

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN.

March 14, 1925.

Learn Frugality.

The third suggestion listed in the suggested preparation for marriage is an economic one; learn frugality. If you give a girl the idea she can marry you for your money she will very likely marry you for alimony. Put her on a diet now and save yourself the necessity of going on a diet later on.

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One of the old boys came back last summer to talk over the shipwreck of his marriage. His story was really pitiful. She had obtained her divorce on the charge of cruelty, and had brought perjured witnesses to support her charge. She was given custody of the child; and although she is a Catholic and a graduate of a convent school, she is now keeping company with another man. His war service wrecked his business, and the divorce proceedings took all the fight out of him, so that he is now a ruined man. He needed to know the truth and so do you. This is what he was told:

"Your silly courtship wrecked that marriage before it ever came into being. You bought that girl expensive presents when you had no business to do so. She was wealthy and you were a pauper, working your way through school and having a hard time doing it. You were afraid she would think you a piker; you were blind in your love for her, and you wanted to make sure she would never have to turn her hand to anything."

"Exactly," was the answer. "I was a fool---I can see it now. But what gets me is that she showed not the slightest appreciation of all that I did for her. I worked hard to give her everything, and I was successful. I felt that the only way to get ahead was to start a business of my own; I did it, and the shoe-string I started on had netted me a modest living the first year, and six thousand dollars the second. I turned everything over to her. She had to have fine clothes and I bought them for her. My business could have sold for fifty thousand dollars when the war broke out, but in the hurry I let everything slide and when I came back there was no business left---and no wife. Fine appreciation for a convent girl to show!"

Again the point had to be driven home: "If she didn't appreciate you, it was your fault. You never let her build up the power of appreciation. You forget that it is a subjective thing. Marriage is a spiritual affair, and its spiritual qualities are brought out by mutual sacrifice. You never let her make any sacrifice for you. Your appreciation of anything depends upon what you put into it: free gifts are held in contempt. What is it that makes a long-suffering wife pick her drunken husband up out of the gutter for the five-hundredth time and nurse him along when the whole town demands that she turn him out. She sees in him redeeming qualities that no one else can see: her appreciation of him, his value in her eyes, has been built up by the sacrifices she has made for him. And since he has made no sacrifices for her, she has no appreciable value in his eyes.

"You love her yet in spite of all she has done to you, and because of all you have done for her. If she would come back to you tomorrow you would welcome her, not only for the boy, but for her own sake." "I would, absolutely," was the quick response. "And the reason you would is now very clear to you. The reason her conduct hurt you so much is because you had done so much for her. But you could not expect her to be anything but selfish and heartless when you never gave her a chance to sacrifice anything for you.

"Look over all the happy marriages you can recall---the kind that last until the golden jubilee. You will find in every case that the beginning was not so rosy: there was sickness or financial difficulty---perhaps both, there was something that demanded sacrifice on both sides, and when their love outlasted those difficulties it grew so strong that nothing could ever sever it."

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If you want to learn frugality, keep an expense account. You may spend money foolishly, but it hurts to put it down and look it over again every time you add another item. And don't spend all your money on crazy presents and crazier food. Put her on a diet. Train her while she's young.

John F. O'Hara, C.S.C.,
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