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BARS TO MATRIMONY

FEAR KEEPS MANY MEN FROM THE BLISS OF WEDDED LIFE.

Some instances of a Lack of Sufficient Pluck to Take the Fateful Trip to the Altar—Various Reasons That All Spell "Afraid."

"There is a great deal of speculation," said a well known lawyer, "as to why men are so reluctant to marry, but one reason never seems to occur to the speculators, and that is that many of them are afraid. No, I am not joking. It is a sober and well considered statement of fact, for which I can adduce as many proofs as you want, that many men would almost as soon think of patting a fierce bull on the head or facing the midnight burglar as taking a trip to the altar.

"I remember as a boy an amusing specimen of this kind of man in Iowa. He was a farmer and was as notorious for his amorous entanglements as for his ingenuity in getting out of them when marriage began to loom near. It was said he had been engaged a dozen times, and though he left all his fiancées in the lurch he never found any difficulty in getting a successor. One day my father, who was his lawyer, asked him: 'Why don't you get married, John? It isn't for want of opportunities, you know, and it's quite time you thought of settling down.'

"Well, sir, John answered, 'it's this way: You see, I like cooing well enough, but I can never summon up pluck to go any further. To tell you the truth, I'm afraid of getting tied for life to one of 'em.'

"If you have heard many breach of promise suits you will have observed that this wholesome dread of matrimony is the cause of a good proportion of them, though all the defendants have not the courage to say so.

"One client of mine had allowed matters to proceed right to the eve of the wedding day, when he disappeared mysteriously and was not discovered for some months. The young lady promptly sued him for damages for breach, and at the hearing the reason for his conduct came out. He admitted that he was fond of the girl, but sundry exhibitions of her temper and jealousy which he had witnessed had so scared him that he simply hadn't the courage to marry her. 'I meant to marry her right enough,' he said, 'but when it came to the point my courage failed me, and I thought it safer to bolt.'

"In another case in which a widow sued a widower for playing her false the defendant put in a singular plea. It seems that the widow's family strongly objected to the match, and as passive opposition was useless to prevent it one of the sons, a stalwart young fellow, called on the middle aged wooer and told him that if he persisted in his suit he (the son) would give him such a thrashing as would effectually cure him of any further sentiment. 'So what could I do?' the defendant pathetically asked.

"The more one sees behind the scenes the more one realizes that there is often a great deal to be said for the man who loves and runs away. One of my clients a few years ago found himself in an awkward quandary. He had engaged himself to three girls at different times and, having canceled his engagements with two, was on the eve of marrying No. 3. No sooner was his intention known than the two jilted ladies threatened him with legal proceedings if he persisted in his proposed marriage, and the favored lady in turn threatened a similar fate if he didn't.

"Here was a dilemma, for whatever he did would end unpleasantly. However, like a prudent man, he decided to run the smaller risk. He pacified his two former fiancées by canceling his engagement and prepared to face the music of the third lady.

"The mother-in-law is often a fatal disturber of love's young dream. One breach of promise defendant declared that he would willingly have married the plaintiff only he couldn't stand her mother at any price, and the prospect of having his married happiness disturbed by her interference so scared him that he decided it was more prudent to break off the engagement, while another frail lover actually stated in court that he was afraid to marry the plaintiff lest she should 'grow up like her mother,' whose 'tongue and temper' had shown him some of the less desirable possibilities of married life.

"One man whom I defended last year seems to have had a constitutional dread of matrimony. He had been engaged to the plaintiff no less than nine years. Four times the wedding day had been fixed, and as many times it was adjourned by his wish. Finally he cried off altogether, and in court he declared that, although he loved the girl, he felt he could never screw up the courage to marry her. When he was asked the reason for his diffidence he said that he had seen so much of the unhappy side of married life and the difference between wooing and wedding that he didn't feel equal to running the risk.

"These are but a few from scores of similar cases which have come within my own knowledge. One man feared to face matrimony on account of his fiancée's extravagance, another quaintly confessed a horror of his wife's cooking and domestic gifts generally, a third defendant was afraid to wed because a distant relative of his lady-love had died in an asylum, and so on. But, whatever the cause, you may take my word for it that the men who are downright afraid to take wives are legion."—Chicago Tribune.

Caution.
"Bridget, can I trust you with the china?"
"Sure ye can, ma'am. O'll save every piece."—Life.

Jean's Revenge.

An avenger need not necessarily be a naturalist, but there are cases where he would take his vengeance more to the purpose if he knew the habits of his victim. Lippincott's Magazine tells a story of Jean, the French Canadian gardener who was found stamping on a little mound of fresh earth and chuckling to himself.

"Ah, Li'sieu," he cried triumphantly, "I am not a one to be trifled with! I am a cr-r-r-uel man when once I am aroused. M'sieu will remember the mole that has long time ravage the strawberry beds of madame? Every morning madame she say, 'Jean, why catchest thou not that mole?'

"But the mole was wise; 'e was queek. Always I look and look, but never can I find heem. But at last, thees very morning, I catch heem. I hold heem tight in my hand—so—and I say: 'Aha-a! Is it thou, then, that has vexed madame and ravaged her beds of thees strawberry? Aha-a! You shall repent of thees wickedness.'

"Then I wonder how I shall kill heem. He must be punished as well as killed. I wonder and wonder, but at last I have the grand idea. Ah, it was cr-r-uel, m'sieu, that way I kill heem! But what would you? Did he not deserve of the worst? But he will vex madame no more. I fix heem. I bury heem alive!"

Will Use No More Slang.
"I've been cured of the slang habit, glory be," says a department woman. "After this I speak plain English, but I'll have to talk a thousand years before I convince Mrs. Skaggs that I'm not ignorant of French. She was telling me the other day about a man we both know who is going to marry a girl over in Baltimore.

"He hasn't a cent, you know," she said.

"How about the girl? I asked in my vulgar, slangy way. 'Has she any dough?'

"Dough?" repeated Mrs. Skaggs. "Dough? Oh, I see what you mean. No, she hasn't a bit. But, by the way, my dear, I hope you won't mind my telling you the final t is always sounded in that word. The French pronounce it precisely as it is spelled—dot, you know; not dough."—Washington Post.

Smoke Slowly and Avoid Cancer.
From the medical profession comes a warning to smokers. If you wish to avoid tobacco cancer don't smoke fast. After careful observation it has been practically determined that this form of cancer is caused by the irritation resulting from the heat of the cigar or pipe. Men who smoke long stemmed pipes, it is said, do not have cancer, no matter how much they smoke, while those who indulge in cigars or short stemmed pipes are afflicted by this malignant growth.

Tobacco cancer caused the death of General Grant. He was an inveterate smoker, and he smoked very fast. At the battle of Shiloh he is said to have consumed fifty cigars. In smoking a large number of cigars in a short time the tongue is irritated by excessive heat, and in time cancer is the result.

Suspicious.
An uncultivated Boer, who had heard of banks, determined to take some of his savings to one of these places. With this object in view, according to a London paper, he traveled to Cape Town, found a bank and handed in his cash to the clerk, who in return gave him a bankbook. "How much do you charge for taking care of my money?" asked the Boer. The clerk smiled and said, "We don't charge, but will give you money for taking care of it." "Let me have it back at once," said the Boer. "I always thought you British rascals were dishonest. Now I am sure of it."

British Emergency Ration.
Every soldier in the British army carries in his haversack what is known as the "emergency ration." This consists of a small tin cylinder, similar to a pocket spirit flask, divided into two compartments. One of these is filled with four ounces of cocoa paste, and the other contains a similar quantity of concentrated beef (pemican). As its title implies, the ration is not to be used except in the case of direst necessity, and if consumed in small quantities it will maintain strength for thirty-six hours.

Most Probably an American.
A woman went into a chemist's in London recently and asked for some article which is generally to be procured at a shop of this kind.

The man of mixtures, replying to the customer's inquiry, said: "Madam, I do not possess what you require. I am a chemist, pure and simple."

"I don't know anything about your purity; there's no doubt about your simplicity," retorted the disappointed woman as she retired from the counter.

Complimentary.
Irate Daddy (suddenly coming upon a highly emotional love scene in a cozy corner)—What! Kissing my daughter! Is this the way you reward my confidence and respect for you in admitting you to my home?

Young Man (calmly)—It strikes me that I am paying you the highest compliment possible.—Baltimore American.

Easily Doubled.
Goodart—Here's a brand new five dollar bill, old man. I'll lend you that—Boroughs—Oh, say; can't you double it?

Goodart—Sure. Here goes! I double it—so!—now I double it again—thus. In this shape, you see, it fits snugly in my pocketbook. So long!—Exchange.

If people do not naturally appreciate you, do not insist that they shall. It only makes matters worse.—Aitchison Globe.

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