

- She has the capacity and willingness to stand by her husband at all times.

THE IDEAL WIFE

Who invented marriage? I do not know; if I did, I should place his name above the greatest inventors of merely scientific contraptions. I say "his" advisedly, because I am certain it was a man. No woman would have thought of such a thing, and if she had, she would have thought twice before mentioning it. Almost any woman can get along fairly well without a husband; she is in her inmost mind as independent and self-sufficient as a cat. A bachelor is like a lost dog. Even if he has so much money that he can furnish his apartment luxuriously, it is only a glorified kennel. As a rule, he never goes there so long as anything else is open.

Among all novelists, the most consummate artist was the Russian, Ivan Turgenev. He had the satisfaction of knowing, while he was yet alive on earth, that he had written immortal books, that

his works would never be forgotten. What did he think of all that? He was a bachelor. He said that he would give all his art, all his books, all his fame, if there were one woman in the world who cared whether he came home late to dinner.

The paradox of wives is that they are at once more idealistic and more practical than their husbands. They are an inspiration and a leveler. They are believers in the church, in the symphony concert, in the art gallery, and in poetry. They allure to brighter worlds and lead the way. At the same time, they bring their men back from futile rages over trivialities. They are practical.

If we relied on contemporary novels for our information concerning the success of marriage as an "institution," we should be pessimists. Happy the nation that has no history. Happy the marriage which has no news.

An unhappy marriage is still "news," which is why it is featured in sensational papers and made the foundation of novels. If we used reading instead of observation, we might easily be led to believe that the first year of married life is the happiest; that passion, then aflame, is soon extinct; that husband and wife regard each other with an indifference that sinks into contempt. The facts are quite otherwise.

When I was a young man, a college friend of mine was married to a charming girl; on the wedding trip he was smitten with illness, and in a few days was dead. Talking about that to a much older man, I exclaimed, "Is there anything more tragic than that?" To my surprise, he replied, "Oh, yes — they had been married only a few days. It would have been more tragic if they had been married twenty-five years. Real tragedy is the loss of a lifelong mate." He was right.

The deep meaning of love is not found in passionate exclamations of frenzied adoration; it is seen in casual remarks such as, "Now don't

go out without your rubbers on," and in real concern for the mate when he sneezes. For a man to live in solid contentment, there must be some one with whom he comes *first*. When he loses her, there is no one to take her place.

The capacity of women to *stand by* their men, their husbands, their sons, and their brothers, is one of their sublimest characteristics. The innumerable number of men over whom hangs that constant tragic fear, the fear of losing their job — for men need, even more than higher wages, security of tenure — know that the most tragic element in (when it comes) will be telling the woman waiting at home. Yet how many thousand men who have been told their "services are no longer needed," going home in despair to tell the woman dependent on the bread-winner, find from her lips, instead of taunts, or what is worse, silent acquiescence in a husband who is a failure, the words of comfort, of support, and of reassuring faith.

The greatest literary artist in American history, our fore-

most novelist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, not only owed his success to the daily inspiration of his wife, but his only opportunity to compose first his mind, and then his masterpiece. If it had not been for Sophia, perhaps we should not now remember Nathaniel. He lost his job in the Custom House. A broken-hearted man, he went home to tell his wife that he was a failure. To his amazement, she beamed with joy, and said, "Now you can write your book!" To his bitter rejoinder, "Yes and what shall we live on while I am writing it?" the astounding woman opened a

drawer and took out an unsuspected hoard of cash. "Where on earth did you get that?" "My husband, I have always known that you were a man of genius. I knew that someday you would write an immortal masterpiece. So every week, out of the money you have given me for house-keeping, I have saved something; here is enough to last us one whole year." Hawthorne sat down and wrote the finest book ever written in the western hemisphere — "The Scarlet Letter." — *By William Lyon Phelps, Professor of English Literature at Yale University, condensed from Apr. '30, Delineator.*

THE UNEXPECTED FRIEND

Thousands of appeals for pardon came to Lincoln from soldiers involved in military discipline. Each appeal was as a rule supported by letters from influential people. One day a single sheet came before him, an appeal from a soldier without any supporting documents.

"What!" exclaimed the President, "has this man no friends?"

"No, sir, not one," said the adjutant.

"Then," said Lincoln, "I will be his friend."