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WOMAN'S WORLD.

ADVICE TO AN ENGAGED GIRL.

As it is a difficult matter for any girl to escape receiving a good deal of advice in these days, when every noteworthy person and periodical is deeply interested in her welfare, you can scarcely expect to be exempt from the infliction. Pretty soon you will be a married woman, when advice will be completely thrown away upon you, so I hasten to offer you a word of counsel ere it be too late.

Don't give yourself airs because you are engaged, while your older sister isn't. Old maids are fashionable at present, particularly when they have ideas of their own, with careers to match. After you have patiently folded your brown wings within the portal of home, while she is "careering" without, it will not be so certain that all the advantages are on your side. To succeed as a wife you must be as unselfish as an angel; to succeed in a man's work you must be as selfish as a man. This implies no reproach to the despised sex. It is amusing to hear women denounce the selfishness of men, when that very selfishness, cultivated, of course, in moderation, is a wise provision of nature, directly designed for the benefit of wives and families. Whatever you do, don't marry a conspicuously unselfish man. He will be very frank and gay, open-hearted and open-handed, a delightful companion, popular with everybody. You will begin life in comfort, be reduced to poverty, descend into debt, and people will wonder why your husband ever married such a sour-faced wife. But these hail-fellow-well-met young men generally do marry sweet-faced girls, who degenerate into sour-faced wives. Some one must bear the burden of support, some one must plan ways and means, and feel anxious and care-worn at times, and where the husband shirks these obligations as being inconsistent with his gay and amiable disposition, it is the wife who has to assume them.

It is better to marry some one whom you thoroughly liked before you loved. When the fragile superstructure of love trembles and threatens to fall beneath the storms of life, a foundation of genuine friendship—real liking—is the best thing to rebuild it upon.

If there are any reforms that you wish to inaugurate, any changes that you desire to effect in the character or habits of the man of your choice, now is the time for prompt and decisive action. Make up your mind whether you will allow smoking in the parlor, or have a private smoking-car built for the purpose, or whether you will discountenance it altogether. If the latter, be sure to come out fairly and squarely on the subject. The woman who hesitates is lost; and it is useless to try and break him of the habit by offering him a cigar of a brand bad enough to have been invented by Trask, the great anti-tobacco reformer. This will not disgust him with tobacco. It will only create a morbid craving for a box of the best cigars. But you say why not defer the discussion of such disagreeable subjects until after marriage. Because the fewer subjects of that sort you discuss after marriage the better it will be for you. Where, then, is the influence of a wife over her husband in breaking up the bad habits of a lifetime? Where are the snows of yesteryear?

Don't write love-letters every day. It is too hard on the postage, and you will never get enough money ahead to keep house on at that rate. Twice a week is often enough except at times when it is absolutely necessary to write twice a day. Occasionally it is well to keep silence for an entire week, as that will be sure to bring you a letter full of apprehensions, and hope deferred, and anxious solicitude. He is not sure whether you are at death's door or just beyond it. You will not often be accorded the opportunity of relieving the fears of a suffering fellow-creature at so slight an expense to your own convenience.

Don't let any one hurry you into marriage. You are an independent young woman now—something you can never be again after you are merged—or submerged—in husband and home. The novelists write "finis" at the wedding-day because it is then that the reign of prose begins.

"Think you if Laura had been Petrarch's wife

He would have written sonnets all his life?"

Certainly not; and the modern Laura, who is perhaps as fond of writing sonnets as her Petrarch, and who makes her pin-money by thriftily disposing of them at a good price, will find this source of income cut off by the words which make her a bride. Poetry that is worth printing is generally paid for, and the chances that it will be better written before marriage than after are as a hundred to one.

When your lover sends you a book don't say it is a very nice book, but tell him why you like it, or quote from it what made the most impression on you. This will prove to him that you know how to read. Most girls are mistress of this desirable accomplishment, but they so seldom practise it on books that are really worth while that one is always a little in doubt as to their attainments.

Don't hesitate to ask questions on subjects that puzzle you. Few things please men better than to be asked to enlighten our poor, darkened understandings. It is beneficial to them also, because the quickest way for a person to become acquainted with his own ignorance of a subject is for him to attempt to explain it to some one else.

You will expect me to say something about the necessity of being able to make a shirt, and bake a loaf of bread, but I am just as tired of the shirt and bread style of talk as you are. One thing, however, I will say. Any girl of fair average intelligence, who will give her mind to the subject, can master the science of cooking, root and branch, in a period of time not exceeding three months. It is nonsense to think that only a life-long acquaintance with broom and frying pan can make one adept in their use.

This is all, except that where other people look at you with knowing eyes, or with a sickly smile, or with an expression of bottomless idiocy, you needn't appear to take any notice of it.

BEL THISTLETHWAITE.