses on them. I dashed down the staircase to lay violent hands on them but slipped and went down the stairs rolling. I broke my leg. I was taken to the hospital where I passed unhappy time.

"One day my brother came to the hospital and sat by me. He said : 'My poor sister, you have ruined your life by jealousy. You have robbed our sister of her husband by jealousy. You can never lead a happy married life because your husband knows about your dark defect. It is better for you to make a compensation for your wrong life.' I replied, 'My dear brother, you are right. I can never be happy. My jealousy shall always consume me. What should I do

to get out of this plague of jealousy ?' My brother said, 'Give your husband freedom to divorce you and freedom to marry your elder sister. You must right the wrong if you want to have peace of mind.'

The brother's advice was followed by the jealous woman and she wrote, later, "From the time I righted the wrong, I have enjoyed what peace of mind can be. I am also a most welcome guest in the house of my elder sister and I can say, that *a life built on the tears of others can never be a life of peace and happiness.*

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XII

BIGAMY

Among Hindus and Mohammedans bigamy is no sin. A Muslim can legally marry four wives. A Hindu* can marry, legally, more than one wife.* Among both Hindus and Mohammedans polyandry is a sin. The result is that men commit bigamy recklessly, especially those who occupy good positions or are wealthy.

Once I read in a paper that a wife publicly beat a young girl towards whom her husband was deeply attracted. It is said that this young girl and her husband almost daily went out for a walk in the evening. The wife objected and protested but her husband cared a fig for her. She felt unhappy. She disclosed her misery to one of her relatives and both hit upon a plan. The relative knew where the sinful couple usually went out for an evening walk. He took his sister with him and selected a spot where they could stand and from which place this couple used to pass. From this strategic position the wife pounced upon the young girl when they passed the spot and threw her on the ground and gave her a thrashing. Her husband was warned to keep his hands off and let the women decide among themselves. The girl wrested herself free and ran to her house. This incident was seen by several people but this punishment had no salutary effect on the sinful couple. It is said the sinful couple married. Thus grave injustice was done to the loyal wife and mother because bigamy is "no sin" among Hindus. Generally aggrieved wives do not leave their husbands because they consider the husband's house as the only shelter for themselves and their children.

I personally came across another case equally regrettable. A couple lived for years a happy wedded life. The star of her husband's destiny shone resplendent in the firmament and from an unknown person he rose to be a wealthy and distinguished person. In his changed and prosperous condition he got fascinated by the

*This was written before the present Law against bigamy.

charms of a young educated girl and announced his intention to marry her. The loyal wife having a number of children saw her luck fast vanishing. The prospect of her blasted home made her gloomy and despondent. But the husband frankly told her that he had gone far enough in his attachment, and if she bore patiently with him he would do all in his power to give her and her children substantial help and company. But if she persisted in her hostility, he would silently withdraw himself and his help.

He married a second wife. He married because law and custom favoured him. Had bigamy been a crime, the husband would not perhaps have taken such a step. The sin of bigamy has ruined many a home.

Because bigamy is "not a sin", many educated persons recklessly commit it. Several years ago, I was on my annual trip to Bombay. Some of the Bombay papers published a sensational news of the marriage of a gazetted officer with a highly educated girl holding a high office in a municipality. One of the papers wrote that the girl had boldly declared that as she loved the young gazetted officer and he loved her in return, their marriage was justified, for it bore the sanction of love. When she was reminded that the officer had a first wife alive and he had children by her, she said that the marriage of his first wife was concealed because the officer had ceased to love her. Some persons wrote that the bond of love was a sanction for cancellation of marriage. Thus according to some, sentiment is the sanction for marriage and not the duty and higher morality. For such sinners, perpetration of grievous injustice on an innocent and faithful wife and her innocent children is no sin at all. If bigamy had been a crime, the woman would not have so boldly justified it and so callously and lightly robbed another woman of her husband.

It was the year 1908 and 1909 that a sensation was caused in the ordinary humdrum of the life of our neighbourhood by the news that P.C.S. officer had purchased the only beautiful bungalow. The officer's family was highly cultured. The girls were not only educated but trained in instrumental and vocal music. The youngest child of the family was a girl. She was a sweet creature. She was hardly aged 12 when she came to the neighbourhood. Within two short years she was married to a graduate son of one of the topmost families. This marriage was the envy of all. Two topmost families were united. We neighbours were anxious to see

this marriage turn out to be a great blessing. But fate seemed to smile at our imaginary expectations. Nearly ten years after, our neighbourhood was rocked with emotion when the tragic news spread that the young graduate husband of the angelic girl had made a run-away marriage with a fashionable flirt. This marriage shocked our town with deepest sorrow at the fate of the angelic girl. Everybody sympathised with the girl and everybody hated the sinful bigamous husband. The neighbours wondered how the young graduate could marry the flirt when he had such a handsome and angelic wife. But passions are blind. They drag a man into the mire of sin. This bigamous marriage of the young graduate gradually brought about a deterioration in the health of the first angelic wife. She at last succumbed to her misery. Thus bigamy caused the death of the first who seemed to be very sensitive.

There was another case. A landlord who had grown-up sons from his first wife fell under the charms of a young girl and married her in spite of the protests of his first loyal wife and the indignation of his grown-up children. Within a very few years the news spread that the lustful landlord, who had married that young girl out of sheer infatuation, was found murdered on the highway. It was strongly rumoured that his mysterious death was due to the intrigues of one of his own children. Nothing was, however, proved. This much was, however, believed that an evil life results in an evil end. In this case it was the sinner who suffered the most.

Bigamy causes a flutter wherever it takes place. In higher circles it causes suppressed sensation. This is what happened in a case that came to my notice. A daughter of a good family was married to a young man belonging to a very high family. This young couple was blessed with beautiful children. So they had everything to feel blessed and happy. But destiny seemed to mock at their happiness. The young husband "fell in love" with a young educated girl. He married her. And the result was that he parted from his first wife and took possession of the children. I asked my reporter : "What shall be the fate of the family when the children realise how their own mother, the author of their being, was treated ?" My fears have been realised. The eldest child did realise that his second mother is not his real mother, that her own real mother's misery was all due to the second mother. This realisation embittered the relations of the children, the father and the stepmother. Bigamous marriages produce many complications.

The sins of bigamy are many and various. In bigamy the second wife builds her happiness upon the tears of another. Sometimes these tears are the tears of her own sister.

A young sister is sent for by her elder sister to do some service to her and to get services in return. The eldest sister, being a mother of some children, could not imagine that her sister would attract her husband to herself. It so happened that, all unknown to her, her husband and the younger sister learnt "to love" each other. They married. The elder sister was bowled out of her equanimity and faith when the tragedy of the bigamous marriage of her husband and her sister dawned upon her. Here two children of the first sister are involved. What the fate of the family shall be is, however, hidden in the womb of the future.

XIII

VANITY

Most of the wrecked marriages are due to predominance of vanity in the partners. If this terrible feeling had been absent, many ruined homes would have remained intact and happy.

There was a family I know It was a very fine family. The girls and the boys were all highly cultured and educated. One of the graduate girls was betrothed to a boy of a very good family who was also a graduate. During betrothal period the pair showed so much of regard and affection for each other that all expected that this couple, when married, would live heavenly life. After some time I was shocked to hear that the engagement had broken. All persons who knew both families were amazed to hear about this tragedy. I was informed by those who knew the situation that it was more due to vanity than to any real grievance that the ship of their life had floundered. The girl had an idea that her prospective husband would do anything for her. So without consulting her affianced husband she announced the place of her marriage which was in every way unsuitable for the boy and his relations. He objected. She revolted and said, "If you are not able to comply with my ordinary wish before marriage, what respect will you have after I have married you and become yours !"

The affianced husband appealed to her to become reasonable as he was helpless. The girl was convinced. She announced that under the circumstances she could not celebrate her marriage anywhere else but in the town which she had selected.

It is said that the girl did not relent and the boy could not disobey his parents who were anxious to celebrate the marriage in their own town where their community lived.

The engagement broke. It is rumoured that the boy has married some other girl. Vanity alone robbed the girl of a very happy marriage and a very fine help-mate. The girl, I hear, has not married.

Vanity produces a lot of domestic misery. I know a couple who were constantly quarrelling. The cause of the quarrel was their

lack of respect for each other due to vanity. What was the real cause I did not know, till one day I happened to see a scene to which I was an unintentional witness. The wife burst out, "I am not dependent upon you and hence you have no business to show your anger to me. I am earning my own livelihood. Even then you treat me so rudely. If I had been dependent upon you, you would have, by constant nagging, driven me out of the house." I asked some bystander what the matter was. He said, "A woman who earns her own living cannot tolerate a word of least advice from her husband. By her vanity she produces a lot of friction."

These expressions by my informant reminded me of a Muslim girl of a very good family who had said "Woman is better placed when she is dependent on her husband. She cannot maintain her humility by having independent means of existence."

The constant friction in that family brought to me the realisation of the fact that the vanity was a plague for family life.

the question may be asked : "Are all who enjoy independent means of existence vain in relation to their husband ?" Not all. There are women who love their husbands and domestic life too much to risk their happiness and existence by the plague of vanity. I know of a young girl who is now dead. She was educating her husband with her own money. Whenever she brought her salary she respectfully offered it to her husband and often expressed to him, "I consider it privilege of my life to be of some help to such a dear husband."

The entire position is : How does good fortune affect us ? Does it feed our vanity or humility ? Does the wife consider her independent means as privilege for serving her husband or does she consider it a reason for her husband to pay respects to her ?

A case came to my notice which is peculiar and shows the blasting effect of vanity.

A young wealthy person married a girl who was fond of education. This young wealthy man simply doted upon his wife. She appealed to him to give her further education in some good institution. He sent her to a Boarding High School where he arranged all possible means for ensuring her education. He lavished money upon her. She was a bright girl. She passed Matriculation examination. He sent her for higher education without realising that he was stoking an axe at the root of his domestic life. The husband's kindness was lost upon her. She

began to feel herself as a superior person who could not live all her life with a non English educated wealthy man. People warned the husband against the change in her life and attitude. But the husband was too fond of her to see any defect in her. The tragedy came in his life when after graduation the wife refused to live with him. It is said that the husband and the wife mutually agreed to separate. The girl passed M.A. examination and re-married some highly educated man. This was a very unhappy case—one of the saddest result of vanity.

It is not only woman who gets so blinded by higher education or independent life. It is recorded of a rich man's daughter that she was given in marriage by her fond parents to a brilliant boy of a poor family. This young wife was inordinately fond of her husband. She compelled her parents to give her husband higher education as he wished it. When he graduated with credit, he appealed to his wife to send him to a foreign land for further higher education. The father warned his daughter against the step. He told her, "Dear daughter, don't send him to foreign parts. He will lose his head there and become indifferent to you." But she was fond of her husband. She was anxious to see him rise in life. She could not realise that men from poor families get inflated with vanity and cherish opinions about themselves which are too high. But the girl stood firm and her husband went to foreign parts. He distinguished himself there and got an idea in his inflated mind that he was too good for his Indian wife and he took the most tragic step of marrying a white woman.

When his wife came to know about this, she simply groaned in misery and her fond parents were hard put to rescue her from pining for a worthless ingrate. It is sad that the husband forgot that he was made by his wife and that he had no reason to be a traitor to her while he had every reason to feel indebted to her for all his life. Through vanity he lost sight of the fact that he was made by his wife and that his wife had given to him these treasures of life which make for the happiness of homes, viz., treasures of devotion, love and sacrifice. But vanity makes a person blind and this man became utterly blind.

The saddest incident that I met within my life was of a young girl whose husband was an uneducated and poor man but possessed one strong desire and it consisted in giving his young wife education and training. It is said that he was a poor peon in a

school and yet succeeded in giving his wife education and training both. This wife in course of time became the headmistress of the school where her husband was a peon. She should have felt proud of her husband who had made her life but she felt ashamed of him. It is said that she treated him just like a peon and so very terribly humiliated him that his life became hell for him. It is said that he died soon and the people felt that he was a martyr to his good intention and spirit of service for his wife. Many said that death was a release for him.

XIV

REVENGE

There is an absolutely true story of a woman whose husband married a second wife and passed her over. The first wife was filled with the feeling of revenge to punish the second wife. A strange way of wreaking vengeance occurred to her. The neighbourhood was shocked with horror when the news spread that the first wife had pulled her own eyes out with a hot splinter. People rushed to her help but she had plunged herself into eternal darkness. After some time her neighbours asked her why she had done so much harm to herself. She gave a curious reply and said, "Now that I am blind, my co-wife shall have to look after me. She will not thus enjoy unmixed happiness of her wedded life." What a horrible way of wreaking vengeance !

One day I happened to go to a family where a strange sight met my eyes. The husband and his wife were exchanging hot words. The family hearth was cold. There was no fire and nothing was cooked. But husband and wife had gone without food the whole day. The husband complained of his wife's callousness. The wife complained of her husband's callousness. The husband said she had refused to cook in order to starve him. The wife said, "My husband has driven me to the state of starving myself and thus end my life. He is a man who can go into any hotel and take his food, I am a helpless woman, economically dependent on him. I have neither the courage to go to any hotel all alone by myself nor have I money in my pocket to pay for my food".

Intercepting her, I said, "Your house is full of foodstuffs and you are strong enough to cook. Why don't you cook for yourself and your husband ?" She replied, "I won't do that. I want to teach him a lesson that callous disregard for me won't pay him. He must respect my wishes and fulfil them before he can expect me to cook for him. He has been paying me a fixed amount for my pocket expenses. Suddenly, he has discontinued paying me this amount. I refuse to do anything for the home just to make him feel my value." The husband suddenly said, "I am sorry that I have

discontinued giving you your pocket expenses. You kindly attend to home duties.”

This avoided a great tragedy. The wife was determined to starve herself to death in order to set her husband right.

There is another true story of a highly educated pair who hated each other so much that they wanted to inflict pain on each other. The mother weaned the children from the father. The husband retaliated by asking his servants not to obey his wife. Thus the wife found joy in getting the father disrespected and hated by his own begotten children and the husband found satisfaction in getting his wife insulted and disobeyed by their servants. For years together the husband and the wife lived a dog-and-cat existence and produced hell in the family. It is said that this highly cultured family did not realize the injustice that they were doing to their children in bringing them up in an atmosphere of conflict and misery.

While there are cases of very good wives who spend their intellect and endeavour in winning back to themselves their erring husbands, there are also cases of wives who begin to hate their erring husbands and try to avenge themselves upon them.

There was a young man. He married a beautiful and amiable girl. This girl did not know that her husband was an erring husband and that he had fixed his attentions upon some other woman. But when she did learn about it, she tried, in the first instance, to reclaim him. Failing in that, she was moved by her insulted heart to wreak vengeance upon him. To start with, she denied him love and conjugal rights. As her husband lived openly his life of illicit affections, she also began to lavish her affections upon some other man. This false step broke the family life and produced for the future a gloomy prospect of life. The horror of such wrecked homes is the misery they inflict upon the children.

It is said that the spirit of vengeance does not ordinarily cool itself. In many cases the flames of revenge burn up into a conflagration destroying all prospects and possibilities of domestic love and peace. Some years ago I was at Bombay. When leaving for the Punjab, I heard at Bombay station that a particular girl belonging to a family I knew had committed suicide. That girl was known to me as a cherished wife of her young husband. This young man was an employee in an office. I asked my informant, “Why did the young wife commit suicide ?” He said, “She was

blinded by the spirit of revenge. Her brother's marriage is to take place in her town. She asked her husband to take her to the place. He applied for leave. His leave application was not granted. He told her that he would again press for leave. She foolishly believed that her husband was giving excuses. When he left for office, she flung a parting shot at him, 'You will reach your office and you will know there what it has cost you to postpone taking me to my native place by lame excuses.' He had hardly reached his office when he was called to the phone and given the sad news that his wife had committed suicide."

Thus the spirit of revenge cost the young girl her life and led her to break a happy home.

Some years ago a news was published in a paper that a woman had committed suicide by throwing herself into a well along with two very small children. The reason assigned was that she had quarrelled with her husband and she wanted to punish him by this insane act. By the spirit of revenge she was led to break a well-established home. She pushed her husband into the gloom and darkness of a house plunged into desolation and sorrow.

How the revengeful spirit of husband and wife breaks even a happy home has been touched upon and described in brief. But a family does not consist of parents alone. It consists also of children who are called brothers and sisters. A spirit of revenge among brothers explodes a family as if hit by a bombshell.

In one of the tehsil towns in my district there happened a most gruesome tragedy of how one brother, enraged up by the spirit of revenge, had got 11 members of his brother's family brutally murdered. Revenge is an atom bomb. It leads to massacre. May this evil feeling never manifest itself in any human heart. Indian history, especially the Muslim period, teems with examples of broken homes which have been destroyed by this evil feeling.

Similarly, European history gives us a great many examples of homes broken by revenge. It is recorded of a famous European queen that she married a prince not because she loved him but for political reasons. The prince, however, loved her. This lady did not take stock of this. She lavished her affections on someone who was called her favourite. The husband avenged by arranging to get the paramour killed.

The queen did not forget this. She harboured the feeling of revenge and conspired to get her husband, the prince, killed. This

aroused her subjects and she lost her throne and ultimately her life. Such was the dismal end of a crowned queen seated on her throne and married to a prince. Revenge is a blasting flame which burns to ashes homes and cherished relations.

XV

SELF-WILL

Self-will is one of the most potent factors in blasting the peace and happiness of wedded life.

A young couple married. Both the bridegroom and the bride belonged to rich families. Educated wealthy families in India during the British Raj followed the practice of sending their promising young sons to foreign parts for higher education. The bridegroom's parents had the same objective in view about their promising son. The passage was arranged for the boy when the complications arose. The bride showed her determination to go to foreign parts herself also. The husband was hard put to dissuade her from her dangerous determination. She made it clear to her young husband that he had no business to control her movements anywhere, as she was grown up enough to look after herself. The following talk took place between both :

"Dear wife, you should not forget that you are my wife. Your life has been entrusted to my care. I am, you know, much better educated than you yourself. It is, therefore, safer for you to follow my lead as that would ensure domestic peace and harmony."

"Dear husband, don't forget that I am your wife and not your slave. According to Hindu tradition I am your partner in weal and woe. If you want to improve your prospects by going to foreign parts, I have as much right to improve my own prospects. All that you can claim is that you have no means to defray the expenses of both. By the good grace of my parents I am left a decent heritage. I can defray my expenses."

"Economic independence is a good thing. It is good that you are not dependent upon me for your foreign education ; but tomorrow while living in a foreign land you may as well claim that as you have money of your own, you can live whenever you like and manage your conduct as it suits you. Absolute independence of husband and wife is neither good for the wedded life nor good for their children."

"You have done well in opening this side of our life. Yes, I do mean to live my life as it suits my liking. I can live with you in foreign parts on one condition—that you don't interfere with my movements. You go where you please and I go where I please."

"How can joint home life be possible when the wife does not consult her husband at all and she wants to have her absolute self-will ? Suppose, I do the same, neglecting you and your children when they come, how would you appreciate this neglect and indifference ? Suppose you are keeping a home for me and I come to the house at odd hours as it suits my whims and caprices, keeping you unnecessarily waiting at the dinner table, spoiling your meals and harmonious life ?"

"Whatever may be the cost, I want to have my free will. I have asked my father and brother to have separate arrangements made for my boarding, lodging and studies from the very start."

"So, dear wife, you don't want to live a home life with me. You don't want to manage a home for me. You don't want me to determine your movements. I am glad that you have opened your heart to me. On the basis of such a code of conduct, I refuse to oblige myself with your theory and practice of life."

Both went to foreign parts. I am told both lived an absolutely free life—free from each other's control. When they came back they were already almost separated.

In India this kind of free-will, uncontrolled by social checks and social discipline, is not tolerated. It is said that they actually separated. Being absolutely free from each other, the wife drifted recklessly to the dangerous brink of living a life of free love with others. She used probably to say, "If my husband can marry another wife, why should I not live a sexually free life with some other male ?"

Her mode of life scandalised all. Some people were bold enough to tell her on her face that her defiance of moral check and moral principles was bringing her into bad repute.

They even told her that no decent man would like her to visit their ladies and daughters, nor would they like their women to associate with her. Someone bold enough told her, "Your life we consider as a plague-spot on wedded life."

But this self-willed woman did not realise that she was a part of society and subject to the social discipline and moral rules of society. She did not realise that it is a safe thing to let a good and

educated husband or a loving father guide the family bark. She did not realise that marriage gives a woman many rights against the husband. She did not realise that marriage also confers dignity upon a wife. She did not realise that as a wife law and society were with her. She did not realise that living a life as a mistress of even the most powerful man robbed her of her dignity as a woman and wife, robbed her of the right and privileges she enjoyed against her husband.

I am told she realised all this late. Those with whom she lived as a mistress deserted her. Gradually she found herself all alone—friendless and deserted—and looking askance at her husband's home and his honoured second wife. She had children from her husband. Even they refused to see her. Thus both as wife and mother she had to pay the heavy penalty of being hated as an ignored wife and an ignored mother. She lived to realise that as a wife and as a mother a woman does not gain by self-will. On the contrary she loses and that also considerably. For her own sake and for the sake of her children it should have been her chief concern to avoid all misadjustment, win her husband and produce a happy and harmonious atmosphere for her children. So long the couple is not blessed with children it may be excused, for such quarrels and misadjustments harm them primarily. But the things change when the children bless a family by their presence.

I was present at a meeting when a girl of about thirteen years stood up and, amidst tears, described how in her childhood her little heart was broken to pieces when she saw that her parents never smiled when they were together. She said further how her father, dominated by his self-will, would not only ignore her mother but often threatened to go in for a second marriage. She said she was extremely grateful to Dev Samaj which had brought about peace and harmony in her parental home and so effectively converted her father that he had begun to feel repented for his past unjust conduct towards her mother. The father who was present in the meeting got up and, amid sobs, described how, dominated by self-will, he used to trample upon the feelings of his wife.

Self-will is one of those most dangerous feelings which harden the hearts of people and not only lead to injustice and wrong but bring about the wreckage and ruin of homes.

I read the story of a successful man who tyrannised over his very good wife and promising children. He used to beat his

children very cruelly. One of his grown-up sons left his family and was never heard of. His wife used to pass her life in agony due to the disappearance of her son. But the father was adamant. He did not give up beating his children. His wife became desperate. Though gentle like a lamb, she roared at him like a lioness, throwing a challenge at him, 'If you beat my child again, I will run away from your home and never see your face again'. The husband was amazed to see this new side of his wife's character. But he was so sure of her devotion that he did not take notice of her threat. Once again he beat the only son who was then putting up with his parents. The husband was stunned to find when he returned from office that his gentle wife had left his home along with her son.

The desertion of his wife came as a shock to him but too late. He searched for her a lot but all to no avail.

Years passed. Fortune deserted the broken-hearted husband. His business failed. All joy vanished from his life. One day he got a letter from his son informing him of the critical condition of his mother and requesting him on his mother's behalf to give her the satisfaction of his last death-bed visit. He came. He met her. She, the angel of his life, thanked him for his kind visit and requested his son to look after his father.

The self-willed husband lived long to repent for his attitude towards his wife and children. But so far as the wife was concerned, she was beyond the changed attitude of her husband and she did not live to see that the conversion of her husband was real and beneficial. His son, who doted on his mother, very devotedly looked after his father and by his grateful conduct smoothed his passage to the next world.

Thus, weakness of self-will loudly cries that they are unfortunate who are dominated by self-will. Every couple in this world must realise that matrimonial life can be cemented only by feelings of mutual respect, mutual reverence, mutual gratitude and mutual love.

XVI

LOW HATE

Low hate is another blasting feeling which leads to the devastation of home life.

A young and handsome wife, having three or four children came to see me. I engaged her in conversation. During the course of conversation I asked where her husband was. She forthwith replied : "He and I have parted and perhaps for ever." I felt amazed and asked her : "How you both, a sensible and educated pair, could afford to bring about life-long separation ?"

After some time I just put her a question : "Where are the three children ?" She replied : "Of course, they are with me. They refuse to go to their father." I remarked : "I have seen your husband. He is strong of body, tall in stature and highly educated. How could you tolerate separation from him ?"

She replied : "I left him because I hate him. He is simply thirsting for reunion. But I can't bear even his presence." I looked at her in astonishment and said, "As a husband-hater you are perfect. By hating your husband and renouncing the weight and strength of his standing by you, you are heading for disaster. You are depriving the children of the proud name of their father and you, as a practically deserted wife, will not give your children the benefit of the strong arm of their stalwart father. They will have no moral awe of you. They will have no physical terror of you. You will be very fortunate if your children are within the line of protection."

She replied : "I have counted the cost. I know and appreciate the risk I am taking. But you do not know the intensity of my hate. I have become desperate."

I left her but with the sick feeling of having met an unfortunate woman who did not realise the harbour of safety which a good home established by good parents provides for both the parents and the children. She lived to see what I had prophesied. Nobody would envy the home she had made for herself and her children.

One day I received a letter from a gentleman who appealed to me to influence his daughter to pass the highest examination open to women and he volunteered Rs. 10,000 for her provided she agreed to his proposal.

I was greatly surprised to receive such a letter. I was glad to communicate the contents of the letter to the girl's mother who had come to me to get her admitted. As soon as I revealed to her the contents of the letter, she became furious and said : "I won't touch even his whole wealth even with a pair of tongs ! I would rather wish my daughter dead than that she should extend her hand to her father for financial help !"

I communicated the sentiments of both the father and the mother to the girl. The girl said and very definitely : "My mother is right and I stand by her." And she did stand by her mother.

Low hate consumes to ashes even the best of homes.

A young man of a very good family married a young girl of a very good family. They were blessed with two sons. When clouds shadowed the horizon of the home, the bark of their life smote hard on the perilous rock of politics. On the basis of difference of votes independently given by both to two different candidates, they developed hatred for each other. The wife became humble and she apologised to her husband. But the iron had entered the soul of her husband. His hatred had become very deep. A number of mutual friends intervened but he would not relent.

This husband went to a foreign country. When he returned from there, his wife, along with other people, went to greet him home. He gave her a freezing and cold shoulder. This public denial of her greetings broke the lady's heart and she returned home with a dark, dismal and gloomy expression.

This is how a very sweet home was converted into gall and wood-worm both for parents and their children. I am told that one of the children took this misadjustment between his father and mother very seriously and by his sensitiveness he damaged his health.

I have before me a number of cases in which the feeling of low hate has destroyed forever the home life of even young couples. These couples especially brides, forget that marriage casts upon the couples a heavy responsibility towards each other and towards their children.

The extent of hatred which a disgruntled wife bears towards

her husband can be realised from the following dialogue between a reformer and a wife who had given up her home :

Reformer.—Shrimatiji, if your husband were to appeal to you to excuse him, will you accompany him home ?

Wife.—I won't, even if he were to rub his forehead on the ground in my presence or rub off his knee skin by continuous and intense prayers. I simply loathe him.

Reformer.—Suppose your husband were promoted to the post of Tahsildar, and he appeals to you as a Tahsildar to share your life with him, will you not be tempted to go to him ?

Wife.—I won't even if he becomes a Deputy Commissioner or a king of my district.

Reformer.—Will you go to him if he sacrifices his life in the cause of human welfare ?

Wife.—I won't even if he becomes an *avtar*.

Such is the woeful plight of those obsessed by low hate. Nothing appeals to them. Nothing good appears to them in their partner. No appeal from their partner ever touches their hearts.

I met another case. A young couple entered into wedlock. They seemed to be happy. They lived a wedded life together for two or three years. Their marriage was blessed with a child. After a few months the child died. What happened to both I do not know. But suddenly they separated. The husband was deeply hurt by separation. He appealed to his wife through a number of sources. I saw him making appeals to his wife and her relations. After waiting long he remarried. He met me two or three years after his second marriage. But he had not forgotten his wife. He conveyed his feelings through various sources to his first wife but she remained adamant. Nothing could move the wife and nothing did move her. She would tell those who would approach her that so far as home life was concerned she had burnt her boats. She had accepted an isolated life separated from her husband as the only normal life for her. Hatred had burnt to ashes all her desires and longings for home life.

How hatred grows or originates is not clear or definite. I came to know from some sources that a graduate husband married a girl after he had seen the family and felt satisfied. In Punjab the bride is taken to her husband's house immediately after the wedding. But after three or four days she returns to her parental home and stays there for a few days or a few weeks. Thereafter she is taken by her

husband or his relations to the husband's home and given a rousing send off, loaded with honours and affections.

But in this case neither the husband nor his relations turned up to take her back to their home. I am told the husband never called her back. This unfortunate happening took place about one-third of a century back. Nobody has come to understand the real cause but the general impression is that the husband instinctively hated her and felt that his life would be poisoned if he brought her home and lived with her.

Two or three years ago another incident came to my notice. A highly educated pair belonging to top-ranking families entered into a matrimonial alliance which was duly celebrated with great eclat. Hundreds of families envied the pair. Parents of girls of marriageable age openly declared that the wedding of the couple was the greatest event in the life of their parents and even they longed that their daughters may get such matches.

The couple was very handsome and highly cultured. They had everything one desires in the world. And when the bride returned to her father's house after a stay of three weeks with her husband, everybody hoped that the return of the bride from her parents' house to her husband's home would be signalled by great honours and great festivities. Acute was the disappointment of all concerned when weeks passed and the return home of the bride to her husband's house never materialised. On the contrary, it was rumoured that though the bride loved her husband intensely, the bridegroom put up a strange proposal of getting free from her by judicial separation. This inexplicable proposal of the bridegroom came like a hammer blow on the hearts of the girl and the girl's parents. This incident is a terrible example of hatred. The girl is hated, though she possesses all the virtues to make an excellent partner.

Most of the marriage can be saved if they are blessed with children. Childless marriages run good many risks. But marriages blessed with children cement the wedding tie very closely and very strongly. Those persons, therefore, who avoid the coming of children in the family by birth-control contraceptive run a great risk of a menace to their wedded life.

XVII

SELFISHNESS

Once I read the story of an American woman who was called by an American editor as the meanest woman in the world. The story was quoted by a Bombay paper. This referred to the life of an extremely mean woman who became mean because of her selfishness. The woman had formed the passion of her life to have as much money as possible. She was a very beautiful woman. Lots of people felt attracted towards her but she point-blank refused to marry anyone of them. The reason was that none of them agreed to fulfil her two conditions. The first condition was that she would marry a millionaire. The second condition was that her intended husband must gift away all his possessions to her and in her name. In order to fulfil these conditions the first man she married was 80 years old. He gifted away all his millions to this beautiful but selfish woman. After a year or two he died. Then she married another old man aged over three scores and ten who also gifted away all his millions to this woman before he married her. This old man also died soon. It was then that she thought of marrying a young man. She selected a young speculator. This man also transferred his cash to the name of the young wife. As prosed, he gave to his beautiful wife all the money he earned in speculation. From this young man she got a son.

The young speculator once met with reverses. The reverses were not so great as he could not have met from his past earnings. He appealed to his wife to give him a loan from his cash money which he had transferred to her name.

She point-blank refused and let the credit of her husband suffer in the share market. A lost reputation is seldom recovered. This young man went into bankruptcy. The shock of bankruptcy killed the young man. So this selfish woman let her husband die rather than help him with his own money. It is true that she never married again but she did not change her character.

Now, the two souls who remained in this world, so far as this woman was concerned, were she and her infant son. Her son grew

up. She gave him education. She got him a commission in the Army, and then one day she called him to herself and repeatedly impressed the fact upon him that she owed no further duty to him and she neither longed to share his earnings nor should the young man long for her money. So this selfish woman deprived her three husbands of all their money and deprived her own begotten son of the use of her money so long she lived on this earth.

The paper wrote that her death dues which the Government required from her moneys were so enormous that she must have turned in her grave at the thought of it. Her own begotten son, whom she had deprived of her enormous money so long she lived, was the only heir she left. This son resigned his commission and took desperately to a life of luxury. Those who hoard money do not realise that they do not carry it beyond the grave while they carry the evils of attachment and misuse as an inevitable fruit of their long life.

This was a case of a greedy woman. But there are millions of cases of greedy men. The evil custom of dowry in India has made young men and their parents monsters of greed.

It was at Multan that a murder took place of a young wife at the hands of her mother-in-law and husband who wanted her to bring a few thousands more from her rich father, as her husband wanted to go to England to prepare for the Bar. On several previous occasions she had prevailed upon her father to submit to their extortions. This time, however, she felt that her husband and her mother-in-law had stepped beyond the limit of forbearance of her parents. So she refused to comply with their extortion. Her husband and her mother-in-law lost their balance of mind and began to beat her hard to make her submit to their demands. The poor dear girl cried hard but these cruel monsters would not stop beating till at last she died. In order to remove the traces, it is said, they cremated her dead body before her parents could come.

The parents, however, instituted legal proceedings. The case was proved. The culprits were heavily punished. But the dear child was gone and from the hearts of thousands of parents issued one agonising cry : "My dear daughters, may you never be born and if born at all may you never wed scoundrels dominated by greed !"

The famous Sneh Lata of Bengal committed suicide because she heard her parents complaining lamentably that they had no money to get Sneh Lata married and no property to mortgage for

her sake. Poor Sneha Lata considered herself the cause of her parents' misery, and so she rid them of misery by committing suicide.

I met a rich man. He had four or five daughters. Some of them were studying in college. To my great surprise he withdrew them from the college. I am fond of giving college education to girls. So, I felt hurt when these girls, the daughters of the rich man, gave up college education. I, naturally, reproached the rich man for his retrograde step. He said in a painful mood :

"Dear friend, you know me from my childhood. No ordinary cause could have led me to deny college education to my daughters. The reason is that I have grown rich. Everybody of a flourishing family has eyes on my wealth. If I were to pay these prospective sons-in-law the dowry they demand, I would leave my sons in absolute poverty. Besides their dowry their demands after marriage will be a still heavier drain upon my funds. I cannot pay the dowry they demand. I will have to seek boys from ordinary families. Such boys are not ready to marry highly educated girls. Nor would graduates and M.A. girls like to marry them. This is why I have withdrawn them from your college."

He concluded by saying : "Our cursed social customs are engines of torture let loose on poor parents and poor girls. Hindu society is screaming under the tortures of these self-created social engines which make matrimonial alliances either impossible or miserable."

A case was reported in some papers in Delhi. It concerned a youngman who was a graduate. This youngman was married in his village with a faithful wife. He entered Government service and thus left his village for the sake of service. A thought struck him to make rich matrimonial alliances with certain families outside his village and secure rich dowries. His first wife did not know that he had married a second time and his second wife did not know that he was already a married man.

He married a third girl and got a rich dowry. His third wife was equally ignorant of his first two marriages. It is said that the bubble burst when he made the uncanny attempt of a rich marriage at Delhi. He revealed to the marriage brokers that he was an Imperial Service man unmarried but quite anxious to marry. One of the persons who sought his hand for his daughter was a lawyer. He wanted to make sure that the claims made by the young man

were correct. Without letting the youngman know he went to his native village and there tried to get the confirmation of his claims. It is said, he met the youngman's parents and friends. He came to know that the youngman was a married man and father of two or three children and that he was employed in Government service on Rs. 60 per month.

Armed with these facts he came back and took in writing the claims made by the youngman. He dragged him to court and made him suffer the penalty he deserved.

Pathetic was the cry that emanated from the bosoms of the misguided girls whom he had married one after another by fraud.

Greed brought about the ruin of the matrimonial life not only of the youngman himself and his first married wife but also of the girls whom he had married under false pretences. Greed is a monster force. It does good to none. It corrupts the greedy man himself and harms others as well.

I was told about a girl who is still unmarried and my information says that she has been so much shocked by one cruel experience that she would not marry at all.

This girl had fallen in love with a young graduate. This youngman, I am told, gave her a solemn pledge to marry her at any cost and never to marry another girl.

The girl also graduated. She expected the youngman to keep his word. She had declared to her guardians that she would marry him and none other. She, therefore, told her guardians definitely to carry the offer of her hand to the youngman or to his parents.

She was shocked to know that the boy's parents gave a cold shoulder to her guardians. When her guardians told the youngman's parents that the girl and the boy had settled their own marriage and they simply needed their blessings, the parents of the boy became furious and said : "In our families marriages are arranged by the parents and not settled by the couples."

So saying, they pointed at the boy and told her guardians to go and ask him. The guardians of the girl went to the boy and sounded him. He replied : "My parents are the sole authority in the matrimonial affairs of their children. I am helpless."

The girl who had built up castles on the boy's emphatic promises came to realise when she knew all the facts that dowry was at the root of all her misfortune. The boy married another rich girl because she brought a rich dowry. The first girl realised that

greed was at the root of her misfortune.

This realisation smashed all her hopes and crumbled to dust all her golden dreams. She felt that money was after all the mare that was needed for riding to a happy home.

The girl was wrong in her conclusions. Greed no doubt corrupts man but greed is not the basis of home-happiness.

For all happy relations all that is needed is a life of altruistic forces.

XVIII

CREDULITY

During my school days I met a strange case. One student who was about seven or eight years older than myself, passed his Vernacular Examination and got admitted in the English school. Perhaps I was born the year he got admitted in the English school. Before he was promoted to the Matric class I joined him. Thus the students who was seven or eight years senior to me, had lazily dragged on his life till I overtook him in the Matric class. He used to take at least two years in every class before he was promoted to the next senior class. In the Matric class, naturally, he gave up studies. As his school career was hopeless his employment in life was equally hopeless.

He was hardly drawing ten or fifteen rupees a month when I was staggered to hear that he had been wedded to an only daughter—and only child—of a well-to-do man.

I knew that this only child was sought after by several good families for several well-placed boys. She was an heiress and naturally she was a well-sought-after bride.

How this well-placed girl married a hopeless boy was a great mystery to me. When I came to my native land from my college, I made inquiries into this mysterious case. I came to know how credulity makes a mess of the life of many young men and women. The boy's parents were helped in their conspiracy to entrap this big fish by some marriage brokers who were lavishly paid to bring about the engagement and marriage. The young man was proclaimed to be a young collegiate who had passion for higher studies and who was offered a Government job of Rs. 125 but had declined to accept the offer as it was his ambition to complete higher education.

After the mischief was enacted the parents of this only child came to be disillusioned. They came to know that the boy was not even a Matriculate and that the maximum pay he was drawing was Rs. 15 per month. The parents swallowed the bitter pill as an arrow flung by fate.

I have never forgotten this case as it shows the horrors of credulity suffered by sensible and well-placed parents. The couple united by credulity did not happily live long. I do not know if there is any child blessing their marriage.

There was another case of a victim to credulity. Once I was playing in the streets during my school days, when I suddenly saw coming out of a poor hut a beautiful woman with a personality. I was astonished to see such a lady living in such a poor hut. I asked my playmates as to who she was. The eldest among my playmates said, "Have you not heard about the case of this lady ? She is the mother of your class-mate.....". I then asked, "Why is she living in such a hut and under such poor conditions ?" My play-mate said, "This lady would have well adorned a rich man's house. But she was a victim to conspiracy of conditions over which she had no control."

He, then, narrated to me the pathetic story thus : "A native of this place returned from Bukhara and proclaimed that he had brought a fortune. The middle women rushed to his house. In fact, this man had brought no fortune. But he had cunningly placed in some utensils gold *mohurs* and he had spread them in some strategic positions. The middle women found them there and brought them to the man rebuking him for his carelessness. Thereupon the man said, 'Sister, this is why I want a lady to look after her treasure. Men are not good house-keepers !'

"This news spread like wild fire. Offers began to pour upon him. This pretty woman was offered to him as the best prize.

"Within a week he married her. The bubble that he had raised began to burst. When he had spent his cash money which he had got as dowry, he revealed his true conditions to his wife. It is said he took to the profession of a hawker. After he was blessed with a son, he passed away leaving to the care of his widow, his poverty and his child."

Such calamities happen to many a soul, but credulity rules all the same.

In matrimonial matters the sins of credulity flourish very much. Several young men have succeeded in marrying girls by falsely proclaiming themselves as unmarried when they were married to two or three wives. A father of a graduate girl brought his daughters for admission to my college for post-graduate studies. I just asked him. "Is not your daughter recently married ?

Why do you start her education again when she is well-established in life ?”

He sighed and said, “A terrible tragedy has overtaken my girl. When she was taken home to her husband’s house, she came to know that he was already a married man. This broke her heart. She left the house of her deceitful husband never to return to him.” I said, “Did you not make sufficient enquires before letting your daughter launch into this adventure ?” He sadly said, “I was cheated and I could not help it. My daughter’s tragedy has left me a sadder and a wiser man.”

The future will decide how this tragedy affects this girl.

A marriage was announced. At the time when the marriage was to take place the bridal party came in procession. I happened to be there when the announcement was made that the marriage was postponed. It was said there that the bride had refused to marry the bridegroom at the eleventh hour. The reason was that a woman who was jealous had talked something against the bridegroom to the bride. She believed the scandalous talk against him. Those interested in the bridegroom were hard put to prevail upon the girl to marry the bridegroom. The difficulty was tided over at that time. The marriage took place. But the gash inflicted upon the bride’s state of belief never healed up. After sometime the bride came under the influence of another woman and permanently separated from her husband.

While the above incident relates to the wedding time of the pair, there are a number of cases which touch and concern the domestic life of married couples.

A youngman brought to his home as his second wife an extraordinarily beautiful girl. The youngman loved her very much. But the neighbours could not bear to see the youngman happy and contended with his new wife. The youngman was a widower when he married her. The neighbouring women hit upon that weakness of the family to poison the new life against the youngman. If he gave her ornaments, the neighbouring women would tell the new wife : “These ornaments were on the person of the dead wife and they were taken out of the hands and ears of the corpse.” If the young husband gave to his wife beautiful clothes, the neighbouring women would poison the new wife telling her : “These were the very clothes which your dead co-wife used to put on festive occasions.”

Lots of such nonsense which should have been disbelieved by the new wife was easily swallowed by her. The result was that her heart began to be torn from her husband by the scandalous talk of the neighbouring women. The couple who promised to be the most devoted one, lived as a broken tie which ended in the early demise of the tender wife and the consequent heart-broken condition of the husband.

Credulity and lack of faith go together. These two are strange bed-fellows.

I know a married girl who is now dead. She cherished a stoic faith in her husband. When she was brought to her new home by her husband she went to pay a complimentary visit to her neighbouring ladies. Someone among her neighbours began to talk ill of her husband just as a friendly advice. She quickly left that slandermonger's house and went and told everything to her husband and requested him to convey to her that she had felt deeply something said against her husband and that she had taken that slandermonger as her worst enemy. Therefore none in the neighbourhood dared to talk ill of her husband.

It is not that the husband had no defects but she believed him to be perfect. This attitude of this young wife made her domestic life a real heaven. I wish all wives and husbands adopt this attitude of mind. It is the greatest mistake to hear ill of any of our loved ones.

XIX

ILLICIT PASSIONS

Illicit passions or desires specially of a sexual character blow up a happy homelife like a hidden mine.

I was hardly 14 years of age when I saw a very handsome young man and a young woman cheerfully holding conversation in a secluded street. I did not know them. I simply wondered why they had sought out a sparsely inhabited neighbourhood and almost a deserted street. but I knew nothing about them as to who they were and how they were related to each other. Later on I came to know from men and women talking about this pair. What I gathered from them was that this couple had illicit passion for each other. Both were married. The young man was married to a daughter of a wealthy merchant who had gone to foreign parts on business. She was blessed with four sons—all of them alive. The wealthy young paramour of this woman was also a father of three children from his wife. So both these fallen creatures had no reason to fall. Before they were entrapped in the meshes of their illicit passion they were known to be living a normal life with their wedded partners. Their illicit attraction changed the destiny of their lives.

It was about three or four years after the above event that this illicit love of this guilty pair came to be public. The husband was sent a cable to urgently come home if he wanted to save his home and his well-earned reputation from sure wreckage. He got the cable and started for home immediately.

The guilty couple came to realise the danger. Both of them hit upon a plan. They rented a house in the outskirts of the city and began openly to live the life of illicit love.

The husband reached home. He came to know that his beautiful young wife had left his home and children—all four of them—and had gone and openly lived a life of sin with her young and wealthy paramour.

The husband filed a suit in the court of the City Magistrate against the guilty paramour. During the proceedings the pleaders

and others tried to bring about a settlement. The husband, for the sake of his children, agreed to take back his wife provided the guilty pair permanently snapped their guilty ties and returned to their wedded partners.

The guilty pair refused. The case went on. The young, wealthy paramour and the woman stood their trial. The case was clear. The accused was proved guilty and was convicted to six month's rigorous imprisonment. Even then, the woman did not return to her husband and her four children. She continued to live the life of sin with her paramour after he had completed the term of imprisonment and came out of the jail. It is said that by this illicit love both of them lived and died as outcasts from their communities. Everybody pitied their condition when they died. In order to gratify their illicit passion they destroyed the peace and purity of their homes, the peace and progress of their well-established and respectable families.

This is how illicit sexual passion digs the grave of even happy and respectable homes.

During my career as a lawyer I came across a strange case. One man had gone to foreign parts. He brought a pile of wealth from there. He could secure, when he returned home, a handsome young girl as his wife. The marriage was fruitful. Within two or three years of her married life she was blessed with a son. But as misfortune would have it, she was sinfully attracted to a vagabond—a young, handsome rascal. This unworthy, handsome youngman responded to her guilty attraction. Both of them fell in the trap of illicit passion. For sometime their guilt remained concealed. But murder would be out. So this sin also became public.

The husband appealed to his wife and threatened the rascal to give up the sinful course of life. But the woman stood adamant and the young paramour confessed to me that left to himself he would have retraced his steps ; but the young, beautiful woman was too strong for him and he succumbed to her charms.

The young, guilty woman had left her middle-aged husband, and her infant son hardly aged 12 months and had exchanged the life of affluence and prosperity for a life of penury and want.

I personally appealed to her to go back to her husband and home where honour, prosperity and home life were open to her. I told her that as a wife and mother she enjoyed several privileges

which as a runaway wife she lost and completely lost. I told her that she had no moral claim on her paramour even though she lived and died for him. I continued and told her : "Young girl, by a sinful life you are losing everything we all hold dear. If the paramour deserts you, you will have no roof to cover your head, no social shelter to guarantee you security of life and you will be living a life of degradation even to maintain your body." I lived to see her end. Her Paramour was convicted and imprisoned. She stuck to him. When he left the prison gates she greeted him and followed him. Not finding welcome anywhere in their town they left for another province. Her only son grew up into a young man and when I last saw him he had matriculated and joined a college. When I asked to him about his mother his eyes burned with indignation and he said : "I have no mother ; she embraced social and moral death years ago. I have known only one love and that is the love of my father. I can't forget the unkindness of that unnatural mother who deserted me when I was 12 months old and when I was her first-born child and only child. It is good that she had not cursed the world with more progeny. And besides me there is none to recall her cruelties and her impurities."

Illicit passion is an unforgettable curse on mankind. One day a lady came to me. She said : "I have come to weep my sorrows to you." So saying she burst into copious tears. I was deeply touched and tears came even to my eyes. A woman's sorrow is an unbearable event for me. After some silence she said : "You know that particular woman and do you know that she has robbed me of my husband ?"

I said : "Yes, I know that woman but I do not know that she has robbed you of your husband." She continued and said : "He had gone to the place where she lived. She served my husband. My husband was touched. He used often to tell me how he was indebted to her for kind attention to his needs and he persuaded me to make a substantial return to the woman in terms of service when she visited our town. She was treated in our house as an honoured guest but little did I know that her intentions were wicked. During winter nights she would call him on the pretext that she was ill. I did not know that she was playing a part. I encouraged my husband in his benevolent endeavour to make such return for the services he had received at her hands. Terrible was my disillusionment when one day the sin was out. Please persuade my husband to give up all relations with her."

This fall of the husband poisoned the very happy family atmosphere of the good woman and as far as my knowledge goes, she never recovered her home's happiness and her husband's devotion.

The cruel woman, who was the cause of all this misery, ridiculed what she called the sentimentality of the wife. She bluntly remarked : "When a man falls, the fault is of the wife as she fails to be any longer an object of love and devotion to him."

These words of this shameless woman always rankle in my mind. She prided herself in having stolen the love of the husband of a very good woman. The wife died and late in life did the husband realise that his wife was not a female only ; she was a great companion of life. She deserved to be valued more preciously than any other woman and every husband having a good wife should always resent the attractions or seductions of any other woman.

I came across a strange case. Here the guilty party was a man. This man had developed illicit passion for his friend's widow. His wife resented this flaw in the character of her husband. One day they had an open quarrel in the presence of some of their relations. The husband, smarting under the lash of his wife's tongue for his open infidelity, lost his temper and the following talk took place between them :

Husband : I am not going to renounce my intimacy. If you cannot bear it, you can go and have another husband.

Wife : (indignantly) : You shameless man ! You have ruined your own character for ever and you want me to imitate your evil example of life and thereby degrade the name of my family and corrupt its atmosphere. Your mother is sitting before you. Tell her to go and marry another person.

Having thrown this challenge in his face she ran to the inner room of her house and sobbed out bitter tears.

As was to be expected, this illicit love of the husband brought about the wreckage and ruin of their matrimonial life.

Nothing so terribly brings about breach of matrimonial life as illicit passion of husband or of wife or both.

XX

DISCONTENT

Discontent produces grumbling. Grumbling produces moods of complaint and constant friction in the family.

One of the causes of discontent is greed of money.

There is a true story of a contented family which turned into a discontented one, developing a mood of constant friction.

There was a lower middle class family which was singularly happy. The husband worked on daily wages. He worked hard in the factory and his work was appreciated by the management. He was happy in the office. He had no unusual greed. He found joy in the work and peace in the service. At home he left the management of the house to his good wife. She was happy with whatever money the husband brought as wages. They were often seen going together to make purchases for their home. They had no further worries.

Close by their hut was situated a rich man's mansion which was occupied by a wealthy magnate who owned a number of factories but there was no peace in their home. The husband was miserly and the wife was greedy. Nothing that the husband did for the wife satisfied her. She was always discontented. One day she was heard telling her husband : "What have your riches done for us ? They have brought us no peace in the home and no love amongst us. With all your riches you keep me straitened in many matters. I want to live like the wife of a rich man while you wish me to live like your old mother who saw poverty and lived all her life as a middle-class woman and continued to do so even after you became a rich man.

"Leaving other instances, look at our neighbours. They are living on daily wages, but how happy they are ! They live together as happy doves. Whatever time they can spare they live in each other's company while for weeks I don't have that privilege with you. They go for shopping almost every day, while I long to go with you for shopping."

The husband said : "Dear wife, you long to be a rich man's wife. I have, therefore, an ambition to be a rich man. When the spirit of hoarding catches hold of both the husband and the wife, contentment flies away. I am anxious to hoard money while you are anxious to hoard costly clothes and private bank balances. We shall be what our chief ambitions are. While greed is our chief ambition, gay companionship and spirit of love and sacrifice are the chief ambitions of our poor neighbours. Compared to us they are poor in money and other worldly things. Compared to them, we are poor in contentment."

The wife said : "I would rather be a contented woman enjoying peace and happiness at home than be a magnate's wife surrounded by the splendours of worldly things."

The husband smiled and said : "Even your neighbours would not rest contented if they had a chance to get the gifts of the world."

The wife said : "I don't believe it."

The husband remained silent. Months after the condition of the neighbours changed. The husband began to overwork himself and deprive his wife of his comradeship and happy association. The wife was happy in living a most economical life. She lived almost a miserly life.

The rich man's wife was astonished to see such a dramatic change in the happy life of this poor couple. Addressing her husband she said : "How is it that the neighbours have undergone such a drastic change ? Their comradeship is gone. Their spirit of happy association with each other has faded. They both seem to have grown miserly—what we call economical."

The husband said : "The laws of life and death are the same. There are no separate laws for the rich and no separate laws for the poor. We all mould our lives according to our predominant desires. The spirit of hoarding the good things of the world made us what we are while the same spirit of hoarding made this apparently contented couple what they have become. The spirit of hoarding worldly things get us worldly things and robs us of the spiritual values of a life of contentment, love and sacrifice."

The wife asked : "How did this magical change come over the life of this happy couple ?" The husband said : "I worked this miracle."

"But how did you work this miracle ?" the wife asked.

The husband replied : "The task was easy. I placed within their reach bundle of notes totalling Rs. 99. The wife got the bundle. She was the first to be affected. She asked her husband to complete the amount Rs. 100. That laid the trap for them. After they had completed Rs. 100, their greed for hoarding grew stronger. They went on hoarding even after the first hundred had led to the second and then the third and so on. The fire of greed went on blazing fast and furious. It consumed their contentment. They now lived not for each other but for hoarding money. Their contentment was gone. Their spirit of devotion for each other faded. One unhappy family destroyed the family happiness of another."

I once visited the house of a well-to-do family. This family consisted of a grandfather, a grandmother, a father, a mother and four grand children. When the grand-father was alone, he called me. He said : "My son, I have everything the family desires. There are these members who are earning well. There is my daughter-in-law who is doing a lot of service in the family. But my wife, an old woman, creates trouble by constantly complaining against my son, his wife and his children. Her constant complaints have worried us all so much that we all want to run away from the family."

I asked him : "What is the nature of her complaints ?" He said : "Her constant complaint is that all the members of the family do not deposit their earnings with her and do not receive all orders from her. She is not happy with what she gets. She is miserable for what she does not get. Even if she gets a decent amount of her pocket expense besides other things, she does not feel satisfied. She wants all the money of the family herself. Grown up and married children have to look after their wives and children and their social needs. I feel thankful to them for what they do for us. My wife becomes angry even at this attitude of mine. She wants us all to suit our attitude to her taste. In fact, she wants the world to live for her and not suit herself to the world in the spirit of service and thanksgiving."

I sought an opportunity of helping her out of that attitude. I did get the opportunity, but I failed. Her complaining mood was so intense that no good advice appealed to her. The principle of our doing our best for others and expecting as little as possible from them did not appeal to her. She was a part of the family. She became the hated member of the family because she complained

child against everybody. She had ample scope to be a favourite of the family but she lost all that because of her attitude of constantly complaining. Those, therefore, who indulge in *dush chinta* (thinking ill of others) against the loved members of the family, mix a dose of poison in the cup of domestic life. *Dush chinta* destroys the contentment and peace of family life.

I read of a woman who never had the spirit of *dush chinta* against her husband. She found rational excuses for any and every fault he committed. Her husband went out to sell his horse. On the way one needy man having a cow appealed to him to take his cow in exchange for his horse. This was a bad bargain, but he entered into it all the same. When he proceeded further, a person having a goat appealed to him to give his cow for the goat. He entered even into this losing bargain. As he proceeded still further, somebody owning a hen met him and requested him to exchange the goat for the hen. He agreed. Before he returned home, he had given away even this hen for a song. Thus he returned home empty-handed. He narrated the story of the series of his 'bargains.' His wife did not shout at him. At the narration of every exchange, she found some rational excuse for every such exchange. When he completed the story and said that he had brought nothing, she exclaimed : "Don't say you have brought nothing ! You have brought to me the most precious thing *i.e.*, you yourself. I value you above everything in life. I can afford to lose all if I can retain you. May you, dear husband, live long to enliven and brighten up my life."

XXI

FALSE PRAISE

There was a poor man's son who had passed Middle Examination. He joined hospital service and became a compounder. He served as a compounder with a great deal of interest. He collected good prescriptions about several common ailments and practised with their help. It became evident to him that in case of several diseases he brought about more effective cure than many a practising doctor. He at last resolved to start his own practice. His own popularity as a successful compounder made him a popular and efficient practitioner. It dawned upon him that if he added a side-practice of a chemist dealing especially in patent drugs, he would have a still larger practice. His vision in this respect proved true. His practice increased. Within a few years he was able to purchase a residential house in a good neighbourhood and a shop in a good market place.

All this was good in its own way. But one thing considerably pained him and it was that he had not won social recognition in his community. This lack of recognition by his *bradri* (community) made both husband and wife sad and gloomy. They were longing to be praised by the community. They hit upon a plan. Their eldest son had grown to be of marriageable age. They got him betrothed in a good *bradri*. They wanted to make an impression on the girl's relations and be talked of by the parents of other marriageable girls. It was told that they took a special train to the destination and secured the services of a band which was a new feature then. All this cost they did not count as cost because everybody began to talk of them as wealthy and influential persons. That was the dose of praise that they wanted. They quaffed it with great avidity. It is said they also fed all the villagers of that village and spent about Rs. 25,000 on the marriage celebrations when such marriage did not ordinarily cost more than Rs. 2,000.

This pair, hungry of social praise, spent money like water—the money which the compounder had earned by the sweat of his brow.

The comedy that followed this marriage was that, soon after, an educated officer went there to celebrate the marriage of his own son in another rich family of the same village. He spent less than Rs. 10,000 but did it in a way so as to make the deepest impression upon public mind.

The villagers, not knowing the amount spent by their new visitors, began to say that the second marriage was indeed a splendid event and that the first was a poor show.

The second dose of condemnation spoiled the first dose of praise and grievously shocked the compounder and his wife.

I happened to go to the compounder after the marriage of his son with a party of persons who were collecting subscriptions for some charitable cause. While he had spent Rs. 25,000 on the marriage of his son and did not repent, he refused to give even five rupees for charity and sent us all disappointed !

The heavy expenditure on his son's marriage had greatly depleted his resources.

Such activities damage the economic resources of a family and thus rob it of stability and soundness.

I was once travelling with a gentleman. When our train passed a village, my companion drew my attention to a castle-like building which looked deserted. He said that the castle was once a flourishing *haveli* of some rich merchants belonging to the Vaisha sect. These merchants gradually dwindled. The chief cause of their ruin was that they tried to vie with one another in spending lavishly on marriage and thus win popular applause. This hunt after popular applause ruined many of them and those who were once rolling in wealth are today wearing the sack-cloth of poverty because of their financial appetite for false praise.

I asked him where these families now were. He said that they were scattered all over the country in pursuit of money just to keep their body and soul together. While they were born with silver spoons in their mouths, they haven't got even wooden spoon to take a poor meal.

I heard about a rich man. He used to spend money in marriages and raising buildings just to out-do the ostentation of his community people. Once it so happened that a prince of a native State wanted to suppress one foolish custom which used to cost every man several hundreds of rupees for nothing. This custom related to the parents of the bride-groom throwing away, just as a

sacrifice, copper and silver coins. The Maharaja ordered that every man found guilty of this wrong practice would be fined to the maximum penalty of Rs. 500. This ordinance practically put a stop to the wrong practice. But the Seth considered himself too big to submit to the ordinance. So he determined to ignore it just to win fame and name for being the richest magnate. So, on his son's marriage, he sent Rs. 500 to the Government treasury as a penalty, while the marriage procession went on and silver coins were flung as a sacrifice for his son.

I just asked my reporter as to what was the fate of that rich family. He sadly said : "Today that family is a down-trodden family. Its economic independence and glory have vanished. They have paid the penalty of foolish hunt after undue praise."

I just asked my reporter : "What would have been the fate of the family if the strong dose of this kind of vanity had not been drugged into their veins ?"

He promptly replied : "If that rich man's family had not been so foolishly drugged they would have lived and flourished as the top-ranking family for several generations to come."

One of my friends narrated to me how a young man of a rich man ruined his family altogether by this weakness of hunger for undue praise. After his father's death he opened a cloth shop. Several people who knew about his weakness gathered around him and flattered his vanity. They purchased a lot of cloth from him on credit. He had the largest custom as he sold things on credit. He used to proudly boast of it. One of his well-wishers warned him against the danger. He frankly told him : "You shall have the smallest custom if you demand cash payment !" This plain talk made him indignant and he said to him : "You people are burning with jealousy on seeing me flourish." The man replied : "We shall soon be melting with pity on seeing you ruined."

The words of this well-wisher proved to be true. The foolish young man paid heavy penalty for his hunger for false praise and it was with extreme difficulty that he could make both ends meet. He was not only the person to suffer but the greatest sufferers were his innocent wife and innocent children.

It is said about a rich man that he ruined his trade by posing as a great philanthropist. He would lavishly give gifts to his servants just to appear to be their benefactor. The result was that his funds began to dwindle. His partners had to remove him to avoid a

general disaster. But all this did not make him wiser. He ruined himself and his family suffered the most, while he got nothing from the false praise lavished on him.

This demon of false praise is a great danger that lies in the path of young girls and boys who are to enter marriage. One case was brought to my notice. Two youngmen were studying together. One of them was a local student. He lived with his parents and other members of the family. The second boy was an outsider. He lived in the hostel. The local boy used to invite the hostel boy to his house and introduced him to his sister. How the intimacy between the boy and the girl ripened is not known. But this much was evident from his intercepted letters that he indulged in a lot of praise of her. The Principal was approached to save the situation. The Principal prevailed upon the youngman to leave the town. His going away from the town saved the girl from the terrible tragedy of sharing the rotten life of the youngman.

This girl continued her studies and became a double graduate. She was happily married to a rich graduate. When she was reminded of the ditch into which she would have foolishly fallen, she used to say : "Young and inexperienced girls need greater protection. They are easily deluded by false praise. They need sobering education to give them a correct idea of their responsibility."

XXII

I SHALL NEVER BREAK MY HOME

Some years ago, I read a prize story of a remarkable woman who related how she made up her mind to keep her home intact even amidst the greatest trials. When she was a young girl she married a young boy with whom she fell in love. They started building their home life. Both took to earning money and both used the collective earning for each other's welfare. They felt proud and happy to create a happy home atmosphere for each other's well-being. No question arose in their minds as to who earns more or who earns less. For a few years, they helped each other and lived an ideally happy life. It was then that a cloud appeared to darken the horizon of their home life. The husband lost his job. The whole burden of the maintenance of the family fell upon the wife. She had built her own business. This business went on flourishing as time rolled on. Months passed and the husband could not get a job. He was feeling depressed under the burden of the weight of conscience which pricked him with the thought that he had to depend upon his wife's earnings when as a man it was his duty to look after himself and his wife. But his wife was a noble soul. She appealed to her husband to join her in her shop and his presence would be not only a sort of consolation to her but as a source of added earnings. This joint work and joint effort did actually prove very beneficial for both.

The business so rapidly advanced that they had to engage the services of about half a dozen new employees. One of these new employees was a young and beautiful girl who, unhappily for this good family, cast the spell of her charms over the husband.

Gradually the husband became so infatuated with her that his attention began to get diverted from his wife and centred on that young girl.

The wife felt deeply agonised. To her great misfortune she fell ill. She was confined to bed. This left the sinful pair more free to indulge in each other's amours. This made the wife still more unhappy. When she recovered she saw the situation which was

created by her illness. In sheer desperation she made up her mind to end her life.

She went up a hill. She was about to plunge into the river below when suddenly a light dawned upon her to make one more effort to save her home. So she gave up the idea of suicide and returned home inspired by the new resolution of saving her husband for herself and for her cherished home.

When she was at home, she called her husband in her chamber and laid before him her intentions. She told him that as he had lost his heart to another woman and there seemed no hope of crying halt to his way of life, they should better enter into a dissolution of their business partnership. She left to him to select whatever portion of their stock he liked and leave the rest to her.

The husband chose a part of the stock. The wife gladly contented herself with the rest. She was anxious to remove every bit of bitterness in their separation.

The night came. Both retired to sleep. The wife was prayerful. The husband felt seriously concerned. When he began to think over the dangers of a life divorced from a noble wife, his conscience woke up. At mid hour of the night the wife heard sobs issuing from the other cot. She went up to him to smooth his forehead and carry consolation to him. The husband was deeply moved and clung to her, crying in pain. "Beloved wife, let us not break our home." The wife replied : "You have responded to my prayers. To me our home is more precious than life itself. But what about the young girl ?" He said : "The first thing that I will do tomorrow shall be to kick her out of our service. She was about to smash up my happiest home life and part me from my noblest wife."

Thus a great tragedy was averted. The noble wife made every possible effort to save her husband and home and she was blissfully successful.

There is another true story which came within my notice. A young girl married a distinguished graduate. The wedding took place amidst most joyful celebrations, but within a few weeks her husband came to know that his young wife was suffering from epileptic fits. He revealed this fact to his parents and brothers and they decided to send the bride home to her parents. They complained that they had been cheated. The girl had long been suffering from the fell malady and the bride's parents had

deliberately kept it hidden from the bridegroom and his relations.

So far as sending the bride to her parents' home was concerned, many of their caste men did not find fault with the bridegroom. But something else also happened which created consternation. As the bridegroom was a young and distinguished graduate, he was betrothed to another girl. Bigamy was unknown to his community. Even in such an extreme case, the whole caste rose with one voice against this new step.

The bride had well-placed relations and one of them was a good lawyer. They filed a suit against the bridegroom for permanent injunctions. They succeeded in getting orders for temporary injunctions prohibiting the bridegroom and his new in-laws from celebrating the second marriage. The orders were issued. The second marriage was stayed. The sympathy of the public was with the first wife.

Months passed and the case did not come up for a hearing. But at last orders were issued for the final hearing.

Though the relations of the bride fought against the bridegroom, she did not feel anything against the husband. She prayed hard for the good of her husband and for her happy return to the home of her husband though she had no hope.

But something happened which was not expected by anybody. Her husband knew that he could influence her most if once he got a private interview with her. So he arranged to send her a message for such an interview. She gladly availed herself of that. Once she met him she stayed with him. In order to please her husband she agreed to withdraw the suit. This gave the severest shock to her father and relations. But she abided by her husband. The case was withdrawn. People thought that the husband had played a trick with the confiding girl and that he would drive her back to her parents' house after she had withdrawn her case.

But the wife's anticipations proved to be correct. Her husband not only kept her in his home but gave her the first position in his heart and home. She often used to say : "I risked everything to save my home and I succeeded."

This girl was hardly aged 18 years and was practically a divorced wife. She recovered her home and husband by her noble resolution not to allow her home to break. For years she lived with her husband as an honoured wife. She was mother of half a dozen children. When she died she left a sacred example of a noble girl

who took the greatest risk to save her husband and home for herself.

A very interesting and instructive case came to my notice many years ago. A friend had written asking me to visit his house and let him know of their general condition. I determined to see the family of my friend that day and to write to my friend all about them the next day. According to my programme fixed for that day, I could find time at about 10 p.m. to see the family. It was a late hour but I found the family awake and engaged in discussion. Seeing me, the eldest woman member of the family said to me : "Brother, you know my brother-in-law who has neglected his wife because she does not come up to his standard of a suitable wife. But look at this girl (the neglected wife) who says that she would go to her husband at... about 300 miles from here. The boy may not even open his door to her ! What shall she do in a foreign land as a neglected wife ?" I waited for the girl to reply. After some time she said : "Brother, you know my position as a wife. I cannot bear to live away from my husband without making a perfect endeavour to win him over to me. I long to have my husband and home and I want to do all that is in my power to have my husband and home."

"What will you do ?" I asked. "I shall go to him and appeal to his better sense." she replied, "Up till now I have accepted the position of a neglected wife. I refuse to accept it any further ! Let me go and appeal to him myself. The worst that can happen to me is that he will not accept me. That does not worsen my position. I shall have the satisfaction of having made a personal effort. It is possible I may prevail upon him."

I prevailed upon the eldest woman member of the family to allow the girl to go and make an effort.

The young girl was allowed to go to her husband's town.

I forgot all about this incident till one day I happened to meet this young girl in a street. I was astonished to see her and said : "When did you return to this town ? Have you returned alone or with your husband ?" She proudly said : "I have won my husband and my home. Look there, that is my husband talking to his friend. He asked me to go ahead and he would follow me." I said : "I congratulate you. You have won a great victory. I must have cost you a great struggle." She smiled and said : "Great victories need great efforts. To win my husband and home was a great victory and it needed a great effort."

She smiled and added : "No woman can lose her husband and home if she is determined to save them for herself. I was determined to save the ship of my home and I saved it. I believe that we woman can save the ships of our homes if we are resolved to do so. My personal case is an example to the point."

XXIII

I SHALL NEVER FAIL TO APOLOGISE

There was a young man who became a widower two years after his marriage. His wife was very beautiful. He felt her loss as a serious bereavement. For sometime he declined offers of re-marriage till, at last, time healed his sorrow and he accepted a girl of a good family. But this girl was very plain in her looks. In comparison to his first wife she was called by some people ugly. She was not ugly but in comparison to his first wife, she could be called "plain." I thought she would fail to capture her husband's heart. But my fears were falsified.

Once I was sitting with the husband of this "plain" girl when, all of a sudden, to my great astonishment, he said : "People sympathise with me that I lost my first beautiful wife and married a comparatively dark-complexioned girl. But my personal experience tells me that I have suffered nothing. My second wife has made my life far more happy. Her greatest characteristic is that she does not allow me any occasion to get angry with her."

I asked him : "Have you no differences at all ? After all, you are human beings. You must have differences and frictions. How do you smoothen your bitterness ?"

He was silent for some time and said : "There is no bitterness with my second wife. When I exchange hot words with her and become sulky and go to my office, I invariably find on my desk her letter expressing her apologies whether she is in the wrong or I am in the wrong. By her such uniform conduct she makes me feel sorry for the part I took in the quarrel and exchange of hot words. The result of her attitude is that there is no quarrel in the family now."

This is a strange instance of life and I have seen. A girl with a "plain" face brought about a wonderful peace and amity in the home-life of her husband and his relations.

Most of the families are wrecked and ruined because the wife or the husband or both become obstinate after their family quarrel and point blank refuse to see their part in the quarrel.

I came across another case. An extraordinarily beautiful girl married a widower. She was proud of her beauty and was arrogant. Her attitude towards her husband was one of superiority and arrogance. Once she quarrelled with her husband a bit roughly. The husband slapped her on the face. The quarrel became bitter. She ran to my house and opened her heart to me. I heard her and I put her this question : "Can you see the part you took in the quarrel ?" For sometime she was silent. Then light dawned upon her and she said : "I am sorry. I did not express to him that I was in the wrong." I asked her : "Do you see now that you were in the wrong ?" She said : "In my present calm mood I do see that I fanned the flames of fury."

I then told her : "Can you express such feelings to your husband ? You will be amply repaid."

She said : "I will do it. Straight away I am going to my husband to apologise to him." She kept her word. I met her after three or four days and asked her how she had fared. She said : "Your prescription has worked wonderfully. My apology brought tears to his eyes and since then he is all love and devotion to me."

this prescription has helped many a soul.

I came across yet another case. There was a rich husband. He was a bit arrogant. He treated his wife and children a bit harshly. So long as his children were quite young, all put up with his arrogance and cruelty. The wife overlooked his defects but she saw that the children were getting unhappy over their father's behaviour towards their mother. One day one grown up child went to his father and appealed to him not to insult their mother in their presence. The humble suggestion should have made the father wiser. But this had the opposite reaction. Two daughters of the family one day broke into sobs when the father treated the wife cruelly in their presence. A slight noble gesture on the part of the father would have saved the family and would have assured the father a happy home built by his noble wife. The children threatened to leave their father's family even if the mother did not join them.

One day the mother and the children left their home and went to their grandparents' house. They never returned to the father's house. For sometime the father assumed an attitude of indifference. But gradually it dawned upon him what a sweet home he had broken up by his obstinate conduct. He repented. But his

repentance was late. The children had married in the meantime. None of them ever returned to his father. The mother once remarked : "I had to choose between my husband and my children. I would have liked to keep both together but my husband would not yield. A slight gesture of apology for his conduct even after I warned him, would have saved him and myself the sweet atmosphere of home life. But my husband would not see this. The result is that our home life has been smashed to pieces."

XXIV

I SHALL NEVER FAIL TO APPRECIATE

Some years ago I read in *The Tit-Bits* a beautiful story quoted from Carnegie's famous book : *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

There was a lady who had a husband and three stalwart children. She was very much devoted to them. She used to prepare newer and newer tasty dishes to keep them well fed and happy. She served them for 20 years and was astonished to note that neither her husband nor any of her children appreciated her services and praised her dishes.

One day she laid plates on the dining table and covered them all with a neat and clean table cover. She asked her husband and children to go into the dining room and start taking food. They went to the dining room. They took off the table cover. Terrible was their astonishment and anger when they saw all the plates full of hay. "Mummy," they said, "Why this joke with us ?" The lady replied : "Are you able to see and distinguish hay ? But for 20 years you never saw the value of good dishes which I served to you ! I thought you did not see my dishes ! I am convinced your eyes are not to blame. They are sound enough. If they can see hay, they can see good dishes also. The sight of hay caused you anger. But the sight of good dishes did not elicit any good word from you !"

The children gave a loud laugh and said : "Mummy, you are right. We have been thankless brutes. We are extremely thankful to you."

This story reveals to us the fact that it is our duty to sing virtues and recount favours.

One highly educated person returned from a European tour. He recounted his personal experience. He said he went into a hotel. He was served very well by the hotel bearer. But next day when he went there, that very servant refused to attend to his call. He complained to the hotel manager who was surprised to hear anyone complaining against that servant. The manager asked another

servant to attend to the guest. Next day when he went again to the hotel, the manager went to see him. He told him : "My friend, my servant is very touchy. He says he served you very enthusiastically. But it seems you did not thank him for his services. This caused him resentment. It is considered bad manners not to thank anyone for a cup of water that is served to one." My informant told me that since then he made it a rule of his life to thank everyone from whom he received any service whether he was a servant or even a tongawala. In our country we are not accustomed to acknowledge services whether received at home or outside.

I thanked my informant for this new experience.

One day while conducting moral instructions of the college classes, I asked some of the girls whether they wrote their parents any letters of gratitude. Some of them laughed and said : "Sir, do not our parents know that they maintain us ? Is it necessary to remind them of that ?" Another girl said, "Sir, as suggested by you, I wrote a letter of thanks to my parents for their countless services. My mother laughed at this and wrote to me : 'Don't waste your time in writing such letters. You can better thank me by devoting your time to your studies.' "

I was surprised at this attitude of the mother. She had perhaps no idea that gratitude is a precious virtue as ingratitude is a terrible vice. She did not know that higher virtues need developing as the attitude towards studies needs development. The body, the intellect and the altruistic life, all need exercise and development.

But there are parents who *do* appreciate the development of such virtues in their children. One retired Government servant had got two of his daughters admitted to our institution. During the days devoted, in our Society, to the purification and betterment of our relation with our parents both the girls wrote letters to their parents eulogising their services to them. The father wrote back to the head of the institution : "Just now, we have received very elevating letters from our daughters, and my wife and I were deeply moved to tears. We thank you all for developing such an attitude of gratitude in our children. It is rarely that children recognise their parents as their benefactors, while fewer children acknowledge the services rendered to them by their parents."

Reverence and gratitude produce sweetness in various relations. They produce great blessings in matrimonial relations too.

I have experience of one highly cultural family. The bridegroom was my benefactor. I attended his marriage perhaps in the year 1894 when I was sixteen or seventeen years of age. The bridegroom was about six years my senior in age. His bride was about fifteen years of age.

She impressed me as a singular girl. Whenever she got an opportunity to talk to anybody about her husband she used to burst into his praise. I was practically of her age and her husband was my teacher and benefactor. She took every available opportunity to sing her husband's praise. I believed that her ardour would cool down with time. But I was wrong. As time passed, her enthusiasm waxed stronger.

I went to college for studies. I completed my college education in seven years. I had, then, an occasion to come in contact with my benefactor. I met his wife. I found in her the same enthusiasm, perhaps stronger, of singing praises of her husband. I just told her : "Sister, is this the only topic which interests you even after seven or eight years of your marriage ?" She said : "My marriage with such a noble husband is the one abiding event in my life. I married a man who possessed all the virtues of a good husband, namely loyalty, love, respect, considerateness, etc." I then said : "Is your husband the only person whose life is bedecked with these precious virtues ?" She replied : "Other men do not interest me. This much I know that my husband is the best person I have come in contact with. As a wife, I have the highest interest in him. I regret I cannot do justice to his exceptional qualities. I value no other topic as great as to sing his praises in his presence or in his absence."

I met her again after twelve years. She was busy doing her homework. She left the work and greeted me. I don't know how it happened but soon after she began praising her husband. She manifested the same old enthusiasm of singing the praises of her husband.

I asked her : "Are you not tired of praising your husband in season and out of season ?" She replied : "How can I be tired of singing the praises of one who has made my life extremely happy and full of contentment ?"

She is dead now. But she has left the deepest impressions upon me of a wife who was really a great admirer and devoted comrade of her husband. From that time onward I have quoted the

example of her life and taught people that both for husbands and for wives the one specific which makes matrimonial life happy is the attitude of singing the praises and counting the favours of their wedded partners.

I remember the case of a wife who lived a short wedded life but who left for me a good example to cite and quote. She talked very little about her husband to anybody. But she could never tolerate anybody talking ill of her husband, so much so that one day her husband asked her to visit a family connected with him. Her attitude underwent a change. She felt sad and said to her husband : "I don't like to see the faces of these people." The husband asked : "Why are you so much against them ?" She calmly replied : "I don't like one who talks ill of you. On the last occasion when I visited them out of regard for you, they maligned you and said many things against you. I felt so deeply pained that, when I returned home, I could not restrain my tears."

How lasting an attachment would grow among families whose members could use this specific of constantly praising their dear ones and constantly resisting any talk against them !

I SHALL NEVER FAIL TO COMPLIMENT

I once visited a family. The husband and the wife were busy quarrelling with each other. I enquired of both as to what the cause of their difference was. The husband said : "I brought some vegetables from bazar and they were cheap enough. I expected my wife would be happy to see such a good bargain made by me. But terrible was my disappointment when she said : 'Who told you to bring these vegetables ? I have already brought vegetables enough for our use ! You have made a superfluous bargain !' I got unhappy and told her to be wise enough to pay me a compliment for what I have done and not to shower abuses on me for imaginary mistakes. She often brings things from the bazar and just to encourage her, I pay her compliments. I regret she has learnt to believe that all compliments are deserved by her and no compliment is deserved by me. Hence though I am the earning member, she believes I have no right to spend anything without her permission and that she has the exclusive right of spending."

This was a new experience to me. Therefore, I have studied several families and generally the main cause of quarrels between husband and wife is with respect to the privileges a husband or a wife claims to possess *exclusively*.

I read the story of a wife who possessed the habit of showering compliments upon her husband for whatever bargains the latter made. One day her husband went out to sell his horse. He was of a very generous nature. He was not a business man. On the way a person met him and made a bargain with him which was decidedly not paying from a business point of view. The wife complimented him saying in her kind way : "I believe my husband is wiser than myself."

I read another story. It was the story of a *sadhu* or *faqir*. This *sadhu* was driving a persian wheel with two bullocks. It was said about the *sadhu* that he never got angry because he generously commented upon every act of others. One day four bad men tried to put his temper to the severest test. So they came when he was

working at the well and started teasing him. At first they un-yoked the bullocks. Then they took out the axle connecting the wheel with the well. The *sadhu* remained silent. Then they took out from the wheel the ropes to which were tied the earthen pots which fetched water from the well. When even this did not annoy him, they started beating him. This *sadhu* touched their feet and cried : "Thank you for your kindness." Looking to such unusual patience and attitude of forgiveness, they fell at his feet and wept for forgiveness. When the *sadhu* forgave them, one of them ventured to ask : "How did you justify all our nasty actions ?"

The *sadhu* said : "When you untied my bullocks, I thanked you because I felt I had overworked the bullocks. When you removed the axle, I felt you mistrusted my intentions and imagined that after your departure I may be tempted to yoke the bullocks again. Removal of the axle minimised such chances. Again, when you removed the ropes to which were tied the earthen pots ; I realised that you had done a favour to me by removing even the possibility of working the well."

But when you began to beat me, my heart rose in gratitude to you that you punish me here on this earth and have not left the chances of my being punished in the next world."

The four bad men were deeply moved by the attitude of the *sadhu* and it is said they were converted for all their life.

This story may appear extraordinary. The generosity shown by the *sadhu* in this may seem abnormal. But the *spirit* shown by the *sadhu* or cherished by him is highly commendable. If all husbands and wives were to cherish this in everyday life, they would make long friction impossible. It is the total absence of this spirit which has smashed many homes.

I have already narrated the story of an educated mother whose husband was an Imperial Service man. He was many times more enlightened than his wife and yet his wife always made him the butt of her criticism. She quarrelled with him even on the question of educating the children. The husband knew the advantages of foreign education. So he was anxious to send them to foreign countries for education. The wife was abnormally attached to them and so she could not part with them. Instead of realising her own weakness, she quarrelled in winning the children against their father. The result was eternal misery between both. The only lesson she needed to learn was to appreciate her husband and realise the benefits of paying compliments to him.

There is another true story of a husband who failed to pay compliments to his wife for the great service she did to him and his family merely because she possessed simple features and was not English-educated. It is said he woke up to his unforgivable weakness during his last long illness when he realised that this so-called simple-featured woman, who was condemned as uneducated, was the only friend by his side. She served him all the twenty-four hours of the day. One day, out of gratitude, he burst out before others : "I regret very much that I have started to value my wife during my present illness. I wish I had realised it before, so that I could have made her life and my life happy. I want to tender to her, before you all, my unstinted apologies. She has served day and night a thankless husband."

The admission by the husband can come as a revelation to many husbands who fail to appreciate their wives as great friends merely because they do not possess, according to them, external beauty or college education. A woman cannot be a good wife simply because she possesses beauty. A woman is not a good wife because she has received college education. A woman is not a good wife because she belongs to a rich family. A woman is not a good wife because she joins her husband in social functions and club-life. A woman is a good wife because she lives a life of unimpeachable loyalty to her husband. A woman is a very good wife because she is the guardian angel of her home and children. A woman is a good wife because she never allows her husband to be compared with others to his discredit by any man or woman. A woman is a good wife when she is a "one-man woman." Of such a woman every man need be proud. For such a woman every man should offer a bouquet of rich compliments every day.

One day, I was sitting in the house of a friend of mine when he directed my attention to a pair sitting in front of a house just on the other side of the road. The wife was very corpulent and positively ugly. The husband was good to look at. My friend said : "This husband comes every weekend for the sake of his wife. She is maintaining the house for him and the children very devotedly. She is not able to accompany her husband to the town where he is in service merely because it is the desire of the latter that she should stay here in the home town just to look after the education of their children. Every Saturday and Sunday he is with her. It is strange that he does not move about anywhere and continues to sit by the

side of his ugly wife. We all feel surprised to see this attachment of the husband of his wife.

I listened to my friend and calmly told him. "Dear friend, you have seen the body of the woman. You have not seen her great heart which her husband has seen. Well, the poet, has said : 'Look at Laila from Majnu's point of view'. The husband pays rich compliments to her by deep devotion to her'.

I SHALL NEVER FAIL TO RESPECT

A gazetted military officer was one day describing his experiences. He frankly admitted before his listeners that it was a foolish thing to quarrel with one's wedded partner in the presence of one's children. He continued and said :

"My eldest child, whom I love the most, was present when I picked up a quarrel with his mother. I did not imagine that the child would be affected by my attitude and conduct shown towards his mother. I went to office. I returned home in the evening. As usual, I called the child to come and embrace me. He was a child aged only five or six years. Even such a child forthwith replied : 'I won't come to you. You quarrel with my mummy. I won't talk to you.' "

The father then continued and said : "This tiny child gave me a great lesson of life—that parents should never quarrel with each other in the presence of their children. The children begin to take sides and, as a rule, they take the side of their mother."

Another man present in the meeting gave another story. He said : "There is a family of landlords in our village. The head of the family had a wife and three grown-up children. This landlord one day had a serious quarrel with his wife who objected vehemently to his attachment for a young girl. The landlord proudly said : 'I tell you, I will marry that girl ! Do whatever you like ?' "

My informant continued, "All this quarrel took place in the presence of the grown-up sons. The father married. Some months after the marriage, the news spread like wild fire that the landlord had been murdered in cold blood. The murderer could not be traced. But rumour had it that the tragedy was due to the domestic quarrel."

Family quarrels lead to tragedy and family harmony leads to cementing of the ties of families.

There was a double graduate who was present when I was talking to some friends upon the need of husbands and wives

ceasing to have any quarrels among themselves in the presence of their children. This young graduate told me, "I am a living testimony of the truth of your saying. I was a child of about seven or eight years when consciousness first dawned on me that my mother was being treated with indifference, because of the presence in the family of my auntie who ruled the whole family and treated my mother, according to me, with cruelty and indifference. Even the attitude of my father was not one of protection and respect for my mother. This consciousness made me unhappy. An iron entered into my soul. I decided to set right my auntie and all others in our big family who used to quarrel with my mother. I am glad I lived to grow and I succeeded in liberating my mother from the tyrannical rule of my auntie and others. My father's attitude was also changed. My father realised that I could not bear my mother being denied the respect which she as the queen of the family deserved. I openly say that young children are very sensitive about their mothers. Once they realise that their mothers are not being treated as they rightly deserve to be, they feel disheartened and rise against their persecutors."

I value the experience of this young man.

Once a family came to see me. The husband was an officer. His wife was an educated woman. But she was his second wife. The first wife was alive. Her children were removed from their mother's protection and placed in charge of the stepmother. During the conversation she said : "How strange it is that though I have brought up my step children with all the love that I possess, the eldest child avoids me and hates me."

I enquired into this case. I found that the eldest child had grown conscious of the fact that the stepmother was the root cause of her mother's unhappiness. Her marriage brought about her mother's separation from her father. That consciousness had embittered her young soul and nothing can remove this bitterness from her soul. She often weeps and sobs when she meets her mother in her maternal grandfather's house. She tries to influence her younger brother against the stepmother. Her own mother's deserted condition has made her a rebel. She does not talk against her father but her whole heart is with her mother. The children, it is true, cannot bear their mother being treated with disrespect by their fathers or other relatives. It is the greatest blunder for any parent to disrespect his wedded partner in the presence of his children.

Rightly one man said : "The wife of a *Sardar* becomes the *Sardarni* of her house as soon as she becomes the mother of a male child and the wife of a *Seth* becomes a *Sethani* as soon as she is blessed with a male child." It is, therefore, meet and proper to cease quarrelling with and disrespecting one's wedded partner after the family is blessed with children.

At another place, I have described a terrible case which came to my notice. On my way to the station I had to pass the house of one of my acquaintances. As soon as I entered the street in which the house was situated, I was shocked to see a middle-aged man thrown on the ground by two stalwart youngmen and being violently beaten. My pain knew no bounds when I saw that the man on the ground was the father and the youngmen who were beating him brutally were his grown-up sons. I went up to the house and saw the mother of the family sitting there. I told her how her own sons were beating their own father. She said : "What should I do ? This morning he quarrelled with me and even kicked me in the presence of our sons. Youngmen cannot bear their mother being beaten in their presence even by their father." I came down and rebuked the youngmen and told their father not to treat the boys' mother with disrespect and violence. I regret to say that the beating of wives who are mothers of grown-up children is not a rare event. The children resent this and this is one of the main factors of the misery of several families. The families in which parents respect each other and love each other produce an atmosphere of peace and happiness in the family.

The consequences of mutual quarrels between husband and wife are not limited to their misery. They extend to the life of their children. I have seen sons and daughters of quarrelsome families repeating the story of their parents in their own lives. To such children, sometimes, quarreling with their wedded partners seems a normal affair. I was one day shocked to learn that a member of our college staff was often beating his wife. One day my young child came running to me and said in his innocent way : "Father, that professor (whom he named) slapped his wife on the face and she fell flat on the pavement." I could not believe this. I sought an opportunity to see him. I asked him : "Is it true that you beat your wife today ?" He said : "Yes, it is true. There is nothing novel about this. By beating her I don't fall in her estimation. In our parental homes we have often seen such a drama enacted. In our

family a husband who cannot set his wife right is called an imbecile.”

I said : “You are a terrible man to call the beating of your wife a normal affair !”

He said : “If it were not a normal affair, how could wives in our families put up with our beatings ? Our wives, when beaten, do not desert our house. This shows that the beating of wives is a normal affair in our families.”

I did not believe him. I don't believe that the beating of a wife is a normal affair anywhere. No son can bear the beating of his mother even by her husband.

XXVII

I SHALL NEVER COMPARE

Comparisons are odious in all relations.

There was an educated girl known to me. Her father was a farmer but he was very fond of giving education to his daughter. He paid his daughter handsomely for good food, good dresses and all necessary books. She lived in the boarding house and boasted among her classmates that she was the daughter of a rich landlord. One day her father, dressed simply in his farmer's dress, paid a visit to his daughter's school with a lot of decent things and money. His love prompted him to see his child and personally give to her relishable things and good dresses. But the girl, who was anxious to pass off for a rich landlord's daughter, was shocked to see her father coming to her school and received him coldly. It is said that she compared her father to other girls' fathers who were rich and hated him for being a peasant. A father is a grand thing in life. Fatherless children alone can realise this. The love of parents is a most precious treasure for a child. In the matter of love and sacrifice, parents are incomparable. But those who fail to grasp this truth and compare their parents to their discredit because of their external appearances, fail to become good children.

The girl married after she had completed her education. Her temperament remained the same. She could not be satisfied with her husband, though he was deeply attached to her. He was physically a healthy man. But she compared him to his discredit with other educated men. She also compared him in all other respects with other men who were socially well-placed. The result was that even when she saw him among his relatives, she began to run him down. This habit of her lost her the feeling of love and respect for her husband and she was not very much heart-broken when the poor man passed away in youth. Her future life was also a record of this bad attitude towards even the second husband. She never harvested the blessings of wedded life.

A case was reported to me of a man who was a sepoy when he was recruited in the military department. He was married to an

uneducated daughter of a rich landlord. In his position as a sepoy he valued his wife. But to his good luck he rose from one position to another till he became a Commissioned Officer of the lowest grade. He, then, came in contact with educated girls and compared his wife with them. He began to curse his luck and at least he determined to get rid of her. So he drove her to her parents house. Then he prevailed upon a good family to wed their graduate daughter to him on the specific condition that he would never bring his first wife to his home.

It was after that event that the parents of the first wife and the girl herself came to see me. The parents and the girl shed copious tears at the inhuman injustice done to her. But nothing availed with the husband. The girl then determined to get education. She passed Matric and joined a college and I am told that she remarried. This, I am told, was a happy marriage. She was a successful wife and a successful lady. She had received sufficient education to rub shoulders with the educated wives of other officers.

There was a young man who joined an Engineering college. He was a brilliant student. He hoped to rank high in his final examination and get a good job. It was then that evil thoughts began to crowd his mind. He was married when he was young. The wife was deeply attached to him but she was uneducated and perhaps of simple features. He began to dream of moving in high circles and his vicious imagination suggested to him how he would fare moving about with his uneducated wife in the clubs and social circles of highly educated and pretty women. His vicious thoughts suggested to him how to dispose of his wife. He hated her for no fault of hers. Her only fault was that she had married him and he could not dispose her off. Every day these thoughts created in him low hatred for his innocent wife till at last the Devil in him evolved in his mind an infamous plan. He went to his father-in-law's house as his wife was there. He met her and told her to accompany him to his parental house. They passed through the town where he studied. He got down at the station and leaving the luggage in charge of his servant, he took his wife to the town on the pretext of showing her the college in which he was studying. On their way they had to cross the bridge of a big canal. When the wife was standing on a plank of the bridge the husband gave her a push from behind. She fell into the rushing water and was drowned.

He returned to the station and told his servant that his wife had perhaps gone back to her father's house.

The girl's parents suspected treachery. They moved the legal machinery. The case went up to the High Court. This brilliant but wicked student was sentenced to the highest punishment of the law i.e., death. The strictures made by the High Court in the judgement against the student were worth reading.

The story is recorded of a family which made a rich marriage. The family got their son married to a rich man's daughter and got a handsome dowry. They seemed satisfied with the dowry. But the hidden serpent began to coil round their heart. They heard of other girls who brought better dowries for their husbands. They began to tease and taunt their daughter-in-law as having brought to them nothing in comparison with what other girls had brought to their educated husbands. In the beginning she used to bring gifts and presents for them on festival days. But the spirit of comparison made them more and more greedy. They began to fleece the girl's parents through the girl, till at last the patience of the girl was exhausted. One day she refused to submit to their coercion any longer. This made the boy and his mother mad and they started beating her. It is said that she died of the blows inflicted on her. She was hastily cremated just to remove the signs of evidence on her beaten body.

The father of the girl who was a man of social standing moved the machinery of the law and I am told that the boy was sentenced to death and his mother was sentenced to transportation for life.

If the boy and his mother had felt satisfied with what dowry she had brought to them and had not compared her with the daughters of other rich men who had brought richer dowries, they would have neither killed the innocent girl nor themselves suffered the highest penalty of law.

A blind prince, a big *Jagirdar*, was married by his hostile relatives to an ugly girl under the hoax that he was being wedded to a very handsome girl. As a wife she served her husband as none else had served him before. He became deeply attached to her.

The prince was originally of sound eyes. Suddenly he had lost his eyes. His wife knew this fact. So when after some years she heard of a German doctor, an eye specialist, she thought of getting her husband treated by him.

The hostile relatives who had got him married to this ugly woman did not appreciate the wife's step as they feared that if he recovered his eyesight he would see through their plot. Fearing exposure, they told the wife not to get him treated as he would be the first to hate her as she was ugly.

The wife, however, was too noble to think of herself. She got him treated. When he recovered, his first thought was to see his noble wife. The wife was standing by him. The nurse pointed to the ugly woman and said : "Just by your pillow stands your wife." He was shocked to see her ugliness and said : "This woman is my wife !"

The wife ran out of his house, and was run over by a car. She was carried home by a sympathetic Christian couple. When she recovered she volunteered her services to a hospital for the blind.

After several months came a rich patient to the hospital. This ugly woman was placed in charge of him as she was the most capable nurse.

After a few weeks of service, the blind prince came to recognise in his nurse, his own wife. So catching her by her hands he said : "Is it not true that you are my wife ?" She returned : "I am your ugly wife !" Tears rose to his eyes and he said : "Fie on my eyes which could not see your noble soul and saw only your external form and I lost you by my own ugly comparison. *I am glad I have lost my external eyes again.* My internal eyes have revealed to me your golden soul. Take me back to our home. I shall remain with you under your noble care in mine and your *Ashram.*"

XXVIII

I SHALL NEVER FAIL TO SHOW AFFECTION

There was an unemployed military recruit. Though he was unemployed he was very happy. One of his acquaintances asked him as to how it was that his wife tolerated his unemployment and looked after him with such an affection. He smiled and said : "I love and kiss her ugly child and she feeds me and serves me enthusiastically." A writer commenting upon this said that the recruit was a wise fellow. It is a mother's weakness to see her begotten children loved by everybody, especially by her husband.

A rich widower aged more than 50 years wanted to remarry. He made an offer through his relatives to a widow over 30. He was an experienced man, so he made her an appealing offer. The widow had a daughter. She wanted to give her education but she had no means. this rich widower promised to give her child good education and get her married to a boy of a decent family. The mediator drew the gloomy picture of the daughter's future destiny and appealed to her that she would be able to save her daughter from such a terrible fate if she married a rich husband. The widow was won over. She married the widower only for the sake of her daughter. Her motherhood prevailed. Her caste did not encourage widow marriage but for the sake of her daughter she broke the shackles of caste. It is true the step she took proved a success. The girl married a decent boy after she had received her education. But for the appeal the widower made to the motherhood of the widow, he would not have succeeded.

I read the story of two travellers who were sailing in the same ship. Before they got into the ship they were unknown to each other. The woman was a widow with a baby in her arms. The man was attracted by the baby. During the whole course of the voyage he served the baby and showered affections on her. The woman was won over. This man wanted to have both the mother and the baby. So he offered his hand to the mother. The mother, realising the fact that the baby would feel the absence of the man, agreed to

marry him. The writer remarked that the marriage was happy because of the common bond of love for the child.

It is the fear of the step-motherly treatment which stands in the way of the marriage of a widower having a child or children from his first wife. A step-mother is a horror for children.

There was a big *Sardar* aged about 30 who met me in a train. He had two beautiful daughters aged about five and six years. I just asked him where the children's mother was. His face was shadowed by sadness and he said with a note of pain : "These children are unfortunate. Their mother is dead. I would have been happy if I had died, for in that case even if the mother had married she would not have neglected these girls. But if I remarry, I would not be able to give and ensure fatherly affection to them. In my case they would be neglected children. Mother's love is many times more intense than father's love."

Our literature is full of sad incidents of the step-mother's ill-treatment towards the children of the first wife of her husband. The memorable epic *Ramayana* narrates the story of Rama who was the victim of the machinations of one of the wives of his father who was a step-mother to him.

In our daily life we see how fathers are unable to protect the children of their first wives against the machinations of their second or third wives. We find how daughters of the first wife are married to non-eligible boys because the step-mother refuses to give them even ordinary dowry or because they reserve covetable bridegrooms for their own daughters. Some step-mothers deny even education to their step-daughters and keep them busy like housemaids. Step-mothers often destroy the destiny of their step-children. The step-children find their salvation by leaving the roof of their father. The step-mother by such treatment of step-children destroys the happiness of the home not only for their step-children but even their own.

A man married a second wife during the lifetime of his first wife. The first wife had children but the second wife had none. Here was a case which was a peculiar one. The childless wife was the favourite wife of her husband. According to his idea she lavished full affection on her step-children. But the step-children could not forget that she was the cause of the expulsion of their mother from their father's home. This attitude of the children has been the cause of the domestic misery of an otherwise loving

husband and wife. The children could never believe that their step-mother, who hated their own mother, could ever be sincere in her love for them. In India the step-mother problem has ruined the peace, harmony and affection of thousands of homes.

There was a wealthy man who lost his first wife. She left him a very handsome male issue. He was very fond of his son. For about fifteen years he did not marry. Then, as chance would have it, he fell under the fascination of a beautiful woman. Both of them loved each other. But when the offer of marriage was made by the woman to the man, the latter revealed to her the fact that he was a father of a handsome child whom he loved above his own life. "Can you," he asked her, "love my son as devotedly as I do?" She replied: "How can I love him less when he is your child?" He said: "I know myself. Even to please you I can't give him less love. The boy is the apple of my eye. For his sake, I can even forsake you." The woman replied: "I take the risk."

They married. Time passed on. Gradually, the woman was blessed with two children. She yoked her step-son in the service of her own sons in various duties of the house. The step-son was one day found weeping by his father. The father warmly embraced his son and enquired from him what ailed him. He meekly replied: "Father, allow me to go to my grand-parents' house. There is no warmth of love left for me in my own home. My mother's attitude is harsh and cruel. If you don't let me go in peace, I shall run away." The father left deeply distressed. He temporarily took him to the house of his grand-parents. He then had a frank talk with his wife. Both at last agreed to separate or live in separate houses. The father brought his only sister who was a widow to come and make a home for his son. So far as his wife was concerned he had a separate house for her. This artificial arrangement did not work well. The father lived sometimes with his wife and sometimes with his sister, but the peace and harmony of the family was gone. The son grew up to be a prosperous man and he was married. The father generally lived with him.

I SHALL NEVER INDULGE IN CORRUPT PRACTICES

The superintendent of a Christian model school for children, who took special care of the model side of the children, painfully narrated some incidents of the life of parents. She was taking her class and impressing upon the children the need of avoiding abusive talk. One of the kiddies stood up and said : "Sister, my grandfather indulges in a lot of abuses." The Sister felt pained and she went to the child's house and expressed her agony that parents and grandparents should set a bad example of their life before their children which may cost them heavily in the end.

One other missionary had to make a painful statement as to how parents affected the morals of their children and created hell for them. "A young college student," he said, "repeatedly made false applications about leave and gave false excuses for not having done home-work and thus created an impression upon his professors of being a bold and blatant liar." One day the missionary took him to his chamber and prayed for him that he may change the course of his conduct and become a trustworthy person. The boy meekly replied to the prayer by saying : "Revered missionary, my father boldly indulges in forgery and fabrication. I feel lying to be a proper course of conduct in worldly life." The missionary felt deeply pained. When the parents see their children getting immoral and dishonest they begin to shed tears without realising or admitting to themselves that their own life wrecks the life of their children.

There was a tehsildar. He was considered a most intelligent person. Some of his big officers used to consult him on most difficult revenue and judicial problems. But he was a notorious bribee. He used to take pride in possessing perfect astuteness in escaping detection. His son, an equally intelligent person who passed some highest university examinations, enthusiastically admired his father for being so astute and he literally followed his father's footsteps. The boy lost faith in moral values. The father was at last detected and convicted. The son, too, got involved in

some unfair dealings and forfeited his licence as an advocate of one of the High Courts in the country.

When the parents practise corruption, they little realise how they wrêck their family life.

A father got attached to a woman though he had a wife and children. He had the courtesy, however, to maintain a different domestic arrangement for his mistress. For years together he maintained two different households, one for his wife and the other for his mistress. One of the daughters of the family imitated her father and brought about the wreckage of the family name and family honour. Little did the father realise that by placing before his children the example of an immoral life he was undermining the family edifice so far as its honour was concerned. Lots of people have shaken the stability of home life by providing an example of corrupt and destructive life to their children.

The question may be asked : What should the parents do in such case ? Should they live a crabbed and confined life ? Should they give up the freedom of their life just for the sake of maintaining the moral life of their children ? Our reply is that absolute freedom of action is given to none. A man who is married has to be loyal to his wife and control his feelings or actions in sex affairs. A man who gets children *owes* responsibility to his children. He has to become good in order to provide an atmosphere of goodness to his children. Parents must note that they have to become good because they are parents and owe a heavy responsibility to their children. Everyone has to become good because we are social beings and as social units we owe a heavy responsibility to society for its high moral standards. Born in Nature, we cannot be absolutely free. We cannot eat whatever we like. We cannot take poison and expect to be sound in health. We cannot drink liquor in place of water and not suffer. We cannot breathe coal gas and expect to be sound in hearth. We cannot break social laws and expect to enjoy absolute immunity from social penalty. As units and parts of Nature we are bound to obey laws of Nature pertaining to the health and soundness of our body and soul. We are free to practise moral laws but we are absolutely restrained in the practice of immoral laws.

Once I had gone to a frontier town. I was being led through some streets by my guide when suddenly he stopped just opposite a palatial house situated in an ideal environment. The guide asked

me to mark the house as he meant to reveal to me the tragedy that was once enacted in these happy surroundings. He said : "Years ago, the master of this house was placed in the Imperial Service and enjoyed not only power and position but passed off for a wealthy magnate. His son was an heir to tons of money. He passed his life in pleasures. His hobby was arranging *nautches* by dancing girls in his house. He was the father of grown up girls and husband of a beautiful woman. The *nautches* in his house were witnessed by the ladies of the house also. They were injuriously influenced to see their male members showing deep love to the dancing girls and paying them handsomely.

"Once the tragic news burst upon the town that a daughter of the family had deserted the house and gone and lived with a dancing girl. Efforts were made to bring her back but all to no purpose. The girl bluntly told her relatives : "I am not going to come back to the prison-house where all kinds of restraints upon our activities are imposed by those who dance attendance on dancing girls and who show us how they treat free women !" "

My guide told me that the daughter did not return. She lived there in the same town for the rest of her life with the dancing girls. It is true that this rich family gave up having *nautches* in their house but they had paid a heavy price for their wrong life which they lived before their women and children. It is said that the head of the family soon retired as a broken-hearted man. He said that the tragedy had ever since clouded the atmosphere and name of that family.

I believe that there are some virtues which are imperative for every parent to possess. These virtues are integrity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, chastity, and sincerity. Sacrificing these virtues means sacrificing the happy home and loyal comradeship between husband and wife.

I was returning from the city station where I had gone for a walk. A friend of mine, who used to accompany me on walks, asked me to take note of a Sikh Jat who passed by on a cycle. When he had walked a little further and the cycle had disappeared from our sight, my friend said : "The man who had just passed by us belongs to a village near mine. He is a notorious trafficker in women. He is a terror for many a family who has young daughters and daughters-in-law. Once he paid heavily for his evil practices. He had a daughter, his only child. His daughter saw what the father

did. She heard him talking about the good fortune of those who were induced to leave their home and got sold into good houses.

“One day when he returned home he was taken aback to hear that his own daughter had been kidnapped by traffickers in women. He felt the greatest shock of his life. He burst into tears and appealed to the *Panchayat* to help him to recover his child. The powerful *Panchayat* did succeed. But one of the *Panchayat* people frankly told him that his daughter had paid for his evil deeds.”

She became an easy victim to persons who followed her father's profession. She honestly believed that she would make a good marriage by running away from her father's house. It is hardly known how many thousands of evil-doers pay the penalty of their evil life in the life of their children. Believe that every man has many reasons to be good and no reason to be evil, once he becomes a parent.

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it contains a most graphic and gripping biography of Shri Satyanand Agnihotri, author of Dev Dharma and founder of Dev Samaj whom his followers call Bhagwan Devatma ; history of Dev Samaj movement which heralds the greatest revolution in the religious world ; a concise but complete exposition of the philosophy of Dev Dharma which challenges world thought ; & 25 photographs of Bhagwan Devatma and various persons and places connected with him.

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Some Press Opinions

The adolescents who are dreaming of building homes would be richly rewarded through the study of this book, no less than the married people who in spite of the best intentions, at times fail miserably to make necessary adjustments demanded of them for the fulfilment of their sacred duties. A book like this, to say the least, should be a necessary part of liberal education.

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The Hitvada, Poona

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