

The excitement produced by the suicide of two young ladies is still intense. Such had been their personal preparations for this act under various influences which had operated upon them, that it was performed with as much order and system, and apparently with as little misgiving, as they had previously performed their daily tasks. They thus deliberately put an untimely end to their earthly existence, caused a thrill of excitement in every nook and corner of our city, blasted all the fair hopes of parental anxiety, cut off every opportunity which injury might have desired to repair any wrongs ever done to them, urged the press into a nightly toil to spread the news and circumstances of the awful deed, awakened suspicions which otherwise would have slumbered even in the breast of slander, and have given us a most painful illustration of the frailty with which the human heart is encumbered.

But if it shall awaken young men and women to a proper sense of the relations they sustain, and the obligations they owe to each other, who shall say that the improvement made is not worth more than the sacrifice has cost?

The danger is however that a vitiated state of morality aided by a vitiated press, will so regard the event as to work out evil rather than good. Against this danger a warning voice ought to be raised.

Concerning the case one thing is evident, viz: that it grew out of a social intercourse between the young ladies and particular young gentlemen, and the real or imaginary relation they sustain to each other. I have no means of determining the right or wrong to be attached to either party in their intercourse previous to the fatal act, and therefore I wish to avoid any judgment in that matter, and to refer only to the mournful issue, as a beacon to all who survive them.

It is not to lay an interdict upon the socialities of life that this subject is broached. This could have no tendency to prevent any similar catastrophe. It is God's design we should be social, and that the sexes should intermingle in their socialities. But these socialities are limited by law as inflexible as the throne of God. Punishment must follow transgression. Within that law is a sea of joy—outside of it is an ocean of sorrow.

I. But let us inquire *what is essential* to the keeping of the heart, in the social intercourse of the sexes?

1st. A correct view of the relations of the sexes to each other. At the beginning, God made them male and female with a moral and physical adaptation to each other. It was not good for man to be alone, not even in paradise. There was a want which would be felt in his loneliness. Much less is it good for man to be alone in his depraved condition. He needs an influence to mitigate the ills of life which alone can be supplied by woman. And as there can be no reliance or obligation on the one hand which does not imply a counterpart on the other, so it is not good for woman to be alone. She is subject to ills and trials and sorrows, which can have no mitigation except through the aid and influence of the other sex.

But in the ordinary intercourse of life the law of God limits to a *general* attachment. An attachment that is *special* is limited by the same law to one man and one woman. An intimation on the one hand that there exists a special attachment, which in fact does not exist, is a crime, because it is trifling with a fixed law. Before the attachment is allowed to become *special*, it should be known to be mutual and disposed to permanency. This would save from many a shattered brain, if not from many a premature death. This matter so superlatively important to the well being of society, is too lightly esteemed. Sins connected with it are too often connived at by those who ought to be wise enough to rebuke them. Parents, guardians and elders, by inuendoes and double-entendres, too often sow the seeds of sorrow in their own pillows, and wretchedness and misery in the lives of those who ought to receive wholesome and serious advice from them.

Because it was not good for man to be alone, God made an helpmeet for him