



Of Marriages and Single life

Sir Francis Bacon

<div>1</div> Text	<p>HE that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public.</p>
Explanation	<p>Bacon begins the essay by proposing that married men and fathers stifle their own creativity and usefulness to the world when they decide to marry or when they have children. He writes that marriage and children are "impediments to great enterprises.</p>
Line by Line Explanation (Explanation in blue, original in black)	<p>HE that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; (A man who is married and has wife and children is unable to risk his money for noble purposes.) for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. (They are obstacles to any endeavor either good or bad.) Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; (The best works which are the best for the public have often come from unmarried men.) which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. (These are the men who have</p>

<div><div>2</div></div> <div>Text</div>	<p>Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences.</p>
<div>Explanation</div>	<p>Therefore, it is logical that men who have children show a great care about the future and make various important initiates and possibilities regarding their family future. However, there are also some single men who think only about their personal interest and they give no importance to future life and they consider it useless to think about the future life.</p>
<div>Line by Line Explanation</div> <div>(Explanation in blue, original in black)</div>	<p>Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. (so it is logical that men who have children care a great deal about the future and make various important initiates and possibilities regarding the future.) Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves,(However there are also some single men who think only about their personal interest) and account future times impertinences. (and to think about the future they consider as useless)</p>

3

Text

Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer.

Explanation

Bacon enlists that there are some greedy people who consider wife and children as items of expense. Such foolish and greedy men take pride in having no children. They believe that they will remain richer if they do not have any children. Because with children their expenses will increase and also there will be more heirs to his property.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. (Some people consider wives and children as items of expense.)
Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, (Some foolish and greedy men take pride in having no children.) because they may be thought so much the richer. (They believe that they will remain richer if they do not have any children)

4

Text

For perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man*, and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children*; as if it were an abatement to his riches.

Explanation

They possible reason for such behavior may be, perhaps they might have heard that with great burden of children are not regarded as rich and children are a hindrance on the growth of fortunes to make them rich .

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

For perhaps they have heard some talk, **(because they might have heard people say)** *Such an one is a great rich man*, and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children*; **(that so and so is a great rich man but he has the burden of children)** as if it were an abatement to his riches. **(that children are a hindrance on the growth of fortunes to make him rich).**

5

Text

But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles.

Explanation

However, most men choose to remain single for the sake of liberty that a single life allows, especially there are certain people that are very sensitive to any kind of restrictions, even they find their belt and laces as symbol of restriction and imprisonment.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, (However, most men choose to remain single for the sake of liberty that a single life allows.) especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint,(especially there are certain people that are very sensitive to any kind of restrictions) as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. (even they find their belt and laces as symbol of restriction and imprisonment)

<div>6</div> Text	<p>Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition.</p>
Explanation	<p>Bacon enlists the positive and negative qualities of a single man. Unmarried men make the best friends, the best masters, and the best servants. contrary to that they do not make the best citizens as they have so great a sense of freedom that they tend to run away from responsibilities.</p>
Line by Line Explanation (Explanation in blue, original in black)	<p>Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants;(Unmarried men make the best friends, the best masters, and the best servants.) but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; (But they do not make the best citizens as they have so great a sense of freedom that they tend to run away from responsibilities.) and almost all fugitives are of that condition.</p>

<div>7</div> Text	A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool.
Explanation	The single life is better suited for a clergyman because a married man, in case of charity, will fill his own pool with water instead giving to other but an unmarried man can be more charitable as he does not have any needs of his family to satisfy
Line by Line Explanation (Explanation in blue, original in black)	A single life doth well with churchmen;(The single life is better suited for a clergyman) for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool.(because a married man, in case of charity, will fill his own pool with water instead of giving it to other).

8 Text	It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife
Explanation	Bacon shares his experience that for judges and magistrates the situation is indifferent, their marriage doesn't make a great difference. because if they make themselves corrupt by making bribes through their servants. In that case their servants/agents will prove them worse than wives.
Line by Line Explanation (Explanation in blue , original in black)	It is indifferent for judges and magistrates;(For judges and magistrates the situation is indifferent) for if they be facile and corrupt, (because if they make themselves corrupt) you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife (they will receive bribes through agents which are much worse than wives.)

<div>9</div> <div>Text</div>	<div> <p>For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base.</p> </div>
<div>Explanation</div>	<div> <p>Bacon asserts that it is good for soldiers and army men to get married because for soldier it is often an emotional support to think of wives and children before going into battle or during the battle. But on the other hand the dislike of marriage among the Turks makes them vulgar and soldiers.</p> </div>
<div>Line by Line Explanation</div> <div> <p>(Explanation in blue, original in black)</p> </div>	<div> <p>For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children; (For soldier it is often an emotional support to think of wives and children before going into battle if their general create this idea through their speeches.) and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. (That is why Bacon says that the dislike of marriage among the Turks makes them vulgar and soldiers.) (hortatives) speeches made for encouragement</p> </div>

Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon.

Explanation

There is no doubt that wife and children are discipline to humanity but single men are often more charitable because they have less expenses. But at the same time they also tend to be cruel and hard hearted as they do not have a wife or children to invoke the tenderness within them. Having a wife and children develops the softer feelings of a man.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; (no doubt, wife and children are discipline to humanity) and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust (Single men are often more charitable because they have less expenses.), yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. (But at the same time they also tend to be cruel and hard hearted as they do not have a wife or children to invoke the tenderness within them.)

Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati* [he preferred his old wife to immortality].

Explanation

Bacon describes the qualities of good husband that a grave and serious natured man with traditional beliefs is often a loving husband and he prefers his old wife to immortality.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, (A grave natured man with traditional beliefs is often a loving husband.) as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati* [he preferred his old wife to immortality].

Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous.

Explanation

Describing qualities of a good wives Bacon says that women who are faithful to their husbands are often proud of their chastity. If a wife thinks her husband to be wise he will command her loyalty as well as obedience. A wife does not respect a jealous husband.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. (**Women who are faithful to their husbands are often proud of their chastity**). It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; (**A wife will always remain chaste and obedient if she thinks that her husband is wise**) which she will never do if she find him jealous. (**and she will never remain the same if she finds her husband jealous.**)

Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses.

Explanation

Bacon gives a great tribute to women in aphoristic style that for a young man a wife is a passionate lover, in the middle age she is a companion and to the old man she is a nurse and takes care of his husband.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses.

(For a young man a wife serves the purpose of a mistress, in the middle age she is a companion and to the old man she is a nurse.)

Text

14

So as a man may have a quarrel to marry when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry,—*A young man not yet, an elder man not at all.*

Explanation

Different people may have different opinion about proper age to get marriage. But Bacon quotes the saying of a wise man that a young man not yet, an elder man not at all.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in **blue**, original in **black**)

So as a man may have a quarrel to marry when he will. **(there may be some dispute on the view that when to marry)** But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry, **(Bacon here quotes a philosopher and mathematician who answered the question of when a man should marry)** —*A young man not yet, an elder man not at all.* **(a young man not yet, an elder man not at all")**

Text

15

It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience.

Explanation

Commonly it is observed that bad husbands often have good wives. There wives seldom receive good behavior from their husbands. But they feel the value whenever occasionally she faces the kindness of her husband, or such wives are taking pride in this idea of patience to bear.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; (commonly it is observed that bad husbands often have good wives.) whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; (they feel the value whenever occasionally, she faces the kindness of her husband) or that the wives take a pride in their patience.(or such wives are taking pride in this idea of patience to bear.)

Text

16

But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

Explanation

Some time it happens that a woman makes her own decision to choose a bad husband against the will of her friends and relatives. in that case she will always try to present their folly as good act just to prove that her decision was good.

Line by Line Explanation

(Explanation in
blue, original in
black)

But this never fails, (contrary to that it never fails) if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, (when a bad husband is chosen by a woman with her own will) against their friends' consent; (and selection of husband was against the suggestion of her well-wishers) for then they will be sure to make good their own folly. (in that case she will always try to present their folly as good act.)



The End