

Married Lives of Great Men

It is very trying to be married to a genius or a fool, says the author of a chatty book, "Love Affairs of Famous Men." Montesquieu was once at work when some one rushed in shouting "Fire!" "Go to my wife," he replied, as he went on writing, "these matters belong to her." Confucius was so worried by his wife that he had to divorce her before he could work in peace.

Daudet's wife was not only an excellent housekeeper, but a fine literary critic, who helped Alphonse at his work. Cooper and Hawthorne were both encouraged by their wives to begin writing their masterpieces. Thomas Hardy dropped architecture to become a novelist at his wife's urging. Max O'Rell's translator and literary helper is his English wife.

But these men were not poets. Women who marry poets play "a game of double or quits." There was Dante. He had a wife and seven children after settling down, but he never forgot his Beatrice and poor Mrs. Dante wasn't permitted to forget her, either. "Whenever she appeared before him, he had no enemy left on earth." Chaucer, who himself married one of the ladies of the Queen's bedchamber, wrote: Marriage is such a rabble rout That those who are out would fain get in And those who are in would fain get out.

Shakespeare wedded a woman much older than himself. In his will he left the lady his "second-best bed," which may have had a subtle sentimental meaning, like Pickwick's chops and tomato sauce.

When Milton was 35 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of a gay, bustling house. She didn't enjoy 4 o'clock rising and long prayers, and in a month ran away from home. Subsequently she came back and fell on her knees to him,—and he used the scene as the material for Eve's begging for Adam's pardon in his account of the creation! She died young. Milton's second wife died a year after marriage. In his third, retribution smote him, for she was a terror he had deserved. Before their marriage, he had never seen her. She survived him 53 years, and, according to Johnson, "cheated his children."

Wycherley, the poet, was a droll dog. Early in life he married unhappily. Ten days before his death he took another partner to spite his nephew and heir. He could die married, he said, though he couldn't live that way.

Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, espoused a lady much above his rank. Coleridge married at 23 and had a lifelong struggle to support his family. He was "a dreamer dreaming greatly," and naturally didn't pull well in harness. De Quincey, himself a poor stick of a man, said: "Neither Coleridge nor Byron could have failed to quarrel with any wife." Southey married Coleridge's sister and got along with her very well until she turned crazy and died.

De Quincey rushed into print to abuse Wordsworth, who never read the articles. "He says your wife's too good for you," a friend quoted. "There he's right," cried the poet. Long after one who went to Kydal Mount "saw the old man walking in the garden with his wife. They were both quite old and he was almost blind, but they seemed like sweethearts courting."

Shelley, already with one broken-heart experience, wedded at 19 a girl of 16, and the two played at light house-keeping on buns and things. Later he deserted his wife and she drowned herself in the Serpentine.

Landon's wife mortally offended him in their honeymoon by jumping up to look at a Punch and Judy show while he was reading his own poetry. He was a burly, roaring fellow with a colossal conceit. She was gentle, and not over-bright. So he deserted her and their children shamelessly.

Byron's life was embittered by his early love affair for Mary Anne Chaworth. The "Maid of Athens" was a daughter of Mme. Macri, wife of a British vice-consul in Athens. Byron didn't love his wife and she couldn't stand nine executions in the house for debt in one year, not to speak of marital misconduct. So they parted.

Goethe was a terror. After "Gretchen," Anna Katharina, Charity Meixner, "Emilia" and "Lucinda" he devoted himself to Charlotte Buff (Lotte) and Ann Muench. After a little affair with "Lili" Schoenemann he fell in love with the children, but still able to keep the poet awake three nights meditating on her charms before he'd ever seen her. He wrote her a thousand letters. Then came Christiane Vulpius, a fat, gross, drunken creature, whom Goethe married when he was 58. Before and after their marriage they lived together twenty-eight years until her death. At 74 the widower fell in love with Miss von Lewezon, and later with Mme. Szymanowska. Goethe, like Bobby Burns, had a beautiful visage and an eye which, it is said, no woman could resist.

Heine told his patient, much-enduring wife to marry after his death, so that at least one man might mourn him. "Have your jest, dear," she replied placidly; "you can't do without me." Every Monday Heine used to beat her, in a sort of a joke which hurt her feelings terribly, although she was three times as strong as he.

Hood was another poet who delighted in playing jokes on his wife, though they were of a different kind. Most beautiful was Browning's love

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story. Elizabeth Barrett was a poet herself, and in such poor health that her parents opposed her marriage to Browning. Both believed, but neither practiced free love, and their marriage happiness was perfect. Browning used sometimes to kiss the paving stones in front of the door of the church where he was married. D. G. Rossetti buried the MSS. of his first book of verse in his wife's coffin. Seven years later they were dug up and printed. Steele captured a very beautiful lady by his art in writing love letters, and when they were married, he used to get drunk, while she fought the wolf with cold British valour and kept upon her husband as tight rein as she could. Scott loved a girl to whom at 19 he chanced to offer his umbrella in a storm. But she wed another. Probably Scott never quite recovered his heart. He married Charlotte Charpentier, a jewel, a woman of sense and spirit, with whom he lived most happily.

But oh, Jeremy Bentham! When a young man he proposed to a girl and was refused. At 60 he tried again and was again refused by the same woman. When he was 80 he wrote that she had always been in his thoughts since in youth she gave him a flower in a green lane. And yet Bentham was a philosopher!

Dickens and his wife separated after twenty years of not always unhappy married life, apparently by the man's fault mainly. His wife was not fine enough for his new fortunes. Thackeray was a good husband and father, but his wife went crazy and had to go to an "institution." There was something sordid about Charles Reade's life "romance." He couldn't marry without losing his college fellowship, but formed an "alliance," possibly platonic, with Laura Seymour, an actress whose dissolute husband Reade had kept in spending money.

John Paul Richter said that woman's soul as well as her body, is bound in an eternal corset, but he seems to have been "happy though married." Balzac once met in a Swiss inn a princess who was reading one of his stories. They corresponded, and after her prince died Balzac was promoted to the vacant place in her heart and great domain.

Dr. Johnson was gross, fat, short-sighted, scarred by sorofula, and a pig at table. At 26 he married a woman of 46, whom he disciplined a little, obeyed fairly well, loved devotedly, and missed, after her death, very much. Johnson had a low opinion of women who, he said, could neither make a good book of cookery or even dress in good taste, but oh, how he could flatter the pretty girls in his elephantine way!

Thomas Carlyle's marriage has been more written about than that of any other man, however great. Both he and Mrs. Carlyle were cheated of their first loves, and there was, besides, according to Prof. Peck, another cause for unhappiness between them. Mrs. Carlyle was very near a genius herself, and almost as nervous as her fidgety spouse. Once, while suffering from headache, she threw her teacup at him—of course, with a very bad aim. And after her death, how the sad and lonely man missed her! and called on all the world to miss her also, which was unreasonable.

The most bitterly debated marriage ever made must have been that of Martin Luther, whose wife used to scold him heartily, though she had been a gentle nun. Swift loved his Stella, was secretly married to her, some day, and after he died, a lock of her hair was found in his desk, labeled, "Only a woman's hair." Sterne was a mean and unfaithful husband, but in general clergymen have been guilty of nothing worse than nagging. Many may have forgotten that Cardinal Manning was married before he left the English church. His wife died after four years of a very happy union. Whitfield's wife also died in four years, somewhat to his relief, as he confessed; though she was too good for him, and heartened the poor, spiritless fellow by sea, and on land as best she could. Once when a mob began throwing stones at him she stood at his side shouting, "Now, George, play the man for God."

Mrs. John Wesley was a terror, and went on occasion even so far as hair-pulling, for which the saintly life of her spouse certainly gave little provocation.

Lawyers have had their share of marriage tribulations. Bacon and Coke were rivals for the hand of a lady who chose the latter, and made him desperately unhappy.

Doctors marry cannily. They can judge women well. Thus Erasmus Darwin made extensive inquiries about Mrs. Pole before he married his second wife. Abernethy told his lady that he had no time to "make love," and she must take him yes or no, P.D.Q. She took him.

Cromwell had nine children and ruled as well as loved their mother. Marlborough was a conquering general, but Sarah Jennings, his wife, ruled him with an iron hand. But she loved him, too, and when he died she refused to marry the proud Duke of Somerset, because she "wouldn't permit the emperor of the world to come after John, Duke of Marlborough." "Chinese" Gordon never married because he never found a woman who would follow him to the ends of the earth. Garibaldi did find such a woman, who actually went into battle by his side. Nelson fell in love in Quebec

with a young widow and played under a table with her little boy. They were married, but Nelson became unfaithful under the charm of Lady Hamilton, and it was the name of the latter not the wife, that was on his lips when he died.

HOARDING THEIR MONEY.

Many and strange were the devices of our grandmothers for hoarding away their wealth, and even at the present time, despite the facilities offered by banks and burglar proof safes, there are many women who will not intrust their savings to the keeping of another person, but who search for queer hiding places in which to deposit their possessions.

The stocking bank, the favorite hiding place of a past generation, has now become almost obsolete, except with a very few old-fashioned people in quiet out of the way villages, yet there are many methods of storing away money and valuables equally quaint which are still adopted by ladies.

An elderly spinster, a friend of the writer, who resides in one of the many ancient houses to be found in Chester, England, had a set of large stationary drawers topped by cupboards specially built into a huge closet in one of the rooms. The lower drawer, instead of resting directly on the floor, ran on grooves about two inches above it. This lower drawer she would pull out, and place large sums of money and all her jewel cases in the space left below, and then replace the drawer, which she kept filled with linen. The old lady would always declare that if the house was broken into and the drawers ransacked no one would think of pulling them right out, and that her hiding place was far safer than any bank.

Equally shrewd was a woman in Liverpool, who, whenever she had occasion to leave her home at all, would put her money and jewelry in the coal scuttle, covering them up carefully with several layers of coal. This might have proved a somewhat risky experiment in the winter months, when the fire had to be fed, but the owner felt no burglar would ever dream of looking in a coal scuttle for valuables.

Another lady once confided to the writer that if she had occasion to leave her house empty she invariably placed her jewelry in her old shoes, which were placed alongside the new ones. Quite a lot of valuables can be forced down into the toes without giving the slightest evidence of the value therein.

Of other hiding places, perhaps the most popular, especially for paper money, is the big family Bible. It is quite a customary thing in out of the way country houses to thus secure any valuable papers in the possession of the family. Tea caddies and sugar bowls make excellent temporary safes, and the pocket of an old dress hanging in an unopened way in a wardrobe is regarded by many women as one of the safest places imaginable for spare-rings, broches and bracelets.

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AN INDEX TO CHARACTER.

If I could see into a girl's room I could always tell the character of the occupant, for the mind almost invariably reflects the manner, just as the manner reflects the mind, says a writer.

Given a tidy, clean, neat, well-ordered room I would argue a sweet, settled, well-balanced disposition, and in nine cases out of ten I would be right. There are, of course, exceptions but it is with the vast body of women I am dealing. On the other hand, a dirty, disorderly, disagreeable room will usually find in it a tenant like unto itself.

True, a girl with an untidy room may appear as fresh as a daisy on the street, but that is only her public character and aspect. In private life and in her heart she is exactly what her room tells you she is. I have seen a young man captivated by a young woman who appeared to be all that was nice and sweet and fresh and gracious but when he became better acquainted with her, when he saw her in her home, he was compelled to change his mind, and his affections also soon underwent a change. Depend upon it, your real character will show itself some day. You will be found out, no matter how you may hide your faults behind the bedroom door. Therefore, I say to all young women—keep your room tidy, and let it be a true index of your mind and character.

SEVERE PUNISHMENT.

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Second Boy—Yes. What did she do? Made me take a bath!

THE FAIRY PART.

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Tommy—And is that why you call it a fairy story?

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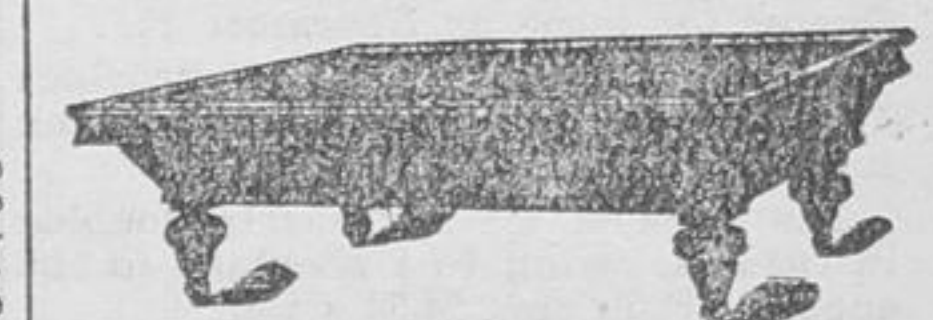
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