

MARRIAGE.

Addresses at the Ceremony Delivered by English Clergymen.*

A rubric to be found in the Church of England Prayer Book provides for the delivery of a sermon during the marriage ceremony itself on the duties of man and wife. Original addresses are frequently substituted for the Prayer Book homily, so that the Rev. Mr. Wardell-Yarburgh, vicar of St. Mary's, Tewkesbury, has made this collection of sermons delivered by well-known men; the profits from the sale of the volume to go to the Clergy Sustentation Fund.

The clergymen whose addresses have been chosen, represent all schools of thought, and the sermons included in the volume have been divided into two general classes—those for "the educated" and "simpler addresses" delivered to the poorer congregations. A number of marriage hymns, some of which were still unpublished, have also been added, as well as valuable suggestions for the arrangement of choral weddings, the latter being by the Rev. James Baden-Powell, precentor of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.

As would be expected, these addresses having been carefully chosen from among those made by some of the best-known clergymen of the Church of England, the language used and sentiments embodied will be found very beautiful. The Rev. Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London, in the course of his sermons says:

It is human love which is the great teacher of the mystery of personality. It shows us that there is something in ourself beyond the sum of our qualities, our capacities, and our activities—something which binds all these together and gives them a connected meaning. You have learned that this self grows larger by being merged in that of another. It does not grow by observation from without, but by a revelation from within. This revelation can best be gained by perfect intimacy with another. It needs the guarantee of inseparable companionship in all things. Its success depends upon the completeness of mutual intercourse. This intercourse, this companionship, must grow with your growth and become the centre of your soul's progress. For this purpose fancy must be turned into something which may endure, and the gossamer threads of sentiment must be woven into the homespun stuff of daily life. This process is only possible if, from the very beginning, you fully recognize its necessity and its importance. Constant intimacy demands perpetual self-discipline for the purpose of self-surrender. Only so does one soul grow nearer to another, because each feels that it is helped by the other to grow into an ever-widening world.

Dean Hole, whose lectures in America revealed to us a most agreeable personality, makes a very strong point in his address when he points out the reason why certain unions end disastrously:

Why do we see so many unhappy marriages, so much wicked rebellion against the Divine decree. "Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"? Because they are too often made impetuously, from passionate admiration, for social position, increase of income, even from pique and disappointment, without consideration of character, temper, education, or religion. Because marriage is regarded by some as a civil contract, and not as a Divine ordinance. Because the solemn service of the Church is too often regarded as a mere form—the words fly up, the thoughts remain below. Nay, we have that service mutilated, at the suggestion of those who have not the love which thinketh no evil, who cannot understand that to the pure all things are pure, and by those who, ignoring the vows of obedience to the Church, make their timid concessions to the world.

Again we find the Rev. Mr. Barker, Canon of St. Paul's, summing up very completely what should be a wife's aims and a husband's hopes and duties in the relationship they are about to enter, telling us that a woman's highest aim should be to merge her own interests, hopes, and ambitions in those of her husband—all separate or independent life going toward the weakening, if not the actual destruction, of the sacred idea of marriage. To the man he points out that married life is in its highest sense self-sacrificial, bidding him learn to be patient, forbearing, and chivalrous.

Unselfishness and true manliness win from the woman more and more, as the stream of life broadens and deepens, that deeper affection and trust which are the true glory of the woman, as they are the strength of the man. If a meek and quiet spirit is like a necklace of pearls around a woman's neck, so courage and patience, unselfishness and love are like a crown of glory round about a man's brow.

Canon Rawnsley's address is not only beautifully worded, but contains very valuable advice, as will be seen from the following:

We all bid you God-speed, and tell you in the quaint words of the old homily to have no fear with any amazement, for though the world is all before you where to choose, you go forth upon a most adventurous journey, and the good angels will go with you to guide you into all peace, on this one condition, that the spirit of self-sacrifice is yours. The spirit of self-sacrifice, mark you, for married life is not all dreams; it has its hard realities. The way of married life is not all smooth; it has its ups and downs; nor is it all roses. It is give and take from first to last. * * * It is your privilege God helping you, to make this earth a little more like heaven. * * * The late master of Balliol, Dr. Jowett, said: "Marriage is the greatest event of life; it is also a new beginning of life. It is a home for the lonely, a haven of rest for those who have been too much tossed by the storms of life. It is the best and most lasting thing. It is heaven upon earth, to live together in perfect amity, and disinterestedness, and unselfishness, to the service of God and man, until our life is over."

The Canon of Liverpool, the Rev. J. W. Willink, introduces a beautiful and unusual appropriate simile into his address:

There will, of course, be trials and difficulties to face. What life is free, or ought to wish to be free, from them? But, as in the great ocean it is found that, no matter how the storms may roar and the waves may toss upon the troubled surface, the deep underlying depths are ever in peaceful calm, so it is with wedded life and love; under the surface of life, possibly to be ruffled or storm-tossed by sorrow and sickness

and disappointment, there are the depths of mutual confidence and loving faith which no trouble can reach, no storm assail, and the peaceful calm of your wedded love will but grow and expand till time be merged in eternity, and the heavenly rest of the Father's home above opens out before you in all its fullness of unending glory.

But in a portion of an address delivered by the Rev. F. L. Boyd, Vicar of St. Albans, Teddington, will be found the most important, perhaps, of all the advice anywhere offered.

Further, we should all like to say that if a marriage is to mean the foundation of a happy home, the home must be for each the centre of personal happiness. It is a matter of common observation that there are homes which are mere lodging houses, in which those who are most concerned have real pleasure and interest in other quarters—where the husband finds the essential qualities of life in business or in public duties—or at his club; when the wife feels that her real satisfactions are obtained in "society," or in artistic or charitable work, the home, in any true sense of the word, ceases to exist. Home is the place where the heart dwells; within whose sacred walls are treasured the joys, the hopes, the fruits, and the purposes of life; it is the starting point of all the ideals and efforts, the desires and ambitions which go to make us what we are; from it we go forth into the world to enter into whatever tasks and duties, whatever relaxations and enjoyments, God may set before us, and to it we return bearing with us the choicest results of our external life and labors, as the gleaner in his bosom bears back to his family the precious sheaves. All this, and much else, that is involved in it, the Church and the world agree to say, solemnly and earnestly, to those who are married.

The simpler addresses are not expressed in such beautiful language, but make up for what they lose in charm of diction by being strong, direct, and to the point. The Rev. Spencer Jones, Rector of Botsford, makes some very good points in the address from which the following is an extract:

Learn how to differ without quarrelling, and how to argue without sneering. * * * Our differences, representing as they do different points of view, make life interesting and keep it always fresh. * * * But there must be moments of clash and conflict, and then you must know how to give and take. It is what are called small worries that fret, and if we are not careful, they will produce a cleavage all the more serious for being so gradually felt. * * * Remember to give and take, and when you cannot be kind, learn to hold your tongue. And, last of all, as it is God who has made you one, it only God who can keep you so. Remember all divorces are not proclaimed in our courts of justice. It is the undercurrent that is so dangerous, the temptation to separate without saying so, to acquiesce in some miserable low level of life and let live. It is not this that you are undertaking today; a mere existence such as this is a marred and not a married life.

*MARRIAGE ADDRESS AND MARRIAGE HYMNS. By Wardell-Yarburgh. Edited by the Rev. O. P. Wardell-Yarburgh, M. A., Vicar of the Abbey Church of St. Mary, Tewkesbury. London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co. 1900.