

LIVING

Adapting to a New Life

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed



A new student pinning for her home

THE other day, my uncle was complaining about his son a 16-year old high-school junior, who wanted to move back to Boston and live with his aunt. The reason: he hated his new school in Connecticut. The family had just moved to Connecticut and it really bothered them that their only child did not want to stay with them and give the new city a chance.

I was laughing, thinking about this childish act of stubbornness, then stopped suddenly, remembering my first few days at the university and realized his problem.

There were six of us back in school, we were inseparable. From Sweet Valley Highs, Agatha Christies and Seventeen magazines to our happiness, sorrows and the deepest darkest secrets, we shared everything. Then there were only three of us together at the same college. I recall how we looked forward to the "break" time when we exchanged day to day gossip while having "chatpati" and sipping soft drinks or helped each other with our studies.

Now, we are all university students, majoring in different subjects at different institutions both home and abroad.

Looking back, I realize how helpless and alone I felt in the beginning being separated from my friends and getting accustomed to a totally different world.

"Change" is a natural and a common phenomenon of life. It comes to everyone's life at one time or other. Here, "change" does not refer to a break, a holiday or a vacation, rather it expresses the changes a person goes through, when he/she switches schools, pursues higher studies, gets a new job, gets married or moves to new surroundings. Change is usually associated with feelings like apprehension, uncertainty and disappointment.

But, the question is, can we all, deal with the "post-change" problems, and focus on a happy and successful future?

The answer is yes. There are some sure ways of adjusting to a new life, that most of us learn the hard way, such as:

(1) Keep an open mind: This is one of the most impor-

tant points one has to remember. Having high expectations about a certain place, might lead to disappointment eventually. Thinking the worst of something is no help either, as you might be too prejudiced to see the good side of a situation. When one goes to a big institution both home and abroad, he/she might be mentally prepared to come across many cultures, dialects, religions, ideologies, tastes and opinions. Honestly, one can't expect everyone to be like oneself or one's "amies". The plus point is, you will learn more about other people and their ways, things you have only heard about before, now you can find out for yourself. "Free your mind," that's right, remember the MTV commercial and make it your motto and things will work like a charm.

(2) Don't compare your present life with the past: Comparison of any kind is never good, unless it's in your academic interest. Comparing your new environs or your current life style with the old one will make you miserable. "Back there I could do this," "Here we don't have that opportunity": These kinds of emotions will only pull you back to the past.

"I went to Chittagong from Dhaka to study medicine there, and I remember how awful it was for me at first. I used to complain about the

food, long distance, the people — everything. But, now that I have come to terms with my predicament I am actually enjoying my life back there," confides one student.

(3) Accept your new life: A person cannot live in his familiar surroundings forever. Changes are inevitable. In any case life is not static. One should not turn back the clock and dwell in the past, rather accept the changes and go on with one's present life with a zeal. If things had always been good for you so far, be optimistic, you can keep it that way.

(4) Look at the positive side: Come on, don't be such a cynic! There are positive aspects to everything. Maybe, you will find more time to socialize, to get to know other people besides your own crowd or perhaps your new classes will prove to be very interesting and without your best buddies around to divert your attention, you will probably get more to hit the books and get more work done. Think about it, your parents are going to be proud of you.

(5) Making friends: Face it, nobody can live alone. Not unless they are freaks! But, if one is an introvert or a shy person, he/she is likely to face a tough time trying to make friends. Before, you didn't have to worry about this problem, as your friends were always there with you. But, now you have to

make an effort. If no one bothers to introduce themselves, you should take the initiative and introduce yourself. Chances are that they too are a little nervous and unsure about you and it's up to you to change their minds and if you are all freshmen as new in a place, then there is nothing to worry about, at least you are not a loner. Best thing is to look for an open, friendly face and start with neutral and safe topics like, "So, where are you from?" "Do you know anything about the classes?" "What are the teachers like?" etc. If you are nice, no one can really be rude to you.

(6) Join in the fun: Lots of programmes and activities take place all the year round, everywhere. Be a part of them. Attend the seminars, symposiums, take part or help in organising a cultural programme, a function or whatever. If you are interested in debating, join the debating club, or any kind of social welfare organization or forums. Not only will the experience be educational, working in a group can be very interesting too.

(7) Keep your cool: Whatever happens, do not lose your temper. Don't let anything get you down. Complaining and sulking won't ease the situation, you will only succeed in aggravating people around you. Also, try being more like your new acquaintances. If you are too different from everyone else, you will never be able to adjust well in a new society. "When you're in Rome, you do as the Romans do." Yes, when you cannot win them just join them. That should make a lot of difference.

(8) Keep in touch with your old friends: As the saying goes, "old friends are gold" when you are depressed or worried about something, you can always turn to your true friends for moral support. Nothing can replace them. The more you miss them, the more you will learn to appreciate them.

Don't give up on yourself. Give a place a fair chance before you decide to say "au revoir." Hang on to these, that's the spirit. If you quit, it won't matter to anyone. But, you might regret your hasty decision later in life.

Home Influence on Child Behaviour

by Dr Maliha Khatun



A well adjusted child playing with paints

IT needs no psychological insight to admit that the parental and home influence outweigh the effects of all other environmental impact combined in determining the fundamental organisation of children's behaviour. According to some well-known psychoanalytic theories the bases of social and moral values are laid early in life, on parent and child relationship and interaction. Over and above, the foundation of children's attitude to society, salient features of character like submission to authorities, co-operation, competition etc. all are the result of early parent-child interaction within the home feelings of affection and sympathy towards others, which are considered so vital to psychological adjustment in adult life, are also dependent on the nature of parent-child relationship.

The home, in all ages and in all contemporary cultures, is truly considered as the most stabilizing and socializing agency in human life. In view of this importance of home influences and early experiences, Freud was able to trace most of man's psychological conflicts back to early experiences in life at home between the ages of 4 to 5.

Parents differ widely in their rearing practice of children. Some follow the age-old traditional methods, some have personal prejudice, some approach with emotional feelings and still some impose the rule of thumb procedure. Parents are seldom seen expressing even verbally any doubts as to their abilities to help the psychological growth of their children. But child rearing has now assumed a focal point in modern society. And psychologists are in doubt regarding the claim of all parents to know how to rear children. The motto of the average parents may be summarised thus "What was good enough for me, is good enough for my children" or just the reverse. "My parents were too strict with me: I am going to go easy with my kids."

Psychologists have carried out various investigations cen-

tering around the home influences on the behaviour and attitudes of adult life. Then investigators found out that during the pre-school years children from strict homes were retarded in sociability and friendliness whereas children from "indulgent" homes were highly social both in friendly and quarrelsome ways. The "rejectant" group differed little from the norm although they showed some resistance to adults.

Although it seems advisable to rear up children on the broad principles of democratic ways in order to ground in them right from childhood the principles of democracy that some psychologists have come to the findings that such children develop the tendency of aggressiveness and undue assertion which the democratic parents are not likely to tolerate.

With the result, that during pre-school period, the parents of democratic homes by and large adopt authoritarian attitude towards such children. The psychologists also believe that democratic homes

run the risk of producing too little conformity with cultural demands. The authoritarian control procedure, on the other hand tends to produce quiet, unaggressive and well-behaved children, but such children are also restricted in originality curiosity and imagination.

Parents with social values are probably in the majority in the middle strata of our society. It would probably be unwise for us to campaign for rearing up children in democratic procedures.

Mother's role in child rearing

The mother spends much of the time with the child. In terms of time, therefore, the mother has more opportunities than the father to influence her offspring's psychological growth and behaviour. Tradition also favours the mother's influence, child rearing in our culture is generally recognised as primarily the mother's responsibility. In cultures of industrialised societies, the father is too much engrossed in money making

and he has little time to spend with his children. One of the effects of this is that both boys and girls become secretive with their fathers and they are drawn more towards their mother in their difficulties.

The need for the mother's presence during psychological conflicts raises no special problems in the rearing of girls. However, the response in boys has been viewed by some psychologists with increasing alarm. There is some evidence that over protective mothers have a harmful effect upon the normal and healthy growth of children. This situation could be partially corrected by the father's assuming a more active role in the rearing of their sons.

Mothering and related child behaviour

It is generally agreed that the basic need of children is the love and affection of the mother. However, mothers differ in their expression of love to their offspring and their ability to love. Some psychologists believe that such mothers have their own background and their early training under their authoritarian mothers or indulgent mothers influence their subsequent attitude to their own offspring.

Child psychologists believe that a low level of maternal affection prolongs the period of child dependency. On the reverse, overprotection tends to produce over-dependency in the child.

Sears and Colleagues have shown that maternal child-rearing practices are related to the development of both dependency and aggressiveness in young children. Dameron rated that mothers may be permissive about many irregularities in child behaviour and yet be restrictive of any behaviour that smacks of aggressiveness or destructiveness. This attitude of the mother naturally confines the child. He is not sure about his mother's reaction to his behaviour — whether he will get approval or disapproval, with the result that in adult life such persons show contradictory norms of behaviour.

COOKERY

Meat Loaf

2 lb. beef
2 cups soft breadcrumbs
loosely packed

2 eggs beaten
milk
Worcester sauce
pepper and salt

Mince the beef and ham or bacon, and mix with the breadcrumbs. Bind together with the egg and sufficient milk to form a moist mixture which sticks together. Season well with Worcester sauce, salt, pepper, and a little fenel. One minced onion may be added if liked, but it must be minced very finely indeed. Bake in a loaf tin in a moderate oven for one and a half hours or till brown on top. Chill before serving. This may also be boiled. To do this, shape the meat mixture into a roll and wrap it in a scalded, floured cloth. Then plunge into boiling water and boil for about two hours.

The loaf may be jellied when cool by making a jelly from two tablespoons of gelatine dissolved in one large cup of boiling water. A cup of tomato sauce is then added, and a little extra vinegar if necessary. When the jelly is almost setting, pour it in spoonfuls over the chilled loaf. Repeat till the loaf has a coating of jelly about 1/4 inch thick.

Meat Rissoles (Rolled Cutlets)

1 lb. boiled, mashed potatoes
cold meat mince

1 egg
crisp bread or toast crumbs
fat for frying

Have the mince simmered till rather dry, and form into roll shapes. Take sufficient mashed potato to cover the meat, flatten till about 1/2 inch in thickness, and place the meat in the middle. Mould the potato round the meat, keeping the long roll, shape the rissole should be. Dip the rissole in the beaten egg, then coat it thickly with the toast crumbs. Fry in boiling fat till a golden brown.

Minced Meat Potato Pie

2 lb. potatoes
1 tablespoonful dripping
1 egg

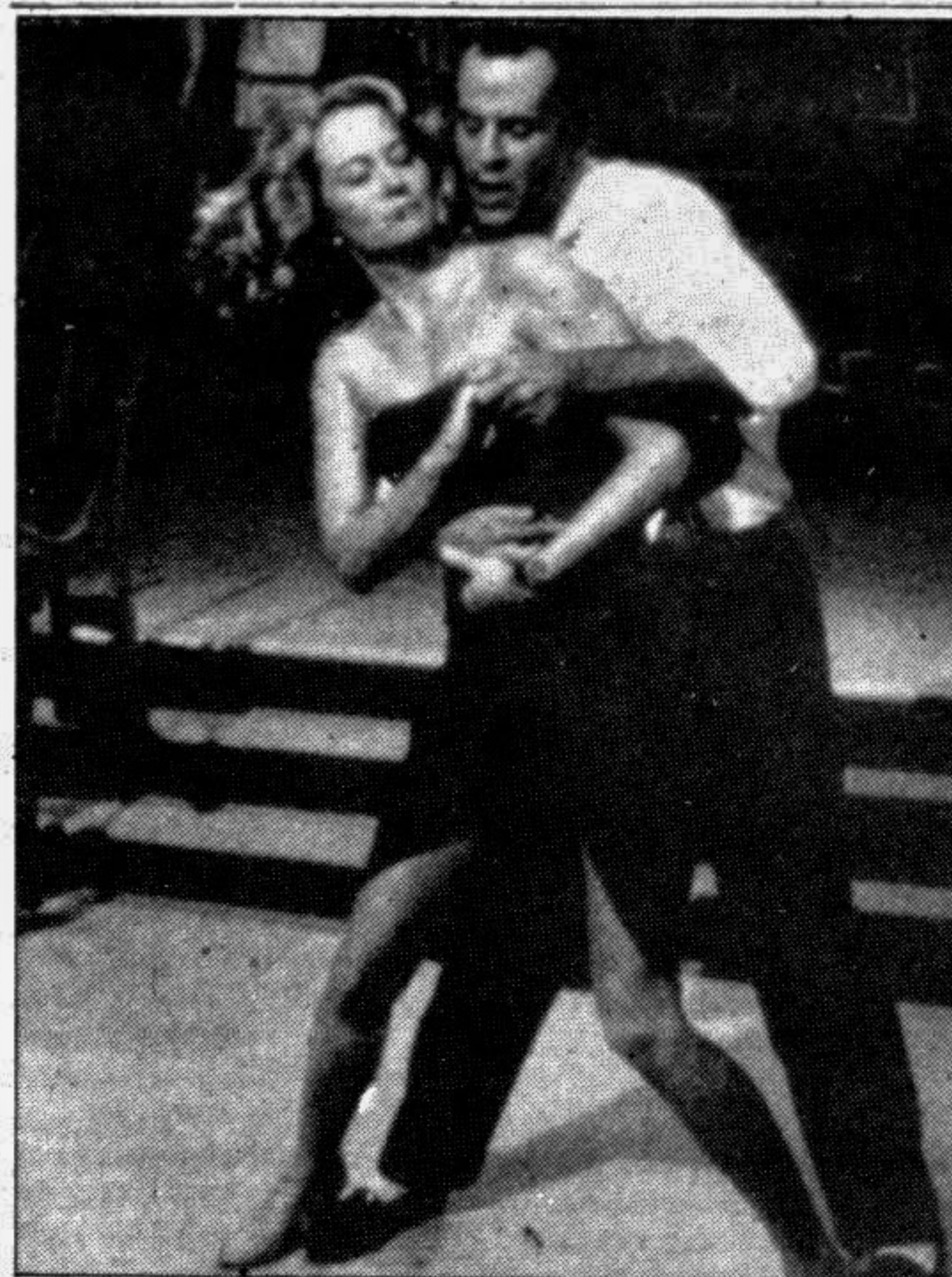
salt
breadcrumbs
cold meat mince
Boil the potatoes, mash them and make into a paste with the dripping and yolk of egg, add salt to taste. Butter a pie-dish and put alternate layers of potato and mince, potato forming the bottom and top layers. Scatter some breadcrumbs on the top and put a few pieces of dripping here and there. Put in the oven and bake until the top layer of potatoes is nicely browned. Serve hot in the dish.

Minced Meat Pancake Sachets

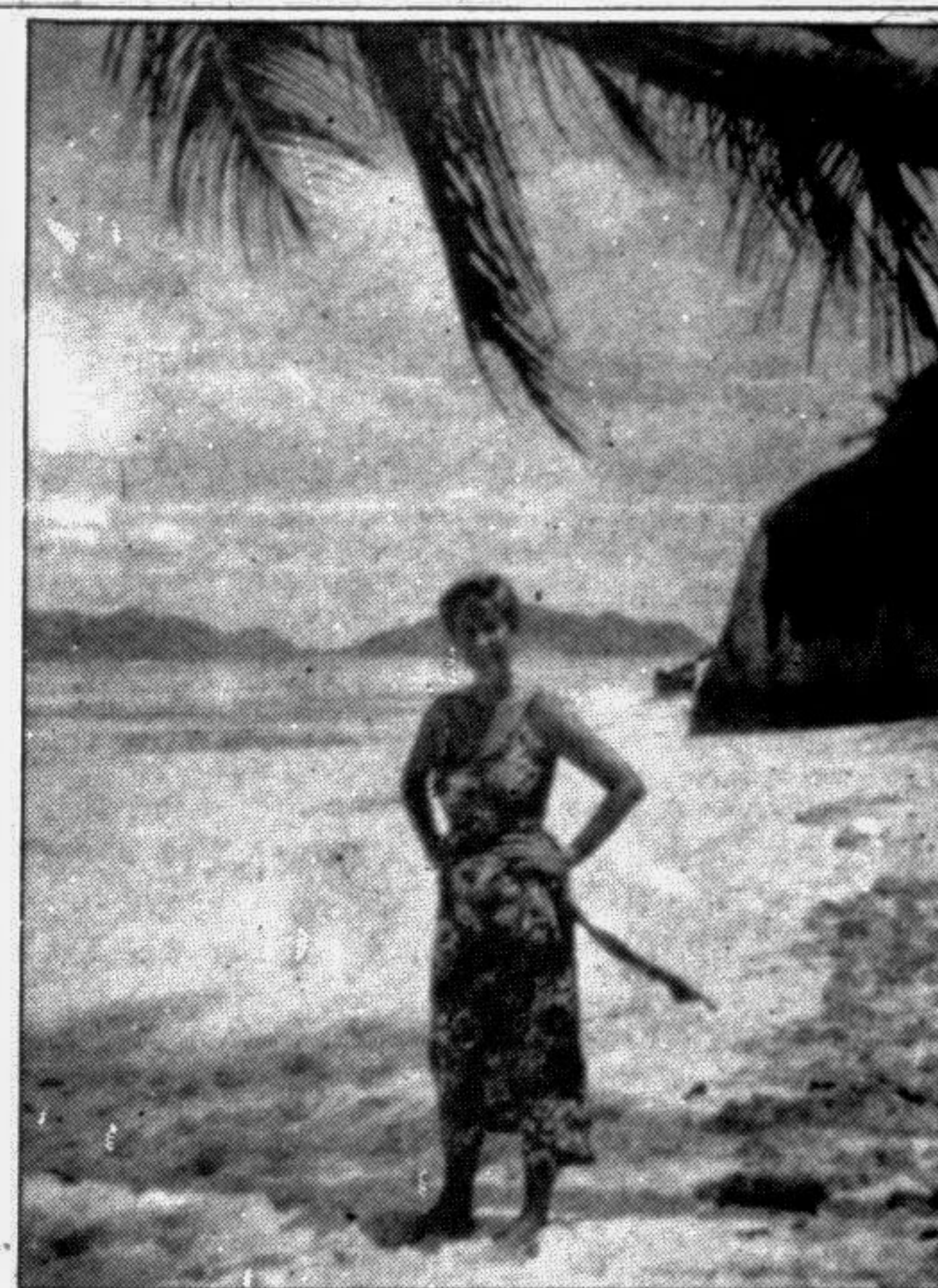
1/4 lb. flour
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
2/3 pint milk
1 egg

salt
dripping
egg and breadcrumbs
cold meat mince

Mix the flour, baking powder, milk and egg into a smooth batter, adding a pinch of salt. It should be a little thicker than the ordinary pancake batter. Melt a little dripping in a frying pan and pour in enough batter to make a pancake. Do not cook both sides of it. When cooked underneath, turn on to a plate, place a spoonful of mince in the centre, and fold it neatly into an oblong parcel, using white of egg to paste it with. The parcels should be made as soon as each pancake is taken off the fire (once they get cold they will break in folding). After all the parcels have been made brush them over with beaten egg, coat with breadcrumbs and fry a golden brown in dripping. They could be served as liked, either hot or cold.



"Moonlighting" on "Star Plus"



"Holiday" on BBC

Depressions From Nowhere

by Ina Husain Farouq

THERE was a time, when we had the good sense to realize that discontent, despair and even failure are normal; that squabbles between men and women, parents and children, are unavoidable; that not everybody was intended by God, fate or biochemistry to be content all the time. Indeed, one mark of good health is precisely the capacity to be unhappy when reality warrants it — without apology or rationalization.

As recently as 30 years ago, no one questioned your right to be unhappy. Happiness was considered a blessing, not a guarantee. People were permitted to suffer pain, or fall into moods, or seek solitude without being analyzed interpreted or discussed.

In behavioral medicine, the link between a person's emotional state and disease have been documented. Severe over stimulation of the brain and endocrine system may have physical effects leading to diseases, it is said.

Everyone has setbacks in life, and experiences occa-

sional losses and threats. Why do some people sail through such events, while others fall apart, one wonders.

Depression is a small word. Nothing to terrify. As a mood, it may mean blue Mondays or disappointments. The feeling of despair is sometimes so deep that, unreasonable guilt and anguish overwhelms one and all joy and hope disappear.

Some people slide slowly into the quicksand of depression. Once a lively mind, grows muzzy, incapable of the least decision, and unknowingly tears cascade down. Unable to break force of a leaden lassitude, one simply sits in a chair, looks not through but at a window, siphoning off the hours of the day, abandoned are the household chores. It's an empty feeling of loss and pain, watching the loved one's feelings turn to rancid dislike.

The most characteristic early symptom is the absence of joy or pleasure, chronic fatigue, poor concentration, lack of interest and indecisiveness is common. If clinical depres-

sion persists, uninterrupted, day after day, and over a period of time this will interfere with one's capacity to function. It is very important to recognize these symptoms, because in its early stages depression is relatively simple to treat. If not treated, the person may become worse and at the extreme point become suicidal.

What triggers depression? Sometimes it is events like marital problems, getting fired or financial loss. But often it comes out of nowhere, for no reason. Medications and drugs are recommended by specialists for the clinically depressed.

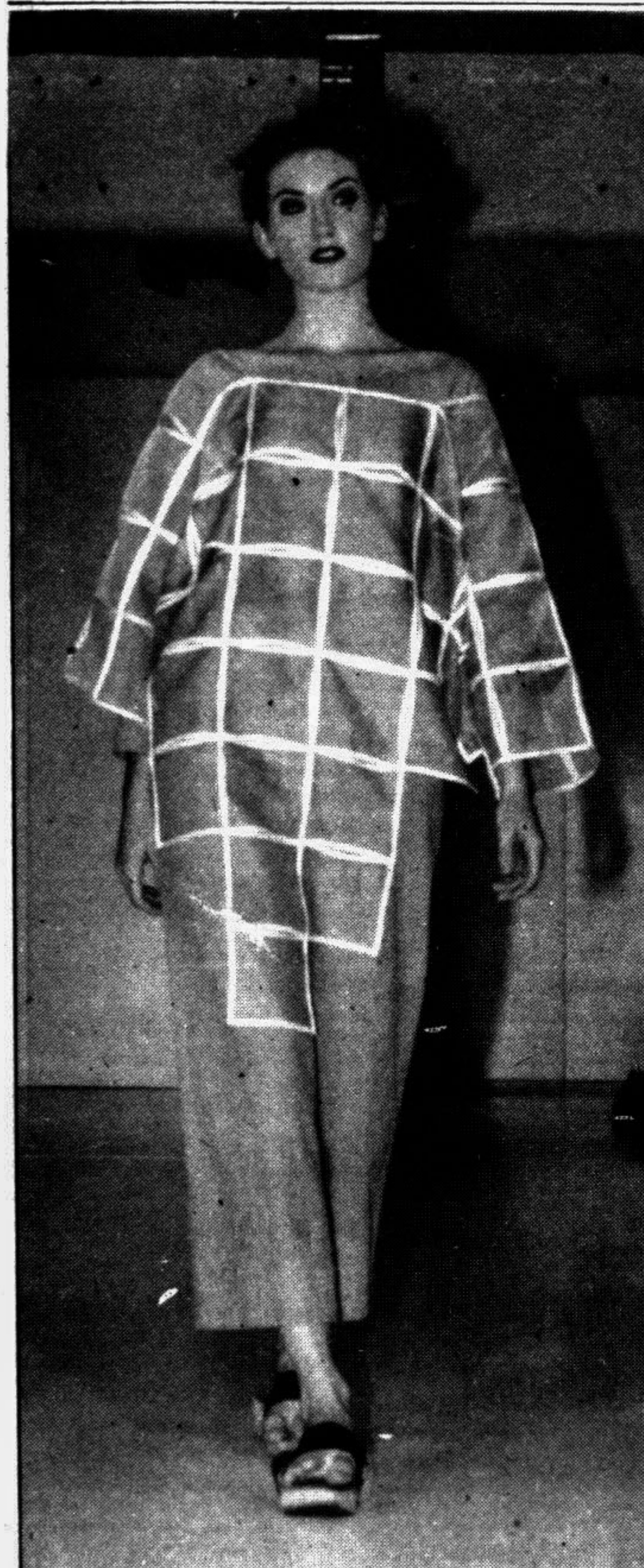
One must reconcile one self to being imperfect. One must surrender one's infantile dream that anyone really lives happily ever after. Life, even for the most successful and "well adjusted" among us, involves duties that are dull, routine, and disagreeable. If we spent less time trying to have "fun", we might discover the endless reward and resources of that internal self, which can

accept disappointment or ungratified desire, and which is at home with contemplation and solitude.

People get cured and forgotten emotions of love, pleasure and positive thoughts rise to the surface. Instead of hiding in misery, one starts putting away guilt and self hatred; one so learns to resist what one may take for harsh moral or professional judgement from doctors who are specialists in psychology. The person should be able to treasure the gift of life again.

Learning how to live with one's emotions and being able to cope with one's problems is very important. One must learn to take care of one's mind as well as body. Recognizing that emotions and problems trigger physiological reactions — and vice versa — is half the battle.

The other half is knowing that the foundations of good health lie in love, laughter and faith in oneself. That is when one starts learning how to love oneself first and in return love others.



A sample of European fashion by Angela Kotzürk - Photo: LPS