

Chapters to Young Men, on How to Win a Wife
Chapter III – More About Manliness
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I did not say half I wanted to, about manliness, last week, for the scissors of Mr. Editor are as decisive as those of Atropos – only with this convenient difference, that they decide for one week, instead of all eternity.

I want to tell you not to fall in love with every girl you meet. Sometimes we find a man who is blessed with an extraordinarily large capacity for *enjoyment*. He is perfectly delighted with himself, and everything and everybody, that comes in his way. Every Concert, or Exhibition or Opera is “perfectly magnificent.” He is always just of the opinion of the last book he has read, or the last speaker he has heard, and his heart is always taken captive by the last array of bright eyes, dimples, smiles, and that the very one he happens to be with, he is certainly going into the consumption for! Does a queenly form, with dark lustrous eyes and regal brow, sweep past his heart yields quick homage, and he joins the throng of admirers and gives his soul up to the chase, meantime viewing all the world as dross. And then a little curly head and pair of merry blue eyes pops up before him, and dispels the vision. Verily he had at last met his destiny! But no: the maiden only laughs, and shakes her head, and passes on and just as he finds his heart cords snapping, and takes to meditating on the relative merit of hemp or a cold bath, a very neat, trim, housewifey little body trips along, and he is all right again, and congratulates himself on his good luck! All girls are alike to him. The noble minded, true hearted maiden, and the giddy, young coquette, who hasn’t a mind above flounces and laces, command equally his love and adoration.

Certainly it is a convenient trait, this being able to look on the sunny side of things, and seeing everything delightful in everybody you meet; but may it not show a great want of depth and penetration? If you fall in love just as readily with a pair of bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and coral lips, and nothing beyond them, as with a girl who has a mind and soul in her, doesn’t it show that you don’t know the difference? And would any sensible young lady prize your esteem, at that rate? You must have a character of your own to start with. Don’t begin this “getting in love” too early! You want to know what you are, are going to *be*, before you decide what you can *love*. Do not form judgments too hastily. There are a great many girls whom you will like, with whom you will form very pleasant friendships, but only one to whom you can give your whole heart.

Another thing: O, Frederic Augustus! I, who know what sort of stuff a maiden’s heart is made of, do solemnly warn you – never get down whining on your knees to one! Love ever looks upward – it wouldn’t see you! *Pity* might look down, and see you, and be moved, but *Love* – never – never! Stand up like a MAN and say “I love you” in sincere frank, manly tones, and the words may be echoed back.

But, my friend, you must be manly, not only in the society of young ladies, but in every other relation of life. We don’t live in the Middle Ages, and in this era of Progress, young ladies have got their eyes open. They will know what you are about, and they will judge for themselves. How do you manage your business affairs? If you are a merchant, are you as polite and gentlemanly to the plain woman in calicos; who comes to get a spool of cotton, as to the lady in silk who comes to do her spring shopping? Do you think it very smart to use a little cunning for the sake of getting the best of a bargain? If you are a lawyer do you always plead on the right side, or do you espouse the cause which pays best? If you are a minister, are you sure that you are perfectly honest and faithful, that you declare the whole truth? Or do

you compromise a little, here and there, to suit the notions of this or that man of property or influence? Are you perfectly just; perfectly honorable; perfectly *manly*?

What are your politics? Don't wince, now, and frown, and utter anathemas on "strong-minded women!" What makes you admire those noble old Roman matrons? What makes you glorify the women of the Revolution? Tell *me* you can esteem a woman who does not take an interest in the welfare of her country! What course are you pursuing? Are you catering to the interests of a party, for the sake of some party office – and think *she* is going to look up to you as the realization of her ideal?

What is your relation to the world? What is your object in life? Is it to build the biggest ant-hill of the heap? Is it to knock down some of your fellow ants, for the sake of mounting up in their places? And you think *she* is going to sympathize with you? O, no, you don't! You know better!

L.