

The Bee's Home Magazine Page

The Sixth Commandment

"Fifty-Fifty" with Spouse—Grafting Wives and Selfishness of Husbands Causes of Disaster.

By DOROTHY DIX.

This is the sixth commandment of matrimony:

Thou shalt split thy pleasures and thy shekels "fifty-fifty" with the partner of One of the great troubles of matrimony is that few couples ever have the honesty and fairness to make a fair divide of its responsibilities and burdens and perquisites.



Sometimes it is the husband who "welches" on his end of the bargain. Sometimes it is the wife who ducks out from under her end of it. Sometimes you see a husband who thinks he has a right to be a little tin god in his house, while his wife should be contented to be an adoring slave.

Sometimes it is the wife who feels that she is entitled to all the domestic sweets, while her husband is left only the bitter; but seldom do you see a man and woman working together and splitting "fifty-fifty" in domestic life. And when you do see this, you behold an inspiring spectacle of connubial bliss.

There are women who look upon matrimony as graft, and at husbands as easy things that they work for their individual profit. These are the ladies that we see resplendent in the latest creations from Paris while their husbands wear coats that are shiny at the seams and hats of last year's vintage. These are the ladies who roll about in limousines while their husbands hang on to traps in the street cars, and who go to Bar Harbor in summer and Palm Beach in the winter, while their husbands toil on through heat and cold with never a vacation in their hard-worked lives.

These women—and their name is Mrs. Legion—do not make an even divide of matrimony. They are grafters who grab everything desirable that is in sight. They shunt the whole family burden on to their husband's poor shoulders instead of bearing their share.

You often hear a woman hypocritically bemoaning the fact that her husband will wear hand-me-down clothes, or that he won't ever go off on trips with her, or that he doesn't keep up with the new books and new plays, when the truth is that she works the poor fellow so hard to pay for her finery and luxuries that she doesn't leave him any time or strength or money for himself. He'd like to be well dressed and to amuse himself if she'd only split "fifty-fifty" with him, instead of leaving him only a jitney out of a dollar.

It is not always the woman, however, who is the family monopolist. Quite as often it is the man who holds to the cheerful theory that the husband, being the head of the house, is entitled to all the prerogatives thereof.

These are the men who think that when they marry they have conferred such an inestimable favor on a woman that she should never expect anything more to be done for her. They are strong for the contention that woman's place is in the home, and that she should ask no livelier amusement than taking care of the children and meeting her husband with a glad, sweet smile.

These are the men who look about twenty years younger than their wives, and who are turned out by the best tailors, while their wives make their own clothes and look it.

These are the men who always have plenty of money to belong to fashionable clubs, and to play golf, and to open wine in restaurants for chorus girls, but who dole out car fare to their wives by the nickel, and raise ructions over the size of the bills on the first of the month, and begrudge the baby certified milk.

Now, no really happy home was ever founded on selfishness, and no egotist man ever loved a woman well enough to enjoy being "worked" by her. No woman was ever self-abnegating enough to enjoy being offered up as a daily sacrifice to her husband. Patient Griselda is a mythical character. She never existed in real life.

The only way that any real happiness in married life is ever achieved is for the husband and wife to make an equal divide of everything, and this is just as much true of work, and cares, and responsibilities, as it is of joys and pleasures. No woman ever finds herself a real wife to her husband until he lets her in on the ground floor of his struggles and his ambitions. No woman ever feels that she is a real helpmeet to her husband until she has actually helped through some crisis.

It isn't enough for a real woman to be a show window by which her husband advertises his prosperity by hanging fine clothes and jewelry upon her. She wants to be something more to him—to enter his real life—and if men only understood this, and talked to their wives about their business, and their hopes and plans, fewer men would have to complain of woman's extravagance.

Women would be satisfied with very little if they knew that their husbands were giving them a square deal. It's the suspicion that they are being cheated of their share of the profits of the domestic partnership that makes the silent partner so often throw the firm into bankruptcy.

And the woman who realizes that it's up to her to give her husband a fair run for his money, that her part is to make a comfortable home, to be thrifty and cheerful and contented, has grafted her husband to her with hooks of steel. She can laugh at aunts and snap her fingers at aunts, for she has built her house of happiness upon the eternal rocks.

To make matrimony a success, forget not the sixth commandment, which says: Thou shalt split thy pleasures and thy shekels "fifty-fifty" with the partner of thy bosom.

"I Know a Girl There!"

No. 3 Montreal

By NELL BRINKLEY

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"Oh, I do know a girl there. A Canadian-American girl—a gay, graceful creature—and I wish I could see her now. The girl of snow and the sleighbells, with the cheeks as hard and scarlet as apples, with the brilliant, liquid eyes of a French father and his black hair with the coppery lights. Seems to me now, when I think, that always she was laughing—with a glimmer of fine white teeth and a tightening of the soft, red lips, and a deepening of the dimple in her slanting cheek. White and black and red she is. Like Snow White in the Glen with the Seven Little Men. The red of the scarlet maple leaf that grows on her mountainsides, the black of starlit night skies, the white of the

snow that froths around her skil and powders in a glitter her furs and toque. Last I saw her she stopped in a laughing trek up a steep slope deep in snow, her moccasins layered in white, her winged toboggan on her back, snow diamonds on her lashes, a drift of snowflakes dimming her glory of black and scarlet, one cold little hand bare, the scarlet of her trappings of sweater and mittens matching the blood in her cheeks, the black of her furs the hair that sprayed across her face; and, standing under the black and silver birch and a snow-blanketed fir, she waved a debonair good-by.

Snow-white and rose-red and still-water black—the Montreal girl.—NELL BRINKLEY.

Tragedy of Loneliness : But Girls and Men Must Meet in Conventional Ways to Insure Respectful Friendship.

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.

I am twenty-five, good-looking, nice appearance, athletic build, good dressed, fairly educated. I am not so very well acquainted here. I have lots of opportunities to flirt, but I lack the nerve to be too forward, although I am not bashful in any way.

I sure am lonesome, lonesome in this big city, and I certainly would like to make the acquaintance of some nice young ladies, but don't know how.

LONGFORD.

In response to this letter, which appeared in The Bee less than a fortnight ago, I have received no less than a hundred letters from girls who are lonely, too.

My sympathy is great for each of the lonely individuals who seek congenial companionship and who is sufficiently attracted by a printed letter to ask for advice. I know that in every large city there are dozens of girls and men who want to know pleasant young folk of the opposite sex—and who jump at every straw that offers them the opportunity. And it is one of the tragedies of life in a city that this grasping at straws won't do.

Friendships between men and women if they are to flourish and count for anything worth while in life must be based on mutual faith and trust. Mutual faith and trust do not come through faith and trust irregularly. Suspicion is meeting people irregularly. Suspicion is meeting people irregularly. Suspicion is meeting people irregularly. Suspicion is meeting people irregularly.

Loneliness does not stop because you know people. "I am never so lonely as when I am with other people," is bitterly true when those other people are not congenial and of your own sort.

The one great consolation about the tragedy of loneliness is that it is in no way final. It may always be overcome. Perhaps tomorrow the sad little girl who goes from her hall bedroom to work and comes drowsily back to her hall bedroom from work may quite simply and naturally meet some one through the knowing of whom her whole life's course may be changed.

A girl I know went obligingly to look for an apartment for a relative who was coming to her town. With her was a girl friend who waited in the lobby for her. When the home hunter came back from her unrewarded search she found her girl friend deep in conversation with a man who happened to live in that building.

Though he was a family connection of this girl's they took no interest in one another. The girl who chanced to be introduced to him came to be a very good friend of his, and through him she became a member of a thoroughly congenial circle of charming men and women. To any lonely girl just such a pleasant experience may come any day.

Who of us knows what waits "just around the corner"? Who of us wants to risk because of unpleasant present conditions the chance fully to enjoy happy experiences when they do come? Loneliness must never tempt us into indirection or danger. Life has to be lived according to its rules and friendships must come naturally, honestly and with dignified beginnings.

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Why We Quarreled

No. 5—The Man's Side—The Man Who Liked an Occasional Drink Tells His Story.

By VIRGINIA TERRHUNE VAN DE WATER.

(Copyright, 1915, by The Star Company)

Persons knowing that my wife and I have quarrelled about my drinking might think that I am a drunkard. On the contrary, I am fairly temperate. I am not a total abstainer, though Susan's father is. Had she asked me before our marriage if I drank, I would have told her the truth. But she never asked me.

When we had been married for some months she smelled liquor on my breath one evening and made a great fuss over it. I acknowledge that I had had one glass of whisky. "There is no harm in that," I affirmed.

"But there is," she declared. "Drink ruins more homes than any other vice in the world."

"It is not a vice," I insisted, "unless one carries it too far. And when I am tired or depressed I feel the need of a stimulant of some kind."

"Then why not take a cup of tea or coffee?" she argued.

I could not help laughing as I visualized myself taking such a bracer as this. Then, as I saw that my wife was really unhappy, I tried to soothe her.

"Dear Susan," I pleaded, "do be reasonable. I have never been drunk since my silly freshman year in college—and then only once."

"I tell you it is a wicked habit and a senseless one," she reiterated, and in her declaration I recognized her father's teaching. "It makes me miserable to think of it. It leads to sorrow and disgrace."

I appreciated that she was absolutely unreasonable on this subject, so I tried, without lying to her, to make her think that I would hereafter let drink alone. In my soul I determined to do as I had always done. I certainly had enough self-control not to go too far. Ignorance is bliss, and if a wife is foolish about a matter it is wise and right for a husband to avoid worrying her.

For a while Susan watched me closely, and she often sniffed the air about me suspiciously as if to make sure that it did not smell of liquor. I was very careful that it should not. I confined my

drinking to a day to the noon hour when I was out at luncheon. By the time I reached home in the evening there was no odor on my breath.

I do not consider that this was wicked deceit. Had I objected to Susan's taking ice cream soda, had I scolded her whenever she did take it, I would surely have expected her to keep silent with regard to her frequent visits to the soda fountain.

A year passed before the final catastrophe occurred. My wife had gone up town to spend the day with her sister. As noon it began to storm, and at 4 o'clock Susan telephoned to my office that if the rain continued I must not be worried if she did not return until morning.

"If it holds up enough for me to come, without getting very wet, I will adhere to my original plan and be back at dinner time," she said. "But if it storms heavily, I am afraid that sister will insist on my staying where I am."

"I understand," I said, "and while I shall miss you, of course, I do not want you to risk catching cold."

The rain was falling faster and more persistently at 6 o'clock. This convinced me that my wife would not return to-night. So when a friend invited me to dine with him at his club, I accepted. I telephoned to the maid at my house that I would not be in to dinner, and that her mistress would stay over night with her sister.

I had no umbrella and was so wet by the time my friend and I reached the club that I immediately took a glass of whisky.

My friend ordered more drinks with the dinner. I supposed that as I was tired, and my stomach was very empty, I was more susceptible than usual to the effects of the stimulant. For the first time in many years I felt that my brain was clouded and befogged. I was secretly glad that my host went as far as my home with me. I was still more glad, as I let myself in the house—assisted by my companion in inserting the latchkey into the hole intended for it—that Susan was absent.

Imagine my horror when she met me at the door of our bedroom.

"Oh, my dear," she began, "I'm so glad—"

Then at sight of me, she stopped short, her face turning deathly white. I attempted to laugh and kiss her, but she struck at me, beside herself with anger and disgust.

"You're drunk!" she exclaimed shrilly. I tried to explain, but it was useless. I knew that my tongue was thick and my words were not as convincing as I wished to make them.

The next morning we "had it out." Susan told me that she had helped me into bed last night—that she did this as a duty, because she was my wife. She also remarked, shudderingly, that I was loathsome to her. Then she added that she would never trust me again—never.

"You have been drinking right along ever since we were married," she accused. "I know, because a man my sister knows mentioned to her that he takes what he calls his daily 'nip' with you every noon."

I could not deny this, and did not try to. "But there's no harm in it," I added.

"No harm!" she repeated, her eyes wide and angry. "There is harm enough in it for me to determine that I will not live with you any longer. No," as I tried to plead with her, "until you promise me, swearing it on the Bible, that you will never touch another drop of liquor, I will not stay under your roof."

She thinks she is right, yet I am sure that if she really loved me she could never have reached this decision.

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