

Let's Give Our Mothers A Break This Year. III.

The Saturday Review of Literature furnishes us (via The Ave Maria) with a sound verbal spanking for the flapper. It is administered by Lee Wilson Dodd, in his review of Willa Cather's "Death Comes to the Archbishop." He addressed himself to a rebellious young person in short skirts -- "the incarnation of average public taste in America" -- who declared that the novel bored her. Here is his reply:

"You say, my dear child, that Miss Cather's novel has bored you; that you could not get through it; that it is not really a novel at all. When I ask you why it is not really a novel, you maintain that there's no story in it, by which obviously you mean a love story. In this, as in most other things, you are wrong and -- don't bother to forgive me, sweet child -- rather pathetically stupid. There's a great, a very great love story in Miss Cather's masterly quiet narrative. It is a severe, purely-designed chalice of hand-beaten silver, filled to the brim with the essential wine of love, -- love of man to man, love of God to man, love of man to God. True, it nowhere lures you to identify yourself with some fair and conceivably frail heroine whose neurotic organism is asquirm with sexual desire. In this respect, I am forced to admit, it fails your expectations very badly.... But if you can manage to survive this disappointment and attune your mind (may I daringly presume you have one) to less customary harmonies, -- harmonies both throbbing deeper and lifting higher than the common range, I venture to assure you that you will soon forget to be bored..."

In the first Bulletin of this series you were shown that your conduct, good or bad, means the public esteem, good or bad, of your mother. The second Bulletin, yesterday's, showed that motherhood still develops noble character even when it finds selfishness in the raw material; and that it produces a spirit of sacrifice that can undertake the sublime. Today you are asked to give your mother a break in the choice of her future daughter-in-law; and to give your future kids a break in the choice of their mother.

Now a man usually chooses his wife from among his female associates. It is only fair that he should do so. The girls who give him their time during their marriageable period should have an even break for his affections; and if he has one set of rules for his ideals and another set for his practice, it is hardly proper for him to drag a girl of his ideals down to the rules of his practice.

The popular companion of a great number of young men at the present time is of the type described in Lee Wilson Dodd's withering sarcasm quoted above. Tuberculosis and nervous disorders will, of course, remove many of these brainless young women from the marriage market before their time comes, and for the rest there are enough brainless young men running loose. Unless you are brainless yourself you have no need to seek them out as suitable companions or wives.

You need to pay your mother the compliment by implication, that she is the best kind of mother, by choosing for your companions young women who conform to her ideals. That's giving your mother a break. If such young women are not common in your environment it is nearly always possible for you to change your environment. And it is always possible for you to pray for the thing you want if it is not readily accessible. St. Joseph is a great friend of honest lovers.

Prayers.

Frank Goetz asks prayers for his father, who is very ill; Tom Frost's grandfather died Sunday; Karl Brennan's grandfather is quite low; Frank Noll is still very ill; Martin Callagy is improved; Al Taylor's mother is still low. 3 special intentions.