

Woman's Realm -:- Social and Personal -:- Fashions -:- Literature



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Shall Parents Live With Their Children? Dorothy Dix Stresses Value of Independence

The Widowed Man or Woman Who Goes to Live With the Children Upsets the Domestic Happiness of the Family and Loses the Peaceful Independence Which is the Rightful Heritage of the Old

Every day I get letters from old men and women telling me that they have lost their wives or their husbands and that their children want them to break up their homes and come and live with them, and asking me whether they shall do it or not.

To which I unhesitatingly reply NO. NO. A thousand times NO. Don't do it. Stay in your own place. Hang to your own home as to your last rock of refuge, the last bit of peace and happiness that is left you in this world. Don't break up your home and go to live with your children unless it is an absolute financial necessity, unless you are dependent upon them and there is no other way in which they can possibly provide for your support.



When Mother or father is widowed, it seems the natural and appropriate thing to their dutiful and affectionate children to urge them to break up their homes and come and live with them. They can't bear to think of mother alone in that big house, so lonely and forlorn, with father gone. Besides, she has worked so hard all these years, raising a family and cooking and scrubbing and cleaning and dusting, that it is time she rested some, and they want her to come and live with them and just fold her hands and do nothing the balance of her life.

As for father, how on earth could he manage to get along alone without mother, and no one to look after him and see that he got the proper food and wrapped up his throat when he went out and took the medicine for his rheumatism? It makes his children's heart bleed to think how desolate and neglected he would be with nobody but a hired housekeeper to take care of him. So they insist upon his selling the old place and coming to live with them.

But this gesture of welcome, made by the children in all good will and tenderness and sympathy, almost invariably ends in disaster to all concerned, and particularly does it end in disaster to the old. And this is not because there is anything wrong with either the children or the parents, but simply because human nature is what it is.

To begin with, the induction of father or mother into their children's home menaces the peace of the home because it inevitably starts friction. The man and woman who have ruled their own home for forty years can never play second fiddle in anybody else's home, especially their children's.

They feel they have a perfect right to boss Mary's home, or John's home, too, and Mary's husband and John's wife resent this, and Mary and Tom and John and Susan have words about it that lead to the divorce courts oftener than to any other road, as statistics amply show.

Then there is the never-ending strife between father or mother and the children, the bitter conflict between the old generation and the new. The traditional picture of grandfather or grandmother showed a placid and serene old man or woman with their grandchildren sitting reverently at their feet listening to words of wisdom.

In reality the grandparents and the grandchildren are in a perpetual fight. Grandpa is always criticizing everything about the girls from their lipstick and rouge to the length of their skirts and saying that no respectable girl used rouge and showed her legs in her day and what on earth their mother is thinking about to let them run around at nights the way they do, she doesn't know, and they needn't say that she didn't warn them when they come to some bad end.

And grandpa picks on the boys about their collegiate clothes and their jazzy speech and ways and the hours they keep, and says that when he was a boy he got up and milked the cow and walked five miles in the snow to school and never spent a nickel unnecessarily and never tore around in a high-powered car and the boys answer impudently and grandpa's feelings are hurt and he complains to their father.

The result is a merry little family war that the old unintentionally precipitate. They are not to blame, because they can't help doing as they do. For they have the vanity of age and that makes all old people think that their own opinions are infallible and that wisdom will perish with them. And for another thing they can't stand by and see those they love going, as they think, to destruction without lifting a hand to try to save them.

But if the old complicate life for their children when they go to live with them, they ruin it for themselves. For when they give up their own homes, they give up their independence, they give up their identity, they give up their place in the sun. In their own homes they were rulers and could order things as they liked. In their children's home they are guests who must conform their tastes and habits to other people's.

In their old home towns they were people of importance with their own friends, but when they go to live with their children they are only Mary or John's mother or father. And they are only there on sufferance. Nothing is more pitiful than the loneliness of old people who have been uprooted from all of their associations and transplanted to some distant place where there is not one person to whom they can say "Do you remember," and who have no companionship except that of strange young people with whom they have nothing in common.

And what more terrible than the boredom of the old people who have been busy all of their lives and who suddenly find themselves with nothing to do! How long the days that are not filled with useful labor! How empty the hands with no tasks to perform any more!

And how they miss their old surroundings, the old home, the shabby old furniture that was not furniture to them, but memories! The bed in which their babies were born and in which their loved ones died. The chair where they rocked their babies to sleep. These are more to them than the period furniture in John or Mary's fine house.

So I think old people are wise if they stay in their old homes, in their old environment, among their old friends, with their old furniture, instead of going to live with their children. They are not so lonely as they are among strangers. They are better off to work a little too hard than not to work at all. And they have their independence—that is the one great necessity to happiness to us all, old and young.

DOROTHY DIX.

Household Hints

By Roberts Lee

When Sewing Bind a small piece of adhesive plaster on the finger to protect it from being pricked when sewing or embroidering.

Ants To get rid of ants scrub the shelves and drawers with strong carbolic soap.

Tough Fowls If tough fowls are steamed for several hours it will make them tender.

Motoring With Mary

By MARY JANE MOORE Every revolution of the engine grinds out wisdom for the woman who drives a car, one of the has discovered.

DRIVING AS A GAME

"How slowly will this car run?" The question in itself was startling, but coming from a neighbor lad of 18 who, as I watched him drive past the house seemed interested only in speed, it seemed doubly out of the ordinary.

"How slow can you make it go in high speed without having it buck all over the road?" he elaborated the question while I was trying to recover myself.

"I don't know," I admitted, "I never tried. Whatever made you think of that question?"

"Oh, it's a game we're all playing these days. That's the trouble with you older people—you think what you call the 'younger generation' is interested only in seeing how fast things will go."

"Don't lecture me," I cut in, "as a matter of fact, I'm one of the younger generation's most staunch defenders. Let's get on with this game. I'd like to learn it."

"Well, it's simple enough," remarked my instructor. "All you have to do is see how slow the car will run in high gear and then see if you can pick it up to a speed of about 20 miles an hour without making it jerk or buck."

And then, by way of an afterthought— "It shows you whether you're a bum driver or not."

With that thought running around my head, I tried to see how slowly I could travel in high gear. I took my foot off the accelerator, got my left foot on the clutch pedal and let the car come down to a lower speed.

We still were traveling along about 12 miles an hour when my companion broke out with— "That's all wrong."

"What's all wrong?" I asked petulantly. "I haven't even started yet."

"Sure you have. We're down to 12 miles an hour and you are still out in the middle of the road. When you slow down you ought to be near the curb. That guy behind you doesn't want to play the same game. He's in a hurry."

If somewhat vigorously spoken, the words were true and they reflected the fact that some of these young drivers actually do more thinking than their elders. So, learning this rule, I pulled over to the curb and started again.

"You're still wrong," he commented. This time, I was actually irritated.

"What's wrong this time?" I asked. "Well, you're riding the clutch. That means you're afraid and are ready to throw out the clutch and shift gears and we're still moving along at 10 miles an hour. This car'll pull along all right at a lot lower speed but you see you've never really tried it."

Dutifully, I took my foot away from the clutch and let the car come down to three miles an hour. I could not get over the idea, though, that I would need to shift gears, so kept the foot moving nervously in the direction of the clutch. We had gone but a short distance at this walking speed when I automatically shifted into second gear and started to pick up speed.

"Why didn't you pick up again in high?" I was asked.

"I didn't want to slip the clutch," I replied.

"You wouldn't have had to if you'd been as good a driver as you ought to be and could be with a little practice. It really makes you a good driver, this business of learning to handle the controls delicately. Besides, it really is a lot of fun, but most people make driving a business."

I'm practicing in my spare moments, to show that I agree.

Etiquette

By Roberts Lee

Q. To what place does the bridegroom have the bride's bouquet sent? A. To the bride's house.

Q. Should a woman personally present a letter of introduction? A. No. Only a man has this privilege.

Q. At tea what article accompanies the lemon? A. The lemon fork.

City officials of Inverness, Scotland, have voted to wear official robes of rich scarlet superfine cloth, with mock ermine capelet, and cocked hats.

A musical opera on the "Thema Regium" of Frederick the Great by Bach was recently given in Mombijou Castle, Berlin.

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Apple Crop Prospects Rosy

AUGUSTA, Me., June 13 — A light crop of Baldwins, but unusually good crops of McIntosh, Wealthy and other Fall varieties of apples were indicated by the blossoms this year, Fred C. Sturtevant, of the state department of Agriculture reports.

Commenting on the apple situation, Sturtevant said:

"The orchardists are doing more spraying than usual as a result of the pomological meetings last summer. There is more interest among the orchardists, especially in Androscoggin and Oxford counties, in the setting out of young trees. This also is noticeable in York County, which is the past three or four years to awaken them.

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