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LOVE OR A CAREER?

By FANNIE HURST

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EVERYWHERE about her, ever since she could remember, she had heard the bright patter about economic independence of women.

It was wonderful to belong so irrefutably to a world of women which had asserted its right to venture unchallenged into certain fields of work-a-day activities hitherto reserved for the exploits of men.

If anyone had out and out asked Emanie if she were a suffragette, her reply would have been evasive, noncommital and unconsciously not quite honest.

One did not have to be so stern and uncompromising an advocate as that! Emanie did not intend to let herself get "strong minded" about it. Those were the sort of women who defeated their own cause; antagonized the men and alienated the women.

Emanie was not particularly concerned about the vote, even as a symbol to this much heralded emancipation. Women's party membership. Not much! All very well and good for those women who wanted to risk their looks and their charm and their desirability, catching trains for Washington to get bills introduced and abuses defeated. Of course some one had to do it and certain kinds of women were magnificent for the job.

Economic independence to Emanie was just a pleasant isolated fact. Forty-five dollars a week as confidential secretary to a life insurance company's vice president, who seldom came to his office more than three two-hour mornings a week, and who placed implicit confidence in his secretary's competence to cope with the honorary duties of his largely honorary position, left Emanie free to enjoy to their fullest the economic advantages of a good salary, an extraordinary amount of leisure and a pleasant apartment in which she had the time, taste and money to entertain with judgment and skill.

It was not surprising that a young woman in her position, good-looking in a brown, sleek-haired, slender and efficient sort of way, chic because she could afford to dress well, alert because she had leisure and money for lectures, books, concerts and theaters, should think twice, nay thrice, before she considered anything so drastic as marriage.

Marriage, even into conditions which bettered hers materially, was something at which to look askance. Her position was so right. So secure. So free. Even a marriage that bettered materially, was gravely liable to pitfalls.

But it so happened that the opportunity of marriage which presented itself to Emanie was not one to better her position in the worldly sense of the word.

Thomas Maugham's earnings were about the same as Emanie's, and his work in a large Middle West city would have made it impossible for Emanie to continue hers in the East. Besides, Thomas, in that curiously gentle way of his, was out-and-out about what he wanted where Emanie's activities were concerned.

All well and good for women to go out into business and careers after marriage. Thomas was the last person to have an attitude about it in general, but he wasn't going to make any bones about his attitude in particular. Let the future take care of itself. But for the first year or two or three, at least, Thomas wanted Emanie in his home—after that—well, time to talk about it.

Neither was Thomas the one to bicker about the fact of children. He wanted them and he wanted them while he and Emanie were still young enough to enjoy youth with their offspring. All in all, it looked as if Thomas' idea about the future, which he was apparently so willing to let take care of itself, was pretty well laid out.

Life in a Middle West city, as the wife of a young salesman for an automobile firm, was not the glamorous picture Emanie had drawn for herself on those occasions when she let her mind reach into the future beyond her smug present. And that salesman one who had certain reactionary views that were rather frightening.

In the abstract it could scarcely be said that the opportunity to marry Thomas Maugham was the rosy one that should have attracted her response, except for one great factor.

Emanie was in love with Thomas. He was the sort of man she could visualize with thrill, as the husband of her household, the father of her children, the dear close confident of every aspect of her life. He had qualities that in a man were precious to her. Vigor, gentleness, intelligence, and a charming laissez faire. This last, she told herself, his easy-going capacity to let tomorrow take care of itself, was what was going to stand in his way of an ultimate big material success in life. But just the same, it kept him sweet and unshrewd and gentle in the way that was so appealing to her.

For three months Emanie dallied with the idea of marrying Thomas, torn between the conflicting elements of what was undoubted attraction; her practical knowledge of his shortcomings; her dread of the monotony of what a routine life would mean; and her hovering sense of the folly of throwing away her fredom and economic independence.

In the end her judgment, and what she called her common sense, and her distaste for the sordidness of the routine of comparative poverty, stacked up against what she called her school-girl romanticism, and one morning, in the Middle West city, Thomas received the letter which permanently severed their provisional engagement.

Afterward, as Emanie told herself, she realized to what extent she had hovered on the edge of folly. Once the letter had been written dismissing Thomas, it seemed to her that all her good judgment, released from bondage, came flowing to hedge her in further from the folly of what she had contemplated. Once that letter was written and mailed, it seemed incredible to Emanie that she had ever even hovered on the edge of indecision.

Three months later, her salary was increased thirty-three and one-third per cent, and at the end of two years her photograph had appeared in a popular magazine as one of the ten highest-salaried women in the country.

She has a three-story house now, on one of the smart East side streets of the city, which she shares with a woman friend who is almost equally successful in another field of endeavor. Their joint Sunday evening at homes are among the most popular in an exclusive and sophisticated set of professional and social men and women. At forty, Emanie is chic, wordly wise, traveled, successful and filled with the divers interests of a demanding and complex business life, a busy social whirl, good clothes, good food, and even better business prospects.

She and her woman friend, however, plan to retire one of these days and take a hunting trip into East Africa that will consume several years.

Every so often, on one of her business trips across country, Emanie has occasion to stop in Tom Maugham's city and she never fails to look him up. Thomas has married, is earning about sixty dollars a week, and with his wife and two children, occupies a bungalow in a row of similar ones, on a pretty suburban street.

Eileen Maugham is forty, a little fat, blond, and his two tall gangling sons, one in hers and one in Thomas' image. Their lives apparently are as routinized as the row of bungalows in which they live, except for the fact that Eileen does not see it that way, and Thomas does not, and the universe about the unit of four in that small house on the small street is busy and happy and crammed with the petty anxieties and joys of a humdrum existence.

There is no doubt, of course, that not for one instant would Emanie change places with Eileen.

On the other hand there is even less doubt that Eileen could contemplate anything so calamitous as having to change places with Emanie.

Writer Sees No "Punch" in Rereading of Book

We see frequently the statement by some one that he has read a certain book, usually fiction, two or three times. It seems to us that anyone who can do that and find anything new must have been a negligent reader the first time. We don't care for the bony wreck of the turkey for days after Thanksgiving to be picked over in search of a few shreds we may have missed; and what we haven't missed in a story is like hearing an anecdote a second time. Where's the punch?

Music, our hearts may call for, over and over again, but literature doesn't seem to be that way, unless it is a gem of word coloring like Ruskin's or Carlyle's or Maeterlinck's, or a poem, which is another form of music—or ought to be if it is a good poem.

But why one should want to read "David Copperfield" five, six, a dozen times is to us incomprehensible; or "Tess of the D'Ubervilles;" or "Jane Eyre." We grasped their pictures, their emotion, their lessons the first time.

True, if, after many years, we have well-nigh forgotten a book, we may refresh our memory by a rereading, but while our memory would be refreshed, we fear we wouldn't be. "The mill will never grind with the water that is past."—F. H. Collier, in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Star Dust

Mayme—He ought to be popular—he's such a brilliant football player.

Gertie—Yes, only his private life is so darn colorless.



REALLY SIMPLE

A look of recognition came over the diner's face as the newcomer entered the restaurant.

"Pardon me, sir," he said. "I think we met here a fortnight ago."

The newcomer shook his head.

"Sorry," he replied politely enough, "but I do not know you."

"Maybe not—but I recognized your umbrella."

"That's impossible, sir," went on the newcomer. "A fortnight ago I hadn't an umbrella."

"No, but I had," came the other's retort.

POLITICAL WISDOM



Friend—You seem to talk quite freely for publication, without actually saying anything.

Politician—That's the art of it. A man should always avoid letting his views get mixed into his interviews.

Ready for Service

Little Boy—How many kinds of milk are there?

Father—Why, there are condensed milk, evaporated milk, sweet milk, and sour milk. Why do you ask?

Boy—I'm going to draw a cow, and I want to know how many spigots to put on.

Proof in His Success

The local reporter was interviewing a prosperous soap manufacturer.

"It is a well-known fact," he said, "that you made your fortune out of soap, Mr. Lather. Now, to what do you attribute your success?"

"To clean living, my friend—to clean living," was the reply.—Pearson's.

Always Rising

"So that distinguished looking gentleman in the tall hat is your leading citizen, eh? Has he received many degrees from the colleges?"

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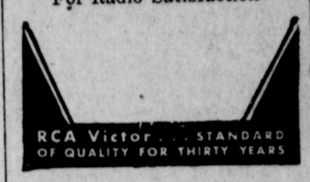
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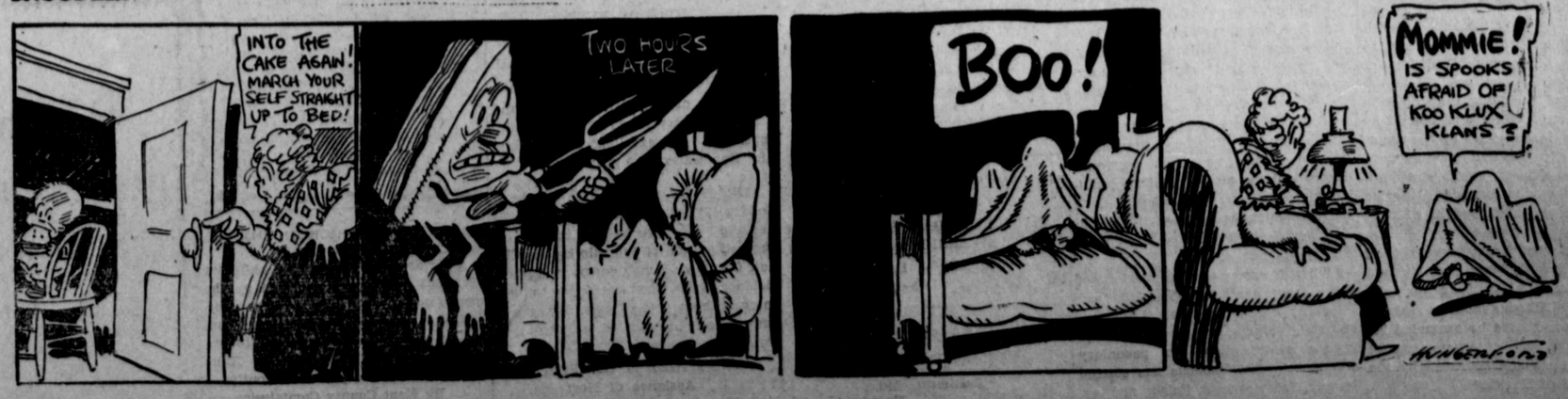
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