

Yes!

SHOULD THE WOMAN PROPOSE?

No!

Feb. 29th is the Leap Year Day.

"Why Not?" Retort Most of the Women. Still They Are Careful to Explain that in Their Own Cases the Man Popped the Question . . .

DO YOU believe in leap year proposals? Should women propose? These two questions fired point blank at Omaha women socially elect, suffragists and anti-suffragists, bringing varying responses. Some laugh it off, others refuse to commit themselves, some downright pooh-pooh the idea, while others just as staunchly coincide in their views with the fair lines Milholland Boissevain, who admits that she had to "pop" the question three times before her husband would accept her.

Coy debutantes and indifferent spinsters alone were not quizzed in this instance. What would be the use? You know what they would say for you can take it from us, unattached females have too much of Mother Eve or the sphynx or both to be drawn into confessing what they really know and believe on the subject.

"I don't know, I never made one," replied Mrs. E. M. Fairfield to the first query. Mrs. Fairfield is chairman of the city central suffrage committee and is frequently referred to as one of the most beautiful of Omaha suffragists. "Bernard Shaw in his 'Man and Superman,' says they do—that women pursue men and the men, poor things, are helpless to resist them. I haven't found it so in my career, however."

Why Wait Till Leap Year?

"If anyone has the inclination to propose, why wait until leap year any more than any other year?" counter queried Mrs. Draper Smith, ex-state suffrage president and well known club-woman. "No, I can't conceive of a man asking a woman more than once to marry him, let alone a woman."

"It strikes me it would be far more dignified to come right out and tell a man you loved him rather than to do the ridiculous things some women do to attract the men. The way they dress and act can only be explained by the desire to attract attention and thus lead up to a proposal. But it is such a radical step in advance of anything heretofore," remarked Mrs. George Covell, suffragist and temperance lecturer. "I wonder if he was worth it," she continued, in commenting on Mrs. Boissevain's three-fold proposal. "Some women would be better off if the men didn't propose to them either."

Mrs. H. C. Sumney, another prominent suffragist who is busily at work heading the anti-suffragist campaign launched here recently, refused to be quoted on the burning issue of the day.

"Oh, such rot!" she exclaimed, "Anyway, I am engaged in higher pursuits. I am looking down, not up. My gaze is on the sidewalk only. I can't even be a suffragist now, I'm so busy on this campaign."

Would First Give the Man a Chance

Mrs. E. M. Syfert, president of the Omaha Woman's club, turned from the telephone and asked her husband: "Were we married in leap year, dear?" before she would commit herself. On receiving a negative reply, "I think I would wait for the man to propose," said she. "At any rate, I wouldn't have the courage to propose three times to a man. If he didn't know the first time whether he cared or not, I wouldn't ask him again. I can't imagine a woman who would want to keep company with a man who was too bashful to propose."

"I wasn't married or engaged in leap year either. Let the man do it," vouchsafed Mrs. William Archibald Smith, secretary of the Nebraska Anti-Suffrage society and regent of one of the chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. "I don't believe in these advanced notions and usurping man's prerogatives. Women are not justified in assuming men's places."

"I certainly do not believe in leap year proposals. I believe women should be sought after—definitely," was the emphatic declaration of Mrs. P. Crofoot an anti-suffragist and enthusiastic member of the Tuesday Morning Musical club.

Prefers Good Old-Fashioned Wooing

Mrs. Helen Aron Lewis averred she was too much of an anti-suffragist to countenance a



woman's proposing. "I believe in the good, old-fashioned wooing. Women should be wooed and should not even put themselves in position to be asked. Most any young man can overcome his bashfulness under the circumstances, I believe. Lots of bashful young men have gotten married, I notice."

Mrs. Charles T. Kountze, Omaha's recognized social leader, laughingly evaded the queries. "It's

so long since I thought about it, I wouldn't say. Really, I haven't an idea on this subject."

Mrs. Howard Baldrige, another of Omaha's beautiful women and active in all social affairs, also persistently evaded the quizzing. "I've been married so long. Ask the women who have the right to ask men," she laughed. "Isn't this a perfectly delightful day, and oh, yes, do you know about that perfectly delightful visitor who is at

the Fontenelle?" and she led the conversation into other channels less committal.

"Why should a woman be barred from showing her admiration simply because she is a woman and he is a man?" asked Mrs. Halleck Rose, prominent in the Omaha Society of Fine Arts and also strong for suffrage. "I see no reason except custom which should make women resign their lives to fate. At that, the state may some day step in

Champions of Woman's Right to Propose Claim that Right for Her Not Only During Leap Year but Any Old Time and All the Time

and settle the affairs of the heart for both men and women by granting or refusing them the license to wed, and," she continued, "the social conventions which decree that a woman surrender the prerogative of proposing marriage to a man and await supinely the event of being wooed and won, are incidents of the inferior and dependent social position she has occupied in the past. Legislation in America has removed many of her disabilities, but social traditions so far dominate present customs as to leave the prerogative of proposing where it has always rested. So long as the wife is regarded as a dependant and her maintenance is looked upon as a sort of burden upon the bounty of her husband, it will doubtless be thought more seemly and modestly to yield this privilege to the dispenser of the bounty. Viewed in that light, a modest, single woman will hesitate to make a proposal that implies the solicitation of a man's bounty. A position of social equality would bring a woman's proposal within the proprieties. The freakish disregard of social conventions during leap year seems, however, aside from the point and not in furtherance of any consistent course of evolution."

Girl Can Help the Man to Pop

"I see no reason on earth why if a woman wants to propose, she shouldn't do it in leap year or any other year. Most any girl can bring about a proposal and most of them succeed, with the assistance of their mothers, in making it dead easy for a man to propose. Lots of girls are brought up with that end in view," was the frank admission of Mrs. F. H. Cole. Mrs. Cole's father, however, she says, brought her up on the doctrine that "He who giveth his daughter in marriage doeth well, but he who gives not his daughter in marriage, doeth better." Mrs. Cole is a civil service reform advocate and heads that department of the General Federation of Women's clubs.

Mrs. George Prinz, earnest art and literature student and exceedingly popular in social circles, was deeply engrossed in some thoroughly "high-brow" subject when the question was broached and she had to come back to this terrestrial sphere and mundane subjects. "It shouldn't be done. I believe in the old-fashioned notion that a man likes to pursue and the woman likes to be pursued," she averred.

Dinner Table Debate of the Question

That evening Mrs. Prinz threw a conversational bomb into a perfectly proper dinner party by appealing to the other dinner guests on the subject.

"My! Wouldn't it be great," exclaimed one of the dinner guests, an interesting widower.

"The man would hate it!" differed a bachelor. One of the matrons at the table thought it pathetic that there were so many old maids, splendid women, who would be happily married perchance had they exercised the right of choice with men whom they admired. "Still I wouldn't advise them to ask the man because, after all, women like the idea of having the man ask them to share wedded bliss."

Another man, still clinging to single blessedness, insisted that the privilege of proposing belonged solely to men. It is whispered that a number of like bachelors suffer in imminent fear of losing their independence were women to take it into their pretty heads to propose.

One matron said she was so surprised when her husband proposed to her, she couldn't have been more astounded if a perfect stranger had popped the question. However, she confessed, she had had her eye on him all the time and thought she would be tempted to propose if there were any danger of his getting away from her.

More Common Sense Needed in the Home Too Many Good and Brilliant Women Lack Judgment in Dealing with Husbands' Desire for Variety in Life, Says Ella Wheeler Wilcox

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

IT is easy for many women to be brilliant, and it is easy for others to be good. But it seems the most difficult thing in the world for a woman to be sensible.

Genius and virtue are everywhere, but we search for common sense. Woman is called a composite creature, but man is tenfold more composite. When a man has had the whole world catering to everything in his make-up except his love of virtue he is not to be made abidingly happy with nothing but that quality satisfied.

He cannot suddenly and permanently change his whole mental structure. Be satisfied, then, if your husband gives up the liberties and vices which the world allows a bachelor, but do not ask him to relinquish the courtesies and recreations which are every man's privilege.

Drive suspicion from your door and install confidence in its place. Cultivate self-esteem and self-confidence, and think, act, talk and live so sweetly and lovingly that rivalry is impossible.

Make the new life a holiday, not a term of imprisonment. A very good woman who has no human weakness in her nature is sometimes the devil's tool to drive men to drink. Every now and then a world-weary and folly-weary man marries an innocent, unworldly and "good" woman.

He wants the sweet home life he had not in the paths of pleasure nor in the byways of license. He wants the unmercenary devotion of a loving woman, and he wants to walk forth in the broad light of day, unashamed, with his wife by his side.

It is the inevitable goal of every worth-while man. The world approves of such marriages, and the woman feels that she is filling the highest mission of her sex in reclaiming a lost sheep.

But how few such women know the wise middle course to walk with such a man. It is all very well to listen when he tells you he is happier than he has ever been in his life before, and that his home is dearer to him than any club on earth, but it is far from well if you fall upon his neck and weep the first time he intimates that he would like to drop in at the club and talk with the old chums for an hour.

This is the poorest method you could adopt to convince him of the greater joys of home. There is a certain fascination in a club to most men. There is danger in this fascination to some men. When a man sickens of it and wants a home it is because he has had nothing but his club, and because there is a worthy element in his nature which calls for something better.

The fact that he should want to visit the old scene now and then is not an indication that he is sick of home or that he is wandering from the fold again.

If the pasture is sweet and the shepherdess kind and wise the sheep will not wander far.

If you have married a man who has been overfond of the fair sex, and if he is kind and true and loving, do not stand forever upon the alert, lest he become disloyal to you. Constant surveillance

never kept a man true. It has made many a man unfaithful.

Although your husband may have told you over and over that you are tenfold more pleasing to him than any woman he ever knew before he met you, that does not signify that he might not like to sit by some other at a cotillon. It does not signify that he would not enjoy talking with others whom he regards less highly than you.

In the association with the women he does not love a man often most appreciates the woman he does love. Should he take a seat by some other woman and converse with her in your presence, do not act sulky, distrust or injured. That only makes you ridiculous and unlovable.

Although your innocence and unworldliness won your husband from the paths of folly, those qualities will not keep him at your side unless you mingle common sense and tact with them.

Absolute loyalty, absolute morality, absolute honor and cleanliness of life every woman has the right to ask of her husband. But to make him a willing captive should be woman's art, not to make him a life prisoner and the home a reformatory and the wife a suspicious warden, always imagining that the prisoner is planning escape.

The good wife must possess other qualities besides goodness to make her marriage with a mere man successful. Common sense and tact must be two strands of the rope to make it strong enough to act as an anchor for the domestic ship. The too good wife relies wholly upon one strand and the ship breaks anchor.