

Religious Bulletin

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V.

"Learn Frugality."

If you give the girl the idea that she can marry you for money she may want to marry you for alimony. Put her on a diet now or she may put you on a diet later on.

Some time ago one of the old boys came back to talk about the shipwreck of his marriage. His story was tragic. She got her divorce on the charge of cruelty, sworn to by perjured witnesses. She was given custody of the child; and although she is a Catholic graduate of a convent school she is keeping company with another man. His war service wrecked the business and the divorce took all the fight out of him; he is a broken man.

He needed to know the truth and so do you. This is what he was told: "Your courtship wrecked that marriage before it 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; you wanted to make sure she would never have to turn her hand to anything."

"Exactly," was his answer. "I was a fool - I can see it now. But what gets me is that she showed no appreciation of all I did for her. I worked hard to give her everything, and was successful. I felt that to get ahead I must start a business of my own. I did it, and the shoestring I started on netted me a modest living the first year, and six thousand dollars the second. I turned everything over to her. My business could have been sold for fifty thousand dollars when the war broke out, but in the hurry to get in 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 own fault. You never let her build up the power of appreciation. You forget that this 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 sacrifices. Appreciation of anything depends upon what you put into it; free gifts are held in contempt. What makes a long-suffering wife pick her husband 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 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 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 because you have 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 the happy marriages you can recall -- the kind that last until the golden wedding. 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 became everlasting."

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 foolish item. And don't spend all your money on crazy presents and crazier cover charges. Put her on a diet. Teach her to walk. Train her while she's young.

PRAYERS: Jimmie Coram is improving somewhat and Jack Daley is getting much worse.