



Reading for Women and all the Family



Life's Problems Are Discussed

By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

I haven't any illusions about my own sex.

I am not one of those who believe that national suffrage for women will immediately usher in the Millennium, and prove a panacea for all our ills.

I fancy that in office and in their party councils women will "play politics" and be swayed by unworthy influences just as much as men.

I do not claim superior virtue for my side of the house; in fact, I am inclined to believe that men are the more staunch in upholding a principle, less inclined to wavering or compromise.

But there is going to be one big difference when woman takes her equal place in the Government. The Government is going to be a closer and more intimate thing to the people than it has ever been before.

And that will come about from an increase of courtesy in the various bureaus and departments.

The ordinary citizen doesn't often come in contact with Governors, Mayors or other high officials. His business, when he has any, is usually transacted through minor clerks and subordinates who enmeshed in red tape and safely anchored to their jobs by the rules of the Civil Service make it the endeavor of their lives to draw their pay with as little return in effort as possible.

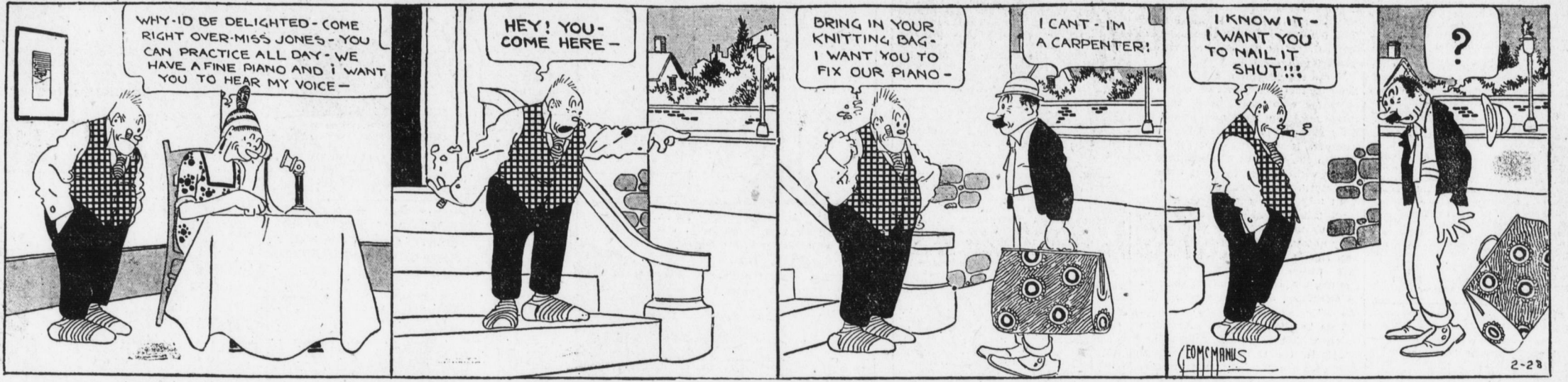
To this type of mind the use of the proper report form and a devotion to rigid routine are of vastly greater importance than satisfying the wants or needs of some outsider. And why not? Attention to the one gets him credit with his bureau chief or superior for efficiency; attention to the other means merely a lot of extra work and a darning of the special recognition for it. The clerk knows, of course, that he is technically the servant of the public; but his immediate boss is really the person he strives to please.

He is also aware that by following the strict and definite line of his duties he is not going to get into any trouble, whereas the divulging of information or otherwise bestirring himself to help the citizen who comes to him in a quandary may lead him into all sorts of hidden pitfalls.

So naturally he grows to regard the perplexed people who lay their inquiries and complaints before him as nuisances and interruptions, and gets rid of them as expeditiously as possible.

Who that has ever had business at a public office has not felt the suspicion and hostility with which he is regarded when he presents himself before some person of brief authority to state his case? If he is to show some especial "pull" or influence his task is easy; otherwise he is listened to with bared impatience, insulted if possible, told to sign a blank which is pushed in front of him, and reformed that his

Bringing Up Father



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affair will "be taken up in the regular order."

There are exceptions, of course, but that is the usual type of minor officeholder, and that is the usual treatment accorded any one who dares disturb them. The variations of it run all the way from graft poorness to elegant indifference, but the effect is the same. The citizen leaves fuming at his futility and confident that nothing will ever be done in the matter which he has submitted. And nine times out of ten he is right.

Owing to the incivility and lack of consideration he has received, he begins to feel that between him and the government he supports and pays to maintain there is a great gulf fixed. He becomes a potential anarchist.

But why should a shirtwaist and La Valliere behind the counter, instead of a waistcoat and horseshoe pin, effect an improvement in methods? Women can be quite as snippy as men, perhaps more so. The woman red-tape martinet is as familiar a figure to those acquainted with office work as is her male counterpart.

Yet no matter how deeply sunk in the ditch of routine, feminine curiosity is bound to assert itself. Proverbially, traditionally, characteristically women "want to know." And for most of them personalities have an absorbing appeal. Generations of sewing circles and back-fence colloquies have left their indelible impress on the sex.

So when John Jones comes storming in to recite his family troubles or to report the iniquities of the people in the flat overhead or to complain of official negligence and injustice and demand the heads of everybody concerned he will be very apt to find with a woman behind the desk an eager listener to his story, and it will be as soothing balm to his perturbed soul.

His difficulty may be trivial or something entirely outside the province of the authorities; probably it is. A male clerk would recognize that in the first half dozen sentences, and with a brusque "Nothing doing" would turn away.

But a woman will probe and question and lead him on through dozens of irrelevant details until he has talked himself out, and then if she regretfully assures him that although she has her personal sympathy the department is so circumscribed by law as to be powerless to aid him, the chances are that he will go away perfectly satisfied. Half of the complainants only want to "get it off their chests" anyhow.

Feminine curiosity? Some philosopher once said that everything in this world has its uses, and here is one for a trait which has long been flunk at women as a reproach. Unless I am vastly mistaken it will serve as an effective lubricant to ease much of the friction in governmental contact with the public.

It is said, you know, that Josephine won many supporters to Napoleon in the early days of his career by her obliging manner and by the readiness with which she would lend ear to any story whereby it was sought to gain her interest. No matter how tedious or prosy the recital, she would listen with every semblance of interest, and often interrupt to question or have some obscure point explained.

That this was often purely perfunctory on her part is shown by

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the tale of the courtier who by mistake gave her his tailor's bill instead of the petition which he wished her to present to the First Consul, and who was afterward assured by her that she had been deeply touched by the contents of the paper and would lose no time in laying it before her husband. But that was only one unfortunate instance; usually she scored.

The red-tape artist and the martinet have their place. But if I were a government executive or head of a department I would place on the first line of attack only soft-voiced, sympathetic women of about thirty with tender hearts and hair worn Madonnawise. And in choosing them I would subject all candidates to the psychological test of a five minutes' conversation. If any applicant did not ask at least twenty questions in that time I would have none of her.

Advice to the Lovelorn

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX

CAN YOU TRUST YOURSELF?

DEAR MISS FAIRFAX: I am a telephone girl, caring for a switchboard in a very large apartment house. I am considered attractive, and though I try to appear reserved to the men in the house pay me a lot of attention.

Several of them have asked me to go out with them or meet them for lunch downtown. Do you think it proper for a girl in my position to accept these invitations? I am not referring to the invitations of married men (though they are more frequent than any others), but to those of single young men.

I would like to know your opinion, as I must confess I do not go out very much, and often feel inclined to take advantage of the many offers pressed upon me.

SALLY.

I am going to make a confession, my dear—my respect for mere "propriety" is not always overwhelming. To do what is right and sensible and dignified and self-respecting seems to me a great deal more important than to worry over the fine points of etiquette. But there are certain "rules of the game" which everybody ought to observe. One of them you instinctively follow—you would not consider accepting the invitations of those worldly and cynical married men who in our day and generation like to amuse themselves at the expense of a girl in high position. But there are certain "rules of the game" which everybody ought to observe. One of them you instinctively follow—you would not consider accepting the invitations of those worldly and cynical married men who in our day and generation like to amuse themselves at the expense of a girl in high position.

THEIR MARRIED LIFE

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Helen slipped a clean cover on the card table and got out the cards and the bridge score.

"Well, how is everything, Helen?" queried Mrs. Stevens, coming out from Helen's bedroom and pulling down the front of her blue taffeta dress as she came.

"Just fine. I'm so glad you came early. Now we can have a nice evening playing cards."

"Hello, you people," said Warren, coming in from the kitchen. "Is it cold out? Did you come in the car?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Stevens, "and I didn't want to a bit. It's not really far enough to bother with the car. It's just a little cold enough to-night to freeze," scoffed Warren.

"That's what I told her," put in Mr. Stevens.

"I don't know about that," said the four settled down at the card table. "It felt cold enough to me."

"You probably don't dress warm enough," suggested Warren teasingly.

"You couldn't possibly ruffle my composure, Warren Curtis," said Mrs. Stevens, trumping Warren's trick cheerfully.

"She's really hard to rick," said Mr. Stevens.

"Don't you really get worked up over things?" asked Helen wistfully.

"No, I don't think I do," said Mrs. Stevens, and the game went on.

At 11:30 o'clock Helen brought in the sandwiches and Warren appeared with beer, and at 12 the Stevenses had gone.

Helen had slipped into her bathrobe and began to take off her plates and glasses, and Warren settled down for a smoke, when the doorbell rang furiously.

"Who on earth can that be at this time of night?" said Warren, starting to the door.

Helen's heart began to beat. Unexpected calls like this in the middle of the night always made her think of telegrams containing bad news from home.

"Why my dear," Helen gasped with relief as Mrs. Stevens came into the hall, "What is the matter? Is something wrong?"

"We can't start the car," said Mrs. Stevens. "We've been at it ever since we left you."

"It can't be frozen," said Warren incredulously.

"It's frozen," snapped Mrs. Stevens. "I told you it was cold enough to freeze to-night. I told Henry not to take the car out, but he would do it."

"But he would do it," said Warren, but he would do it and take of your coat," said Helen soothingly. "Warren will go down and see what he can do."

"Oh, there's a policeman down there now, and we've done everything. We always prime the engine the first time, and that never even made it start to-night."

"I'll go on down," said Warren, who had slipped into his coat.

"Helen you might see that some water is put on to the hot water is the start for a frozen engine."

"You know if the engine's frozen the car is ruined," said Mrs. Stevens turning to Helen tragically. "It's never any good again."

"But you don't know that it is frozen, dear excuse me just a minute while I see if there's any hot water."

"Oh, don't bother, please. I know it won't do any good now."

But Helen had gone to do what Warren had told her, and when she returned she found Mrs. Stevens crowded up against the window gazing down into the street.

"Warren's coming up," she in-

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Daily Fashion Hint

Prepared Especially For This Newspaper

Among the Best Styles.

The shops are showing tentative summer styles to tempt women who can no longer be seduced by winter goods. Here, for instance, is a figured check voile with skirt in bib and suspender effect. With it can be worn a simple bodice of crepe meter, lawn, handkerchief linen, etc. Medium size requires 4 yards 36-inch material for the skirt and 2 1/2 yards 36-inch wide for the waist.

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