

Ideal Marriage

ITS PHYSIOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE

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DEDICATED TO
MARTHA VAN DE VELDE-HOOGLANDT

Et parce que tous les jours je t'aime davantage
Aujourd'hui plus que hier et bien moins que demain
Qu'importent alors . . .

ROSEMONDE GÉRARD.

INTRODUCTION

THIS is the book on the physical problems of marriage we have all been waiting for. It had to be written; and written exactly in this way—soberly, scientifically, completely, without a scintilla of eroticism, and yet with a sustained note of high idealism.

Of books of a kind on the subject there have been more than enough. Most of them have suffered from the same defect, namely, that they have been written by people with incomplete medical knowledge.

Dr. Van de Velde, who for many years was in charge of the Gynæcological Clinic of Haarlem, has all the scientific qualifications necessary to write on the subject with authority. In addition, he is happy in possessing the gift, rather rare in a scientist, of a clear literary style. He can write to interest as well as inform. That is why his book can be recommended so confidently to every physician who has the welfare of his patients at heart. In these days doctors must be able to advise on the subject. The consulting room is the modern confessional, and it is the duty of the members of the medical profession to give definite and accurate advice on any problem in sexology propounded with honest intent to them. How many of us can truthfully say that we are competent to do so? Not many, unfortunately, for the subject has never before, to my knowledge, been presented so simply and concisely. Such information has hitherto been hidden away in scattered articles in many languages. Here it has been collected together by the industry, and moulded into homogeneity by the wisdom of this distinguished Dutch gynæcologist.

In this book, then, will be found all the data bearing upon the physiology and technique of sexual congress, clearly stated, without pruriency or mock modesty—in other words, scientifically.

In writing it, Dr. Van de Velde has placed the medical profession in his debt. None of us, probably, will accept all that he says. But all of us will be wiser for having read him.

It is a book that should be in the library of every doctor who looks upon his patients not as "cases," but as human, very human beings entrusted to his care.

J. JOHNSTON ABRAHAM

38, HARLEY STREET, W. 1.

PREFACE

IN order, so far as possible, to avoid misunderstanding of this monograph on the part of superficial readers, the author is anxious to emphasise the following aspects of its contents in advance.

The book is the first part of a *trilogy*. It treats of the sexual basis of married life, and aims at *increasing the forces of mutual attraction* in marriage, through the evolution and improvement of physiological relationships. The second volume, "The Prevention of Conjugal Aversion," with which the author is now busy, deals with the problem of preserving happiness in marriage, from the purely psychological point of view, and attempts to *combat the forces of mutual repulsion*. The third volume is destined to treat the problem of *Fertility and Sterility in Marriage*—a problem of immense significance for marital happiness.

This first volume deals with the physiology of conjugal life, because knowledge here is the indispensable basis, both theoretical and practical, for success in marriage. It attempts to fill a *lacuna* which still exists in scientific literature for the medical man or woman, and at the same time to give doctors an opportunity to refer those patients who need instruction in this particular matter—and all doctors know how many such patients there are!—to the relevant passages, which will spare them the embarrassments and inadequacies of a possibly painful personal consultation. Finally, it attempts to help such married couples as have not recourse to doctors, without their intermediary advice by revealing manifold possibilities of achieving or enhancing happiness, of which they have often never heard or dreamed. Thus it is obvious that the book has to be written in terms which the laity can understand without difficulty.

The title of the volume is correctly translated by the term "The More Perfect Marriage": more perfect, that is to say,

PERSONAL INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

THIS book will state many things which would otherwise remain unsaid. Therefore it will have many unpleasant results for me. I know this, for I have gradually attained to some knowledge of my fellow human beings and of their habit of condemning what is unusual and unconventional.

And, for that reason, this book could not be written earlier. So long as a doctor has to meet the requirements of his practice, he cannot permit himself to transgress the bounds of custom.

But he who is set free from those requirements—free at last to say what he believes to be both righteous and necessary—has the *duty* to speak out before the world.

So I must write down what I have learnt to be true and right; I could not face the evening of my life with a quiet conscience if I omitted to do so. There is need of this knowledge; there is too much suffering endured which might well be avoided, too much joy untasted which could enhance life's worth.

And I have now attained a suitable age and experience for this task. The scientist who has studied theory and practice for more than a quarter of a century; the man of letters who has expressed many thoughts in diverse forms; the experienced gynæcologist; the *confidant* of many men and women; the man to whom naught human, and naught masculine, has remained alien in the domain of feeling; the husband who has experienced all the joys and griefs of married life; and, finally, the man of fifty, who has learnt to contemplate life with a certain serene detachment, who is too old for "youthful follies," but still too young to have lost all desire—all these various entities have been called to contribute to a work written by one pen alone.

I could have escaped the unpleasantness referred to above by the use of a pseudonym. But I cannot have recourse to

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such protection. As a scientist, it is my duty to sign my own name to a serious medical and scientific work. Also, my advice and suggestions here are offered in a wholly responsible, *i.e.*, ethical, spirit, and would lose half their moral purpose if proffered anonymously or under an assumed name.

So I will meet all blame and annoyance arising therefrom with untroubled mind, and in the hope—nay, the *certainty*—that many men and women, even if they dare not say so, will breathe their thanks in the privacy of their nuptial chamber.

TH. H. VAN DE VELDE, M.D.

VAL FONTILE,
MINUSIO-LOCARNO,
SWITZERLAND.

IDEAL MARRIAGE
ITS PHYSIOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE

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