

ADVICE IS NIX

The citizen pushed Washington into extravagance. Only he can push Washington back into economy.

Don't try to alibi yourself by talking about "spending theorists" and radicals and bureaucrats. Begin to talk about the people who are really responsible: you and your neighbors. The federal government, if it is ruining itself on nothing else, is ruining itself on what it is

doing for the neighborhoods. Each neighborhood now says: "Every other neighborhood is getting *its*. We must get *ours*."

Some neighborhood must lead the way out of that suicidal swirl. Why not yours? Why not start Federal Economy County Committee Number One?

When such committees tell Washington to save, believe me it will.



Advice Is Nix

by SANTA ADAMS

SOME OF MY JOLLIEST childhood memories are woven about Mrs. Schmidt's pie shop, whence came the large, luscious pies which our mothers often served at dinner (sometimes, I am afraid, passing them off as their own creations) and to which every child in the neighborhood lucky enough to have a nickel hurried in quest of one of the little pastries which graced the lowest of the three scrubbed shelves.

Those pies were famous in our suburb — and with reason. Their outsides were generously shortened with fresh butter from Mrs. Schmidt's Jersey cow, and their insides bulged with the juiciest of fruits, the finest homemade mincemeat, or the smoothest of custard fillings. All were uniformly delectable, which made it difficult to choose among them.

Once, wavering between huckleberry and peach, I turned to Mrs. Schmidt for help.

"Which one shall I take? I can't make up my mind."

Mrs. Schmidt's blue eyes twinkled at me from behind her fat, pink cheeks, but she disclaimed any responsibility in the decision. Said she: "Advice is nix. Only you and Gott know how your insides feel."

As I walked home, munching my pie, I felt that Mrs. Schmidt was entirely right. Surely nothing else could have hit the spot quite as that huckleberry filling did; and I was glad that Mrs. Schmidt had not suggested the peach, because I should then have been in politeness bound to take it. I decided that advice was a silly thing and that thenceforward I should neither ask nor give any.

I was only eight then, but the years since have served but to strengthen my opinion as to the utter worthlessness of advice.

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Some observant soul has remarked that the world is made up of people who lift and people who lean. From my own experience I may add that, if you don't lean, somebody is going to try to lean on you. Moreover, you'll occasionally meet up with a husky individual who really wants to be a lifter, and he — or, much more often, she — will be angry and resentful if you don't jump at an invitation to lean. It's well-nigh impossible to make people understand that there's a middle-of-the-road attitude — that one can desire merely to mind one's own business unmolested, neither giving nor taking advice.

SMOOTH SAILING

I SUPPOSE it was my resentment of unsought advice which brought me the reputation, while I was yet a small girl, of being "strong-minded." As I grew up, that reputation stuck and gave a lot of people the erroneous idea that I was born a lifter. Other girls flocked to me for advice, and so many love affairs were spread out before me by the sisterhood of fluttering hearts while I was still in my teens that I came to think the whole thing rather silly and decided I'd probably never fall in love myself.

But when I was nineteen and visiting in the North, I did fall in love — and a few weeks later eloped to New York, and was married.

My family never entirely forgave me for marrying a man whom they had not met; and I didn't like to hurt their feelings by explaining why I hadn't brought him home for a visit. It was simply that I didn't want their advice. God and I knew how my insides felt, and any outside opinions would have been intrusions, which I might have resented always. I knew that, when I was safely married, the members of my family would loyally keep adverse criticism to themselves.

It was not that I could see anything to criticize in my beloved, of course. But then, I'd also thought my sister's favorite young man a most presentable and satisfactory suitor, yet well remembered the deluge of comment and advice which descended on Helen's unsuspecting head when she blushing announced her engagement. Everything concerning George, from his Irish grandfather to his own rather large nose and the way he parted his hair, came under minute discussion and formed a basis for

the torrent of advice which engulfed her. I wondered pityingly how Helen could possibly feel any romantic stirrings after having heard George so thoroughly dissected.

Well, I didn't want any of that and I side-stepped it by postponing direct contact with my family until I had been married for several years, had two children, and was obviously beyond all benefit of my relatives' counsel. The fact that my husband enjoyed a much larger income than did any member of my family was a great help. There's something about the possession of money which wards off gratuitous advice, just as its lack serves to bring down unasked counsel in an avalanche. Believe me, I speak from wide experience on both sides of the financial fence.

During the twelve years of my happy married life, nobody bothered me with advice. Nor was I annoyed with leaners who sought it. I moved in a circle where comfortable incomes prevailed, and the people I knew well were mostly married couples who met in groups for purposes of entertainment and seldom mentioned their more intimate thoughts and problems to each other. Occasionally I found myself wondering whether in all that gay crowd Roger and I had any real friends; but the thought didn't worry me very much, because, after all, we had each other and the children, who now numbered three; we had youth and health and ample means. I felt that these things were enough, knew they were far more than the majority of people could claim as their own.

ON HER OWN

THEN A SERIES of swift tragedies deprived me of my husband, our savings, our home.

Nothing remained to me but the three children, and I was not long in realizing that in the opinion of the world the children had changed, in the twinkling of an eye, from three shining assets to three heavy liabilities. People no longer said, admiringly, "You have such lovely children!" Now they sought me out to offer condolences on my motherhood — "and three children on your hands — how terrible!"

Advice began to rain down in a flood which made the deluge of Noah's time seem a light dew by comparison — advice and old clothes.

Winter was approaching, and I was wondering, along with my other worries, whence

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would come the warm apparel which my youngsters needed for the cold weather of our Northern climate. About this time my erstwhile friends began dropping in with bundles of their castoff summer things — nothing wearable, you understand; anything good they'd put by for possible use next year. But whatever was too stained or worn to be saved for themselves they brought along and dumped on me with the self-righteous air of having done something noble (first, of course, having cut off all buttons, buckles, etc.).

But the old clothes were easier to bear than the advice. I could — and did — simply make a bonfire of the smelly old garments and then forget about them. The advice was harder to dispose of, because there was so much more of it. It came by word of mouth, by telephone, and by mail. It came from "friends" of long standing and from people whom I could scarcely recall having met. *And all of it was absurd.* I've yet to hear of advice which isn't.

A woman of about my own age, a writer of popular fiction, said quite calmly: "The only sensible thing for you to do now is to slip out and leave these children for others to bring up. By yourself, you have a chance to yet make something of your life; but trying to support three children would simply chain you to an existence of poverty and misery from which you could never hope to rise. After all, each of us has only himself in this world. All other people are transients."

"But I have no near relatives with whom to leave my children," I protested. This was true, for my parents were dead, and my sister was living in the Orient.

"Let strangers do it, then," said my caller blithely. "Youngsters don't starve in this land of the free. Somebody will look after them, you can be sure."

An acquaintance some twenty years my senior, a woman high in the government of her own State, dropped in to see me while en route to a conference in my section. "Of course you'll have to place your children at once," said she briskly, "and I've taken a couple of days off to help you attend to the matter, knowing you're probably inexperienced in the procedure. Now, are there relatives on either side who could be persuaded to take one or more of the youngsters?"

"But I have not the slightest intention of

parting with my children," I told her. "They are all I have left in the world, and I am all they have. Whatever happens, we'll stick together."

"Don't be ridiculous," she snapped. "You can't possibly keep a family together, untrained as you are in any work. And the children wouldn't thank you for depriving them of the necessities of life, I can assure you."

"They certainly wouldn't thank me for shunting them off upon unwilling relatives or for dumping them in an orphanage," I snapped back at her. And, because I was frightened in spite of the front I was putting up and because I had only four days more in which to vacate the big bare house which had once been home to Roger and the children and me and because I didn't want to go on living any longer but knew I must because of the children, I suddenly screamed at her — "Get out! I can't bear the sight of you another minute! There ought to be a bounty on nuisances like you!"

Needless to say, I never saw her again.

But the foolish advice went on, until I realized that the only way in which I could escape it was to drop out of sight of my old circle entirely. So I sold my engagement ring, the one article of value I had kept when my world crumbled, and with the proceeds I took my children to a medium-sized factory town in a nearby State, where living was cheaper and where I was reasonably certain of being a complete stranger to all the inhabitants. If people didn't know me they couldn't advise me, I thought.

This turned out to be a wise move, though I reached my destination with less than a hundred dollars.

When I was no longer obliged to combat the silly advice of my friends or listen to their lugubrious predictions of failure ("Remember, you've absolutely no business experience, my dear!"), I found the energy to plan a campaign which resulted in a job. True, it wasn't much of a job but it did provide the bare necessities and enabled me to keep my children together. That was all I could hope for, because it was true that I had no business experience nor even the slightest business aptitude. I did, however, have one small natural talent and with this I have been able to eke out our otherwise scant living and even to provide a few of the luxuries while the children have

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been growing up. The fact that such extra income is undependable — sometimes dribbles in a few dollars at a time, sometimes drops into our laps in quite a respectable lump — only adds to its glamour.

FOLLOWING YOUR 'INSIDES'

ALMOST NINE YEARS have passed since I came here; but, although I vowed then that I should become intimate with no one and have kept that vow to the letter, I have not been able entirely to side-step advice. Perhaps that was too much to hope for, because a widow — and particularly a poor widow with children — strikes the majority of people as being the ideal receptacle for advice, just as a wastebasket is the right place to dump worn pens and blotted envelopes. Gradually, though, I have become more tolerant of those who seek to advise me; I no longer have the yen to insult them. But I know that if I live to be a hundred, like my grandmother, I shall never change my opinion that, at best, advice is utterly worthless.

Right here, I know, someone is going to rise and remark that *trained* advice is something very different from the amateur variety and to remind me of the thousands of social workers who have spent years learning to deal with other peoples' problems kindly, calmly, efficiently.

I'm not forgetting these. You see, one of my various jobs during these nine years was in the local branch of a nationally recognized social agency — one which considers the giving of advice to be its pre-eminent service, though during the depression it has also dispensed financial aid. Every day that I worked there but served to strengthen my firm conviction that no advice is worth a dime. The poorest and most ignorant clients who came to that office had a better grasp of their own problems than any "worker" however well-meaning and long-trained.

And why not? Each of us is the center of his own universe, the most important human being alive. Naturally, then, each gives to his own affairs a passionate interest which no other person, never mind how kindly and conscientious, could equal even if he would.

Can you picture any social worker lying awake night after night wrestling with the troubles of Mrs. Zankowski, over beyond the railroad tracks? Hardly! She has troubles of her

own to worry over. But you can be sure that Mrs. Zankowski has lain awake plenty going over those problems. Therefore, if any real solution can be found, isn't it reasonable to suppose that it will be Mrs. Zankowski, not the social worker, who will ultimately find it?

All seven of the "visitors" in the agency where I worked felt constrained to shower advice on me, despite the fact that I was older than any of them and had lived a life of more varied experience. They naïvely believed that their training fitted them to cope with my problems more efficiently than I myself.

But I couldn't see that they were handling even their own affairs any too intelligently. Several lived beyond their means, and were constantly dunned by tradespeople; one couldn't make her husband keep any job; one had a mate who shamed her by philandering; the most recently graduated from college was very unhappy in her home life. Each could have glibly recited a corrective formula to a client in a similar predicament but could find no cure for her own.

PERILS SAFELY PASSED

I'M GLAD I'VE NEVER TAKEN advice from anyone.

It isn't that I feel I've made such a shining success of my widowhood. Indeed, I realize full well that I have not; but some measure of extenuation for my shortcomings lies in the fact that I have been like a stranger in a foreign land these past nine years, struggling against handicaps imposed by both nature and previous training. I know, however, that, had I heeded the preposterous advice showered on me, I should have been still further confused. As it is, such mistakes as I've made have been my own, and I've nobody to blame for them but myself.

Now that the children are growing up and I begin to see dawn ahead, I am more than ever thankful that I followed my own light through the darkness and did not allow myself to be persuaded from my course by the matches that well-meaning but misguided people struck for me here, there, and everywhere.

My children are all handsome, healthy, and ambitious.

They might still have been handsome, but I doubt very much whether they could have been either healthy or ambitious, had I fol-

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lowed oft repeated advice and moved to the cheapest part of the town to save rent. The pale and languid specimens of youth I observe in the slum district never fail to make my heart ache; but probably some of their parents have bank accounts, which I have not.

My children are being well educated. The eldest will graduate from college shortly; the second will soon enter dramatic school.

I was advised many times to relinquish hope of higher education for them. I was told: "You must realize that you no longer belong to your former social sphere and adapt yourself to changed conditions."

But I didn't and I'm glad of it. My course has meant hard work and added self-denial on the part of the children; but those things will be quickly forgotten.

My children have good taste and high ideals.

I was criticized many, many times, when they were younger, because I did not allow them to mingle, outside of school hours, with the children of the factory workers — preponderantly foreign — among whom they lived. I wanted them to keep the correct speech and good manners which were their birthright.

While neighbor girls in their early teens were running around at night with their adolescent boy friends, my daughters of the same age were safe at home, except on those evenings when we all attended the free classes in sculpture and painting provided by the board of education. It would have been an easy thing to let them slip down to the level of their surroundings; and, had I done so, the two elder children would by now doubtless be married to factory hands.

As it is, my eldest daughter is in a position to choose from among several worth-while admirers. In a few months more we shall all move to the city where she has gone to college, and the younger children will automatically acquire, through their sister, the kind of friends I have always wanted for them.

Best of all, there is between my children and me a tie of love so deep, so perfect, that it compensates a thousand times over for any work or worry involved in keeping the family together.

During the first hard years, when there was never the price of a movie or a soda, when we had no radio and little new reading matter, we learned to amuse ourselves by playing together in the evenings. The habit of interdependence has grown on us; we have become a very all-sufficient family, enjoying ourselves best when we are together.

My eldest daughter remarked recently: "I have a lot of fun at school, of course. But sometimes, when I'm out dancing or at a show, I think of you here at home, playing games and popping corn, and I get terribly homesick. None of the girls I know have families like mine. We have better times and care more about each other than other people."

Sometimes I wake in the night and shudder to think what our lives — the children's and mine — would have become by this time, had I followed any of the foolish advice heaped on me. And from the depths of my heart I send up grateful thanks to Mrs. Schmidt for having set me aright on the subject of counsel, long ago.

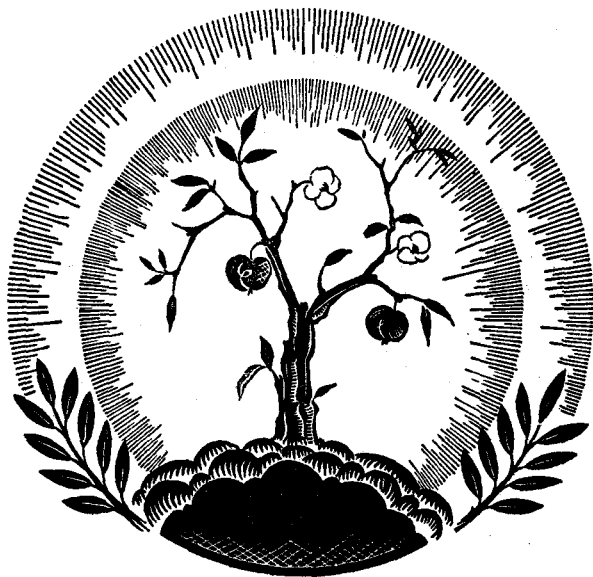
Advice is nix. I know.



Drawing by Susan Flint

The 'Ex-Insane' Revolt

by GREER WILLIAMS



WHETHER YOU DISCOVERED Dr. Sigmund Freud before or after he became a Modern Library giant, you may be surprised to learn that a revolt against his sex psychology is under way in American psychiatric clinics.

One outstanding clinic has already formally stoned him out as a witch doctor, and other mental hospitals are spitting on their hands preparatory to joining in. But the spectacular thing about the anti-Freud movement is that patients are making common cause with their physicians against the old master of psychoanalysis.

The first cry of "Down with Freud!" went up a year ago in the Psychiatric Institute at the Illinois Research and Educational Hospital of Chicago. It accompanied the announcement of the formation of a self-help association for cured patients — the world's first organization of individuals who have survived the most terrifying experience of the human mind, insanity.

It all started with the Institute's successful use of shock therapy, the first system to offer a definite cure for that morbidly fascinating and

alarmingly common disease, dementia praecox, known more exactly as schizophrenia (split mind). Schizophrenia, as well as manic-depression, belongs to the mental-disease group known as "functional" psychoses because no organic defect has been found as a cause.

Freud, however, neatly explained schizophrenia and manic-depression with the same grand theories of sex frustration he used to analyze neurotic behavior; and you and I have been inclined to believe him. Here were no ordinary diseases that could be analyzed under a microscope or in a test tube but disorders matching the majesty of the mind, full of romantic tragedy and mysticism!

This grip of psychoanalysis on popular imagination has been a chronic source of irritation to the clinical psychiatrists, the men who, unlike the disciples of Freud, work day in and out with these diseases. They feel that Freud, a neurologist, has played leapfrog with scientific method in jumping from neurosis to psychosis. Delivering philippics against Freudian fallacy was beneath their scientific dignity, however — and who were they to say that Freud was wrong? Maybe a psychoanalyst couldn't cure a schizophrenic, but neither could they.

Then Manfred Sakel of Austria came along in 1932 with insulin shock, and Ladislaus von Meduna of Hungary, in 1935, with metrazol and gave the clinical men the weapons they needed. In the three years these two drugs have been used in America, the clinicians have sent a growing number of the previously incurable back to homes and jobs with clear heads.

But — would you accept a relative who had been in an insane asylum as an *equal* again? If you were a personnel manager, would you hire a man who noted on his application for work that he had suffered from dementia praecox?

No, not very often. To say a man has been in an insane asylum is to brand him. Our reaction is instinctive.