

"BETTER BE AN OLD MAN'S DARLING— THAN A YOUNG MAN'S SLAVE" — NONSENSE!



Mr. Alsop, Whose Wife, 50 Years Younger Than He, Is Suing for a Separation.

By Mrs. Effie Pope Alsop.

HAD always been brought up to believe that there was golden truth in the old maxim:

"Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave."

I know now that this is not true. I have been an old man's darling.

When I was nineteen years old I married an aged multi-millionaire who is on his way toward his eightieth year.

My marriage to old Mr. Alsop was against my own judgment, my impulse, my instinct and my best reasoning. But I was carried off my feet by the false logic of that wretched adage which I have just quoted above.

I should never have married this aged matrimonial partner if I had not been influenced by the false doctrine of that wickedly misleading maxim. In the hours and hours of repentance and awakening from this false dream I have taken the trouble to look into the origin of this mischievous proverb. And it seems to have had a Dutch origin. If I had known as much of the maxims and proverbs and literature of love three years ago, when I married Mr. Alsop, as I know now, when I am suing him for a separation, I would never have married him.

For instance, Shakespeare created the adage: "Crabbed age and youth cannot live together." And another similar one is "Gray and green make the worst medley." And there are many others.

Why did I not know these truthful maxims instead of the utterly false one that has ruined my life?

Yes, ruined. For, although I am now only twenty-three years old, I have

The Saddening Experiences of Young Mrs. Alsop Who Married A Multi-Millionaire Four Times Her Age and Soon Learned How Cruel, False and Illogical The Old Maxim Is

is written in letters of fire: "Let youth choose youth in wedlock; age cleave to age."

There were two or three "generation barriers" between Mr. Alsop and myself. There is a speculative possibility that I might have been able to endure the exclusive society of people of the generation before mine. But the faded denizens of the dim past, from among whom I was called to choose my companions and in whose cackled quips and anecdotes, venerable as themselves and as often visited upon me, I was supposed to find amusement, they were a bit too far in the forest of time.

As I breathe deep of this free air of California—though I am not yet free of the legal bonds that hold me to my husband—I can scarcely keep from crying aloud my joy of emancipation from the society of cronies and cronies.

Riches? You say that I was surrounded with all the things of luxury and beauty, of culture and comfort, that most women crave? Why, little girl, you who are being pampered and petted, beset with gifts and compliments by some gray-haired courtier, I tell you that I would rather be a free scrubwoman than return to the moral slavery that went with the luxuries.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Alsop was parsimonious with me in the extreme—after our marriage—but I admit the beautiful old mansion in Washington was stored with treasures. So is an Egyptian tomb.

Rather the sight from my window of that graceful, slatternly cowboy riding off to the herds below the blue mountains—youth and strength and freedom of the West—than all the splendors of the Alsop mansion, where old men and chattering old women pass through the gilded halls to worship at the shrine of obsolete social sanctities.

That was the trouble. It wasn't his jealousy, although when he became jealous of his own son it did seem a pity. It wasn't his being stingy with me about spending money, for I could usually coax him to pay the bills. It wasn't lack of devotion, for my husband was much, much too foolishly affectionate. It was the blind, cruel, impossible idea that he could mould me into the spirit, if not the likeness, of his aged friends, and still keep me happy.

He moulded me. I am an old woman—at twenty-three. I catch myself looking in the mirror for gray hairs. But as to happiness (and I believe he wished to make me happy, in his own way) it simply could not exist for me in the atmosphere of the early forties.

It was when we gave our first dinner after the wedding that I was initiated. Mr. Alsop made out a list of people to ask. When I saw that they were all from the other half of the last century I was dismayed. I suggested that we ask some of my young friends. He would none of it. "This was to be a dignified and formal dinner, not a children's party. If I could not form myself to the high position to which I had been called I could at least refrain from interfering with the customary tenor of the Alsop regime."

I wept—and he won. They came. I do not wish to make light of the infirmities of age, but when that line of the bald and the gray went bobbing past me my heart went cold. I felt like Rip Van Winkle after he woke up—the soul still young in him, but to his eyes the faces of all his human associates suddenly seared with years. It wasn't that I trembled for the future. There didn't seem to be much of any future in this world of people on the verge of the grave. I felt only a clammy, a deadening finality. I thought I had one foot in the grave, too.

They talked. I learned that the White House is not what it was in the days of dear President Pierce. I learned that Alice and Phoebe Cary were twin lights of poetry and that Oliver Wendell Holmes was the greatest humorist that ever lived. I heard stories of "befo' the wah"—stories that I was to hear again and yet again. I felt as if some unseen power had whisked me out of myself and set me back three-quarters of a century. The only up-to-the-moment remarks of the evening were the confided chronicles of the state of this one's rheumatism and that one's gout.

I rebelled and managed to push up a few frightened Spring-shots of Youth through this human mold. I obtained permission to have a few young people at the dinners. That only led to more bitter troubles. That house was dedicated to old age; my life was to be a sacrifice to

it. Whether the weapon was jealous rage or silent disapproval, my trembling friends were driven from my doors.

Let me recall here a scene or two from among the many "scenes" in the little drama called "An Old Man's Darling":

The Library—His two young sons have come home from college for the holidays. They are many, refreshing fellows. Harold says: "Look out, dad, or we'll run away with mamma." A remark in most shocking taste, but quite forgivable by any one with understanding of a college boy's sense of humor. I see the blow coming before it falls. Mr. Alsop flies into a fury. Quivering with rage, he denounces the startled lad until he flees from the room. Harold has since died.

A Dinner Party at Our House—a few young people have been asked, for I am in open insurrection against the monopoly of my social existence. I have even managed to have a little music for dancing. There is a young man sitting next me who discusses a new step. He will show it to me after dinner. I am bored and nervous with the talk of the aged majority. It is between courses and the musicians are playing. "No; let's dance it now," I exclaimed on a sudden impulse. And away we whisk around the room.

There is a crash. The table is in confusion. My husband has raised his plate and smashed it to bits in front of him upon the table. He had risen red-faced and furious, and the evening is ruined.

A dance at our house several weeks later—I have money at home until Mr. Alsop has consented to the dance. He strides upon the floor in the midst of a maxixe and hotly orders my young partner from his house, never to return.

These cruel humiliations continued and developed new phases. My allowance of spending money was so small that it amounted to practically nothing. But if I went shopping to New York, my fond but jealous husband let me know that he would pay no bills. That was to bring me home early.

My nerves broke under the strain. In despair I fled to Europe. He came after me and brought me home. But I shuddered in the air of the quiet house. I shrank from his constant caresses. I fled for the last time.

Had I ever been in love with him? No. But I had honored and respected the stately courtier who began to dominate my life when I was fourteen years old.

Fourteen! A little maid in a sunbonnet on the lawn of a hotel at Lake Toxoway, North Carolina. My mother is with me. Friends from Atlanta have a friend to introduce to us. It is Mr. Alsop.

Instantly he has singled me out from among the others. He bends above me as deferentially as to a queen. He pays me playful compliments. And I sit and look up, blushing with embarrassment, into the eyes of the man who is to be for years to come the controlling figure in my life.

At Toxoway they called him my "big Newfoundland dog," because he followed me about so faithfully. They are skilled and persistent wooers—these Romeos of seventy. Every day after the first meeting he sent me flowers; every other day, a box of candy. He flattered me into silly self-esteem by confiding to me business "secrets" which he knew I did not understand. I was proud of the trust. When he returned to Washington he continued to send gifts—perfectly proper ones, candy and books and flowers, but ten pounds of candy at a time, crates of flowers and whole sets of authors' works.

The five years of his courtship were



Young Mrs. Alsop, Who Tells Here Why Life as "An Old Man's Darling" Must End in Failure.

happy years, although, unconsciously, surely, subtly, I was being severed from my youth. About me, even then, were being forged the shackles of which only an "old man's darling" can know the ultimate pain. With young companionship as a background for his love, all was well. But even the young friends spoke the lying adage in a cynic chorus that I then thought sincere.

I had come to rely upon Mr. Alsop in all things. He wrote me pages of love mingled with pages of business confidences. So it went on for five years. Of

course, then it was settled. The shackles were beyond breaking. He had formed all sorts of combinations in restraint of my doubting heart. The love of an aged millionaire is as monopolistic as one of great industries. At the age of nineteen the two A's won—Alsop and the Adage. I married him.

I did not marry for money. I do not think that, after five years of courtship, I could be said to have married blindly. I married for happiness. I liked, honored and respected him.

Honored and respected! Dangerous

words, little lass, on the dizzy, dazzling verge of becoming an "old man's darling." Beware of them. Look forward to the time when you are a prisoner in your palace of dreams, when spectral senility besets your doors, when youth is banished from your life.

But there, I have told you my story. After all, Shakespeare said it all, bluntly, and truthfully, centuries ago:

"Crabbed Age and Youth Cannot live together."



Mrs. Alsop Demonstrating the Maxixe Step Which Made Mr. Alsop So Angry "He Ordered My Partner from His House, Never to Return."

breathed so long the atmosphere of age, have dwelt so long among old people, old houses, old stories and old-fashioned rules of conduct that I am prematurely old myself. I sacrificed on the marriage altar the things that make life worth living—things beautiful, irrevocable—my youth, my girlhood dreams. Like the wings of bright butterflies imprisoned in a tomb, they have withered to gray dust. "Yet we know that something sweet Follows Youth with flying feet, And will never come again."

I do not wish to emphasize my personal experiences as the wife of Edward S. Alsop, except as they are figurative of one of the Great Impossibilities—the carriage of a young girl to an old man. But I hold it a solemn duty to present some of those remarkable experiences as a warning to other potential "old men's darlings," dazzled and deceived. I do not attempt to place blame for the tragedy of my married life. Was it I? 'Twas Mr. Alsop? Was it the plate he mashed in the midst of a dinner party because I danced with a young man? Was it my boredom with his antique friends and my isolation from all friends of my own age? I would not say.

I would blush, rather, out and away, all the petty personalities and differences and declare the thing to blame was simply the barrier of the years—the intangible, yet insurmountable, wall which divides the generations. Upon that wall

Why Doctors Endorse Military Training for American Boys

NATIONAL defense is perhaps the leading question to-day, and no profession is more vitally interested than the medical, for none must contribute more of its personnel to the military forces, writes the editor of American Medicine. There are no differences of opinion as to the necessity for us to be prepared to repel invasion, but the kind and amount of preparedness are the points in dispute. Even the extreme pacifists who argue that armaments ought to disappear and will disappear in time, seem to be unanimously of opinion that for the present we must be able to defend ourselves. All nations depend upon a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms, and that fact is accepted in this country. We must now determine, how many citizens should be trained and how long?

The English speaking nations have never made any efforts in this direction in times of peace, and have trained only the few

who volunteer for service in the small army and navy. The Swiss go to the opposite extreme and train every one a certain number of hours or days each year but permit them to go about their civil employments in the meantime. The rest of the Continental nations adopted a half way measure.

They train only those needed to keep the regular army up to a certain strength which varies according to the supposed need of having a force for instant use—about 1 per cent of the population more or less being kept under arms. It takes a long time to recruit an army and equip it. The Russians required eighteen months to get ready to fight the Japanese, who won out by preparedness. The war ended because of domestic disturbances in Europe just when the Manchurian army was ready to fight.

Whether or not we should be furnished with a large army for instant use need

not be discussed, because the people think they do not need it, and they will not have it, though they all confess that we might have a bigger one than at present. The only thing left is an extensive training of civilians to constitute a reserve from which to recruit an army needing little training. Arms and ammunition must be made in advance, but no one seems to know to what amount.

The wear and tear on clothing is so great in war as to necessitate a new outfit every month or two, so that the means of making it must be improvised anyhow and the lack of the initial supply is not so serious as the lack of trained men and arms. The whole matter boils down to a question of training, and nothing can be done until public opinion demands it.

A large percentage of our population is foreign born, and so glad to escape the necessity for training that they will not consent to it until dire need forces them.

The problem before us then, is far more complicated than usually admitted. For the present we must depend upon patriotic volunteers, but there is no objection to making military drill a part of the public school curriculum.

As a calisthenic and hygienic measure it will serve an excellent purpose. Target shooting would be hailed with joy by every normal boy and would add zest for school.

As a public health measure the profession can safely advocate the innovation without treading on the toes of the extremists who want peace at any price—even the price of liberty. Germans and Frenchmen have repeatedly asserted that their armies had given back to the soldier far more than he had contributed to national defense. As hygienists, we should rejoice at the prospect of developing our youth morally, mentally and physically by military training.