



HE SAYS: "The Girls Never Had It So Good"

by Joseph Newton

IN ONE DAY recently, each of the following conversations took place in my office:

An executive, just transferred from another city, was bemoaning the fact that he might lose an excellent deal on a car if he didn't close it right away. When I asked why he didn't go ahead and make the deal, he looked at me incredulously.

"Without my wife seeing it?" he asked. "Nothing doing. I wouldn't even consider buying it without getting her okay first."

Another office friend was leaving early to meet an important business acquaintance who was coming through town. When I said idly, "I suppose you'll have him out to the house for dinner," he shook his head with a worried frown and answered: "No, I just couldn't ask my wife to do it tonight. It's her bridge-club night, you know."

One of the members of a luncheon group I attend begged off at the last minute. "I have to exchange some clothes for my wife," he explained. "She couldn't get downtown. Had a PTA meeting."

And when I asked another friend if he'd like to join our Thursday night poker club, he told me: "My wife doesn't approve of gambling, and it's not worth making a big fuss about. Besides, I don't know where I'd get the money on our budget. It's already bursting at the seams."

Yes, the girls have the situation well in hand; they are planted firmly in the saddle. In fact, the American housewife has never had it so good. And the sad part of it is that she doesn't appreciate it.

Today, our whole American way of life revolves around the housewife. She has become the dominant force in our society. The signs are apparent every-

where. Advertising—even of hard lines—is being directed to the women because they do most of the buying. Large corporations—on the advice of expensive public-relations consultants—are studiously cultivating executives' wives on the oft-proved theory that if the little woman isn't completely satisfied, the husband's work is bound to suffer.

Women are running for political office and commuter trains. They are flexing their delicate biceps in local civic organizations and school boards. More and more, they are handling family finances, dealing with tradesmen, disciplining the children.

In modern marriages, women insist loudly on a "partnership" and "equal rights" when what they really want is to wallow in the security of marriage while taking roundhouse swings at the habits of the men who make that security possible. It's a real cozy arrangement—for the girls. But it has some unfortunate consequences.

The other day, I had to tell my teen-age daughter flatly that she couldn't do something she wanted to do very badly. She complained bitterly until finally I had to tell her either to behave or go up to her room.

"This is a democracy, isn't it?" she said angrily. "Don't I have any rights around here?"

When I told her "Very few," I practically shocked her into speechlessness.

Today's youth have become obsessed with the idea that family life is a debating society—with every problem and decision to be weighed and discussed and finally voted on for popularity. This is a direct outgrowth of the woman's new and loudly proclaimed equality program. Everybody wants equal rights these days—including the kids.

Actually, raising children—and, to a certain extent, other aspects of family life—requires a good degree

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