



The Good Wife

THE QUALITY A MAN MOST DESIRES IN HIS MATE

By JEAN BLEWETT

"I know a woman who can cure my grief,
And put to flight the petty cares that press,
A woman rich past telling or belief
In cheerful ways and whole-souled tenderness."

I REMARKED that the world and his wife are interested in weddings and the gray eyed girl, who is one of the Christmas brides, returned with gloomy fervour:—

"I don't know about the world, but I am sure that his wife is! The Eternal Feminine, I suppose, but I feel inclined to tell the women who are so prodigal with their advice what your late gardener's son told the other little 'culled kid,' who cried out loud when the gardener was being buried, 'Say, you felleh, w'at foh you makin' all dat racket? Dis ain't none of your funeral, I'll let you know!'"

"I wonder how it is that so many of my relatives are women who are married, have been or hope to be! They trust I'll be happy, but they fear the worst—their tones betray them. It is always 'Are you two suited to each other,' never 'Do you two love each other,'" protested the bride-to-be. Silence for awhile, then the gray eyed girl, with a half wistful laugh went on,—

"What constitutes a perfectly good, first class wife, I wonder? The kind a man keeps right on

"Love will go where it is sent" quoted the grey eyed girl. "It seems absurd to argue that a man should choose this or that kind of a wife. He must follow his heart, musn't he? His chief concern is to get the girl he loves if he can—what's a disposition in a time like this? He isn't worrying about it. He's in love and temper is called temperament during courtship days. Cheeriness is a lovely thing, but you wouldn't have a man marry for that would you—without being in love?"

No, but the cheery girl is generally charming enough to win his heart outright. You remember Tennyson's old farmer's advice, "Don't 'e marry for money, but go where money is."

That's the principle. Let the young man in search of some one to love and cherish go where sunshine is; nature will likely do the rest.

Nothing makes up for the lack of brightness. Beauty, wit, tact, help out but do not compensate. A solemn woman may be a good woman but it's difficult for her to make a good wife. She hasn't the requisites. A man may like a psalm for Sunday, but for week days he wants a song with a laugh to the lilt of it. Give us the soul radiant woman who can lift a man as high as his ideals, give him infinite faith in the future and

HUSBANDS, WIVES, AND HOMES

- ❏ A house without cheer is a gruesome place.
- ❏ A disposition is an important thing when one has to live with it.
- ❏ There are heroes in married life as well as in any other profession.
- ❏ A solemn woman may be a good woman, but it is hard for her to make a good wife.
- ❏ The soft laugh of a contented wife is something worth while

loving? What virtue endears her to him first, last and always?"

"You mean what quality a man desires most in a wife? Give a guess."

"Constancy," returned the bride-to-be, who is very sweet and loving.

"No, not constancy." I contradicted, "Many a constant wife is not 'Witty to talk with, pretty to walk with or pleasant to live with.'"

It is not constancy or any of the great virtues that appeal most to a man. He wants these also—being a man he wants all that is coming to him; but the thing he desires most of all in a woman—the woman of his choice—the thing over which he will rejoice through all his married life is a cheerful disposition. That sounds commonplace, I know, but don't elevate your pretty eyebrows in scorn. We must remember that a man wants—I do not say needs—cheering ten times more often than he wants—again I do not say needs—advising or lecturing, call it what you will. He wants a happy home and worthy or unworthy, he has a right to it. If he be worthy he deserves it and if he be unworthy, certainly an unhappy home will not make him better. And it takes a cheery woman to make a happy home. I do not care how beautiful a home is or how well kept, it isn't a homey, livable spot if a pessimist happens to be in charge. A man may get used to a doleful, complaining woman, but no one knows what "the getting used to it" means to him. From the woman whose lips turn down at the corners and whose tongue drips complainings—may the good Lord deliver us and all worth while husbands!

A HOUSE without cheer is a gruesome place, a garden without sunshine could not be more lifeless. And flowers cannot grow in a sunless garden, nor virtues in a cheerless home.

A disposition is an important thing when one has to live with it. Cheerfulness conduces to peace, and peace is dear to the heart of man. No matter how warlike a man may be abroad in the world, he is all for peace at his own fireside. That phrase "Peace at any price" applies to the benedict. If you doubt it, watch him. In business life he may be bold as a lion, fighting a company, syndicate or even a government, may be fine to him, but when it comes to the five-foot-three slip of a woman who runs his house at her own discretion, he throws down his weapons. This if he is merely an ordinary, every day sort of husband. Of course there are heroes in married life as well as in other professions, bold, obstreperous fellows who retort—"please attend to your own affairs and I'll attend to mine"; "don't try making a fool of me," "live and let live," etc., but these are few and far between.

A splendid dower for a wife to bring a husband is the cheerful nature which ensures his comfort and gives him that sense of well being which all deserve. "Many men of many minds," you say; but in this matter, the many men are mostly of one mind.

what is better still, perhaps, a glorious happiness in the present.

"My love is like a red, red rose," sang the bard. Oh! they could write those poets of long ago; yet we find a homely beauty, if one may use the expression, in the modern verse that hasn't a frill or a flower. Hark to the miller boy singing the rose red song to a different setting,—

"I work every day in the old gray mill,
Though the dollars I earn are few,
The sun is ashing for me still
In my Mary's eyes of blue."

THE happy wife is a helpful wife; her thought and care are for others, hence her content. She does not crave the excitement of society nor need the entertainment of theatre or concert hall, yet, when these things come her way she enjoys them in a rational manner. She is not only sufficient to her husband, to the children who call her mother and the neighbourhood, that large home circle that lies outside the four walls, but she is sufficient to herself—which means more. Women would not run after fads and fashions if they had happy hearts to keep them company at home. The Book says: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." I love the words—they light up the sphere of service. The passing years teach us more of their meaning. It would seem that the Father of us all, taking into account the dark days, the shadowed places, the discouragements and hope deferred, the hurts of life and the losses, out of the kindness of His heart put a premium, the highest premium of all, upon cheerfulness—the Lord loveth. It is as though the message runs—Tell it to all people, shout it from the housetops, sing it to the winds of heaven, that the man, woman or child who gives love and gladness without stint or measure has for recompense the love of God which passeth knowledge.

The soft laugh of a contented wife is something worth while. Beginning in the home circle it goes ringing out through the aisles of a busy old world like silver bells; we pause to listen and go on the better for having heard. If it means this much to us, mere fellow creatures of this wife, what must it mean to the husband; "She is happy. I make her happy," he tells himself. Or maybe his thoughts are all of his share in the transaction, and he says: "I make her happy," and lets it go at that. What matter. The glow in his bosom is a sort of moral exaltation that does him good, and if a few—very few—make fun of his sentimental pride, they also envy him its cause.

Once upon a time there was a wise being, called Olaf the Fair, who sent his son forth to seek a wife. His words of counsel were few, but to the point. "Go, seek until ye find a sunny heart."

Just so, and with a royal example before us we would say to the would-be married man of to day, "Find the sunny heart—get the smile. You'll need it before you come to the end of the road." A Merry Christmas to all good husbands and happy wives.



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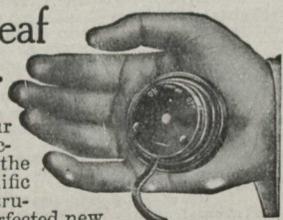
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