



# Reading for Women and all the Family



## "When a Girl Marries"

By ANN LISLE

A New, Romantic Serial Dealing With the Absorbing Problem of a Girl Wife

(Copyright, 1919, Star Feature Syndicate, Inc.) CHAPTER CXXV.

In a maze of words and explanations, we managed to convey to Tom Mason that Miss Warren and Mr. Haldane were merely calling on Jim and me, and hadn't been invited to his picnic. Whereupon Tom made up for the previous lack of invitation and made up a hundredfold.

Scornfully I thought that if ever a man was a completely consistent philanthropist, that man was Thomas J. Mason, Esq. In the short time I've known him, I've seen him plunging into attempted flirtations with each new woman he met. He always has a good excuse—an opening gambit of family friendship, sympathetic understanding or even business. Something stirred unobtrusively in the back of my mind as the word "business" went through it, but I didn't deal with it then, because I was watching to see how Miss Warren took Tom's gallantry, directed at her through her uncle as it was.

But Miss Warren did nothing. She sat back with a respectful willingness to let her uncle deal with the situation.

"Thank you, sir, but I never indulge in Sunday excursions," said Mr. Haldane. "No prejudice or principles in the matter. I know the world needs its outdoor relaxation and I'm glad it can get it through the perfection of the gasoline engine. But I'm an old man. Meditation and the quiet of my home are the rest I need. And I confess to an every week chess game and pipe smoking visit with an old cronie. I'm too old for motor excursions—too old, sir. Come, Irma, my dear, we'll not longer delay these young folks."

Without a sign of a pout or a protest, Irma Warren arose. I could picture the lone, lonely, quiet day she was going to have in the big, old-fashioned mansion where she kept house for Mr. Haldane. So I cried impulsively:

"But Miss Warren—won't you let us carry her off for the day, Mr. Haldane? We've had no chance to get acquainted at all."

Tom flashed me a glance of com-

mendation as Mr. Haldane, on whose oft-displayed approval of me I was counting, turned to Irma Warren.

"Would you like to accompany Mrs. Harrison and her friends, my dear? Jencks will give me lunch and bring coffee and sandwiches at five. So you've nothing to detain you at home. Now that I think of it, you stay in with me far too much."

"I'm very much obliged, I'm sure—but I'd best not go," said Miss Warren staidly, but back of her words I glimpsed youth and a longing for companionship and gaiety. Still, I didn't see how to break through her reserve and make her understand how welcome she would be.

"Oh, please, Miss Warren," cried Tom, with unmasked eagerness which was almost awkward. "I do so want you to come. You can't refuse on the plea of another engagement. So if you don't go, we'll have to conclude that you—don't like us."

"Why, I do like you very much. And I'd love to go, if Uncle can spare me. I was just afraid you were being polite and asking me because I am here, and I didn't wish to intrude," said the girl, flashing the white teeth and crinkling her eyes in a sunny smile that hadn't a particle of the coquetry most women would have infused into the situation.

So this was settled, and Tom insisted on driving Mr. Haldane home on the way to call for Phoebe and Neal. Irma Warren made no pretense of hiding her delight over this holiday. But that didn't make her forget her Uncle's comfort, and she begged for a minute when we arrived at his house.

"Of course, I'm not much company for a brilliant man like Uncle, but I thought he might miss me if I didn't put a book at his place," she explained gravely when we sneaked away from the tonneau with me, while Jim and Tom paired off in front—an arrangement I suspected wouldn't last. It didn't "Want to go in to call for the little sister?" asked Tom of Jim when we arrived at the apartment building where Phoebe makes her home in Virginia.

"Sure thing," said Jim easily. "I knew, however, he'd go no further than the hall and telephone from there that we were waiting. However, Jim wouldn't have been

## Bringing Up Father

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By McManus



consistently Harrison if he had by word or gesture let Tom into the secret of his unwillingness to enter Virginia's domain. The moment Jim limped into the portals of the apartment house, Tom leaped from the driver's seat and swung open the door of the tonneau.

"Come, ride with me, Miss Warren," he leaped. "This Harrison-Lee-Hyland group is a sort of closed corporation. The finance part of it is stupidly in love. And the husband and wife pair are equally devoted, so let's console each other and refrain from breaking up the combinations."

"I'd be very pleased to ride with you. Just put me where I won't be in the way. I'm so happy to be along that I can content myself wherever you like to have me."

"At this reply which didn't play up to him in any way, Tom winced. But when he spoke it was after an almost dogged, challenging look at me—a look I couldn't fathom.

"I like to have you with me," said Tom Mason grimly.

Then something happened which distracted my interest from Tom and the interpretation of his tones and glances. Fortunately he had his back to the apartment and was absorbed in making Irma Warren comfortable in the seat next to his so he didn't see what made my heart skip a beat or two.

Out of the building, head high in air and eyes unseeing, while her lips chattered eagerly and artificially to cover the situation from her companion, came Virginia.

And bending toward her with an unmistakable air of devotion just verging on possession, was Sheldon Blake.

(To Be Continued)

## Life's Problems Are Discussed

We often hear people say in commenting on the experiences of others, "I could have not lived through the things she has endured," or, "It's such and such a thing should happen to me I would die. I couldn't bear it."

But human nature is a strange thing. If the circumstances we shudder over in imagination actually occur to us we meet them with a strength and courage we had not believed ourselves capable of.

This was exemplified in a letter I have had from a woman who has passed through fire and flood and has come out triumphantly.

She was peculiarly alone in the world, having been left an orphan without either brothers or sisters or any near relative. When quite young she met a man who had the gift of presenting himself and his affairs in a rosy light. Her illusions about him were soon shattered, for she discovered immediately after marriage that he was a conscientious objector to any kind of work, and that his capacity for drink was unlimited. He celebrated the birth of their first child with a spree which lasted six months.

In order to live and take care of her child the woman went to work in a factory. Later, another child was born and life became still harder for her. The children were both from lack of proper nourishment; her small household effects went for food, and then under the strain her own health gave way.

But even under these circumstances her husband remained a martyr to his principles. He would not work, and to drown his sorrows he drank deep and continuously. In order to make his life more bearable, his parents supplied him with food and a little money; but they either could not or would not provide for his family.

"There was a time," she writes, "in which I did not sleep; and as for eating, there was nothing to eat."

"I suppose it was only imagination, but one night as I sat by the window I heard a voice say plainly, 'Leave him! You are only digging your own grave and those of your children.' And then and there I made my decision to leave him."

When I told my husband, he beat me for the first and last time. He never had another chance.

I left him, and lived in a shack with my two small children. I had not a friend in the world, and not five cents to buy a loaf of bread with. But somehow I got along.

"I succeeded in finding a good home for my children, where they are well fed and looked after and are kept off the streets. And I am doing well—an earning good wages and beginning my new life. I have found friends, too. When I look back to my married life, I don't know how I lived through it all."

Another woman has written me of an experience similar to the one I have just related, although not so heart-rending.

She married a man who told her glittering tales about his income and his prospects in life; but soon after the wedding she discovered that he was relying on her to do the bread-winning and maintain the family. After a few years, during which she accepted the position he had assigned to her, he was apparently seized with a desire to travel and departed without leaving her his future address. She asks me what I would suggest her doing?

I suggest that she rejoice in being free from so useless an encumbrance, and that if he ever returns the only welcome she gives him is that of a barred door.

The moral of these two stories is comprised in the old saying, "Look before you leap." The most foolish thing a girl can do is to marry a man without having informed herself as to his habits and manner of life. Promises of reform are not worth the paper they are written on or the breath it takes to utter them.

It may be very romantic to declare: "I love him, and I know he will make good!" But there is another old saying, "Fine words butter no parsnips, and most of us like our parsnips buttered."

It is easier to do without fine words than butter.

Almost every woman cherishes the delusion that she can reform some man by marrying him. There may be cases—perhaps one in every ten thousand—where a woman has succeeded in doing so. But in that case it was because the man had the desire in his own heart for reformation and the sincere determination to accomplish it.

One of the oddest things about the feminine heart is that where as a woman will spend any amount of time and thought in selecting a wardrobe, she will snatch up a husband from the bargain counter and then spend the rest of her life bargaining for fate.

## LITTLE TALKS BY BEATRICE FAIRFAX

A man has written me an unusual and interesting letter. He tells me he proposed to a girl whom he regarded as the "best and noblest of her sex."

She confided to him that she was not as he thought her, in early life she had thrown away her bright light and paid the penalty in remorse ever since.

She is willing to marry him, but feels he ought to know the mistake he has made. My correspondent asks me, "What sort of a wife do you think she would make?"

There are as many answers to this question as there are different temperaments concerned. The first thing to be considered is what sort of a husband would my correspondent make?

How large-hearted and generous is his how free from convention, and above all, has he the ability to blot from his memory this girl's confidence or to act as if it were forever blotted out?

Very few men are cast in sufficiently heroic molds to do this. The small souled man would remember his wife's sin, and never speak of it, there it would be, a skeleton at the hearthstone.

In addition to the qualities of generosity, freedom from convention and great-heartedness necessary to make a union of this sort successful, the husband should have a disposition that is above suspicion. The situation would be extremely difficult in the case of a man addicted to suspicion or jealousy.

Poor Othello would be constantly perturbed by his wife's most casual association with friends and neighbors. He would see the proverbial mountain in every molehill. His wife's past would people his present and future with fancies. Such a partnership would be doomed from the beginning by the ballast of memories.

Must Be a Superman So much for the husband. Unless he has a good, generous dash of superman in his makeup he would better marry some sweet young thing whose past is a white page on which no history has been written. But granting for the sake of argument that he has in his makeup the dash of superman which would enable him to be the loving, considerate, trusting husband of a woman whose life has not been above reproach—what then?

One feels that such a man's choice ought to be worthy of such magnanimity. And in the majority of cases it is the woman is overwhelmingly grateful because a man has been found who is generous enough to forgive what the rest of the world condemns.

And such a woman holds to her honorable name and her honorable place with a passion of gratitude that the woman who has never known the lack of these things seldom feels.

For, please remember we are talking of life, not as it ought to be, but as it is—with separate standards of conduct for men and women. No girl, particularly no "nice" girl was supposed to concern herself with her husband's life up to the wedding day.

Indeed, there used to be a particularly cynical proverb quoted to the effect that a reformed rake makes the best husband. And the entire domestic high-court of grandmothers, maiden aunts, fathers and brothers worked together in a deadly conspiracy of silence to recede that the majority of cases it is the woman is overwhelmingly grateful because a man has been found who is generous enough to forgive what the rest of the world condemns.

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eluded, winked an eye at the pedantic of his future son-in-law.

Then along came a French gentleman named Erioux, and he threw a stick of dynamite into this ageless convention. The stick of dynamite was a play called "Damaged Goods," and it showed that very grave things may happen as the result of overlooking a young man's past. Indeed, that stick of dynamite is still smashing and splintering the conspiracy of silence between us.

We are beginning to make the distinction between innocence and ignorance, and we no longer weep tears of sensibility when we see a young girl in her white bridal robes being married to the hero of several oblique romances. Great-Aunt Mary Jane may sweep over the pretty girl, but Great-Aunt Mary Jane is not modern. She does not read Erioux.

But to return to the question of the woman who has strayed from the straight and narrow path and if she may come back—there is no question about it if she is normal. The irreclaimable woman is the near-defective. The proper name for them, I believe, is morose. The despairing welfare worker will tell you the case is hopeless—there is nothing on which to build a foundation.

Case of Normal Girl Different But take the case of a normal, intelligent girl who has been betrayed through what is really the best and most generous of her nature. Hers has been the saddest and most disillusioning of experiences. She has been deceived, avoided and cast aside like an outworn garment. Perhaps in addition to this she has known the humiliation of having her own sex go

back on her and the taste of life in her mouth has been that of dust and ashes. She is not a moron. She has plenty of intelligence with which to realize her position. Scoff at the double standard if you will, the world has yet declined to recognize any other. A place in the sun is offered to this girl who has dwelt long in the outer darkness. Does she value it, does she

live up to its responsibilities, does she cling with a passion of gratitude to the man who has given her her chance of rehabilitation?

She does—but it takes a pretty high order of man to be able to appreciate these blessings and accept them with an equal gratitude. It has got to be a more-than-average man who is capable of leading a woman

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