

A MATRIMONIAL THEORIST

His Theories Did Not Work In Practice

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

In this age of skepticism regarding marriage there are those whose faith in it cannot be shaken. They are persons who have been happily married and about whom children have sprung. To such marriage is their whole world. They are not interested in any one of the plans which are invented for experimental marriage or easy divorce. To them the loss of a single child is an irreparable misfortune, and to the family as a whole the loss of either parent is the greatest calamity that can befall them.

It is either those whose married life has been a failure or those who have never been married at all who are seeking substitutes for the wedlock of the present day. The former usually take the initiative by advancing new ideas concerning it; the latter, with a few exceptions, are ready to jump into matrimony without consideration.

Among young unmarried persons inclined to forethought in this matter were Edward Ellis and Rebecca Sayles. Neither was disposed to take life, its joys and its sorrows as they came, but must plan everything ahead. Being mutually interested in many problems that their elders have found insoluble, they were drawn together by their discussions, and an attachment sprang up between them. Ellis weighed bachelor life against married life and found the advantages and disadvantages of equal weight. On the one side there was something to tie to, on the other loneliness that increased with old age. He granted that if a marriage turned out happily the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. If it was a failure it was unbearable.

This view of it led Ellis just where it has led a host of other thinkers on the subject—first, to guard against injudicious marriages; second, to render them easily dissolved when the parties found themselves not mated. He spent a great deal of time on both these problems and at last solved them to his satisfaction. No couple, he said, should be married without living for at least a year in close proximity with each other; no couple should be married without a prenuptial agreement that at the option of either they should live apart and both assist in securing a divorce.

Miss Sayles, whose views on the subject of marriage had been influenced by the matrimonial troubles of an aunt rather than a mental bent toward the discussion of abstruse problems, agreed with Mr. Ellis as to the precautions, but was "at sea" with regard to the remedy. She shrank from the breaking up of a family—something a woman would be more likely to feel than a man since the maternal is stronger than the paternal instinct. She failed to see how the damage once done could be remedied. Anyway, it would leave a terrible scar.

However, if Ellis did not convert her to his views as to separation, provided marriage proved a failure, he finally persuaded her to consent to his prenuptial agreement. He was perfectly satisfied with this, because she was a girl who would never go back on her promise. They lived near each other, met frequently and by mutual agreement refrained from trying to convince each other that they were far better than they appeared. At least they tried to appear what they were, but whether they succeeded or not is an open question.

At the end of a year of such intercourse they were married. Ellis' prenuptial agreement as to separation in case their marriage proved a failure was put in writing. He gave his bride a copy and kept a copy for himself.

The Ellises lived together ten years without any more matrimonial disagreements than the average married couple. During that period four children came to them, two boys and two girls. Ellis remained in accord with those cynical flings at marriage which have been so popular of recent years. When he went to the theater and heard an actor crack jokes illustrative of what a husband must endure he would applaud vociferously. He read a novel on the theme of domestic unhappiness and recommended it to a friend. The friend handed it back with the comment that neither he nor the world was interested in the subject treated, adding that what was wanted were stories of married comfort and family affection. Ellis looked upon the critic ever after as a man of very narrow mental compass.

Twelve years after the marriage of Ellis and Miss Sayles he one day handed her his copy of their prenuptial agreement to a separation in case their marriage proved a failure. It gave her the surprise of her life. She had listened to his jokes about what husbands must endure, but considered that they sprang from a desire to be facetious. She was aware of what the wife must endure, but during the term of years she had been married her good sense had prevailed over the theories of inexperienced youth, and she had come to consider them on the same footing as other necessary evils and that for the sake of both parents and children they must be passed over with as little disturbance as possible. Indeed, she realized that it was far

more important that they be smoothed over than other necessary evils.

Her husband said nothing when he handed her the paper, but she knew what he meant. In his prenuptial agreement he had not thought it necessary to mention children. He had then not had children and was on the same plane in this respect as other bachelors. Children in a matrimonial separation he had not considered.

Mrs. Ellis bore up without flinching under the blow. She said not a word as to the separation except what was necessary for making new plans. The schools in the town in which she lived were excellent, the children had always lived in the house they occupied, and it would be inconvenient to move them. She therefore told her husband that if they were to separate he would have to do the separating; she would remain at home with the children. He had become sufficiently acquainted with family requirements to realize that the children would require their schools and still more their mother. He had always left them to her keeping and did not relish their care. So it was agreed that he should go to live at a distance. Not being actively occupied, it made no difference where he lived.

Mrs. Ellis did not ask her husband the cause of his desire for a separation; therefore he did not make it known. The truth is that ordinary family jars working on a man whose brain was full of matrimonial theories had led him to take the course he did.

It was agreed between husband and wife that the fact that he was to depart permanently was not to be imparted to the children. They were to be told that their father was going away and his return was left indefinite. His wife packed his belongings, and as he saw her doing the work he wondered how he was to get them unpacked, for to this she had always attended, and he had become absolutely useless in either packing or unpacking.

When all was ready Ellis kissed his children, then turned to his wife. She had turned away and was busying herself putting some toilet articles in his satchel. He assumed that she did not wish to be kissed, and it gave him a pang. But it must be remembered that he was not going away on account of a special quarrel or culmination of quarrels, but on general principles. He kissed all the children, and they noticed that he hugged them very close.

"Why, papa," said little Ed, "you're crying."

The only reply was a closer hug. As soon as the father had bidden goodbye to them he seized his satchel and shot out of the door without looking behind him, to the wonder of all except the mother.

There is no fool like the theoretic fool. He can go over theories that have grown up in his mind, they becoming more and more perfect to him the while, and not see some glaring defect that to another will plainly let down his whole fabric. Ellis' fabric was toppling before he left home. He had no sooner got to his new quarters and looked about him in a room in which there were furniture and decorations, but no living being, when it collapsed utterly. That night was the most miserable of his existence. He did not sleep, but lay awake trying to form a plan whereby he might go home and save his face at the same time.

First he thought that he would lay down a series of rules for the guidance of himself and his wife and if she would agree to abide by them he would go home and try to live in peace. He even wrote out several of these rules, but tore them up. He thought of various expedients, but none seemed practical.

In the morning when all his plans were discarded he wrote a note to his wife admitting his mistake and asking whether if he came home he would be received as before his departure. Mrs. Ellis replied that he would be welcome, adding no condition or stipulation whatever. He had scarcely received her note when he called an automobile and told the chauffeur to drive, irrespective of speed limit, to his home.

His wife met him at the door and threw her arms about his neck. Together they went into the dining room, where the children were just finishing their morning meal. All rose and jumped upon him. The older ones had suspected that something was wrong in the father's going and were much moved at his sudden return. When the greetings were over and the children on their way to school Ellis said to his wife:

"Where are those copies of our prenuptial agreement?"

Mrs. Ellis disappeared and soon returned with the articles inquired for. Seizing them, her husband tore them into bits and threw them into the fire burning on the hearth.

"Wife," he said with animation, "it is my opinion that these newfangled plans for trial marriages and easy divorces are for persons who either can't get on together or have never been married. For you and me they are ridiculous."

"They will not help those who are happily married, and, as for those who are unhappily married, God help them!"

That was the end of Ellis' matrimonial theories. When after that he and his wife had a spat, according to an agreement they made after his return, they made it up before going to sleep that night. This they found to be a great advantage in many ways. First, it ended the spat; second, it got them used to cutting short their differences; third, they soon became used to considering such disagreements as mere explosions of nervous irritation and not worth explaining. At any rate, they grew closer each year, and today Ellis wonders how he could have been such a fool.

Supplemental Special Assessment Notice

Supplemental Special Warrant No. 172
Public Notice is hereby given that the County Court of Lake County, Illinois, has rendered judgement for a second or supplemental special assessment to pay the amount of deficiency in the first assessment upon property benefited by the following improvement:

Construction of a cast iron lateral main water supply pipe, together with fire hydrants, shut-off valves and special castings, to be constructed and laid along and under Linden Avenue, Cedar Avenue and Sheridan Road, in the City of Highland Park county of Lake, and State of Illinois connecting with the water main at the intersection of Linden and Lincoln Ave. and running from thence southeasterly along said Linden Ave. to Cedar Avenue easterly along said Linden Ave. to Cedar Av. thence easterly along Cedar Av to Sheridan Rd. thence easterly and southerly along said Sheridan Rd. to and connecting with the water main now laid in Roger Williams Ave. as will more fully appear from the certified copy of the judgement on file in the Collector's Office. That the warrant for the collection of such assessment is in the hands of the undersigned, and all persons interested are hereby notified to call and pay the amount assessed at the Collector's office in the City Hall, Highland Park, Illinois, within thirty days from the date hereof.

Harry B. Evans,
City Collector.

Dated at Highland Park, Illinois,
This 24th day of December, A. D. 1914.

Supplemental Special Assessment Notice

Supplemental Special Warrant No. 166
Public Notice is hereby given that the County Court of Lake County, Illinois, has rendered judgement for a second or supplemental special assessment to pay the amount of deficiency in the first assessment upon property benefited by the following improvement:

Macadamizing and otherwise improving of Glenoac Ave. from the southerly line of Sheridan Place to a point ten (10) ft. south of the northerly line of Lincoln Ave. in the city of Highland Park, Lake County, Illinois, as will more fully appear from a certified copy of the judgement on file in the collector's office. That the warrant for the collection of such assessment is in the hands of the undersigned, and all persons interested are hereby notified to call and pay the amount assessed at the collector's office in the City Hall, Highland Park, Illinois, within thirty days from the date hereof.

Harry B. Evans,
City Collector.

Dated at Highland Park, Illinois,
this 24th day of December, A. D. 1914.

Supplemental Special Assessment Notice

Supplemental Special Warrant No. 181
Public notice is hereby that the county court of Lake County, Illinois, has rendered judgement for a second or supplemental special assessment to pay the amount of deficiency in the first assessment upon property benefited by the following improvement:

Grading, draining, curbing, paving with macadam and otherwise improving of Gage Ave. in the city of Highland Park, from the southerly line of Lincoln Ave. southerly to the southerly line of Gray Ave., as will more fully appear from the certified copy of the judgement on file in the collector's office. That the warrant for the collection of such assessment is in the hands of the undersigned, and all persons interested are hereby notified to call and pay the amount assessed at the collector's office, in the city hall, Highland Park, Illinois, within thirty days from the date hereof.

Harry B. Evans,
City Collector.

Dated at Highland Park, Illinois,
This 24th day of December, A. D. 1914.

Supplemental Special Assessment Notice

Supplemental Special Warrant No. 187
Public notice is hereby that the county court of Lake County, Illinois, has rendered judgement for a second or supplemental special assessment to pay the amount of deficiency in the first assessment upon property benefited by the following improvement:

Grading, draining, curbing, paving with concrete macadam and otherwise improving of McDaniels Ave. in the city of Highland Park, from the southerly line of the paved roadway of Deerfield Ave., thence southerly to the southerly terminus of said McDaniels Ave., as will more fully appear from the certified copy of the judgement on file in the collector's office. That the warrant for the collection of such assessment is in the hands of the undersigned, and all persons interested are hereby notified to call and pay the amount assessed at the collector's office in the city hall, Highland Park, Illinois, within thirty days from the date hereof.

Harry B. Evans,
City Collector.

Dated at Highland Park, Illinois,
This 24th day of December, A. D. 1914.

Supplemental Special Assessment Notice

Supplemental Special Warrant No. 179
Public notice is hereby given that the county court of Lake County, Illinois, has rendered judgement for a second or supplemental special assessment to pay the amount of deficiency in the first assessment upon property benefited by the following improvement:

Grading, draining, curbing, paving with concrete macadam, and otherwise improving a connected system of streets in Ridge-wood Park subdivision in the city of Highland Park, consisting of Gage Ave., De-

Efficient Protection of Property Interests

About \$22,000 in taxes due on Lake County property, approximately \$1, 500,000 in value, is sold annually at tax sales because of the non-payment of taxes. Forty percent of these sales are due merely to oversight on the part of tax payers, to their failure to obtain proper information regarding their taxes or to their being out of reach of notices issued by the county authorities.

The matter of protecting their property interests is a source of no little inconvenience and often of needless expense to property owners, especially to such who own considerable or scattered pieces or who are not year 'round residents of Lake County.

I Look after Your Interests in Lake County

The payments of taxes and assessments attended to. Property owners protected at tax sales. Abstracts of Title and Guarantee Titles furnished through Security Title and Trust Company. Special reports supplied promptly to mortgage holders as to disposition of taxes and assessments on real estate held as security. Legal representation furnished before the Board of Review.

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