# The Marriage Problem

By REBECCA WEST

*Author of "The Judge," "The Return of the Soldier," etc.*

### *The Small Apartment Responsible for So Many Divorces*

WHAT marriage will be a century hence depends not on chasing the boy and girl off the dance floor and subjecting them to Puritan talk about lovemaking, pretending that that which is really extremely pleasant is unpleasant, but on three things which on the surface are totally unconnected with sex.

*Two of them look like making marriage less stable, more likely to be broken up by divorce; one of them looks like keeping it more stable. These three things are: Houses, liquor and transport.*

The future of marriage depends very little on what people say and think about sex, because sex is so deep a force that what people say and think is as likely as not to be just a surface pretense designed to disguise from others and themselves what it really means to them.

*The future of marriage does depend on the houses people live in; what they drink; and the extent to which they are able to move about over the country.*

The houses people live in affect their marriage relationships profoundly. This is not true of very rich people, who everywhere and in all ages have been given to divorce because they get a restless feeling that they can have everything of the best and that they had better get on with it before they die. So they pass from marriage to marriage just as they travel from country to country. It is also not true of very poor people, who everywhere and in all ages cannot get divorced, because they cannot afford alimony. But it is true of the vast class that lies between these extremes.

*The English Victorian middle class practically never got divorced. They pretended it was because they were virtuous. But was it? If you go and look at the villas they lived in an alternate explanation will occur to you. Those houses have three and four large sitting-rooms with maybe a billiard room as well, and eight or ten or more bedrooms, and good-sized gardens. Even allowing for their large families, they had plenty of room to get away from each other.*

When the husband and wife felt resentment against each other, he could go into his study on one story, she into her sewing room on another.

*But a husband and wife living in a three-roomed apartment or a bungalow cannot move more than a few yards from the scene of their disagreements.*

*The person who is really breaking up modern marriage is the bricklayer.*

And as it is unlikely that the cost of building will go down, it seems probable that he will go on doing so.

The only essential condition of marriage is that the persons concerned should admire each other. It is impossible to admire a person who is bleary-eyed and incoherent and undignified.

Though the small apartment and the cocktail bar are working against the stability of the marriage of the future, the earth itself, the soil we walk on, is working for it. People do not get divorced quite so lightly if they are fixed for life in one community.

*A merchant, a doctor, a lawyer, in an English town cannot very easily get up and go somewhere else and start afresh, and his duties will rarely call on him to go more than a few hours from his home. This means that when he is married he rarely meets anybody who does not know it, who is not equally acquainted with his wife; and that if he should get divorced he will have to stay there on the scene of the crime while his wife's friends and his own friends talk the matter out. Therefore, he usually decides to stay put.*

Only one in every hundred English marriages is dissolved. In America things are different. People rush up and down the new country staking out its resources, seizing its opportunities; and in the process they lose their husbands and wives as they might lose their luggage.

*John Smith goes to California and leaves his wife, Mary, in Nebraska; Mary forgets him and makes other arrangements, or maybe John participates in the advantages that are said to belong to the visiting team, and meets somebody who admires him so much that he forgets his Mary. One in ten American marriages is dissolved. But this will end. America's resources will be staked out, her opportunities will be rationed; and John Smith will have to stick to his job, and consequently to his wife.*

As for the essence of marriage apart from its stability, it will be the same a century hence as it is now; a curious kind of cross between a dog-fight and the peace that passeth all understanding; something that nobody quite likes and nearly everybody likes well enough to stay in for life once they have got in. So it will be one century hence; or any number of centuries hence.

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# NEWS ITEMS IN AND AROUND GALENA

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kruser, Mr. William McCarthy and Miss Eva McCauley, of Philadelphia, Pa., were week end guests of latters mother, Mrs. Eva McCauley.

Mr. Irving Vansant and son, John, of Wilmington, Del., were Sunday guests of the formers brother, Mr. L. R. Vansant.

Mrs. Alice Crawford and Mrs. McGregor, of Chestertown are chaperoning a party of girls at Rehoboth for two weeks. In the group are: Misses Beppy Westcott, Anne Cameron, Miriam Newcomb, Marian Aldrige, Alma Dean, Margaret Ellen Ford, Alice Crawford, Margaret Crawford.

Miss Jennie Brockson and Miss Noreen Devilin, of Philadelphia, Pa., are guests of the formers grand-mother, Mrs. Walter Hadley.

Mrs. Lula Gale returned home last Saturday evening after spending the past month with her daughter, Mrs. Samuel Caldwell near Chesapeake City.

Miss Rosa Ritchie, of Baltimore, Md., is visiting at the home of Mrs. Bessie Hurtt in Georgetown, Md.

Mrs. Abbie Pearce is visiting relatives near Middletown, Del.

Mr. and Mrs. Herchel Calloway, of Chestertown, Md., spent last Sunday with her mother, Mrs. W. L. Starr.

Mr. Bernard Cochran and family, of Philadelphia, Pa., were week end guests of his mother, Mrs. Wilson Cochran, Mrs. Cochran returned with them for a visit.

Mr. Leif Ericcson, of Baltimore, Md. was a Sunday guest of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cruickshank, of near town.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Craddoch and children, of Prospect Park, Pa., were Sunday guests of her mother, Mrs. Josephine Davis.

Mrs. James D. Davis, Jr., returned home on Monday.

Mrs. George Newcomb and children returned home last Saturday after spending several weeks with her relatives at Ellicotts Island, near Cambridge, Md.

Mrs. Terry Mitchell and son, of Waynesboro, Pa., is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Vansant.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Boyd and family, of Middletown, Del., spent last Sunday with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Boyd.

The Salem Y. M. C. A. Camp of New Jersey, arrived on its annual trip to the Farm of Mr. Robert Cochran, near town.

Mrs. Joseph Nicolls and children, of Baltimore, Md., are visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Boyd.

Miss Junita Boyles, of near Cecilton, Md., visited her friend, Miss Alice Prettyman last Friday.

Miss Genevieve Cochran returned to her position in the Galena Bank last Monday after a two weeks vacation.

Miss Carolyn Coxe returned home last Friday after spending several weeks with her aunt, Mrs. Wm. Otty in Philadelphia, Pa.

# PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ITEMS IN KENNEDYVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. Ray King and children and Mrs. George Ringgold and Rodger spent Monday in Wilmington and Dover.

The Mite Society met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ross Wiltbanks.

Mrs. Earl Nickerson has not been so well and was unable to return home last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Van Atta, of Baltimore, spent the week end with her mother, Mrs. Bessie Cain.

Sergeant J. A. Dickerson, of Baltimroe, wife and three children, Angelius, Joseph and Vernon visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Medford Jones last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bratton, of Hamilton Park, Del., formerly of Kent County, Md., are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on July 28.

Mrs. Bratton is a sister of Mr. Wilmer Fords. Miss Lena Garey is spending this week in Philadelphia with Mr. and Mrs. Howard Leathem.

Mrs. James Toulson, of Fairlee and Mrs. Ralph Tucker, of Rock Hall, spent Wednesday with Mrs. Medford Jones.

Preaching as usual in Grace Presbyterian church Sunday evening at 8 p. m. as this is the last service until September. Members andf riends are asked to worship with us.

Mr. and Mrs. John Georges spent Sunday in Atlantic City.

Miss Elaine Theodore, of Baltimore, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Medford Jones.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Roader spent a few days with Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Webb, near Cecilton.

Miss Sue Johnston, of Washington, D. C., spent the week end with her sister, Mrs. James Weer and children.

Mrs. Acca Crew and Miss Lula Van Dyke spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Julian Crew.

Mrs. Joe McHenry and son returned on Sunday from a pleasant visit with relatives in Philadelphia.

Mr. and Mrs. John Glen and Mr. Milton Glenn, of Rock Hall, visited Mr. and Mrs. George Glenn on Sunday.

Mrs. William Lipscomb is spending this week with her mother and sister, near Camden.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Johnston and children, Mr. William Johnston, Miss Sue Johnston and Mr. Hesey were Sunday dinner guests of Mrs. James Weer and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Scotten and daughters, Mrs. Davis, of Wilmington and Mrs. Carl Lynch and son, Alvin, of Newark, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. William Anthony.

Mrs. Ada Hitch, of Queenstown visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Hurlock last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Massey, of Virginia, returned to their home on Sunday after a pleasant visit with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kennedy. Mrs. Kennedy returned home with them.

Mr. and Mrs. White and Delia Ann spent the week end at Rehoboth.

Mr. and Mrs. Ryland Crow have returned to their apartment in the Shafer house.

Mr. Robert Hill and Mr. William Irving visited near Suddlersville on Saturday and found Mr. Irving's brother very ill, he passed away on Sunday evening.

Rev. Ferguson spent a part of last week here visiting his members and friends.

Mr. and Mrs. George Rasin and Dr. and Mrs. Urie are spending a few days at Rehoboth.

Mrs. Mary Green, of Church Hill, was Sunday visitors at her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Archibald.

Officer (to colored driver who has been whipping his horse): 'Don't whip him, man—talk to him.'

Driver (to horse, by way of opening the conversation): 'Ah comes from N'Awleans. Where does you come from?'—Southern Lumberman.

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