Reading for Women and all the Family

Bringing Up Father

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By McManus

Life's Problems Are Discussed

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

In other words, he presents to the world his own conception of himself. And the world accepts him at his own valuation.

All of us in our experience have seen some one putting it across with no apparent equipment, and have wondered and admired; and we have all seen real gifts and real talent fail of recognition. We have pondered over this injustice, and marvelled at the strange workings of destinty. But there is a reason.

My own humble theory is, that the mediocre but successful people possess an invaluable something which the gifted but unrecognized lack, and that is a sense of drama.

We will stand anything in the way of pose or pretense, provided it is carried off artistically. For the bad actor, either off or on the stage, "Boos" shall be his portion.

Have you ever met a real genius, one acclaimed so by the world because of his or her transcendent gifts? They are as scarce as hen's teeth, but their invariable and distinguished characteristic is that they are entirely simple, natural and unaffected. They don't have to be anything else. Nevertheless, they are dramatic; for that is the role of genius. Theirs is the drama of achievement.

Poor little Emperor Nicholas of Russia is an example of those who are lacking in the dramatic instinct. Pallid and undersized and trembling at his own shadow, he did not at all fill the popular idea of a Czar. If he had been a big, blustering brute with a loud voice and a scowl, it would have been a much more difficult matter to have dislodged him from his throne. People will stand for an autocrat, but never for a counterfeit of one.

The same thing is true of Louis XVI of France. Old Louis XIV understood the game better. He knew the deluge was coming, but he died with his head on his shoulders.

The successful men and women of the world, either consciously or unconsciously, have always realized the value of dramatic effect. They have looked and acted the part—made the picture, as the stage saying goes.

I don't suppose for a moment that George Washington ever attitudinized before a mirror, or purposely brushed back his hair from his forehead. But if you don't think that serene, lofty brow, that classic profile and that stately bearing of his had anything to do with his frame, try to imagine a fat, low-browed man with a snub nose and a walrus mustache ever being regarded as the Father of his country.

Andrew Jackson embodied in his careless attire and uncouth manners what constituted in his day the popular conception of rugged honesty. There were other men of his time no doubt just as square, just as forceful, just as patriotic as he; but gnarled and sturdy in appearance and speech he looked and acted the part of "Old Hickory."

There is nothing discreditable or belittling in all this. These men were guilty of no affectation or of pretending to be something that they were not. They simply emphasized in their actions and appearance those inner qualities which characterized them. It was probably quite unconscious on their part. They were merely obeying their instinctive sense of drama.

No one would ever suggest, for instance, that there was anything studied about the personal peculiarities of General Grant. Yet what an effect of bulldog tenacity was given by that tightly clenched cigar between his grim lips, and of stern deliberation by his silences. With his square-set figure and square, bearded face, he symbolized to the Nation an impregnable bulwark.

It is not possible that in the very assumption of autocracy which he gave lay the secret of that unequalled power that the late J. P. Morgan wielded for so many years in the world of finance? Big and bold and brusque and masterful, he filled every requirement of the role. Like Lorenzo the magnificent, he surrounded himself with treasures of art.

This instinct which some men have properly to stage themselves and whatever they do amounts often to positive genius. I read a story the other day in a current magazine about a public man who had in his possession some extremely sensational information which he was not yet quite prepared to give out. The newspapers, however, had gained an inkling of the facts and the reporters were after him.

He did not seek to avoid them. That would have served as an assurance that he had something he was trying to keep dark. Instead, although he was just out of bed, he sent word that they were to come up to his rooms. The place was flooded with morning sunshine. He came out from his bathroom to greet them, arrayed in the scantiest of garments and rubbing his head with a towel. The psychological effect was one of frank informality, so utterly opposed to any suggestion of concealment that he practically had the battle won before he spoke a word.

Those shrewd, experienced newspapermen were impressed with the idea that there was nothing to discover, and asked him only a few perfunctory questions which he was easily able to turn aside. Yet his ruse was not the result of forethought It was a spontaneous inspiration born of his natural dramatic quality.

People everywhere fall into classification as "types" and we expect them to be what they appear. If they fail to measure up to our anticipations, we feel disappointed and defrauded.

You see a woman with an oval face, fair hair parted in the middle, dove-like eyes and an expression appealing and tender; and you expect her to be a Madonna, not a vampire. If she turns out to be a vampire you are much more shocked than if she looked the part.

Where we make a big mistake is in failing either through selfconsciousness or timidity to play up to the role to which nature has evidently assigned us. If you are not succeeding, it is because you are playing a part which does not belong to you. You are miscast.

Drama grips and interests every one. Twelve million people in this country go to the "movies" every day merely to be amused and thrilled and taken out of themselves. And there is no such drama as life itself when it is suitably presented. The trouble is that it is generally so sloppily played. The situations are slurred, the characterization is poor.

Drama in its very essence is action as against stagnation, a conflict in which the hero or the heroine wins against odds.

On the basis then, dramatize yourself. Your business and your life are not poor, sordid, monotonous affairs; they are great, dramatic adventures full of romance and color and action. Your audience is waiting. Then bow to the world's low footlights and give them their money's worth.

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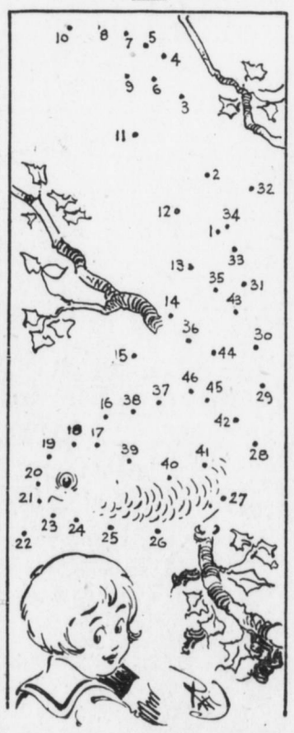

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"THEIR MARRIED LIFE"

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"I'm getting tired of these eternal dates that you keep making," Warren said disagreeably.

"Well, Warren, either you must accept people's invitations and ask them here in return or you must give up having friends."

"Now, that's a ridiculous statement."

"Why, no, it isn't dear; not at all."

"It certainly is."

"Well, I don't agree with you."

"Of course you dont' simply because you don't want to."

"Warren, that is terribly unfair."

"Well, why can't we make life a little more spontaneous? Why can't we do things on the spur of the moment? That's the only way to have any fun out of life."

"It would be nice," sighed Helen; "but it would be so hard to see people that way."

"It seems hard because we aren't used to it."

"But other people might not understand it at all."

"They'd have to take us as we are or give us up."

But you wouldn't want to do that, dear."

"Sure I would. If they weren't real friends, real enough to understand our way of doing things what would be the use of hanging on to them?"

"Well, Warren," said Helen practically, "inasmuch as we have made this engagement for tonight, you'd better get dressed. We can talk about the other arrangement some other time."

"Yes, that means that it will be put off indefinitely, and the next time talking over the telephone you'll have the entire week filled up with engagements, and I'll have nothing at all to say about it."

"But you're never home, Warren, and what would you have me say when people ask to see us?"

"Oh, there are plenty of things to say. Be frank and tell your friends that you are not going to make any more definite engagements."

"But Warren, it wouldn't be possible to do things that way in the case of meals."

"Well, manage matters any way you like then, but don't make my life an engagement schedule. Do you realize that we have been doing somthing, either having people here or going somewhere, every night this week? Why I don't have a minute to read the paper or do anything I want to do. You women have all day to visit with each other and see each other, but what time do the men have unless they take a night or two off and then there's always more or less fuss made about it."

"Anytime you want a night off, take it, dear. I don't remember ever saying anything about it."

"No, but when the times came you would, all right, or else you'd go around with that injured martyr air, which is worse than any amount of fussing."

By this time Warren had worked himself up into a perfect passion of self pity. He imagined himself the worst abused man in the city, and he was past argument or convincing even if he had stopped to listen to anything Helen might say. And so as usual, she said nothing and slipped out of the bedroom, leaving him to dress. She pondered on what he had said as she fixed the card table with a fresh cover and got out the cards. It would be lovely not to plan things ahead, and just to do things on the spur of the moment. Carp and Frances did things that way. Every time Helen had asked Frances up for dinner she had begged off on the plea that Carp hated to make a definite engagement.

"If you'll let us drop in some night and take pot luck with you," Frances had responded, "we'd simply love it." And Helen had laughed and had tried to understand, because she loved Frances, but she had been hurt just the same.

By the time the Thurstons came in, at about 8:30, Helen felt more or less downcast. Warren had forgotten the argument after a change of clothing, but Helen, who had been thinking things over, was just beginning to wonder how she could manage things to please Warren. Now Helen did not care very much for Mrs. Thurston, she had never felt quite at home with her; certainly Mrs. Thurston was not the type of woman anyone could get at all intimate with. But Mr. Thurston was different. He was delightful. Generous to a fault, always ready with funny anecdotes, and splendid company. Everyone liked him and Warren particularly. After an evening of bridge, when Warren and Mrs. Thurston had come off victorious, Warren was in a particularly good humor.

"Too bad, old man," he said genially ,slapping Mr. Thurston on the back, "better luck next time. Say, why is it that we don't see you people oftener? How long is it since you were here?"

Helen was listening with all her ears, anxious to know what was coming.

"Oh, not so very long," Mrs. Thurston was saying, "we want you people to come up next Thursday for an evening of bridge. How about it, is that all right for you?"

"Sure," responded Warren heartily, "that's all right for us, isn't it, Helen?"

Helen met his eyes, her own filled with inquiry, but he had forgotten his protests of a little while ago. He was simply impatient for her to accept the invitation.

"We'd love to come," said Helen prettily, and then wondered why she had that little hurt feeling that had come so frequently of late.

(Of course you enjoy this series. Watch for the next installment.)

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Advice to the Lovelorn

A Bit of Etiquette

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX:

I am a stenographer in a small office and often my employer introduces me to salesmen or buyers for various firms with whom we do business. How should I receive these introductions? I am quite unaware of the correct manner to acknowledge them. Should I offer to shake hands? Should I arise, if seated when the introduction is made? When a person says, "I am very pleased to have met you," what is the proper reply to make? Also is it very good form to shake hands with a girl? When introduced to a gentleman on the street or in a train should you offer your hand when introduced and again at leaving him? forms often puzzle me. A. V. M.

I am a foreigner, and these little A question like yours does not really belong in my column. But so many of my girls have similar worries that in fairness to all of them I am going to answer you. When your employer introduces you to men, you need not arise. Just say, "How do you do, Mr. Jones." And when a man or woman speaks of the pleasure it gave them to meet you, thank them graciously and say that you, too, have enjoyed the meeting. I think it is always pleasant and friendly to hold out your hand when introduced to anyone. Never fear being over-cordial. The real cordiality that comes from sweet nature and kindheartedness is welcome to almost everyone.

Try to Win Her Parents

Dear Miss Fairfax:

I am 23 and am dearly in love with a girl one year my junior. My financial condition does not allow me to marry her, as she comes from a very wealthy family and her parents want her to marry some man with money. She has asked me several times to elope with her, but I know my conscience will bother me. P. I.

Are you sure you cannot win over the parents of the girl you love? Do you care for her deeply enough to want to make sure of her happiness? Now why not impress her family with your sincerity, your willingness to work, your deep desire to make their daughter happy. I don't believe in elopements—but even less do I believe in your objection to an elopement. If you think your wife might taunt you with her wealth some day, evidently you consider her snobbish. Are you sure that if you settle down to good, hard effort you could not convince your sweetheart's parents that you are rather a desirable candidate for son-in-law

Gifts For Soldiers

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX:

Could you possibly suggest some kind of an appropriate gift to send a soldier at camp? Although I have known him for years I do not care to send him anything not in good taste.

Although I know Thanksgiving is quite a ways off, and I want it as a Thanksgiving gift, I would greatly appreciate your kindness if you would tell me through the columns of the paper a sensible gift.

ANXIOUS.

A woman who is doing splendid work for our soldier boys tells me that "goodies" are particularly welcome to the boys in camp. And when I remember how much a "box" meant to all of us in my college days I can quite sympathize. A delicious cake, jellies, preserves and such things are welcome. Why don't you send a real Thanksgiving box—a roast chicken (if turkey is too bulky and too costly), a mince pie, a jar of cranberry jelly or any other dainties you feel like making. Good books, nicely marked handkerchiefs, some sort of little mending kit, a writing companion, with paper and fountain pen—any practical gift that will not be useless and n the nature of "excess baggage" is right to send a soldier boy.

See Him at Home

Dear Miss Fairfax:

I have been going about with a young man. We have learned to love each other. He is anxious to become acquainted with father and mother, so I asked if I could receive him at our home. Why do my parents refuse, saying I could do whatever I choose outside, but that I could not have any young men at the house. U. S. L.

As you tell your little story, your parents are a complete puzzle to me. It sounds as if their judgment was very poor (and I hate to make any suggestion which sounds lacking in respect to parenthood). I really feel that it is to them I must write rather than you. They owe you the protection of their home. They ought to see that every girl needs the privilege of having her friends in her own house and that when a young girl is told to meet her friends a nywhere else she likes she is being shoved into danger.

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