

tion has set in. Hence it is in the highest degree probable that the savage is doomed to disappear from the earth, and in his place a hybrid race will spring up, only in its turn to go the way of the mammoth and the cave-bear.

## THE BOOK OF TOBIT AND THE HINDU-CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IDEAL.

BY ALBERT J. EDMUNDS.

ALL Christians have heard that marriages are made in heaven; the Quakers believe that God will choose you a wife if you will listen to Him (see story at the end); while down to our own times the Armenians have kept up the platonic marriages of the early Church. The researches of Conybeare have made it possible at last to translate a long-misunderstood passage in Corinthians:

"If any man considers he is not behaving properly to the maid who is his spiritual bride, if his passions are strong and if it must be so, then let him do what he wants—let them be married." (1 Cor. vii. 36, translated by Moffatt: London, 1913.)

An Armenian folk-tale (told me orally) relates that a traveler asked for a night's rest, and the only bed was that of the host and his platonic wife. The former vacated in honor of the traveler. Suspended above the bed was a sieve, which began to leak. It was explained that this sieve supernaturally held water, but leaked if an impure thought occurred. The husband assured the guest that the sieve had successfully retained the water during the years of his spiritual marriage.

Conybeare has shown that the medieval chivalry about love goes back to this early Christian practice. But is the New Testament its only literary source? We have used the word *platonic*, and many people imagine that Plato has some transcendental marriage ideas. Unfortunately the student knows better: the exalted passion of Plato refers to men, not women.

For centuries there stood these words in the marriage ritual of the English Church:

"Look down, O Lord! from the heavens and bless this meeting. And as Thou didst send Thy holy angel Raphael to Tobias and Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, so wilt Thou deign, O Lord, to send Thy blessing upon these young people."

Of course, the pair heard this in Latin unless they were Lollards; and after the Reformation, the Tobias and Sarah were changed into Isaac and Rebekah, and again into Abraham and Sarah. But the deuterocanonical characters were perpetuated even in English, in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI.

The allusion to Tobias is especially appropriate in view of the English law which forbids a marriage to take place after the hour of noon. The reason behind this will appear in the sequel. That Shakespeare appears unconscious of any delay in the finalities of marriage would be an argument against the supposed fact that he was a Roman Catholic.

I doubt if any one but a Catholic or a Lutheran understands the implication which was present in the Middle Ages to the minds of well-read people who heard the name Tobias, or who saw his pictured story on the stained glass of church windows, like those at Banwell in Somersetshire.<sup>1</sup> This is because our modern London and New York Bible Societies have long refused to print the middle books between the Old Testament and the New—those valuable historical documents and not less valuable romances called by Protestants "The Apocrypha." Not only so, but even if the English reader goes to the Book of Tobit in his Protestant versions, he will miss the central feature of the love-story, which is only found in the Catholic Vulgate and in one Hebrew manuscript, known only to scholars. The story may be found in Rabbi Gaster's translation of this manuscript in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* for 1896, as well as in all translations made from Jerome's Vulgate. It is therefore accessible to readers of the Douai Version or of Luther's noble old German, because both are made from the Vulgate (the Douai throughout, of course, and Luther's for this particular book). I love to fancy that some Pennsylvania mystic beside the Wissahickon in 1743 might have shown the story, in his newly printed German Bible, published by Christopher Sauer, to the astonished Anglo-American, who had never seen it before. It is piquantly curious that the two great Puritan nations should be strangers thereto. Here it is, in the Catholic version of 1609:

"Then the angel Raphael said to him (Tobias): Hear me, and I will show thee who they are over whom the Devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves

<sup>1</sup> Brought from Belgium about 1855, but dating from the sixteenth century.

to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the Devil hath power. But thou, when thou shalt take her, go into the chamber, and for three days keep thyself continent from her, and give thyself to nothing else but to prayers with her. And on that night lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and the Devil shall be driven away. But the second night thou shalt be admitted into the society (*copulatione*) of the holy patriarchs. And the third night thou shalt obtain a blessing that sound children may be born of you. And when the third night is past, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children. . . .

"Then the angel Raphael took the Devil and bound him in the desert of Upper Egypt. Then Tobias exhorted the virgin and said to her: Sarah, arise, and let us pray to God to-day and to-morrow and the next day: because for these three nights we are joined to God: and when the third night is over, we shall be in our own wedlock. For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God."<sup>2</sup> (Tobit or Tobias vi. 16-22; viii. 3-5, Vulgate-Douai version.)

This story is not in the common English versions, which are translated from the Greek of the Septuagint. That the story was once in the Greek may be suspected from the words in chapter viii: "I take this my sister, not for lust, but in truth." And the spirituality of marriage is further enforced by the words in chapter vi (omitted by the Vulgate): "Fear not, for she is appointed unto thee from the beginning" (*from the eon*).

It is a curious fact that during Jerome's literary activity at Bethlehem, the Fourth Council of Carthage, held in 398, decreed as follows:

"Canon 13. The bridegroom and the bride must be presented to the priest by their relatives or the bridesmaids, when they are going to receive from him the nuptial blessing; and when they have received it, they must observe continence, out of respect for the same, for the night after this blessing."

The Church afterward extended this period of abstinence to

<sup>2</sup> There is a direct allusion to this in 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5: "Each of you should learn to take a wife for himself chastely and honorably, not to gratify sensual passion, like the Gentiles in their ignorance of God" (Moffatt's version, 1913). Cuthbert Latey, the Catholic translator, also 1913, follows Westcott and Hort in deducing the italics from Jer. x. 25 and Ps. lxxix. 6, but neither of these texts has *God*, being in the second person. That Paul was thinking of Tobit is manifest from the subject in hand. The Lutheran version rightly refers to Tobit.

three nights, evidently in imitation of Tobias, as indicated by the English rubric.

For a long time it was fancied by Protestants that, as the three nights were not in the Septuagint, the Old Latin, or the late Aramaic, they were a little joke of Jerome's, a pious invention of his, to encourage chastity. But in 1896, Moses Gaster of London found a Hebrew manuscript in the British Museum which contains the story, and he believed that this version was affiliated to the lost Aramaic which Jerome had used for his Vulgate. Other scholars do not agree with Gaster, and as this manuscript dates only from the thirteenth century, there is just a chance that it may have been influenced by the Vulgate.

All misgivings about Jerome may be dismissed, however, for, as Franklin Edgerton, the learned Sanskrit scholar of the University of Pennsylvania, has told me, the three nights are Hindu. They are in the Brahmin manual of domestic religion (*Grihiya Sûtras*). Sure enough, I have found them in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vols. XXIX and XXX, where they recur in every recension of this famous manual. The form known as Pâraskara says this:

"Through a period of three nights they shall eat no saline food; they shall sleep on the ground; through one year they shall refrain from conjugal intercourse, or through a period of twelve nights, or of six nights, or at least of three nights." (*S. B. E.*, XXIX, p. 286.)

Most recensions have three nights only, but that of Aqvalâyana adds that, if they abstain for a year, their son will be a prophet (Rishi). Here we have a possible germ of the Virgin Birth. Moreover, *the first three nights are spent in religious exercises*; the bridegroom (or both bridegroom and bride) sacrifice at sunset and sunrise with invocations to the gods. At dawn on the fourth day the ceremony for consummation begins, and they say almost in the words of Tobias: "May we live a hundred autumns!"

The Iranian background of Tobit is already familiar, with the Aryan dog-companionship and demonology (Asmodeus = *Aeshma daeva*). But here we have a Hindu background and an Iranian too. In the Hindu theory there is a demon present at marriage, the *gandharva*, who is anxious to participate in the pleasures. By means of abstinence or moderation this demon is warded off, and a higher power is invoked, which insures better offspring. This is the real meaning of Asmodeus being exorcised by the sacrifice. Asmodeus is merely a Hellenized form of an Iranian name; and

this name in turn is only another case of the familiar phenomenon of Hindu ideas being transformed in Persia.

The lost Aramaic used by Jerome was nearer to the Hindu-Persian original than the Greek or any other extant version, and the Roman Church deserves great credit for adhering to this Oriental text.

That the three nights are Iranian is rendered pretty certain by their observance to date in the Armenian Church. My learned friend Frank Normart assures me of this. At the wedding the priest ties a silken thread around the pair. The bride wears this thread until the third day after the ceremony, when the priest removes it. After this the marriage is consummated. Armenians regard as sacrilege our rough and ready nuptials. As observed above, the English Church attempted to mitigate the custom by prohibiting marriage after noon. It is just these vital things that are always dealt with by a whole-souled religion.

A Russian Jew in Philadelphia has assured me that when he was in Russia, late in the last century, a period of abstinence was regularly observed by Jewish brides and grooms.

The influence of Tobit in the Christian Church has been immense, and in Catholic countries Tobias is a common name. Indeed many a dog is called Toby to-day in remembrance of Tobias's, and a famous religious joke relates to this exemplary dog. Said a Protestant disputant to a Catholic (because in the Vulgate the dog wags his tail): "I can prove to you, according to the Council of Trent, that if you don't believe that Tobias's dog wagged his tail, you'll be damned!"

Little did we dream that our spiritualization of marriage was not merely derived from the love of Christ for the Church, but from the daily life of Hindus for immemorial ages.

Euripides, on the last page of the *Alcestis*, makes Hercules say to Admetus, after the return of Alcestis from the other world:

"Not yet is it right for thee to hear her speech until by the gods who reign below *she shall be deconsecrated, and the third morn shall come.*"

I owe this literal translation to Walter Woodburn Hyde, of the University of Pennsylvania. Henry Leffmann, who pointed out the passage, seemed to think that the third morn referred to our present subject; but may it not more probably be a reversal of the three days after death? In the Avesta and the original text of Mark, the soul rises up in the other world *after three days*. Paul, with Euripides, makes it the third day. However, it is quite

likely that, in the ancient mind, there was a direct connection between the three days after marriage and the three days after death.

In modern times, the despised Seer of Poughkeepsie, Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), wrote the philosophy of the universe in five volumes. The fourth of these was called *The Reformer* (Boston, 1855). The style is inflated, and the book has never ranked as literature. Nevertheless, it has an element of originality, for the only reform insisted upon is sex hygiene and control. When this is carried out, a finer type of children will be born, and all the problems will settle themselves!

In 1886 a physician told me that he had advised his son to observe continence in the early days of marriage, and was proud when the boy reported two weeks thereof. The physician was a Protestant and was almost certainly ignorant of the Vulgate story. A freethinking friend, when recently told of the Tobias nights, replied in substance: "I never heard of that, but I did it myself." Many an orthodox Christian would have been happier if he had done so too.

In conclusion I will transcribe from a Quaker autobiography of the eighteenth century an actual example of Divine guidance in marriage. It is taken from the Autobiography of David Ferris (Philadelphia, 1825), written shortly before his death, which occurred in 1779. The incident belongs to the year 1734.

"After I had been about six months in Philadelphia, I requested to be taken into membership with Friends; and was accordingly, received. Some time after I had joined the Society, I began to think of settling myself, and to marry, when the way should appear without obstruction; which was not then the case. I considered *marriage* to be the most important concern in this life. 'Marriage,' said the apostle, 'is honourable in all.' I concluded he meant that it was *honourable* to all who married from pure motives, to the right person, and in the proper way and time, as divine Providence should direct. I believed it best for most men to marry; and that THERE WAS, FOR EACH MAN, ONE WOMAN THAT WOULD SUIT HIM BETTER THAN ANY OTHER. It appears to me essential that all men should *seek for wisdom and wait for it*, to guide them in this important undertaking; because, NO MAN, WITHOUT DIVINE ASSISTANCE, IS ABLE TO DISCOVER WHO IS THE RIGHT PERSON FOR HIM TO MARRY; but the Creator of both can and will direct him. And why, in such an important concern, should we not seek for counsel, as well as in matters of minor consequence? There is, moreover, greater danger of

erring in this than in some other concerns, from our being too impatient to wait for the pointings of divine Wisdom; lest by so doing, we might lose some supposed benefit. It is common for young people to think and say, 'I would not marry such a person; for certain reasons: such as the want of beauty, wit, education,' etc.; and to affirm that they could not love such a one: but we may err by an over-hasty conclusion, as well as by any other neglect of our true Guide.

"I now propose to give some hints of my own proceedings in this concern. Near the place of my residence there lived a comely young woman, of a good, reputable family; educated in plainness; favoured with good natural talents; and in good circumstances. Every view of the case was favourable to my wishes.

"By some hints I had received, it appeared probable that my addresses would be agreeable to her; and some of my best friends urged the attempt. From inattention to my heavenly Guide, I took the hint from man; and following my own inclination, I moved without asking my divine Master's advice. I went to spend an evening with the young woman, if I should find it agreeable when there. She and her mother were sitting together; and no other person present. They received me in a friendly manner; but I think I had not chatted with them more than half an hour, before I heard something, like a still small voice, saying to me, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself?—seek them not.' This language pierced me like a sword to the heart. It so filled me with confusion, that I was unfit for any further conversation. I endeavoured to conceal my disorder; and soon took my leave, without opening, to either the mother or her daughter, the subject which had led me to visit them. And I, afterwards, had substantial reason to think it was well for me that I had failed in this enterprize.

"I was so confused and benumbed by this adventure that I did not recover my usual state for several months; though I could not suddenly see that my error was acting without permission; but began to suppose that I should never be suffered to marry; and should have to pass my life without a companion, or a home. I endeavoured to be resigned to this view; supposing it was the Lord's will; but, for several months, it was a severe trial. At length I was brought to submit, and say, 'Amen.' This simple account of my visit to that young woman, is designed as a warning to others; that they may shun the snare into which I was so near falling.

"I shall now relate another of my movements, with respect to marriage, which I believe was a right one; as it terminated to lasting

satisfaction. It may appear strange to some: as if I married in the cross; and, I suppose, few will be inclined to follow my example. Yet, if the divine Teacher of truth and righteousness be attended to, it may be the lot of some. After I had been much mortified and humbled, under a sense of my former mis-step, I went, one day, to a Friend's house to dine. As I sat at the table, I observed a young woman sitting opposite to me, whom I did not remember ever to have seen before. My attention, at that time, being otherwise engaged, I took very little notice of her; but a language very quietly, and very pleasantly, passed through my mind, on this wise, 'If thou wilt marry that young woman, thou shalt be happy with her.'<sup>9</sup> There was such a degree of divine virtue attending the intimation, that it removed all doubt concerning its origin and Author. I took a view of her, and thought she was a goodly person; but, as we moved from the table, I perceived she was lame. The cause of her lameness I knew not; but was displeased that I should have a cripple allotted to me. It was clear to me, beyond all doubt, that the language I had heard was from heaven; but I presumptuously thought I would rather choose for myself. The next day the subject was calmly presented to my mind, like a query, 'Why shouldst thou despise her for her lameness? it may be no fault of hers. Thou art favoured with sound limbs, and a capacity for active exertion: and would it not be kind and benevolent in thee, to bear a part of her infirmity, and to sympathize with her? She may be affectionate and kind to thee: and thou shalt be happy in a compliance with thy duty.' Notwithstanding all this, I continued to reason against these convictions; alleging that it was more than I could bear. The enemy of my happiness was busily engaged, in raising arguments against a compliance with my duty, suggesting that it was an unreasonable thing that I should be united to a lame wife; and that every one who knew me, would admire at my folly.<sup>3</sup> Thus, from day to day, and week to week, I reasoned against it; until at length, my kind Benefactor, in a loving and benevolent manner, opened to my view, that, if I were left to choose for myself, and to take a wife to please my fancy, she might be an affliction to me all the days of my life: and lead me astray, so as to endanger my future happiness. Or she might fall into vicious practices; notwithstanding that, at the time of her marriage, she might be apparently virtuous; it was, therefore, unsafe to trust to my natural understanding. On

<sup>3</sup> The author's person was rather uncommonly good, and it is probable he might have thought too highly of personal excellence. [Note by the Quaker editor of 1825.]



the other hand, here was a companion provided for me by unerring Wisdom; so that I might rely with safety on the choice. Still I was unwilling to submit. But heavenly kindness followed me, in order to convince me that it would be best to comply, and no longer resist the truth. At length it pleased the Lord, once more, clearly to show me that if I would submit, it should not only tend to my own happiness, but that a blessing should rest on my posterity. This was so great a favour, and manifested so much divine regard, that I no longer resisted; but concluded to pay the young woman a visit, and open the subject for her consideration; but after I had laid my proposition before her, I still had hopes that I might be excused; and only visited her occasionally. During this time, for several months, I endured great trials and afflictions, before I was fully resigned. But, after divine Goodness had prevailed over my rebellious nature, all things relating to my marriage wore a pleasant aspect. The young woman appeared beautiful; and I was prepared to receive her as a gift from heaven; fully as good as I deserved. We waited about six months for my parent's consent, from New-England, (a conveyance by letter being at that time difficult to obtain,) and accomplished our marriage on the thirteenth of the Ninth month, 1735, in the city of Philadelphia.

"It is now forty years since we married; and I can truly say, that I never repented it; but have always regarded our union as a proof of divine kindness. I am fully sensible there was no woman on earth so suitable for me as she was. And all those things which were shown me, as the consequence of my submission, are punctually fulfilled. A blessing has rested on me and my posterity. I have lived to see my children, arrived to years of understanding, favoured with a knowledge of the Truth; (which is the greatest of all blessings;) and some of them, beyond all doubt, are landed in eternal felicity."

We cannot end better than with the immortal words of Swedenborg:

"THE DELIGHTS OF ADULTEROUS LOVE BEGIN FROM THE FLESH AND ARE CARNAL EVEN IN THE SPIRIT; BUT THE DELIGHTS OF MARRIAGE LOVE BEGIN IN THE SPIRIT, AND ARE SPIRITUAL EVEN IN THE FLESH."—(*De Amore Conjugiali*: Amsterdam, 1768, par. 440.)