

# Listen, World!



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
ELSIE ROBINSON

## THIS TALK IS ABOUT PARENTS

There are Sinners—and Sinners. There are the obvious crooks that the law imprisons and the obvious crooks that it doesn't imprison. But today I'm going to speak of a class of Sinners who have hitherto been exempt from even the suspicion of Crime. I refer to Parents.

Yes, I observe your start of horror. Nevertheless I persist. No sinner in all the world is more harmful than the Parent, when he is a sinner. And most Parents are sinners—although they do not dream of the fact.

And now I can see you settling contentedly in your armchair as you read, wondering which one of your neighbors I am now about to "show up." Do not be so comfortable, my friend. It may be that I am about to show you up. The sins of parents are not always blatant and vicious. Not by beatings, nor ignorance, nor fanaticism are the worst parental sins wrought—but in the name of love. The very foundation of your "rights and duty as a parent"—the belief that the child is yours and that you must train him in the way he should go, is evil.

The child is not yours. He belongs to himself and God. You have no right, or duty, to mold his soul or shape his career. His soul's integrity should be as sacred, as inviolable, as the soul of an utter stranger. He is a stranger to you. For he must take up life where you have left it off. He must succeed where you have failed. He must be wiser and stronger and better than you. He will be all of these things if you let him grow as Nature intended. Your only duty is to be a Comrade—to show him what of life you may—to be loving and charitable and good-natured when he takes joys which are not joys to you and endures pains you would have spared him. He is his own.

You can only give first aid. And now let's come down to cases—to you in your comfortable chair and your kiddie out in the backyard eating the cake you told him not to touch.

In the first place, what is a Child. A Child is the Next Step in the Human Stairway.

That sounds simple but what a revolution would be caused if we really acted as if we believed it! George

Bernard Shaw, in his remarkable essay on "Parents and Children," says that the child is "a fresh attempt to produce the just man made perfect—that is, to make humanity divine." Do we try to make that bit of humanity divine? We may say we do, but the chances are we try to make him like Uncle Amos or Grandpa or our own selves. Do we treat him as someone capable of far more interesting and advanced life than ourselves? We do not. From the day that he is born, we consider it our duty, our Duty—to try to mold him in the form of our individual conception of what is agreeable, efficient and proper.

That is all very well when he is a tiny mite. Someone has to do his thinking for him when he is a babe. But as soon as he begins to do his own thinking and desiring along lines alien to our thoughts and desires, do we "lay off" and let him

buy a little of his own experience? Do we treat him as an individual with an individual's right to self-expression? Generally we do not. We try to mold harder than ever. Sometime we do it with beatings and nagging. Sometimes we do it with loving and tears. Sometimes we try to cure. Sometimes we try prayers. But either course is blasphemy against the plan of God.

Love all you want, advise all you want, help all you want—but do not try to hold that child after your idea—do not take advantage of his credulity, ignorance and affection to convince him that your standard is the only one to be followed or that he must do what you say "if he loves you."

Again I quote from Shaw: "Every child has a right to its own bent. It has a right to be a Plymouth Brother though its parents be convinced atheists. It has a right to dislike its

mother or father or sister or brother or uncle or aunt if they are antipathetic to it. It has a right to find its own way and go its own way, whether that way seems wise or foolish to others, exactly as an adult has a right to privacy as to its own doings and its own affairs as much as if it were its own father."

That doesn't mean that the child has a right to make an infernal nuisance of itself in the home or outdoors. "Its own father" hasn't that right, either—although he often takes it. It doesn't mean that the child has a right to waste, or annoy, or destroy, or interrupt or lose all self-restraint. No adult has a right to do these things, either.

Society restrains the silliness and violence of the adult, but it never-theless respects the individual right to the pursuit of happiness." Parents, as representatives of society, should restrain the silliness and violence

of their children. But they should also respect the individual right to the pursuit of happiness and the weighing of right and wrong. To fail to do so is to sin against the highest law between man and God—the right of every human being to find goodness in his own way. To fail to do so is a sin.

The father who beats his child into submission is a sinner. The mother who loves and preaches and weeps her child into submission is a sinner.

The father who forces his child into want and pain and stress by his neglect and hardness is a sinner. The mother who keeps her child away from hardy contact with life by her fears and softness and coddling is a sinner.

The whole point is this. No matter how advanced you are, how progressive, how young in spirit—you belong to a day that is passing and he belongs to a day that is to come. The things that feed you physically and nourish you morally are not the things that will feed or nourish him. Justice and truth, courage, love and humor—these things are eternal, but their application varies with every generation.

You cannot equip your child with his moral weapons, for you cannot foresee the fights he will have to wage. You can only live your own life with such purity, kindness and honor that he will come to love purity, kindness and honor for themselves, and wish to use them in his own life. But what constitutes honor for him may not be what constituted honor for you—just as your idea of honor varies widely from your great grandfather's.

Lay off, parents—Lay Off! Stop your preaching and posing and pretense. Stop telling what "you did as a child." You know perfectly well you're fibbing. Stop pretending you know it all. Stop pretending that you're really "grown up." You know in your heart, if you have a heart, that you're nothing but a helpless blunderer and dreamer. You know you're one thing outside and quite another thing inside. Then play fair. Be his chum, his pal—but stop, oh stop, being a Parent!

Next Week—"This Talk is About Incompatibility."

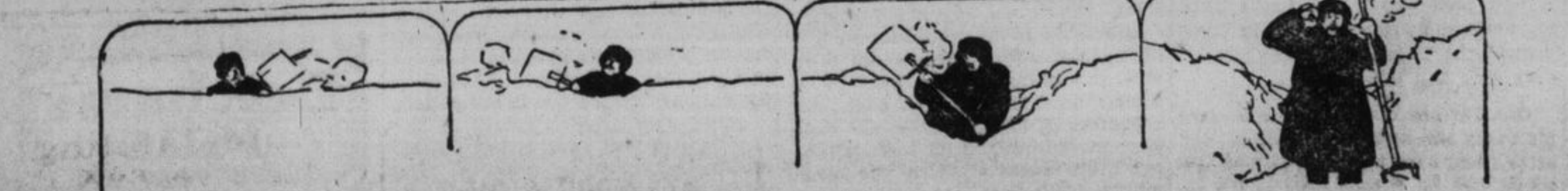
I WONDER HOW THE WORLD WOULD SEEM IF PARENTS, FAT OR THIN, WOULD ACT LIKE KINDLY HUMAN FOLKS INSTEAD OF GODS OF TIN!  
I WONDER IF YOUNG BILL WOULD NEED SOCH WOODSHED DISCIPLINE, IF MA AND DAD WERE CHUMS INSTEAD OF ANGRY GODS OF TIN!  
FOR I AM SURE THE BLACKEST LINKS IN EARTH'S SAD CHAIN OF SIN, ARE FORGED BY PARENTS WHO BELIEVE THEY'RE SACRED GODS OF TIN!



## Folks Back Home

Sketches by J. H. Striebel

## By Robert Quillen



Uncle Gus. Uncle Gus sat by the stove, "adly polishing a cow horn. "I ain't got nothin' to call the dogs with," he complained bitterly, "on account o' me bein' a good feller. Last October Jim Barnes come over to borrow my setter to go bird huntin', an' I let 'im have her. He put a load o' shot in her 'fore' night. He was pow'ful sorry, but he didn't say nothin' 'bout payin' fo' her. An' then last week he come wantin' to borrow my horn, him an' the boys bein' a mind to go 'possum huntin'. I knowed I wa'n't never goin' to see the horn no mo.' an' an' sure enough he dropped it in the woods an' come back full o' grief an' explanations.



"I've knowed a sight o' chronic borrowers in my time, an' I ain't ever knowed one what could be trusted with nothin'. If they wa'n't shiftless an' sorry, they'd have things o' the own; an' bein' shiftless, it ain't reasonable to expect 'em to take care o' things they borrow any mo' than they does the' own."

"It ain't kindness o' heart what makes me lend 'em things; it's just because I ain't got back-bone enough to oose 'em out an' send 'em packin'. An' me bein' soft-hearted that way, I'd a sight rather have the toth than live next to a feller what's got the borrowin' habit. I sho' would."

lines and possessed a flivver and wore a lodge emblem and thought very well of himself. And of the first he said: "Poor gink! How can he be satisfied as he is?"

A third man appeared. He knew nothing of international politics or psychology, but he used the right fork at the right time, bathed daily, read the best sellers and possessed a dress suit and thought very well of himself. He saw the second man and

said: "Poor gink! Satisfied in his ignorance."

A fourth man appeared—a man who knew history, the arts, science and polite manners. He could speak ten languages and could awe a butler. He observed the third man and said: "Poor gink! He probably doesn't realize how ignorant he is."

And the gods on Olympus observed the fourth man and sighed. "Poor gink!" they muttered. "Poor ignor-

ant! And yet the fool is content in his ignorance."

Balances. Nature's system is an admirable system of checks and balances. If she provides an appetite, she provides the commodity wherewith the appetite may be gratified. And by reason of her nice economy, the strong that prey upon the weak breed but slowly, while the weak that are preyed upon keep their species alive by reason of their remarkable fecundity.

This nice balance of need and supply obtains also in the realm of morality. Some men are morally clean for the same reason that they are addicted to the bath habit: because they have a natural or acquired aversion to dirt. These have little capacity for conscious wrong-doing, and therefore have little capacity for repentance. If they do wrong, pride comes at once to the rescue with a sophistry to excuse them, and they suffer no loss of self-respect.

Men of the other type—emotional men with a vast capacity for repentance and a proneness to indulge in orgies of remorse, have this capacity and this proneness because they have also a vast capacity for conscious wrong-doing and are constitutionally incapable of resisting a temptation. The rabbit's ability to run fast affords sufficient proof that it will have frequent need of nimble legs.

Willie Willis. While little Willie Willis was organizing his "Juvenile Klu Kluxers" at the cemetery, Monday night, a white mule appeared among the graves. The cemetery association thinks the fence can be repaired for sixty dollars.

To be thrown on one's own resources is to be cast in the very lap of fortune, for our faculties undergo a development and display an energy of which they were previously incapable.

He only is great who has the habits of greatness, who after performing what none in ten thousand could accomplish, passes on like Samson, and "tells neither father nor mother of it."

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### The Girl and the Butcher Boy



In one of last month's magazines there was a piece written by a romantic fellow who held that one who is incapable of jealousy is incapable of love, and that a man no longer loves his wife when he ceases to be jealous of her.

The girl across the street read the piece and determined to try the theory at the Wharton party Wednesday night and test the love of Hiram, the butcher boy.

One of Judge Ryan's boys was down from the tony seat for the party, conspicuous in tailored clothes and patent-leather hair, and the girl persuaded him to sit with her

beneath the stand lamp and held him there by wiles known only to her sex, meanwhile observing the butcher boy covertly to measure his reaction.

The experiment proved only that experiments are dangerous. She told Daughter about it next morning. "Hiram sighed lots on the way home," said she, "and my heart was touched. I pressed his arm gently and asked him what his thoughts were. And the horrid thing said: 'I was just thinkin'. Gosh, wasn't that ice cream good!'"

What male is there whose heart doesn't play second fiddle to his stomach?

### KINGSTON RETAIL MARKET PRICES

Saturday, Jan. 6. The market remained very firm during the past week, there only being a few changes here and there throughout the list. The buying is reported to be stronger again since Christmas week, and things generally are adjusting themselves after the rush of the holiday season.

It will be noted that bananas are now quoted by the pound, selling at 15 cents. Sweet potatoes retail at 10 cents per pound straight, which is an increase of 20 per cent. Butter has advanced 2 cents on the pound.

Table with market prices for various goods like Bananas, Apples, Potatoes, etc.

Table with market prices for various goods like Parsnips, Turnips, Dairy Produce, etc.

Table with market prices for various goods like Fish, Meats and Poultry, etc.

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