

Growing Up and Liking It

Alice Rose Moore

A recent issue of one of the nationally known teen-age magazines contained an article on how the modern young miss can make the change from childhood to adolescence as easily as a moth can shed its chrysalis. This bright young thing learns overnight to walk gracefully, to apply make-up artfully, to carry on a good conversation with adults, and to reply to all her date's remarks with a bright-eyed and interested "Oh, really!" She plays the piano and sings beautifully; she perfects her tennis backhand and swims like Esther Williams. She is a typical teen-ager.

In reading this article, I thought bitterly how I had made the transformation from childhood to adolescence. For a few seconds, I wished that I had had such a guide as this article when I started my new life. Perhaps I would not have been the stupid, awkward, blundering girl who required loving parents, patient teachers, and understanding friends to see that she survived successfully the age of being fat, sloppy, pimply-faced, and speechless. Of course, I realized that a miracle such as the one the article described occurs only in fiction. No article of that type could pull a young girl through "that age" in a few short days or even in weeks. The transformation from a sheltered violet to an unprotected orchid requires more than the reading of a few words written by a "woman of the world." It requires the neverfailing teacher—experience.

Experience was my unflinching, unyielding director along the new walks of life. When I was thirteen, I looked up with awe to the "queens" of the high school I attended. I thought that just such things as I recently read in this article put them in the position they held. I realized bitterly that not only would transformation have to occur in me, but a mental enlightenment as well. I tried all the diets and beauty preparations advertised and sincerely sought to become well-versed on international affairs. I must have expected miracles. And miracles do not happen. My mother warned me that the diets and cosmetics I tried might injure my health. She said, also, that I could not "cram" into my head information which I did not understand. She attempted to tell me that if I sincerely made an effort to grow up and would just take things as they came, I would not end up an unpopular, withered old maid, as I fully expected to do. Naturally, this attitude did not appeal to me. When, after another year, I remained unpopular and unwanted. I watched my friends blossom into

lovely belles, but I remained a wallflower.

My complexion and my figure grew clearer and slimmer as time wore on, but I still had not developed that "sparkling personality" I longed for. My case looked hopeless, but as I knew I could not continue through life moping and withdrawn, I began to participate in high school activities, particularly dramatics. I decided, even though I knew I would eventually end my existence with a parrot and a black cat, I might as well make the most of what I had at my disposal. This new attitude, of course, gave me the experience I needed. I made many grave errors along this highway, but each error taught me a little more, until I had a fairly good idea of what this society I lived in expected of its members.

I was taught that neither beauty nor a magnificent personality is an essential marker on the road of life. Either one would hardly be a blight on a person's career, but the really important objective in growing up is realizing that the world is made up of millions of people and that each one is an individual being. Understanding others and fitting ourselves into this huge society in whatever place our talents happen to fill should be the ultimate goal for everyone. The high school and college "queens" are usually pretty, but they are also vitally interested in other people, in what they are doing, and in what their problems are. Perhaps there is a modern Cleopatra who is beautiful, talented, gracious, and charming. Perhaps she became so overnight. In most cases, however, it takes a great deal of down-to-earth living to become an important part of our great society.

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Watermelon Party

Martha Katzenberger

I shall never forget my first watermelon beach party, which was held at Myrtle Beach in South Carolina. The people with whom I was staying had dug a deep pit in the sand and had filled it with wood for the campfire, which also served as the light for the cutting of the melons. We sat on blankets spread around the fire, singing school songs and old favorites. The night was dark; there was no moon, only millions of stars in the vast, appalling space overhead. The beach at night is terrifying; you cannot see the surf—you can only hear the thunderous roar as the breakers pound the sand. It is so different at night from the gay, friendly beach of daytime