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W. F. COAKER,
Min. of Marine & Fisheries.
July 9, 1920

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A Course In Courtship

By P. O. D.

(In Saturday night—Toronto).
Poor old human nature is certainly not being left very much its own untutored instincts these days. Every human impulse is being codified and standardized and made the subject of college courses. Marriage has, of course been long since shorn of any vestiges of romance it might possess by the Eugenists and the Psychoanalysts and the whole noisome tribe of sex cranks. But one did think that they would leave the business of courtship alone. Here, at least, young love might be left to its own gracious devices. Why hasten the disillusion? But nothing, it seems, is sacred to the people who are engaged in the pleasant pastime of reforming the rest of the human race, and now we have a prominent clergyman in England coming out with a plan for a series of classes in the right methods of courtship.

Incidentally, isn't it wonderful how advanced and scientific the clerical profession is becoming in these hurried modern times? Old-fashioned clergymen were content to preach religion and let it go at that. They stated with the usual divine sanctions the basic principles of ethics, and left the members of their flocks to make their own individual applications of them. Not so your modern parson. He is all for scientific management and concerted effort and as much meddling in the other fellow's business as possible. It may be the best and most efficient system, perhaps, and the right way to get results—even if the only obvious result is to get the clergyman's name and picture in the papers. But, personally, we like the old way best. If we were to go to church, it would be to get religion and not to get tips on the newest and best methods of courtship—much as we may need instruction in that difficult and perilous art.

To come back to the Rev. Hugh Marsh, vicar of Mansfield, and his classes in love-making, he, of course, lays the necessity for such things at the door of the modern parent. "If parents neglect their duties to their marriageable daughters," he says, "and leave them in a state of ignorance, then the clergy should step in and conduct regular classes on the subject."

Certainly, blame it on the parents. They are responsible for everything. The job of being a parent has always been an onerous one, so far as we can make out, but as time and civilization go on, it is rapidly becoming an almost impossible one. No wonder a lot of them are shirking the responsibility—it is too great a strain on the mind and the nerves. If the average man and woman had to start in and study up all they ought to know before tackling the task of becoming parents—why, by the time they had acquired all the necessary knowledge, they would be too old to try it out. Perhaps it would be wiser and more effective if the very advanced thinkers were to frame their theories for the instruction of grandparents—then there might be time to catch up.

Medieval parents and even parents so late as the Victorian age had a comparatively easy time of it. All that was expected of them was that they should feed their children and clothe them and see that they got a certain amount of ordinary instruction, and public opinion was satisfied. Never did the old style mother feel called upon to tell her daughter how she ought to conduct her courtship. She might drop an occasional shrewd hint—usually as to the young gentleman's financial prospects, and whether or not he meant business—but the rest was left to the girl. About the only right parents used to retain was that of the veto, when the young lady picked the wrong man. And this right, of course, has long since been taken away from them.

Incidentally, we would like to ask the Rev. Hugh if he really thinks there is anything about love-making that the modern mother could tell her marriageable daughter which that young lady doesn't already know. Now, if he were to rehearse the matter and suggest that it was high time modern children took their parents into their confidence and open their old-fashioned eyes to the facts of life as set forth in sex literature and the movies, there might be some sense in the suggestion. But, of course, modern youngsters wouldn't—they would be afraid of shocking the old folks.

far as we can judge from the cabled reports, which are necessarily rather brief and fragmentary, these classes are of two kinds—classes for young people who possess "a very low code of morality" and classes for "healthy-minded couples." In the first case, we should judge, the instruction is largely of a restraining and additive nature, and is devoted to solemn warnings and pious exhortations. In the latter case—well, the only reason we can think of for the Rev. Hugh holding classes for "healthy-minded couples" at all, is that he would like to see them put a little more "pep" into their work. Quite right, too.

One thing that rather puzzles us about the Rev. Hugh's system, is how in the world he is going to get students for his "low-code" classes. Young people with that sort of morality are not likely, one would judge, to go to a clergyman for instruction in courtship. They are far more apt to seek for knowledge by some rough and ready method of personal experiment—in fact, that's how they acquire their peculiar code. But, after all, the reader is probably not much interested in that sort of young person. Neither are we—our own code of morality being painfully high.

But the classes for "healthy-minded couples"—really, in spite of our opening tirade against meddlesome clergymen, we are rather taken with the Rev. Hugh's idea. We wouldn't mind joining such a class ourselves, if we could only overcome the handicap of our years and our natural embarrassment. Besides, why does the Rev. Hugh insist on his pupils being "couples"? We could hardly invite a young lady to join a class in courtship, with us—not without giving her the idea that we meant something very personal by it.

Frankly, this strikes us as a very serious defect in the Rev. Hugh's system. By the time a young man and a young woman have got to the point where they are a "couple"—with their names in the social columns and the girl's friends giving her showers and all that sort of thing—they would seem to an ignorant bachelor like ours to have got past the need for lessons in courtship. What they need is a few lessons in matrimony.

If the Rev. Hugh really intends his classes to be for engaged persons, there is a distinct danger lurking in the scheme. What is to prevent three or four young men in the class deciding that they prefer the style of some other young lady student and the greater enthusiasm she puts into her lessons? It would be terrible if these classes for "healthy-minded couples" should have for immediate result the busting-up of several of the couples and their rearrangement on a new basis. That's the worst of conducting your courtship publicly under a supervising eye—the chances for comparison are far too great. It would naturally never do for young Mr. Brown, who had brought young Miss Green to the class, to put in his time gazing yearningly at the superior work of Miss Dolly Flutter. Or Miss Green, on the other hand, might discover, as her knowledge broadened, that Mr. Brown was a dud and a goof compared to the masterful and fluent Mr. Montmorency. It is not well to run such risks unnecessarily.

The people the Rev. Hugh ought to go after are the bashful souls who are not yet a "couple" but would like to be, only they don't quite know how to go about it. This is the case where specific instruction is of value. Of course, the neighbors might be inclined to talk if an unattached young lady openly went off to a class in love-making—they would probably regard her as a designing hussy—but this feeling would soon wear off, if the classes became popular as they no doubt would. No one could feel that it was a rather brazen proceeding, if all the young ladies and young gentlemen in the congregation took to attending them.

Perhaps it would be a good idea if the Rev. Hugh in the beginning held the classes separately—the girls in one, the boys in another—by way of obviating the inevitable bashfulness

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Sale Price \$5.17
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and confusion. He might devote these preliminary lessons largely to theory, and in this work he would find a few movie-films of very great assistance. Klasing, for instance, which would naturally form a very important feature of the Rev. Hugh's curriculum of studies, could hardly be better taught than by running off before the pupils a few select scenes by Mr. Wallace Reid or Mr. Francis X. Bushman. Aides by these gentlemen is a very rhythmic and impressive performance, lasting for about seven hundred feet of film, at a rough estimate, thus affording every opportunity for study. In fact, the film might easily be slowed down so that every detail of the action could be followed. Not even the Rev. Hugh himself could conceivably give a better demonstration—oh, with

Mrs. Hugh, of course, or one of the more elderly deaconesses, who would presumably take a maternal interest in the success of the class.

For the young men a more vigorous course of instruction might be required, as the more active part of the work naturally falls to their share. We would suggest, for instance—we are full of good suggestions—that they should be put through some kind of physical drill tending to strengthen the right or left arm, as a preparation for the severe strain of keeping it round a young lady's waist for hours at a time.

They might also be trained to hold a sack of flour—if flour is too expensive, make it sand—on their knees for protracted periods. The weight could be gradually increased till they got so strong they could hold almost anything without either foot going to sleep. How important this is only a man who has tried it can understand. We haven't, but this is what an imagination has been given to us for.

When the dear boys and girls have gone successfully through these preliminary courses, the classes might then be combined for more practical work—it would also add greatly to the interest of the student. But when the classes are finally assembled for these more advanced studies and the task arises of dividing them off into couples, we would very respectfully and humbly suggest that the Rev. Hugh should do this by lot. It would be fair to all and would prevent an unequally scramble on the part of the gentlemen for the more alluring co-eds. But perhaps we can safely leave this to the Rev. Hugh—he knows, he knows.

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