Mr. and Mrs. Sallie



—being the Confessions of a new wife .... by Gladys Baker

Illustrated by Paul Robinson

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SALLIE'S FATHER TAKES HER IN HAND

"But Father, it's so exciting having the admiration of men and Curtiss is always indifferent—now that he's so absorbed in his work."

"What's the matter, Father? Has anything happened? You haven't heard from Curtiss, have you?" I questioned, with swift alarm at his unexpected appearanc at the dance.

"Nothing has happened, Sallie," he replied in a calm and reassuring voice, "but I want you to do something for me."

"Of course I will. What is it Daddy-dear?"

"Would you mind coming home with me now instead of later with Ted? I've been doing a lot of thinking since our little chat tonight and I wanted to talk to you—that's all. You see, it's nothing startling and besides," he attempted a smile, "I was invited to the dance."

"All right, Dad, I'll meet you in a jiffy," I flung over my shoulder as I hurried towards the stairs, "tell Ted we're going, if you can find him. He's probably parked with some pretty girl a mile from the place!"

Reaching home we made our way to my father's study which was a privilege extended only on occasions of state. He sat in an arm chair beside his desk while I comfortably ensconsed myself on the sofa, and thoughtfully studied the smoke-rings of my cigarette.

"First of all, I want you to realize that I'm not preaching or attempting a lecture, my dear," he began, "it's just that I've been thinking about you constantly since you've been home and I believe the time has come for me to tell you some fundamental truths that can only be acquired by a familiar and lengthy acquaintance with Life."

I caught the seriousness of his thought and realized that only an important message would have made him so grave. I at once became a part of his mood.

"I'm going to do something I've seldom done. I'm going to criticize your judgment in leaving Curtiss at a time when he needs your cooperation most. Shirking your duty (no matter how unpleasant it may be) will never lead to happiness," he paused for a nod of understanding, which I gave. Then he continued, in a voice unspeakably kind: "then too, Sallie, I can't agree with you about going around unchaperoned with Ted. You wouldn't want Curtiss to have engagements with girls."

"Curtiss wouldn't look at another girl. I've never thought of such a thing and besides he doesn't care about parties and-er-good times."

"Yes, I know your argument, Bambina, I've heard all you modern wives on the subject before, but I don't think it's quite fair and besides Ted is a pretty bad sort; the men at the club call him the 'young matron's delight.'."

I smiled.

"He did say, that a girl wasn't even interesting until she was married—to some other chap."

"Just what I thought," exclaimed Dad, "I see you understand what I mean and I'm glad of that."

"Another thing, daughter, I don't think you should make an exhibition of yourself doing the Charleston and being the center of attention like a cheap 'Garden of Allah' dancer under a tent. All they need at the Country Club for more realism, is some sawdust and a squeeky flute. In spite of their tuxedoes the men who form the audience are the same and make the same significant remarks. Now it's not quite as undignified for a debutante (though it's deplorable enough) but for a married woman it is unquestionably poor taste."

"A married woman," I flashed back back at him, "I'm beginning to hate that expression. Does one have to wear shackles just because of a brief ceremony in which she promises to love, honor and, sometimes, obey? I'll tell you something, Father, a girl doesn't change one iota just because she's a wife. At heart she's just the same. The only ones who do are they who are brow-beaten and bulldozed into it by overbearing husbands who would make her over into some conventional type—she's one of his possessions and he's going to prove it by nature, I tell you, and I haven't changed. I'm the same Sallie underneath. I love Curtiss and admire him more than anyone I know (next to you) but I still get a kick out of being popular and wearing pretty clothes and having other men—yes, other men tell me that I'm attractive and a good dancer and have them notice my new frocks. Shocking? Well, I can't help it, Dad, and it's true with every girl only she's been subdued so long that she's inhibited and doesn't dare admit it, even to herself."

Silence in the room.

"I'm not going to do anything terrible," I added, noting the look of uncertainty and doubt that had swept over his face, "and I'm going to be true to Curtiss, not on account of any question of morality but because I love him, you see!"

"I knew you expect to be, Sallie, and I have all the confidence in you in the world but, you're going to have a hard time doing it, I'm afraid."

He relighted his pipe.

"Women have changed radically in the last few years but they haven't brought the men along with them all the way. It doesn't make any difference how the modern woman figures—the reaction of men to her re-organized code—men are innately crude and unless they are held down by old-fashioned conventionality they'll revert to type. It's for that reason I would warn you, my dear."

He got up, walked over to the window and stood lost in reverie for what seemed to me, a long, long time.

I called to him softly.

He reseated himself in his chair.

"There's another thing. I want to caution you against yourself."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"Just this, that if you allow yourself to be susceptible to flattery you'll let the bars down, in spite of yourself, Bambina, and before you realize it you'll be taking some man besides Curtiss into your life."

I shook my head in a positive manner as I rejected the thought.

"At first you'll only encourage him for the sake of diversion and because you want a bit of colour in the regular hum-drum of the day,—then, before you know it, this man will have taken first place in your thoughts, his compliments, his pretty sayings, his entertaining manner, and a thousand little courtesies that all husbands are, unfortunately, prone to neglect."

My thoughts flew through space. Father was right. Many, many times since we had been in Paris I had thought of Barrington Pierce and there had been times when Curtiss and I had misunderstandings, that I longed for the companionship of the young musician. His worshipful attitude would have given me confidence in myself and a fresh appreciation for the beautiful things of Life.

"But Father, it's so exciting having the admiration of men. Curtiss is always indifferent—now that he's so absorbed in his work."

"Don't, Sallie, don't," and a low moan escaped from my father who was always so composed.

He bowed his head in his hands but only for a moments space. It was the first time I had glimpsed behind those doors of his unbreakable poise.

"That's just what she said. Time after time I've heard her speak those very same words but I didn't listen, until it was too late."

"Who, Father?"

After another moment of silent grief he continued, at the same time making a desperate effort at self-control.

"I was speaking of your mother," he said. "I've never talked with you about her before. But I thought tonight after you'd gone out with Ted, that I'd better tell you all. You're so much alike, in a way it's like your mother was still alive. Your mannerisms, your reasoning, which, though inconsistent, is meant to be fair, your conquerable magnetism, your quick, bubbling laughter, and even in the way you suddenly turn your head."

He rose impulsively and went to an old Renaissance chest of which, as a child, I had stood in awe. I knew that it held the things of this earth which my father cherished most.

He came back to me and offered me a crimson velvet box which he held in the palm of his hand.

(To be continued next week.)



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BURRSVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs were given a miscellaneous shower on Thursday eve, April 15th, at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hobbs, near town.

Mrs. Ida Harmony who has been spending several weeks in Philadelphia has returned home.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Walters spent Sunday in Greensboro.

Mr. Wilbur Welch, of near here, is a patient in Milford Hospital.

Mrs. John Lee Chance returned to Cambridge Hospital for treatment last Saturday.

Mrs. Lewis Slaughter and daughter, Mrs. Pearl Baynard, were guests of Talbot County relatives recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Anstine Stafford and children, William nad Virginia, were guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Stafford in Easton.

The congregations at the Holiness Church are increasing. Mr. George Culver, of Denton, is now pastor of this church.

Rev. A. W. Betts was greeted with a goodly number of ex-parishioners at Union M. P. Church on Sunday morning last. After three years' absence, he has again been assigned the pastorate of Caroline Circuit of the M. P. Church, at the annual conference which recently convened in Wilmington.

Mr. William Satterfield is reported seriously ill at his home here.

Mrs. John Thawley, of Crisfield, has been visiting Mr. and Mrs. John H. Thawley and Mrs. aMrgaret Sampson.

rMs. William Andrew and son, John William, of American Corner, were guests of relatives here last week.

Mrs. Jessie Bailey Lee and son and Mrs. Judson Ramsdell, of Harrington, called on friends here last Wednesday.

She—What is your object in kissing?

He—You.

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