

Undergraduate marriages have not been part of American life long enough for us to be certain what the effect will be. But two ominous trends can be noted.

One is the "successful" student marriage, often based on a high-school choice which both sets of parents have applauded because it assured an appropriate mate with the right background, and because it made the young people settle down. If not a high-school choice, then the high-school pattern is repeated: finding a girl who will go steady, dating her exclusively, and letting the girl propel the boy toward a career choice which will make early marriage possible.

These young people have no chance to find themselves in college because they have clung to each other so exclusively. They can take little advantage of college as a broadening experience, and they often show less breadth of vision as seniors than they did as freshmen. They marry, either as undergraduates or immediately upon graduation, have children in quick succession, and retire to the suburbs to have more children — bulwarking a choice made before either was differentiated as a human being. Help from both sets of parents, begun in the undergraduate marriage or after commencement day, perpetuates their immaturity. At thirty they are still immature and dependent, their future mortgaged for twenty or thirty years ahead, neither husband nor wife realizing the promise that a different kind of undergraduate life might have enabled each to fulfill.

Such marriages are not failures, in the ordinary sense. They are simply wasteful of young, intelligent people who might have developed into differentiated and conscious human beings. But with four or five children, the husband firmly tied to a job which he would not dare to leave, any move toward further individual development in either husband or wife is a threat to the whole family. It is safer to read what both agree with (or even not to read at all and simply look at TV together), attend the same clubs, listen to the same jokes — never for a minute relaxing their possession of each other, just as when they were teenagers.

Such a marriage is a premature imprisonment of young people, before they have had a chance to explore their own minds and the minds of others, in a kind of desperate, devoted symbiosis. Both had college educations, but the college served only as a place in which to get a degree and find a mate from the right family background, a background which subsequently swallows them up.

The second kind of undergraduate marriage is more tragic. Here, the marriage is based on the boy's promise and the expendability of the girl. She, at once or at least as soon as she gets her bachelor's degree, will

go to work at some secondary job to support her husband while he finishes his degree. She supports him faithfully and becomes identified in his mind with the family that has previously supported him, thus underlining his immature status. As soon as he becomes independent, he leaves her. That this pattern occurs between young people who seem ideally suited to each other suggests that it was the period of economic dependency that damaged the marriage relationship, rather than any intrinsic incompatibility in the original choice.

Both types of marriage, the "successful" and the "unsuccessful," emphasize the key issue: the tie between economic responsibility and marriage in our culture. A man who does not support himself is not yet a man, and a man who is supported by his wife or lets his parents support his wife is also only too likely to feel he is not a man. The GI students' success actually supports this position: they had earned their GI stipend, as men, in their country's service. With a basic economic independence they could study, accept extra help from their families, do extra work, and still be good students and happy husbands and fathers.

There are, then, two basic conclusions. One is that under any circumstances a full student life is incompatible with early commitment and domesticity. The other is that it is incompatible only under conditions of immaturity. Where the choice has been made maturely, and where each member of the pair is doing academic work which deserves full support, complete economic independence should be provided. For other types of student marriage, economic help should be refused.

This kind of discrimination would remove the usual dangers of parent-supported, wife-supported, and too-much-work-supported student marriages. Married students, male and female, making full use of their opportunities as undergraduates, would have the right to accept from society this extra time to become more intellectually competent people. Neither partner would be so tied to a part-time job that relationships with other students would be impaired. By the demands of high scholarship, both would be assured of continued growth that comes from association with other high-caliber students as well as with each other.

But even this solution should be approached with caution. Recent psychological studies, especially those of Piaget, have shown how essential and precious is the intellectual development of the early post-pubertal years. It may be that any domesticity takes the edge off the eager, flaming curiosity on which we must depend for the great steps that Man must take, and take quickly, if he and all living things are to continue on this earth.

STUDENTS CHALLENGE MARGARET MEAD'S VIEWS ON EARLY MARRIAGES

MARGARET MEAD CAN STIR UP CONTROVERSY ON JUST about any subject; and on marriage she can cause an explosion.

Shortly before going to press, we gave about a dozen Simmons students a chance to preview the article, "Is College Compatible with Marriage" (pages 1-4). Some of the girls were married, some engaged, and some single. All verbally exploded in one direction or another.

Here is a sampling of their reactions:

Married Student:

Miss Mead seems intent . . . on making generalizations about a situation which cannot really be generalized intelligently. She seems to think that many early marriages occur between high school steadies who have continued their mutual devotion into college. I disagree. Most high school romances do not outlive high school. We all know one or two extremely bright girls who were "wasted" because they insisted upon getting married immediately after high school. First of all, the girl in such a situation was bright enough to understand what she was doing — namely preventing a change of heart through a broadening of education. She feared a separation enough to give up what is usually looked forward to — college. If the girl did not have any idea of what she was missing, perhaps her high school is to blame for its low quality intellectual goods. I am willing to bet that, generally, unless unfortunately pregnant, most girls want to go to college. The students who have the highest immediate post-high school marriage rate are the business course girls. The ones who go on to college, but drop out

immediately when married to breed kiddies, probably came for reasons obviously non-intellectual.

Miss Mead does not appear to realize that even today — the era of more and more bright kids, and advance placements — most college students are not bent on an intellectual career. . . . [They] are concerned with getting through it all and with meeting some of their eligible peers. I am not condoning the situation. I am only saying that it is unrealistic of Miss Mead to assume that every college student is as intellectually oriented as she implies. There is no meter yet conceived, no test yet devised, that can judge self-knowledge, maturity. The girl who takes it on herself to get married has thought [about it] a good deal.

Yes, there is social pressure for marriage, but not so much from the family as Miss Mead says. The pressure for marriage doesn't mount until in the junior or senior year at least, and it is found in the peer group. Parents do not accept a career as a suitable substitute for the creative role in marriage. That is why they like their daughters to marry. As for parents rushing children into social situations at age ten, this is so, but not . . . for the reasons of marriage. Parents want their kids to be socially comfortable, not scared and awkward as the parents themselves might have been in early adolescence. Parents are also afraid that young teenagers are going to start experimenting in the great uncharted laboratory of sex, so their social enthusiasm is heavily seasoned with cautions and fears.

The situation is complex at best. Maturity applies to Miss Mead's dictum of "no parent support," as well as to the "know thyself" plea. Again the situation is special in each case. Parents don't want to give kids money. They don't want to make the serious decision of marriage too easy for them. They don't want to

undermine the responsible nature of their sons. I wouldn't worry that parents would suddenly begin supporting their children. The financial problem is just one of many things that must be coped with.

However, in special situations, what's wrong with financially able parents helping out the occupationally poor medical student and working wife? If a boy is a loafer, he is not going to be in med school. If he is a hard worker, he will be a responsible person no matter whether his parents give him aid or not. Families help one another. That's what they are there for. Most parents are very cautious about such big giving. We all know cases in which the parents have simply refused to help when they thought that the couple in question . . . hadn't the maturity to get married.

As for the wife supporting the grad school-occupied husband—this is an individual problem. If hubby resents the help, he is really an immature fellow. A couple works together for a common future; many couples are willing to scrimp, stave off all possible babies, and the like, so that the husband can get that Ph.D. or law degree. What's wrong with couples having the maturity to make such a decision? If Miss Mead is solely concerned about the frivolous, non-thinking, childish group in the college population, she should not have addressed herself to such a general audience. All individuals cannot, nor do they desire, four uncluttered years of pure scholarship. Many who do want this education and more may marry and stay conscientiously at school, the happier because a nasty area has been eliminated from her life—the whole nauseous system of dating. If a girl is happier having babies, let her be. Again, no one can choose for a student. No one, even Miss Mead, can tell when a girl should know herself, when she is fully matured.

Generally, no one condones the young, young, high-school marriage, nor the supporting of parasitic youngsters by over-indulgent parents. However, this situation applies to a much smaller portion of our college population than Miss Mead gives us to believe in her article.

Married Student:

A man loses his personality and feels inferior when his wife supports him while he is at school; so the tendency is for him to shy away from her friends. I don't believe that marriage has a steadying effect for a man when he is a student because he has not proven himself yet.

Married Student:

I don't agree with most of this. It seems to me that she is looking at this from the wrong end. She places too much emphasis on responsibility. After all, college

is not synonymous with *freedom from* responsibility. If a person is really mature, he is responsible, regardless of the situation (married or single). However, I do agree with the points she makes about the social pressures surrounding marriage. What she says about the working wife is, I think, invalid; both partners in a marriage can find fulfillment if the wife works, from choice or necessity. Dr. Mead's arguments in this article on marriage do not give enough benefit of the doubt.

Engaged Student:

In a large co-ed university, where married students living on campus form a large part of the student body, the situation is certainly much different than in the Boston area.

Most of the husbands of girls at Simmons are graduate students or men working full-time, so I don't feel this article is particularly applicable to Simmons girls. These [Simmons] couples are mature individuals, ready to make a choice.

I do believe that if both people are . . . undergraduate students, they lose a great deal by marriage because they never have a chance to mingle with others their age, or participate fully in the dorm or college life. However, when the husband is a graduate student, or an employed individual, I believe that the marriage can be enriching for both.

Miss Mead outlines two types of marriage—"successful," which involves a "Babbitt-type" relationship in which neither partner is able to fulfill his intellectual capacity, and "unsuccessful." This infuriates me! What about the students who are intellectually capable of marriage—who can broaden their experience through their mate's friends? These couples could be sharing and learning together.

Two people in love will want, naturally, to see a great deal of each other. The man will be much more able to study in a relaxed home atmosphere, without worrying about eating out or picking up the girl for a date, etc. It is a strain for two people to hold off marriage in order "to broaden their college experience."

There is romance involved in marriage and love. Who wants to start to raise a family when you're twenty-six? Granted, you won't want six children by that time either.

Regarding the role of a wife in supporting her husband—I think this helps the woman fulfill her role as a wife. The husband's acceptance of this support is a sign of mutual confidence in his future and their future together.

This whole question depends so much on who and where you are. I have a friend who went to college

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Introducing Mrs. Aaron Richmond

She lives in the
round-the-clock world
of celebrities — entertaining them,
cajoling them, discovering them

By MARYLEA CROCKETT

WARS HAVE BEEN WON, CAREERS HAVE BEEN MADE by the skill of a gracious hostess. Particularly conscious of this force for success are those in the world of the theater, as Mrs. Aaron Richmond, '24, wife of the distinguished Boston concert manager, can testify. Her role as hostess of the Celebrity Series has filled her memory with a supply of delightful experiences that would last for two lifetimes.

One of her choice stories is that about Leopold Stokowski. When the Richmonds engaged him to perform several years ago with an all-youth orchestra in Boston, the musician insisted that Symphony Hall was too small to perform in and the Boston Garden, with a seating capacity of 16,000, was the only possible building for his concert. Testing the acoustics of the Boston Garden, Stokowski clapped his hands from several vantage points in the large auditorium amidst complete silence. He then turned to the Richmonds and emphatically announced, "Those pillars must come down." The Richmonds explained the impossibility of changing the foundation structure of the building, and Stokowski performed with the pillars.

Interesting incidents, like this one, have been part of the life story of Anne (Harpel) Richmond since her graduation from the Simmons School of Business. She had worked only a short time at Harvard, when Aaron Richmond hired her. Six months later he engaged her as his wife.

She works every day with her husband, and is quite proud that she has her own office in her husband's



suite on Newbury Street. Engaging performers and amusing them during their stay in Boston, is a round-the-clock task. Mrs. Richmond opens her thirteen-room Brookline home to them because "they have to eat in restaurants often enough." The guests thrive under this attention. Drawing on a well-stocked recipe file, this charming hostess always cooks the entrees and desserts, and often the main meal; but she employs help for the everyday cooking.

Her business and social activities never crowd out her volunteer work. In addition to being corresponding secretary of the Ladies Committee of the New England Center Hospital, Mrs. Richmond helps this group in any other area where she is needed.

Storms, delayed planes, or illness pose special problems for Mrs. Richmond. Several years ago, John Charles Thomas was engaged for the Celebrity Series. He arrived several days in advance of his concert as he had other engagements around Boston. The night before his Symphony Hall performance, the singer ate something that disagreed with him, and he developed ptomaine poisoning. Mrs. Richmond treated the crisis as just another everyday problem. She saw to it that the cancellation of the performance was announced

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