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CONSERVING MARRIAGE  
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# Conserving Marriage and the Family

*A*  
*REALISTIC DISCUSSION*  
*of the*  
*DIVORCE PROBLEM*

BY  
ERNEST R. GROVES

*NEW YORK*  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1945

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## PREFACE

THERE are a multitude of books that discuss the divorce problem but so far as I know no book has been written to help those who are in doubt whether they should get a divorce. Not only is this question the most difficult they have ever had to face for many married people but also as they attempt to answer it they become doubtful of their own thinking. They realize their judgment may be clouded by emotion.

It is natural under such circumstances to seek counsel from someone else. Ordinarily this means going to a relative, a friend or a lawyer. As a rule the first two are apt to be prejudiced because of their personal relationship, often already having taken sides, and therefore unable to think the matter through calmly. Since the lawyer is likely to be a divorce lawyer who gets a part or most of his professional income from divorce seekers, he can hardly be expected to give impartial advice. The purpose of this book is to help these perplexed wives and husbands, who must decide to get or not to get a divorce, to think their problem through and make an intelligent decision.

When anyone is in doubt whether to seek a divorce the best person to go to for the needed impartial insight is a domestic counselor. Unfortunately, at present, only in a few places is such help available. In seeking this professional assistance one must always take care not to fall

into the clutches of an incompetent or fraudulent person who poses as a counselor in order to exploit people having marriage and family troubles.

In my three decades of experience in helping people in domestic trouble I have found the three most common problems brought to the counselor are; how to make adequate preparation for marriage, how to improve sexual adjustment and whether to get or not to get a divorce. The professional counselor has found that it is helpful to his clients and a saving of time in the case of these first two problems to recommend a book. My contribution to this literature has been *Preparation for Marriage* and as co-author *Sex Fulfillment in Marriage*; and now for dealing with the third of the series I have written *Conserving Marriage and the Family*. The book seeks to bring out, as the domestic counselor does in conversation, the self-understanding needed for the making of a sensible decision.

I wish to record my thanks to my friend Abbott Ferriss, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, for suggesting the need of this book and to express my appreciation to his wife, Ruth Sparks Ferriss, my former secretary, and to Grace Welch Jordan for their part in preparing this manuscript for the printer.

E.R.G.

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PART I

MOTIVES FOR DIVORCE COMMONLY  
RECOGNIZED



## *Chapter One*

### SO YOU'RE GOING TO GET A DIVORCE

SO YOU'RE going to get a divorce? I am asking you to think your decision over with me, not because I am opposed to people being divorced but because from a considerable experience with people who have gone to the courts to break away from a husband or wife, I have learned that later some of them regret what they did. We all recognize the risk of a reckless, passion-driven marriage. Most people are not so conscious of the fact that we have reckless, passion-made divorces. The marriage mistake can be rectified by a divorce, for in most of our states the need of providing this escape from an intolerable husband and wife relationship is recognized. Law has no remedy for the unwise divorce. Unless there can be a later reconciliation, a break once made must continue. Naturally an appeal to the court greatly increases the original trouble so that not often do the spouses, once they have had their marriage dissolved, remarry.

I shall try to use this book to bring my thinking to you as if we were sitting down together talking over your problem. My only desire is that you be sure of yourself before you make the break that will almost surely end the fellowship which you once entered with such high hope. I shall discuss the chief reasons which lead people to seek a

divorce in order that I may help you to feel sure of yourself before you take your matrimonial unhappiness to the court and ask for release. It is risky to rush into marriage but even more so to seek a divorce hastily and without counting its long-time costs.

Of course, you do not expect me to discuss the reason for the divorce that you are choosing to present to the court. These legal grounds seldom are the true causes. You have no choice but to select the one that seems most feasible from whatever number the law of your state permits. I wish, on the contrary, to think over with you the real reason why men and women want divorces. Some of these are so common they are generally recognized. Even when this is true, however, the full meaning of them is not always realized. Surely it is not too much to ask, before you make one of the most important decisions of your life, that you ponder the meaning both to you and your spouse of the thing that convinces you that you should have a divorce. There are some reasons, and perhaps it will be best if we call them motives, that are not clear. Therefore people as a rule do not understand them. They are concealed from the person who is being influenced by them and so we shall have to bring these up as well as those commonly recognized and see whether they have any importance in your particular case.

It is asking a good deal of anyone who is so unhappy in the marriage relation as to wish a divorce to sit down and face the problem unemotionally and try to weigh all the facts. It is only asking, however, that you anticipate what sooner or later you will be forced to see. For once a divorce is obtained and your present state of mind passes, you will be free from present tension and stress and then you will probably bring up in your thinking what I ask you to

ponder now. Forethought will be an advantage; afterthought, in most cases, will have no value.

If children are involved I feel I have the right to urge you to consider the getting of a divorce from every possible viewpoint, especially considering the future interests of your children. If it should prove true that the divorce would be a relief to you but for some time a hazard to the children, you have a very difficult and inescapable moral problem. No one but yourself can give the answer. Certainly no one would dare automatically to say that under such circumstances you should not be divorced but what we can ask is, that you, unselfishly and in the most realistic manner possible, survey the entire situation. It will not be strange, the situation being what it is, if you find that someone, in any case, must suffer while the decision would be an advantage to some other individual. Even those who have no children may face a similar dilemma since a divorce that may be desirable for one spouse may be a catastrophe for the other. Again when such a predicament arises the one who gets the divorce must accept the responsibility and no outsider would care to influence his or her decision.

Often the reasons that appear to justify a divorce, as soon as they are closely and calmly examined, become more complex than they appeared at first sight. There is more root to them than we expected. Rarely are they entirely related to the other person. Even when they are clearly the consequence of the action of the other spouse their significance is, in part at least, due to the personal history and disposition of the individual seeking the divorce. Are you willing to listen to me as I bring up the various motives for divorces in order to analyze them and to see how substantial they are in your case? If so, you must also consent to accept some probing of your own personality.

There should be no withdrawing from this self-searching if it is clearly understood that we are not seeking to find out who is to blame but rather to discover, conditions being what they are, whether a divorce should be sought or whether an effort should be made to reconstruct the marriage that has so nearly been wrecked. Any temptation to try to decide who is at fault should be put aside. The only thing that is sensible or helpful is the endeavor to weigh the facts which should determine your policy regarding the divorce.

Since divorces are usually granted to the woman it will be best if I present this material as if I were talking to the wife. Of course I know that what happens at the court is often fictitious. It is a part of our code that even when the man is seeking the divorce it is proper for him to let the wife petition for it. Only when there is a decided difference in the meaning of the problem as it affects the man and the woman will I discuss the two unlike situations separately. Elsewhere the male reader need only change my point of view from that of the wife to that of the husband.

## *Chapter Two*

### I'M UNHAPPILY MARRIED

THE most common reason that is given for seeking a divorce is marriage unhappiness. Of all the motives this also is the most difficult to discuss. It is necessarily vague and represents for the most part an emotional attitude. As soon as it is examined it is likely to break up into various other reasons such as are discussed in the following chapters. Perhaps because it is so general it makes the best starting point for our discussion which attempts to help you, who are in trouble, discover what your matrimonial situation really is and then what should be done about it.

It is evident at once when we begin to think seriously about marriage that almost everyone enters it with unreasonable expectations. This is especially true of those who marry early because at that time they see their future everywhere in rosy lights and naturally are at the very pinnacle of their anticipations. If they demand of marriage complete fulfillment of their desires, they are asking more than can be had. If we boil down the cause of their dissatisfaction to its essence, it is immaturity. Getting a divorce will not help them unless it stimulates growth. We can, therefore, leave this failure to understand the meaning and the limitations of marriage for a later chapter since it needs to be discussed when we consider concealed motives. Putting this motive aside for the present we can

deal more adequately with those who have a better reason for not being happy in marriage and it is best that what I write should be made to seem as personal as possible.

I do not doubt that you are unhappy; that is something concerning which you alone can speak with certainty. However, before you decide whether you should get divorced it will be wise to explore as fully as you can the reasons for your unhappiness, in order to find out how much they are related to marriage and whether you are likely to be more happy as soon as you are divorced.

Although we are all prone to talk about our unhappiness and our happiness, especially the former, it is not always clear what we mean or whether the words reveal how we feel. One fact we know. We do not always have the same ideas as to what is necessary to make us happy, and it is equally clear that what seems to add to one person's happiness would bring misery to another.

To get at the truth of the matter, the first thing you need to find out is whether you were happy before you were married. Frequently we find single people, who are discontented and frustrated, seeking relief through marriage. Sometimes they succeed because the conditions that were making them trouble come to an end with their marriage. This, however, is not usually what happens since their unhappiness before marriage was primarily the result of their own disposition, their attitude toward life, and this was not changed merely by their being married. They are still the same kind of person they were before, and sooner or later the temporary covering up of this, brought about by marriage, wears away and then their hope of becoming happy through marriage having faded, they are in a worse plight than ever.

Therefore you must be honest with yourself. Is mar-

riage the cause of your dissatisfaction and will you be any happier divorced? May it be that you are projecting upon your husband the discontent that has long been a chronic handicap in your life and which, therefore, must be removed before anything you do will bring you any considerable feeling of success? If this inward flaw of character should be the real cause of your present feeling that your marriage is a failure, you are only making greater trouble by running away from it and by deceiving yourself in thinking that a divorce would bring you that hoped-for happiness which you have found unobtainable through marriage.

Do not feel that this is an attempt to blame you. When all the facts are taken into account, perhaps you can be justly charged with nothing more than failure to face the source of your trouble. In any case, it is a waste of time to try to fix guilt. Any effort to do this will almost certainly show that there are many and very often subtle causes for your feeling of unhappiness. The one important thing to recognize is that no person can expect, with such a background of discontent, no matter what its source, to find marriage different from other aspects of life unless first there is a change of personality. Sometimes marriage does perform this miracle of character reconstruction but as a rule, if one carries unhappiness into matrimony, the new relationship sooner or later becomes merely another way of being unhappy.

If, for the moment, you are willing to turn away from yourself and look at others it will be easier to see that happiness as a rule is something that one has in every part of one's life or not at all. We are happy all over or everywhere life seems disappointing. This shows how unconvincing a reason for divorce being unhappy generally is.

For example, the real trouble may be some physical condition which is constantly influencing your emotions. In that case the fundamental underlying feeling that usually possesses you is something that makes for discontent. It shows itself in many ways, but the root of the trouble frequently is something that has to do with digestion, chronic fatigue or especially some malfunctioning of the endocrine glands. When this is the situation, the body conditions influence adversely the emotions, and then they in turn add to the handicap of the personality by tending to increase the source of the difficulty.

It is not always easy to change such conditions, but if they are recognized that in itself helps. The story is told of Immanuel Kant that he discovered that his pessimistic tendency was the result of inadequate breathing and that by making an effort to breathe more deeply he changed his fundamental gloomy outlook. As for myself I doubt whether he made the complete transformation that he seems to have believed that he brought about; but surely he took his unhappiness, when it did show itself, less seriously, because he knew or thought he knew, what was its explanation. It was a help to know that it was caused by something belonging to him, and in the same way if you can find that you are hampered in your attitude toward life by some physical condition, that in itself will help you increase your satisfaction not only in marriage but in everything you do.

At least, it is important to realize that one can never be made happy by outside circumstances. It seems to be true that some people can be made unhappy because of environmental conditions but happiness must always have, in great part, an inward source. Do you remember several years ago that a very wealthy man who had done a great deal of

good through his philanthropy and who had had all the opportunities open to a person of great wealth committed suicide? It was apparently as unexpected by all his friends and relatives as it was shocking. We, who read of it in the papers, do not, of course, have adequate information as to what was its explanation. If we can take the word of the man himself he had exhausted the satisfactions of life and, therefore, had no reason for living longer. In a most dramatic fashion he made it clear that favorable circumstances on the outside cannot by themselves make one happy. This is as true of marriage as it is of wealth. If you have been asking marriage to perform an impossible miracle, the chances are that a divorce will only make still clearer the fact that you must fundamentally change or you will always find everything you do disappointing.

When we seek happiness it proves illusive. We gain it as a by-product. We give ourselves wholeheartedly to the tasks and opportunities at hand and find ourselves rewarded with a joyful interest in life. Happiness is like health. As long as we have it we are content. It is when we lose it that we start hunting for it. Happiness illustrates the principle that he who loses his life finds it. This is true in marriage just as it is elsewhere. It is only when marriage begins to go badly that we become conscious of our unhappiness. Then we start looking for the reason of our discontent.

It is natural for us, whenever we find ourselves dissatisfied, to try to find some cause outside ourselves as the explanation. Too often we suspect that someone with whom we are intimately associated is responsible. Thus the adolescent finds the parent at fault; the man in the office, his boss; and the discontented wife, her husband.

I am asking you to consider this, not so much because I

wish you to be just to some other person, but because of the importance self-understanding has for your future, whether you are finally divorced or not. If you are merely heaping blame upon your spouse or on the marriage relationship for a general feeling of dissatisfaction, you are not getting at the real problem, which is yourself. It is not enough even to know that you were happy before you were married and are now unhappy. This, as we shall later see, may mean that you have been refusing to grow up and meet successfully a more mature testing than that encountered in your earlier period. Of course, it is true that the person who was happy before marriage should be more happy afterward, but just because this has not resulted does not prove that the marriage was a mistake and should now be dissolved. It may be that what is really needed is character changes in yourself. One of these may be the unwillingness or the inability to discard the romantic outlook that you naturally and properly had as you looked toward marriage. The courtship attitude toward marriage provides a good entrance. To gather the satisfactions marriage offers we must, however, go on to a more mature development. This growth comes only through accepting the responsibilities and limitations associated with intimate fellowship even when husband and wife are bound together by genuine love.

Marriage cannot be an excursion into a lifelong unadulterated pleasure. If you are unhappy because you are asking an endless sojourn in paradise and being denied it, I am telling you the truth, whether you like it or not, when I assert that divorce can never be the solution for such childish expectations. This does not mean that marriage is necessarily disappointing but rather that it is a way of living just as is the single life, and that if you refuse to

meet its obligations you cannot long enjoy its satisfactions.

If you have very definite reasons why you are unhappy and feel sure that your marriage could be a success, we must turn away from your first general statement that you are getting a divorce because you are unhappily married and take up what you believe is the cause of the trouble. Then we shall have two questions to ask. First, are you right in thinking that some circumstance is making your marriage unhappy; and, if so, is it something that cannot be changed? Surely before you get a divorce you must do your best to be sure that your reason for unhappiness is genuine and that there is no hope of your being rid of it. In the following chapters I shall take up with you the most common of the various causes of trouble. Our purpose will be to discover how much importance any one of them may have for you personally; and, in case one or more seems to be making you unhappy, whether there is any possibility of eliminating them or of lessening the trouble they are now making you.

## *Chapter Three*

### MY MATE IS UNFAITHFUL

THE unfaithfulness of the other spouse is for most wives and husbands the strongest possible motive for divorce. Indeed, feeling is so violent concerning this offense that it may seem idle to discuss it at all. The strength of the emotions that impel toward divorce, however, do not in the slightest degree change the consequences that come from breaking up the family. It is these that concern us because we are trying to find out as we discuss each of the common reasons for seeking a divorce whether in the long run such a decision is wise.

There are those who are convinced that there is no other proper ground for divorce than unfaithfulness. There are others who believe that one has no choice. When there is certainty that the husband or the wife has been unfaithful, divorce must be sought. These individuals are not likely to ponder what I write, but I know from experience with some of them that, once the divorce has been obtained and their emotion has lessened, they have regretted what they did. Therefore I urge even those who have such strong feeling about the matter to do their best to consider what I write.

One thing is clear, the charge of infidelity must be based on something more than suspicion. The domestic counselor is constantly forced to deal with marriage problems that turn out to be the result of jealousy and abnormal suspi-

cion. Most people have no idea how frequently false accusations are made. A woman, for one reason or another—and very often this has been her tendency since childhood—has a great sense of inferiority and, because of this feeling of insecurity as a wife, she is all the time imagining that her husband is unfaithful. Again and again when the evidence is checked and the whole situation of the family is understood it is clear that the problem is not what the husband has done but the persistently suspicious character of the wife. Less often but with the same violence we find jealousy and suspicion possessing the husband.

The woman who is conscious that she is not a good sex partner is particularly liable to the fear that her husband is being attracted by other women. In this instance her reasoning has some grounds. In no other circumstances can the husband be so easily turned toward another woman. This, however, does not mean that most men who have frigid wives do become unfaithful. There are a multitude of reasons why they are more likely to accept their unsatisfactory sex adjustment. They value their home, they love their children, they are interested in their business or career. Although they may wish their wife were different, other women do not have such strong attraction as to make them unfaithful.

Frequently the woman's pride is so hurt at even the suggestion of her husband's disloyalty, which may be brought her by some so-called friend or arise from her own suspicions being awakened by some occurrences that have quite a different meaning from what she thinks, that she conceals her suspicion and gives her husband no chance for explanation. She tries and convicts him without his knowledge and her own imagination acts as chief witness.

It is very difficult to make a woman, who is constantly suspicious, realize that she is being betrayed by an emotion characteristic of her own personality and that the problem is within her rather than in the conduct of her husband. Since, however, a divorce and the breaking up of a home have such influence upon her later happiness, it behooves her, for her own interests, to do her level best not to become a victim of her own suspicions. Anyone who observes life discovers again and again how recklessly rumor starts and how untrustworthy is much of what we hear about people.

Even if you are sure that your husband has been unfaithful I still have something to say that I think you may well consider. Unfaithfulness is not all of the same quality. Therefore, in order to get at the seriousness of your reasons for divorce, it is necessary to find out the meaning of your husband's unfaithfulness. To help in the understanding of this we may best divide unfaithfulness into two kinds; the acute and the chronic. Of course, there is a difference between the desire to be unfaithful and the overt act. The law pays no attention to the former. The domestic counselor is forced to recognize that it may be a greater reason for divorce than an act of adultery itself, because it may represent the basic attitude of the husband; while the latter may be explained, as we shall see, by circumstances that are never likely to be repeated. Since there is no way to get at this inward disposition of the husband unless in some way he confesses it, we shall have to dismiss it from our discussion and concern ourselves with what the husband does.

By acute unfaithfulness I mean something that has occurred but not something that over a long period of time has become a habit. I am using the word as we do when we

speak of an acute infection and a chronic disease. Acute unfaithfulness is similar, in its significance as an aspect of the personality, to murder committed in the spirit of passion. We regard murder as the greatest offense in crime. The prison warden, however, again and again assures us that there is a type of murderer who is the least troublesome prison inmate and the one who most often can be safely restored to normal life. If the individual is not insane, as is, for example, the paranoiac who has an obsession that leads him to kill; or is not one who has often murdered, as is true of the gangster, we know that his terrible crime, in a large percentage of cases, is the result of sudden passion.

This kind of murderer is not likely, if set free, to kill a second time. Probably few men are less apt to, since the passion that led to the act is never likely to become as strong as that again. Just as a man under intense emotion may kill another, so, likewise, there are men who under certain circumstances may be unfaithful, yet their behavior does not reveal a persistent impulse toward infidelity, but rather a weakness of character under stress that will never again be so strong.

If more people understood the sex differences of men and women, this problem of acute infidelity in a man would be handled with greater intelligence. The sex impulse of the normal male is simple and more direct than that of a woman. It is not stronger or more significant. It is merely more open to quick attack. In most women the impulse develops slowly and can find outlets in what the scientist calls secondary sex expressions. On the contrary, in men these expressions act as stimuli and do not bring satisfaction. A woman's sex life also has greater monthly variations. The result of all this is that most men can be more

easily and quickly aroused than most women. All the conditions have to be favorable in order to stimulate the passion of a woman and render her open to suggestion. In addition, it is much easier for a man to have more sex desire for a woman without feeling any affection or even respect for her, than it is for a woman in her contacts with men. The average wife cannot even conceive of this separation of sex and love, and therefore cannot help feeling toward her husband's infidelity as if it had the same meaning of loss of love that sexual intercourse with some other man would have for her.

Married men who surrender to sudden passion are usually left with a great sense of guilt. They cannot understand how they happened to do what they did. They are certain ever after to be much more careful than most men. They were caught by a desire that they had not known they possessed. Sometimes they confess to their wives because only so can they regain any degree of self-respect. Sometimes they dare not tell, but somehow the wife learns or surmises from the change she detects in him.

Now, if this passion-type of disloyalty is the explanation of your husband's conduct, the question you face is—must there be a divorce or can the marriage be salvaged? Of course, you are terribly hurt and fearfully shocked. You cannot see how any man, loving his wife, as you thought your husband loved you, could become unfaithful. Sometimes the answer is very simple. It may be because alcohol took away his judgment and inhibitions. In that case the real cause of what happened was the drinking. The conduct that followed was in no sense deliberate, or a disclosure of fundamental disloyalty in the character of the man.

Possibly he can never fully forgive himself. The ques-

tion you have to answer is—can you help him recover? Perhaps his predicament is most like a moral illness. To what extent is your feeling not the result of what he did but of your loss of pride? If children are involved, what are their rights in the matter? If they have had a good father in the past, must they now be separated from him and grow up to feel that he is a disgrace? The court, under such circumstances, will surely give you the children but that does not mean that it will be in your power to fill up the void that must come to them from having their father taken from them. You should also consider the economic consequences of divorce. Of course the court will give you alimony but the publicity of the divorce may greatly lessen the earning power of your former husband. Moreover, he will have the right, as a rule, to remarry; and may later have another family. The court will have to take this into account in determining what he must pay you, because if children are born, they must be supported as certainly as your own.

You have another searching question to face. What are going to be the moral consequences of the divorce upon your husband? Possibly you are indifferent, or you may even be glad to have the chance to punish him. I suspect, however, unless you are a cruel person by disposition, that this bitter possibility is temporary and itself a result of passion. You will not always feel as you do now. Emotion always subsides or lessens as time passes. If your husband never recovers his one-time morale, I wonder whether this will in the long run bring you satisfaction?

Perhaps you think that I am merely asking you, against your will, to sacrifice yourself in order that others may not suffer. This is not my purpose. If anyone must suffer I would prefer that it should be your husband because he

is the one that is responsible for the trouble. I am, however, not thinking that you should be sacrificial. I am asking you rather to consider your long-time interest and final reaction. This merely means trying to discover now what sooner or later you will know through experience. Only by doing this can you make a decision that will prove most advantageous to you. Perhaps I can make the matter clearer by taking up a few representative experiences that I have come to know in my domestic counseling.

A. was the wife of a professional man. She was a wonderful housekeeper, economical and efficient, and also a good mother. She thought she was a good wife but, as a matter of fact, she paid very little attention to this side of her responsibility. She had little interest in her appearance and naturally grew less attractive. She was also sexually frigid and, as she later said, did not suppose that sex meant much more to her husband than it did to her. In his professional career he came in contact with a self-seeking, well-to-do, physically attractive and most certainly designing woman. Events show that the woman who made the trouble quickly glimpsed the weak points in the home defenses of the wife and immediately cultivated the man and did everything to contrast herself and the wife to her own advantage.

The husband was busy in his profession and not at all seeking an opportunity for unfaithfulness. The woman continued, however, to cultivate him, and more and more he became friendly with her. In time he came to feel that his marriage had been a mistake, and that for the first time he was in love, and so told his wife. As he expected and hoped, he found that she was as eager to get a divorce as himself. She was given the children, although they had been close to the father, and she was given also a com-

fortable income. She moved away from the city where her husband carried on his profession, and slowly the intense feeling that had made her so eager for the divorce dissolved. She was more and more lonely and felt that she was not able to give her children the kind of home they needed.

The second marriage of her husband increased her regret that she had given him up. Indeed, she still wanted him and had no interest in any other man. Her final conclusion was that she had acted foolishly, that it would have been better for her to have accepted the competition of the other woman, for she had great advantages in the long run in the struggle that would have followed between the two. It was not easy for her husband to push aside what she had done to help him succeed. He was very fond of his children and hated to lose them. He realized that his reputation would be hurt by the divorce, that there would always be in the community a measure of suspicion concerning him, whereas before there had been great confidence and, in his line of work, this trust was a very important matter.

How much happiness he finally obtained I do not know; but I believe that he had a temporary revival of physical passion which was in part the consequence of his wife's indifference to sex, something that she could have changed, and that there was just a short period when he was genuinely tempted away from his home. If he could have been brought through the crisis with sympathy from the wife rather than denunciation, it is likely that he would never have been tempted again. He would have profoundly appreciated the wife's self-control. I do know that the latter greatly regretted getting the divorce and that a few years later I read that the husband, in middle life, had died.

What I learned about him makes me believe that he never recovered his one-time morale.

Under almost identical circumstances, in the case of B., we get a story of reconciliation instead of divorce. This very attractive, socially successful and educated woman, the mother of three children, found, in her late thirties that her husband had been having an affair with his secretary. The wife had never during her marriage experienced any physical pleasure from sexual intercourse. She had supposed that her husband felt as she did and looked upon the physical side of marriage as being something that was prerequisite for parenthood. She thought him perfectly content and was shocked beyond expression when she positively learned through his own statement that he was sexually intimate with a woman in his office. He was astonished at her reaction, thinking that, if anything, it would be a relief to her that he had turned his sex interest to the other woman. The wife at first was determined upon a divorce. As a result of correspondence and later conferences, her entire attitude toward married life changed. She began to reconstruct her thoughts of sex, got rid of her inhibitions, and accepted suggestions that led her to cultivate her own passion. The consequence of this was that she began to realize how poorly trained she had been for marriage. She gave up all thought of getting a divorce which would have ruined the professional career of her husband, a very ambitious man. In time she was able to persuade her husband that there really had been a genuine change in her sex disposition, and that it was not something she had put on, as he first thought, to win him back. She certainly achieved greater happiness than did A.

C.'s history shows the folly of allowing gossip to impel

one, in a spirit of anger and suspicion, into divorce. C. was a woman doctor and her husband was in the same profession. They had a child and were both busy, successful and apparently happy. The husband had a young woman patient to whom he gave a great amount of attention and time. Out of this came rumors, and naturally they reached the ears of the wife. Her pride was hurt and she blamed him for getting himself into a position that permitted such stories to start. While her feeling was running strong she went to him and, angry and hurt, accused him of unfaithfulness. He made no attempt to defend himself but immediately left her and soon they were divorced. To this day she does not know whether there was any basis for the gossip. The young woman continued to be his patient but eventually moved away from the community. He never remarried, and the wife now believes that she had no good reason for suspecting him. In any case, she regrets the divorce and says that if she could live through the same experience again she would ignore what may or may not have been an infatuation. Indeed, for many years she has wished that she might remarry her husband, but he has never shown any desire to be reconciled, although he and she have coöperated in the education of their daughter.

The case of D. is almost parallel with the one given above. It has, however, one difference. It shows the risk of letting a relative influence the wife to get a divorce when she finds herself face to face with her husband's unfaithfulness. D. was married to a doctor who was building a splendid professional reputation in a large city. Three children had been born and the wife, once they had begun to come and her husband had gotten started in his career, gave her attention chiefly to them. As she said later, she

took her husband for granted. She felt secure, and the sex part of marriage meant very little to her; she thought this was true of the husband also. Her fundamental inclinations were toward motherhood rather than toward being a wife. Undoubtedly in the early years of her marriage she had mothered her husband, and when the children came, to a great extent, she turned from him toward them. The doctor was thrown into the company of one of his favorite nurses. Unquestionably this younger woman was shrewd and deliberately planned to win the man. She constantly flattered him and took every opportunity of being with him and of impressing him. Gradually a degree of intimacy developed between them and the man was thrown into inner conflict. When the wife finally asked him why he was so unhappy, he confessed his interest in the nurse and asked her to get a divorce. She was tremendously surprised and shocked but met the test splendidly. Instead of upbraiding him, she urged only that they be sure the divorce was necessary, since they had three children who would be influenced by whatever they did. Apparently he was proud of the mature way she met his confession, and this relieved his feeling of guilt and made him appreciate her more than ever. His home tie, his sense of loyalty, and his professional ambition seemed likely to draw him back to his family.

Then the wife made a bad mistake. She told her sister, and this woman reacted to the information with an outburst of emotion. She finally talked the wife into going home and giving her husband an ultimatum. He must immediately promise to have nothing to do with the nurse or the wife would leave him. The husband's response to this was that the younger woman had nothing and the wife was economically secure, since her family had money, and

that he could do nothing but marry the nurse. This he did after the wife obtained a divorce, but his second marriage was most unhappy from the start, and his professional standing was never again what it had been. The wife's present judgement is that she was a fool to let her sister interfere, that if she had been more patient she would have had her husband back. Perhaps you think she should have felt herself well rid of such a faithless man. But it is necessary to remember that she was in love with him, that they had a common interest in their children, and that until the nurse had made the break into his life he had been a most desirable comrade. What she wanted—and it is this that is important—was not the punishment of the husband but his return to the family.

The case of E. is different because it involves the unfaithfulness of a wife rather than of a husband. Also the wife was impregnated by a man not her husband. Some months after E. was married, her husband enlisted in the army and they were separated. It was his wish that she should go about with her friends, and she carried on as usual in the social life of her set. One night at one of the parties that she was accustomed to attend, she drank a good deal more than she realized. No doubt she felt the loneliness of her husband's absence and sought relief through being with friends and drinking. This particular night she may have had more inclination than usual to boost her feeling by recourse to alcohol. Perhaps the man involved deliberately deceived her and gave her a greater quantity of intoxicants than she realized. However that may be, he drove her home at the end of the party and she remembered little else until toward morning she found that he had spent the night with her at her apartment. In due time she knew that she was pregnant.

Fortunately the husband was stationed where she could rejoin him. When she told him her condition he met the crisis with a self-control that not many men could have had. As the pregnancy developed the wife became dangerously depressed and eventually determined to kill herself. The husband went to a domestic counselor and through his advice the wife was placed in the hands of a skillful psychiatrist and obstetrician. In place of a divorce these two young people are now as metals fused together by intense fire. They have been tested to the utmost and not found wanting. If the reader thinks that the husband ought immediately to have divorced his wife, it is well to remember that genuine love is sympathetic and forgiving as well as demanding and possessive. This tenacity of love commitment is the thesis of the Book of Hosea and nowhere in the Old Testament does spiritual discernment reach a higher level. There are men like Frederick Robertson, the greatest of English preachers, who, knowing that the wife has been unfaithful and with no defense, have refused to go to the courts for a divorce.

My five cases illustrate what I call acute unfaithfulness. We must now take up the other kind of infidelity which presents greater difficulties of reconciliation.

Our code is such in this country that when the husband or the wife is habitually unfaithful no marriage can be regarded as a success. Granting this, what we in this discussion are interested in is whether under such circumstances an innocent wife or husband should always seek a divorce. This issue would not be likely to arise if, for example, our code were similar to that of France. There the integrity of the family is the important thing. Infidelity of either spouse may be frowned upon, but that does not mean that those concerned believe that the only

solution is a divorce. It is the family that must be preserved even though the husband or wife may have to tolerate something he or she does not like. Surprising as it may seem to some of my readers, this is the attitude of some people among us who are face to face with the fact that the husband or wife is frequently unfaithful. It is not that they condone what happens, but rather that there are other and stronger reasons for not breaking up the family. The most common of these is the wife's desire not to hurt her children or to deprive herself of the support they and she need from the husband's earnings. In these homes love is replaced by tolerance.

Not all of these wives who know that their husbands have relations with other women feel that they are out-rivaled. Instead, their point of view may be that the husband has affairs, but that these are essentially a product of physical passion and the deeper relationship is still maintained by the wife. Sometimes such a situation is just the contrary; the wife knows that she has lost her husband but still prefers to live with him rather than to break up the home. Intercourse of the spouses may have ceased or even this intimacy may continue. It will surely surprise some readers, and they will naturally recoil from the fact that there are women who, because they are frigid or because their husbands are so much more highly sexed than they are themselves, are quite willing that their men obtain physical satisfaction elsewhere so long as there is no open scandal, risk of venereal disease, or any emotional commitment that will lead the husband to turn away from the wife and children.

F. is an extraordinary example of this. Her husband, a professional man, has such excessive sex hunger that it is hard to believe that it is not pathological. Outside the

home, he is a man of the highest integrity, has always been kind to his wife and children, and is a success in his line of work. Nevertheless the constant, inordinate demands that he made upon his wife sexually led her, in order to preserve her health, to seek the help of an unmarried friend whose situation was the opposite of hers. Of course she could easily have obtained a divorce, but instead, monstrous as it may seem to some of my readers, this family has remained unbroken and now at last the man's extraordinary passion seems to be lessening.

My one purpose in this discussion of the chronically unfaithful spouse is to bring out that, although both legally and conventionally under such circumstances a divorce is considered justified, the question that the innocent spouse faces is whether this seems the best solution of a bad situation. If one feels that there is a moral obligation involved, and that a divorce is imperative, there is nothing to be said. Such an individual must go to the courts. On the other hand, if the question at issue seems to be what is most desirable, taking all things into account, there is need of facing all the facts, and these include the consequences of the divorce as well as the fact of the infidelity of the guilty person. The decision cannot be automatic for these wives or husbands but, instead, needs to be the result of a calm examination of all the present and future interests involved. Perhaps it should also be said that in some cases long-continued infidelity suddenly ceases, and, although the hope of this happening cannot be made a very strong motive for toleration, it does sometimes occur. When this happens, the wife or husband feels certain that not getting a divorce proved itself the more desirable choice.

This book, to be trustworthy, must be honest and real-

istic. This means that our discussion of the problem of infidelity must include recognition of the effect the war is having on women as well as men. It will surprise some of my readers, and shock many more, to be told that, as was true during the First World War, a considerable number of wives who under ordinary circumstances undoubtedly would be faithful to their husbands have had intercourse with other men. There are many influences that have led to this. A portion of these women entered a marriage with motives almost exclusively physical. The departure of their husbands has meant little more to them than that they have been denied the satisfaction which induced them to marry. Others for the first time have been released from the social control that came from living in a small community where everybody was interested in the doings of others. Thrown into a new and exciting environment and given an anonymity for which they had never been prepared, they use the freedom provided by their new social situation to have affairs with other men in the absence of their husbands. Although they probably would have been conventional, living in their former environment, their faithfulness would have been the result of the coercion of public opinion rather than of a self-chosen loyalty.

In interpreting their conduct and repudiation of the conventional code, it is necessary to keep in mind the sexual consequences of war. Conflicts such as the one now raging terrifically stimulate sex. The tendency toward fatalism expressed in "Let's eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," the disorganizing effect of excitement, the experiencing of loneliness and even fear, the release of inhibitions that were tied into a peaceful way of living, the greater opportunity for sex relationships, especially in the case of the woman, are some of the influences of war that intensify

sex desire and lessen its control. This result of war is something that we like to keep out of our consciousness as much as possible. Indeed, most people have a very slight realization of the sexual aspects of our previous wars, especially the Civil War and the First World War. The fact is, however, that greater sex license is a product of war just as are wounds and deaths.

We are much more tolerant of the freer sex life of soldiers than we are of their wives. This difference in attitude comes from the social tradition which concedes greater sex license to the male than to the female. This ascendancy of masculine dominance, the feeling that the woman's unfaithfulness is a greater offense than the man's has for a long time been expressed in what we have known as the double standard. With the increasing equality in the social status of woman, this discrimination is harder to maintain. The trend certainly is toward wiping it out and this fact undoubtedly has some influence on war brides in prompting them to take the same freedom they feel sure their husbands are practicing.

If a man returns from the conflict and knows beyond doubt that his wife has been sexually unfaithful it seems fair that before he rushes for a divorce he should scrutinize his own conduct. If his conduct has been the same, he has no greater grievance than has his wife. The question that faces both of them is, can they recover the meaning of their one-time fellowship? It is not so much a question of what has happened as of what significance this has had and will have upon their living together as husband and wife.

## *Chapter Four*

### WE ARE ALWAYS QUARRELING

IF YOU and your husband are always quarreling there can be no doubt that your marriage is in a bad way and something should be done about it. Compatibility is essential to success in marriage. If you and your wife are constantly fighting, it is no wonder that you have come to feel that there is nothing left for you but divorce. Before you make your final decision, however, you should try to get behind this constant quarreling and discover its cause. If you can get at the bottom of the trouble it perhaps may be clear that you and your husband can again become companionable; for it is not likely that this bickering, which has now become a habit, characterized your courtship or started immediately after you were married.

There are many reasons for incompatibility. By searching, you may discover that the real trouble is something that is discussed in one of the other chapters of this book and that the quarreling is merely a symptom of what is basically wrong. Assuming, however, that the quarreling is itself a problem and not an expression of some other maladjustment, I shall try to analyze some of the most common explanations of the chronic quarreling of married people.

We may well start with irritability. This of course has itself many causes. One of the most common of these is

nervous fatigue and its explanation is chiefly one of the following conditions: ill health, nervous exhaustion or frustration. A multitude of people, although not sick in the ordinary sense, lack the vitality of health; and, because of this, they are the prey of circumstances which, if there were more body vigor, would be unnoticed. Possibly the most common result is a tendency toward depression. A large part of the time these victims feel blue. Occasionally they have an excursion into cheerfulness and vivacity, but for most of their day-by-day experience they tend toward a gloomy outlook upon life. This is trying for them but even more so for their spouse.

Another and almost as frequent result of ill health is one that concerns us—irritability. The individual by voice or manner creates still greater difficulty for himself because he stirs up opposition from other people. He is sensitive to such a degree that it almost seems as if he were looking for trouble. Indeed, it is probable that it is a relief to his inner feelings of irritability to antagonize others and to quarrel with them.

Any parent who has been close to a sick child has discovered that during convalescence he becomes difficult to manage. He is more discontented, restless and cross than when very ill. The situation is not far different from that of the adult who chronically does not feel well. When this is the explanation of a wife's habitual irritability, it is clear that divorce will only remove the opportunity for quarreling with the spouse. The habit will persist and will find some other outlet. The only solution is to decrease the cause and the proneness for quarreling.

This may mean getting rid of a bad habit rather than medicine or may demand learning greater self-control. If the husband is at fault the situation is the same. Before you

divorce him you should try finding a way to rid him of his irritability or help him keep it under control.

The situation is about the same when we consider nervous exhaustion. This is a much easier problem to deal with, provided it is understood. It merely means that the individual is expending more nervous energy than the body can supply. There is need of more rest, of less activity and especially of a curbing of ambition, but whatever direction the fatigue happens to take, unfortunately the condition itself tends to increase restlessness and to stimulate the desire to be doing something. Occasionally the woman is trying to imitate someone else or to carry through a program that is clearly unreasonable for her.

This expenditure of nervous energy is always an individual matter. At times we find a person who is naturally very rapid in mental or physical activity and thus expends a great deal of energy in a short period of time, trying to carry the same hours of work and social life that a different sort of person handles without trouble. Sometimes the wife seeks to be too good a housekeeper or assumes too many social responsibilities. Overambition makes trouble, especially for those in the upper middle class where we seem to find the greatest quantity of this type of nervousness. Instead of recognizing that modern life demands more of us than of our forebears because it has so much to offer, and that each of us must find some way to protect ourselves from overspending our nervous capital, there is no self-understanding.

Whenever the nervous energy has been overspent, irritability results. Anger comes quickly, with fault-finding, discontent, suspicion and finally quarreling. This, in turn, becomes so much a habit that often it destroys compatibility between the husband and wife. What is needed is a

new sensible regimen adapted to personal circumstances. No effort is made by our orthodox educational system to give the growing child training in the conserving of his personal energy, but instead the school itself frequently does its utmost to encourage what is in fact an overspending of energy. Thus frequently the cause of an adult's quarreling goes back to early childhood.

The third source of chronic irritability is frustration. There may be numerous causes for this, but whatever its origin it is almost certain to make trouble for family life because it so frequently expresses itself in irritability. When frustration is the cause of quarreling, the sensible thing is to find its origin in order to know whether it is related to some condition of marriage that needs to be changed. Very often we discover that the husband or wife is frustrated for reasons that have nothing at all to do with marriage. The source is apt then to be experiences in the former family life when, during childhood, a sense of inferiority became established in the personality. In such cases a little self-examination, honestly carried through, may uncover the real cause of trouble. In a more deeply buried difficulty nothing but a thoroughgoing examination can bring to the surface the source of the frustration.

The important thing for the wife or husband to realize is that it is easy to put the blame for one's own discontent upon the other spouse and relieve inner feelings through quarreling, when he or she has little or no responsibility for the frustration. The intimacy of married life offers the greatest possible opportunity for the discharge of emotion; and, if one has the disposition to express frustration in argument or antagonism, the husband and wife relationship very quickly becomes a chronic tension resulting in constant quarreling.

The discussion has been turned toward the problem of the wife, but the first step toward getting at the seriousness of chronic quarreling is to see whether the wife or the husband is the principal offender. It is natural to blame someone else when we find ourselves badly adjusted. Therefore, in order to get a true picture of the marriage situation, it behooves you, a wife, first of all to consider honestly your own behavior. One way to dig out the facts is to look backward to see whether before marriage in other intimate relations there was the same problem of quarreling. If you were constantly in trouble with your parents and associates, it seems reasonable to assume that you carried into marriage a tendency to quarrel, which is now leading you to consider a divorce.

As soon as you have become convinced that the explanation of the quarreling does not belong to you, and that it can be rightly charged against your husband, it is necessary to apply the same analysis to him. He is likely to be irritable for the same reasons as yourself but the circumstances that cause them will be different, aside from ill health which will operate on both of you in the same ways. The over-expending of energy, for example, may be not so much his own choice as the result of the conditions under which he works. Although large industries realize the problem and try to lessen the dangers of personal fatigue, they do not perfectly succeed. For one reason it is not easy for them, employing a great number of people, to individualize the responsibility of each so as to provide for every employee the most favorable conditions of work. In small businesses and in many professional situations no attempt is made to recognize or deal with this hazard of excessive occupational fatigue.

In the greater number of cases it appears that it is not

the work itself but the reactions to it or to activities outside the home that are the chief cause of nervous fatigue. If your husband is in the wrong kind of work or is employed by someone who is dominating or irritating, and must hide the reactions that arise in such a situation, he comes home more nervously tired than would be true if his conditions of work were pleasant. Then, instead of being animated by what he does through enjoyment in his work, he comes to you at the end of the day more than tired, for he is nervously spent. He should transfer into some occupation that will not be so exacting. Until this is done he needs to find recuperation through his home.

It is not strange that you are not always prepared to respond to his mood in a way that will help him get rid of the tension that has accumulated during the day. He may make your coöperation in regaining stability difficult because as soon as he is safe within the household walls he begins to pour out his pent-up feeling upon you. Such practices cannot go on year after year without wearing down your patience and your respect for him. If you are also nervously tired or quick to anger, fierce quarreling is almost certain to result and a bad relation grows worse.

If you can think of your husband as a victim who requires understanding and sympathy rather than as a culprit who deserves punishment it may help salvage your marriage. On the contrary, as soon as you think of the problem causally, and try to find out just what is the meaning of his irritability, you may have to recognize that he has always been that sort of a man. His different behavior during courtship was only a temporary hiding of a settled disposition. Then the question is, can you endure his personality, his readiness—even eagerness—to quarrel year after year. Unless there is a radical reconstruction of

personality—and this usually requires psychoanalysis as the only hope of success—he cannot be expected to change. If children are being influenced by him, that also must be taken into account and their welfare rather than yours may become the chief motive for a separation or divorce.

The husband's frustration in its influence on behavior is similar to that of the wife. The causes of it are most likely to be found, however, in the conditions of the man's employment outside the home, when they are not the outcome of a disposition established early in life. Your husband may have lost his self-respect. He may feel that he is not a success. He may be convinced that you are disappointed in him, that he does not earn as much money as he should, and that he does not give you the happiness to which you are entitled. His feeling of inferiority may come from his idea of the way other people feel toward him. Many times he can be saved from this sense of frustration if you can help him gain self-assurance through a fellowship of love that is not dependent upon outward success or prestige. If he can be helped to regain the self-confidence that he most certainly had in courtship, his unfortunate tendency to quarrel will disappear and once again you can be happy. It is something worth striving for. It may require a long campaign, with improvement coming gradually; and in working out a program you may need the help of some understanding person, experienced in dealing with marriage problems.

Another common cause of quarreling, which is even more difficult to handle than irritability, is great differences between the husband and the wife in their outlook upon life. If the two differ very radically in standards, values, purposes, habits, especially in what we call their life-philosophy, either there must be generous tolerance

and the willingness of each to accept the other as he is, or there will be a constant endeavor by one or both to change the other. Physical attraction during courtship between the man and woman can be so strong as to keep in hiding the fundamental differences between them which in time are certain to lead to incompatibility and quarreling.

No other relationship in life can prosper with such differences between two associates as marriage. Nevertheless, love frequently dissolves in such a union merely because the man and woman are alien and the great difference between them is unacceptable to one or both, and a source of hostility. In such a case quarreling is an effort to force the other person to conform to a pattern of behavior which is foreign to him, and which he resists until deep-seated clashings of the two personalities result.

There is another cause of quarreling which is very like that which we have been discussing. It comes from the desire of one individual to dominate the other. The quarreling is only a means to an end. The attempt is to force the spouse to be submissive, to give up independent thinking and to submerge himself or herself to a person who is always trying to satisfy a hungry ego. This psychic disorder, to use medical language, offers little hope of recovery. Quarreling will not cease even if it does bring about a submerging of the personality that is constantly under attack. Once this is accomplished, the other will continue to get satisfaction by demonstrating superiority at every opportunity. In such a case the only possibility of normal married life is through a radical remaking of the personality at fault, and the only hope of this would be a religious conversion or a psychoanalysis carried through that would wipe out a long-established, trouble-making habit.

The wife who has a husband who quarrels in order to dominate must decide whether or not it will be possible over the years to live with him and become subject to his constant effort to destroy her self-respect and independence of personality. Such a wife, in making her decision, must usually assume that the husband's habit will not only persist but grow more and more oppressive.

## *Chapter Five*

### HE ISN'T THE MAN I MARRIED

I UNDERSTAND you have been considering a divorce because your mate has proved not the person you thought you were marrying. I am sure you realize that this complaint is very common. The old saying that you never know anybody until you live with him shows that the experience is almost universal. It would be remarkable if it were not so, since there is no possible way that we can really know anyone except by day-by-day contact. Even a temporary, trial marriage could not accomplish its purpose, because a normal relationship would not come about until the experimental period had come to an end. Once marriage has been entered into the husband and wife begin to show their natural characteristics, and in your case it appears that this expression of the true character of your mate is to you fearfully disappointing.

Since you feel as you do, there is little value in reminding you that marriage always brings the necessity of a readjustment of expectation. I realize that you have become convinced that in your case there has been a serious deception—that indeed, the one you married is not the person you thought he was. Since such a feeling on your part is not open to argument, I shall accept it as a reliable testimony that your marriage is to you so unsatisfactory that it is your belief that the only way out is to seek a

divorce. I shall, however, ask you to consider with me whether this judgement that you hold so strongly is in fact justified by what has happened. In this discussion I am not trying to argue you away from getting a divorce, but merely asking you to think the matter through so that you may not later feel that you have acted hastily and thereby made a mistake that it will be very difficult to correct.

Disappointment is always related to expectation. You will agree that it is unfortunate that courtship, which is our way of assuring a proper selection of a mate in this country, carries with it a certain amount of deception. This, of course, is sometimes willful; and the person putting on a front, as we say, knows perfectly well what he or she is doing. As a rule it is not so. It is merely that under the circumstances of a strongly awakened attraction both the man and woman put their best foot forward. They do not need to try to do this in a self-conscious way. It is as natural as breathing. They are eager to do their utmost to be attractive, and the interest they have in each other enhances their good qualities.

There is always a certain amount of glamour about courtship, which, in the later calmer and more everyday relationships of marriage can easily be interpreted as a deliberate effort to hide less agreeable traits. Never in life is there such opportunity as during courtship for the imagination to color the future until it seems as if entering marriage meant passing through the gateway into paradise. You surely must acknowledge that this peculiar kind of daydreaming may have captivated you during courtship and given you ideals that no individual could possibly fulfill.

We therefore must start, if you are willing to be rea-

sonable about your desire to be divorced because your husband has disappointed you, with an examination of the attitude you brought into marriage. Sometimes this disillusionment is nothing more than the necessary passage from the conditions of courtship to those of marriage. Moreover, some courtship experiences are much more hazardous than others. If a young man and woman have had little opportunity to be together under normal conditions, and if their association has been intermittent, rather than a day-by-day being together such as usually happens in a rural community or a small village, then of necessity their courtship experience has been less helpful than it ought to have been. They have lacked the opportunity they needed to become well acquainted with each other.

It is only fair to remember that your spouse has had some disillusionment as well as yourself. Courtship has done for him what it did for you. It has given the same extraordinary expectations. Each of you when you married faced the same necessity of finding a safe passage out of adolescent romance; for, even if your union has not led to a let-down of ideals, it certainly has required a readjustment. It may well be that your criticism of your spouse has been in part the consequence of his attempt to reconstruct courtship ideals and accept you as you really are. I cannot believe that you are so sure of yourself that you feel certain that there has been no reason whatsoever for your mate to reconstruct his pre-marriage expectations. You are both human, and it would be amazing if only one of you has had trouble in making the adaptations that always come with marriage.

This necessity of reforming and modifying what one demands from marriage does not mean that the husband-and-wife relationship has to be less satisfying than was

expected. There are some who believe this and hold to what has been called the mousetrap theory of marriage. According to this idea, people are caught during courtship by false hopes, and their later disappointment comes from the fact that marriage always proves deceptive.

If you have observed people, there is no need of my saying that this describes only the kind of marriage that is not successful. I am sure that you know very many happily married people who would not dream of going back to the courtship experience, but who find year by year that they are drawn closer together, have more in common, and are more sure of their love than they were in their courtship period. There had to be a change of ideas as a result of the constant intimacy of husband and wife; but this, although it was not anticipated by their imaginations during courtship, has led to a more satisfying fellowship. Of this there can be no doubt, because it is the achievement of a great many people who marry.

The domestic counselor becomes familiar with the unwillingness of some wives, and less often husbands, to move beyond the courtship and romance, and accept the changed conditions brought by marriage. To them the wedding day is the climax of their lives. You need to be certain that your impulse to get a divorce and your feeling that your spouse has been a great disappointment is not really this unwillingness to accept a readjustment to life that properly follows marriage. If this should be the explanation of your dissatisfaction, not only are you hurting yourself by not going forward to a greater maturity, you are also demanding the impossible of the person you married. No one could help you keep the atmosphere of courtship perpetually and still be your spouse. Not only must the person you marry disappoint you, but marriage with

any other person, however many times you try to achieve the impossible, will likewise fail you.

It will always be possible for you to demonstrate some defect of personality in any person you may marry. Such flaws are sure to exist, and if you are longing for a return to courtship days you are in a mood to find them. A series of disappointments in marriage is not imaginary, because we have examples of men and women who marry again and again; and who find themselves disappointed each time, get a divorce, and then try again. The onlooker clearly sees that the first marriage was probably as hopeful as the seventh or the eleventh. The real trouble was in the false notion of what marriage is, plus a childish clinging to the inferior relationship of courtship or a temporary craving for a mere sexual association. Marriage is the exacting and more demanding relationship, but it is also more satisfactory, if only there is the increase in maturity which makes it possible for the man or woman to gather from the relationship the joys it offers.

Sometimes this clinging to courtship is not so much due to a desire to continue the experience itself as it is to an unwillingness to accept the responsibilities that marriage brings. It is easy during the short period of courtship to be free from the stress and strain of a partnership such as comes with marriage. The earlier experience may seem so free, so exclusively pleasure-giving, that there is reluctance to meet the realistic demands that marriage brings. Sooner or later, however, whether one marries or remains single, this necessity of assuming one's personal share of the load of life must be accepted, or one remains immature and, because of that, maladjusted.

No doubt your marriage has brought you much that you did not expect and that you do not like, even though,

without these duties and activities, the fellowship would weaken because of lack of growth. This is the way of life in every maturing experience; marriage has to be like every other relationship. Perhaps your husband protected you at first, and you did not have to meet much of the testing that now seems to you the result of failure on his part. If this is true, your husband's great mistake was in not helping you earlier in marriage to learn this necessity of carrying one's share of the load, without which there cannot be any true fellowship between husband and wife. Perhaps he has been impatient and blames you for not recognizing your responsibilities sooner. Wives also make this mistake and overprotect their husbands.

Whether it is his fault or yours, this recoil from the obligations and limitations of marriage is certainly no motive for being divorced. Instead, your present happiness and future content, as well as your development of character, are at stake. If you withdraw from marriage because it has its tedious side, its tasks as well as its pleasures, you are throwing away the greatest opportunity life can give you for the maturing that you desperately need. The problem is your own, for no one else can be sure whether your disappointment is self-created or not. Therefore, for your own advantage, you should most honestly examine yourself before you convict your spouse of having proven not the person you thought you were marrying.

Our stress of romance in courtship has been frequently criticized by students of marriage who, living in foreign countries, are familiar with a very different attitude. From every quarter in our country come influences that encourage our young people to think of romance as *the* essential characteristic of love and marriage. The novel, the play, the short story and the movies especially, are some of the

sources that build up romantic expectations. The result is that the American girl who marries has a somewhat more difficult adjustment to make than those who enter marriage with a more prudential and realistic motive. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that wherever modern culture goes, there is a tendency toward this romantic approach to marriage. It first began to appear in some parts of Europe with the coming of the troubadours, about the eleventh century.

As a wife, you have no reasonable basis for complaint because your husband proves different from what you expected in your daydreaming, since nothing else could be possible in your movement from a romantic to a more mature appreciation of the meaning of marriage. It would seem to me, therefore, that the character of the change rather than the fact that it has occurred is what should determine your policy concerning the divorce.

Perhaps this can be brought out if I raise some questions which you can answer for yourself. They may help you think the matter through. Is he morally different from what you expected? This kind of character change does strike at your opportunity to be happy. If you find that he has covered up moral deficiencies, you certainly must consider seriously whether it is good for you to live with him. It will be difficult for you not to fall far below your present standards if you associate with a man who lacks morals. Is he dishonest, deliberately deceptive, cruel, exploiting; or just lacking in ideals? If these are his faults, you can surely say with justice that he is not the man you thought he was when you married. Is his change obnoxious? Sometimes very trivial habits can get on our nerves. If this is your situation the question is, assuming that he does not change, are you troubled enough to prefer not living with

him, or are you willing to accept flaws in his way of doing things which are not the result of any lack of love. It has been said that one of the tests of a true marriage is the ability of a husband and wife to sit at the breakfast table, morning after morning, without either one becoming an irritation to the other. Do the changes that have occurred hurt you? Are they practices you regard as harmful? If so, either there must be a change, or your married life will grow increasingly hazardous. Sometimes a wife is mistaken in her belief that what the husband does injures her. This most often happens in the sexual relations of the husband and the wife. If you are in any doubt about such a practice you should get the counsel of a competent doctor.

Always the final question that must be answered is whether your husband's change for the worse must be regarded as hopeless, or whether there is a possibility that he can change back and be more nearly the ideal man with whom you chose to live for life. If he can do this, you do not need a divorce. One thing is certain: in such a situation you must not expect too rapid a change. A gradual improvement is most likely to occur when there is the possibility of the reshaping of his personality.

It would be foolish for you not to consider also what your life will be after you are divorced. You do not want to jump out of the frying pan into the fire, and this is just what some discontented wives have done. One of the important questions you must answer is whether you can support yourself after you are divorced. I have known women who have found it very difficult to maintain their family, even when they have been given alimony, because they were not trained in any particular skill or occupation. Your economic situation after the divorce is only one of

many problems that you had better face in advance, because you will soon need to struggle with them.

Finally I ask whether you have been able to discuss frankly your disappointment with your husband? Does he understand how you feel? If he does, he may make the heroic effort necessary to bring you greater satisfaction. Frequently the husband cannot be made to see how the wife feels. He is either too sure of himself, too selfishly indifferent, or so exceedingly sensitive that he cannot sit down and in a quiet way discuss an incompatibility which can be cleared up through coöperation. Are you willing to be frank with him? If so, have you given him an opportunity to respond in kind? If not, you are denying him the last chance to prove himself the man you wanted to marry. If he cannot meet your proposal to get at the cause of your disappointment through frank discussion, without denunciation, anger or sulking, you have done your part; and you must decide without his help whether divorce is the best way out of your matrimonial disappointment.

It is apparent that these same questions should be faced by a husband who has determined to get a divorce because of his disappointment in marriage. Even the economic question concerns him, for he may find that he has a much greater expense-load to carry after he dissolves his marriage. This is especially likely to be true if he has to pay alimony or maintain his children. He may find himself attempting to support two households. Even when this does not occur he may be surprised to discover that his wife, with all her faults, could handle money better and make it go farther than he could. He has the same reasons for self-examination as the wife and therefore will do well to answer frankly and unemotionally the questions already placed before the wife in the three preceding paragraphs.

## *Chapter Six*

### WE ARE BADLY ADJUSTED SEXUALLY

THIS statement, "We are badly adjusted sexually," is one of the most frequent complaints about marriage that comes to the domestic counselor. A great many American wives, and many more husbands than most people would suspect, confess in confidence that they are not happy in their sex relation. Nobody knows just how many there are of these dissatisfied wives and husbands, but those close to the problem consider the estimate that one-third of American couples never achieve good sexual adjustment a conservative judgement. It may be that the problem is exaggerated, since those who are well adjusted seldom come to the attention of the physician or the counselor.

It seems as if this problem of sex dissatisfaction in marriage were more common in our country than elsewhere. We may be deceived in this. The fact is, perhaps, that in the United States the dissatisfied woman speaks more freely than elsewhere. She may also expect more from sex, and be less willing to put up with maladjustments. She, less often than her European sister, has ulterior motives, such as finances and family status, to curb her self-expression.

In spite of these various reasons for the sexual problems of marriage looming larger here than in other places, it is impossible for anyone who is constantly hearing about

these marital sexual conflicts not to become convinced that there is a greater liability of trouble here than in other countries. In any case, sexual maladjustment is distinctly a modern complaint and one that is only beginning to get the attention it deserves. Even the doctor in times past has had little medical training to help him advise those who are in difficulty. Only of late has there begun to be a slight recognition on the part of most physicians that a good sex life has a proper place in the health program and is not merely a social or moral problem.

Whether your situation as a wife demands a divorce or not, you are doing the right and wise thing to face frankly the fact that you are dissatisfied with your physical relations with your husband. Certainly if, after two years of living together, you still have good reason to complain, it would be bad policy to attempt a program of sacrifice in the belief that you should accept continuous maladjustment, either because nothing can be done about it, or from the feeling that you are under obligation to endure your failure to achieve normal physical relations. This does not mean that if the situation cannot be cleared up you must be divorced, but rather that you have no right to become resigned to failure until every effort has been made to straighten out your predicament. Only when such an effort has proved futile should you face that alternative of accepting persistent maladjustment or getting a divorce.

It may be that the chief reason why we are so concerned with this problem of marriage in this country is that with us the adjustment cannot be one-sided. There is no doubt that women in many parts of the world never question their duty if they find the sexual side of marriage disagreeable, painful or even disgusting, because to them it is a matter that concerns only the man. If he is content, all

is well. It is evidence of the progress we have made in the United States that this attitude on the part of the wife, which would lead her to submit no matter how unpleasant her sex relations, is not the usual reaction of the American woman. Of course it is much more difficult in any relationship to make two people mutually satisfied than it is if there is endeavor only to please one.

This recognition of dual interests in the marriage relationship is what is meant by adjustment. In the strict sense of the word there is no adjustment in a sex relationship that caters only to men. There are characteristic differences between men and women; and there are—and this is much more important—individual differences between each husband and wife. Thus it comes about that if they are to be happy in their sex fellowship they must learn together to work out the technique that will bring both of them satisfaction.

It is the failure of you and your husband to accomplish this highly desirable relationship that makes you believe that there should be a divorce because physically you are badly mated. Your assertion that you are sexually maladjusted must be accepted. We can, however, think the matter over together in the effort to discover whether divorce is the best way out. We need to consider the most common causes of marital maladjustment. It might seem that trouble would seldom come from this direction, in the marriage experience, because of the strength of the sexual impulse. Nature has taken great care to endow both men and women with a sex drive that is normally strong. Her purpose has been to assure the continuation of the human species. You notice that I have said these impulses are powerful in both the male and the female. This is contrary to what many suppose.

There are two reasons for this false notion. Woman's sex life is more complex than that of man, and therefore it is not so urgent or so sure to be consciously recognized. The greater reason, however, is that society has trained the woman to so ignore or suppress her sex nature that she is not aware of its strength. This is what the psychologists call conditioning, and we would all admit that in the United States for a long time the idea has persisted that sex desire belongs to the man, and that it is proper for him to recognize his impulses; and that woman, on the other hand, should follow the opposite program. As a consequence of such teaching, a good or respectable woman has been taught that she should accept sex intercourse as a marital duty, but should not welcome it since such an attitude would be improper.

Am I right in taking for granted that you do not share this abnormal and mischievous attitude toward the sexual endowment of the woman? The fact is that sex has greater significance for her than for the man. It permeates her life more thoroughly because it has a greater spread over the body and because it has potentially a richer content. In the long run it may mean more to her nervously and psychically than to the man. If you have held to the opposite point of view, this may be the explanation of your dissatisfaction. Since you have a wrong feeling toward sex, it is not strange that you are unhappily adjusted. It is, of course, no fault on your part, because you are merely reacting as you have been taught to do. You cannot, however, expect a successful marriage if you start out denying your part in what is a basic motive for matrimony.

Since I may not be able to reverse your habit of thought in so brief a discussion, I urge you to talk the matter over with some qualified and trustworthy doctor, minister or

domestic counselor. I also suggest your reading some of the books that have been written to help people like yourself. It is foolish to think that you can never change. Anyone who has had experience in counseling people in trouble in marriage knows many women who have turned away from a false conception of the significance of sex, and have eventually discovered how much their normal impulses, once they have been freed from the traditional inhibition, can contribute to a wholesome husband-and-wife fellowship.

Perhaps you know that you have a perfectly sensible attitude toward sex and still find yourself lacking in physical passion. If this is true we must try to find the causes of your trouble. They are chiefly physical or psychic. The first may be the result of many body conditions that prevent your endowment from finding its proper expression. Physical fatigue, chronic disease, and especially the malfunctioning of some endocrine gland is most likely to be at the root of your difficulty. The only way to deal with this sort of problem is to get a thorough-going examination that will seek to discover why you do not have the sexual impulse you should possess.

Unfortunately some doctors, chiefly because they do not know how to handle such complaints, will try to turn you aside from searching for causes by saying that many women are like you and nothing can be done. After all, they affirm, sex does not mean very much. This kind of subterfuge will not be so common in the next generation of physicians because medical science is beginning to take sex seriously. This change has chiefly come about because of the great progress that has been made recently in endocrinology. This has demonstrated that the sexual glands play an important role in what is known now as the

endocrine system. This knowledge has brought a new insight, forcing the doctor to take a more serious attitude toward sex.

The psychic causes of trouble are many and are highly individual. The only way you can get at them is to travel back into your earlier life and seek out with perfect frankness the various things that occurred during your childhood and early youth that led to your present attitude toward sex. These incidents have built up a barricade through which your biological female endowment cannot penetrate. They may have been relatively trivial, but not in the effect that they have had upon you. On the other hand, they may have been real misfortunes, and it is not strange that you have reacted as you have.

Fear, shame, and guilt are the ones that are most common, and it is safe to say that none of us have grown up without having had some of these adverse suggestions that have endangered our wholesome thought concerning sex. It is extremely common, for example, to find a parent reacting unwisely to the normal curiosity of a child and, because of this, starting the latter, in very early years, toward a way of thinking about sex matters that is totally unlike her attitude toward other interests. It is too bad that this happens even in these days but it is still more unfortunate that there are so many women who do not realize how badly trained they have been for marriage because of such experiences. Not realizing the unfortunate suggestions they have been given regarding sex they make no effort to correct what, intelligently handled, would have no permanent effect. There are times when the conditioning is so deep that the individual does not seem able to recall its beginning, and then she has to have help, most often from a psychiatrist.

One of the greatest differences between a woman and a man, and one that handicaps the woman, is the failure of the former to realize that true marriage necessarily includes sex relations. It would be difficult to find a man who did not appreciate the importance of the physical part of marriage, but we often come across women who marry without the slightest conception of this aspect of marriage. Sometimes they are shocked when at the eleventh hour someone tries to inform them, and at other times their recoil comes at the beginning of marriage. A situation of this sort is difficult for the husband, and many times he so greatly misunderstands how the woman feels that he makes still more trouble, not because of his selfishness, but because of his failure to understand the wife's reaction. On the other hand, there are men who deserve trouble because they are so selfish and inconsiderate.

Some years ago a woman who finally got divorced because of her hostility to sex told how, on the first night of marriage, without any preparation whatsoever and in almost the time it takes to relate what happened, she was initiated into a one-sided sex experience which the man, on account of his previous relations with a different sort of woman assumed was a perfectly proper way to start marital relations. It took this wife ten years to decide to dissolve her marriage. Although she was a fine type of woman physically, her sex desire was annihilated on the first night of marriage. Later when she began to realize what she had lost, her protest grew so strong that she refused to live with the man whom she rightly held responsible; and, after finding means of self-support, she was divorced and never remarried.

The charge is often made that the husband is oversexed. This may be true, but in a great many instances it

is a misinterpretation on the part of the wife. She is lacking in normal impulse for some reason or other, most often because she has not been sexually awakened. Then because of her own deficiency, she misunderstands the husband's sex passion which is fundamentally normal. It is, however, often true that one of the spouses is more sexually endowed than the other. Then compromise and adaptation to these differences becomes necessary, a program has to be worked out before there can be adjustment.

It is highly important that the woman recognize always that good sexual relations are an advantage to her, and that she should seek satisfaction in this aspect of marriage as in others. Her well-being is influenced by successful intercourse. It should never be merely a catering to the husband's desires; it needs to be a mutual satisfaction.

Marriages sometimes go on the rocks because the wife uses sex as a weapon. Meaning nothing in itself to her, she discovers that she can make use of it to hurt or to dominate her husband. Her love of power is so great that she prefers to develop that rather than her normal impulse. The consequence is that she becomes frigid but permits sexual intercourse for a price. Sooner or later the average man rebels against this attempt of his spouse to use sex for some ulterior motive. Frequently he finds another woman who gives him an adequate and sincere response.

The most common result is his own gradual loss of sexual interest. He may, however, realize how it has come about that he has gradually turned his attention almost exclusively to his business as a means of an increasing sublimation. Then he may blame his wife and even attempt to get even with her. Thus sex, instead of being a means of

consolidating the union of the husband and wife, is used to provide both with opportunity for contention and re-  
crimination.

Any woman, thinking of a divorce because of sexual maladjustment, needs to search honestly to find just what is the cause of her trouble. I, therefore, beg you, before you make a final decision, attempt to uncover the various influences that have led you and your husband to your unsatisfactory sex relationship.

Here I turn from the wife to the husband. The male reader who reports an unsatisfactory sex adjustment with his wife is likely to have one of the complaints I now discuss.

“My wife is frigid.” This may be true but it does not get at the cause, which should be the concern of the husband. One of the most frequent causes is the failure of the husband to develop a technique which gives the wife any degree of satisfaction. Instead, because of his lack of understanding, he constantly arouses a desire that is never brought to a happy climax. In time the protest of the nervous system of the wife destroys her capacity for response, and in this way she finally becomes frigid. Men are much too sure of themselves and therefore unskillful in the art of love. The best way out of this difficulty is to get the counsel of a specialist who can show the husband where his technique is faulty. As a rule the brevity of the intercourse, the almost precocious ejaculation of the husband, is the underlying cause of the trouble.

The second complaint of the husband, which often is also that of the wife, is that although sex relations were satisfactory earlier, they have ceased to be. There may be many physiological reasons for this and also a large num-

ber of psychic causes. Among the first is the wife's ill health or her loss of good muscle control of the vagina, most often the consequences of too frequent or difficult childbirth, especially where the wife has too quickly returned from the hospital and taken up household obligations before her muscles have had time to return to their former condition. It must be admitted, however, that many times this is not the explanation. The muscles have been so stretched that they do not come back, and the sexual relationship therefore is disappointing to both husband and wife as compared with what was true before her birth experience. In any case this is a problem for the doctor. It is not something that should be accepted unless there is no way in which science can bring back the more favorable former conditions.

If I were talking to the husband who is unhappily married because of sexual maladjustment I would speak as follows: Do not be satisfied with merely recognizing what is true, but make a genuine effort to find out whether there cannot be a better solution than separation or divorce. Do not expect the average doctor to take much interest in the problem which you may need to solve to save your family. Seek out a specialist who does have understanding of the difficulties husbands and wives face in their marital adjustment. Give the wife a chance to prove herself a good sex partner. Do not turn to some other woman because this is the easiest way to an immediate solution. You may find some woman who is more than willing to use her opportunity to break up your home but, in the long run, you are likely to discover that, although you may have gained a better physical relationship, you have lost greater values in your search for happiness. Do not throw away your chance to help your wife out of a frigidity

which is not the result of her desire to disappoint you but of circumstances that have victimized you both, conditions that need changing, if there is any possibility of accomplishing this through the help of science.

## *Chapter Seven*

### HER MOTHER IS ALWAYS MAKING TROUBLE

THE title of this chapter, "Her Mother Is Always Making Trouble," has been chosen because this complaint comes most often from the husband, and it is the wife's mother who is blamed. This, of course, is not always what happens. Fathers make trouble as well as mothers. Frequently it is the husband's mother rather than the wife's who is charged with having destroyed the compatibility of the spouses. A considerable number of divorces in this country come from this in-law interference. Probably this explanation of the trouble at times represents a wrong diagnosis. But, even so, there can be no doubt that in this country the meddling of parents does lead to the break-up of many of our marriages.

The fact that the husband oftener complains of his mother-in-law's trouble-making appears to be good evidence that the mother-daughter relationship is more apt to prove mischievous. Next to that is the mother-son combination. The cause of each of these is likely to be a parental fixation. This looms so large in the bringing about of incompatibility between husband and wife that it deserves a chapter by itself. In this present discussion I shall ignore the problem of fixation, and deal with the way in-laws make trouble, and with some of the motives behind their interference.

The first thing that strikes the observer is how often in these in-law problems there is a contest for possession. The spouse and the in-law struggle against each other for a supremacy in the affection of the victim of the competition. If we take the mother-in-law as our illustration, it is easy to see how difficult it may be for her to take second place in the life of her daughter or son. Her inclination to hold her former place is so strong that she is driven to the rationalizing of her motive, and is able to defend anything she does as being for the welfare of her child.

If we look into the mother's life we generally find that she has had little to make her own career seem worthwhile other than through the relationship she has been maintaining with her child. Her lack of other interests encourages her to try to perpetuate a fellowship that cannot go on, just as it was, without destroying the wholesomeness of the marriage of her daughter or son. Her mistake runs back a long way—her life is empty because she has so completely concentrated herself on her home and children. As the latter drift away and start their own families, she finds herself stranded. If she has had only one child, or if her own husband is dead, she is all the more tempted to cling to the one-time relationship that now, because of the marriage of her child, needs to be changed and adapted to a new situation.

The root of the trouble may be a tendency toward jealousy on the part of the mother-in-law or the husband. A mother who is naturally jealous finds the greatest possible opportunity for her feeling when she sees her daughter's interest moving away from her former home as she tries through marriage to start one of her own. Husbands are quick to suspect interference when they are themselves jealous. Attempting to monopolize their

wives completely, they create tension that need not exist. Their attitude stirs up the opposition of the wife; she feels, and rightly so, that the parent is not being justly treated. This reaction, in turn, becomes to the husband convincing evidence that the in-law is making trouble.

There is something in American family habits and attitudes that tends to magnify this problem of adjustment. This seldom causes friction in other countries. For example, a Chinese student recently told me that she could not understand why her American girl friends felt as they did about the necessity of living apart from their parents when they married. To her the only normal thing was to enter the family of her husband, once married, and she assured me that there was very little friction in the large family group which is so characteristic of Chinese life. It appears to be our emphasis on individualism which, in this country, makes the in-law relationship a fertile source of matrimonial tension. If this is the explanation, perhaps what is needed in many marriages, where there is incompatibility because of an in-law situation, is a broader outlook on life and a more generous realization of the contribution to family unity that can come from parents, sons, and daughters uniting their individual interests.

Before we take up together the question of whether your particular situation is such that divorce is inescapable, suppose we look at the different marriage conditions that tend to magnify the difficulties of the in-law situation. The most notorious of these, as a cause of trouble, is the living together of a parent and a newly married couple. This has proved so dangerous that there is hardly anyone, aside from some of the parents concerned, who does not think of it as something that must not be done if there is any way to avoid it. Sometimes circumstances permit nothing

else. It may be that a parent is old and helpless and the only way there can be a marriage is for the couple to share their home with one of the parents. This does not seem to have been a great problem in pioneering days. Possibly the fact that families tended to be larger then explains why there was less risk of friction.

Money difficulties or housing conditions may be the compelling reason for the parent going to live with the child or the bringing of the child to the old homestead. If you are living with an in-law and this seems to be what brought the need for a divorce, may not the solution be to start a home of your own? The answer to this question, much too often, is either that conditions are such that there cannot be any change, or that the trouble is that the daughter or son refuses to leave the former home. I have known wives who have said that they would rather be divorced than leave their parents' home. This naturally raises the question, why did such a person marry. We can only recognize that, strange as it may seem, this attitude does occur. In spite of the hazards of two families living together, we do find that the arrangement works well for some. It appears to be easiest in the country or among those who to a great extent continue habits and attitudes of a former European background.

If the living together of new families is the most dangerous of in-law situations, the two families being near each other proves a close second. If the parent is free at all hours to visit the household of her newly married child, there is almost as much opportunity to create jealousy and irritation as when all are under the same roof. A small village provides greater opportunity for this sort of interference than the city. Unquestionably many husbands and wives who have finally become estranged

through in-law interference, actual or suspected, would have gone along happily if only there had been considerable physical distance between the parent and the child. Trouble also comes through letters. The parent may use them as a means of holding the child who has married in a state of dependency which, in time, destroys the happiness of the husband-wife fellowship.

If one of the parents contributes to the support of the newly married couple, this may lead to in-law interference. Parental subsidy has been recommended by students of American family life as a means of making possible a marriage that otherwise would have to be delayed. The doctor, for example, has to go through a long period of preparation; and, unless he has some independent income, he is likely to have to delay marrying until he is close to the thirties. If his wife's family has money it seems reasonable, in order to prevent this long waiting that the parents continue to support their daughter after her marriage. This arrangement works well if it does not tempt the wife's parents to seek to dominate the newly married couple. The fact that they are giving the money that makes the marriage possible leads some of them to interfere in matters that should be left with the husband and wife. The situation also encourages the husband to react quickly if there is any apparent meddling. His pride can be easily hurt.

Some mothers unconsciously destroy the harmony of their daughter's marriage because they are too eager to use their greater experience to help their child with her housekeeping. The mother sees mistakes that are being made, or she may even react against a household program in contrast to her own, and she feels duty-bound to give assistance. If and when she has the best of purposes, her

aid or advice may be interpreted by the husband as an attempt to run things.

The mother at times is wrong in her judgement concerning the housekeeping or home life of the young people. It is what they want or at least meets their needs better than would the mother's planning. She may resent the husband's ideas; but these, rather than the mother's, should be the concern of the wife. If parents would maintain a hands-off policy, the in-law problem would seldom arise.

The most difficult of all in-law complications is that which comes from the husband and wife having radically unlike religious faiths. We rightly discourage the marriage of a Catholic and a Protestant or a Jew and a Gentile. Very often there would be no trouble, were it not that there is effort on the part of one or more of the parents to interfere and prevent the young people from making an adjustment of their most serious differences. It is a hard problem for them to work out, under the most favorable conditions. If a parent is permitted to intrude, a workable solution may become impossible. There is nothing that is so likely to impel the parent to try to control the life of a married child as a religious conviction. If this is the motive behind the in-laws' interference you surely face as difficult a problem as ever appears in married life.

Now that we have considered the various situations that most often provoke trouble with in-laws, I am asking you to consider your own personal problem in such a way that you may reach the right decision about divorce.

First of all, I ask you to notice how important it is that you discover the trend in your spouse. If he, for example, is making some progress toward the independence that you took for granted when you married, you have reason to be reassured and patient. The in-laws' influence may be

trying, but, since it is decreasing, time is with you and you can look forward, knowing that sooner or later your husband is likely to reach the maturity and independence that you thought he possessed when he married you. If, however, no progress has been made in a year or more, or if there has been a greater leaning upon the mother, there is little to encourage you to believe that things are ever likely to improve.

It is difficult but necessary that you do some sincere self-searching. Are you unduly sensitive? Are you asking, not that the mother refrain from interfering with your home, but that she entirely separate herself from her child? If you believe that your husband's love for his mother is an unnecessary lessening of his love for you, you have the wrong conception of affection. It is not something that we have in a certain quantity, so much bulk, so that if we direct some of it toward one person we have less to give to another. It is rather that our love is different as it is expressed in our various relationships. Your husband, for example, may have love for his child, love for his parents, and love for you. These three are not in competition, for each is different from the other. They may become antagonistic, but this is not inevitable, nor is it what usually happens.

Before you feel that a divorce must be had, you must be sure that you are not selfishly trying to possess your husband so that his affection will be directed only to you. If such is your demand, your marriage failure is not the result of the mother's interference but of your hostility toward a loyalty which you should appreciate and accept. If there is no doubt that your mother-in-law is making you trouble, you still have the question, how much harm

does she do. It is easy to react strongly against things that are really trivial. How much does she actually influence her son and how important are her results? It may easily be that you have full command of what is significant; and that therefore the mother-in-law's interference does not justify, so far as its consequences are concerned, the feeling you have toward her. The husband, when the in-law problem is his, needs to ask similar questions.

Finally, may there not be a better way out of your predicament than a divorce? Can you not improve your competition and outrival whoever is making trouble? Since your husband chose to leave his parents and marry you, you must have many advantages in any contest with his parents. Instead of becoming so emotional or attempting an ultimatum to force your husband to break his allegiance with his parents, your happiness in the long run may depend upon a shrewder solution of your predicament. If it is possible for you to increase the strength of the ties between you and him, you have no need to worry as to what will be the final outcome. Unfortunately many wives who deal sensibly with opposition from other sources give way to anger if they find what seems to them to be an in-law's attack on the harmony of their home; and by their recrimination, criticism or anger they reinforce the in-law's influence. By their own reaction they risk the respect and eventually the love of their spouse.

It may be that you are not so much concerned with what the mother tries to do to influence the son as with her interference in the bringing up of your children. This sort of interference is the same kind of problem we have been thinking about, but it has a different expression. You have the same opportunity for having your ideas carried out

in the end. You have the advantages in the long run. You mean more to the children than their trouble-making grandparents. Time is with you. Patience may be the solution rather than divorce.

## *Chapter Eight*

### WE FIGHT ABOUT MONEY

FINANCIAL difficulties are, as everyone realizes, the true explanation of many divorces. None of the causes that lead to estrangement in marriage is so difficult to handle as the friction that arises over the getting and spending of money. The problem is generally very different in the form it takes, according to whether it is the wife's or the husband's. Therefore we shall have to deal with it from the point of view of each of the spouses and, since the wife most often is in trouble, we shall start with her complaints.

From the wife the charge we most often hear is that there is not a fair division of the family income. She says that the husband looks upon what he earns as his and doles it out to her as if it were a gift or payment for debts for which she is responsible even though in fact the purchases have been almost exclusively for the family rather than for herself personally. She also finds fault because she has to ask for money when she feels that she has as much right to it as he. To be sure, it is paid to him but, as she sees it, the family is a partnership. If she takes care of the home she is doing her part and deserves at least as much as the husband of any surplus there might be. She considers it humiliating to have to beg money from him, as is so often true, even to pay household debts. She protests when he criticizes her for any money that she

spends on herself or makes her explain why she is asking for money and what she intends to do with it. If, as often happens, she has been independent before marriage her reaction to his attempt to control the family pocketbook is all the more intense. She looks back with longing to that time when she possessed her own income and could use it as seemed best to her.

The trouble may not be the manner in which she has to extract enough funds from the husband to pay her debts, but the fact that there never seems to be an adequate income and so she is always worrying about finances and constantly obliged to face creditors who expect payment. If she knows that the husband is liberal with himself and has a sufficient income to meet the household liabilities her protest against the niggardly way she is treated is all the greater. She may know that he wastes his money, gambling, betting on sports, or even entertaining other women.

In other instances she blames the husband, not for the way he spends his money, but for his lack of ambition and failure to earn an adequate income. There is no end to the quarreling that can take place under these circumstances, for the husband may feel that he does earn enough if the wife had better judgement in spending. She, on the other hand, is convinced that he will never be able to support his family in comfort. If the wife, when she previously lived with her parents, or when she was employed and made a good income before she was married, was accustomed to a higher standard of living than she has ever had since marriage, dissatisfaction is likely to wreck the marriage relationship. This may happen even if from the outsider's point of view the husband is not to be blamed for the insufficient income. Sometimes she has never become efficient as a housekeeper, and this, rather than the

amount of money the husband earns, is the explanation of the fact that the family is always in debt.

The difficulty that the counselor has when he tries to help such a family out of trouble is that he is confronted with the reaction of the wife or the husband, and he seldom has much opportunity to get at the causes of the financial controversies. He cannot discover whether they are the result of unskillful housekeeping or unreasonable demands on the part of the wife or of a selfish spending by the husband. In cases not a few, controversies about money matters would cease if the wife were given practical instruction that would help her become more efficient in her housekeeping. Many times the same recovery of happiness would result if the husband and wife could agree on some equitable division of the family income, based upon a workable budget. In the cities, especially, there is opportunity for getting help in such planning, but too often the trouble between the husband and the wife has already gone so far that the counselor has no chance to direct them to the proper agency or persons for the assistance needed. It is unfortunate that during the latter part of courtship it is not now customary in the United States for the wife to prepare herself for household management or for the couple to consider in detail the financial policy they intend to follow. There is usually some conversation regarding such matters but it is so general and so brief that rarely does it prove to be of much help when tested by the problems of everyday life.

If we turn to the husband and get his statement as to the reasons for quarreling about money, we find that his interpretation of the causes of trouble is seldom that of the wife. More frequently than any other criticism is the charge that his wife is extravagant. It is likely that before

marriage the man was in the habit of paying his debts promptly; now he finds that he is constantly running behind and most often his explanation is that his wife does not show judgement in the things she buys. The neutral observer many times will agree that this is the true explanation of the financial difficulties of the family. It may not be, however, the selfishness of the wife, as the husband is too apt to assume, but rather her lack of experience and her inadequate training for her responsibilities. On the other hand, examination may reveal that her husband is right, that she is attempting to continue a former standard of life which the family cannot afford, or is imitating someone who is financially more fortunate; or for some motive, which she herself may not realize, she uses credit as a means of relieving frustration.

If the wife is at fault and also sensitive as to any criticism, it is difficult to help her out of her predicament. She may resist any suggestion that she is the cause of the family conflict and content herself with blaming the husband for not earning more money. Although it may be true that as his income has increased, his debts due to his wife's extravagant ways have grown more quickly, and the evidence may indicate that no matter what he earns he will find her wants always in advance of his income. It is not difficult to see why the counselor is seldom able to help this kind of woman. She is so resentful of any suggestions that her own unwise buying or wasteful habits are at the bottom of the difficulty, that any attempt to make her see the truth is apt only to strengthen her feeling that she is badly treated. Being the kind of person she is, she is willing to sacrifice her domestic compatibility on the altar of her vanity, and her husband must either look

forward to lifelong quarreling about finances or be willing to separate from her.

Another complaint the husband occasionally makes comes from a relationship that is uncommon. The man marries a woman who has money and then finds that he has accepted a subordination which amounts almost to a sort of domestic servitude. Many wealthy women who marry men of a much lesser income are able to handle their superior financial status in such a way as not to hurt their husband's pride or make him feel inferior. It is naturally a difficult situation and, without meaning to be domineering, the wife may injure the man's self-respect until he sees no way of escape other than divorce. The man's being wealthy appears to make trouble but rarely for the wife. This seems to be due to her accepting the conventions that give the man headship. It is when the roles are reversed that the marriage becomes hazardous. The woman of wealth who marries a professional man who is distinguished in his field seems least often troubled by the differences between them financially.

Another cause of trouble is the husband's reaction to the wife's working outside the home or her maintaining an independent career. The two need to be distinguished because each presents its own type of problem for the husband. He may object to the woman's working because of pride, feeling that people look down upon him because he is not able by himself to support the family. He may be dissatisfied with his home life and feel that it is the business of the wife to take care of the house and to provide him with the comforts and the attention which he believes he deserves and which he thinks she neglects.

His attack may not be upon her working but upon her

failure to maintain the kind of home he wishes. She may have the same desire as he but may find that it is impossible to get enough time for the household because she has to work outside. Since her hours may be just the same as his, she cannot see why he should expect her to assume the tasks of housekeeping in addition to her other work. Sometimes the trouble comes from the woman's fatigue. Because she tries to do overmuch at home she becomes irritable or so spends her energy that she has little left for husband-wife fellowship. Occasionally the husband points out that there is no need of the woman's working because his income is sufficient if she is willing to curb her desire for spending or her ambition in her out-of-the-home occupation.

Marriage troubles develop in other homes where although the wife works outside and there may be disputes as to the adequacy of the husband's income, the problem is essentially not that of finance but of whether the woman is justified in going on with her career. Such conflict illustrates a clashing of interest that is thoroughly modern and about as troublesome to handle as anything that occurs in marriage. The husband wishes his wife to concentrate on her family responsibilities, give up her ambition and become the sort of wife he planned to marry. She, on the other hand, feels that she has the human right to go on developing the professional or business enterprise in which she is engaged and that marriage ought not to deny this to her any more than it does to the man. Their differences become all the more uncompromising if the wife entered the marriage believing that the husband would permit her to continue her career. Possibly the matter was not clearly settled or it may be that the husband did not anticipate

what it would mean to live with an ambitious wife and now regrets his consent to her working.

The seriousness of such a situation becomes vivid if, for example, we think of a woman physician marrying a business man or a Protestant minister. It is fortunate that this necessity of adjusting to a career-woman falls upon only a minority even of the husbands whose wives work outside the home. It is evident that the only hope of working out a successful solution is either for the wife willingly to surrender her career or for the man to accept the kind of family life that is possible when the wife is committed to an employment outside the home which is as permanent and exacting for her as that which he himself pursues.

If you are debating whether to be divorced or not on account of a money or career conflict, the only advice that the outsider can give is that you consider carefully your present ordeal in comparison with what is likely to happen after the divorce. Is there any possibility of straightening out the tension that has developed between you and your husband? If his attitude or habits are at fault, has every means been exhausted to make him see the error of his ways and to establish a reasonable financial budget which recognizes the mutual interests of you both?

If you are the husband in a home where your wife is extravagant or lacking in judgement about money matters, is there any chance that she can be helped to become more efficient? Certainly a divorce should not be decided upon in a spirit of anger, and not until there appears to be no likelihood of ever finding a way to solve the financial maladjustment. If you, as a wife, are planning a divorce because your husband is trying to force you to give up your career or if, on the other hand you, as a husband,

are unwilling any longer to tolerate the limited type of family life that alone is possible because of your wife's concentration on her out-of-the-home ambitions, the one important thing is that you come to your decision as free from emotion as possible after surveying the situation you now face and the one which will follow the divorce. It may be that by changing your attitude toward your wife's career you can endure a relationship, which, although not according to your preference, is far better than that which will result from your divorce.

## *Chapter Nine*

### WE CANNOT AGREE ABOUT CHILDREN

CHILDREN, as we would expect, tend to hold together husbands and wives. This does not mean, however, that family conflicts never center about children or that such differences between husbands and wives cannot lead to clashing that becomes the motive for divorce. It is not difficult to see how division can come about. If there are profound contrasts in religious beliefs for example, or even introvertive versus extrovertive tendencies, the coming of the child is likely to bring these antagonisms to the surface and so stimulate and magnify them as to bring about a struggle for the control and directing of the child.

Such controversies by no means always lead to the break-up of the family. In spite of violent differences, the husband and wife may remain together, and their principal motive for this may be their interest in the child. Even where there is a harmonious relationship in which the welfare of the child is stressed, this does not prevent an expression of minor differences which, as in other experiences, require adjustment of the thinking and feeling of the husband and the wife. It is true, therefore, that the child tends to hold the family together, and also that he frequently becomes the cause of differences between husbands and wives, ranging from discussion and compromise to unyielding estrangement.

It is this failure of adjustment, as the parents express themselves in their contrasting attitude toward the child, that concerns us, for it is one of the influences that lead to divorce. These differences that cause controversy and loss of affection take many forms. It will be best for us to take up the most common of these, and deal with each one separately as a possible motive for divorce.

We are confronted at once with the fact that one parent may want a child or more children, while the other may be set against this happening. We cannot say that it is the wife who usually wants children or usually refuses to have them, because it appears to be as often the husband as the wife who is attempting to determine the family program. This does not mean, as many seem to assume, that the wife is usually unwilling to have children and that the husband wants them. The situation may be just the opposite. All we can say is that the two disagree violently sometimes over having a child and at other times as to how many children they should have.

In some cases there should not be any doubt about the proper decision. Dealt with objectively, there may be evidence that on account of bad heredity or the wife's condition, or some other substantial fact, she ought not to become pregnant. The same calm thinking sometimes would clearly indicate whether another child should come into the family. Unfortunately in the majority of such problems the difference of attitude is the cause of the trouble, and this may be so much a part of the personality that any change is difficult.

If you are thinking of a divorce because you differ with your husband about the having of a child, or adding to your family, unless agreement can be had by uncovering some fact that rightly determines the policy, you are left

with a question which can be answered in the end only by making sure of your own feeling. If you are convinced that you are right and there is no hope of getting your husband to change his attitude, you should be willing to state clearly why you are reacting as you do and you should try to get your husband to do the same. After this has been done and an adjustment appears impossible, if either one of you is still determined upon getting a divorce, you must try to anticipate how things will be after your separation. It is such a personal matter that no outsider will dare go very far in trying to influence your decision, whether to get a divorce or tolerate a situation unlikely to change.

The marriage conflict may be the result of the infertility or low fertility of the husband or the wife. When this is the cause of the trouble we do have the resources that can at least reveal whether there is any possibility of pregnancy occurring. If you are moving toward a divorce because your husband is impotent, or one of you is lacking fertility or apparently is absolutely sterile, you surely realize—do you not?—that the first step in handling such a problem sensibly is to get the condition determined by a medical examination. This must include both the husband and the wife, even though there is every reason to suspect that one of them is the probable cause of failure to reproduce. Not until a thorough examination has been had by both husband and wife from a competent specialist and every effort made to restore fertility, if there is hope of that, have you any right to consider a divorce. The same holds true for your husband if he is the one who is thinking of leaving you because you do not bear him a child. He may be blaming you when he himself is to blame. In approximately a third of the cases it is the man rather

than the woman who is infertile and, even when it is the woman who is sterile, her condition may have come from an infection caused by gonorrhoea which she contracted from her husband and which did her more injury than it did him.

If, after a reasonable period of treatment, fertility is not restored, there is still another possibility before divorce is decided upon. You can adopt a child. This may not at first seem a very satisfactory solution but the testimony of those who have thus solved their problem is that in a little while they feel as strongly attached to their boy or girl as if it were their own.

In some families the conflict that centers about having children is a result of uncompromising differences regarding the use of contraceptives. To one of the spouses, on account of religious background, the practice of any artificial method of preventing conception is regarded as immoral while to the other it merely means using the best resources modern science has for the voluntary control of the size of the family. It is obvious that in a situation of this sort any adjustment is difficult; certainly it cannot be expected that the husband or wife who has moral scruples against birth control can be led to a changed conviction through argument. There seems no other alternative than refraining from the use of contraceptives or a temporary separation or one made permanent by divorce. So fundamental a difference should have been discovered before marriage, and the policy determined then.

It is not strange that we find trouble occurring between parents on account of their divergent attitudes toward the training and discipline of children. We often find that a parent either imitates the practices of his own family as he experienced them in his bringing up, or the opposite. In

either case the program he wishes to carry out as a parent is subjective, neither based upon the characteristics of his child nor the demands of the prevailing social life. Thus opportunity is made for violent clashing between the father and the mother.

Each of them may be reacting to the conditions of their childhood, and their principles may be so diametrically opposed that what one attempts the other undermines, or it may be that only one is reacting to his own personal history while the other is making an effort to carry out the better insight of the meaning of childhood that has been gained through familiarity with the investigations of scientists in the last two decades. When this occurs it is usually the mother who is more aware of the teaching of modern science. Her ideas receive from the husband sarcasm, ridicule or opposition. She may not be so much troubled by these expressions and attitudes as by her conviction that her child is getting a wrong preparation for life and, as a result of her feeling, an estrangement develops which finally leads to the decision to be divorced. The jealousy of one parent because of the greater influence or success of the other in dealing with their children may make the conflict all the greater.

If it is such a domestic strife that confronts you, and you are contemplating divorce, this is my suggestion. Be sure that your feeling has in fact come from evidence that the child is suffering as a result of the difference in the two ideas of discipline. It is easy to exaggerate the harm that the child is receiving. Such a division is, of course, not an ideal situation, but on the other hand later in life your child will find great divergency of ideals and it may not prove a serious injury to his adult experience that he is introduced so early to a collision of programs.

It may even be that either parent would over-influence him, were it not for the rivalry provided by the other. You can magnify the significance of this contest between parents because you can generate great emotion because of it and this will cloud your judgement. There is always likely to be some degree of difference between husbands and wives, merely because one is familiar with the woman's outlook upon life, the other with the man's. Even though this is the result chiefly of convention, possibly entirely so, it nevertheless presents to the child two differing philosophies of life, and this is one of the advantages of having two parents.

It is not the difference between you and your husband that is making you have such anxiety, but the greatness of the contrast and the trouble that it is bringing the child. Therefore your decision as to what needs to be done should be determined by the consequences of the conflict as they influence your child. It is not how strongly you feel, but how correct you are in thinking your child is being injured. If you can separate your feeling from your attempt to discover just what is happening to the child you can trust your decision. If under such scrutinizing it is clear that the child is being confused, led into conflict, and developing inferiority feeling, then I have only one remaining question: will the divorce increase the mischief and make it even harder for the child, or will it relieve him of a conflict which is crushing his confidence and stealing from him his sense of security.

There is another problem which comes from the parents competing against one another to win a monopolistic loyalty from the child. It is not so much that they have unlike principles of child training as that each wishes to possess the child and as far as possible so to dominate him

as to shut out the other parent. It is amazing how far this rivalry can go, starting almost from the day of the child's birth. Each parent tries to impress the child and win his affection, using every resource obtainable. The effort runs from rivalry to the deliberate attempt to undermine the child's respect for the other parent. This competition means, of course, a dangerous home life as far as the child's future is concerned.

If this competitive situation is the motive for your divorce, it will not be easy for you to admit the truth. The temptation will be to blame your husband and to seek to separate your child from him in order that you may have the monopoly you desire. However, bad as this will be for the child it may be preferable to a continuous clashing for the fundamental question is: will divorce in the long run prove more satisfactory than the present divided household?

You have already by your decision to seek a divorce demonstrated that you are not the kind of woman who is willing to surrender to your husband's dominance and thus achieve peace. Therefore, there does not seem to be any likelihood that the child will be free from his parents' competition until he has reached the years of independence. What you must determine is whether the continuation of this kind of family life will be more harmful than a divorce, which may merely intensify the contest. The probability is that the court will assign the child to you and your husband in rotation, and of course each of you will continue to try, according to your opportunity, to win supremacy in the child's affection. Your desire for a divorce may be very strong but when looked at by an unprejudiced person it may be more questionable as a motive than any of the others we have discussed. Only a

most sincere self-searching on your part will give you any clue as to whether you should or should not go ahead with your divorce.

There is another kind of discord in family life that leads once in a while to the conviction that it would be better to be divorced. It comes from one parent recognizing that the other is showing very great and dangerous favoritism to one child while at the same time neglecting others. We expect usually to find that this is the attitude of a mother toward a son and a father toward a daughter, but it does not always take this form. It may be the result of the extrovertive or introvertive disposition of one of the parents which brings him very close to the child like himself and causes a constant wrangling with other children who have the opposite trend. It is my experience that the introvert is likely to be the more tolerant. If, therefore, the father happens to be strongly disposed toward extroversion he may continuously war upon his children who are unlike himself, seeking always to develop in them the qualities akin to his own disposition, and frowning upon any indication of their introvertive tendencies. The introvert is open to more injury because, under attack, he is likely to turn inward. Then his introversion becomes excessive and an obstacle to wholesome social relations. It may be the age status of the child which is at the root of the favoritism. There seems to be greater risk of this occurring with the youngest child.

If you are considering getting a divorce because you feel that one child is being hurt by too much attention and another by too little from your husband, and you are convinced that he is not likely ever to change, the only question you must consider, in as unimpassioned a manner

as possible, is whether a divorce will prove more harmful than a continuation of the mischievous relationships between your husband and his favorite and neglected children.

The least doubtful of all the motives that lead to divorce on account of an unwholesome relationship of husband and child is when the former's character clearly has a very bad influence over the latter. It is hard for anyone unfamiliar with what has happened in domestic life to realize how cruel and vicious and morally dangerous men or women of low ideals can be in their contact with children. Occasionally the general public hears of these tragedies because of something which happens and forces the wife to seek the protection of the court. There are homes where the meanness or the immorality of the father does not take such an open expression, so that the outsider never gets any clue as to the suffering the wife endures as she realizes the menace continually facing the growing child.

If you are forced to recognize what seems certain to ruin the future of your children, you do need not only to consider getting a divorce or legal separation but you should take at least one step toward acting out your belief, since there is no other way of protecting your children from permanent injury. Go to some person whom you can trust, preferably a family counselor or someone connected with a social agency who has experience in dealing with family problems. State your situation and invite whatever investigation is possible and then if, as is likely, you are advised so to do, start proceedings for a divorce. If on account of your religious belief a divorce does not seem right, do not assume that your only alternative is to continue living with your husband. You still have the

possibility of a release by a legal separation. Seek out a priest who has had experience in family problems, or a social worker of insight, and follow the counsel given you which is likely to be that you must separate from the man who endangers the moral character of your children.

PART II  
MOTIVES NOT RECOGNIZED



## *Chapter Ten*

### FATHER OR MOTHER FIXATION

WE HAVE been discussing the reasons commonly given for the desire for a divorce. There are other motives that, because of their emotional meaning to the individual, are difficult to recognize. Although they are the driving force and the real cause of dissatisfaction, they are concealed from the person who is being influenced by them. This is not a willful covering up, as a rule, but the natural consequence of a failure to grow up. We may think of these motives as the expression of immaturity, but we shall understand them better if we raise the question why there has not been the development of personality needed for successful marriage adjustment. Only a person who had achieved maturity would have the insight to recognize them in their true character, and such a person would have no such motive for a divorce.

The two unrecognized motives that impel toward divorce, that we shall discuss, are fixations and matrimonial monotony. These are the ones that we most often find making trouble. They are also the two that we can have some hope of bringing into the consciousness of the person who is being victimized by them, without having recourse to the psychiatrist and his probing of character by psychoanalysis. They both represent an immaturity but their expression of this is different enough for us to be able to distinguish them and treat each in turn.

As we start our thinking together we must face the fact that we are trying to get at the cause of the trouble in marriage, and that the person concerned not only does not realize it but does not wish to acknowledge it. I do not mean by this that there is a deliberate attempt at concealment but rather that to admit what is true would seem too great a criticism of one's self. The person has not only failed to mature but he has built up his defenses against admitting that this has happened. Every effort has been made to construct a barrier against any confession of emotional immaturity which would injure one's pride, even one's self-respect. Our thinking, therefore, must force the way through this barricade, but since the present unhappiness will grow greater whether there is or is not a divorce, because the immaturity will continue to make trouble, we can appeal to self-interest. Any woman who is trying to solve her matrimonial unhappiness will make a heroic effort to discover whether at bottom her trouble is caused by her own immaturity or that of her husband.

In order to understand how a fixation comes about we shall have to go back and discover one of the hazards of childhood, the root from which the adult problem of fixation sprouts. Few in these days would deny that the child from his early days has need of an affection which, as a rule, he receives from his parents. When, about two decades ago, the personality problems of childhood began first to be studied by the psychologists and psychiatrists, there was a feeling among many that this affection, especially as given by the mother, was dangerous, and the true explanation of many of the emotional problems appearing in the behavior of children and youths. This conviction went so far at times as to make mothers feel guilty if they expressed openly the love they naturally felt for

their children. It is now generally recognized that, although this affection, like every other powerful influence over character, can be dangerous, it is needed by the child and, without it, he is denied the emotional sense of security which his proper development requires. To deny the child love is to create a void in his life, an emptiness that will plague him as long as he lives.

It is, therefore, not mischievous to establish the relationship between the parent and child that we recognize as affection. The danger comes when this is so abused and so continued that the child does not develop the independent personality which he must have to meet his responsibilities in life. Instead of this maturing, he leans upon the parent for his security and satisfactions in such a way as to make us think of the parasite that draws its nutriment from the host to which it clings. Both the parent and the child are tempted to continue a relationship which, for the good of both, should change as the child grows older. It therefore becomes the parent's obligation not only to love the child but also to be willing to encourage that independent development which will lessen the child's need of the parent. The child's temptation is similar to the parent's. His dependence upon the parent is the easier way to meet the difficulties that being with other people sooner or later brings, a companionship which demands for happy association the ability to adjust. Fortunately, in the growth of the child, there normally arise impulses that lead away from the parent. We are all familiar with their expression in an increasing self-assertion. In the early years of child life they show themselves in a spirit of contrariness which the parent frequently finds vexing, but which, nevertheless, is the forerunner of a stronger craving for self-command and independence, a motivation

toward wholesome maturity. As we would expect, the transition is gradual from the early relationship to the later one and not without conflict for both parent and child.

Suppose the parent wars upon every impulse the child begins to show toward self-initiative or a competing relationship with other people. It is, of course, not difficult to start such a campaign with a very small child and continue it until all the strong incentives for the building of a normal, independent existence are crushed. This leaves the parent, most often the mother, with a monopoly of the child's affection. This is described in the present-day psychiatric science as a fixation.

Those who train animals are familiar with the fact that if an instinct, such as that of the dog to bury his bone, is for a brief period repeatedly prevented expression, it will fade away. This loss of a normal impulse because it has been forbidden expression is an illustration of what happens in the life of the growing child who is developing a fixation on the parent. If his attempt to free himself from his complete dependence upon the parent has been constantly defeated, his other impulse to cling to the parent grows with such strength that the development of any considerable self-life usually becomes impossible.

Thus, it is not the relationship of the mother and child which is the menace but its monopolistic character. The parent is dangerous not because she loves the child but because she uses this relationship to retard or even destroy the normal maturing which the wiser mother encourages. If fixation is firmly established it continues and constantly hampers the growth of independence that good judgement in life outside the home requires. The history of the immature person is a continuous rehearsal of a dependency

which spoils every enterprise or relationship that is attempted in later life. Marriage has to suffer as do the other associations. Indeed, the marriage from the start may be destined to failure because even the choice of a mate is influenced by the fixation.

This particular consequence of fixation is most likely to occur when the relationship is between the mother and a son or the father and a daughter. In such cases the victim is impelled to find a mate that in some significant way suggests the parent. This situation has been forcefully expressed in the exaggerated statement that the individual marries his parent. It would be better to say that the mate is chosen not as a replacement of the parent but as an extension of the parent. In other words the marriage is emotionally brought about with the desire of having the new experience and still maintaining unchanged a relationship with the parent. The individual expects to have his cake and still to eat it. Naturally such a program breaks down because the new relationship is not permitted to develop normally lest it become a rivalry to the parent-child relationship. The afflicted person withdraws from this unexpected need of change while the spouse is likely to react against a fixation the results of which he now detects even if he does not understand their causation.

It is obvious that these two opposite attitudes toward a fixation, one spouse wishing to maintain it in spite of marriage and the other determined to free marriage from its coercion, is certain to bring incompatibility. Occasionally the marriage relationship breaks down the strength of the parent-child fixation sufficiently to permit a slight degree of happiness but much too often there develops between the spouses an increasing collision.

In many instances such incompatibility finally develops

that divorce seems the only way of escape from an intolerable situation. The desire to become free may originate in the spouse who is maintaining the fixation and will be defended by indicting the husband for some great fault of character. On the other hand, the wish for divorce may come from the spouse who grows disgusted and hopeless as he sees the inability of his chosen mate to develop a natural independence and to maintain a wholesome family life. Again and again he is angered by the interference of the parent who is likely to use every opportunity to show that she still maintains emotional supremacy over her child. In a few cases the divorce itself becomes a maturing influence and then the childish adult breaks from the parent and blames her for interfering with the marriage and spoiling it. The more common thing is for the victim of the fixation to go back to the parent and have no understanding of the real cause of incompatibility that developed in her married life.

Have I made it clear that, if you are struggling with a fixation and are unhappy in your marriage, your wish for a divorce will originate from something you are likely not to realize and something for which you are not responsible? In order to get at your true situation and discover just what you should do, you must try to find out whether you have been unreasonably dependent emotionally on one of your parents. This does not mean that you should examine yourself in the effort to find out how blameworthy you are, but merely for your own future interest you must be sure that you are not being impelled toward a divorce by a motive that is the result of your own failure to develop a normal, independent personality.

More than your marriage is at stake. If you are the

victim of a fixation, even the death of your parent will not release you from a clinging which is denying you opportunity to adjust to life. Has your parent interfered? Have you always accepted your parent's suggestions? Have you constantly revealed that you are more interested in your former family life than in your present home? Are you comparing your husband with your father? Do you do it in such a way as to emphasize the disappointment he is bringing you? Do you resist your husband's efforts to keep your parent out of your quarrels or your problems? These are some of the questions that you must answer in your self-searching. Looking back upon your youth, were you much less free from your family as you went out to school or employment than were most of the young people with whom you associated?

To recover from childhood subserviency and attain normal self-assurance does not mean that you have to throw away the love that you felt for your parent in order to be released. It is never necessary to strip one's self of one affection in order to gain another. The point at issue is: are you using your love for your parent as an excuse for your unwillingness to grow up?

In this effort at self-analysis, forget for the moment the charges you make against your husband. If you are suffering from a fixation on your parent you cannot help being disappointed in your mate and you will surely defend your dissatisfaction by uncovering some weakness, true or imaginary, in him, thus passing on to him the blame for your predicament. Therefore you must set aside the reason you have been giving yourself for a divorce and make a desperate effort to sound your own character. If you have the strength and sincerity to uncover your fixation, you

will be able to free yourself from your former dependency and meet the opportunities of marriage. This in the end will not only bring you greater happiness but, doubtful as it may seem, your maturity will also prove an advantage to the parent who has been unwittingly making you trouble.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### FAILURE TO GROW UP

THE moment you read the title of this chapter, "Failure to Grow Up," I am sure you will understand why this motive for divorce is unlikely to be recognized by the person who has gotten into trouble for not progressing toward maturity. When we include this failure of development among the reasons for divorce we do not mean that one cannot be happy in marriage unless there is, along all lines, complete maturity. To affirm this would be to deny what we all constantly see, people who are happily married but who still show, at times at least, childish tendencies.

Whether failure to grow up is wrecking a marriage or not depends upon two things, first, the effect of the immaturity on the marriage relationship and then, the reaction it receives from the other spouse. The latter is likely to be determined by the amount of maturity he or she has achieved. In other words, we must keep in mind that we are not concerned with an attempt to measure how mature a husband or wife is as compared to what we consider ideal but, rather, with what are the actual consequences, in a particular marriage, of the relative immaturity of one or both of the spouses. This is always a question of what happens rather than an attempt to judge how much or how little the person has grown up.

It also becomes clear, as soon as we think the matter

over, that this growing up is a result. Although the word "immaturity" describes frequently what the outsider considers the source of trouble in the marriage, it does not tell us what the cause of the failure to grow up is. It is natural for any person to move away from childhood or adolescence, and so there must always be some explanation of the trouble-making immaturity. As soon as we go hunting for these underlying reasons for the inability to develop we find that we are concerned in many cases with the parent-child fixation which we have already discussed.

We have clearly recognized that the child who continues a fixation on a parent becomes in great measure parasitic. Instead of developing self-reliance, there is a continued dependency and, as far as the emotional life is concerned, it remains largely unchanged even though there may be intellectual development with the adding on of years. This retardation keeps the person in the spirit of childhood or youth and, as a result, when a new relationship such as marriage demands a different and independent adjustment, the immature individual withdraws from the ordeal.

There is another explanation of immaturity which is very like what we have been thinking about. The trouble is not so much fixation as that the child has been too sheltered. No effort has been made by the parent to hold the child in an emotional bondage, but instead, for some reason, too great an attempt has been made to guard the growing child. He who has been sick a great deal or who has had difficulty in getting on with others, perhaps from timidity, is most apt to suffer from this parental policy of over-protection. As we would expect, the mother is much more open to such a temptation than the father. The girl also is more likely to be the victim of this over-concern than the boy. In any case she will not have so many op-

portunities as he to break through whatever barricade against the outside world the parent has erected.

This over-sheltering usually comes about so gradually and, as we say, so naturally that the parent does not realize what is happening. Every child must have security and in order to get this he must be at times protected. He rightly looks for such help to his parents and as a rule his request for support is granted. Nothing, therefore, tests the wisdom of the parent more than his ability to see that this protection, good and necessary as it is, must lessen as the child grows older. He needs to learn how to find security chiefly within himself and not in the guardianship of the parent. The aggressive child who has already tasted the sweetness of independence will be likely to take care of himself, since his impulses lead him to break away from the sheltering arms of the parent. It is the timid, sensitive child, already suffering from over-protection, who is in danger of accepting the security the family attempts to provide instead of developing his own within himself.

Perhaps the first tremendous trial the over-protected childish adult encounters comes with marriage. These excessively sheltered persons have the same impulse to marry as the more independent young people but they are not prepared to meet the testing which marriage brings. If they have found husbands who are happy to carry on as did the parent, a degree of happiness may follow marriage. If, on the other hand, as is usually true, these childish wives are quickly subjected to situations that require maturity, or at least self-decision, they find themselves in trouble and the easiest thing is to blame the husband for the weakness in their own personality which they never understood.

Sometimes, looking at immaturity in someone else, we

insist that lack of courage explains what has occurred. Perhaps this disposition to withdraw from anything hard or disagreeable is evident to the neutral observer but even so it usually leaves us asking the question: why did the great timidity develop? If we go searching for causes we soon find that the happenings of childhood and the policies of the parent are the chief explanation of the adult's trouble.

There is a special type of immaturity which marriage frequently reveals. This is a clinging to the courtship experience. Once in a while we come across some person, almost always a woman, who frankly confesses that the happiest time of her life was during courtship, bringing as its climax the wedding. I, for one, have never heard any man say this. Courtship has its delights, but no person growing toward maturity is likely to look back to it as the ideal period of life. One may covet its satisfactions and even wish a revival of its unique, romantic atmosphere but this does not mean, to anyone who has grown up, a desire to exchange marriage for courtship. This dissatisfaction with the present and eagerness to return to the days before marriage is just what we do find in some of the wives who have failed to mature emotionally.

As you have been reading what I have written you do not find it difficult I imagine to name friends who are in trouble because they have not achieved a reasonable maturity. It is hard for you, however, even though you confess that you are unhappily married to believe that you are one of those having difficulties because of a clinging to the conditions of childhood or youth. You can, however, prove your growing up by the most honest self-examination of this desire of yours to be divorced. Are you in trouble because you recoil from unexpected adjustments that are

really the normal consequence of being married? For example, are you reacting against sex intercourse because you have a terrific fear of pregnancy and are unwilling squarely to face what is behind your attitude? Instead, you are protecting yourself from acknowledging what you do not like to confess by charging your husband with cruelty or with an abnormal physical passion.

Are you blaming him for demands he makes upon you, for the responsibilities that naturally come to you as a wife because you covet the easier life you had while sheltered in your parents' home? Has marriage proved itself a failure merely because it has brought obligations, the demand for self-control and the need that you emotionally readjust yourself to your parent? Being unable or unwilling to make the changes required for a greater maturity, are you turning instead to a divorce?

Perhaps your belief that your marriage is a failure merely means that you are holding to the romantic ideal that you found pleasing in courtship and no matter whom you might have married, sooner or later, you would have been disappointed. You are asking that marriage provide you with the same refuge from life that has been your undoing in the past and, instead of seeing this you are hiding your own unwillingness to grow up by blaming your husband for spoiling your ideal of marriage. If this should be true, divorce will not help you. Marrying someone else later will not bring you a way of escape from the unhappiness you are now experiencing. You need not be fully matured to be a successful wife but it is indispensable that you start growing up, gaining the strength and insight that the ongoing in life always demands of the adult, whether married or single, as the condition for either success or happiness.

We must not forget that the immaturity may be the husband's rather than the wife's. Even the man who in his out-of-home employment is able to meet his obligations may have an underlying immaturity which will appear in his more personal and intimate associations. His failure to grow up emotionally will be the result of childhood influences such as have just been discussed and his recovery must come from a change in his attitude toward life. Getting a divorce will not make him happier unless it enables him to discover the source of his discontent and his one way of escape—development of adult character.

## *Chapter Twelve*

### MATRIMONIAL MONOTONY

THE third concealed motive for divorce which we need to consider is a rather subtle one. It can best be described as dissatisfaction because marriage has become monotonous. There has been a petering out of meaning. Instead of increasing the zest of the wife-husband relationship it has come to be barren, an anti-climax of romantic expectations. Perhaps this can be brought out best by an illustration. Some years ago a newspaper editor, who had noticed that when a wealthy man married and immediately started with his wife on a world tour in his private yacht, he ran an abnormal risk of a divorce, asked me to write a feature article explaining the psychological reason for this disproportionate breakdown of marriages. A little analysis reveals what was the trouble. A trip around the world has an enticing sound. It is easy to forget that there are many days during such a tour when little happens, forcing upon the husband and wife a constant intimacy with little to occupy their attention. They are thrown upon their own resources in a limited and to them monotonous environment. Being persons who have been familiar with a luxurious background, boredom, at least in one and frequently in both, sooner or later develops, during the very period when there is special need of their establishing compatibility. Irritability follows and by the time they are back home they are estranged.

Explorers have recognized the danger of this happening on long voyages or when a group of men are for a considerable period isolated and forced to maintain a constant face-to-face and intimate association. It is from experience that they have learned this monotony is the one thing that they must try to prevent if they hope to keep the members of their expedition from discontent and quarreling.

Marriage need not be monotonous but it *is* to some people. Frequently wives are quite right in believing that their marriage experience is needlessly tedious and that their husbands are to blame for this. It is a peculiar sort of hardship, forced upon them by a selfish or an unimaginative man, who seems to have the idea that once he wins his mate he need not exert himself to keep her happy but that she should become a cheerful servant to his comfort, a mistress willing to meet his sexual need and a female equal to the bringing of children into the world.

There are other marriages in which the fault is either the wife's or that of the husband and wife together. Perhaps the wife has a wrong idea of what marriage really is and expects it to be a day-by-day visitation in paradise, and because it does not fulfill all her dreams and includes demands upon her that she never contemplated, she finds it less and less satisfying. She cannot see that much of her happiness must come from an ongoing experience and that the barrenness of her relationship is because it is not making progress.

It may be that marriage has an emotional glow in its first weeks or months or years on account of its new experience of physical passion. The matrimonial security of the couple is built exclusively upon this physical relationship, and gradually this begins to lose its animation and fades away. Then comes the feeling that was once ex-

pressed by a wife who said, "Nothing in life is so exclusive as sex." In so far as intercourse is a merely physical association it is by nature limited and, unless enriched by growing affection, it naturally tends to peter out. This shows why some people find marriage for a brief period almost an emotional intoxication and then drift into a dreary monotony and finally decide to separate.

The monotony of marriage is sometimes the consequence of an unwise program on the part of the wife or the husband. In the early days of marriage there was no need of any out-of-the-home interests; former friends were abandoned, social life cut to a minimum, and everything staked upon the satisfactions generated in the association of husband and wife. This may succeed as a temporary program but, carried on for any length of time, it has about the same effect as the narrow quarters of a small yacht during a long voyage. The husband, because he is likely to be engaged in business outside the home, is less liable than his wife to suffer from this sort of monotonous married life, and this explains why it is the latter who usually considers that her marriage has lost its one-time meaning.

In some families the monotony comes from a different direction. Neither husband nor wife cultivates home interests or, if one tries to do this, the other refuses to cooperate. The result is that they have such a meager domestic experience that they never establish a real home. Since their successful, zestful undertakings are outside, and in association chiefly with other persons, little is left for them in common except their physical relationship and the obligations that come from their household expenses and other unescapable family obligations. If they happen to have children, these are farmed out as much as possible and receive from other adults whatever fellow-

ship they ever know. Husbands and wives in this predicament have little to hold them together and gradually they recoil from a marriage that has become so empty.

The most natural impulse in a marriage that has become sterile in its emotional value is to turn to some other member of the opposite sex who seems to promise a revival of the sort of feeling that led to marriage. This renaissance, of course, in a large measure is merely physical but it may not be recognized as such. The new attraction is contrasted with the monotony of the first, and the only way to happiness appears to be through a divorce and a remarriage. Sometimes this does result in a more substantial and time-enduring relationship but, usually, because there is no change in the personality of the dissatisfied divorce-seeker, the second choice of mate peters out as did the first. Some of these men and women, having wealth, marry, divorce, and remarry again and again but never do they achieve permanent happiness.

If you must admit that marriage has lost its savor and seems an empty experience, before you rush to the divorce courts, it is well to find out just why your one-time happiness has faded away. Even when this does not help you salvage your present marriage, it may prove a great asset if you try to make a future marriage a success. Has there been a wrong program? Can it still be corrected? Is the barrenness of your fellowship the result of boredom which will always pester you unless you develop a more serious and a more varied interest in life? Is this new attraction which makes you so sensitive to the hollowness of your present marital life a vain effort on your part to revive the physical passion which needlessly has withered away? It is not easy to resurrect a lifeless marriage, but even if there is no hope of this and you are sure that your former

affection has been destroyed through monotony, it will, nevertheless, prove useful to take stock of your present resources and prepare yourself for whatever your future situation may be. It is that ongoing toward maturity which alone brings abiding happiness.



PART III

WHEN YOUR DECISION IS MADE



## *Chapter Thirteen*

### IF YOU DECIDE TO GET A DIVORCE

IF YOU decide to get a divorce after thinking through your situation as honestly as you can, looking at the future as well as the present, there are still some suggestions I wish to make. You must first of all decide where you are going to seek your divorce. If you live in South Carolina at present you have no choice, you must go elsewhere. The probability is that you will seek to establish residence in one of the most liberal states. Statistics, however, show that a considerable number of South Carolinians go into the neighboring states of North Carolina or Georgia for their divorces, in spite of the fact that these states are more exacting than, for example, are Florida or Nevada. If you live in New York either you must be willing to use adultery as the ground for your divorce or you also must go elsewhere. The situation is complicated by the fact that New York does its utmost to discourage migratory divorces, that is, divorces obtained elsewhere by persons who in fact expect to remain residents of the State of New York. If you are living in some other state than New York or South Carolina you will need to know what provision, made by law for the getting of a divorce, you can present to the court.

It will not do for you to depend upon hearsay information, even when this comes from some friend who has

recently been divorced, for legislation is constantly being changed by the state legislatures and, what is often more important, decisions are being made, when the validity of some divorce has been called in, which may be of great concern to you. No part of American law is so confused as that relating to divorce. You must therefore rely on the information you can obtain from a competent lawyer.

Since you must depend upon some lawyer to guide you through the divorce proceedings, it is very important that you find the right sort of person. A great many lawyers refuse to have anything to do with divorce cases. In contrast, there are some lawyers whose professional ethics are questionable and who do almost nothing else but help people become divorced. It is for your own interest to avoid this latter type of lawyer and find one whose reputation is good and who will see you safely through what at best may not be a pleasant experience. It will be wise for you also to get as clear a statement as possible as to what the lawyer's fee will be, and how much the entire proceedings will cost. It may be necessary for your lawyer to ask the court to force the husband to take care of this expense. If you are entirely dependent upon your husband it is evident that you are in no position to shoulder the costs of a divorce.

If you have gone outside of your native state and have established legal residence in some other state where divorces are exceedingly liberal, not only must you be careful to observe whatever provisions for legal residence are imposed by the jurisdiction where you are getting your divorce, but you must also attempt to protect yourself through your lawyer from any possible litigation later. As has already been said, if you are away from your former state in order to take advantage of more liberal divorce

legislation and are planning to return to your former legal residence, there is frequently opportunity for the challenging of the divorce you receive. You may find that because of decisions that have been made you may be legally divorced in one jurisdiction and still married in another, and you may even discover that a second marriage will in some states be regarded as bigamous.

This year a couple who were divorced in Nevada have been sentenced a second time for bigamy by a North Carolina court. After their first conviction they carried their case to the United States Supreme Court which said North Carolina must recognize the Nevada decree. This decision raised the question whether the residence was a genuine one and, taking this as a cue, the North Carolina court tried the couple again and sentenced both of them to imprisonment. Recently a Massachusetts court convicted a man of bigamy who, after getting a Mexican divorce, remarried in that state. His statement that his lawyer assured him that his divorce was valid did not change the disposition of the court.

If property is involved or if there are children born of a second marriage whose legitimacy may be legally contested, it is highly important that you get a divorce under such conditions that there is no danger of its being questioned in the future. Because of the present confusion as to the legality of divorces obtained by moving from one state to another, you may decide that the safest thing for you to do is not to change your residence but to accept the more exacting requirements your present state requires for the getting of a divorce. This, of course, cannot be true for those living in South Carolina since, under no circumstances, does that state grant a divorce.

If your husband has already been divorced and even

remarried, having gone to a liberal jurisdiction for the decree, it would seem reasonable that you need do nothing about getting a divorce yourself and that you are free to remarry. A good lawyer will tell you, however, that this conclusion of yours is not sound. There is a possibility that the legality of your husband's divorce may be called into question later because it was obtained by migration from one state to another. If you remarry and have children, their right to any property involved may at some time in the future be made a test case in court.

Recently a young friend of mine was deserted by her husband who went off with another man's wife. Then the man and woman were both divorced from their former spouses in a state having very liberal divorce laws and were married. My friend also remarried in time and a child was born of her second union. She had already had a daughter, by her first husband, who had been assigned by the court to both parents, with the decree that the major period of her time was to be spent with the mother. The father of this friend of mine happens to be a very well-known lawyer. He insisted on his daughter's getting a divorce in the state where she lives because he said there was a possibility of later litigation on account of property the wife held, and the second child might not be permitted to inherit from her. There did not seem much danger of future difficulty in this case but the father was so familiar with law suits based upon a dispute of the legality of a divorce obtained by migration, that he was insistent. His daughter was sensible enough to avoid any possible doubt of her right to remarry, and she finally obtained a divorce on the basis of two years' separation from her former husband.

Your lawyer will wish to make a satisfactory arrange-

ment with your husband concerning distribution of property, alimony if that is sought, distribution of children if they are involved. He will know how far he can go in such matters without raising the issue of collusion between you and your husband in the getting of your divorce, something the law does not permit. You need not worry about such matters if you have the right kind of lawyer. It is well for you to remember, however, that you may be interested in more than merely becoming legally free from your marriage ties, and anything you have questions about should be talked over with your lawyer. It is his business to protect your future interests, not merely to get you the decree you seek.

It may be that you are asking for a divorce with a great deal of emotion. You may be bitter, angry, and even full of hate because of what you consider the injury, the suffering, disappointment, or the disgrace your husband has brought you. As a consequence you may have an impulse toward revenge and may desire to do all you can to hurt your husband and his future as you get your divorce.

If you are a wise woman you will curb your passion and do your utmost to avoid a public exhibition of your feelings or any needless contention before the court. Even though the American people are apt not to take charges of cruelty, for example, especially if they are defined as mental cruelty, whatever that may mean, very seriously, it is nevertheless a mistake to use the divorce proceedings as a means of attacking your former husband. It may make you feel better for the moment to make him trouble, even to ruin his reputation, but in the long run it is not likely to prove to your advantage or to bring you satisfaction. If you have children you must remember that they will some day know about your getting the divorce and that it may bring

them inferiority feelings, shame or some other life handicap when they become familiar with the charges you made in a spirit of passion against the man who, in spite of whatever may have been his faults, is still their father. I realize you may have no choice. If the divorce is opposed by him it may be necessary for you to reveal what otherwise would willingly be hidden. It is one thing to uncover a matrimonial tragedy because you have no choice, but quite another to do it needlessly because for the moment it soothes your injured feelings.

Whether to ask for alimony, and if so, how much to demand, sometimes are troublesome questions. A woman with small children and no income of her own seldom has any choice, and any court will recognize her need of help after her divorce. In other instances the decision is not so clear. An experienced social worker has learned from her work that alimony is frequently the chief cause of contention between former husband and wife even when their marriage has been legally dissolved, and occasionally is the only reason why they cannot be reconciled and remarry.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly women at times attempt to punish their former husbands through the financial burden they place upon them by the alimony they receive. Occasionally the real purpose of this is the wife's desire either to prevent a man's remarrying or to make his second matrimonial experience difficult because so much is subtracted from his income by the first wife. On the other hand, we have women who in the spirit of pride are unwilling to take any money from the husband from whom they have separated.

<sup>1</sup> Peele, Catherine Groves. "The Social and Psychological Effects of the Availability and the Granting of Alimony on the Spouses." *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Volume VI, Number II, pp. 283-292.

This policy may be both unwise and unjust. It may free the man from responsibilities that belong to him and place upon the wife an economic load which she cannot carry. These women fail to look forward to the difficulty they are likely to have in supporting themselves and, even more when they have children, in maintaining their family. Possibly it was easy for them before marriage to earn their way; they forget that they may not be able to step back into their former economic security. The years they have been married may have lessened their earning power. The woman who decides on a divorce needs to think the matter through in as objective a way as possible when she is faced with the question whether to ask for alimony and, if she does, what she needs to have and what she can justly demand from her former husband.

The husband has an obligation even to the wife he is divorcing. He should recognize this and attempt to keep out of his settlement, especially when there are children, bitterness, anger or any desire to hurt her. In the end a harsh program is likely to hurt him as much as his wife. He is sure to find that it is no social advantage for him to be known as a man who attempted to punish the wife whom he divorced or who divorced him.

This is my eleventh-hour suggestion. If you are determined to get a divorce first by separating from your spouse, test yourself with a trial divorce. Live long enough as if you were divorced to find out how you will like having this break made legal. The experience may prevent your making a great mistake.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

### IF YOU SEEK A MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

IT MAY be that you have come to a different conclusion and feel that you can escape getting a divorce. You realize, however, that you cannot safely be content with this merely negative decision. You have been in difficulty or you would not have entertained the idea of leaving your husband. It is, therefore, not sensible just to change your mind about the matter and go on with things as they are. You need help even if there be no possibility of any radical improvements in your husband-wife relationships. In that case you have some demanding motive that makes you decide, taking all things into account, that it is better for you to go on in your unhappy situation than to be divorced.

Fortunately many of my readers will not need to accept such a depressing conclusion. Your married life has not been satisfactory but there is hope that it can be improved. You have thought the matter through carefully enough to realize that changes must be made and now you need counsel as to how your situation can be bettered. Instead of a divorce lawyer you need to see a counselor whom you can trust to give you the insight you desire in order to salvage your family life.

Perhaps you know at once where you can get this help you must have. This will not usually be true. You must

then seek a reputable, experienced counselor. Fortunately men and women who have the necessary background and attitude to serve you are becoming more common. With most of them domestic counseling is a by-product of their profession. Even so, they have attempted to prepare themselves by study and through experience to give specific, practical, helpful assistance to those who come to them in trouble. Many of these persons are men and women engaged in social work or are ministers, rabbis, or priests. All well-established religious organizations in the United States are taking a serious interest in helping people prepare for marriage and also in providing good counsel for those who are in matrimonial difficulty. As a result we find many ministers, rabbis, and priests who do a considerable amount of domestic counseling. We have social agencies that specialize in domestic counseling. There are also psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists who from their special professional background are serving an increasing number of persons who come, asking for guidance in dealing with some family problems.

It will be better for you to seek out some domestic counselor than to go to a friend or to a relative for advice. The reason for this has already been brought out in an earlier discussion. You need an impartial outsider's viewpoint but you need even more the help of someone who has had a great deal to do with problems such as yours.

In addition to the social agencies that provide counselors as part of their service, there are men and women who concentrate in these organizations upon domestic counseling. We have a few organizations that are exclusively concerned with this service, seeking to aid those who need preparation for marriage or who come for help because they are in difficulty in their marriages.

There are also individuals who are making this service their chief profession. The following list of these organizations and persons are sources from which you can draw help but they are not the only ones you can depend on. The persons listed are among the reputable, trustworthy counselors to whom you can go with assurance. You must remember, as was true in the beginning of the profession of psychoanalysis, that people without adequate training, because of commercial motives, are seeking to enter this field of counseling. It is probable even that some of them may take advantage of any information they may receive, concerning a family conflict, to blackmail the informer. At least this had to be recognized some years ago by the professional psychoanalysts as a risk in their work, and they were forced to protect themselves by establishing standards of training and experience for those engaging in their special form of service. Some persons are willing, even without scientific background and serious study, to improvise solutions for the most complicated and consequential of matrimonial problems. You should beware of anyone claiming to be a domestic counselor who has not had professional training and who does not subscribe to a code of ethics as exacting as that assumed by every reputable physician. The following are the organizations of which I know that are professionally concerned with matrimonial guidance:

#### CALIFORNIA

American Institute of Family Relations  
607 South Hill Street  
Los Angeles  
Paul Popenoe, Director

Family Relations Center  
1200 Hyde Street  
San Francisco  
Henry M. Grant, Executive Director

#### ILLINOIS

Association for Family Living  
Marriage and Family Consultation Service  
209 South State Street  
Chicago  
Evelyn Mills Duvall, Executive Director

#### MASSACHUSETTS

Counseling Service  
Massachusetts Society for Social Hygiene  
316 Huntington Avenue  
Boston  
Lester W. Dearborn, Chief Consultant

#### MICHIGAN

Advisory Service  
Merrill-Palmer School  
71 East Ferry Avenue  
Detroit  
Robert G. Foster, Director

The Marriage Counsel Clinic  
863 Fisher Building  
Detroit  
David C. Kimball, Clinician

The Clara Elizabeth Fund for Maternal Health  
Flint, Michigan  
David B. Treat, Director

## NEW YORK

Marriage Consultation Center  
The Community Church  
550 West 110th Street  
New York City  
Abraham Stone, Director

Family Guidance and Consultation Service  
Child Study Association of America  
221 West 57th Street  
New York City  
Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Director

Bureau of Marriage Counsel and Education  
62 West 48th Street  
New York City  
Valeria Hopkins Parker, Director

Jewish Institute on Marriage and the Family  
40 West 68th Street  
New York City  
Sidney E. Goldstein, Chairman

Old Age Counseling Center  
2 East 54th Street  
New York City  
George Lawton, Director

## NORTH CAROLINA

Marriage and Family Council, Inc.  
Chapel Hill  
Gladys H. Groves, Director

## OHIO

Cincinnati Social Hygiene Society  
312 West 9th Street  
Cincinnati  
Roy Dickerson, Executive Secretary

Family Consultation Service  
312 West 9th Street  
Cincinnati  
Mrs. Anna Budd Ware, Director

Maternal Health Association  
2101 Adelbert Road  
Cleveland  
Gladys Gaylord, Executive Secretary

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Marriage Counsel  
1830 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia  
Mrs. Emily B. H. Mudd, Director

The following list of individuals is, as stated, not exhaustive. It represents the present membership of the nominating committee of the American Association of Marriage Counselors. These persons, therefore, you can depend upon because of their experience and training and their code of ethics:

Bridgman, Dr. Ralph P., President  
Hampton Institute  
Hampton, Virginia

Dearborn, Lester W.  
316 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts

Dickinson, Dr. Robert L.  
2 East 103rd Street  
New York, New York

Folsom, Dr. Joseph K.  
Vassar College  
Poughkeepsie, 65, New York

Groves, Ernest R.  
704 Gimghoul Road  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Groves, Mrs. Gladys H.  
704 Gimghoul Road  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Kleegman, Dr. Sophia  
59 East 54th Street  
New York, New York

Laidlaw, Dr. Robert W.  
563 Park Avenue  
New York 21, New York

Mudd, Mrs. Stuart  
1830 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Parker, Dr. Valeria H.  
62 West 58th Street  
New York, New York

Shields, Dr. Frances  
2 East 54th Street  
New York, New York

Stone, Dr. Abraham  
40 East 35th Street  
New York, New York

Wortis, Dr. S. Bernard  
410 East 57th Street  
New York, New York

The following are the men in our three chief religious organizations who are leading the attempt to conserve marriage and the family. Feel free to write them for information if you have a marriage problem.

**FOR THE CATHOLICS:**

Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, Director  
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**FOR THE PROTESTANTS:**

L. Foster Wood, Secretary  
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Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America  
297 Fourth Avenue  
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## REFERENCES

To those readers of this book who wish to consider in greater detail some of the problems we have been discussing in *Conserving Marriage and the Family* the following books are suggested:

### I. DIVORCE LEGISLATION

Divorce and Separation, *American Family Laws*, Volume II and Supplement, Chester G. Vernier, Palo Alto, California, Stanford University Press.

These volumes contain the most complete summary of divorce laws. In order to keep up-to-date this material would have to be revised yearly.

### II. SEXUAL ADJUSTMENT

*Sex Fulfillment in Marriage*, E. R. Groves, Gladys H. Groves, and Catherine Groves, New York, Emerson Books, Inc.

This book emphasizes the psychic causes of sexual maladjustment and will help the reader who wishes to discover whether there is anything in his background that is making trouble in marriage.

### III. FERTILITY

*Facts for Childless Couples*, E. C. Hamblen, M.D., Springfield, Illinois, Charles C. Thomas, Publishers.

This is an unusually clear and helpful discussion of the problem of infertility, the examinations necessary for

diagnosis, and the treatment that is given the wife and husband in an attempt to restore or improve fertility.

#### IV. SELF-EXAMINATION

*Getting More Out of Life*, Catherine Groves, New York, Association Press.

This book will prove helpful to anyone who wishes to examine the influences that have affected her outlook upon life. It was written to help the domestic counselors who are seeking to aid their clients in understanding themselves, and has a list of the various agencies to which one may go for assistance.

*Maternal Overprotection*, David M. Levy, New York, Columbia University Press.

A factual, exhaustive, study of social immaturity due to over-protection during childhood.

#### V. ALIMONY

*Law and Contemporary Problems*, Volume VI, Number II, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, School of Law, Duke University.

This is the most complete study we have on the problem of alimony.

#### VI. MIGRATORY DIVORCE

*Law and Contemporary Problems*, Volume II, Number III, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, School of Law, Duke University.

This is a discussion, chiefly legal, of the confusion caused by the differences in the laws of the various states regarding divorce.

*Getting a Divorce*, Isabel Drummond, New York, Alfred A. Knopf.

This book presents concretely for the lay person the legal entanglements that can come from the differences in the states in their divorce legislation. It also contains a sum-

mary of the grounds for divorce in the various states which was true at the time the book was published, 1931.

## VII. THE AFTERMATH OF DIVORCE

*The Old Love and the New, Divorce and Readjustment,*  
Willard Waller, New York, Horace Liveright.

This is a very revealing and interesting statement of the experiences of persons who have been divorced and who have attempted to readjust themselves to their new status. It is good reading for anyone debating whether to get or not to get a divorce.

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