

My Hopes for the Future

A letter from a mother to a daughter

A Prize Winning Essay by Laura Brown of
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My Dearest Girl,

This is the eve of your wedding day. Tonight your eyes are like stars; your feet seem barely to touch the ground. The flowers have been ordered for weeks, it seems — the dresses are pressed — the caterers have been checked, the house is immaculate. All is in readiness for the Day. And now I can sit down, draw in a deep breath, relax, and write this letter to you, for I must talk to you, my dear one, tonight.

Tomorrow the man of your choice will claim you as his own — tomorrow you say goodbye to our mother-little girl relationship which although it had greatly abated had never completely disappeared. From tomorrow on, your husband's opinions will take precedence over all others, and you and he will, together, work out your problems. This is as it should be — we would not have it otherwise.

Your husband will be to you as a knight in shining armour, the apex of all your dreams. You believe that nothing you attempt, as a couple, will be impossible. Keep that belief, my daughter, and a goodly portion of your plans and hopes will indeed be accomplished.

Now, on the brink of the new life, so many responsibilities loom out of the future, upon your horizon. Do not try to conquer all at once — act slowly, think each one through, and many difficult situations will evolve into minor problems, practically solving themselves.

Really, darling, as you go forward you will realize there are many forces working towards making life a happier one for our young married folk. You need not worry, as your father and I did when we began our marriage, about the cost of sickness; we now have sickness insurance to ease the expense. We have pensions for the aged, bursaries for education for our young people, and we also have small monthly cheques for each child in the family, sent by our government. All these reforms have been introduced over the past few years.

You will be looking forward, my dear one, to the coming of your family. As each little one joins your family circle you will find your affection growing, enveloping each one, building an unbreakable bond of love with which you confidently face whatever may lie ahead of you.

In the past decade many wonderful drugs used for the prevention of diseases have been discovered, so that your concern over your

children in their severe childhood ailments will be greatly diminished.

Modern conveniences will make your family life so much more enjoyable, my daughter. But don't overdo them, I would advise you, — keep the tradition of homemade cookies, cakes and puddings alive. There is a great deal to be said in favour of the prepared foods, but so much more satisfaction and individualism is obtained by following our old recipes. You have copied my treasured collection and no doubt will pass it on, with additions, to your children also. Many women regard their family recipes as heirlooms and guard them as such.

Looking into the future, perhaps you have felt uneasy about the atomic age. When we know all the good that can come from the control of the atomic power, the huge potential it has for producing heat and light energy, we should be most thankful such a dynamic force has been discovered, but we must be very cautious, thoughtful, prayerful when we realize how much harm this tremendous power, if uncontrolled, could cause to our world. However, since all our great nations know the dreadful danger of this truly marvellous discovery, if misused, doesn't it seem both logical and feasible that this tremendous force will be the focal point which will determine the permanence of peace in our time?

Television is, in our homes today accepted along with radio, as an absolute necessity. Remember, my daughter, in building your home, not to let these media become monsters carrying into your house sadism, sex immorality, violence, hatred, salaciousness. In time they can dominate the home influence far beyond comprehension. But use them to bring beauty, the arts, comedy, music to enrich your lives, and your lives will profit greatly thereby.

When I was a child I remember hearing of the controversy about women receiving the franchise. Use your vote wisely, I would ask you. Work for reforms, that all may have a fair chance in this life. Study the Bill of Rights, the Indian Eskimo question and before you cast your ballot for a candidate know the person and the cause for which he stands.

The segregation question will also be the subject of many discussions in your home. Remember always to see beneath the skin, the same colour of blood, the same problems of character, the same need for encouragement or