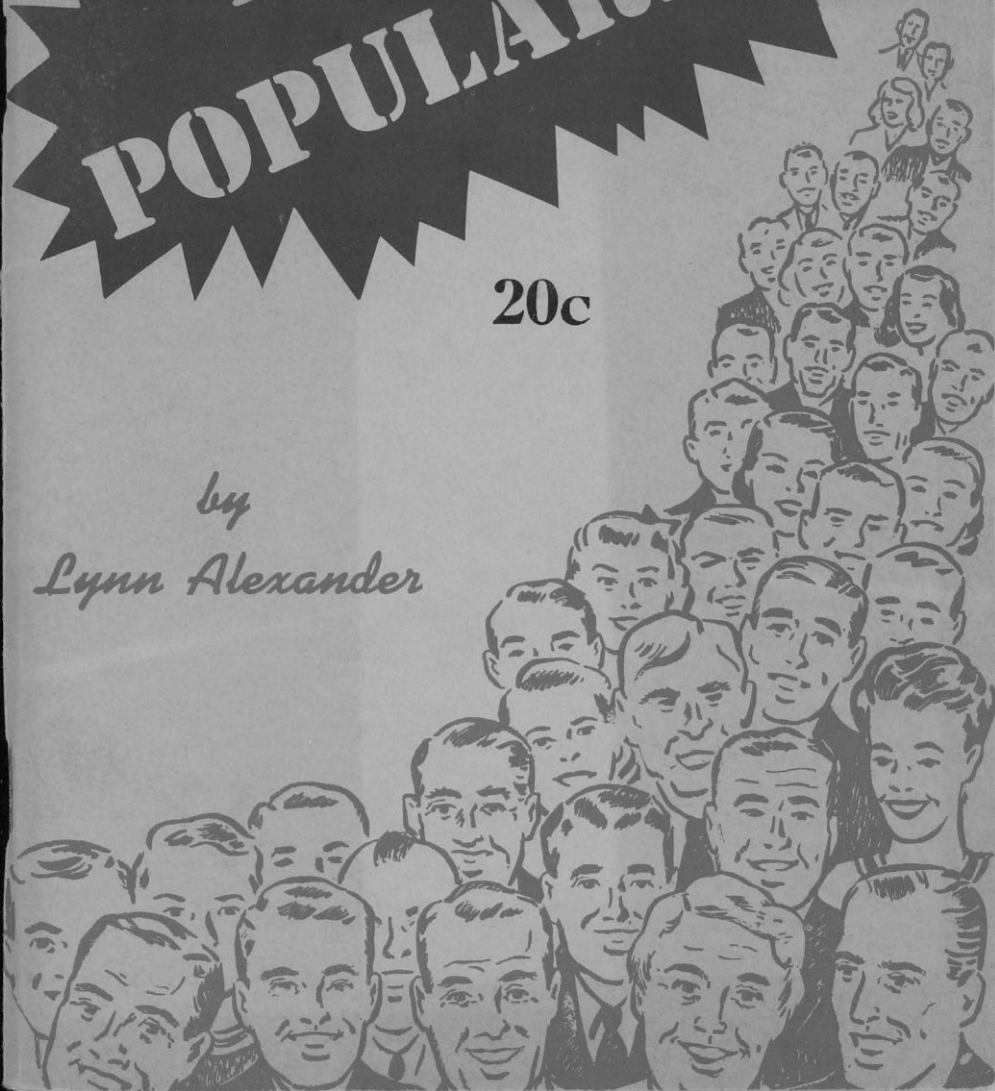


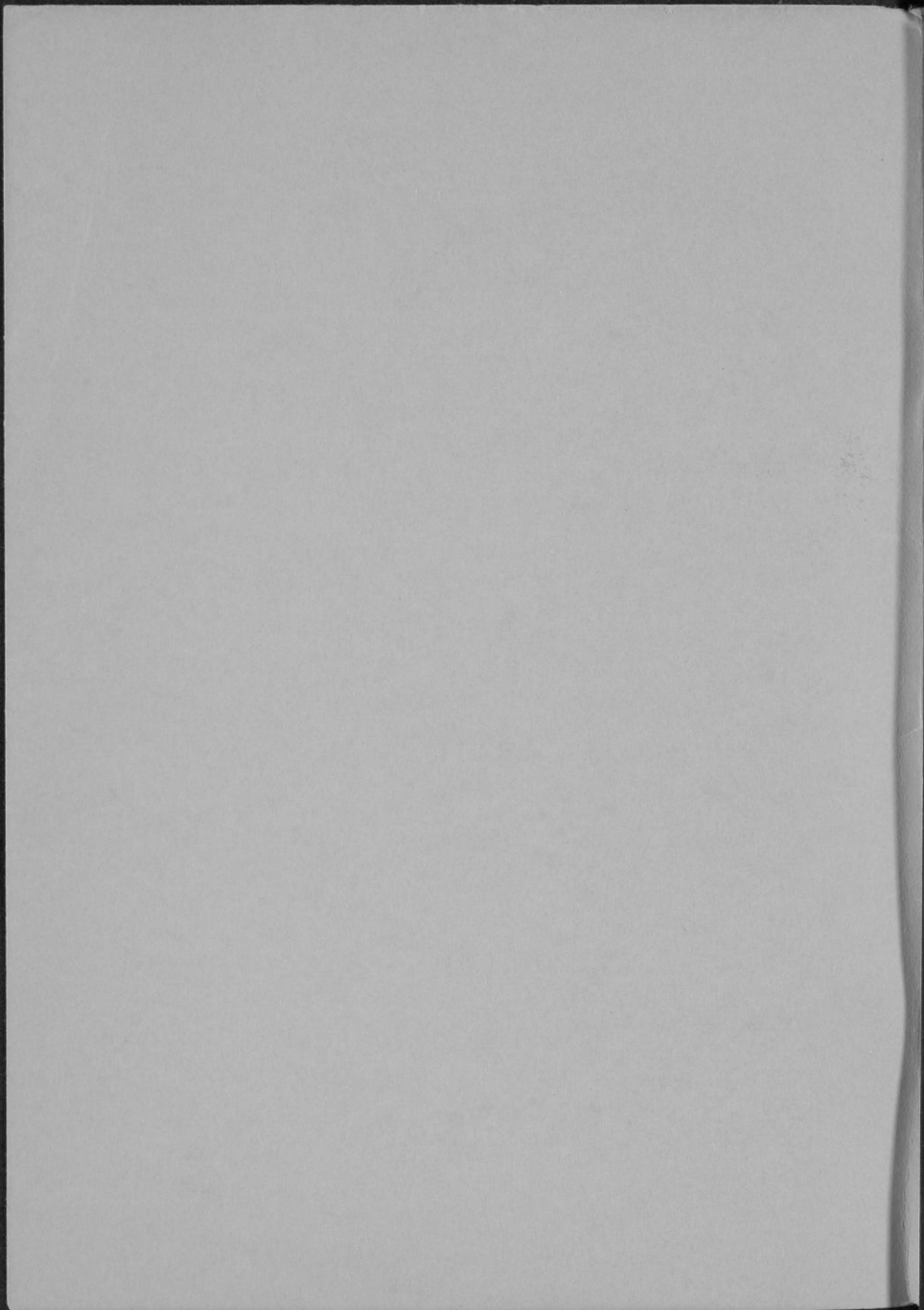
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by
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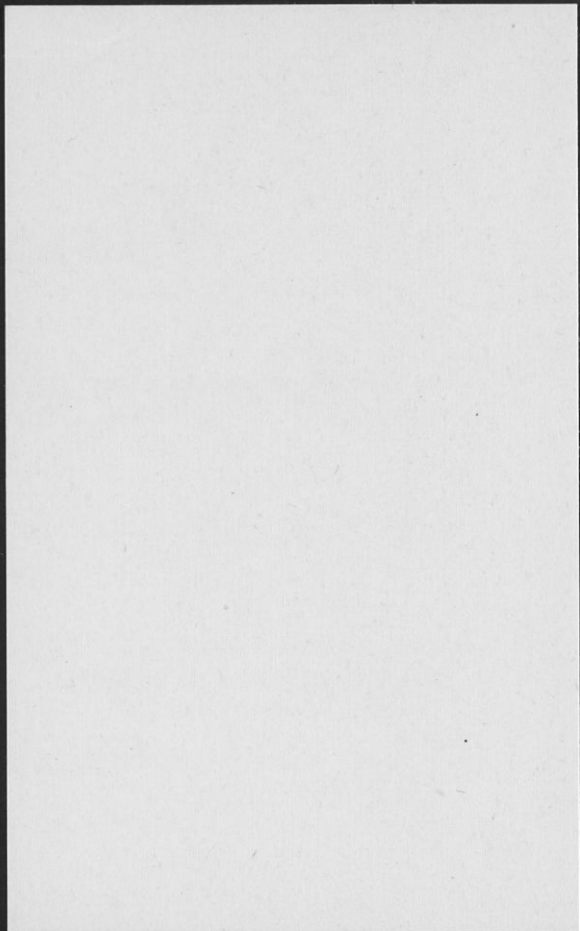
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Letters to Lynn

*About
Popularity*

*by
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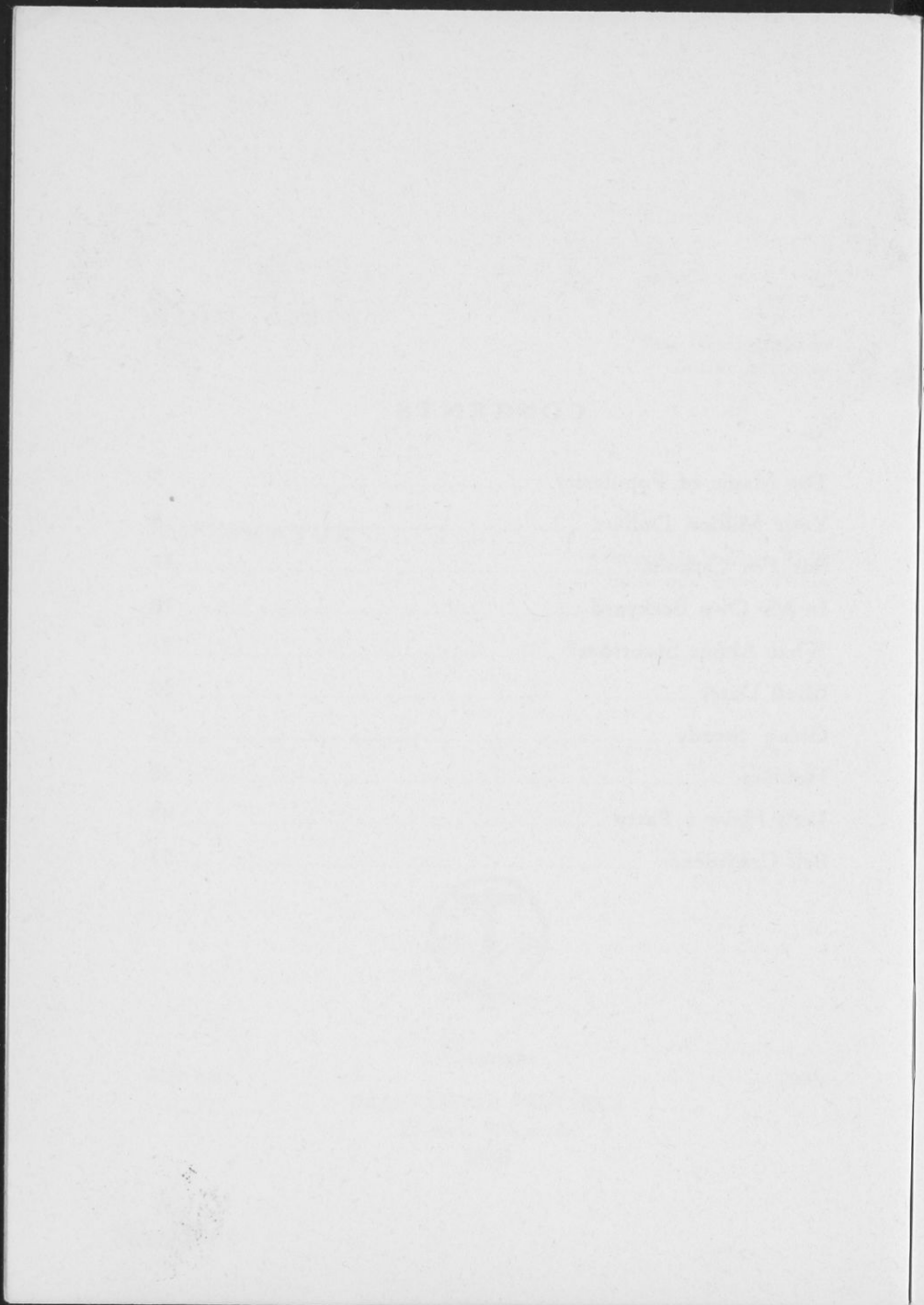
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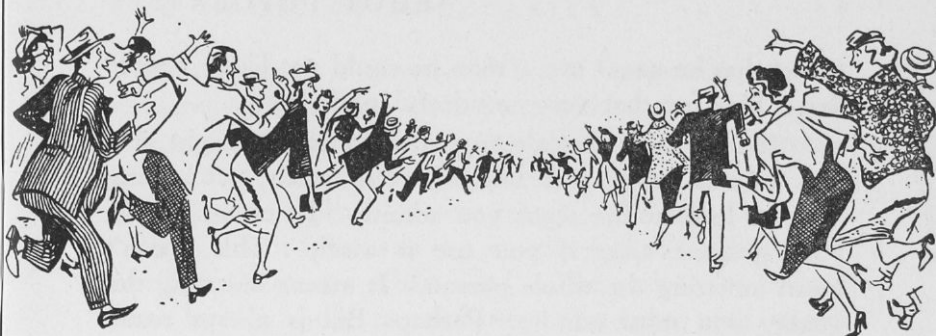
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THE MAGIC OF POPULARITY

The age-old question of what makes a teen popular is appearing more and more frequently in the mail-bag. The popular teens seem to shine like brilliant stars against a black velvet sky. Popularity is like a jewel, glowing so brightly that it automatically attracts admirers. But often, for those whose magic touch it has evaded, there is a tinge of wistful longing. Why is it that some teens are sprinkled with stardust and others are dim by comparison?

Actually, popularity doesn't depend upon material things whose evidence we can tangibly detect. It's something deeper than that. It consists of qualities that appeal to others. But most of all, it consists of a genuine interest in other people. If you can love your friends for themselves, overlooking their faults and emphasizing their virtues, your first battle has been won. Will Rogers used



to say that he never met a man he could not like. People loved him for that very wonderful philosophy.

If the phone doesn't ring as often as you might like, and friends seem just beyond your reach, try taking a closer look at the teens you admire. Imitation can be your greatest asset if you use it wisely. This doesn't mean imitating the whole person. It means imitating the quality you most admire. Perhaps Bill is always ready with a cordial handshake. Good! With little effort, you can do the same. Phil has a marvelous knack for remembering names. This knack doesn't always develop naturally. You too can acquire the art. If Phyllis and Marie can keep you howling with laughter at their merry conversation, be an attentive listener. By using a little imagination and a lot of exaggeration, you can develop a sense of humor in your daily conversation.

Not many months back I received an urgent plea from a girl in her mid-teens requesting a list of popular slang phrases so that she would be "in the know" when she talked with the other teens at school. As it was, she knew none and felt left out of her friends' bright chatter. Their line of talk was "real gone," and hers was not. Well, personally, I wouldn't care to be "real gone." But she did — and it was important to her. So, my suggestion was that she note down the particularly striking phrases commonly used by her friends and try them out for size. It wouldn't be difficult to jot them down in private whenever she heard them.

The most popular Jacks and Jills in the crowd may have individual personalities, but there are several assets

which they share in common. You'll find in them a social awareness. They are not concerned solely with themselves and their personal problems. They are interested in helping others. They possess a basic honesty and a sense of fair play. It was written, "To thine own self be true, and it follows as the day the night that thou canst not be false to any other man." The truly popular teen lives by that code, remembering that being true to self is being true to the individual that God wants one to be.

The popular teen also possesses a mental alertness. Keeping on his toes, he reads the daily newspapers, new books, Catholic literature, and articles of current interest. His conversation never runs dry, nor is he at a loss to know what to say. There simply isn't time to discuss all the topics which truly hold his interest. He enjoys varied activities, especially hobbies. Maybe his hobby is tropical fish or stamp collecting or woodwork, but this added interest adds a new facet to his personality. And finally, the really popular guy or gal has a keen sense of humor. He or she can laugh at the day's mishaps and look forward to tomorrow.

That's the popular teen. But how did he get to be that way? Actually, it can be summarized by the hands on a clock.



YOUR MILLION DOLLARS

If someone suddenly handed you a million dollars, what would you do with it? Well, actually, you own a treasure whose value is far in excess of a million dollars. In fact, it would be almost impossible to estimate its true value. Depending upon **your own evaluation**, it could run into the millions . . . or it **can** be worthless! It is your **TIME**.

Longfellow devoted many beautiful passages in his writings to the topic of time. I like best his definition: "What is Time? The shadow on a dial, — the striking of the clock, — the running of the sand, — day and night, — summer and winter, — months, years, centuries; — these are but arbitrary and outward signs, the measure of time, not time itself. Time is the Life of the Soul."

Emerson compared the days to a loom on which the warp and woof of past and future are recorded. Shakespeare devoted at least thirty-one passages to the subject

of time. Sir Thomas Browne thought of time in this way: "Think not thy time short in this world, since the world itself is not long. The created world is but a small parenthesis in eternity..." Mother Frances Cabrini, whose evaluation of time made her a saint, said on many occasions that there could never be enough time to do all the things that she wanted to do.

One of the most frequent statements made to me is, "Oh, I've always wanted to write, too! It's a shame that I just never have had the spare time!" And I find myself wondering what spare time is, for to my way of thinking there is no such thing as spare time. Unfortunately, each day is composed of no more than twenty-four hours — whether it is your day or mine or the next person's. Fairly enough, each of us is given the identical bank account of time each day.

Recently a foremost psychologist, in discussing teen delinquency, made the statement, "One of the greatest contributing factors to the national delinquency problem is the fact that our teens have too much leisure time on their hands." If this is true, teens, it indicates at least two important points. The first point is that the parents of our teens are not giving adequate guidance. You remember as a child how you would ask Mom, "What will I do? I don't have **anything** to do!" The wise mother not only guides the time of her child, but she helps in planning the time of her teen as well. The second important indication from the psychologist's analysis is that our teens today are not placing a true evaluation on their time.

Take a look at the teen who devotes hours poring over movie magazines, detective novels, comic books, or the one who spends each evening idly playing solitaire. What about the long hours spent on the telephone by many teens repeating unnecessarily the day's happenings to each and every friend? What about the too numerous coke sessions, the gossip get-togethers, the "dragging Main Street" excursions of aimlessly driving around town?

How important are those time bank accounts? How high are the teens' evaluations of the one life which God gave them to spend?

You and I have a fortune in our hands, teens, a very real fortune. As Jerrold once said, "To the true teacher, time's hour glass should still run gold dust." How do we go about turning our time into gold dust? Well, actually we reiterate the very reason for our being on earth, the reason that God gave us a life to live: to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him.

The popular teen knows that in order to love God, we must be on speaking terms with Him. Time spent in prayer and meditation is true gold dust in our pockets. Not only are we counselling with Heaven, but we are receiving the fortifying Grace to live our daily lives to their fullest. When we are praying for others, we are helping them fight their battles. Whether it's a poor missionary in India or a sick neighbor down the street, we are actively giving them our help.

The popular teen knows that, in order to know and love God, we educate ourselves to the best of our ability.

This educational process doesn't end with the last peal of the school bell. It means doing plenty of work on our own too. It means approaching the world in which we live with an inquisitive mind. The more that we ourselves can learn, the more we will be able to impart to others. That's especially true of our spiritual education. Time spent in spiritual reading adds greatly to your bank account.

To serve Him . . . What an unlimited opportunity! There are countless ways in which we can serve our family and friends. Giving Mom a helping hand, relieving Dad of unnecessary responsibility, writing cheerful letters to the older folks in the family, tending the young ones with a willing hand, encouraging others in the family to the regular practice of the True Faith. We can add to our bank account without so much as ever leaving our home!

But serving God is not, as we know, confined to the family circle. Our church and parish offer splendid opportunities: helping Father and the Sisters, cleaning the church, organizing and stimulating active youth groups. Beyond the parish is the city, and beyond the city is the nation and the world.

"I'd like to increase my popularity by doing something really worthwhile," a Chicago teen recently wrote me. "But there's just not much I can do . . ." In the same mail were four heartbreaking requests from our missionaries overseas for any form of assistance. Old rosaries, prayer cards, discarded clothing, used Catholic literature . . . and, most urgently, prayers. Not much that he

could do? Why, he could turn every moment of his day into a priceless jewel!

Time is our greatest treasure, our life's bank account. If you doubt its tremendous value, try estimating in dollars and cents the time that our scientists spent discovering the polio vaccine. Estimate the worth of the time that St. Francis de Sales devoted to writing his **Introduction To A Devout Life**. Put down in dollars and cents the time that was used in preparing and passing the Bill of Rights.

It's true, teens, our bank account of time is worth only as much as we evaluate it. Each moment, each hour, each day . . . you are spending this fortune that God gave you. The popular teen knows this. It's worth a thought, isn't it?



BUT I'M CATHOLIC

Dear Lynn,

I guess you would say that my problem is that I am Catholic. That seems a strange thing to say, maybe; but it's true. While I am proud to be of the Catholic Faith, I find that it keeps me from being as popular as I would like to be. I have no intention of ever being anything other than Catholic, but I would like to be popular too.

I am a girl of eighteen and will graduate from high school this year. Our crowd is an average crowd of teen boys and girls. Some of them are Catholic

like myself, but most of them are not. They do not understand why I have to fast after midnight on Saturdays, why I must come in earlier than the other girls, why I won't kiss on first date, or neck at all. Some of the kids think it is perfectly all right to tell off-color stories, and they think that I am a prude when I will not listen.

That's just about the whole story, Lynn. They tease me about being a religious without a habit and kid me about going to Church all the time. Sometimes this is hard to take. Maybe I just don't have a sense of humor?

Any suggestions that you have will be appreciated.

Many thanks for your help,

Carole

Carole, I think you have the situation figured all wrong from the very beginning. Being Catholic isn't keeping you from being popular. Look around you. There are plenty of popular Catholic boys and girls! People respect them because they faithfully practice what they believe. They have high ideals, and they don't mind saying so. They maintain moral standards from which they do not deviate. There is no compromising with them. They love Holy Mother Church, and they want the whole world to know it!

What's bothering you, Carole, is that you are different from the others in your crowd. You say that the majority of them are not Catholic. Therefore, it is obvious that they do not practice or understand many of our beliefs. This makes you feel that you are singular and perhaps a bit conspicuous. Well, truthfully, Carole, you

are! You're different — and it is a difference of which you can be proud!

Have you ever taken the trouble to explain to these other teens why you must fast after midnight on Saturdays? Have you ever explained the medals you wear around your neck? Or your rosary? Why you don't kiss on first date? Why you do not care to listen to off-color stories?

Or have you just left these other teens in the dark, thinking perhaps that you were trying to show that you were better than they are?

That's an important point, Carole. No one is attracted to a person who wields his religion like a club. None of us likes the person who "shows off" a religion, whether it is Catholic or Baptist or Mormon. In a situation like this, it appears that the person is trying to belittle us, and to make us think that he is a saint. You've seen the Catholic teen who makes a great to-do at a Friday picnic when meat is served. "Oh, my heavens!" he vociferously objects. "I couldn't touch that stuff! I'm Catholic, you know!" That sort of thing doesn't set well with anyone.

The same is true of the Catholic teen who throws up his hands in horror when someone starts to tell an off-color joke. "Oh, I can't listen to that sort of thing," he fairly screams. "I'd have to go to confession. I'm Catholic, you know!"

I think that in such instances the teen has missed the point entirely. He is not eating meat because he does not want to. He is not listening to the off-color story because

it is against his principles! The fact that he is Catholic contributes to his desire in each case, but it is not the explanation for his refusals. At least, it certainly shouldn't be!

Perhaps you have been using the "I'm Catholic, you know!" explanation, too, Carole? If so, it would account for your lack of popularity. And it is a wonder that some teen has not sharply returned with, "Well, so what? I'm Methodist!"

Because you are different from the rest of the crowd in your beliefs does not mean that you can't be just as popular. In fact, it can increase your popularity, because through the Faith you can gain a great deal of respect and admiration.

The first thing to do is to explain these differences when they arise. If it is a fast day, and the crowd stops for a hamburger after the movie, simply say: "This is a fast day in our Church; on such days we don't eat between meals. I hope you'll give me a raincheck for my hamburger this time." If you go with the same crowd continually, you'll find that fewer and fewer explanations are needed, for your friends will begin to understand the practices of your religion.

The second thing to do, Carole, is to rid yourself of any self-consciousness about your differences. All of us are different in some way. The other teens with whom you associate also have differences. If they are smart, they capitalize on them to make themselves more popular. Accept in your own mind that the practice of your Faith occasionally will call for an explanation. After all, is that

so bad? Other teens are interested in the tenets of Holy Mother Church. Why be selfish in not stating them? Why not make them so attractive in the eyes of your teen friends that they might even wish to attend Mass with you some time?

If you assume the attitude of a modern day martyr whenever you have to come in early from a dance in order to get to Communion in the morning, other teens will be prone to regard Holy Mother Church as a sadistic organization. If, however, you accept this small sacrifice and make your friends realize the importance of Communion, they will begin to wonder at the strength and beauty of our Faith. See what I mean, Carole? Let them know that whatever you are doing you do willingly, happily, and because you want to do it! Don't make them feel that a sad sense of duty plagues you. It's not—or at least, it **shouldn't** be!

By sharing your religion with your teen friends, by never using your religion to make you appear superior, and by accepting the practices of the Faith with a willing heart, you can increase your popularity, Carole. Folks respect those who live by what they believe. They will respect you and like you all the more for it!



IN MY OWN BACKYARD

Dear Lynn,

I'm not sure that anyone can help me with my problem, but I hope that you can. I am a boy of fifteen and am average in just about every way. In school I have lots of friends, both boys and girls. The other teens seem to like me pretty well.

My problem is my mother. She will never let me invite any of my friends to my home for a party. I have asked her many times, and she always tells me the same thing. She says she is afraid they will break up everything in the house. Lynn, this isn't so. The other fellows and girls are allowed to have Platter parties and television parties in their homes. And, while we may be noisy sometimes, the teens are really considerate of the furniture. I have told my mother this, but she does not believe me.

I'd like to stay popular, Lynn. But I hate to go on accepting invitations to other people's homes when I cannot have my friends in my home. Is there anything that I can do to convince my mother?

Many thanks for your help,

Leonard

You are so right, Leonard, about wanting to reciprocate the hospitality which the other teens have shown you. Personally, I think every teen — boy or girl — should be permitted to have an occasional social gathering in his home. If the teens behave and are considerate of the parents and furnishings, this privilege should be granted freely.

But Mom doesn't see it that way, does she? What are we going to do to convince her that you have social obligations just the same as she does?

The first thing to do is to get your mother better acquainted with your friends. Introduce her to these teens; make her feel that they are also her friends.

Whenever there is a party given by another teen, be sure to bring home all the details. Tell your mother what games were played, what refreshments were served, and any other highlights of the get-together. If it is at all possible, try to arrange for your mother to visit one of these parties in the home of your friend. Many mothers are suspicious of teen parties because they fear that they will get out of hand or turn into necking parties. Let your mother know that your group of teens likes to get together for good, clean, wholesome fun.

In order to get Mom better acquainted with your group, encourage her to participate in teen activities. When she is a sponsor for a teen group, she will have a better opportunity to see the kids first-hand, and to know that they are of good moral character. Serving as sponsor or chaperone, she will become more interested in taking part in teen activities. The next time your group has an

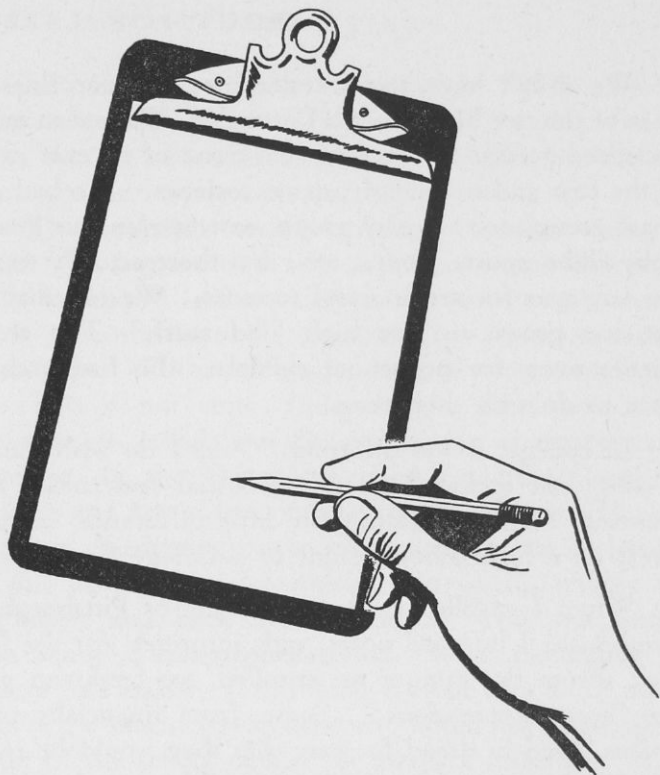
outing or party, ask your mother to help chaperone. If you know any of the other mothers, you might suggest to them that they request your mother's help with the teens.

Once the privilege is granted, Leonard, be sure that your friends comply with the house rules. (You might even suggest to Mom that she permit one party on a test basis. Especially if you have a basement or garage that could be converted to party use!) If there are preparations to be made in the way of refreshments, you should feel that this is your job. Nothing elaborate needs to be served. Popping popcorn during the evening suffices. But whatever you plan for the party, make sure that you do not push the work on Mom.

As your friends arrive, introduce them to your parents. While Mom and Dad do not especially want to be a part of your group, they don't like to be ignored either. It is courtesy on your part to make sure that they feel they would be welcome.

After the party, it is your responsibility to clean up the clutter. If Mom wakes up to a messy house the next morning, she isn't going to take well to your teen parties. So, be sure that you set the house back in order **before you retire.**

If you abide by your parents' wishes whenever you have a party in the home, you'll find Mom and Dad more responsive the next time you're in a party mood!



WHAT ABOUT SORORITIES?

I was reading a pamphlet the other night, written by Father Lawrence Mossing, that should be of interest to all teens who would like to be more popular. Its title is "High School Fraternities and Sororities." Sometimes such pamphlets can be pretty didactic in their approach to a subject. But, believe me, Father Mossing really makes sense!

We didn't have social fraternities and sororities in either of the two high schools I attended. We saw so many specialized groups of activities that none of us ever cared for the fuss and bother of private societies. We had our debate group, one-act play group, extemporaneous group, hobby clubs, sports groups, etc., that there actually wasn't time left over for secret social societies. We felt that we were too grown up for such "kid stuff." The secret societies were for pre-school children who had nothing better to do with their time.

In college, it was different. And I do wish Father Mossing had included all school social fraternities and sororities, for I can distinguish little difference in their effects on a high school senior or a college freshman.

When I enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh as a freshman, I bumped noses with sororities for the first time. From the minute we enrolled, we freshman girls were "sorority conscious." Some, from financially poor families, lived in dread for fear that they would be overlooked. As most of you know, not all boys and girls are "rushed." Generally, the basis used by most sororities and fraternities for rushing a person is social position, the influence of the family, or financial standing. Few rushees are chosen on the basis of scholastic attainment, personality, or character. True, these things are given a light investigation by some societies, but they are considered merely worthwhile appendages.

"Rushing" consists of pre-arranged engagements in which the sorority or fraternity members become acquaint-

ed with their prospective newcomers. Those who are to be rushed are nominated by present or alumni members. From this list of names, invitations are sent out for coffees, teas, and sometimes cocktail parties.

The freshman coming into high school or college is faced with a grave new fear. Everyone says that to be really influential and popular, you must belong to one of the larger sororities or fraternities. What if no one chooses to rush me? I'll be left out in the cold without a chance!

This is not true. Independents, as non-fraternity students are called, can be as popular as any fraternity member. In the first place, they have the immediate backing and friendship of other independents. The one very real disadvantage is in elections to office or honors. In this instance the fraternities join hands, choose one candidate, and back that candidate. The independent vote is not as easily concentrated. What difference can a mere vote make? It can make a whale of a lot of difference to the journalism student who would like to be elected editor of the school paper. It makes a difference to the elected football queen. The school student president and student council are selected by "popular votes."

The independent in high school and college is on his own. He does not have the automatic backing of a large group who have gathered together in the wee hours and figuratively elected their own candidate.

The majority of freshmen in high school and college are never rushed. These are the broken-hearted ones who start their school career with the fear that they are not wanted. This is pretty hard to take, when your friends

and former classmates are rushed and you are not. You feel the loss of these friends, and you feel that you're not quite in their class. For consolation, you have only the other "untouchables."

In addition to this large group, there is a group of freshmen who know instantly that no matter how much they desire to be a sorority or fraternity member, it is financially impossible for them to become members. Merely to pledge such a society in college costs close to \$100, or, in some instances, more. In high school the pledge fees generally are also maintained at an expensive level in order to keep out any possible poor members. In addition to the pledge fees, there is another large fee at the time you are accepted as a regular member. Then you have pins and scarfs, fees to maintain a club room or the fraternity house, an insignia ring, and quite a number of assorted fees that go for first one cause and then another.

It's evident that few high school and college students can afford to belong to fraternities and sororities. Among these who cannot afford such a luxury are worthwhile students who should have their place in the leadership of the school!

Is this the democratic way of life in our schools? If we do not uphold democracy in our public and private schools, where then is it to be taught and lived? Democracy is not something that is automatically absorbed like oxygen from the air. It is not something that is granted to the graduate like a diploma. Democracy must be lived — and this is no less true in our educational institutions than it is any place else on earth!

Father Mossing, in his excellent article, cites one of our nation's newspapers concerning fraternities and sororities, "They do foster undemocratic distinctions based on considerations unrelated to individual worth. They set small groups apart from the student body, and those excluded band together to form yet other cliques. That they should promote indifference to authority is inevitable since they have established a society in conflict with that of the school; moreover, in some states their existence is in defiance of state law." Father Mossing adds that the only clubs and societies which should operate in any school are those which are open to all who can qualify. Membership should be a matter of merit and achievement.

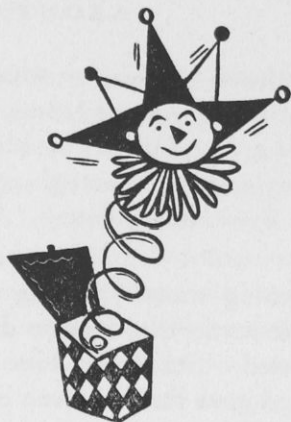
Initiations into both high school and college social fraternities have made a wild red splash across the front pages of our nation's newspapers. In most instances they are remarkable evidence of man's inhumanity to man. A favorite in the South for many years was to pour molasses and feathers over the candidate. A group of girls in one city, picked up by police for wearing scanty hula costumes on the main street, explained that they were merely part of an initiation. A group of fraternity boys in another city was arrested on charges of assault when their pledges were treated to powerful doses of castor oil and beaten with clubs. In some cases, as you must have read, pledges have been permanently injured and died from such barbaric treatment.

If this is the type of loyalty test that fraternities sponsor, what sort of ideals can these groups possibly have?

The teen who wishes to be popular, instead of blindly joining such groups, will take a firm stand against them. The abolition of secret societies, especially in our high schools, is the responsibility of each of us. We can encourage our schools to oppose such narrow societies by requiring that each student and his parents sign a pledge that he will not engage in such activities. Parents of teens can strongly object to membership in such clubs. But I think most important of all, we — both teens and adults working together — can find a finer substitute for fraternities and sororities. Groups based upon common interest and common goals are far more attractive than an assorted gathering whose only bases in common are rings, pins, and a secret code. There is no honor or achievement gained from wearing such insignia. It means only that some friend opened the door of membership for admittance. Or, in the cases of some fraternities, it means that one weathered a beating with a minimum howl.

What has such a fraternity member or sorority member gained? Prestige? Actually, the prestige is largely self-imagined by the group involved. Those outside of the group are now firmly across the barrier. Knowledge? Few such societies foster any attempt at intellectual growth. Companionship and added friends? Just the opposite. You have now deliberately limited your number of friends. And the ones you have were not chosen because you really liked them.

The truly popular teen never makes the mistake of limiting friends by joining fraternities or sororities.



BLIND DATES

Dear Lynn,

I am a girl of seventeen, and I would like your advice. My problem is that I am not very popular. Because of this, I can't seem to get a date for myself. When I am around boys, I do not feel at ease. After the fellows get to know me better, they seem to like me fine. But the main thing is getting the boys to date me in the first place.

Several of my girl friends recently have offered to get me a blind date. The boys whom they date know other fellows who have the same trouble that I have in getting acquainted. Would this be all right, do you think? I have heard that it is dangerous and not in good taste. On the other hand, it does not appear to be morally wrong, to my way of thinking. What is your opinion?

Hoping that you will be able to help,

And many thanks,

Anne

I guess all of us know, teens, just what a blind date is.

But in case some of the younger teens might be wondering: a blind date is a date with a boy whom you have not met. It is generally arranged through friends or relatives.

What about these blind dates? Are they right or are they wrong?

There is nothing morally wrong with blind dates *per se*, Anne. However, they can be dangerous business if caution is not used. But if you take advantage of the good sense that God gave you, they can be a lot of fun and widen your circle of friends.

Wherein is the difference between the foolish blind date and the wise one? To begin with, never allow someone whom you do not know well to make a date for you. The person who is arranging your date should be trustworthy and should have the same high ideals that you have. He or she should be a friend, not merely an acquaintance. If you accept a blind date that was arranged by someone you scarcely know, you cannot be sure that this person was thinking of your best interests. It is entirely possible that he is making a desperate last minute "pitch" to even out a crowd.

Secondly, Anne, never accept a solo blind date. If you are going to share an evening with a person you have not met, you want to be sure that you are in the company of friends. In case any emergency should arise (and it could happen on any date, not just a blind date!), you will have friends to whom you can turn. If you accept a blind date, be sure you are with at least one other couple, both of whom are well known to you.

A third restriction, Anne, is that in accepting a blind date be sure that the other girl (or girls) knows her date. It is very unwise for two girls to go out with two boys whom they do not know. In other words, **no double blind dates!** It's best that both you and the other girl be well acquainted with her companion.

Before you ever accept the date, know precisely where you are going and what you will be doing. This is, after all, information which will help you decide whether you want to accept the date. If the evening is indefinite, and the others just want to "bum around," do not consider acceptance. If, however, it is for a dance or basketball game, and you will be in familiar territory, you're safe in assuming that this will be a pleasant evening.

For years, blind dates were considered not in good taste. However, these days all of us know that it is impossible to get to know all of the nice folks we'd like to know. Formal introductions aren't necessary. If we have good friends who know of someone they think we might enjoy meeting, there is nothing morally wrong in accepting that extended friendship. But, in your own interests, it is important to follow the restrictions. Mis-handled, a blind date can be catastrophic. If you allow a stranger or casual acquaintance to make a date for you and the boy alone, then you are asking for trouble. Girls with good morals do not date so easily. Therefore, there arises in the boy's mind the assumption that your morals are not of the highest. From that assumption comes trouble!

It's best, for obvious reasons, never to make a blind date for that "extra special" occasion. If you and the boy

do not get along or do not take well to each other, then the occasion is ruined for you both.

Where it is at all possible, it's a good idea for the mutual friend to arrange an introduction ahead of time. Perhaps they might stop by the house for a minute. Or you might meet for a moment after Sunday Mass. Even though the meeting is brief, it helps break the ice, and you do not feel completely strange when the boy calls for you.

How should you act on a blind date? Well, actually, just as you would act on any other date! However, there is the added fun of getting acquainted. Once the introductions are over, there are the innumerable questions about each other to be asked. If you are the shy type and hesitant, encourage the other person to talk about himself. What does he like? Where has he lived before? Does he work? How about his family? Does he participate in any sports? You can go on and on with the most interesting topic the other fellow knows: himself. We all like to talk about ourselves and appreciate the fact that someone is interested enough to ask us questions about our lives and interests.

Should any trouble be encountered on a blind date, it is simple enough when you are with a crowd or with another couple to ask them to take you home. It's not necessary to make a big scene. Just say simply, as you would on any other unpleasant date, "I'd like to go home. Would you take me now?" If further explanation is needed, you can state firmly, "Fred had the wrong idea about me. I'm very sorry to upset the evening."

Such incidents do happen, Anne, even when you are well acquainted with your date. Be prepared ahead of time to handle the situation with dignity.

Blind dates can be a lot of fun, teens, if — as I mentioned — you use the good sense that God gave you. But never accept a blind date just because you don't have anything better to do. Rather, accept it as an invitation to a new friend that is offered you by an old friend whom you esteem.



GOING STEADY

Dear Lynn,

In your pamphlet "LETTERS TO LYNN: About Dating," you talked about going steady. You forgot to mention the many girls who get married at 16 or 17 and have a wonderful marriage and how young our grandparents got married. Personally, I think my grandparents have an almost perfect marriage. Of course, everything has its ups and downs, but it works for the best.

And then this talk against marrying a non-Cath-

olic. The only thing wrong is the lack of understanding of the other person's religion.

I definitely approve of steady dating, if it means marriage; because it is easier to break off if you have made a mistake in choice than an engagement. And a marriage is impossible to break. If more persons went steady before they were engaged, instead of rushing headlong into the wedding, there would be less divorce cases. If the persons involved had high moral standards, they would not break the Sixth Commandment. If not, then it's the parents' fault. What the parents don't realize is that the children mimick them from the time they are infants.

I am not going steady because I want to get more schooling. I have not met the one whom I think is right. But if I do and if we share the same interests and are able to get along, then I'll go steady before I get engaged because I don't want to make a mistake. After all, this Hollywood romance stuff is a lot of bunk! You have to be able to get along with a person if you are going to live with him for the rest of your life.

How did you tell that your husband was the right one? You certainly didn't flip when you met him. I also don't believe in love at first sight. If anything is going to last, it takes time.

Yours truly,

Dolores

P.S. I am 15 and a junior in a Catholic all girls high school.

Dear Dolores,

Many thanks for your fine letter. It was grand hearing from you.

On the topic of going steady, I can see that you have given the subject a great deal of thought. However, Dolores, have you ever actually gone steady? On the surface, going steady looks like such a convenient arrangement, an ideal situation. Unfortunately, those who have devoted their time and dates solely to one person — only to discover that he or she is the wrong person — will tell you differently.

Going steady as you described in your letter, a prelude to an engagement, certainly can do no harm. But to most teens, going steady is not regarded in that light. Rather, it is a pact that is made any time from thirteen on. It is an agreement to date only the one person to the exclusion of all others. It is a promise to show no affection to any other boy or girl. Generally, this includes attention too.

In short, going steady, whether it is in the early teen years or the later ones, involves a lot of possessiveness. Do you agree up to this point?

Where the teens actually have marriage in mind — and that marriage is possible within a reasonable time — such possessiveness is part of the long range plan. It's a trial period in which the two teens are seeking to discover whether they want to make the promise more binding by a formal engagement. The contract of going steady in this case, so long as it is not a prolonged period, is sensible.

But consider most of the teens who are presently going steady, Dolores. They are not older teens with marriage in mind. They are in their mid-teens with only a year or two of dating experience behind them at most. And those years of dating were during their most imma-

ture teen years! (Remember your first dates?) Is it right for these teens to tie themselves down to one boy or girl? Is it sensible to say, without having given yourself the opportunity to evaluate, that this is the one boy or girl in the world for you? I don't think so. Not only do you lack the experience and judgment (after all, we DO learn a great deal as each year goes by), but you are seriously restricting your chance to gain this knowledge during years when a mistake can be rectified. It is a far more serious blow to misjudge the person of your choice in your twenties than it is during mid-teens.

It's true that there are many who married early who have had a successful and happy marriage. For each such case, there are probably nine others in the divorce court. The individuals involved are the criterion. But consider the teens you know personally . . . How many of them would happily resign themselves to the responsibilities of a home and family, the likely struggle against poverty, and giving up the fun of parties and dances and school sports? Boys in mid-teens can scarcely earn enough to provide even the small luxuries to which both have become accustomed in their family homes.

The chance for happiness when a teen marries a non-Catholic is equally diminished. Even where understanding exists between the two parties, there is a complete isolation in the spiritual life. In the phase of marriage where the couple should be the closest, they are going their separate ways. In whose steps are the children to follow? In a happy marriage, there is a "oneness." (Remember the part of the Nuptial Mass which speaks of "one flesh"?)

There can be no complete oneness when the parties do not see eye to eye on their spiritual beliefs. True, the marriage can be a happy one and even a successful one. But there is always that part of the individual which cannot belong to the other person. They are joined inseparably in other ways . . . but never in the most fundamental way that marriage was intended to join two people. Instead of waiting together outside of the Confessional, one person stands alone. Instead of walking together up the aisle toward Our Lord in Holy Communion, one person walks alone. Even in the most simple aspects, the Faith — meatless Fridays and Fast Days, Holy Days of Obligation, the sacramentals, saying the evening rosary — is never shared. It may be tolerated, and it may be respected; but it is never **shared!**

In the above, Dolores, we are taking for granted that there is a good understanding between the two people. Where that good understanding is lacking (as it is in many, many cases!), trouble is inevitable. The Catholic party either is forever defending the Faith upon some score or else is minimizing the Catholic way of life in order not to irritate the non-Catholic.

That doesn't mean that non-Catholics aren't every bit as fine and lovable as Catholics. But it does mean that they have not been raised to the Catholic Faith and the Catholic way of life. They have not attended Catholic schools or been taught Catholic doctrines at home. Their religion has not been the same as that taught by Holy Mother Church. In many instances, the basic beliefs oppose our beliefs. In still more cases, they have grown up

and matured with mistaken ideas of the Catholic Faith. With a background so completely non-Catholic, how then can we expect an understanding of our beliefs and our way of life?

You ask how I knew my husband was the right one?

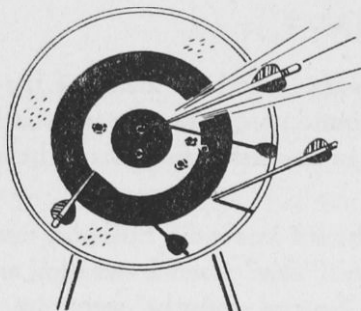
No, I didn't "flip" when I met him, and it wasn't love at first sight. Several months went by before I knew. During those months I became more and more aware of his kindness and his gentleness. By his actions, I knew that he placed my happiness above his own. There never was a doubt in my mind that he loved me more than anything else in the world. When I was with him, there was no need to go to dances or movies or parties. There was no need to have other people around. It was enough to sit and quietly discuss the events of the day, our hopes for the future, our mutual interests.

I hope my suggestions have shed a little light on the topics, Dolores.

I'm glad to hear that you are **not** going steady. I hope you won't until you are ready for marriage. The teen who wants to be really popular does not tie herself down in this way. Instead, she seeks many, many friends — boys and girls. Her circle of friendship among boys is never narrow and limited. It is as important to make friends among the boys as it is among girls.

With every best wish,

Lynn



HOBBIES

Dear Lynn,

What's the matter with me? Other teens always seem to have something bright and interesting to say. I never do. I'm just dull.

I'd like so very much to be like other teen-agers who are the life of the party and who interest people. I'd like to be more popular with the boys and girls. What do I do?

Respectfully,

Bob

Have you ever wondered, teens, why some folks are more interesting than others? Why do the minutes fairly fly when we are around one person and painfully drag when we are with another? Well, one of the surest indications of a popular personality is whether that individual has an interesting hobby.

There are so many hobbies these days within the

scope of our budget and interests that it's difficult to select any particular one. But whichever you choose, this added facet to your personality provides ample new topics for conversation. You're not forever finding yourself at a loss for words or limiting your talk to frothy bits of gossip.

Developing a hobby in the teens (and even before!) is a good beginning. You've seen plenty of grown-ups who were so boring that you scarcely could stay in the same room with them: the father who is all "office talk" and nothing more; the mother whose sole topic of conversation is which one of the children has the sniffles today; the teacher who thinks that Babe Ruth is a candy bar and a quarterback is something you get in change. "I'd hate to be that stuffy!" you think. But it's not impossible that you could be, you know! If you follow in the pattern of their footsteps and channel all your enthusiasm and thinking on one topic, ignoring a whole world of opportunities, you are walking in their shadow! If you turn your thoughts inward, shutting your eyes to the marvelous possibilities provided us by the Mystical Body of Christ, then you too can bore the next fellow.

"What sort of hobbies would you suggest?" a young teen asked recently. "I haven't much talent — even less money — and not much preference. What are your hobbies? Are they the same that they were in your teens?"

The nicest part about hobbies is that they are always exchangeable. When you explore one field and feel that you have made a good stab at mastering the art, then you are ready to explore another! During my teens, my big-

gest hobby was my typewriter. It was an old rattletrap affair in good working condition. It cost, I think, about \$17.00 and was given to me for Christmas when I was ten. Mom had a book on how to type, so I sat down and tried to teach myself. It might have worked had I not been too impatient. It was far too slow a process to type with ten fingers. I decided that two were plenty! Besides, I told myself, there are more constructive things to be done than laboriously picking out typing exercises. There was a newspaper for the neighborhood that I wanted to write, scads of homework that could be accomplished more neatly on the typewriter, and inevitably fiction stories that trickled through my imagination.

Sports of all type were appealing. My favorites were tennis and swimming. Making jewelry was a hobby to which I was partial for many years. Mom would buy loose beads, and I would fashion bracelets and necklaces for all the feminine members of the family. Occasionally, someone even bought an exceptionally attractive brooch or bracelet. Sketching was another pastime which filled many happy hours. Years later, in the hospital recuperating from an appendectomy, I found that I had developed enough accuracy to sketch a reasonable facsimile of the nurses.

The hobbies during the past ten years have been varied. First, it was gardening. During those years, I practically lived in a seed catalogue. There are so many interesting varieties of flowers and plants!

Gardening was replaced with the less strenuous hobby of tropical fish. Sure, I had goldfish on the mantel years

before. But suddenly, a pair of guppies became the most absorbing topic in our house. Guppies reproduce themselves every twenty-eight days. They are varied in color and range from everyday guppies to the exquisite blue fantails. Tropical fish are probably the simplest hobby on earth, and especially recommended for shut-ins. The few precautions necessary for their care are readily learned. The water must be aged 48 hours, and it's helpful to add a conditioner that is sold commercially. The temperature of the water should range between 70-85 degrees. You do not change the water, as you do with goldfish. The tropicals should never be covered. They won't overeat, but the extra food fouls the water. In addition to guppies, as the aquarium or fish bowl grows, you discover an endless number of tropical fish varieties and, like myself, you may start your own nursery for those which reproduce.

Here are a few of the other hobbies which I have found interesting:

ARTCRAFT: This is fairly recent. The kit contains a complete line of the supplies which you will need. The paints, brushes, and pictures are ready for use. The picture is already sketched, and each object is numbered to correspond with the color to be used. Especially for the amateur who is not yet ready to sketch or paint and who needs to work with form and colors, this hobby is exceptionally instructive. The pictures make nice decorations for the home and for gifts.

RECORD COLLECTING: In recent years, I've been a Western fan. With the rest of the nation I grieved

at Hank Williams' untimely death. Homer and Jethro are two of my favorite autographs. So, on a quiet eve around our home, you're very likely to hear the Western records spinning on our phonograph. Not being in the upper income class bracket, our selection is limited. But with each new addition, there is far more thrill than if we could walk in a store and buy everything in sight! Our favorites? Bobby Williamson's "My Gal Comes From Heaven," Tennessee Ernie's "Sixteen Tons," Tex Ritter's "High Noon," and Red Foley's "Peace in the Valley."

DOLL MAKING: In my opinion this is one of the most worthwhile hobbies that any girl could have. With every stitch, you are bringing the kind of happiness that God meant us to create for each other. There are plenty of types of dolls to be made, and you can buy regular doll patterns in the pattern departments. (Also patterns for all kinds of doll clothes!) In addition to the rag dolls, there is the lovely Southern belle with the enormous skirt. She is a Lingerie Lou doll whose costume is made of milk filters. (They are durable round cotton discs which can be bought at Sears or in a Hardware. It's best to buy the better grade.)

For Christmas giving, birthdays, special events, for orphanages, hospitals, for Church bazaars, for missions overseas . . . there is nothing more appropriate or beloved than a homemade doll!

MISSION PACKAGES: It's a little strange that we would consider mission packages as a hobby — when Holy Mother Church holds her missions so dear to her

heart. But in addition to the special graces which accrue through our good works, the packages can call upon your imagination, initiative, and resourcefulness. All kinds of packages are appropriate.

Our Benedictine nuns made a beautiful package last year of picture prayer cards which they had carefully cut and pasted and tied with a dainty ribbon. School children easily could assemble ABC books with pictures and magazine illustrations. How these would help some child across Mary's blue ocean to learn the English language! Scrap books on favorite topics are fascinating to assemble. These too help both the mission teacher and student. Some examples might be: a scrapbook of pictures of transportation (planes, trains, etc.), American sports, pets, the American home, American schools, recreation. The list is endless!

In addition to scrapbooks, my own packages generally are composed of lightweight discarded clothing, used Catholic literature, lightweight toys, religious articles, and rosaries. For the mission priest? A package or two of chocolate pudding, cigarettes, a bar of soap, or a tin of popcorn would be welcome. So little to offer to those who give so much!

Postage on package to the missions is very low, not much more than it costs to send a parcel here in the United States. Be sure to mark your package "Free Unsolicited Gift — For the Missions — No Value." If you place a value, make sure that it is very low to prevent high duties on the other side.

Names of needy missionaries can always be obtained by writing your favorite Catholic magazine.

There are so many absorbing hobbies that it is difficult to understand how anyone could be without an exciting day. Stamp collecting opens new windows of interest. Woodwork can be both profitable and worthwhile. A kindergarten for youngsters in the block or special tutoring services offer a service and a hobby at the same time. If your parents don't object, a pet school also is fun. Lots of folks would like to have their pets trained at a nominal fee, and if you have this aptitude, your hobby will be in demand!

Well, that's a start, teens! Any one of the hobbies mentioned is fun and profitable. Hobbies you know, Bob, are a boomerang. They not only are interesting, but they make you more interesting too!



LET'S HAVE A PARTY

Dear Lynn,

I need your help and need it badly. I have a problem that I just can't seem to solve. It's this way: in our town you have to give kissing parties in order to be popular. I would love to give a party occasionally; but, honestly, I just can't see smooching with a lot of fellows I don't care about. Too, I know the Church doesn't approve of such parties (I asked Father in the Confessional), and I don't want to commit a sin.

Still, I don't want to be left out in the cold either. That's no fun. I'd like to be just as popular as the next girl. Right now my popularity is at a stand-still because I won't attend such parties and definitely don't want to give one. What shall I do? I'm desperate. Please help me.

Yours in Christ,

Kathy

Truthfully, Kathy, there is no need to give such parties in order to be popular. As you and I know, popularity consists of a whole lot more than playing Wink or Post Office!

But, on the other hand, you would like to entertain your friends with parties that are wholesome and fun. With just a little imagination you can plan parties that are lots more fun than kissing games. (Your parties will make the kissing games look infantile, which they are!) Many of our teens have reported that kissing game parties have gone out of style since their crowd discovered what good, clean fun real parties can be!

In addition to such regulars as platter parties, bike parties, weiner roasts, television parties, charades, and dances, here are some additional ideas, Kathy, which might be new to you.

I. Breakfast — "Come As You Are"

Mainly for girls, though boys could give a party like it. Early in the morning, without warning, you call all of your friends whom you wish to invite for breakfast. However, you specify that they must come as they are dressed. That includes curlers, bobby pins, and cleansing cream.

Arrange ahead of time several games that can be played for small prizes. An excellent game that is always a lot of fun is a game where each girl must name a song that contains the name of a food that can be eaten for breakfast e.g., "You're the Cream in my Coffee," "Tea for Two," "Three Little Pigs," "I'm in Love with You, Honey," "Eggs-actly Like You."

II. Story Telling

The hostess starts a story and thereafter points to each member of the group, preferably out of turn. Each guest to whom she points must continue the story in one sentence using the name of your school. Thus "Once upon a time there was a fuzzy caterpillar who enrolled in St. Mary's," says the hostess. The next person might say, "The fuzzy caterpillar went out for football at St. Mary's." The next adds, "The coach decided that the fuzzy caterpillar should play tackle at St. Mary's." And the next person might continue, "Every time the fuzzy caterpillar from St. Mary's tackled an opponent, the opponent nearly died laughing!" Anyone who hesitates with his sentence or who forgets to include the name of the school is eliminated. The winner at the end of the story is judged by applause.

III. Postmark Contest

Have all invited members to your party bring a postmark. (Or the hostess can supply them all, if desired.) The hostess also provides one postmark. They are turned face down on the table. One postmark is drawn, and it is the key city. Each person then draws to discover which can come closest in miles to the key city. In the event that two cities (or more) are tied, being equally distant from the key city, the postmarks previously drawn are returned to the table, and the remaining contestants draw again.

IV. Photo Party

Each person brings a baby picture of himself. At the height of the party, the pictures are displayed one by one,

and each member of the party must guess (on a slip of paper) the identities. The one with the most correct answers wins.

A good warm-up for the climax of the party is a game in which the hostess shows baby pictures of famous personalities. (These can be gathered ahead of time from magazines.) The group, divided into teams, guesses at each picture. The winning team receives a small prize. (Preferably something edible so that it can be divided.)

V. Postcard Party

Each invited guest brings a picture postcard. Either in teams or separately, the guests must guess the location of the picture on the postcards.

VI. "Come Travel With Me"

Guests are divided into two teams. The first team starts "Come travel with me. I am going to . . ." and names a city. The second team must take the last letter of that city and name a city **starting** with that letter. So, if the first team says "Come travel with me. I am going to Sacramento," the next team must take "O" as the starting letter for the city of their destination. They might continue "Come travel with me. I am going to Ontario." This particular choice has left the first team with the problem of an "O" also. They might use "Come travel with me. I am going to Oklahoma City." Now the second team has "Y" which could be used for "Youngstown." Any time a team is stumped and cannot name a city within the count of ten, they lose 10 of their 100 points. At the end of the game, the team still having the most number

of points wins. (If you're smart, you might throw in Phoenix against your opponents!)

VII. Stamps for the Seminaries

All of the girls invited to the party, for both boys and girls, bring delicacies which they have made at home. Candies, cookies, cupcakes . . . anything which might appeal to the other teens. These are priced, according to the number of stamps it requires to buy each delicacy. Foreign stamps, old stamps, commemorative stamps have the most value. Each person invited to the party brings as his wampum all of the unusual stamps which he can collect for the seminaries. He buys his refreshments with the stamps.

A variation is to charge stamps for each dance.

VIII. "Where Am I Going?"

Before the party, the host or hostess clips pictures from magazines that are intended to represent the name of a city. For instance, a picture of a dove could be used for "Dover," St. Anthony for "San Antonio," St. Francis for "San Francisco," a traveler for "Rome," a den for "Denver," an angel for "Los Angeles," etc. On the back of each picture, she writes the name of the city the picture represents. At the party, the guests are divided into two teams. They draw (sight unseen) a picture from the box. The contest is won by the team which guesses the greatest number of cities held by the opposing team.

A variation, especially fun for boys' (8-12) parties, is to gather pictures which indicate either baseball or football teams. Thus, a cardinal for St. Louis, a pair of red socks for Boston, a pirate for Pittsburgh, etc.

IX. For the Dance Party at Home

Select an item to represent each girl attending the party. For instance, a wedding band for Mary, a miniature devil for Helen, a remnant of polka dot material for Dorothy (Dot), a pocket for Lucy ("Lucy Locket lost her pocket"), sheet music for Carol, etc. When all the guests have arrived, the boys draw or select one of the curiously assorted items and must find the girl it represents. If the girl's first name is difficult, or if there are two girls by the same name, a last name can be used. This is especially helpful where the guests are not well acquainted. It's a good ice-breaker and introduces the boys to the girls. The items can be used over and over again during the evening at a large party to encourage introductions and exchanging partners.

A variation is for each girl to contribute something personal when she arrives at the party, and the boy must find the owner of the object.

X. Personal Pronoun Game

Art Linkletter uses this one on his hilarious House Party. The host or hostess asks a series of questions, all of which must be answered **without** the use of personal pronouns such as "I, my, me, mine." Any guest who uses a personal pronoun in answering the question is eliminated from the game.

XI. "Who Am I?"

This one is fun if you have a set of encyclopedias, but can also be played with a book on the lives of the saints or by memory. During the evening each person

looks up five interesting facts about someone they might like to be. When each person has assembled his facts, the guests divide into two teams. Each guest then tells the facts, one by one, about the person he would like to be. The opposing team loses 20 points from the possible 100 for each fact they fail to guess. The team with the winning number of points receives the prize.

XII. Record Parties

Each invited person brings a favorite record. The records are played, and each person marks down on his list whom he thinks brought the record. At the end of the platter session, the guesses are checked; and the one having the most correct answers wins.

Another record game is charades of records. The party divides into two teams. Each team acts out the title to a record. The opposite side is given three minutes in which to guess. If they cannot guess, they pay a penalty.

A popular platter game with younger teens is musical chairs. The chairs are placed in a circle. One less chair is used than the number of participants. As the music is played, the guests walk around the outside circle of chairs. When the music stops, each person dives for a chair. The object is not to be left without a chair. The chairless participant must drop out of the game, and one less chair is used each time.

Prizes for a teen party should be simple and inexpensive. A new hit record, a photo album, a small box of candy, an autograph book, a box of notepaper...

There are any number of items that can be bought at the five and ten!

Those are a few party ideas, Kathy, which might help you in party planning. There is, as you can see, no reason to believe that a party cannot be fun unless kissing games are included. That just isn't so! By using your imagination and a touch of originality, you can give the best parties found anywhere!



SELF-CONFIDENCE

Dear Mrs. Alexander,

I am the youngest boy in our family of six children. I get along with my family fine, but at school I have trouble. I try so hard to make the other teens like me, but I am not very popular for some reason.

My best friend tells me that I am too shy and un-talkative. I think maybe I am, but I am always afraid that I will look silly to someone else. I am not very good looking, and I am a poor dancer. But are these things important?

How can I be more popular?

God bless you,

Jimmy

Frankly, Jimmy, looks and good dancing do help toward popularity. But they do not constitute popularity. There's a big difference!

Good looks and apt dancing are like doors that open. They attract others to want to investigate you further. But once that door is open, it is up to the teen to carry the ball. There **must** be something worthwhile inside to hold that interest!

There are plenty of other doors besides handsomeness and dancing. There are talent, friendliness, interests, and spirituality to name but a few. If you do not possess one door, you can possess another. Some of these, such as looks, are God-given; others you can earn with the help of God.

I think every teen, Jimmy, should have at least one talent. There should be one thing which you can do just a bit better than the next person. Maybe it's nothing more intellectual than collecting postcards. But if you do that one thing well, then you will have gained a great deal of self-confidence. As we saw from the section on hobbies, the opportunities are unlimited. Or perhaps you would prefer a sport or working on the school newspaper? It doesn't really make a lot of difference what that talent is or in which field it lies — just so it is there!

In addition to developing a talent in some field, Jimmy, it's going to be necessary to rearrange your thinking. All of us feel the same way that you do. There is a natural shyness and timidity in each of us. Like you, we fear that we will commit some error and appear foolish

in the eyes of our friends. But unlike you, Jimmy, we are not afraid to take the chance.

If you can make yourself realize that we all share this same feeling, this identical fear, then you have made great strides.

When you are out in a crowd, do not try to confront the crowd. Rather, select one person at a time with whom you want to speak. Take the initiative. Say the first "Hi!" and show, by your conversation, that you would like to be friends. Perhaps this person is ill at ease or a stanger to the others. Then, make it your concern to put the person at ease and to make the introductions.

If you can concentrate on bringing happiness to someone else, then your battle has been won. Shyness and the lack of self-confidence is, after all, nothing more than allowing our thoughts to dwell too much on ourselves. If you will concentrate on others, this lack of self-confidence will evaporate.

Another good idea, Jimmy, is to volunteer your services on committees whenever you can. Working with small groups toward a common goal will do you much good. You will find that your relationships with other teens will be easier and less strained. With your mind on the project, you will be less concerned with yourself.

There is no magic formula for popularity, Jimmy. Most of us have to work plenty hard for it. But it's worth the hard work, wouldn't you say?

IN THE KNOW

The popular teen knows what to do and when to do it. This ability we call Know-How. Others call it poise.

It is a charm that can be cultivated either through our own investigation or through experience. Without it, we're self-conscious and ill at ease. This insecurity is transmitted to those around us. We're uncomfortable — and it's pretty doggoned obvious!

While Know-How is no fire scholarship to the charm circle, it is like a comfortable chair in a crowded room. You know that you have something to fall back upon in moments of confusion. You're fairly sure that you can meet other teens without committing those embarrassing "slips" that make you blush for hours after the incident. Of course, you can't take out insurance against those awkward situations, but you can cultivate a greater self-assurance.

The best way I know to gain poise is to "bone up" on likely situations that might be confusing. If you want to be popular, make sure that you can meet these situations:

I. When the one-and-only calls on the phone and wants nothing more than to chat, you should:

- (a) Limit your conversation to fifteen minutes.
- (b) Find a soft cushion and settle down for the evening.
- (c) Explain that your brothers and sisters are too noisy, and you can't hear.

II. If the new boy friend has shown a lot of interest but seldom phones, you should:

- (a) Call him on the phone and let him know you are thinking about him.
- (b) Write him a note each night and give it to him in the morning.

(c) Wait for him to call or drop by the house.

III. If Johnny, your little brother, is hanging on the phone and you have an urgent call to make, you should:

(a) Make so much noise he will lose his temper and get off the phone.

(b) Explain that your call will take only a few minutes and then he can have the phone again.

(c) Tell Mom to chase him away from the phone.

IV. If you are watching your favorite television show and friends drop in, you should:

(a) Ask them if they would like to see the program; if they wouldn't, switch it off.

(b) Politely ask them to come back later.

(c) Carry on a conversation and watch the program at the same time.

V. If a school chum wants to borrow your clothes, the best thing to do is:

(a) Tell your friend that you have lost the thing she wants to borrow.

(b) Tactfully explain that your clothes would not be becoming to her.

(c) Tactfully explain that you would rather she didn't borrow the clothes.

VI. In the family, it is all right to borrow such wearing apparel as:

(a) Dressess, slacks, suits, blouses, etc.

(b) Underwear.

(c) Accessories.

VII. For Mass, if you do not own an attractive hat, wear instead:

- (a) A gaily colored scarf.
- (b) A conservative solid color scarf.
- (c) A handkerchief.

VIII. If a friend asks you whether a new suit or dress is becoming and you think it is little short of a nightmare, you should:

- (a) Honestly explain that it is gruesome.
- (b) Tactfully evade the question.
- (c) Please your friend by the equivocal statement "It's out of this world!"

IX. If you are invited to dinner at the home of a friend and they make no gesture to say the blessing, it would be quite proper to:

- (a) Either say the blessing silently or ask if you may say it aloud.
- (b) Shame them with looks of admonition.
- (c) Just forget it this one time.

X. If someone in your party makes an unkind comment about Holy Mother Church in your hearing, you should:

- (a) Consider the source.
- (b) Politely explain that only ignorant persons make such remarks.
- (c) Briefly and gently voice your views and change the subject.

XI. If a Protestant friend is accompanying you to Mass, it might be wise to:

- (a) Admonish your friend about talking in church.

- (b) Explain that she must expect something entirely different from her Protestant services.
- (c) Briefly instruct her about standing and sitting; then provide her with a Missal.

XII. If someone asks a question about the Catholic religion that you cannot answer correctly:

- (a) Make up an answer so that their interest won't lag.
- (b) Advise them to consult the parish priest.
- (c) Frankly admit that you are not sure but tell them that you will look it up and report to them as soon as you are sure of the answer.

XIII. If one of your parents is Protestant and holds beliefs about the Church that are not true, the best procedure would be:

- (a) Provide plenty of Catholic literature for your home.
- (b) Explain that they are wrong in their attitude.
- (c) Pick a favorite saint and pray like fury.

XIV. If someone in your home is falling away from the Church, you should:

- (a) Immediately tell Father.
- (b) Encourage him to participate in Catholic activities and to attend more regularly the services of the Church.
- (c) Disown him; he's not worth the effort.

XV. If you are in a crowd and some joker begins telling off-color stories, the best thing to do would be to:

- (a) Tactfully say "I'm sorry. I'd rather not hear it!"
- (b) Make the sign of the Cross and plug up your ears.
- (c) Be a good sport and listen.

XVI. If your date starts heading for Parker's Paradise after the movie, you should:

- (a) Explain to him that kissing spreads germs and you are extremely susceptible to sore throats.
- (b) Explain that he has the wrong number; necking parties are not your specialty!
- (c) Warn him that it is a mortal sin to kiss before marriage.

XVII. If you are in a crowd and you discover too late the others plan to stay out far past your deadline, you should:

- (a) Emphatically demand that you be taken home.
- (b) Call a taxi.
- (c) Call Dad or big brother, explain the situation, asking them to come after you.

XVIII. If a very close friend asks you to do his Math, you should:

- (a) Go ahead; after all, it's for a friend.
- (b) Call him a cheat.
- (c) Offer to help him with his Math and teach him what you know about it.

XIX. If your brothers and sisters are squabbling, the best procedure is to:

- (a) Try to get them in a good humor so that they

will laugh at their differences by saying something like, "Aw, come on, kiss and make up!"

- (b) Get at the root of the problem in order to decide which is right.
- (c) Ignore it — after all, it's none of your business.

XX. If you find yourself alone with a strange teen and at a loss for words, it would be a safe bet to:

- (a) Discuss the weather.
- (b) Keep silent and focus on the floor.
- (c) Maneuver the conversation so that the teen will talk about himself.

ANSWERS

I. (a) On the family telephone, casual conversations should never last longer than fifteen minutes. In order for any family to live happily under the same roof, it's necessary for each member to be considerate of the others. If you expect consideration, you must learn to give it.

II. (c) Unless there is an urgent matter to discuss, it is never proper for a girl to call a boy on the phone. Note writing is childish and gives the boy the impression that you are chasing him.

III. There's that word "consideration" again. After all, little brother's phone conversations are as important to him as yours are to you. But if there is a house rule of fifteen minutes, you won't have this trouble!

IV. (a) Emily Post agrees.

V. (c) Borrowing clothes is a good way to lose a friend. The same applies to loaning them. No matter how careful one may be, there are always accidents and often perspiration stains. No matter how generous you are at heart, it's difficult not to resent losing a favorite pair of slacks or a blouse at the hands of a friend. It's better to make a rule not to borrow or loan clothes!

VI. (c) Accessories are less easily damaged and more easily replaced.

VII. (b) Let's not overdo it with those scarfs we wear to Mass! The most incongruous sight of the past year was a girl who tip-toed into the pew with a devout expression and a scarf illustrating cocktail glasses and can-can dancers! A handkerchief is plausible only if you have forgotten your hat or scarf.

VIII. (b) Nothing will be gained by blunt frankness when your friend asks your opinion about wearing apparel. After all, opinions differ. Your taste may be far different from that of the next person. Rather than hurt feelings or lie about it, evade the question with something like, "Blue is your color." Or "Plaids are always becoming to blondes." She's stuck with the outfit; don't make her self-conscious every time she has to wear it.

IX. (a) Neither condemn nor condone — do what you **know** is right!

X. (c) There is no use arguing with someone who has a grudge against Holy Mother Church. You will

only increase the bitterness and cause a scene. However, when I encounter such a situation, I always briefly make known my own views. I want to be sure that the other listeners know that I don't accept the criticism as truth.

XI. (c) One reason more Protestants do not attend our Masses is because they are self-conscious and uncertain. Since most Protestants do not kneel in Church, it's wise to forewarn your friend. Without a Missal, the Protestant attending the Mass for the first time lacks proper appreciation and comprehension of its significance.

XII. (c) No harm is done by admitting your uncertainty about a matter of Faith. But there is plenty of harm done if you give out misinformation!

XIII. (a) Don't argue or cajole with a Protestant parent. You will only drive them further away from the Church. Praying is good, of course, but supplement it by concrete action on your part. Most people are inquisitive enough to peek into those Catholic magazines, pamphlets and books lying so casually around the house!

XIV. (b) A person who is drifting away from the Faith is in constant turmoil with himself and God. Don't add to his unhappiness. Try to guide him back gently by interesting him in Catholic friends and Catholic activities. If these fail to provide the needed inspiration and encouragement, consult Father.

XV. (a) You may be a good sport in the eyes of the jokester if you laugh at his off-color stories — but

what are you in the eyes of God? And which is more important?

XVI. (b) Any fellow that's worth your time won't resent your tactful explanation that you don't engage in necking parties. If he does resent it, then you can be sure that his primary interest in you was far less than worthy!

XVII. (c) No use in making a scene — and don't call a taxi! Even in these days, taxis late at night are a risky proposition. Call Dad or big brother.

XVIII. (c) Don't sacrifice principles for friendship.

XIX. (a) Humor is the best medicine in family squabbles. Setting yourself up as judge won't increase your popularity with your family. Why alienate either one?

XX. (c) Everyone loves to talk about himself. No one can think you boring or dull if you are inquiring about **him!** To do so would be to admit that he himself is dull! We all love an audience. Being an interested audience is one of the prime assets of possessing a good personality!

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