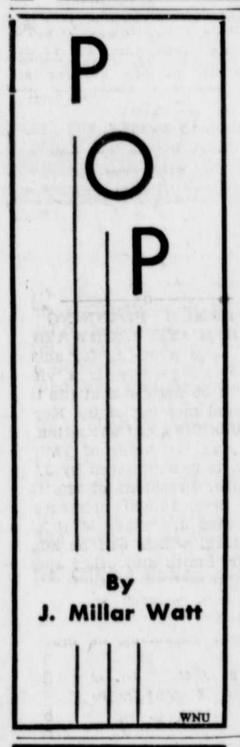
• OUR COMIC SECTION •

Events in the Lives of Little Men



HE HAS ONE

Solicitor—We are offering our new perfected talking machine on easy monthly payments.

Henry Peck—I don't need one. I'm married.

Vacation Trips

Two friends were talking. One always takes a trip in the summer and the other has to stay at home. The one who goes tried to console her friend by saying:

"Well, the nicest part of a trip is being so glad to get home. It certainly feels good to be back again."

"I suppose then you think I have a better time than you do because I get to stay home," was the unhappy reply.

1000 B. C.

"What's old Flint toting all those tablets for?"

"Says he has a new idea for a comic strip."

Kathleen Norris Says:

Are Mothers Always the Best Mothers?

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

Some wives really ARE second rate, they really are whining and stupid and unattractive, and a man might reasonably turn from them to the friend in whom he finds sympathy and gentleness and affection.

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

WOMEN are much more generous to each other than they used to be, the old "catty" femininity has gone pretty well out of fashion, and still the very hardest thing for a woman to do is to admit that another woman is more attractive than she is. You never hear a woman say: "Well, to tell you the truth, she is really nicer than I am. She has better manners and more charm. People like her better."

Of course men don't admit this of other men, either, but I am writing of women at the moment.

If a girl wins away another girl's beau, the second girl never concedes that the first girl is anything but designing and a flatterer and two-faced and unscrupulous. That is human nature; unless we may console ourselves that the vampire is a thoroughly unscrupulous creature, we have to admit that we ourselves are rather second rate.

And yet some wives really ARE second rate, they really are whining and stupid and unattractive, and a man might reasonably turn from them to the friend in whom he finds sympathy and gentleness and affection. Just because a man marries a woman at 20, when she is sweet and fresh and laughing and devoted to him and his plans, doesn't mean that he is going to adore her 14 years later, when she has lost all bloom and charm, when her voice is discontented and her housekeeping disgraceful.

Sally's Problem.

The problem of the woman I am going to call Sally Waters has something to do with this situation; Sally is 37 now, and hers is a real tragedy, sadder perhaps even than death. This is part of the letter.

"Paul and I were married when I was 23 and he two years older. I had a good job teaching and for a year I kept it. Then his anxiety for a real home with a wife in it, and a child, persuaded me to stop work, and a year later Jean was born. Money was rather scarce at the time and the baby was delicate; I had a hard year or two, when Paul, who never paid the slightest attention to the child or helped me in any way with the housework, was wasting most of his evenings with a crowd at the club, and coming home so late that he was exhausted in the mornings and was continually losing jobs.

"When Jean was two, he suddenly discovered that he adored his daughter, but by that time I was thoroughly discouraged. I was offered the job of house manager in a home for defective children at a good salary, and Paul and I were divorced. He went to live with his mother, who came twice to me afterward to help her get him a job, which I gladly did. The arrangement was that they should have Jean for two months a year, pure generosity on my part, for I could have asked different terms. Paul, without a job and with a bad record of intemperance was not in a position to question anything. At that time his father, a most exacting invalid, was living.

Daughter Wants to Leave.

"I managed my job and my child, keeping a little girl to watch her in business hours, and stealing every minute I could to be with her. She grew lovelier and lovelier, and at about six, her invalid grandfather having died, began to spend summer vacations with her grandmother and father. They fed her then, naturally, but I clothed and educated her, worried over her when she was ill.

"Now she is 10, and she wants to live with her grandmother. That is the long and the short of it. She loves her father; he is managing the small farm now, and he and her grandmother worship Jean. She wants to go to school with a little girl who lives near, she wants to help Granny cook, and she and Daddy manage everything and have so much fun.

"I admit that it is a more natural life for her than living in a sanitarium filled with defectives and psychopaths, but what about me? Have I no rights? Now that she is a fine, independent, self-reliant little human being, rather than an exacting and delicate baby, Paul wants her, of course.

A Bitter Blow.

"The thought that she wanted to go to him was so bitter to me at first that I could not conceal it from her. She cried for days, but when she finally gave in it was with the air of a martyr, and she made no secret of the fact that her interest was out at the farm. She telephoned her father every night, and nothing that I did or offered in the way of movies or new frocks interested her.

"What shall I do? Give up my child, the very light of my life, or keep her and trust that after a time she will turn to me again? We have most of our meals in the big dining-room, but I have a nice suite of three rooms, including a small kitchen where I can arrange an occasional little feast for just the two of us. We have many perquisites, rent, light, service, meals, hot water, linen, but Jean says lately that she hates the institution, the wards and the smells of the halls and elevators. Is it fair that after ignoring his responsibility for her when she most needed him, her father should have the pleasure of her company now? His mother, I will say, is a wonderfully fine woman, and I am not surprised that Jean adores Granny. Perhaps if I had had Granny's sheltered life and comfortable home I might be the same sort of woman."

Let Jean Go.

This is really a sad letter, and a hard one to answer. But I think that the answer is that Jean is the person to consider, and that her mother's best chance of winning the child's heart is to be generous now. Life with a loving father and wonderful grandmother on a farm is a child's ideal of perfect happiness, especially when it is contrasted with the bleakness and bigness of institution life. Jean probably suffers from constant association with the defective and afflicted children, and finds the coziness of her grandmother's table delightful by comparison.

So I would give her up, if I were Sally, as we all have to give up our children sooner or later, and rejoice that so pleasant and safe a haven is ready for her, in a world in which so many hundreds of children are neither safe nor happy.

Let that be the arrangement for the present, Sally. But be very sure that the future holds changes that you cannot possibly anticipate.

PERPLEXED

Consider Sally Water's problem . . . Scorned by her husband after her baby was born, Sally became discouraged and finally was divorced from Paul. Sally went to work, giving Paul and his mother the baby daughter for two months each year. Now at the age of 10, the daughter wants to live with her father and grandmother. Should Sally be obliged to give up her only child? Read Kathleen Norris' startling reply.

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