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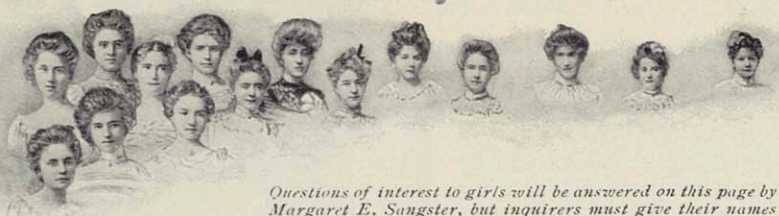
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Mrs. Sangster's Heart to Heart Talks with Girls



Questions of interest to girls will be answered on this page by Margaret E. Sangster, but inquirers must give their names and addresses. Correspondents inclosing stamps or addressed stamped envelopes will be answered by mail.

A Talk with the Graduate



I FELT highly complimented, Mabel dear, when I received the invitation to be present at Class-Day and Commencement, and to be a participant in the pleasures of your last eventful week in college. The four years that loomed so large before your eyes when you entered the Freshman class have glided by like a dream, and the last twelve months, in which you have been a senior, wearing cap and gown, have been the swiftest of all.

What happy years these have been, brimful of work, but work you have enjoyed; spent in an environment that has suited you, and enriched by such delightful friendships! Whatever else you may lose, Mabel, the memory of your college life will be a precious possession in the coming years.

One of the charming features of college life, and one of its abiding values, too, is that the associations make us so rich in friends. They are from every part of the world, and that helps to broaden our horizon. I notice on the honor roll of this Commencement the names of a Japanese girl, a Hindu and an Indian, the latter one of our aborigines. Your chum came from Texas, your opposite neighbors across the corridor were from Maine and California, and the class represents very fairly the womanhood of our nation in its finest and most promising types. We cease to be provincial as we relinquish the narrowness of our home boundaries and recognize the best that other places and other influences have to give.

I HAVE kept in touch with you all along. I was so pleased when I saw that you were one of the editors of the college monthly. Never have I had a better time than at some of your teas and spreads, nor known sweeter girls than those who crowded your room, sitting on the divan, the chairs and the floor, when we had our little talk, one evening that you remember, about life and its privileges. We spoke of privileges rather than of duties, and most of us realized that just because we had so much that was pleasant and helpful about us we must help along the common world and make life pleasanter for others. I hope your "others" will mean the people in your own home first of all. Begin there, wherever else you end.

A good deal is expected, Mabel, from a clever young woman who has had the best academic training of the period. Alma Mater has set her stamp upon you to some purpose if, besides giving you a fine theoretical education and plenty of intellectual discipline, she is sending you out unspoiled, wholesome, simple and childlike, in equally good health of body and mind. She has given you self-confidence, which, when allied to modesty, is a guarantee of enduring, womanly excellence. You will find your niche and fill it.

I HOPE you are not going to complain that life at home is distasteful. I think I need not fear this for you, though I have known girls who have been happy in college to be very discontented on leaving it. A girl from a plain home is sometimes repelled by the plain ways of the home folk—ways that four years of absence have taught her to forget. To be sure she is not the best sort of girl who is capable of this, and she is probably ungrateful, for the parents she is ashamed of may have made great sacrifices to let her go through college.

I am inclined to the belief that all girls, your kind of girl, Mabel, and all other kinds, need a reminder that their mothers are entitled to a share of their company when they are fairly out of the classroom.

Should a girl marry—and very properly a good many college graduates find their sphere in marriage—she ought to give a year at least to her home, before she slips her hand into her husband's and goes to make a new home with him.

THE word I have for you, dear girl, is this, and I emphasize it strongly: Do not fail to set the true value on the personal equation. What you are as an individual, broad-minded, gentle-mannered, will tell on society wherever you touch it.

For the rest, Mabel, I am aware of your scorn of homilies, and I am not going to preach to you. If I have a message it is one that may be condensed in a sentence or two. Be womanly. No girl gains anything by mannishness. Be cheery. To add to the gladness of the period is a duty no one should shirk. Be swift to extend a hand to the girls who have not had your chance—the working-girls who have been pushed by circumstances into the maelstrom of hard toil. Be cordial in word and sincere in heart. Be straightforward, and do not let any rebuff daunt you. There is no failure possible to a brave heart that trusts in God.

And keep right on studying, learning, growing, and developing ever into a finer womanhood.

Answers to Girls' Questions

MARY. The story you tell me is like a romance. If as you say you have others dependent on you for whom you must make a home, you are right in supposing that your equipment and your writing talent ought to bring in money enough to help along. You have had much published and nothing paid for. I advise you hereafter to conduct your work on a business basis. All first-class periodicals pay contributors. None of them print what they do not pay for.

LUCY. It was very wrong to let friends circulate a report that you were engaged when you were not, and the man in question has every reason to be annoyed.

CLARA. How shall you make people fond of you? Why, by being generally and sincerely interested in them.

A. L. C. The teacher of whom you complain is doing her utmost to arouse your ambition, and I fear has an uphill road before her. Put yourself in her place. Would you enjoy teaching a girl who refuses to do her work, and "just loaf"?

WINNIE. Your mother is right. A girl of sixteen is too young for society. Her pleasures should be simple and herself in the background. Early to bed is a good rule for you, my dear.

KATE. Since you have so hasty a temper, pause before you say angry words, and observe Little Dorrit's rule: "Count five-and-twenty, Tatty-Coram."

JANE. As a general houseworker in a small family where you have a pleasant home you are earning five dollars a week in money, with board and lodging added. But you are dissatisfied because you want more "respectable" employment. I wish I could disabuse your mind about that word. Any work one does well is respectable. Housework is quite as honorable as, and much better paid than, most kinds of manual labor. Do not give it up unless you can urge a better reason than the one you have given me.

LOUISE. For your summer trip you will need both thick and thin clothing. If you expect to do much tramping provide yourself with a short skirt, a jacket, a trim hat and comfortable shoes.

MARGARET. The girl you speak of who is so unpopular has nobody but herself to blame. People who go about blurring out every exasperating thing they can think of must expect to be disliked. Even true things may sometimes be left unsaid. Indeed, they are often better left unsaid.

M. E. By all means acquire either French or German thoroughly. You will best gain ability to converse by spending some time in a foreign family where English is not spoken.

RUTH. The head nurse in a family where several nurses are employed is a very important personage. She occupies an honorable place, receives her orders directly from her employer, and must have tact, discretion and intelligence to order her little kingdom aright. She is usually a well-paid and very much respected person.

SOPHY. If you have nothing else to read do not despise the dictionary. You can get no little advantage from perusing its columns.

R. L. E. Your question about plagiarism is very interesting indeed. "Is it permissible," you ask, "to found a story upon an idea received from some sermon, remark or article?" You imply that a story thus founded would not be original. I think you are wrong. Plagiarism is deliberate literary theft, the stealing word for word, phrase for phrase, or thought for thought of another's work, and passing it off as one's own. This is an excessively mean act, and the plagiarist is on the same plane with the pickpocket and the burglar. But we all derive ideas from, and are kindled and stimulated by, the words of others, and our own work must of necessity be influenced by what we hear and read. The best way for any writer to form a good style is to read the finest productions of the finest minds. The great original and creative minds are few. Homer, Milton, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe will occur to you, yet even these owed something precious to those who had gone before them.

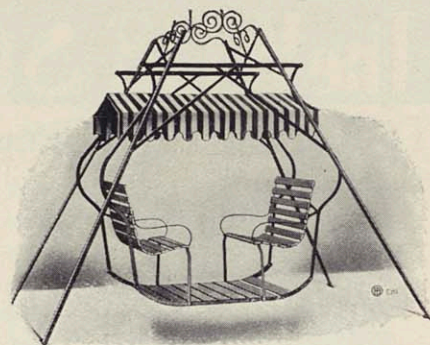
ELLEN. I beg you to cure yourself of the contemptuous attitude which you confess is becoming habitual with you. We have no right to look down upon any fellow-being, least of all upon the tempted and the poor.

NETTIE. Answer a letter very soon after you receive it, while its contents are fresh in your mind.

MAUD. A girl may not allow another girl to reflect upon a lady who is older than either and the friend of both. Stand up for your friend, but temperately, not with heat and vehemence, and advise the offended girl to carry her grievance to the lady in question. A frank talk may set everything right.

ANNA. You cannot possibly be equally in love with two suitors; if you think you are you will be safe in refusing both.

BARBARA. Success is often gained by pegging away in an obscure place. After a while somebody discovers that very faithful work is being done, and then comes promotion.



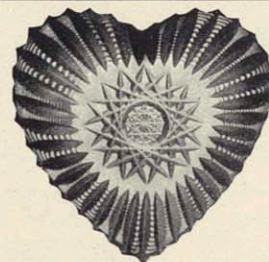
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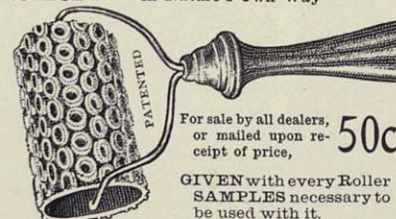
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