

CHAPTER IV
COURTSHIP—FOR THE GIRL

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Texas

DEAR MRS SANGER

I am a young girl of 20 years and am going to marry soon. I have been hesitating for many months just for the reason that he is in the hospital, having been gassed in the army

I love children very much and would not think of a home that was not blessed with them but under the circumstances, with my husband in his present state, I do not think it just right for me to go ahead and bring a little one into this world who might suffer the consequences I have talked this matter over with him and he just says we can trust to luck about that but I just cannot see it as he does

I purchased your book "Woman and the New Race" and read it and I thought you could help me in this matter since I have no one to talk it over with I will be a young bride and I realize my ignorance on this subject and I am in perfect health now and would like to remain so

I am educated and have my own way to make in this world My future husband does not understand why I do not rush right on into marrying him and this is what has been bothering me all the time The doctors say he will be well in another two years and we have been waiting so long that we have decided to marry now

Mrs Sanger if you can advise me, I would appreciate it very much and would only consider it as motherly advice. Thanking you I am

B G S

CHAPTER IV

COURTSHIP—FOR THE GIRL

FOR the girl who stands at the threshold of life the period of courtship is even more important than for the young man. For centuries motherhood, not marriage, has been the chief function of mating. There is reason to expect that most normal women will continue to seek self-development and self expression in the fields of marriage as well as motherhood.

Therefore it is essential that every girl in her late teens and early twenties should use all her intelligence and insight to develop herself mentally, emotionally and physically. Not that she should aim merely to prepare herself for the 'marriage market,' but she owes it to herself to appear and to live at her best.

No matter how limited her income today is, it is possible for every girl to make the most of her natural endowments. This requires study and attention and perhaps advice from some trusted, confidential friend.

Beauty is not the monopoly of a few girls

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upon whom all gifts have been showered Nature has endowed every woman with certain powers of attraction Every woman is attractive in some way No woman is attractive to all men But every woman can make herself attractive to some men, and this is as it should be

Certain things are essential to all No beauty no prettiness, no attractive qualities can you afford to neglect

In the very first place, to all women health and hygienic cleanliness are absolutely essential Over confident in their power to attract admiration, many young girls become negligent in this respect Such negligence must immediately be corrected

It is within the power of every girl and young woman nowadays to develop and to keep radiantly fresh her natural charms If she fails to do this, no amount of money spent on clothes, jewels, or superficial trinkets can possibly make her any more attractive to eligible young men

In the first place she must keep her body fresh and clean free from the odors of perspiration and preventing through daily care, the possibility of any unpleasantness in this

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respect This is a delicate yet tremendously important problem of feminine hygiene which must be solved not by a general rule but by each girl personally

Much of a girl's freshness and attractiveness depends upon proper diet and digestion and the healthy functioning of the processes of digestion and elimination—the stomach and the bowels A fine skin and complexion can not be kept if the stomach is disordered by careless eating and an overindulgence in starches and sweets Chronic constipation is an enemy to beauty A sweet wholesome breath depends to a great extent upon these vital processes of elimination Every intelligent girl will realize the importance of the internal as well as the external care of the body Less active and indulging in fewer sports than men girls are more often victims of constipation

The care of the teeth and mouth must become a part of the daily routine The proper care of the hands and fingernails is also a necessary routine The hair which is properly called a woman's crowning glory, must be thoroughly cared for brushed and groomed daily if it is to retain its glossy life and beauty

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The coiffure is an art no longer neglected by American women and today when its importance is being fully realized there is an infinite variety of styles bobs and cuts that have proven a Godsend to many

In the matter of dress girls have a far greater opportunity for charm and attractiveness than ever before By the use of intelligence, common sense and good taste even the girl of limited income can choose a wardrobe of great attractiveness

Every article will be chosen by the sensible girl not because it happens to be the latest fad or fashion (and may be particularly unsuited to her individual figure and complexion) but with a careful attention to the problem of whether it enhances and brings out her good points Each girl must learn to develop a style and individuality in dressing choosing clothes and colors which accentuate her type at the same time exercising great care that she does not render herself cheaply conspicuous Men are proud to be seen in the company of girls who are striking and stylish but most men are embarrassed by girls who are loud in manner whether it be in voice or in clothes and complexion

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The care of the body both outwardly and inwardly the bathing and thorough cleanliness of all of its orifices give the girl an assurance of sweet smelling cleanliness which gives her an invaluable assurance and confidence in her own power of attractiveness Her mind is no longer weighed down by nervous doubts concerning her physical defects or deficiencies Her appearance is no longer a matter of chance nor merely of a perishable prettiness but it bespeaks intelligence and character as well A wholesome selfishness in this matter of personal appearance and style is healthy and normal in a girl who does not care to leave her life and future happiness entirely to chance

The girl who can study herself and use discrimination and judgment in the care of her body and in the selection of a wardrobe will by this exercise of intelligence be enabled to judge and discriminate between the types of suitors who are attracted to her

Before the girl has found the man of her choice there is a period that is important in her development and yet is one of danger and uncertainty It is during this period that the

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girl must discover her own strength and her own weaknesses

During this period the attractive girl—and I insist here that all girls possess natural powers of attractiveness which they themselves must develop—the attractive girl finds herself in all classes of society interesting to several types of men. Some will be attentive merely on the basis of good fellowship. There are other boys immature unsettled unsure of their financial or economic position. There are still other men who are ready and willing to drift into any sort of relation possible who have a horror of assuming any of the more serious responsibilities of life and who are aimless and vacillating in their intentions with women.

Then there is a most dangerous and sinister group—men and boys who are at heart gangsters whether it be of a country club gang or one which congregates at street corners. Both to the sheltered debutante of society and to the self respecting girl who reluctantly goes forth to earn her own living men of this type are not to be encouraged. The chief aim of this sex pirate is to return to his gang and boast of his conquest of some girl and of the favors

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he has won. Make no mistake about this he tells of his intimacies how far he has been able to go with the girl and what chances others have for the same privilege. Such men have absolutely no respect for the girl who gives herself freely to them. In his mind such a girl is merely a substitute for the prostitute whose price he cannot pay.

Girls in sheltered homes, closely chaperoned, may not frequently meet men of this type. But girls in business pursuits who work in stores, shops and factories are thrown constantly in contact with such men. She may redeem him from his sinister habits. But she can do so only by awakening in his mind a respect for her, not by succumbing to his suggestions or desires.

Finally there is the man who falls seriously in love with the girl. He may be a man who has been an old friend, a companion, or an absolute stranger. Whether this flame be love at first sight or not makes little difference. Or perhaps there is the man with whom you, the girl, fall seriously in love.

This is the awakening, the new consciousness within yourself that you are in love, that you want with all your heart and soul this one man.

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as your mate If you sense that this deep feeling is returned so much the better If this man who in your eyes differs from all other men shows signs—and there are innumerable ways of finding out—of wanting you in return it is of the greatest importance that you be mistress of the situation

At this point courtship begins And in this important experience the girl no less than her suitor must play an active and all important rôle The final outcome of the game depends more upon the wooed than upon the wooer

Many a possible romance and marriage have been thwarted by too passive an attitude or too hasty an acceptance on the part of the girl

To awaken a desire to nourish it to cultivate it to direct it—this Balzac has written, is a poem in itself It is the poetry of courtship It is the duty no less of the young woman than of the suitor

If the initial friendship and good fellowship upon which the intimacy between the suitor and the girl is founded is to be converted and ripened into the deeper feeling of enduring love the girl must aim to awaken in the heart of the wooer a fine respect for her as a human being

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His desire will increase if she makes it impossible for him to take her interest for granted. Uncertainty is a greater stimulant to his interest than possession. Concealment is one of the most natural and legitimate of woman's arts. The suitor's interest is held and deepened by his effort to find out if the girl of his choice is really in love with him.

Do not play with his affection. But at the same time do not forget that the pursuit is a necessary link in the chain, and no matter how delighted you are that this man may be your mate, avoid premature consent. Remember again that a prize lightly won is not highly valued.

For the woman as well as the man the period of courtship or wooing demands a distinct technique. There is an art of being wooed as well as one of wooing.

Too many young women today have forgotten this. They forget that Nature and tradition have decreed that Man shall be the wooer, the pursuer, the huntsman. Man is the aggressor, and there is a profound psychological reason for the rightness of this view.

If the woman is clever enough to elude charmingly this pursuit, she becomes instru-

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mental in intensifying his desire, in deepening his attraction in holding his interest

It is therefore one of the first lessons for women to learn in the art of love, to be playfully elusive. She must respond to the advances of the man of her choice, but she must not respond too rapidly, too completely, too prematurely. She must remember that adventurous primitive man does not value highly an easy capture.

Desire is generated in the pursuit. The more venturesome the chase, the greater the vicissitudes overcome, the thrill of uncertainty, in brief, the whole prelude of anticipation makes the lover set a greater value and interest on the object of his passion.

Today many women have forgotten this. And in neglecting to learn the elements of an art that is essentially feminine, in failing to realize the two fold nature of courtship, they are disappointed in the lukewarm interest displayed by the wooer.

Uncertainty stimulates the wooer's interest. This however, does not mean that even in the period of ardent wooing, sincerity and honesty should be cast aside. Quarrels, which to many may seem inevitable, should never be per-

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mitted to deepen or become anything more than superficial incidents of the courtship

Thoughtless cruelty may kill or deaden forever an enduring love. Even though the lovers may be brought together again by mutual forgiveness, the wound remains. It may poison or infect the entire relationship.

The love of the majority of men is deepened and strengthened by resistance. It puts them on their mettle, gives them the necessary obstacles to overcome and puts them to the test. The man who is easily defeated or willingly accepts disappointment is hardly the man who makes a good husband. Especially in the early days of courtship it is the duty of the woman to aim to bring out the strength and courage of the suitor, not his childish weakness.

Just as the lover must seek to dramatize his love by a series of pleasant surprises and unexpected incidents, so too, must the girl aim to discover the real man beneath the love by putting his character to unexpected tests.

Her aim from the beginning of courtship to the day when she finally consents to become his wife, should be to prevent this intimate and thrilling relationship from sinking to the level

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of the commonplace Never permit your favors to become matter of fact

The first requisite is to win this man's respect Having won it, you must retain it but without resorting to the crude weapons of coldness or affectation It would be the utmost tactlessness to assert your own superiority by correcting his faults or calling his attention to personal defects in dress or manners On the other hand, the clever girl may suggest to her swain certain changes in dress or deportment in a manner that will not offend him, and at the same time make her dearer to his heart Do not criticize and find fault Nagging is immoral Encourage and stimulate to greater achievement by appreciation and respect

Familiarity breeds contempt, rightly warns an old adage This is especially true during the days of courtship Therefore never cheapen this relationship, whatever its outcome may be, by undue faultfinding familiarity Make it worthy and dignified, as you should make all human contacts

A certain dignified reserve does not mean that you must coldly deprive yourself of any of the real pleasures of happy youth But the

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girl should not forget that during the days of courtship the whole foundation of a lifelong relationship is being built. Good manners, politeness, courtesy, respect, and dignity are more necessary in these more intimate relationships than are involved in the relations of acquaintances or friends.

The highest compliment a man can pay a woman is to ask her to become his wife. Anything less is an experiment. Either it reveals his inability or his unwillingness to accept responsibility or his fundamental selfishness in love. At any rate it bespeaks his unconscious confession that his love is not of the marrying kind. To enter such a relation is most likely to be a costly experience for a girl just entering maturity.

There is a wholesome reaction today against prudishness and priggishness in youth. This is indeed a healthy sign. But there is another danger in the swing of the pendulum to the opposite extreme. Laxity in speech and behavior, roughness and rudeness of manner is not pleasing to men, rough and uncultured though they themselves may be. The noisy, conspicuous girl who in a group or party is seeking always to attract attention to herself

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is usually in this very act confessing her failure to hold the interest she so flamboyantly seeks to arouse. She only attracts to herself the same type of response.

The girl who is elusive whose manner suggests that beneath a quiet exterior she is concealing qualities of strength and more endearing charms is bound to attract men of more sterling worth who themselves have learned deeper and truer values of life who seek in a woman finer and more profound beauty than a cheap and gawdy exterior which so often conceals an empty head.

Gossip and questionable stories are incongruous and unsuitable for any girl's conversation and create a bad impression with men, even though they may tolerate them. Nevertheless such talk inevitably lowers the girl's moral standard in the eyes of her male companions. If she indulges in or tolerates loose coarse language concerning phases of life all humans should respect and reverence the whole exalted tone of romantic lovemaking is vulgarized and an element of cheapness and discord enters into a relationship that should be kept clean and poetic.

The younger generation today too often

confuses haste with frankness With the decay of etiquette and advent of the new freedom of expression haste and hurry tactless frankness and bad manners in all phases of life there can be little doubt that courtship is becoming one of the lost arts But it is an art upon which most of the enduring happiness and stability of subsequent married life depends It must not only be recaptured but developed refined and recognized as of primary and central importance in the technique of love

The period of wooing is therefore the most beautiful as well as the most important in the lives of the young men and young women It corresponds to the springtime of the year and young love is like the young plant bursting through the soil The young lover may for the first time awaken the young woman to the realization of her blind impulses may unveil for her the mystery and the intensity of love Small wonder that this has been the eternal theme in art music and literature Love embodied in a woman means a rebirth for the lover

When at last the suitor has made a proposal of marriage the girl doubtless has already

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considered her reply and should nevertheless continue mistress of the situation. She should have satisfied herself as to his character that he is pleasing to her physically as well as mentally that his virtues outweigh his faults and that she is ardently in love with him.

If she does not believe they are suited to each other she must have the courage and the honesty to reject him. Such a rejection no matter how painful at the moment will prevent the future and tragic unhappiness in two lives.

If on the other hand she foresees a community of love and interest she can without reservation accept the proposal and announce her engagement.