

but she falls for every weird fad that comes along. She says she can't eat lean meat and that fats are good for her. I won't have my kids raised on nothing but pork roasts, fritters, and peanut butter. Can't eat the stuff myself. I've told her, 'You cut out serving this kind of gook, or I'll cut out your housekeeping money.' Why, if I let her get away with this, heaven knows where it would end. Never appease a woman. You can write that in your book as rule No. 1 for getting along with them. Just don't give up an inch!"

The Sprats, we may infer, were not held back by false pride, childish selfishness, or stubbornness, and they probably had some good laughs over their opposing tastes. Gaiety, we may guess, reigned more often than sour looks as they licked the platter clean. There was no small achievement.

Smoothing out difficulties with effective compromises draws on truly adult feelings. It calls for a genuine desire to find ways of working out troublesome or potentially troublesome situations.

**C**ONCERNING the right of the other person to his tastes, sometimes even his foibles and weaknesses, is the first step toward the right attitude. Only then can you seek a comfortable meeting ground. Yet some people would rather magnify their difficulties and sulk in self-imposed martyrdom than try to find a sensible solution.

"With me it's all or nothing," Clarice Vaughn said. "If Ted wants to watch baseball on TV every night, let him watch. I'll go to my mother's or to a movie by myself. He can choose between me and the Yankees, but he can't have us both. I won't sit there with the TV set blasting away, and not a word said to me until the last out of the game."

As a result of this stand, Clarice and Ted had less and less communication, fewer and fewer common interests. Ted's baseball-watching became

a central issue in a deteriorating relationship.

Clarice might have profited by listening to Carol, but she was more interested in playing the neglected wife and showing Ted up as a selfish oaf.

"I felt just as unwanted as you do, when night baseball was on TV last year," Carol Barker told Clarice. "There I was all day, cooped up with 16-month-old Jill and the baby. Come evenings, Joe was glued to the television set even before he finished dinner. I tell you, it got me down!"

"Then one night he said he'd heard nothing but talk, talk all day and he was tired, so he turned the sound off. While he was sitting there looking at the picture, I had an idea. Why couldn't he play Scrabble with me and keep one eye on the ball game? The next evening I suggested we try it. Believe it or not, it worked. Now he sees the game, and at the same time he plays double solitaire or Scrabble with me. We have real fun that way. Once in a while I forget it's my move when the bases are loaded and the batter has two strikes on him. And Joe has even become so interested in our game as to miss a double play. Why don't you and your husband try our system?"

"Not a chance," Clarice said. "If my husband doesn't want to spend his evenings with me, I'm not going to coax him. He can wait a long time before I dream up any schemes that let him have his cake and eat it, too. I have some pride, and I won't beg for his company." Clarice was inflexible.

That kind of pride builds barriers to mutual esteem and affectionate companionship achieved through intelligent, imaginative compromises such as Carol's and Joe's. One of the valuable by-products of working out differences in this way is not merely that you gain several yards by yielding a few inches, but you usually find that confidence in your husband or wife has been reinforced.

Those who are adroit in arriving at agreements

will tell you that a fundamental technique is to be clear about what you want and willing to state your side fairly and calmly. Without good-natured honesty, you cannot approach your goal of a mutually happy partnership.

Frank expression may be alarming to extremely timid or sensitive souls because it involves the risk of rebuff, but that's a risk worth taking. Silence may be more costly in the long run. Husbands and wives, especially in the early years of marriage, are not the mind readers the ultra-romantic would like to believe. Love may indeed be quite blind to what the loved one is thinking. There can be no basis for compromise unless you both put your cards on the table.

Fruitless sacrifices and snowballing confusions often can be avoided by frankly stating opinions and expressing feelings. Your true aims may be closer than you imagine. Pete and Shirley Ryan could have avoided an acutely unhappy year had each not chosen to appear noble and self-denying in an Alphonse and Gaston routine.

Shirley's 19-year-old sister Kate was left homeless when their mother died. She had a job of sorts, but she was not fully self-supporting. Pete liked to think of himself as a man who did the right thing, or what appeared to be right. He insisted that Kate live with them, but Shirley wasn't so eager to have her careless, overexuberant, flirtatious sister under her roof. She feared there would be no peace and little privacy. But if Pete thought sharing their small apartment with Kate was the only solution, how could she refuse?

From the day Kate moved in, Pete felt imposed upon, and resented her. Shirley and her sister quarreled continually. Only after an unappreciative Kate moved to the "Y," where she said she had wanted to live in the first place, did Pete and

(Continued on page 22)

## Give-and-Take Is the Key to a Happy Home.



A strict mother and an easygoing father should attempt a more uniform discipline.

A couple's idea of relaxation may differ but usually there's a way to please both.

Partners should be able to talk out mutual problems and join in working out solution.

Photos by Mickey Pallas