

Chapters to Young Men, on How to Win a Wife  
Chapter II – Which Treateth of Manliness  
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In winning the esteem of a young lady, two things are very important. 1<sup>st</sup>, That you are worthy to win one; 2<sup>nd</sup>, That you find one worthy of winning. Young men are wont to start out with their heads full of the latter idea, to the entire exclusion of the former. Luckless mortals, doomed to learn their mistake, in the hard school of experience. This is the very rock of which I wish to warn you, and teach you to steer clear.

My dear young man, if the Mary, Carrie, or Susan, or Julie your mind is tending toward, is such a lovely, sensible, high-minded girl as you dream of, don't you suppose she has formed a very high ideal of manhood? Of course she has! A woman of little soul, and consequently few wants, may take up with the first young man of good looks and good business, who makes love to her. But the girl you're thinking of, won't do it! No, sir! Do you dream of a gentle, pure, thoughtful maiden, *she* dreams of a strong, noble, whole-souled man. Be a *man* then, if you would win a *woman*. Have some manliness, and act it out.

*First*: have some manliness. A woman does not like a mere negation. She wants some one to be sure of, and she cannot be sure of a man who isn't sure of himself. Therefore, if you have anything in you, let it come out, and she will like it, if it is worth liking. Have a character! *Mean something!* Do not be afraid to wait upon old Aunt Huldah from church, on a slippery day, because "the fellows" might tease you about it, or some of the girls curl their ruby lips. Depend upon it, if one girl among them has got a heart, it will go pit-a-pat when your name is mentioned, ever after. If you don't believe me, try it!

Do not be afraid to express your ideas on any subject – that is if you've got any; if you haven't, get some! Josephine may not agree with you, but say what you think, and allow her to differ. She will like you all the better for having a mind of your own.

Never act a part, to win the regard of a young lady. Or, let me preface this, by saying don't be a flirt (for there are as many flirts among you, as among those of the other sex). The girls may like you well enough to go with, but not one of them would think of marrying you. Do not be all things to all ladies. You compromise yourself; you lower yourself; or rather there is no "yourself," you are only the shadow of whoever you happen to be with, and no girl ever will love you, for the very good reason that there is nothing to love. You congratulate yourself that you have "reserved forces," yet since they are "reserved" you cannot call out the noblest part of a woman's nature, and nothing less is worth having.

Never flatter. If a young lady's affection can be gained by an appeal to her vanity, it is a poor acquisition; if not, she will conclude, and justly, that you hold her at entirely too low an estimate. Be polite in an honest, frank, manly way, but don't be a puppy, don't be a mere "ladies' man." A "ladies' man" is public property, and quite useful in its way; a good serving man, a good walking stick; but rest assured he'll never be any *woman's* man."

Show a little nobility of nature. Think of something besides self. Devote your services, not always to those you like best, but to those who need them most,. Don't go off to the lecture with Clara, and leave aunt Mary and cousin Nell dying to go, and no one to take them! Above all, (if one among you needs the exhortation) never go to anything alone – never! If you do, get into the darkest corner, and cover up your face! Don't leave your mother, to offer your arm to that pretty Ellen. If she is as sensible

as she is pretty, she will give you the slip for it! Don't go home from evening meeting with any of the girls, unless you have ascertained that that old woman who sits up in yonder corner, and is always present, through rain and snow, has some company. Probably she has not; so offer your arm, with a pleasant bow and smile and be just as gallant and a great deal more sensible than if you were waiting on the belle of the season. Be polite to the plain and neglected ones. I know you are palpitating to go home with Clara – and she *does* look bewitching in that snug little, blue hood – but don't you do it! She will be provided for. Turn, in all gentlemanliness and deference, to that poor, plain, bashful Mary A. – Clara will love you all the better for your nobleness, if she is capable of appreciating it; if she isn't, the quicker you sound her depth the better.

Let me tell you something! I was once in a company where one of the lady guests was obliged to return home before the time of breaking up, and since she was no bright particular star, and not the peculiar favorite of any one of them, not a single gentleman (?) present had the manliness to offer himself as her escort. I can tell you, if Will and George, and Ned and Alfred, had listened at the dressing room door, and heard the indignant and scornful remarks of those very young ladies they had been playing the agreeable to all the evening, they would never have shown themselves again! If *you* had been there, my friend, after having read this letter, and had followed its advice you might have set some maiden's heart a jumping.

To sum up the whole, you must have something to you – and just that something which your ideal of a woman will admire and love.

This brings me to my second division: "Act it out."

A word to you, bashful young man! In the first place, you are very superior to many of your sex who dash right in, among a circle of laughing girls, and do execution, while you are trembling and blushing, and your tongue cleaving to the roof of your mouth. Do not be afraid! There is something in you! Let it out and the girls will be surprised and delighted; act yourself with confidence, nothing fearing, and they will like you. "Be sure you are right, and then go ahead."

Do not think the girls are plotting some conspiracy against you – they never dreamed of it! Indeed they have thought very little about you, and will think very little about you, till you have gone home with some of them and invited one or two, or more, to the concert tomorrow night and the lecture next week; and have talked to them on all those things that you have thought over to yourself and never before ventured to say out loud – when they will come to the conclusion that you are one of the finest and most agreeable fellows in the world!

L.