The art of match-making is fast disappearing. Now, you'll have to do your own choosing. And what kind of girl will you choose? Preparing for marriage involves a shopping tour with some worthwhile qualities in mind:

Don't put too much stock in the external. Looks have been deceptive for centuries. Men have been so gullible, they have had to resort to law for protection. In 1700 the English Parliament passed the following law against the wiles of women:

"That all women of whatever age, rank, profession or degree, whether virgin, maid or widow, that shall from and after such Act impose upon, seduce, and betray into matrimony, any of His Majesty's subjects by means of scent, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool, iron stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes, or bolstered hips, shall incur the penalty of the law now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanors..."

That's how deceptive appearances have been, and can be, where Miss Rexall or Miss Walgreen is involved. She may be lovely, and use Pond's -- and still have a head full of goldfish. The possession of a pretty face and a trim ankle is an asset. The ability to wear Dior creations may be something for the Avenue to behold.

The art of flashing eyelids in a way that sends you into a swoon will, as time goes on, do little more than raise problems. And if that's all she has to offer, you'll find it difficult to solve these problems.

What's Beneath The Veneer?

Remember, you are marrying for life. The factor of sexual attraction can be depended upon up to a certain point -- then it fades into insignificance. After the bloom of youth comes the lines and the wrinkles of time and care. Maybe they don't appeal to you now; but they can be marks of inexpressible beauty for those who know how to recognize and appreciate qualities of the spirit. Surface attractions and "pretty nothings" will fade with tomorrow. If that's all there was to recommend the girl -- you'll be left sad and empty.

Much more important is the matter of personality, and a sense of humor. Don't overlook the religious training, and the intellectual background. During the engagement period ask yourself: "Is she patient, and kind, and understanding? Is she a realist when it comes to financial limitations? Is she a good manager? Does she love the atmosphere of a home? Is she content to do without luxuries which I am unable to provide? Can she bake a cherry pie? Does she mind getting her hands dirty? After all, you are looking for a girl with whom you must live year after year, putting up with each other's weaknesses long after the thrill of physical charm and beauty has become merged with the prosaic facts of human nature, and the humdrum of everyday existence.

Can a man trust his own judgment in these matters? The answer lies rather in the realization that we need help -- and that we'd be smart to get all reliable help possible. That's why we go to St. Joseph, these days, in whose saintly hands we rest our case.

Tonight at 6:45: Novena Devotions in Sacred Heart Church.