

"DON'T grin — smile." So says Emily Post in her code of behavior for women. But then she hadn't read "Gentlemen Prefer..." in a local magazine last month in which various obsequious gentlemen commented sagaciously on women in general.

My, how my funnybone tingled upon reading their fatuously flippant observations! Of course they spoke with their tongues in their cheeks as in the accepted custom among young men, particularly adolescents, when the subject is "Women." Why do men seem to have an unconscious dread that people mistake their interest in the opposite sex as serious? Why not admit it? Why not admit it? Why hide behind a protective screen of wisecracks and rib-tickling remarks?

I remember a young fellow who professed disinterest in girls in general. He took extreme pains by actions and words to proclaim his aloofness... his disregard. Yet he sprouted an elegant moustache.

"Why the moustache?" I asked him. "To strain soup?" We admire broad-minded

The Contrariness of the Male Species

By HELEN MELIA

men. But not men with wide-open spaces between the ears. To judge from what gentlemen say nowadays about their preference in women, they seem to be magnanimous beyond belief. They speak, with convincing gestures and shining eyes. The liars! They admire modernity in a Miss. They offer her cigarettes and glasses brimming with gin. They tell her there's a drugstore in every corner and whisper, insinuatingly, "why not? You won't be a chicken all your life." They profess eternal love until the poor girl's head is giddy from their ardent avowals and promises. Oh no! She mustn't be old-fashioned! Men don't like it! Yet they'd wallop their own sister if they caught her trying hard not to be old-fashioned. When

it's the girl next door who goes wrong, they go right after her—until church bells chime in the distance when they beat a hasty retreat.

The most popular and preferred girls in town are those that "gentlemen" won't be seen out with — in public. That is, if we are to believe what they say they prefer in women.

Some gentlemen generously allow us ladies to study their masculine souls, "if it does us any good." But we tried that long ago when we wore ribbons in our hair and skirts that came above our dimpled knees. We've outgrown gentlemen of that type whose ego expands alarmingly under adolescent admiration. Then there's the virile male who "chases anything that wears a skirt." A start-

ling statement but disarmingly frank. There's a rooster in my back-yard that chases anything that clucks and then crows magnificently and flaps his wings on his chest. Mr. Skirt-chaser, like the rooster, deems it necessary to prove his virility at repeated intervals. Why? Who doubts his masculinity?

What gentlemen seem to prefer these days makes for a rather confusing picture. We must be sophisticated yet basically simple and unaffected. We must be intelligent but not more so than our escorts — the hardest requisite of all! I could make a gag here about us girls going out in relays with intelligent escorts but what girl wants to step out only once a month! Never mind; let that pass. I don't want to leave an opening for gentlemen pugilists of the pen.

To boil it all down, if you wish to be preferred by the modern Manila male, you must be born charming, if not actually devastatingly beautiful. If you're intelligent as well... that's a handicap you'll have to struggle along with as well as you can.

DEATH IN THE ...

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seemingly sapient heads in utter bafflement. They had never seen a case like this: of a strong-limbed youth suddenly stricken by an unknown malady. It was the district health officer, summoned by Berto's grief-stricken father, who put an end to the speculation of the townspeople on Berto's sickness. A vicious form of paralysis had gotten its relentless grip on the town's bully.

"He's being punished by God," was the townspeople's verdict.

Poor as they were, Berto's unhappy parents did everything within their limited means to bring life to the dead limbs of Berto. But he remained partly dead for months and months. While he could move his arms with great effort, his legs were stiff and unmoving. Berto would be half dead all his life.

But tonight, inside the church of Padre Silvio, Berto, as he lay sprawled on the aisle, seemed to be suffused with a force that seemed to bring life to his useless legs. He had heard of miracles, of men and women whom the world gave up as dead but who were given new life because they had faith. He would go to the church of Padre

Silvio and pray as he had never prayed before.

With reluctance, his aged father fashioned a crude crutch and with this Berto started on his pilgrimage to the church on the hill. Still the bully at heart, he refused assistance from his father and relatives. He would go to the church alone, even if he had to crawl in going there. And crawl he did, dragging the crutch with him.

As he lay quivering on the cold aisle, a slight noise came from one of the corners of the church. It was a series of soft, dry coughs that came from the pain-wracked body of a thin, prematurely old woman around whose drooping shoulders was wrapped a tattered shawl. It was Antonia, who was vainly trying to stop the paroxysm that gripped her and filled the entire church with an eerie noise.

In her heart Antonia knew that

it would not be long before her diseased, wretched body would cease disturbing people. Way back in far Manila, in a hospital where ghosts of people move about with the white plague dogging their heels, the solemn-faced doctors had given her up as a hopeless case. Antonia had returned to San Antonio—to die.

The forlorn figure kneeling in a darkened corner of the church that night was a far cry from the vivacious woman of ten years ago who left San Antonio to find her "rightful place" in the city, the hunting ground of modern Cinderellas. She was not like the rest of San Antonio's female inhabitants who were born only to be married to ignorant, calloused men and raise armies of half-naked children. She was different.

Indeed, Manila has a place for women like Antonia. It welcomes with open hands women like her

who want to get somewhere and are not scrupulous about the weapons they use in attaining this end. Soon, Antonia became a familiar figure in Manila's high spots, a typical lady of the evening.

A few so-called fortunate residents of San Antonio who had stayed away and landed in Manila, brought glowing tales of the activities of Antonia when they returned. They told of her costly clothes, of her sparkling jewels, of the people she ran around with. To the girls of San Antonio the name of Antonia was always spoken of with awe, almost reverence. But to the men, the stories about her brought a familiar leer in their eyes and huskiness in their voices.

Ten years is not a long, long time, but to Antonia she had lived to the full every day of this dizzy decade. So full that when the blow struck her, she was the only one who found it unbelievable. She could not reconcile herself to the fact that she had lost her youth and her strength. A terrible disease was the price of those ten mad years.

Her money, clothes, jewels and friends gone, Antonia found her-

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