



Reading for Women and all the Family



Life's Problems Are Discussed

Life, like the form of government outlined by our National Constitution, is largely a system of checks and balances.

"We've got to give and take," run the lines in a current stage comedy; and the significant answer is, "You take and never give." That's where all the trouble arises.

Every relation into which we enter—business, personal or social—is in effect a contract, but except in purely commercial transactions, the terms and conditions are usually so loosely stated that one may construe them about as he pleases, and as a consequence one or the other of the parties to the agreement, generally both, feel defrauded. The misunderstandings and resentments due to this one fact are the source of almost all our so-called "troubles."

Any lawyer will tell you that it is the very essence of a contract to leave no point open to question; yet men who will hold out for the last dotting of an "i" and crossing of a "t" in a financial instrument constantly obligate themselves in far weightier matters on an utterly hazy basis, or none at all.

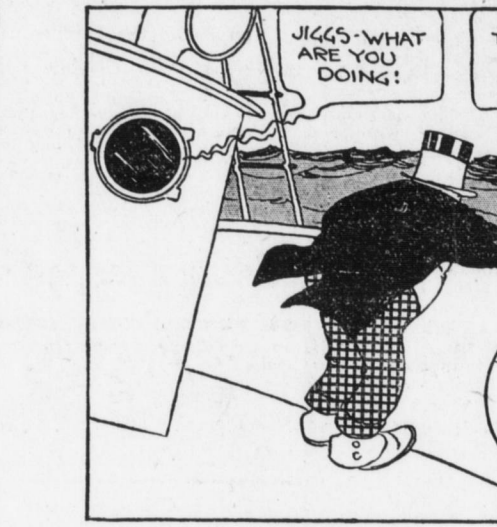
Marriage, for instance, is probably a more important step to most of us than granting a power of attorney or executing a real estate transfer; but look at the difference of method in the two undertakings. In the one case, every contingency is safeguarded, the language is as clear and explicit as it can be made, there is a settled penalty fixed for any false representation or breach of the agreement.

In the other case we have an exchange of "vows," beautiful and sonorous we will admit, but about as ambiguous and indefinite in phraseology as could well be framed. The bridegroom after fumbling for the ring and generally slipping it on the wrong finger, bleats in repetition after the clergyman, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow." Yet even as he says it he knows that he is making a pledge which he has not the slightest intention of keeping.

What he really means is that he will provide more or less for his wife during his lifetime, and that at his death she may claim one-third of his estate. A similar mental reservation or both sides attends the words, "until death do us part." And as for the binding covenant, "To love, honor and cherish," apparently covers everything short of physical violence or actual infidelity.

But if the marriage agreement is vague and uncertain, what shall be said about parenthood? Indeed, many people do not regard the assumption of that relation as a con-

Bringing Up Father



tract at all, and will be startled to hear it called one. Yet that is just what it is—a tripartite undertaking between the parent, the child and the state.

The parent agrees to give the child maintenance, care, education and support within certain years, and in return the child is obligated to submit to the direction and control of the parent. If either fails or refuses to abide by these terms, the state will step in and enforce compliance.

So far, so good. But there is something beyond the mere material wants of the child which the parent should give, and that is a respect for his individuality; and there is something the child should give beyond mere obedience. Here is where the vagueness and uncertainty of the arrangements creeps in. One side or the other is almost sure to "take and never give," and a fair exchange is the spirit of every contract.

I discussed in a recent article an instance of the sort. A mother had written me asking for advice in regard to a daughter who was habitually bad-tempered and impertinent toward the members of her own family, although fair-spoken enough and charming in her manners to outsiders. In other words, she "took" all the comforts and protection of the home, and "gave" worse than nothing in return.

As is my custom when a question is submitted to me by one of my correspondents, I tried as well as I could with the data at hand to place myself mentally in the position of that mother and also of the girl; and when I wrote my article—it was the one about the "Diamonds and Tons of Speech"—I endeavored to show the younger woman the mistake she was making in giving away to her petulance and to suggest to the elder one a course of judicious praise as a corrective for her daughter's waspish ways.

It seems to me that I had pretty thoroughly covered the subject, but a day or two later I received a letter which presented the question from a new angle and caused me somewhat to revise my opinions. Here it is:



"Dear Mrs. Woodrow—I have read your article in to-night's paper and wish to say a few words. 'You suggest that the mother praise her daughter to rid her of her impertinence. I think if this girl's parents and brothers would leave her alone until she is rested and has eaten a good supper they would find her as gentle and affectionate to them as she is to her friends.'

"I am seventeen years old and a bookkeeper working for my father. Not only do I work in the office, but in our shop, too, and I work as hard as our hired help. When I get home from a hard day's work my mother insists on asking me dozens of questions about the business—what orders have come in, who telephoned, did Mr. So-and-So call to-day, etc.—and besides, she used to call up about five times a day to ask those same questions on the phone.

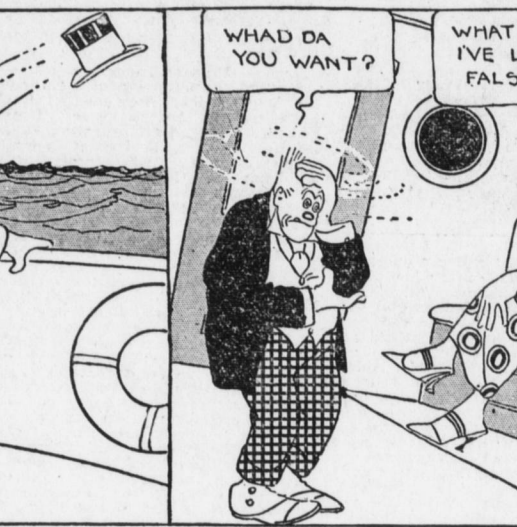
"Now, I have a temper, and when all these questions are thrust at me just as soon as I enter the house, I let it out on the family. Then they wonder why I am so irritable and unpleasant.

"Do you imagine, Mrs. Woodrow, that if my mother started in praising me when I got home from work that would make me pleasant? No. The only thing I want is to be left alone until I have rested and eaten my supper. Then she could ask me hundreds of questions, and I would be only too glad to answer them. She has stopped telephoning to the office, because I have made her understand it interrupts me and interferes with my work."

I sympathize with that girl and appreciate the justice of her contention. Every human being is entitled to a certain amount of quiet and freedom from interference, seasons in which to rest and refresh one's soul. The truest friendships are those which recognize this right and which permit of "intimate silence." There are times with all of us when the babble of voices and a buzz of questions is torture. But the family circle in general has little respect for this prerogative.

When Napoleon was planning to invade England in 1804 he prepared a great flotilla of flat-bottomed boats to transport his army. Paris, bound to have its jest, called these peniches or walnut shells, and Brunet, the comedian, raised a laugh one night by eating walnuts on the stage and tossing the shells into a pail of water. "I am making peniches," he said. For this the police punished him, but the next night he again tossed walnut shells into a pail of water. "What are you doing?" asked a companion. "I know very well what I am doing," answered Brunet; "but I also know when not to talk."

THE FOUR OF HEARTS



mentiously. "That is where woman belongs—in the home of her parent- or guardians until she goes to the home provided for her by the man she marries. That is woman's destiny."

A Difficult Question
Cynthia would not argue, but in her soul she was wondering if anything could be more degrading to a woman than marrying a man for a home. Suppose she never fell in love—what then? Was she to be a dependent all the days of her life? She did not put this question into words. It would do no good. Her only course was to live by the day, do her duty as well as she could as long as her money held out. Then—

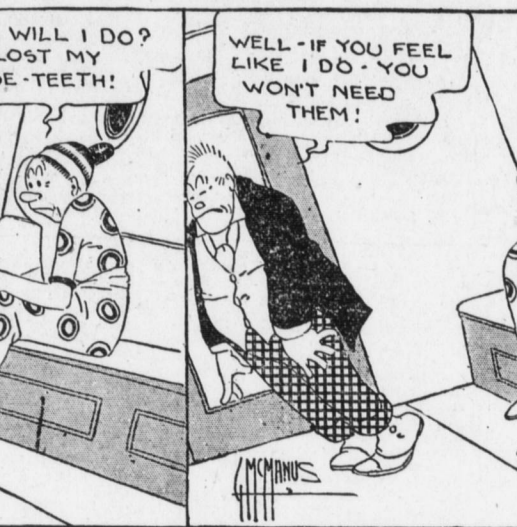
She shook her head and closed her lips firmly. She would not look ahead. She was sure that she could not carry out her uncle's idea of woman's destiny. She was forcing herself now to go into society a little more, as this was her relatives' expressed desire. But she met no man whom she could bear to think of as a possible husband. None of them stirred her pulses.

It was all very well for a girl like Dora to be planning marriage, for she was engaged to a man who she had known for years, a man who was unlike other men—strong, sympathetic, all that he should be. What a friend he would make if one could let one's self accept the friendship if one dared—

She checked her musings abruptly. She had trained herself to do this during these past few weeks when her thoughts turned toward Milton Van Saun. She told herself this was because she did not care to have as a close friend another woman's husband. And Milton would soon be Dora's husband.

What was the true reason? The question thrust itself upon her mind as clearly as if some one had asked it of her in clear tones. It was a snowy afternoon and she was walking briskly toward Edward Van Saun's house, for this was one of the days on which she was to read aloud to the semi-invalid. He had telephoned to her that she must not risk facing the storm, but she had insisted on going, pleading that she needed the exercise. Dora was shopping with the car downtown and had offered to send it back to take her cousin to Mr. Van Saun's, but Cynthia had said that she preferred walking.

By McManus



A Kindly Greeting
The wind was strong and blew in her face as she turned eastward from Fifth avenue. She bent her head and fought her way against it. It was an actual relief to struggle with something as tangible as this wind, instead of with the thoughts that assailed her.

Mr. Van Saun's house was but a few doors from the avenue, and when she had rung the bell and been admitted her host came from the library into the hall to greet her.

"Dear child," he sympathized, "I am sure you are very wet and cold. Take off that coat and those rubbers and come in by my fire and get warm. This is no weather for a girl like you to be out. I blame myself for not forbidding you to come. But you see what a selfish old man I am. I would have sent my car for you, but it is laid up at the repair shop."

His tone, his manner, reminded her of her own father. Impulsively she turned to him and caught his hand in hers for an instant.

"Oh, I am so glad to come!" she exclaimed. "It seems almost like going home to come here!"

She stopped, shocked by her own temerity. When she and her host reached the library fire he spoke gently.

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Daily Fashion Hint

Prepared Especially For This Newspaper

A WELCOME FOULARD.

This season the new foulards are welcomed by a host of women, for in addition to being attractive, it is among the most serviceable of silks. The skirt has a panel front and a gathered tunic at each side finished with silk ruching. The front of the waist carries out the panel effect of the skirt, the neck being finished with a high collar. Black silk is used for the belt and string tie. Medium size requires 6 yards 40-inch foulard and 1 yard black silk. Pictorial Review Costume No. 7568. Sizes, 34 to 46 inches bust. Price, 25c.

Daily Dot Puzzle

Draw from one to two and so on to the end.

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