

THE KIND OF WIFE I SHOULD CHOOSE FOR MY SON. . .

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The Wife Described In
The Book of Proverbs.

BY REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

The subject of this article is capable of being stated from a totally different point of view, that is, for example, What daughter-in-law would I choose for myself? So limited is the mind of man, and so selfish is he even in his most exalted moments, that he cannot but treat every subject with special regard to his own emotions, preferences and interests. I have not only to choose a wife for my son, I have to choose another member for my own family, a consideration which cannot but affect my reasoning upon so delicate a topic. If my son were to be married to-morrow, and depart for the uppermost parts of the earth on the day following, I might not feel the pressure of the matter so sensitively; but when I reflect that my son and his wife are going to live within five minutes' walk of my own house, and they will probably come at least thrice a week for their supper at my table, it is impossible for me to bring my susceptibilities within the control of a stern or even Spartan discipline.

First of all, my son's wife must have a roomy and well furnished head. For I like sense; downright solid human sense. I like too, sense that is softened and varied, by well controlled and well directed humor, not only the sense that can see a joke after it has been elaborately explained, but the broader, rarer sense, which can see the humorous aspect even of some serious things. It is pitiful to see how very seriously some people take their daily life. Life is serious enough in all conscience, therefore, do not let us fill it with a deeper sadness, so tragical as to be utterly without relief, and without openings into wider and healthier spaces. My daughter in law, therefore, must have sense relieved and softened by gracious humor; the humor that may make her keenly alive to the defects of other families, but obligingly blind to the infirmities of all in her own family.

My daughter-in-law must not be a mere face. I hope my meaning is clear. I have now and again seen a woman who had a face and nothing behind it. It has been a nice face in point of form, a shapely modeled face, representing, indeed, some degree of perfection in feature, yet it never lighted up, it never really laughed, it grinned but did not smile, it looked but saw nothing. If my son brought a face of that kind into my house I would banish him into disgrace and solitude. A full length portrait of the wife I would choose for my son is given in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, beginning at the 10th verse. There is no comelier woman in all the galleries of literary art. To think that there may be a woman who will do my son good and not evil all the days of her life—what a fortune is that! What refine gold! What living light. Then how industrious is the wife of King Lemuel, 'She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she bringeth her food from afar; she riseth while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She is a woman, too, of large consideration and distinct business faculty—'She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard; her candle burns all night, and the spindle moves nimbly to the touch of her deft hands. She is a downright clever woman of business. Any fool who has the money can buy a hat, but Lemuel's wife can make an old hat look like a new one. That is genius! Lemuel's wife is no niggard; 'She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yes, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' If you would know what a wife she is look at her husband, for when he sitteth among the elders of the land he is known by the whiteness and fineness of his linen. And what a talker this gentle creature is, 'She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.' Her reputation stands out above the renown of her circle, every one says concerning her, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou without doubt excellest them all.'

I have thus made a clean breast of the purposes which animate me in the choice of a daughter-in-law. My readers now know exactly my policy in reference to my son's welfare. He will never be half a man until he is mated with this sweet and holy woman of the Book of Proverbs. I speak with the greatest emphasis; I declare with the whole passion of my heart, that this is precisely the kind of wife which I should at once choose for my son—if I had one.

A Queen of Silence
And Queen of Speech.

BY BISHOP J. H. VINCENT.

If I had a son who needed a wife, and

my words had power to place in his hand in holy covenant the hand of a woman answering to my ideal, these are the words I should write:

A woman of intelligence, that he, at his wisest and best, might respect her; gaining in culture and power with the passing years, that he might not outgrow her; independent, that she might maintain her rights; self-controlled, that she might not be easily overruled; vivacious, that she might continue to interest and inspire him; gracious and agreeable in social manners, that she might help to make their home attractive to people of taste and refinement; having a speciality in art or literature, that she might continually augment her resources; expert as a cook and caterer, that she might be able to direct her kitchen; genuinely sympathetic, that towards 'servant girls' she might stand in the attitude of a friend, accounting them as home helpers and not slaves, and therefore with delicate sense of fitness objecting to the term 'servants,' unless she applies the same term to her minister, merchant, doctor and banker; honoring true and pure womanhood in every sphere of life where it seeks self-respect and cultivates great social aspiration.

A woman interested in all questions of social reform, that she might contribute directly and indirectly, by example and effort, to the development of society.

A woman fond of children, that might be glad and proud to be a mother; with industry, tact and ingenuity, that she might both entertain and instruct her children. A woman fond of reading aloud, that she might enrich the early years (and thus all the year) of her children's lives with a treatise and a knowledge of the best literature; keen to detect native defects in her children, that she might be wise in devising and equally wise in a permanent silence concerning them.

A woman steady in the observance of religious duties, that her teaching might never become perfunctory, and that all her well-chosen and carefully uttered words

about religion might always have in them the force and fervour of profound conviction and of personal experience.

A business woman, that she might sympathize with her husband's responsibilities, and appreciate his obligations; economical and prudent; training her children to know the value of a penny in the service that earns it, the self-denial that saves it, and the wisdom that divides it in useful expenditure and philanthropic bestowment, training alike to discrimination, prudence, and generosity.

A woman devoted to the Church, reverencing and making delightful (if in a different way from other days) the Holy Sabbath, recognizing the preeminence of the Holy Bible and all other books, and building up into our civilization as far as her home can do it, the noble Christian elements which are the glory of the age and the government in which we live.

A woman free from affections of every sort, scorning to appear what she is not, accounting bluntness as rudeness, and yet preferring bluntness to pretence.

A woman who is a Queen of Silence and a Queen of Speech holding the golden sceptre which litted ensures the first, and dropping gives the blessing of the second; loving her home better than all other places on earth, making it a fore-taste of the Home eternal, and sharing with other earthly homes the qualities of grace and peace which make her own so delightful.

A woman beautiful with the personal charms which reality in character bestows; charms which make irregular features and a plain face attractive, and which thought, love and unselfish devotion make radiant. Such is my ideal of the wife I should seek for my son, if my son were not already thoroughly satisfied, as is his father.

Hearts Agreeing and
God Helping Them.

BY GENERAL G. O. HOWARD

Having set a proper example for my son years before he was born, by making the choice of a wife of just the right kind he

has now in his mind a true model; he has had this model ever since he was old enough to play with the boys and observe the girls. He looks around and comes as near to the model as he can. But does he then and there make his choice? Unless he is unusually discreet, he will not succeed in capturing such a prize. Why not? Because the prize also had a good mother and a good father, and so she, too, has a model, an ideal of her own, for her future mate. You see how very difficult the adjustment. Think of a young man always quoting the sayings of his mother to his intended as a means of grace, or naming her doings as a noble example!

But this will not do. In my simplicity I would say: Trust the boy to find his own way through all the mazes of young society. He has a good thinking brain, a fairly susceptible heart, and in time will have experience enough to enable him to launch and sail his own ship. Oh, how full the world is of charming women! Where can you find faith, virtue, honor, self-denial, intelligence, industry, frugality and abiding affection? These qualities are never more apparent and more pronounced than in the social sphere of our American girls. No where else do you discover more vigorous health, more real beauty, more charming manners.

But you ask, perhaps, should your son consult you, what would you advise? This is certain: I, for one, would manage in such a matter to meddle as little as possible. Just think what a mess of it fathers, and mothers for that matter, have made of it, by injudicious and indelicate advising? Advice is all right, if it be given with great care and long before any choice is dreamed of. As the twig is bent the tree is inclined. Now, I think you see how a noble, dutiful son may find a true and womanly woman, who possesses all the needed graces, and how, hearts agreeing and God helping them, they can commence their married life, attended with a father's and mother's blessing.

A Companion in
Sorrow as in Joy.

BY WILL R. M. D. Y.

The phraseology in which we speak of a person 'falling in love' is significant of

the abruptness with which a young person discovers an attachment for another. For this very reason it usually happens that some seldom seek the counsel of a father in such matters before their choice has been already made. So it has been for generations, and the question you raise is therefore one that would, in actual experience, be almost unique.

And yet there is probably no decision in a man's life, next to his relations to God, that is so important as the choice of a wife. To make a wise choice is to find re-enforcement for all that needs strength; to make a mistake, in all but most exceptional cases, means disaster to the best possibilities of life's career. Many men have been made by a wise choice, and alas! many others have been ruined.

There are, however, certain principles, easily discerned, which are essential to a happy marriage. The first of these is love. Not the sentimental caprice of the season, but that experience, that once known, can never be confused with any counterfeit. Such a love that grows day by day and is strengthened more in life's tragedies than its joys. Second, it is essential to an ideal companionship that there should be community of interests, not simply in the world's pleasures and knowledge, but in the joys and interests of the Kingdom of God.

Should a son of mine then ask my counsel on such a question, I would impress upon him these two essentials to a wise choice. I would urge him to seek for the companionship of one who would inspire him to his best achievements, sympathize with his highest aspirations, rejoice in the things he loved; and last, and most important of all, one who could enter into the fellowship of his sorrows, for in the school of affliction as nowhere else, souls are drawn most closely together in love and confidence.

Much Depends Upon Dis-
position and Occupation

BY REV. DR. THOMAS SPURGEON.

What can I say on such a theme? Why, bless his dear little heart, he is only eight years of age, and it seems at present almost impossible to contemplate matrimony for him.

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H. R. H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.