Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Mrs. B. U.—Marriage isn't for teen-agers.

Ginger U.—Age isn't sufficient reason to stop us.

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Mrs. B. U.—Ginger is only 16 and just because her 19-year-old boy friend has a good job she wants to get married in September instead of going back to school.

I'm trying to tell her that she and Bill can't have the least idea of what marriage is all about. She thinks that yearning and pining for each other is all that matters, and when a girl finds a boy she feels that way about, especially when the boy is making $75 a week, why wait?

I know I should stop them. I know they should go back to their studies and learn more about life and the world. But Ginger thinks she knows everything at age 16. How can I slow her up?

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Ginger U. — Suddenly my mother wants to slow me up. But when I was only 9 she used to brag about all the fellows I had. And I've been dating since I was 11.

Now I'm tired of all the silly dressing up, the boring parties, and fighting off the college kids who want to put on the wolf act. Bill is the most perfect gentleman I've ever met. I feel safe and completely at peace with the world when I'm in his arms. Why not stay there forever?

He's a high school graduate and holds a wonderful job as a garage mechanic. We can live on what he makes. And I'll finish school in the evening session. Mother should be glad I'm so lucky.

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The Council: The files of the Family Service association of America include the case of a couple who married at the same age as Ginger and Bill. A year later they were wishing each other dead. And, she pregnant, slashed her wrists—all because they had taken on adult problems while they were still, chronologically, physically and emotionally, in the adolescent stage of their lives.

After reading what we say here Ginger may insist, nevertheless that she and Bill are exceptions. Maybe she's right. Maybe hers will be one of the rare teen-age marriages which succeed. Statistics show the odds to be against her. In general, the lower the age level, the more emotionally, educationally and socially stunting the marriage proves to be.

But think, Ginger, upon what's really ahead, after the exhibition and excitement of a wedding. No more dreaming. Just reality. No maybe, and "some day." The daily imperatives of laundry, meals, dusting, scouring, marketing, plus the responsibility for keeping up Bill's belief that it was all worth it, that this was the right thing to do. Plus, possibly, responsibility for a baby. This, while your former classmates are sending for college catalogues and painting scenery for the Junior Show.

In "What About Teen-Age Marriage?"—written for her young sister—Jeanne Sakol suggests that four conditions are behind it: boredom, jealousy, loneliness and fear. If Ginger sees some truth here, we suggest that she probe some other way to relieve her condition. None of these is a good reason for marriage to Bill, nor will marriage remove them.

To Mrs. U., who wants to slow things up, all we can say is that the slowing up should have come years ago. Ginger's precocity was a joy at 9. Now at 16 it's a nightmare. Perhaps she can parry for time, get Ginger to learn to cook, to take some premarital counseling and above all, to return to school. In a year, both young people may be more amenable to plain talk on what marriage is all about.

As epilogue we cannot resist offering Ginger these lines by George Meredith. We suggest she share and discuss them will Bill: "To anchor the heart by any object ere we have half traversed the world, is youth's foolishness."

IN EXERCISE

Army Staff Sgt. Lee W. Brown, son of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Brown, 2161 Dowell rd. Grants Pass, and Army Specialist Four Anthony R. Garcia, son of Anthony J. Garcia, 937 Table Rock rd., Medford, were two of the more than 40,000 Armed Forces personnel who participated in Exercise Quick Kick, an Atlantic Command training maneuver held at Camp Lejeune, N.C., earlier this month.

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