

# The Royal Path of Life — Flirting

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The ostensible object of courtship is the choice of a companion. For no other object should any intercourse having the appearance of courtship be permitted or indulged in. It is a species of high-handed fraud upon the unsuspecting heart, worthy of the heaviest penalty of public opinion, or law. The affections are too tender and sacred to be trifled with. He who does it is a wretch. He should be ranked among thieves, robbers, villains, and murderers. He who steals money steals trash; but he who steals affections without a return of similar affections steals that which is dearer than life and more precious than wealth. His theft is a robbery of the heart.

Flirting is a horrid outrage upon the most holy and exalted feelings of the human soul, and the most sacred and important relation of life. It is a vulgarity and wickedness to be compared only to blasphemy. It had, and still has, its origin in the basest lust. The refined soul is always disgusted with it. It is awfully demoralizing in its tendency, and base in its character. It is true, any bandy their low jokes upon this matter in thoughtlessness; but if they would take one moment's sober reflection upon it, they would see the impropriety of jesting about the most delicate, serious, and sacred feelings and relations in human existence. The whole tendency of such lightness is to cause the marriage relation to be lightly esteemed, and courtship to be made a round of low fun and frolic, in which every species of deception is endeavored to be played off. Until it is viewed

in its true light, in that sober earnestness which the subject demands, how can courtship be anything else than a grand game of hypocrisy, resulting in wickedness and misery the most ruinous and deplorable?

There is much trifling courting among the young in some portions of the country that results in such calamitous consequences; carried on sometimes when the young man means nothing but present pleasure, and sometimes when the young woman has no other object in view. Such intercourse is confined mostly to young men and women before they are of age. It is a crying evil, worthy of the severest censure.

A case was recently tried in Rutland, Vermont, in which a Miss Munson recovered fourteen hundred and twenty-five dollars of a Mr. Hastings for a breach of marriage contract. The curiosity of the thing is this: The Vermont judge charged the jury that no explicit promise was necessary to bind the parties to a marriage contract, but that long continued attentions or intimacy with a female was as good evidence of intended matrimony as a special contract. The principle of the case undoubtedly is, that if Hastings did not promise, he ought to have done so—the law holds him responsible for the non-performance of his duty. A most excellent decision. We think if there were more such cases there would be less flirting.

One of the meanest things a young man can do (and it is not at all of uncommon occurrence) is to monopolize the time and attention of a young girl for a year, or more, without any definite object, and to the exclusion of other gentlemen, who, supposing him to have matrimonial intentions, absent themselves from her society. The selfish "dog-in-the-manger" way of proceeding should be discountenanced and forbidden by all parents and guardians. It prevents the reception of eligible offers of marriage, and fastens upon the young lady, when the acquaintance is finally dissolved, the unenviable and *unmerited* appellation of "flirt." Let all your dealings with women, young man, be frank, honest and noble. That many whose education and position in life would warrant our looking for better things in them, are culpably criminal on these points, is no excuse for your short-comings. That woman is often injured or wronged, through her holiest feelings, adds but a blacker dye to your meanness. One rule is always safe: *Treat every woman you meet as you would wish another man to treat your innocent, confiding sister.*



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