Kathleen Norris Says:

Is This Woman a Fool?

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

They never think what it does to a wife to spend all her waking hours in the presence of three small, restless, demanding children and an Armenian girl of nineteen whose great interest is the Thursday night dance.

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

EQUALITY

Kathleen Norris makes a plea for equality of women with men. She deplores the state of unconscious vassalage in which many women live. Their lives are constantly being regulated by domineering husbands who don't realize they are acting as tyrants over their beloved wives. Miss Norris studies the serious problem raised by this deplorable condition and offers advice on how it can be solved.

WHEN I was a girl the burning question was that of franchise for women. In that day everyone—men and women both—thought there was some argument about it. Women were fit to do all the hard work in the world, and the few who struggled through law or medical courses invariably came out ahead of the men in class work, but there was a general impression that no matter how estimable and lovable members of the weaker sex were, they shouldn't have any authority.

Nothing to say about schools, or politics, or business, or housing, or morality. The only voices that could speak on these topics were those of men. In the delicate questions of their souls, of their ailments, of incomes and responsibilities, women must be guided by men.

Women are not yet awake. They are still being led blindfolded through life by the all-controlling males. But at least they are stirring in their sleep, and political responsibility, being granted a short 20 years ago, has encouraged them to work for recognition in higher positions and in statecraft.

Future Holds More Freedom.

Twenty years! Biologically one second. In a hundred years they will only have begun to grasp the full power of their shackles and to take their rightful places as a sex, prisoned too long in a world of false conditions; conditions made by men only, and for which both men and women pay.

Women are gregarious. They like community life. Generations ago young mothers would have united their interests, gotten together groups of babies, commissioned a few mothers in turn to do the tending, cook the spinach, watch the sleepers, and so have freed two-thirds of the other mothers for several days housekeeping, sewing, study and relaxation each week.

But man, jealous and monopolistic, decreed that each woman should have her own little separate establishment. His business is run on a cheerful, companionable, group-unit plan. But until some 30 years ago no wife ever touched money of her own; it was doled out to her in dollars and half-dollars, for shoes and gas and meat. She dared not even dream of a Babies club, in which she and her congenial friends and a group of happy children might share the nursery years. No, her, man decreed, consciously or unconsciously, that the only companion she might have in her long tiring days was some ignorant young foreigner.

Work Could Be Organized.

If women's work could be organized as men's work is; with centers where small children flourished under the care of their own mothers; with a garden, a playground, a well-equipped attic for rainy days, reading hours, music, language study, there would be happier homes, less divorce, less nerves, less psychoses. Women hunger for this economic, safe, inspiring solution for the small-years problem, but men still frown it down. They never think what it does to a wife to spend all her waking hours in the presence of three small, restless, demanding children and an Armenian girl of 19 whose great interest is the Thursday night dance.

And women, still taking men's orders, don't go quietly ahead and live their lives as they want to. Their only way out is quarrels and divorce. But I believe many a woman would find herself out of the woods of headaches, depression, nerves, discontent, if she sat down seriously today—or better, took a long walk, while pondering the question, "What changes in our lives would make me happy? What would I LIKE to do?"

Almost always the answer is nearer than she thinks.

Set in His Ways.

"My husband is the best man in the world," a Philadelphia wife once wrote me, "but he is set. He hates anything out of the way. For example when two summers ago I clipped my little girls' hair quite short, for their comfort and my convenience in the hot weather, he was so angry and so long resentful that I paid dearly for it, and so did the girls. This year they wear curls, a great care for mother. Our boy is six months old, and as I do all my own work I was glad to get the baby-pen into commission again. But Kent has decided that the pen may curb the baby's natural daring, as he grows, and he won't let me use it.

"We have a pleasant back yard with maples and elms in it, and I have hedges around the clotheslines and the barrels. Often I would like to serve lunch or supper there, for the birds do the clearing up and I can make a meal a picnic, with paper cups and napkins. But this conventional man of mine is always conscious of the few back windows of neighbors' houses that overlook the yard; some one MIGHT be looking down on us and our hamburgers!

"Kent hands me his pay check every week; he doesn't drink; he loves his wife and children. We save, and we own a lovely roomy home. But it is trying to be checked at so many turns, and I am wondering if you ever had a problem like mine to solve, and what is the cure.

Regimented Living.

"I must not send poems to the evening paper, because it embarrasses him. The children are never permitted to see the 'funnies' in the Sunday paper. No caller must ever be in the house when Kent gets home. If I telephone a friend he keeps up an undertone: 'Cut that, dear. You've been six minutes—you've been seven minutes.' If I suggest a movie he is apt to say kindly, 'I don't think that with all you've had to do today you want to sit in a hot movie.' Never in the nine years since my oldest was born has he stayed at home and let me go anywhere at night.

"But we all love our daddy, and this is not complaint," the letter ended. "It's only that if he would be a little less critical, we would all be so happy."

This letter is about six years old. I quote it as a perfect illustration of the state of vassalage in which some women unconsciously live. The man neither knew he was a tyrant, nor the woman that her life was being robbed of all its bloom. And of course the result was tightened nerves and half-conscious resentment on her part, and the encouragement of his messianic complex to an insufferable point.

GENERAL HUGH S. JOHNSON Says:

United Features — WNU Service

Washington, D. C.

THIS MAN WILLKIE

Three days of observation of Wendell Willkie have been eye-openers to me—well as I thought I knew him. This column isn't going to make the mistake it made in 1936 and take a strong partisan position. But it feels a certain sense of responsibility for insisting on the availability of this man for almost two years and getting a good many raspberries for its alleged "goofiness."

The "eye-opener" was this guy's sturdy independence. I think he is another, but a pleasanter, Grover Cleveland. I sensed, and sometimes saw, the strongest kinds of pulls and pressures applied to him in these few days. Some of them were from the mightiest of political leaders. Others were of the modern telegraph-barrage variety—"Speaking for 6,000,000 farmers, we urge"; "Speaking for 21,000,000 Catholics, we demand"; "As representative of 13,000,000 Negroes we ask"; "If you won't do so-and-so, you will lose New York state and the whole Atlantic seaboard."

The candidate answers genially and courteously. He checks facts from every source he can command. He continues to pursue the even tenor of his way and thought with a smiling urbanity that seems a miracle to me. I know only one other man who could take such pushing, pulling and pawing with as much good nature, as little disturbance of his convictions and as little loss of sleep. His name is Franklin Roosevelt.

I do not for a moment mean to suggest that Wendell Willkie is a stubborn dogmatist. He is just the reverse of that. He has the usual business habit of putting up an alert defensive to any professional sales talk. But he also uses the efficient business man's practice of overlooking no promising "proposition" and of getting every fact and expert opinion available before he decides. There has been a good deal of speculation about why I went to Colorado Springs. Mr. Willkie asked me to come to give my opinion on certain aspects of the farm, labor and defense problems, with all of which I have had some experience and have expressed strong views.

Well, he winnowed whatever brains I have with a fine-tooth comb, so far as I know accepted nothing, put up as able and well informed debate as I have yet encountered—and left me in complete ignorance as to his final judgment.

To me, all this seems a good sign. The greatest blunder in a recent government has been, I think, a sort of trout-like snapping at and swallowing whole of any attractive brainstorm, with little or no attempt to get an objective analysis or hear any worthwhile contrary opinion.

Of one thing I am sure. Nobody is going to shove this shaggy Hoosier around, sell him any gold bricks or push him off of any important moral position, for the sake of any expedient political advantage. The latter has, to my knowledge, been vainly attempted with dire threats of defeat if Willkie did not instantly knuckle. He just laughed.

He has another quality of Franklin Roosevelt. Nobody rejected ever goes away mad. But while the President accomplishes this by saying, "Yes, yes, yes—you are perfectly right," and then acts just as he pleases; Mr. Willkie somehow manages to keep them cheerful with something like: "Yours received and contents noted. I will study it carefully. Just now it looks lousy"—or "attractive," as the case may be.

I still say he would be a great President.

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THOSE 50 DESTROYERS

NEW YORK.—The fight to sell 50 of our destroyers to Britain is led by the two whirling dervishes of the third-term assault on American tradition—the glamorous Senators Josh Lee and Claude Pepper. Each has a right to be as fanatical as he pleases—as Pepper is for Old Doc Townsend's cruel deceit of the aged; as Josh is for the uncompensated confiscation of property.

Both schemes would wreck beyond repair the economic strength of this country in a time of great danger.

During our Civil war, Great Britain permitted swift Confederate commerce destroyers to be fitted out in British ports. They gave the final push to our once-supreme merchant marine—a blow from which it never recovered. Our protests continued for years. The British finally admitted that for this sort of illegal participation in undercover war, the offending country is responsible in damages for every loss its unlawful act has imposed.

Apart from any such quibbling as Josh Lee is doing to make a mockery of statutory and treaty obligations, let's not overlook the Alabama claims. They involved, in the main, only two wooden ships. What would 50 destroyers involve?

There are some vital factual questions which should be considered against all this juramentado third-term hokum.

Are these vessels "obsolete"? If so, how can it be urged that the life of the British navy depends on them?

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears

KITCHEN showers are fun for everyone and, while they are always supposed to be a surprise, the prospective bride will be wise to give out a broad hint as to her color scheme. The dearest wish of one bride-to-be was a kitchen in gay Mexican colors. Her friends had a wonderful time selecting everything from pottery to peeling knife handles in tones of green, orange and red. One gift that was appreciated most of all was the apron, curtain and tea towel set sketched here.

This set was made from muslin flour and sugar bags. Muslin by the yard would do just as well, and I have shown in the sketch how the gingham facings and bias tape trimming were applied to add the correct touch of color. If you have never cut an apron without a special pattern, you will find directions in Book 4 along with ideas for more aprons and other fascinating things to make for almost nothing.

NOTE: As a service to our readers Mrs. Spears has prepared a series of homemaking booklets. Booklet 5 just published contains 32 pages of clever ideas fully illustrated; and a description of the other numbers in the series. Booklets are 10 cents each to cover cost and mailing. Send order to:

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Speed of Baseball

A speed of 139 feet per second, or 94.7 miles per hour is the greatest recorded speed of a pitched baseball. This rate was recorded by the speed meter owned by the Cleveland Indians for a ball pitched by Atley Donald, a member of the pitching staff of the New York Yankees, in the Cleveland stadium on August 30, 1939. The previous record, established by Dee Miles of the Philadelphia Athletics, was 136 feet per second.

Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. In what famous song does the phrase "grapes of wrath" appear?
2. Who was known as the "Little Napoleon of Baseball"?
3. What plant produces two common spices?
4. Do cat eyes shine?
5. In the Bible what musical instruments caused the destruction of the walls of Jericho?
6. Does a woman's heart beat faster than that of a man?
7. The Roman hunt was blessed by what ancient goddess?
8. "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife" is a line from Gray's poem concerned with what?

The Answers

1. In the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."
2. John McGraw.
3. The nutmeg tree is the only plant whose seed produces two common spices, nutmeg and mace, the latter being the dried arillode, or fibrous covering, of the nutmeg kernel.
4. The eye of a cat acts as a mirror which throws off light, but it does not generate it.
5. Trumpets.—Joshua 6:20.
6. Under normal and comparable conditions, a woman's heart beats from 5 to 7 per cent faster than that of a man.
7. Diana.
8. A country churchyard (elegy written in a country churchyard).

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