

THE GIRL WORTH CHOOSING

For the BOY who Chooses and the GIRL who wants to be Chosen

By DANIEL A. LORD S.J.

This is for the boy with his eyes on the future. But it is for the girl who is thinking ahead. It is meant to help a boy pick out the right girl, and to help the girl be the kind that will be happily and permanently picked.

If you are a boy not in love, yet expect someday to be, this booklet is meant to guide you in picking the girl worth loving. If you are in love, there is still time for you, my young friend, to appraise the girl and decide whether she is the sort who will hold your love as the years slip by.

As for the girl, the suggestions in this booklet will make you more lovable. This is no guide to glamour. But it is a guide to the feminine characteristics that attract a young man and make a mature man glad that in his youth you attracted him.

Choosing the right girl is one of life's great decisions. Upon it depends more of a man's future happiness than at the time he faintly guesses. Romance fades and realism sets in; the dream is gone and the damsel remains. The enchantment of fascination disappears but the enchainment can remain a delightful partnership or a life sentence.

While some girls, in the blessed providence of God, are meant to know His full love and their own personal dedication to Him and His little ones, for most girls the matter of who picks them out and says, "Will you?" is terribly important. It is important to be chosen by the right man. Better not be chosen at all rather than find the man who asks you has asked you for all the wrong reasons.

LOVE IS ENOUGH?

"Aw," protests the young man, "what kind of a business deal does he think marriage is? Love is enough. Love will point out the perfect girl for me. One look, and I'll say, 'This is the one!' Isn't that the way the popular songs go? Doesn't it happen like that in the movies?"

I shouldn't, if I were you, trust too far the popular song-pluggers or the actors and actresses who play at love on the screen. Their married lives are seldom a pattern of successful and enduring love.

Falling in love is almost too easy. People do it all the time, and sometimes many times over. Someday in greying maturity, you will look back in amazement at the number of girls you briefly thought you loved. Most young men say, "This is the one," after a quick look at a litany of maidens.

Marrying is something very different.

Marrying is the heart and the head working together. It is love that to "Isn't she lovely?" adds "And what a lovely disposition;" to "Isn't she beautiful?" quickly joins "And what a beautiful soul!" Marriage turns love into a permanent state. Until marriage, the girl you love comes and goes; with marriage she stays on. Love may be blind; but marriage gives you plenty of time to look at the girl and really see her.

It is easy to marry; it takes a lot of co-operation between two well-matched and congenial people to stay happily married.

BEFORE AND AFTER

The disillusioned married man was once the enthralled bridegroom. He comes to a friend with a startled look in his eye, crying, "If I had only known her beforehand as I know her now!" Or, angrily and in frustration, he waves his arms at an unsympathetic world: "Why didn't somebody tell me? Why wasn't I given some tests that I could have applied before I married the girl?"

Now the simple fact remains: A girl is not changed by marriage. She is the same in disposition and abilities, in character and virtue after the honeymoon as she was before she was fitted for her bridal gown.

More than that, the shrewd observer could have seen in the girl the qualities that would make her a good or poor wife—a happy mother or a complaining shrew. All the signs were there. Many a casual person saw them. It was the lover, blinded by his emotions, who missed the obvious. He in some cases deliberately preferred to be blind. "She'll change," he persuaded himself. Or, "I like the fact that she can't cook . . . Isn't her continuous chatter delightful? . . . Of course, she hasn't grown up, but she will . . . I know she is extravagant with her parents' money; but she won't be that way with mine."

THE TIME TO LOOK

Before marriage, not after, is the time to find out what sort of person the girl really is.

Laugh if you like, but many a highly successful marriage was worked out by the parents of the boy and the girl. The lad's mother and father knew that the girl was charming, good, virtuous, an excellent cook, a fine manager, with a pleasant disposition. She was no Miss Universe; but twenty years from now when her beautiful character had given her grace and a durable smile and comfortable understanding and instinctive good manners, how lucky the man who had married her!

Since parents haven't much to do with marriage choices these days, the young man had better do some tall and serious thinking for himself. We Americans are wild advocates of the romantic marriage. And we are also an international disgrace for the way our marriages go to pieces on the rocks. Quite obviously a "glamour puss" is not necessarily a successful wife. She may be a Wow in a ball gown but she may also shy away in horror from the waving of an apron. She may have a clever line of chatter that is hollow as the rattle of castanets.

So before marriage, during what is first friendship and the beginning of courtship, the wise young man looks and listens and judges and appraises. He quite reasonably expects that the girl is sensible enough to give him the same treatment. Precisely the sort of person not to marry is the person (male or female) who rushes into marriage without thought, planning, or more than a heart-throbbing acquaintance with a life-time partner.

Look, young man, and study the signs.

Don't, young lady, even consider marrying a man who doesn't look and study.

Don't be hurt, young fellow, if the girl is slow to decide whether she thinks you are up to the standard she has set.

Run like a startled deer, young miss, from the hunter who shouts first at his quarry and then asks what kind of trophy he has bagged.

To put it simply: Look before you love.

Or for the girls, let's say: Be complimented by the long and thoughtful look of a good man and be sure you can stand in honest scrutiny.

SIMPLE TESTS

What should a young man planning marriage look for?

What qualities should a young woman develop that would attract a fine, intelligent man, and hold a devoted, faithful husband?

Let's start with that all-important thing called disposition.

"Disposition" is a word that comes from the verb "dispose." And "dispose" means "arrange". How is the girl disposed towards things and people around her? How does she arrange her actions to fit the people she meets and the circumstances that arise?

The ancient verse used to say (and we change only the noun):

"It's easy enough to be pleasant

When love runs along like a song;

But the maid who's worth while

Is the maid who can smile

When everything goes dead wrong".

That was said first of men. But disposition is not so different in men or women. How is she disposed towards pleasant

days or gloomy weather . . . towards plenty of spending money or a sudden shortage . . . to a new spring outfit or last year's that must do for this season . . . towards the party when some other girl takes the spotlight . . . towards old people and young children ... towards a week full of dates and a week when—for some reason—the phone doesn't ring . . . towards the school election that chose her Queen of the May and the class election that found her missing the presidency by one vote ?

THAT PRECIOUS SMILE

A lot of future life would be simplified for the young man who learned to read girls' smiles :

The quick spontaneous smile of good humour . . .

The smile that breaks when things have broken badly . . .

The smile with which a hard job is accepted . . .

The smile that is the outward sign of inward grace . . .

For cheerfulness is just one of the really important elements of a woman's disposition. A man battles the world all day, and it's often enough a tough, ratty world that cuffs him and growls at him and snaps about his ears, and digs pointed elbows into his ribs. When he comes home, he has a right to ask cheerfulness. The smile of his wife at the door is the real love-light that should be burning for him. And he can drop into an armchair of peace if he is welcomed by the cheerful good humour, the dimpled smile, the easy gaiety of his wife.

Many a woman has wisely cultivated a smile.

Girls with charming dimples may well have learned before their mirror that a smile is the way to wake them in fullest fascination.

There are forced smiles . . . and artificial smiles . . . and smiles that are turned on and off with some sort of inner switch, actually emotionless as an electric bulb.

Public entertainers learn to flash their smiles, no more sincere than the tears shed by a Johnny Ray or a singing crocodile. As the chorus line dances onto the stage, the tired, gloomy, unsmiling faces of the girls will seem to catch fire from the footlights; and practised smiles in magnificent insincerity will burst on every face.

In a way, a smile is less of the lips and the dimples than it is of the eyes. A mouth may curve in a smile and the eyes remain dead and lifeless. But eyes cannot smile without the whole face waking to cheerfulness and charm.

CHEERFULNESS FIRST

The test of cheerfulness is, of course, any sort or difficulty.

A girl cannot be other than cheerful when a young man dances attention on her, when she is heavily dated, when her frock is fresh and flattering; when Dad lets her borrow the car, and Mother slips her an extra green bill for incidental expenses.

The time to see whether or not a girl is cheerful is when things go badly:

It rains and spoils the picnic.

You are sorry but whereas you expected to take her to the expensive restaurant with the name band, you admit you are able to afford only a movie and a hamburger.

Mother says, "Sorry, dear, your father and I just have to go out tonight; and you have to stay home and take care of the youngsters."

She has a fresh manicure, but it is also her turn to do the dinner dishes.

She expected to be the school's prom queen, but the other girl wins the place.

Despite her honest efforts, she does not win a place in the school competition.

She captains a team that loses.

Her baby brother runs his hands, heavy with chocolate and jam, over her new linen suit.

You sincerely wanted to take her out, but if you don't stay home and study, you'll barely scrape through.

SMALL TESTS

Small tests are the big tests; for big tests come rarely in life. The cheerful wife and the cheerful mother will be the girl who can take small mishaps with a grin; who doesn't get upset by the tricks of everyday incidents; who can smile and even laugh a little at the trifling disappointments of life.

Watch the girl for the small things. Those are the things you and your wife will have to face later on. Cheerfulness is the precious sunshine of a home; and if the wife has it, the home is bright and beautiful indeed.

MANNERS

Always a young man can think of a girl in these two ways:

1. Someday I shall depend upon her for my personal happiness, once she is my wife.
2. Someday my children will take their manners and their morals from her, once she is their mother.

So, in this day when manners are not too much prized by the younger generation, you'd be wise to take a good look at the manners of the girl you are thinking of choosing.

"Manners" — the word — expresses exactly what it intends to say:

The manner, the way in which a person habitually acts.

The manner, the way she talks.

The manner, the way she acts towards people.

The manner, the way she eats.

All those external gestures make the difference between a savage and a civilized person, a barbarian and a pleasant member of society.

A woman with pleasant manners is a delightful person to have around. A woman without pleasant manners can be a shrew, a harridan, a back-fence gossip, a rude, ill-bred, fish-wifely, gutterish person.

So you might nicely do a little listening to her voice and the way she speaks. You will have to listen to that voice for the rest of your days. Good grammar? Pleasant modulation? Sharpness of ton ? Sudden squeals or blasts or outcries of rage or indignation? Too many words for too few ideas ? No words at all, or so few that you question if she has ideas?

Does she say "thank you" for your gifts, and say it charmingly and with real appreciation? You might notice whether "please" figures in her normal speech, not merely towards you whom she is trying to impress but towards younger children, salespeople, waiters and waitresses, her teachers.

A gentle tongue may come under the head of virtue rather than manners, yet even when a tongue is not concerned with sin, it is certainly concerned with our comfort.

Heaven deliver a good man from a complaining woman . . . from one who is a fault-finder, who constantly sees what's wrong with everything and makes a point of laying her tongue vigorously upon it . . . from the critical woman who can spot and indicate a blemish, however small . . . from the gossip who knows only the mistakes and slips of her friends and makes them her constant subject of conversation.

A man wants to be proud of his wife. He had better notice whether he is proud of the girl with whom he goes out. There are a few tests: She should know how to meet people; she should be considerate of older people, notably those related to her; she should be easy and comfortable in a restaurant, whether it be superlatively good or fitted to his depleted wallet; she should know how to wear the clothes suited for the occasion; she should watch and learn from those who have more experience than she; if she makes mistakes, she smiles at them, apologizes briefly, puts them aside, and tries not to repeat them.

GRATITUDE

Is gratitude a matter of manners or of deep inner virtue?

You will be smart if you expect gratitude from the girl you marry. Here, as in most cases, you can judge her future

gratitude to you by her gratitude to her parents here and now. The girl who accepts the money and clothes, the house and food, the schooling and fun made possible by her parents without appreciation or gratitude will later take what you give her as her right, her due, and nothing for which you should get a sign of thanks.

Listen carefully while she talks about Dad and Mother.

"Oh, Dad's so tight. He hates to let anyone have the car . . . I had to wheedle and coax to get this new dress out of Mother. You'd think every dollar bill was skin off her nose . . . For Christmas? Oh, I got a lot of clothes and things like that; but then, a person's parents are expected to provide those. I wish I really had rich parents."

Listen to her as she discusses her friends.

"Hazel helped me with my book report. But then, Hazel is a bookworm; she'd rather study than go to a dance . . . I feel sorry for June; she does so well in her studies, but she simply has no charm, do you think? . . . I finally persuaded my little sister, that's Nan, to let me take her new nylon scarf; I promised to let her have my gloves on Sunday; but I'll keep them hid so she can't find them; I don't want that kid using my stuff."

A LADY, PLEASE !

Any female is a woman. But only certain women are ladies. For your sake, I hope you have the good luck to marry one of them. For a lady has those marks of good breeding that you will want her to pass on to your children. A lady has gracious manners that make her charming in her own home, pleasant in company, a prize that you can happily bring to a party, the confident, restful companion on your arm.

A lady is careful not to hurt others; and if she inadvertently does, she is quick to apologize.

A lady is considerate of the very old, the very young, the tiresome, the sick, the weak, the underprivileged.

A lady dresses well without being in advance of the styles or holding onto a style when it has gone into history.

A lady is extreme in nothing, but notable because what she does is right.

A lady is the lovely partner of a lifetime. Pray God to send a lady your way.

TOLERANCE

You and I are males, and as males we are going to do our full share of barging into fragile objects, thoughtlessly kicking things around, saying the wrong things at the right time, making the mistakes for which we will be very sorry and of which we shall be ashamed.

Thank Heaven, we spent the early and most naturally clumsy years of our lives under a tolerant woman—our mother.

She picked us up and dusted us off and kissed us when we fell.

She gathered together our broken toys and wiped up our spilt milk and set upright the chairs we had thrown over.

She took us in understanding arms and kissed our bruises and bandaged our cuts and told us how sorry she was and how sure we wouldn't do it again.

When we rashly jumped off the toolshed and landed on the cement and in bed, she said not a word of reproach; but nursed us back, knowing that our stupidity had taught us all the lessons we needed.

She didn't much like that big kid over whom we waxed enthusiastic; but when he turned out to be a bully and a thief, she didn't say, "I knew it all the time." She accepted our bitterness towards him as she had first accepted our enthusiasm, wordlessly and with understanding.

MEN ARE GROWN-UP BOYS

Well, unflattering as it may seem to our male vanity, nothing truer is ever said by a woman than, "After all, a man is just a little boy grown up". And by "grown up", they usually mean physically—perhaps in some ways mentally; but not emotionally and not in any mastery of our mistakes.

So you had best look to your future wife for a deal of tolerance.

Is she tolerant of her own dad, his talkativeness, his not overwhelming success in business, his tendency to brag about

his golf score or what he said to the boss, his constant remembrance of the past, his repetition of the same joke on all occasions? Or does a sneer curl her lips and pity narrow her eyes when she mentions him?

You will need a lot of tolerance from your wife as the years go on. She must be willing to be satisfied with moderate success. The girl (perhaps fortunately rare) who is contemptuous of anything but the most expensive restaurants, the best seats at the ballet, the top-flight clubs, clothes from the superlative shops, may find you—intolerable.

Her tendency to despise anything but real wit may make your modest humour seem hardly worth listening to.

And if she has a biting way of tearing down the reputation of those she knows, will your reputation and fame and achievements be of so high a standard that they are out of the reach of her sarcasm and scorn?

Gentleness and tolerance in a wife are almost essential for a husband's happiness. The girl who lacks these is going to be tough on the man she marries. He has my pity well in advance of the scorn which will blister his skin and the disapproval that will embitter and probably stunt his efforts.

AH, SWEET CONTENT!

The perfect wife is a strange blend of contentment and ambition. You can study that rather easily in the girl with whom you are going. Here and now she will tell you, and mean it, how much better you can do than you are doing; yet she will be pleased with what you actually accomplish and achieve.

"I'm so glad that you are going out for football. I'll be in the stands cheering you when you snare the forward pass." And, if the coach doesn't object, she is around when you practise, giving you the inspiration and courage you need. But you never get off the bench for the first few games. "I know you're chafing to get into the game; be patient; it's an old, seasoned team, and before the end of the season you'll be in there, and next year . . . that's going to be your year."

Ambition for you, yet content with what you achieve.

"Are you going to enter the short story contest? I liked that last story you published in the school magazine. Remember that plot you sketched out for me? Why don't you write that?" You do, but when the awards are given, you get an honourable mention, and none of the cash prizes. "But remember, you are only a Junior. The winners were mostly Seniors." Mercifully she does not mention that Sophomore who got the second prize. "Write that plot over again and next year I'm betting on you."

Her discontent expresses itself in her ambitions for you and for herself. Her content rests upon an acceptance of whatever comes out of honest effort.

DISCONTENT?

Into your litanies put "From discontented wife, O Lord, deliver me!" From the woman who is always comparing unfavourably what she has with what someone else has. From the woman who is angry at the success of others. From the woman who never seems to have enough. If you give her a pound box of chocolates, her look indicates she expected three pounds in a fancy container. If Dad gives her a dyed fur, she admits pettishly that he really could afford broadtail. She does not look at what she gets but at what she has not got. She doesn't have fun in the blessings and gifts that come her way, but is sour and resentful at the blessings and gifts that go to others.

You need not be long with a girl to measure her contentment of mind.

Her attitude towards you will soon show whether her desire for your success is pride in you and ambition for your full development, or greed and envy and an appetite for things and more things and still more things that no millionaire could ever satisfy.

You'll catch that in the way she orders her smaller brothers and sisters around and acts towards people who wait on her.

It is tough to be tied to a bossy woman.

It is a slavery to be married to a demanding woman.

Does she now expect you to spend more than you can afford and to buy her luxuries that are clearly beyond your

allowance or income?

HOME-LOVING

In the normal course of life your wife will spend most of her energies running your home for you.

Perhaps right here and now a boy doesn't realize how important his home is to him. He entered his present home in infancy without much responsibility for its happiness. For years the home exists for him, and he accepts its comfort and its safety, its meals and its peace as his simple due. It will be a long time before he knows how much of his character developed out of the home atmosphere that his mother and father had created for him. He will—only with deep maturity—come to see the relationship between good meals and good health, quiet and calm and sound nerves, pleasant laughter and family gaiety, and his attitude towards recreation and sports and fun.

Well, once you marry a girl, you have taken the partner upon whom will depend the happiness and wholesomeness of the home you are to occupy for many a long year.

Will she be home-loving and a good house-keeper?

"How in the world shall I be able to tell that?" you demand.

Easy, lad; just take a look at the girl in her own home.

How does she feel about her present home? Does she love it and is she proud of it? Does she take you there with an air of happily showing it off? Does she introduce you to her parents with real pride and satisfaction?

You can carefully keep your eyes open and make a few more important discoveries.

What does her mother look like? Well, allowing for the better food eaten by modern girls and the fact of current diet and exercises, your wife will someday probably look very much as her mother looks today. How does that strike you?

Can your young lady cook? "Can she bake a cherry pie, Billy Boy?" the old folk tune used to ask. Or is she the kind of girl whose mother carefully bakes the chocolate cake prepared for your coming and, just before your arrival, coaches her daughter with "Remember, when you tell him it is your cake, say, 'This is a cake I baked for you,' and not, 'This is a cake I cooked for you'?"

Is she proud of her home in such a way that she willingly plays a part in its upkeep? You may well shy away from the girl who "just hates to wash the dishes; they ruin my hands." Your dirty dishes will ruin them just as fast as her father's. "Mother never lets me do anything around the house; she just spoils us, but I love to be spoiled." "Next week Mother is house-cleaning; I'm going to spend the week with my girl friend; house-cleaning drives me crazy." Danger signs, my lad! Great big flashing danger signs! Note them and take the nearest detour.

Your home is, you hope, going to be a place of safety and happiness, of meals well prepared and floors spotlessly clean, for you and your children. You can foresee it as a refuge at the end of the day, a retreat from life's battle, an oasis in the tough journey over the commercial sands. Go on and add your own figures of speech.

Well, you alone can never make a home any of those things. Only a woman can turn a house into a home. Only a wife and mother can make an apartment or fiat a thing of beauty and calm and security and peace.

Do you think your girl is capable of that? Better be sure . . . oh, very, very sure!

CHILDREN

All this, I said, is to be for yourself and your children. Time was when philosophers maintained that the instinct of motherhood was one of nature's deepest; nothing could root it, out. I'm not so sure. One meets some pretty selfish women these days. They dislike babies because, they state incorrectly, babies ruin their figures. They are too nervous for the noise and squalls of infancy. They don't want their homes cluttered up with disorderly children. They are individuals with a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and children have a way of demanding a share of their life—cutting down their liberty—and restricting the forms their happiness may take.

Unhappy the good man who marries a girl who resents children.

How can you know? It's not too hard:

Find out how the young lady feels and acts towards her little brothers and sisters. If she regards them as brats, nuisances, inconveniences, bothers—she won't change too notably when the children are yours.

Watch her with chance children who come your way. Listen to the words she uses to describe the dirty-faced kid whose clumsy and sticky hands imperil her spring outfit. Watch for distaste when she sees a mother with three or four small steps trailing along behind. Listen for her tone of pity when she says, "Susan has had her third baby in three years; the poor thing!"

Love of children is a deep, maternal, beautifully feminine instinct. But it has been left for our highly competent and often savagely selfish modern women to tear it from their hearts. You are lucky if your future wife loves children. You may find her regarding you as a brute and a taskmaster if you expect her to bear and love and bring up children, when she regards motherhood as a curse, and children as an interference with her peace and personal life.

WHAT ABOUT GOOD LOOKS?

"What kind of book is this anyhow? Here he's been going on for pages and not one word about how the girl looks! I want to marry a beauty myself. Life for a husband must be pretty dull if his wife isn't pretty. I'd hate to spend my life looking at some of the girls whose only recommendation is a pleasant disposition."

One thing that has always puzzled me is the faces of some men I've known who demanded beautiful wives. How come that homely men think they are entitled to pretty wives? You'll hear some most unattractive male demanding for himself an extremely attractive female. There ought to be some balance in looks, I'd say. When the onlookers say, "What a handsome couple!" I find myself thinking it quite right that beauty should draw beauty; when I hear a man demanding beauty in his partner, I always look twice to see if his partner will find good looks in him.

However, if our newspaper records are accurate, marriage to a raving beauty seems to lead to some raving divorce proceedings. Beauty is natural in some women, painfully acquired in others, and in still others retained only through a lifetime's service. I can think of no husband as likely to be neglected as the husband of a professional beauty. She owes too much of her time to the care and cultivation of her good looks. And when she is out, she is constantly walking in the presence of an audience to which she carefully plays. Beauty, like all natural gifts, demands a lot of time. If a woman hasn't the inner spirit to keep her beautiful, then she has to put in tireless thought and continued effort to keep the fragile flower of physical beauty from withering.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, BEAUTY?

It is important, however, before answering the demands of the young man bent on finding a beautiful wife to ask just what he or anyone else means by beauty.

Regular features?

A perfect complexion?

A figure meeting the latest standards from the Power's Agency?

I doubt if those are the types of a beauty with which it would be pleasant to live. For regular features, like anything else regular, soon seem less regular than routine. Right now Hollywood is far less interested in regular features than in the expression that lies back of them. There are a thousand girls with regular features waiting counter in cafeterias and pounding typewriters in Los Angeles; the girl who registers in the present tests for good looks has lack of those features—regular or irregular, according to the classic tradition or in the current eclectic vogue—aliveness, interest, character, charm, an inner glow that comes out in her eyes and her general expression.

The day of beauty, classic and orderly, comes and goes.

In the end, beauty is what pleases the beholder; and it is amazing how attractive people defy the rules of art and are beautiful despite a slight twist to a nose, freckles, eyes that are just a little off alignment, a mouth with a fascinating quirk, and a chin that would look odd indeed on Venus of Milo.

Beauty is worth having only if it attracts. Beauty is worth possessing only if, after the passing of time, it remains.

And that is why surface beauty is a poor thing to look for and a worse thing to marry in a girl.

Good health, that wholesome look, the "well-scrubbed look" praised by the current novelists, the face and eyes and figure that mean a lifetime of decent food and enough fresh air and clean living—these are what matter on the physical side.

But looks will fade. Sickness, child-bearing, the passing of the years singularly alter the physical aspects of a woman. Then the inner girl begins to show more and more, to dominate the looks and bring the character to the surface. Her face is charming because she is constantly cheerful. Her features remain surprisingly unlined because she smiles easily, her mouth curves upward, and she doesn't let worry or annoyance dig furrows into her forehead. She moves rapidly and easily because she has an inner spark that keeps her alive. She has something better than regular features; she has regular habits; and the regular possession of virtue and of sanctifying grace.

It is amazing how, with time, the soul comes to dominate the body. Selfish people get the hard, selfish look. Generous people grow more physically attractive each day. People with the peace of God's friendship develop expressions that instantly attract and constantly charm. A mouth that speaks kindly becomes a beautiful mouth. Hands that serve generously become characterful hands. Eyes that look out for affection on mankind are eyes that radiate an inner beauty not difficult to find.

A young man is wise to ask of his future wife a wholesomeness and moderate health.

Her smile soon comes to compensate for regular features.

And if she has a lovely character, she will year after year, indeed day by day, grow into a comfortable, attractive, gracious, beloved adornment of his house. Her virtue is the only kind of beauty that does not decay; and the virtue of her soul will take over and mould to full charm the beauty of her whole person.

HER PERSONAL GOODNESS

All this means that a young man should expect his future wife, the guardian and in a way the maker of his home, the mother of his children, personal goodness.

Modern young men have freely expressed a theory which I find horrible. They feel they have a right to "test a girl." That is the famous "pass" about which so many ugly jokes are made.

"A fellow has a right to find out how far a girl will go. If she is willing to let him get away with something, that's her lookout. If she isn't, then let her take a stand and a decent chap will respect her attitude. You've got to experiment to find out whether a girl is good or not."

Horrible as it is that the self-confessed "stronger sex" should make what they call "the weaker sex" decide how good they both will be, girls might as well know that many a modern young man actually puts them to the test. His attitude is contemptible but common. He does not make love to them because he loves them; he makes love to them to find out whether they are worthy of his possible love. And, in strange and savage contradiction, if the girls accept his insistent love, he decides they are not fit for married and maternal love.

Just as many a pagan-minded girl today thinks she has to indicate to the young man who takes her out that she is a "good sport," so many an equally pagan-minded young man makes the test: Is she going to be a "good sport," or is she someone whom I might consider for a partner in marriage, my wife, the mother of my children?

There is no real need for such contemptible experiments.

Goodness has a way of manifesting itself in a thousand instinctive signs. It is shown in speech and in reaction to speech. The girl of personal goodness is clean of tongue and quite clearly is not happy when the speech of others around her grows soiled. Personal goodness shows itself in the kind of amusements a girl enjoys, and in her attitude to a film in which suddenly something off-colour appears, or to a nightclub performer who turns blue. It appears in the way children take to her attitude towards boys and men; a boy may frankly wonder a bit when a girl is a little aggressive, inclined to be too free with her gestures of affection, hangs on him, sits too close, has a way of finding the arm of the chair he occupies and sitting there rather than in a chair of her own. None of these things are too morally wrong in themselves; they are the

signs of her habitual attitude.

A good girl is a pleasant companion. She likes to dance, but she dances with blended verve and modesty. She enjoys happy conversation but not off-colour conversation. Her laughter is tell-tale; for it should be wholesome and natural and not strained or too loud or rising a little hysterically when things are doubtfully decent. She is a girl who loves her home and is content with a quiet evening. She does not expect the boy at the movies to put his arm around her shoulder, and she goes well forward in the theatre and does not herself stay back among the young couples whose interest in the film is largely secondary. When she rides with a young man in his car, she does not imperil his driving by plastering herself against him; and if he suggests parking, she understands and differentiates between parking to admire the beautiful vista and parking as instant prelude to undeclared courtship and love-making.

No boy has to "test a girl" as the moderns would do. The thousand simple, easy, quickly rising signs tell the story of goodness or its lack. What does she read? What magazines does she eagerly page through? Who are her friends and what kind of boys and girls has she been going with?

PASSED ALONG

It is vital to remember that the goodness of the children is, next to the grace of God, going to come from the goodness of the mother. A girl of easy virtue may be "fun"; she is nobody to trust with a family. She may be a good sport, but will she be a good mother? After marriage she may reform, but it is wasteful effort for a girl to marry a drunkard to reform him; and it is prelude to heartache when a man marries a girl of easy virtue in the determination to turn her into a virtuous wife and mother.

Your future wife should have the health from which will come strong, vigorous young bodies. But she should have the spiritual health from which will arise strong, vigorous, virtuous souls.

HER MIND

While we are on the subject of what a woman passes along to her children, we may take at least a swift glance at the girl's mind.

Certainly, unless you yourself are a young Einstein, you need not demand that your future wife be a Phi Beta Kappa. A book-worm or the ridiculed college grind is not necessarily a person with the kind of mind you'd enjoy living with for years.

Yet this is the day of universal education. Despite the value of modern schools, children will always find their mothers their best, as they surely are their first, teachers.

You will be happy if you marry a girl with an alert and inquiring mind. The physical aspects of marriage are extremely limited even in actual time. The rest of the day you live with a woman's disposition and mind and soul. What she did in school and how much formal education she received is far less important than the quality of her thinking and the kind of mental attitudes she has developed.

Were her parents people who liked books, took her to good films and plays, had good music on the radio or their disks, and believed in pleasant conversation among themselves and with intelligent friends? Or, if they were not, has she herself developed such attitudes?

Did she detest books and class and almost deliberately do badly in her studies, so that now, self-defensively, she brags about what rotten marks she made?

When you are together, what does she talk about and what does she like you to talk about? Is she bored if the conversation rises above the latest Voice with the name-bands or the last piece of gossip about her girl friends? Does she know at least something of what is going on in the world, and when you talk of your ambitions and dreams, your work in life, what you hope to make of yourself and your job, is she alert enough to follow?

We can't stress this too demandingly; yet you will have to depend during a long married life upon the interests and mind and alertness of this girl. And your children's minds will take their first character and formation from hers.

TASTES

The use of cosmetics and the style of her dress really are important chiefly in this: they illustrate her natural taste. A girl with taste doesn't paint like a freshly designed circus poster. Her clothes are attractive and not extreme. They are neither too short nor too long, too full nor too scant, not the styles of five years ago or of the Space Cadet era. When she eats, she is curious about new food but content with the plain dishes of the restaurant you can afford. She is curious about the receptive to new music and new books and art; but doesn't go overboard for the latest craze that may die before its names get into the loose-leaf dictionaries. She shows honest enthusiasm but doesn't gush or rave. She is sweet to people but doesn't, in the Irish phrase, palaver them.

All these are the signs of good taste; and after all, upon the taste of your wife will depend the tasteful or chaotic home in which you are going to spend a good deal of important time.

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL

There are charming, well-mannered, attractive, beautiful, tasteful, well-dispositioned girls in every faith. All religions have their good and virtuous members, depending, of course, on what these religions believe and practise, and what they demand in virtue of their members.

But you are a great fool indeed if you allow yourself to fall in love with someone not of your faith.

If your religion means anything at all to you, it is Christ's own revealed truth, Christ's way of life, Christ's road to salvation, Christ's explanation of how to please His Father, Christ's programme for saving the world. Christ's way is the only way to salvation.

It is not a matter of being a Republican or a Democrat, an Elk, a Rotarian or a Knight of Columbus. It is not a question of preferring the Dodgers to the Cardinals, golf to tennis, hamburgers to hot dogs. It is part of God's plan for you to make a success of your life.

So you fall in love with a girl who does not share your faith. A lot of things inevitably follow

1. You hold deep down inside you a great many truths that she thinks are false, nonsensical, or certainly not in the least important. A great sector of your life is totally alien to her.

2. As your wife, she has promised to raise the children in your faith. What are you asking of the poor girl? What demands are you making upon her tact, patience and ingenuity?

She must teach them truths she does not regard as truths.

She must start them off in religious practices that she herself does not practise.

She must create a religious atmosphere for the house when she does not accept that religion.

She must be so clever that she inspires the children to reverence and follow a religious way of life which she herself neither under-stands, accepts, nor externally practises.

You are asking a girl who may not believe in miracles to work them. You are going to ask your children to accept a faith that their darling mother does not accept. You are facing a life of religious loneliness; for you can never talk about your faith to the girl who does not understand what you are saying, and you must go off alone to Mass, to confession and Communion, to the parish mission or retreat. And you must insist on a Catholic education for the children, following their Catholic Baptism, Communion and Confirmation, which means less money in the family budget, and sacrifices she must make just because you demand them of her.

Does it sound like prelude to a happy marriage, this fact that the girl doesn't accept your faith?

The plain fact is that nothing so disqualifies a girl for marriage to you as the lack of your religious faith or the acceptance of a religion that regards your religion as false, misleading, and perhaps even of the devil.

Marry the girl of your own faith. Don't ask a girl without your faith to accept you when accepting you means a lifetime separation from the soul and mind and practices of the man she has married.

ASK A LOT, GIVE A LOT

Perhaps by this time you have reached the conclusion that I am telling you to ask a lot of the girl you marry. I am. But I am also telling the girls to ask a lot from you.

The simple but vital principle for selection is this: You ought to demand a lot of the girl you marry, for the girl who marries you ought to be getting just as good as she gives.

Ask a great deal of the girl; but bring the girl a great deal yourself.

It's a shabby marriage when either party short-changes the other in disposition, virtue, devotion and faith. It's a blessed marriage when virtue weds with virtue, health finds health, a good disposition unites with a good disposition, and a faith is consecrated at the altar to a similar faith.

Marriage is too important to be fooled with. If shabby, third-rate people must marry shabby, third-rate people, the world will continue to know its makeshift, unhappy, fore-doomed marriages. You wouldn't have read this booklet if you did not want the right girl for the ideal and blessed marriage. Look until God leads you to her. And let her, when you make your offer, know that you are bringing her a man of integrity, pleasant habits and disposition, virtue, and a deep and shining faith.

Then God bless you both.

Nihil Obstat:
Bernard O'Connor,
Diocesan Censor.

Imprimatur:
✠ Arthur F. Fox,
Aux. Bishop, Melbourne.
