The Bee's Home Magazine Page

SILK HAT HARRY'S DIVORCE SUIT

Bunk Saw the Job and Grabbed It

Drawn for The Bee by Tad

Children the Unanswerable Argument Against Divorce

By DOROTHY DIX.

The one unanswerable argument against divorce is the child.

We may say that each of us has a right to his or her own happiness. We may say that an unworthy husband or wife forfeits whatever claim they have upon us. We may say that when we make a mistake in marriage there is no more reason we should be bound forever to it than there is why we should continue to be victims of any other error of judgment.

We may say that to be forced to live with a husband or wife whom we hate, and who brings out all that is worst in our natures, is demoralizing to our characters—that is condemns us to live in an atmosphere in which all that is beautiful and ideal in life withers and dies as if blown upon by the blast of a simoon.

This is true. There is no other such blighting influence in the world as domestic discord. However, patiently borne, it turns the very soul into an arid desert, and nobody can blame the individual who seeks to escape from this death-in-life.

There is no answer to the contention that we have a right to save ourselves from the purgatory or an unhappy marriage, except the wail of a child, weeping over the wreck of its home. That is nature's relentless reply to the sophistries of philosophy. That is duty's stern call to us to stand at our posts, whatever the cost in suffering, and fulfill the obligations we have taken upon ourselves. When we have children we have given hostages to fortune, and are no longer free to seek our own happiness. It is they who are to be considered first.

The childless may be divorced, if it seems best to them, but above the noise of warring couples with children comes the cry of the helpless little ones who are left fatherless or motherless in the breaking up of a home.

Listen to this pathetic, curious, unchildish letter that comes to me from a little girl. She writes in a little, round, schoolgirl handwriting.

"Dear Miss Dix: I am 12 years old, and I read all your articles in The Bee. Now, I want you to tell me what you think of my case. My home is about to be broken up by a woman. Of course, she is younger than my mother, but not any better looking nor one-half so good. Tell me, please, is that the way the world is going? Are there no more happy homes? My brothers and sisters and I have made up our minds that we will never get married. No one could have been more devoted than my mother has been. She has been a slave to us all, and this is what she gets. Please answer me soon. What do you think of a thief who robs little children of their father?

"A HEARTBROKEN LITTLE GIRL."

Poor little girl, who at 12 years has seen all of the gold rubbed off of Cupid's wings, and who has witnessed so many family spats that she has resolved never to get married! Poor little girl, who at 12 years judges between mother and father, and contemptuously condemns father! Poor little girl, whose childhood has been darkened by the sad and sordid knowledge of the world, who discusses affinities and broken homes with her baby sisters and brothers, and who bears on her little shoulders the burden of her parents' weakness and sin!

Doesn't the mere thought of her bring stinging tears to your eyes? And don't you feel that nothing can justify the parents in the way they are doing? Is it not the plain duty of that father and mother to keep a home together for their children and to make their children happy and give them the chance in life that only children have who are brought up in environment of decent family life?

Compared to the welfare of these little ones what is the lure of some other woman to the man? How small a matter even to the wife's jealousy and righteous indignation!

The real victims of divorce are the children, not alone because they are made half orphans and homeless by it, but because it destroys their faith in all that is good and true. How can you teach purity to a girl whose mother has the slime of the divorce courts on her garments? How can you teach honor to the boy who knows of his father's dishonor. How can you teach steadfastness to duty to children who have seen their parents turn cowardly away from a hard situation? How can the weak breed strength into the little ones?

Of course it will be said that when a father and mother cannot agree, and live in perpetual discord with each other, the children are better off with either one than with both; that no home at all is better than a home divided against itself.

To this argument one can only say that parents have no right to make such a home. No matter how deeply they may feel in their own breasts that they have gotten the wrong life partners, and that some other man and woman are their real mates, they are bound by every law of decency to hide this from their children, and to keep the doors of their skeleton closet fast locked against inquisitive little eyes. To be tempted is the lot of all. To yield to temptation is the act of the craven.

It is the paramount duty of parents to protect their children even from themselves, and for fathers and mothers to drag their children into their squabbles is as bad as if they threw the helpless little creatures into the midst of a battle where they would be trampled upon and mangled. For a father and mother to let their children become cognizant of their amours is worse than taking them into a leprosy camp. It defiles the little minds beyond the power of cleansing.

As for the woman who would lend herself to the breaking up of a home in which there are children, the curse of God is upon her. Truly it were better for her that she should tie a milstone about her neck and cast herself into the sea than that she should offend one of these little ones.

The Manicure Lady

"I have just came back from a trip to the country," said the Manicure Lady. "Goodness knows, George, I hated to leave it. Them country people always makes you feel so at home. And think of all them little fishes in the little brooks, and the flora fauna in the trees, George."

"I'll bet you don't know what flora fauna is, kiddo," said the skeptical Head Barber.

"It is some kind of a treetoad, George," replied the Manicure Lady. "They are the funniest little things you ever seen. The landlord's son found one for me and brother Wilfred. It was green, so they couldn't see it among the leaves if they wanted to shoot it. The landlord's son was never in the city, George, and ain't smart like us folks, but he was awful kind. He showed me and Wilfred all over the place. One of the things he showed us was a cunning little wild animal called a wampus. He said that it always lived on a side hill on account of the fact, George, that its two right legs was shorter than its two left legs. And he explained that it was all the time on the right of the hill, and that it always had to walk straight ahead. He said it couldn't turn around, so it kept walking.

"Did he tell you all that?" inquired the grinning Head Barber.

"Certainly he did, George, and I don't see nothing for you to be grinning about, either. If one of them simple country lads wants to be nice to city folks that has had more chances than him, and more education, I don't think it is none of your business to make fun of him.

"Another thing he showed me and Wilfred was a mineral spring. He said that in the winter the water in it tasted like hot whisky, and that in the spring it turned to sulphur and molasses. Ain't it grand, the ways that nature has of taking care of them innocent people up there? You see, George, they don't get a chance to see many papers, so they can't read health hints and beauty hints like the one of which I was telling you of. What in the world are you grinning about? Anybody would think you was as simple as the little fellow that showed us around up there."

"I don't blame him for grinning," declared the Head Barber. "He was stringing you."

"You're dippy!" exclaimed the Manicure Lady. "Imagine anybody from a small town stringing a city girl."

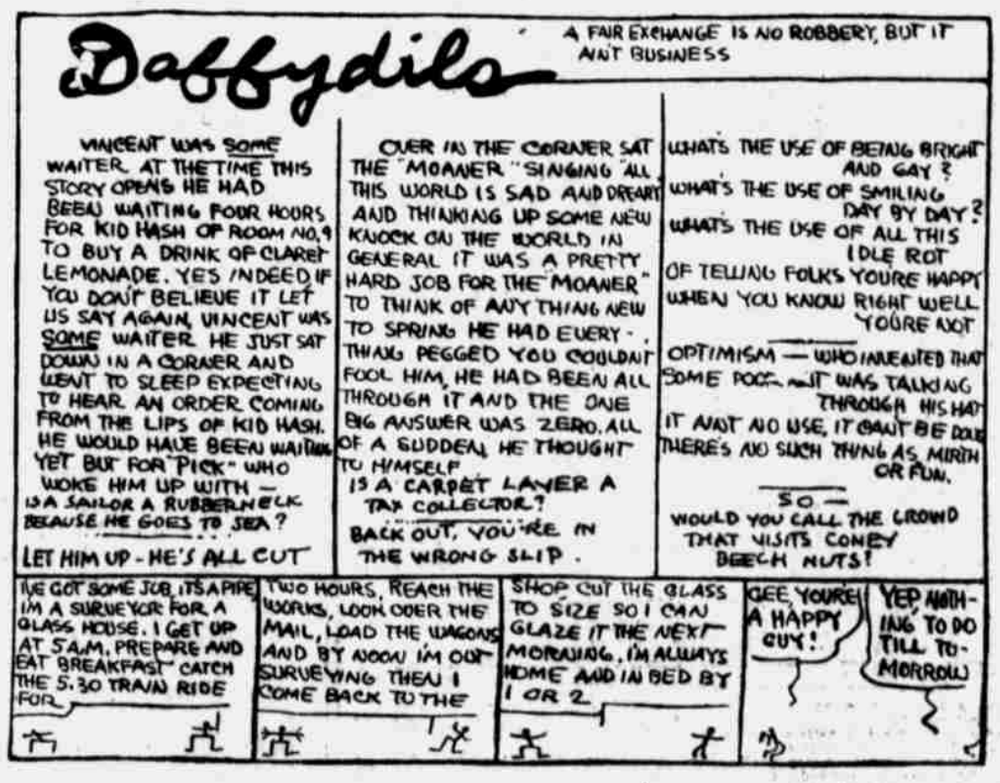
SHE GOT IT ALL BACK.

"Yes; she quarrelled with Jack and returned all his presents."

"And he hers?"

"Every one of them. Why, he even went so far as to send her half a dozen boxes of face powder with a note explaining that since he first met her he must have taken that much home on his coat."—Boston Transcript.

Let Him Up! -:- -:- By Tad



'Tis a Hard Life

By HAL COFFMAN.

The Great Road Problem

By GARRETT P. SERVISS.

Picking up the magazine called Motor the other day, I became unexpectedly and deeply interested in the wonderful exposition which I found there of the present state of one of the greatest practical problems with which this great country of ours is confronted, a problem for the solution of which the motor car doing more than all the other influences combined. I advise everybody, whether owner of a car or not, to read the May number of that magazine, for it will open everybody's eyes to many things which about everybody ought to think, and concerning which everybody ought to have some knowledge.

Did you know that we have in this country 2,199,046 miles of highways—enough in aggregate length to make four continuous loops around the earth and the moon—and that, although this is more than twice the length of all the highways in crowded Europe, only 100,000 miles of these highways are improved—i. e. graded, drained and surfaced with hard material—while practically all the European roads are thus improved?

And did you also know that most of the improved roads that we do possess have been made in consequence of the demands of the users of motor cars and motor trucks? The benefit accrues to all—to every user of the roads, whether for walking, driving for pleasure, or carrying products to market—but the impulse producing the improvement comes, almost entirely, from the urging of those who ride in motor cars. In helping themselves they are helping all others.

There is nothing that strikes the visitor from Europe so unpleasantly as soon as he ventures beyond the neighborhood of our great cities as the abominable condition of the majority of the country roads. Their lack of everything which he has been taught to regard as indispensable in a highway frequently makes him jump to the conclusion that after all this marvelous nation is but half civilized.

Such a conclusion is, of course, unjustified, and yet one can understand how it is reached. The visitor does not reflect upon the fact that we, even without vertiginous rapidity of execution, have not yet had time enough to reform the face of the land. The United States has had to begin at the beginning. We never had a line of imperial Caesars at work for a thousand years, or a Napoleon leading conquering armies to give us a great framework of solid highways to start with. We have had to lay all the foundations ourselves.

The coming of the motor car has been for a greater stimulus to the construction of lasting roads than the necessities of marching armies have been in Europe, but this stimulus has been at work for only a few years, in contrast with the centuries during which the European armed power of jealous governments pushing on the work. But, now that the work has been begun here, it is going forward at an astonishing rate. A simple comparison of the annual expenditures on roads, which I borrow from Motor, will tell the story of American progress better than a page of words could do it:

The United States now expends every year on the building and maintenance of roads the sum of $142,000,000. France expends $63,000,000, Germany $66,560,000, England $80,000,000, for the same purpose. But in Europe the money is spent for maintenance—the roads are already good—while here a large per cent must be expended for preliminary construction. The United States have 40.5 yards of highway for every inhabitant. Europe, with three times the aggregate population, has only 4.9 yards for every inhabitant. But the European roads are all good, though they vary in quality, while only seven per cent of our roads are good.

But read what is being done in all parts of our country, wherever the motor car is employed. Read of the accounts of the progress of the movement for "better roads in Dixieland." Read of what has been done, and is being done, in the middle west and along the wonderful Pacific coast. Look at some of the pictures of these roads, which do not stop for mountains or glaciers, or any natural obstacle, and you will quickly be convinced that we are at the beginning of a revolution in road-making which will place us at the forefront.

This is a work in which every citizen should aid with all his force and influence. It is as important—that all our roads should be brought up at least to the European standard as it is to the simple pleasure seeker. In fact, this work is not being done for the pleasure seeker, but for the whole people, and it is a case in which the instinct of pleasure seeking admirably serves the needs of the work-a-day world. We may thank our stars that we have not had a Napoleon, but have had the motor car to convince us of the necessity of good roads.

New Giant Sun in Gemini

By EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN.

A cablegram sent beneath the sea from Kiel, Germany, to the Harvard college observatory, Cambridge, Mass., announced the discovery of a new star in Gemini. This is the zodiacal constellation the Twins. But every star is a huge sun like our own star—the sun. But think well of these facts. The new sun was discovered by Astronomer Enebo in Europe on March 12. On March 10 two photographs of the same space were taken at the Harvard college observatory, and on the 11th two more plates were secured. When the telegram arrived these four negatives were at once examined, but no trace of a star was visible there, although eleventh magnitude stars are plainly visible all around. These stars are very faint; but on the next night—that of the 12th—the new star of the fifth magnitude was distinctly seen by Enebo. And the discovery made by Observer Enebo was confirmed by new photographs at Harvard. Fifth magnitude stars on clear, dark nights can be seen without optical aid, the sixth magnitude being the limit of visibility without lenses. Every star is a colossal sun, no matter what its intensity of light as seen from the earth may be; even down to the limit of power of celestial photography—the eighteenth magnitude. Magnitude here does not mean the sizes of the stars, of which very little is known. The dimensions of our star, the sun, are known with great accuracy, being 109¾ times the diameter and 1,310,000 the volume of our home—the earth.

The new star in Gemini is the second to be discovered in that constellation. The new sun may have exploded and liberated huge volumes of pent-up gases, two seventh or eighth or tenth magnitude suns may have collided; or a large, dark body may have made sudden impact on a hot sun, or two dark bodies may have been in head-on collision—we do not know which. The new sun in Perseus was watched in powerful talespectroscopes until it vanished in this gas, expanded over a wide area in space.

All of the instruments available will be turned on the new sun in Gemini. If the new sun was surrounded by worlds like the earth—all inhabited—they, the people, soon expired.

The term "new sun" means new to astronomers on our minute world—the earth. Its age may be hundreds of millions of years. And, like our sun, it may have illuminated eight worlds, and supplied heat and light in many homes of many trillion inhabitants. Suppose this sun that suddenly appeared between the 10th and 12th of March, 1912, is 1,000,000 times more distant than our sun—a very reasonable supposition—then light traveling with the known specific speed of 186,330 miles during one second of time has been almost sixteen years on the way to our earth. Then the outburst occurred sixteen years ago.

If 5,000,000 times farther away than the sun—also a very reasonable estimate—then the event happened eighty years ago.

A QUESTION IN SCIENCE

Question—Please tell us why there is no rain during the summer in southern California?

Answer—Only one reason, and that is because water vapor always suspended with greatly varying quantity does not condense. This is self-evident. And the reason why it does not condense over the area of southern California is on account of the Sierra Madre range of mountains. They are made of stone, a good substance to retain heat. Up here I have noticed heat in the rocky peak until 1 a. m. that had been stored during the hot days in summer. Air cannot cool sufficiently to allow its water vapor to condense into liquid drops. Heated air also rising to the summits from the Mojave desert is another reason.