

are thereupon and thereby ministerial—he must complete by his fiat what the statutes require at his hands. This would seem to make it appear that the fault is with the law-making power; but this is only partially if at all the case, as our divorce statute is quite as strict and restrictive as that of most of the states if not that of any of them and much more so than some, notably Illinois and South Dakota. As in the case of many other contracts, the mischief, it would seem, resides in the foundation of the transaction which, being faulty, the whole structure must of necessity be faulty too.

This is all the more deplorable when we take the proper view that of all the engagements which mankind enters into that of marriage is the highest and holiest, the one that should receive the strictest and best consideration. Instead of this being the case, the ceremony which unites a pair "till death does them part" is very often regarded as a mere concession to the prejudices and superstitions of society, and truly the ease with which it can be so decreed must go a long way toward strengthening that dangerous and deleterious view. So long as the marriage solemnization is looked upon as so much mummery—a means by which sinister purposes can be accomplished which otherwise could either not be gained or being gained would subject one to serious trouble—so sure is it that when the object is reached the obligation in almost every case becomes a burden to be cast aside at the first opportunity. The purposes spoken of are many. One of them is the desire for social station or rank; another is the hope of riches or at least improved circumstances in life; another, the desire to triumph over a rival; and one that is lower and viler and more fraught with danger to the human race than any other is mere personal gratification without regard to duties, responsibilities, capabilities or compatibility.

Nature, like time, has its revenges. It may be defied, its decrees disregarded, its demands ignored and no present penalty of an adequate character be inflicted. But the violations are all properly recorded and will as surely be expiated one way or another as that the darkness of night succeeds the brightness of day. Marriage, being the natural estate of man, if treated as a matter of artificial convenience, as a relation to be defined by professional match-makers, a matter of display at the beginning and of slavish observance to the demands of "society" thereafter, what is to be hoped for when the artifice, the gloss, the glamour of the situation are worn away and the realities of life have made their inevitable appearance? In other words, when no longer able to elude the honest conditions, the equitable simplicity which nature exacts, and these are not only received but besought as the only surcease when the penalties are being imposed, what binding force has the mockery of a contract performed for appearance sake and carried out (on the surface) for fashion's sake? None at all, except in law; and the compact, never having possessed the element of sacredness or honesty, might as well be undone altogether as to exist only as a hollow mockery.

All divorces are of course not the result of such causes as have been herein set out, but a large proportion of them are. Some people enter into the marriage relation honestly, virtuously, and with a fixed determination to fully and fairly discharge its obligations, meet and overcome its discouragements and in all things abide by its results, only to find that their judgment has been at fault, that they have taken upon themselves responsibilities impossible of fulfillment, and that life under such circumstances would be a burden too

grievous to be borne. Others in the same class find out when too late that that evil which some of the best of us can only know of by association—incompatibility—exists, and the welfare of both parties demands that they be separated.

There is a disagreeable abundance of such cases as these last named, too, and there seems no present help for them. The most that can be done under all the circumstances would seem to be to exercise the very best judgment of which all the interested parties are possessed, and when these are in full accord there is then something in the nature of a guaranty for acceptable conditions in the married estate. Passion, infatuation, and all kindred influences which set aside the reason are simply the means by which victims are fed and should be fought by all proper agencies until, like other noxious growths in the garden of life, they will eventually be extirpated altogether. We must go to the source of disease to make a cure certain.

REGARDING NEUTRALITY.

A reader wants to know if all the nations of the earth were formally and actually neutral during our war with Spain; also what rules and regulations neutrality imposes. All the nations did not declare themselves neutral for the reason that some are not civilized, and the action of such is not a matter of concern; all that are civilized or partly so were neutral except Hawaii, which declared in favor of the United States. There is but little elucidation of a condition of neutrality needed, the word meaning the same in the international code that it does in the dictionary. Those nations which at the outbreak of a war between two or more others declare themselves neutral must act accordingly—that is, they must give aid or comfort to neither of the combatants and place no disadvantages or hindrances in the way of either except when necessary for their own protection or that of some of their subjects or interests, and even then not to do so aggressively or in such a way as to render their action other than purely defensive. Neither of the belligerents must be aided with anything by means of which belligerency could be carried on, but in cases of extreme need of repairs, provisions or coal, a vessel may put inshore at a neutral port and have a reasonable time for such repairs, with what provisions and coal are actually needed to get to the next stopping place. All assistance apart from this is unlawful and would subject the offending power to being classed as a belligerent and so treated.

In espousing the cause of the United States, Hawaii subjected herself to attack and capture and confiscation or destruction of her commerce by Spain, without being able to give us any more assistance than the providing of a safe and handy harbor amounted to. Luckily the Spanish were not at any time in a position to strike such blows, or undoubtedly they would have been dealt abundantly.

THE DEAL WITH THE SULTAN.

The Philadelphia Record is informed that, according to rumor, the German emperor has promised to protect the sultan of Turkey and to guarantee the integrity of the Turkish empire. As a quid pro quo Germany is to receive Haifa and other territory on the Syrian coast, and also the island of Rhodes, besides the right to plant a colony at Tripolis. It is further stated that a German railroad is to be built through

Asia Minor and Mesopotamia to the Persian gulf.

Should these rumors prove true, Germany has obtained advantages in the Orient that will give her predominance over her rivals. This will undoubtedly be of immense advantage to the sultan's subjects, too, in that part of his empire. In all the coast cities, as well as inland towns, where the representatives of a strong European government have established themselves, there is more liberty, less oppression. Life and property are comparatively safe in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beyreuth, and this advantage will follow the line of march of German influence. Still it is to be regretted that England is not taking a more prominent part in the work of regenerating Syria. Germany is not so far advanced from a state of despotism as Great Britain is. Turkey needs the aid of a strong people that believes in individual liberty, political and religious, within the boundaries of law.

A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET.

What a glorious sunset was that of yesterday! How far beyond the power of man to paint or describe was it! It was a glory in colors emblazoned upon the sky for the creatures who people the lower sphere to look up to and wonder at and admire, as within them arises the thought of how weak and lowly are all their own creations when brought in contrast with the grandeur of omnipotence. The god of day had sunk beyond the western horizon, but while his face was no longer visible the glow of his blazing beams fell upon the long, tasseled banks of cirro-cumulus clouds, and at once these became as "the celestial fire Prometheus drew from heaven." Ruddy gold were they. An undulating network of burnished silver and deepest crimson was cast athwart the glowing waves, while through the rifts here and there gleamed the beautiful blue of the sky. Soon the tints began to shift, the colors to fade; the rays from the great solar lamp were climbing higher and higher toward infinity, and at last the glorious picture blended with the surrounding gloom and was lost to the mortal gaze forever. The vapors drifted slowly apart and became vagrant patches of mist which were speedily dissipated, leaving not a wisp against the changeless azure dome. Night had 'cast her sable mantle 'round the earth and pinned it with a star"—a beautiful picture, too, but lost in the contemplation of the less familiar and more glowing one preceding it.

ABOUT THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS.

Speaking of the opening of the schools at 9:30 a. m. instead of 9 o'clock, a friend of the "News" points out that this means practically at 9 o'clock actual time, because there is a difference of nearly half an hour between the standard time and the time as indicated by the rising of the sun: 9:30 o'clock is, therefore, early enough both for the children and their parents.

It is, besides, a question of economy. When the children are required to be at school at 9 a. m. standard time, which means virtually 8:30, mothers many of whom are without sufficient help in the house, must rise early in order to see their little ones off. There is much to do before they are ready for school. This during the winter means an extra consumption of coal and oil, which in many a household is quite an item.

The opening of the schools in the city half an hour later during the winter