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**ON ACCEPTING FAVOURS**

By A BUSINESS GIRL

I KNOW a married man who goes through life distributing boxes of chocolates to every moderately pretty girl he meets. He doesn't mean anything by it. He's just incurably generous—a sort of born universal uncle, and he thinks no more of presenting a girl with a box of chocolates than another man would think of offering her a cigarette. And the biggest stickler for convention couldn't think it necessary to refuse his gift—he would be most dreadfully surprised and hurt if she did.

Now, that is the very core of the whole problem of accepting or refusing favours. *What is the object behind the attention?* And the girl who is flattered by receiving gifts from men friends should quite unromantically settle this point before deciding—whether to feel flattered or NOT.

A man may give a girl a present because she is socially his inferior, and has done him some specific service.

Or he may be flirting with her, or hoping to do so, and his gifts are lubricants to make the affair run smoothly.

Or he may have more money than he knows what to do with, and enjoys playing Prince Bountiful.

Or, lastly, he may be in love with her, and hoping to make her his wife.

The last instance is by far the most rare.

Except for occasional conventional offerings of flowers, the man in love is usually both too self-conscious and too humble to advertise his state until the moment comes to confess it.

The probable effect of accepting an offered gift should be considered next. Some men read much more into a girl's light-hearted acceptance of some material tribute than do others, but always it tacitly acknowledges a relationship of considerable intimacy.

And, alas! men do not always behave very chivalrously where their emotions are concerned. A man may give gifts to a girl he admires in such a charming and unassuming fashion that it would be almost impossible for an innocent-minded girl to refuse them. Yet when matters come to a head, unsuccessfully for him, he will exclaim bitterly: "If you really didn't care for me, why

did you let me go on giving you things?" And the girl, knowing she has allowed herself to get into a false position, is struck dumb.

Even Mrs. Grundy couldn't lay down rules to meet all the problems connected with favour giving and getting. Here, however, are two fairly universal principles: Never accept costly presents from any man except your future husband; and never accept anything from a man you do not admire and wish to have for a friend.

There are girls who not only accept any and every attention which is offered them, but who are constantly DEMANDING favours: *Will he take her to the theatre? Will he back a winner for her? Does he mind seeing after her luggage for her? Could he go and inspect a possible side-car?—book seats for so-and-so?—send up some cream from the country when he is away?* and so on.

Though she is out to take all she can get, should he demand a large share of her attention in return, she will declare he has no right to criticise or interfere in her private affairs, though by a thousand acts she has given him this right day by day.

GIRLS of this type are definitely discrediting their sex, and will soon find even the most devoted admirer cooling off. It is not "playing the game" for a girl to take advantage of the natural chivalry of a man who finds it hard to refuse a woman's request, to turn him into a sort of unpaid messenger-companion. One man in this position will quietly drop the friendship altogether, while another will seek to take advantage of the fact that the girl is under a big debt of obligation to him. But, whatever the result, this selfish, grabbing attitude towards life can never be justified.

If you decide to accept a favour, no matter what it may be—a seat in an omnibus, or a diamond necklace—do it *graciously*. Don't take it either as a right, or half shamefacedly, take it openly and appreciatively, and try to give some pleasure in return for that which is offered you.

And if you must return a gift—never a very pleasant job—find such a tactful way of doing it that the would-be donor will not feel too cold-shouldered—unless he deserved to be.

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