

How To Choose A Wife

By Laura Jean Libbey



If a girl is unhappily married she begs as an excuse that her husband did not show his true character before they were married. She confides to her best girl friend, "No wonder that Tom and I don't get on together. How can we? He does not seem to realize that it takes two to make a bargain, but only one to break it. Why, do you know, when he courted me, I thought he had the nicest disposition and was generous to a fault. My, how he fooled me! He flies into a temper for the slightest provocation and it is as easy to squeeze blood out of a turnip as to get money out of him."

I have received dozens of letters from complaining women, who never stop to think that it is often the fault of Mary rather than of Tom that there is so little bliss in their young married life. It often happens that Mary has put her best foot forward and never showed her real nature until some months after they were married.

I believe that 50 per cent of the unhappy marriages are caused by the short sightedness of men; they do not know how to select a wife. They rely upon their impulses instead of using sound judgment and when their impulses play them false they are dreadfully disappointed.

Is There Any Certain Way?

The following letter is pertinent to the subject: "I am going with a young girl and she is popular with both girls and men. She has a great many friends for a girl who is only 19. She has a sweet disposition and she is attractive. I have only known her six weeks. Do you think I am safe in relying on my own judgment and that of my friends to marry her? I know that there are those who say that there is no safe and sure way of selecting a wife. What do you think of this?"

My answer to this young man and to all others who contemplate matrimony is that there is a sure and safe way of selecting a wife. It is as simple as one's a, b, c's, and only calls for the exercising of a little common sense.

A woman in selecting a color for a gown decides whether she intends wearing this gown by daylight or artificial light. If it is for daylight then she asks to see the goods by a clear daylight. On the other hand, if she intends wearing the gown at night, then she tries the color by artificial light.

Common Sense Used in Judgment.

Likewise to judge rightly of a good business man it is foolish to size him up as you hear him speak to his friends at some lively banquet, where merriment runs riot. You must also see him at work among his employees and notice how he meets many men.

The same recipe can be safely given in selecting your wife. It is not enough that you size her up after you have seen her dressed in one of her prettiest summer frocks entertaining you in her parlor, or even under more favorable conditions, as enjoying a play or whiling away an evening listening to some delightful music in a summer park. To make a fair estimate of her you want to see her under less favorable circumstances. Take her unaware some morning and make an engagement for a game of golf, or a game of tennis.

Hurry to her home and try to catch her before she goes to breakfast and you may learn many things about her you can never find out in any other way. Take note whether she is fresh and tidy or limp and frowzy. If she is seated at her breakfast attired in a negligee and with her front hair done up in curl papers, you may be disappointed in her, but be glad that you got the

shock before you were married. It is worse still if she has her breakfast in bed and commences her day about the time you have done several hours of hard work and are ready for your midday meal.

Negligent Habits Hard to Break.

If she has cultivated these negligent habits before she is married, she will surely keep them and will make as a legitimate excuse that when a woman is out to a party or the theater until nearly midnight her husband has no right to expect her to be up and have breakfast with him.

Laziness is one evil every man should guard against in selecting the right sort of a wife, and untidiness is another. A wealthy bachelor discussing how to judge of women made this assertion: "I have one standard and only one by which I judge women. I pass by their gowns and their conversation, but I judge every woman I meet by the appearance of her hands. Well kept hands are to me an indication of refinement and culture."

Though he stated his opinion too forcibly. I believe that a woman shows a disposition for neatness or untidiness by the appearance of her hands. If her hands are one indication of neatness, the way she pins her collar, combs her hair and buttons her dress also tell the same story. We have all seen women who spend a great deal of money on their gowns and take little pains to see that their collars are carefully pinned together, that their waists are neatly hooked to the belt, and that their hair is combed neatly. Many a woman wears a simple gown because her weekly allowance is small, though she would like something handsomer and more becoming. But she can have little excuse—not even that she had to dress in a hurry—if she is careless about the dressing of her hair and the arranging of her dress.

Qualities Inexcusable in Woman.

Harshness and irritability are not to be forgiven, though they must be tolerated in a man, but these qualities are certainly inexcusable in a woman. Nature has struggled hard to give to woman the milk of human kindness, and it is her duty to cherish and to cultivate this spirit of gentility that nature has given her. It is often said that a man who makes a good son is sure to make a good husband. Well, if this holds good for a man it is even truer of a woman.

If she is thoughtless with her mother and impatient with her little sisters and brothers, she certainly is not going to be gentle and patient with a man. Now if she is the right sort of girl, however plain her home, and however homely her mother, her best friend in the world, she will prize both more than anything else. She will be so proud of her home and family that she will welcome any man there. For love has taught her that her home is a palace and her mother is a real queen.

She may go out in the world and associate with women who shine socially because of their ability to give costly functions, because of their gowns and priceless jewels and of their homes, which resemble palaces, but these will seem commonplace and trivial compared to a girl's own mother, brothers and sisters, and the old home rich because of its many valuable associations.

Only Index of Girl's Character.

You may believe it or not, but the fact remains that you can judge a good deal about a girl's character by what she eats and drinks. Fine breeds of animals eat sparingly and are just a little fastidious about their food, and the same holds good for



men and women. A fine girl has too much regard for her health to gorge herself, and she has as her maxim, "To eat to live, and not to live to eat." This does not mean that she should deny herself the pleasure

that can be had from food, but her pleasure will be that of the epicurean instead of a glutton.

There is one other thing—that the girl you want to have as your wife is fond of

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When a girl is unhappily married she begs as an excuse that her husband did not show his true character until after marriage. She does not always realize that she also put her best foot forward until she was married. In the first place see the girl you intend to marry as early in the morning as possible, and note whether she is fresh and tidy or limp and frowzy.

Notice if she has her breakfast in bed, or if she comes to the breakfast table in her kimono.

Notice how she fastens her collar and combs her hair. Watch how she treats her mother and her sisters and her pets. Notice what she eats and drinks.

Is she fond of walking or driving? The girl who wants to ride all the time and objects seriously to walking will not exert any considerable energy about your home and affairs.

Inform yourself about her tastes. See if she is only fond of dancing and the theaters.

Is she a flirt, talking sweetly as she dances with you and laughing over your shoulder?

Is she fond of sewing, and does she like to go into the kitchen?

Inform yourself whether she is fond of reading biographies and travel, or does she spend her time reading Ibsen, Owen Meredith, Henry James, Poe or Longfellow.

Go to church with her and see if she cares more for the preacher than for the gospel. Learn if she is a man's woman, not fond of smoking and drinking, but of tennis and golf. Get acquainted with her home life, see what her father's temper is and how her mother runs her household. If you find that a girl is trim, true, healthy, sensible and clever, sail in and win her.

walking and plenty of other outdoor exercise, she is a girl of strong muscle and quickly coursing blood. She will get the same pleasure looking after her household that she does from a long walk or a game of golf, while the girl whose chief pastime consists in loitering in her luxurious car will find household cares a trial and a bore.

A girl's tastes are also a good indication of character. Dancing and theater going are legitimate amusements and it is only natural that girls shall get pleasure from both. But the restless type of girl, who can only quiet her nerves with this kind of recreation, will find little pleasure passing an evening in the library chatting with you or listening as you read aloud from some interesting book.

Home Loving Girl Makes Good Wife.

The home loving girl, however many interests she may have, still finds some pleasure sewing for herself and for the family and likes to try her hand at some new dish, and she will surely get pleasure from the home that you are giving her.

A girl who is a born flirt can never quite reform, however much she may try. This desire is like a germ imbedded in her system and cannot be gotten rid of. If she talks sweetly as she dances with you and laughs over your shoulder at the same time, just put her down as a flirt to be admired, perhaps, but not desirable to have for a life companion.

Almost as bad is the "high browed" woman who utilizes most of her time reading and discussing Ibsen, Owen Meredith, and Henry James. She feeds on that kind of intellectual food and when she exhausts the

patience of her family she talks most learnedly on these subjects at her six or more clubs.

Another type of posing that calls for small real admiration comes from the girl who feigns to be greatly interested in her church and its doings. Well and good if she is, but to make sure that she is not posing go to church with her and see if she cares more for the preacher than for the gospel, and does not take time to admire her new gown or becoming wrap.

Every Man Admires This Type.

Every man, and rightly, likes a man's woman. By that I mean a type of girl who can take a man's view of things and enter into his pastimes and recreations. But there is a big difference in this sort of girl and one who poses as a hohemian by wasting her time and strength in smoking and drinking. This garish type of woman rarely makes a good mother and a sympathetic and genteel wife.

Do not overlook a girl's heredity before you ask her to become your wife. If it is possible, find out what kind of people her grandparents and great-grandparents were. It is not necessary to know so much about their wealth and social rank as whether or not they were healthy and good, hard working people. Meet and talk with her parents, and notice if her mother runs her household in a good and orderly way. If they have these qualities, the girl probably inherits them, or has learned to cultivate them.

Now, if you find a girl who has all these qualities, or some of these, at least, if she is trim, true, healthy, sensible, and clever, sail in and win her, if you can.