

Kathleen Norris Says:

Was the Old Idea of Permanent Marriage Better?

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)



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By KATHLEEN NORRIS

THE great disadvantage of a civilization that permits quick and easy divorce is that no woman can be sure of her husband any more, no man sure of his wife, and no home feel itself safe.

That is the fact, from a purely practical point of view. The moral considerations, affecting the vow men and women take, "for better or for worse," I leave to the theologians. I am merely thinking here that divorce does unsettle the mind of husband and wife. If there were no divorce things would go differently in the family circle. But as it is today no matter how determined the woman is to make her marriage a success; no matter how anxious the man is to have his home one of the happy homes of the world, there is always this in the back of the thoughts of each: "And if it simply won't work, there's divorce."

In the old days there was much abuse of a situation that offered no doorway of escape. No question of that. Some men were bullies at home, bad fathers, bad providers, unfaithful. Wives had no redress. They bore the children and they bore with the children's father in uncomplaining martyrdom, year after year. A friend of mine who married a foreigner, 30 years ago, lived in far and lonely exile from her own land, and had to endure the presence of a beautiful dancer, a chorus girl, in her own home, as her husband's mistress. When he went on a pleasant trip, on his yacht or behind his span of dashing horses, the dancer went, too. When the mistress objected to the noise the children made, the two smallest ones were sent away to a country nurse.

Injustices like this made the life of many a faithful wife and devoted mother insufferable. Only two generations ago a father could order grown daughters suppress to their rooms, could forbid their marrying this man or that, could keep them, and in most cases did keep them, idle at home, penniless, dependent, all their days. It came to the 11 Barrett children by slow degrees, some 60 years ago, that their father didn't intend any one of them to have any love affairs whatsoever. Girl after girl and boy after boy meekly surrendered all hope of love and marriage because papa so ordained it.

The Natural Reaction.

Modern marriage, with its quick divorces, its resulting independence and alimony, is the natural reaction to this unnatural situation. Girls painfully have fought their way to independence and freedom, and if that freedom had been abused in its turn perhaps that is only the swing of a pendulum that will presently right itself. Certainly a husband today is infinitely more reasonable, considerate and faithful than a husband had to be a few generations ago, when anything he did was perforce pardoned by that helpless companion, who was always and forever, to the end of the chapter, until death actually did him part from her—his wife.

But today's way means that any attractive woman, perhaps with two or three unsuccessful marital experiences behind her, can pick upon any desirable mate, and even though he be at the time happily married and with two or three small children, can do her best to win him away from his wife and family and home. And society, not to be too flagrantly inconsistent, must stand by and approve. Unless high moral conviction, the influence of religion,

or character save him, he may be drawn away by slow degrees, knowing all the time, as his wife knows, and the woman knows, that a brief six weeks stay in Reno will suffice to free him from the intoxications of the new experiment.

"My life is made completely wretched by jealous anxieties," writes a woman from Columbus, Ohio. "I've fought it, I've prayed about it, but with every fresh instance of my husband's attractiveness to women and their feeling for him, I am down in the depths again. He likes to flirt; he is continually involved in an affair with some fascinating woman. He writes them delightful notes; meets them for lunch, makes them little presents, but refuses to open his mouth to me on the subject.

"With the help of a young boy I do my own work in an eight-room house," the letter goes on. "We have two small children, a vegetable garden, chickens, and I love every inch of it. I love my kitchen, my piano, my books, my room. Why should all this that I have built up be jeopardized by the selfishness of casual outsiders, who at best take him away from us, waste his money, and put us all into a false position, and at worst may lead him day to day to his asking me to set him free. I suppose it would be silly to say that in spite of all this I love him, but I do love him, love other sides of his nature which are more dependable, and I suffer a continual sense of inferiority and helplessness very hard to bear."

A Vain Boy at Heart.

This husband, and hundreds like him, is a type of the man who grows up in a business sense, and in some ways in a mental sense, but who remains a vain boy at heart. He is as tickled today, at 34, with the artless flatteries of new women acquaintances, as he was 15 years ago. He doesn't want to hold his own in a real world, where friendships, books, home, garden, children and birthdays fill his leisure hours.

He doesn't realize that the quiet companionship of the woman who has loved him all these years is real, and that the feelings he thinks he has for the other woman are self-deception. He hasn't sense enough in matters of the heart to look about him at the men who have married the objects of their "grande passion," only to be bored and disillusioned, after a few years. And he isn't big enough, or his mother didn't train him thoroughly enough to know that the only sure path to comfort and happiness in middle age is to learn to live the hard married years in faithfulness and kindness and content, taking their real joys and richness in place of the younger excitements and flatteries and dreams.

I say, "the hard middle years." There is a hard time in most marriages, when a man is reasonably sure of his job, a woman absorbed in nursery and household cares, and when the glamour of love-making, of the sacred intimacy and oneness of marriage have lost a little something by familiarity. Dire poverty and uncertainty, illness and bitter anxiety for the safety of children usually spare a family this crisis, but not all families experience these extremes, and in easier times we are all apt to forget the treasure we have in dreaming of the outside treasure that might be ours.

After all, the greatest percentage of human joy comes in a well-adjusted family circle. Most men know this. They know in their hearts that it is only to weak eyes that the far hills seem the greenest.



IMAGINARY DIARY OF SUMMER WELLES
MON.—Arrived in Italy okay. Was notified that Mussolini was busy reviewing a new goose step but that Count Ciano would see me. Nearly started a new war by absent-mindedly asking hotel manager if he knew where I could get a good Italian dinner.

TUES.—Was late reaching parley with Ciano because of streets being blocked by parades. Found Ciano so peaceful he dispensed with



usual Italian custom of starting to argue before hearing the subject announced.

The count says Mussolini wants peace as soon as he is sufficiently armed for it.

WED.—Traveling through Switzerland. The Swiss are so peaceful I am wondering if other countries would be less belligerent if they yodelled.

THURS.—I see Goering and Hitler soon. The prospect is quite unnerving.

FRI.—Saw General Goering. Both of him. He wanted to know if I was H. G. Wells or Orson Welles. It was hard to get down to peace talk as he wanted to discuss spring styles in men's military coats. He said Germany was not opposed to peace unless it meant she would have to get along without quarreling with everybody. I asked him if he thought Hitler might retire to the background. He said, "Can you imagine any prima donna retiring to any background?" I had an uncomfortable feeling that there was something under my chair. It turned out to be Goebbels. As I left Goering he said, "Remember us to Roosevelt and tell him not to get discouraged; he'll get into this mess yet."

LATER.—Met Hitler in the Rumpus Room. He asked me how America was and said he was sorry to hear it.

He then asked for an explanation of the peace idea. I told him Mr. Roosevelt felt peace would be a good thing. He replied, "When I've been in as many fights as Roosevelt I'll think so, too."

He suggested that we carry on our discussions in Russian. I said I did not understand Russian. He said, "Neither do I, but a peace conference is a conference." One word from me led to another. In fact it led to a dozen others. Hitler said Germany was always for peace and that if her artillery held out she would get it.

He kept fumbling with a microphone during the entire talk and once remarked, "If television was here I could conquer the world in six weeks."

MON.—Arrived in Paris. Daladier said France was not only for peace now, but had been hoping for it for centuries.

TUES.—In London. Saw Chamberlain. He suggested that we hold discussions in English. I said this might commit us to a clear understanding of what we were saying. He saw the danger of this at once.

I am to see him again tomorrow. I can't escape the conclusion that everybody in Europe is in favor of peace up to the point where peace is proposed.

FINLAND MUST FEEL LIKE THE FELLOW WHO WAS BEING CLAWED UP IN THE LION'S CAGE AND GOT OFFERS OF HELP BY TELEPHONE.

"Berlin. — For stealing 200 chickens, 50 rabbits, 12 pigeons and 5 ducks, Karl Schroeder, 29, was sentenced to death and loss of civil rights today by a special court."—United Press.

It's the loss of civil rights that makes chicken stealing dangerous, says Mack Hollander.

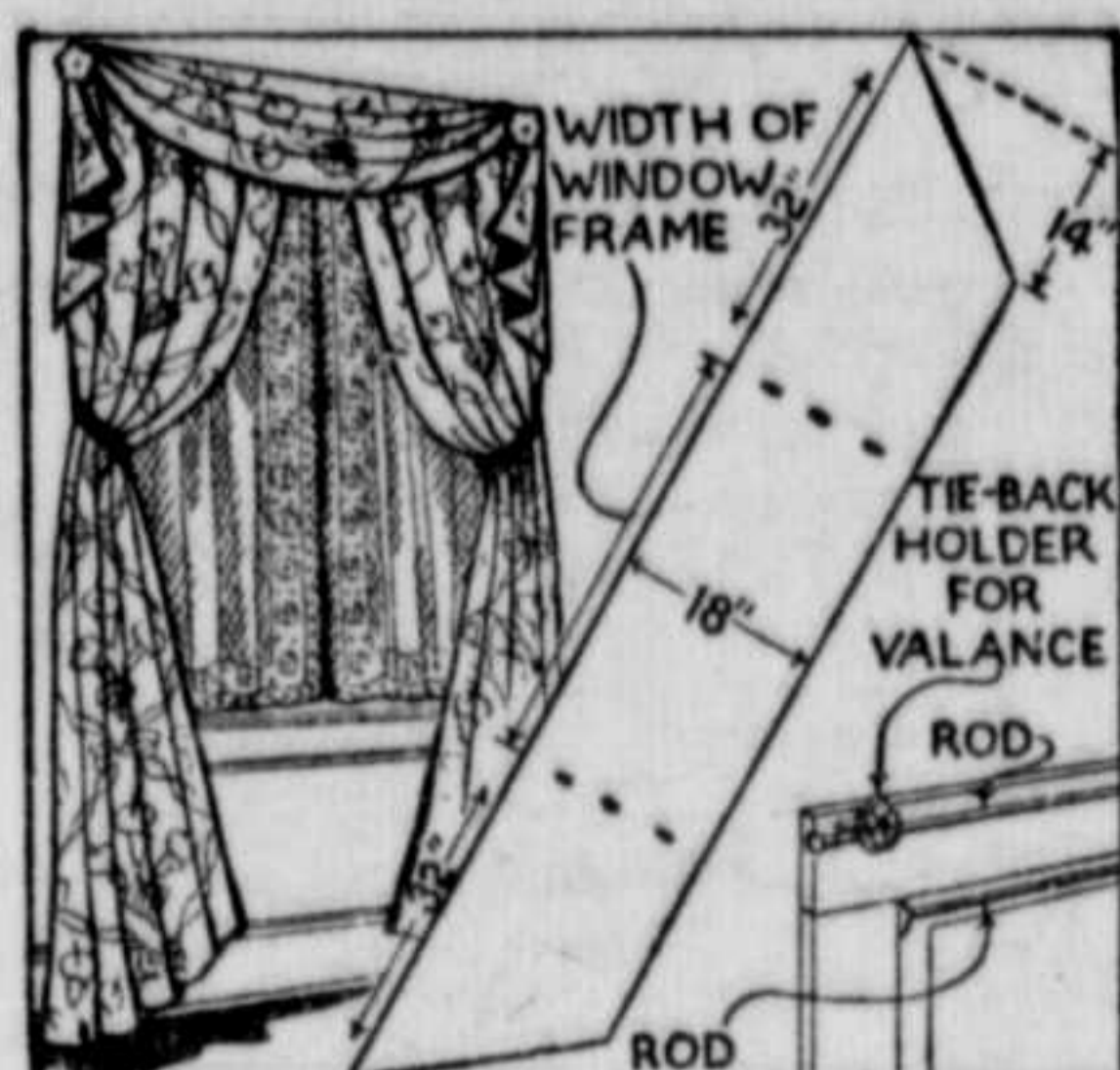
"Glasses Don't Detract From Glamour."—Headline. Wanna bet?

WHAT! NO SMELT?

The Smithsonian Institution, believe it or not, publishes a catalogue listing the fishes taken on President Roosevelt's cruises. (This department has actually seen the one for 1938.) What's more, the President always brings back fish for the Smithsonian Institution to keep. We note that Franklin is represented in the Smithsonian by the Muraenidae (morays), a Sphyracnidae (barracuda), an Acanthocybium (petus and, honestly, one Haemulidae or grunt, as most fishermen call 'em.

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



THAT lace curtains are in fashion again is news! This easy-to-make and easy-to-hang valance is something that many of you have been wanting. All the dimensions for cutting it are given here. The glass curtains are hung on the lower rod; the side drapes on the upper rod; and the valance is draped over knob holders screwed into the extreme upper corners of the window frames.

The color plan for this window began with the glazed chintz drapery material in tones of green, beige and golden yellow. The darkest green—a soft olive tone, was used in sateen to line the valance and make the tie-backs. The brass holders for the valance repeated the golden yellow. The

cream glass curtains toned into the drapery background, and a plain olive green window shade was used.

NOTE: Mrs. Spears has prepared four booklets for our readers with illustrated directions for making 128 thrifty homemaking ideas. Each book contains an assortment of 32-pages of curtains; slip covers; rag rugs; toys; gifts and novelties for bazaars. Books are 10 cents each—please order by number—No. 1, 2, 3 and 4—With your order for four booklets you will receive a FREE set of three Quilt Block patterns of Mrs. Spears' Favorite Early American Quilts. Send orders to:

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Broad Humanity

A broad humanity is the belief that man is more important than his works and that his value is independent of the trappings of circumstance.

Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

- The Questions**
- How deep is mark twain?
 - When one goes to sleep, which is the last of the senses to succumb to Morpheus?
 - If your wife wanted a wimple to wear, where would she go to purchase it, the jeweler's, milliner's or dress shop?
 - According to the Bible, the price of what is above rubies?
 - Mary Ball was the mother of what United States President?
 - Did Confucius live before or after Christ?
 - What is the lowest gear in an automobile?
 - The name of what shellfish is used to denote an ill-tempered person? An insignificant one? A close-mouthed one?
 - What is the largest flower grown in the United States?
 - Can you name the two parts of a fraction?

- The Answers**
- Twelve feet.
 - Sense of hearing.
 - Milliner's.
 - Wisdom.
 - Washington.
 - Five centuries before.
 - Reverse.
 - Crab, Shrimp, Clam.
 - It is believed to be the flower of the umbrella tree which grows to 15 inches in diameter.
 - The numerator and the denominator.



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