

loneliness and war strain, are not the worst threat to the older relationship, but often a reaffirmation of its importance. The danger, in more mature marriages, lies not so much when the partners find a temporary new companion, as when they find that the whole marriage scheme was restricting and unrewarding, and develop a preference for reading late in bed, alone. For just as in new marriages, young people are brought up to depend upon social pressures to give the marriage a chance, so, for all the years that come after, American married couples, American parents, and American children have depended upon a social routine to keep them together.

It was the same sort of routine that gave the new, fumbling young lovers a chance to make their choice a permanent one—common residence, common meals, an expectation that they would spend many hours together, no place to go but home. Husbands and wives got so used to sleeping in the same room that they were sleepless and restless apart from each other. This dependence, based on old affectionate habit, formed the basis of marriage. Husbands handed over their wages, or most of the money, children came home from school, wives swept and cooked and washed the window curtains, not because they especially liked these particular activities, but because it didn't occur to them—or to any one—that there were any alternatives.

It isn't that common meals or a common roof of twenty years without ever being a night apart are necessary conditions of family life. Regular Army and Navy wives, who tend to be chosen from Army and Navy daughters, expect long absences on the part of their husbands and become adjusted to them. But the average American marriage had its pattern, too: a wife who stayed home and put up with a lot (especially in the lower income groups), a husband who came home and put up with a lot, and children who expected to find mother, jam, and admonitions when they came home from school.

From many millions of such families the war has torn away the protecting walls within which they lived. Most

of the overt reasons which will be cited for divorce and delinquency and broken homes were there, to be sure: lack of background, unwise choice of mate, lack of preparation for parenthood, inexperience in adapting sex responses to a continuing human relationship, lack of experience in communicating emotions or articulating attitudes, lack of knowledge of home-making on the part of both men and women, a restless desire for social mobility—all these were there. And children preferred their age mates, were impatient with the parents who took no pains to understand them, were restive under home standards too unyielding and particular to stand the test of the way other people's families lived. But, as long as the familiar peacetime conditions remained, the family, American style, 1940, held together.

So the family, American style, 1945, lacks the old familiar props and properties upon which we all have been depending. Those who live within it are suddenly faced with no design for living. But we know one thing more: that although Man cannot, by taking thought, add one cubit to his stature, he can, by taking thought, add a great deal of sense to his culture. Especially can he do this if the symbol-makers, the writers, the artists, the radio broadcasters, and the film-makers are enlisted in the task. If we ask the right question, the answer should be within human reach. And the question is, How are young people—and older people—who have been reared to depend on one kind of family life, going to maintain their human relationships without the forms it provided?

The soldier who has been married and away for several years now acts as he learned, in his childhood and youth, in the way that young men act who have been married for some years—and so does his wife. He doesn't court her any more. Nor does she bother about how her hair looks at home. Such gestures weren't necessary when a year or two of common living had bound them firmly together. But he has not been married—in the old sense—for a year or two. He has been married, in the old sense, perhaps two weeks, with