

# LOVE IS ONLY BASIS FOR MARRIAGE AND UNIONS BY TAPE MEASURE MEAN DEGENERACY, SAYS REX BEACH

Author, Opposing Entire Eugenic Plan of Marriage, Thinks Scientists Have Ignored Only Legitimate Reason for Wedlock—Compares "Ideal Marriage" of Eugenists to Horse Breeding

By REX BEACH, Author of "The Spoilers," "The Iron Trail," &c.

EACH year in the great cities of the country horse shows, dog shows, cat shows and shows of various "live stock" are held; some are fashionable, others are not. These appeal to the devotees of the perfect horse, the perfect tabby, or to professional raisers of cattle and farmers interested in the blue blooded Jersey cow. If you can, imagine another sort of exhibit. It might be held annually, say in Madison Square Garden, New York city.

Beneath the flying Diana on the tower picture a great electric sign: "National Human Stock Show; Highest Types of Physical Perfection. Blue Ribbons to Winners. See the Candidates for Eugenic Marriages!" Within, in railed off enclosures, we might behold men, herculean of size, strutting about, gracefully posturing or manipulating dumbbells; women, handsome, Amazonian, reclining on couches a la Alma Tadema or seeking to attain the mysterious pose of the Venus of Milo. Crowds pass by, pausing to admire, making comments, critically examining the "points" of the "exhibits." The judges—a grim faced, serious minded board of eugenic doctors—occupy a stand. I do not know just what the social status of such a show will be—whether it will be as fashionable as the horse show or in the class of a Jersey cow or sheep exhibit. Conjure this show before you. I am not responsible for the suggestion. It has come from the eugenists.

If the suggestion for any human stock show is abhorrent and distasteful the eugenic plan for marriage between men and women on a basis of physical perfection is more so. A great deal has been written and said of late concerning the eugenic creed. It is being promulgated by a national organization, has the support of men of science whose eminence lends dignity and weight to the propaganda, and is without question influencing the public mind. The plan of the eugenists appeals to the pseudo-scientific, to the sentimental type of "reformer" and highbrow, and that large class of human beings who, being somewhat unbalanced, go in hysterically for fads.

The extreme absurdity of many eugenic principles was demonstrated recently at the national convention for race betterment, at which a physician made the suggestion that annual shows be held of perfect types of human beings with prizes or blue ribbons to be given to the winners. That the eugenic propaganda has not been without effect has been shown by the passage of a law in Wisconsin making a physical examination of both parties necessary to secure a license to wed and the presentation of a proposed bill along similar lines to the Legislature of Massachusetts.

While I believe in the attainment of physical well being and the improvement of the race I cannot but oppose the entire eugenic plan of marriage. I do not believe that it will result in an improvement of the race, but rather in degeneration. It cannot but vulgarize and make ignoble the marriage relation. Those who have considered the plan of the eugenists have probably done so only superficially. I believe the public should be enlightened concerning the basic fallacy of the movement, its menace and absurdity.

The eugenists contend their purpose is to bring into the world perfect children and thus improve the race. To accomplish this they would make marriage contingent upon physical perfection. What does this mean? They ignore the supreme attraction of love, the only legitimate basis for marriage. They place the highest relation of human life in a class with horse breeding. Of what should be primarily a union of minds, of sympathies and spiritual interests they make a legal union of bodies. Those who advocate these principles speak of course of mental and moral perfection as being desirable with physical perfection. The whole propaganda, however, reveals that the prime qualification for their "ideal marriage" is physical.

Without love the marriage of two people, however perfect physically and mentally, is revolting to our highest ideals.

Recently we have witnessed a singular example of the comic extremes to which such faddists will go. Announcing that they desire to experiment in the bringing of a perfect child into the world a board of eminent medical men, through prominent medical magazine, has offered prizes in a contest for a eugenic marriage. Candidates of both sexes have been invited from all parts of the country. They are to submit themselves to physical tests and the man and woman found most near the ideal of physical



MARRIAGE A LA MODE—By WILLIAM HOGARTH.

This is a reproduction of plate 1 of the famous series engraved in 1745, and which are considered most valuable of artist's works.

is also shocking and repugnant. I wish the women who discuss this movement at clubs and go to lectures would consider this aspect for a minute. But away the highfalutin idea of a perfect race brought into being by the eugenists and consider marriage based upon measurements by tape and gymnastic tests with Indian clubs or dumbbells. One of the young women candidates for the eugenic prize has been quoted as saying that she offered herself not for the prize but with the desire of becoming the mother of a perfect child.

I wonder how many women in the world have ever married with the premeditated, sole intention of becoming a mother? From what we know no such deliberate purpose inspires birds, bugs or bees in their romances—offspring is fortuitous. Nature but utilizes the attraction of sex which, among human beings and with higher evolution, has become transmuted into love. We can be sure that, as she always has, nature will take care of racial reproduction without any deliberate assistance on our part.

This regulation is automatic and wiser than perhaps any human regulation would be. During pioneer days in the West there were phenomenally big families,

the children numbering from twelve to sixteen in a family. As the West became populated and men were not so urgently needed the families automatically decreased in number, just as they have in the congested cities of the world and such countries as France. This is as it should be. Instead of trying to increase population, I believe the aim of life should be to decrease numbers and increase efficiency. Quality instead of quantity is certainly the consummation of evolution. The highest purpose of marriage, in my opinion, is not to bring children into the world, but is an individual development and mutual help toward that end. To me, the bearing of children is the least important phase of marriage. The eugenists make it supreme.

Marriage is entered into too casually, too recklessly with many people nowadays. It should be made more difficult. It should not be possible for any two people to marry from mere passing fancy. While the eugenists are talking about raising the standard on a physical basis, people should be really educated regarding the sacredness of such a relationship. The only basis for marriage is love. And love is above any

qualifying code of the eugenists. People should marry for love alone. Married, their object should be to develop as individuals. Under most ideal conditions marriage is difficult. The domestic relations of two "perfect physical specimens" who have married because of their blood condition and muscle development are not pleasant to contemplate.

If we are to justify actions by results, what will be the probable outcome of marriages entered into on a basis of physical fitness? Perfect children? Possibly—in one case out of ten.

It is recognized that the vitality, brilliance, even genius of children depends upon the emotional intensity of the parents who beget them. The appearance, blood conditions, even health of parents have not so much to do with the mentality of the child as their own mental sympathetic state. The eugenists ignore this attraction. The mental fibre of children born of a physical union is likely to be coarse. It cannot be otherwise.

Men and women fall in love involuntarily. There is no deliberate purpose in a great passion. Love comes as mysteriously as the storm and wind. People suited to mate are impelled to

one another; theirs is a spontaneous sympathy. Nature inspires a woman to select the man who is most suited to mate with her. Nature reciprocally inspires the man. This inevitable attraction may not seem "scientific" to the eugenists. But it is a better guide to parenthood than tape measurements and blood tests.

What is the secret of happy marriage, of successful parenthood, anyway? These wise doctors and learned teachers of race betterment advocate the mating of people who are equally perfect, of similar mental calibre. In life like does not usually mate with like. Inequality is really the prime secret of a happy marriage.

No, I'm not raising any question regarding suffrage, for I believe that intelligent women should have the vote if they want it. But in the marriage relation there can be no equality in like characteristics—if the marriage is to be successful. The man must be stronger and the woman weaker; or the woman stronger and the man weaker. Two evenly balanced persons never can get along; they must constantly clash. One is bound to have ascendancy somehow. Generally, I think the man should qualify in strength and executive

ability; the woman in beauty and idealism of mind.

Rather than encourage the eugenic movement, as many claim, I believe the greater freedom allowed woman in her revolt will discourage any tendency toward a conformance to the eugenic scheme. The more independent women become the more inclined will they be to follow their natural instincts and to resent any arbitrary and sordid powers of submitting themselves to "examinations" to qualify for wedlock.

What woman with self-respect could so demean herself as to submit to a "blood test" as a qualification for marriage? Personally, I do not think people will ever stand for any such impertinent invasion of their rights.

Inequality of characteristics goes for success in marriage, so I believe also that physical inequality tends to the best results. Some of the finest children, as a matter of fact, are born of physically defective parents. There is the old story of the woman who went about trying to have a beautiful child. To effect her ambition she thought "beautiful things," talked about beautiful subjects and gazed at beautiful pictures as a preparation for the coming child. A monster was born!

Thinks the Bearing of Children Least Important and the Union of Two "Perfect Physical Specimens," Without Affection, an Absurdity and a Menace—The Human Stock Show

From London recently came reports of a eugenic marriage between a Mr. and Mrs. Harold Boice, who, to prepare for a perfect eugenic baby, visited famous men, engaging in high brow conversation and the discussion of "advanced" philosophy, and in addition—that the child might not be born without a sense of humor—also talked with humorists, including Jerome K. Jerome and vaudeville performers. H. G. Wells has repudiated his participation in this glibly prepared for "Eugenetta," as the baby has been called. Mr. Wells has disclaimed any belief in this eugenic scheme. With Mr. Wells I commiserate with the misfortune of any "Eugenetta" so prepared for!

If they are truly in love I consider the marriage of two cripples or a healthy man and a consumptive woman more ideal than a eugenic marriage between a lady dunnebell hoister and a strong arm man.

If people are genuinely in love disease is a matter of no consequence, no bar to their union. We often see a woman marrying a weak, consumptive man. It is part of human nature for the strong to support the weak; this law holds in marriage. The self-immolating care of a loving woman for a man suffering from tuberculosis, the unselfish solicitude lavished by a man upon an invalid wife are more beautiful than two healthy people not in love deliberately mating for the purpose of creating a child. Devotion is one of the most beautiful things in life.

I have said that perfect children often come from the most unsuspected sources. For, mark this—and this disproves the whole eugenic propaganda: A child is not the product of its father and mother; of merely two human beings. It is the result of thousands of generations—all the progenitors who have gone before it.

None of us knows our family tree, the ramifications of its roots through generations and the processes that result in our individual selves. Our temperaments and characteristics, our beauty or ugliness, our weakness or strength, our brilliance of mentality or dullness are not the work of our parents; to a degree our parents influence us; we are, however, the concentrated production of thousands of lives through thousands of years. The best qualities that come down to us are brought out by being born of a passionate union, of the fire of love. Children thus born will inherit the nobler qualities rather than the defects of their parents and their parents' progenitors.

One child thus born, even if physically under par but mentally brilliant, is worth a dozen beautiful, strong bodied but mentally obtuse eugenic children.

We are evolving toward a higher marriage relation and a better race. This will not come about through eugenics; not by picking out prospective parents as bulls and sheep are picked, selecting them for admirable physical qualities. It will come about by individual development, mental and physical.

If individuals have disease let them try to cure themselves. If people are physically weak let them exercise and engage in athletics. I believe that physical development of this sort is all important. Athletics are the best preparation for marriage. There is a tendency to-day for those who work in the city to live in the country. Men engage more than ever in outdoor sports, golf, tennis and other games. The Boy Scout movement starts boys thus. Such a movement is more valuable than all the scheduled schemes of eugenists. We have reached that stage of spiritual evolution where we can control the body. With this, marriage should, more than ever, be based on the attraction of mind to mind.

If two people love each other, whether they be physically perfect or not, they will marry, and should not be prevented from marrying.

Let the giant of a man marry a tiny wisp of a woman. Let the huge woman marry a mite of a man. This is as it should be. Let them follow the law of dissimilarity.

Many celebrated folk, such as Col. Roosevelt, advocate big families. If people want children let them have children. If not, that is their own business, and it is no one's concern to criticize.

Parentage should be optional—not obligatory. We have passed beyond mechanically obeying the old Scriptural command of populating the earth. We have become, and should be, individuals. People who do not want children would probably make for parents and their attitude be adverse to the growth and development of unwelcome sons and daughters. I do not think this is a problem sufficiently important with which even to concern ourselves, although it is of course the backbone of eugenics.

But then eugenics is simply the theory applied to the raising of race-horses to human beings. Race-horses are for no good except racing. Human beings are more than animals. Any principle relating to arbitrary breeding on a physical basis will inevitably prove degenerating rather than uplifting to the race.

The eugenists do not, as all faddists, agree among themselves. Some advocate the mating of sane people with the insane; the defective with the normal, and even—so "the opposite strains may mix"—the mating of whites and blacks! All this is to be done on a scientific, unemotional basis! Imagine a sane man being arbitrarily married to a mentally defective woman in order that she may bring forth a perfect child; or a white woman married to a negro so the child may inherit "the better qualities," such as "the resistance to disease and the sense of humor" of the negro! By such a proposition as this alone this mad propaganda stands condemned.



"The Great Human Stock Show! Blue Ribbons for Winners! See the Candidates for Eugenic Marriages!"