

THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE MAGAZINE PAGE

Spinsters Who Confute Colorado Minister's Utterances



Omaha Women Who Would Be Exiled if Rev. Huffner Had His Way

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| Kate A. McHugh, principal of High school. | Clara Schaefer, head resident Social Settlement. |
| Clara F. Cooper, principal of Teachers' Training school. | Lillian Stuff, head nurse Visiting Nurse association. |
| Jennie L. Redfield, principal Castellor school. | Belle Ryan, assistant Superintendent schools. |
| Mary A. Fitch, principal Lake school. | Louise McPherson, president Visiting Nurse association. |
| Lizzie L. Banker, principal Pacific school. | Stella Hamilton, president Christ Child society; director Visiting Nurse association. |
| Helen Wyckoff, principal Comenius school. | Arabella Kimball, director of the Creche. |
| Euphemia Johnson, principal Brownell Hall. | Janet Wallace, High school teacher; secretary Social Settlement association. |
| Edith Tobitt, librarian of Public library. | Joy Higgins, in United States internal revenue department; Settlement worker. |
| Margaret O'Brien, charge of library reading room. | Katherine Hughes, assistant secretary of Ak-Sar-Ben. |
| Kate Schwartzlander, head of library children's department. | Nellie Malone, secretary to the mayor. |
| Mabel W. Porter, general secretary of Associated Charities. | Mary Strong, physician. |
| Esther A. Johnson, probation officer of Juvenile court. | Abby Virginia Holmes, physician. |
| Lily M. Strong, general secretary of Young Women's Christian association. | Nora Fairchild, physician. |
| Marie Haines, general secretary of Scandinavian Young Women's Christian association. | Elizabeth F. McCartney, lawyer. |
| Nellie Magee, superintendent of City Mission. | Frances Graves, business woman. |
| | Mary Munchhoff, musician. |



MISS KATHERINE HUGHES

IF REV. ELMER E. HUFFNER had his way, all old maids in Omaha and in every other place would be exiled to a desert island. And who is this Elmer E., and why does he wish to banish the spinsters?

In the first place, Rev. Mr. Huffner is pastor of the Christian church of Grand Junction, Colo. Or, rather, he was minister in that church. He has resigned and the sermon advocating the banishment of old maids was his last. An Omaha spinster suggested that it is well for him that he saved that sermon until the last.

The sermon, which has stirred up quite a tempest of protest among unmarried people all the way from Boston to San Francisco, was entitled "Love, Courtship and Marriage." In it Rev. Mr. Huffner declared that bachelors and bachelor maids were waste humanity and that they should be isolated on an island where they could not hinder the progress of civilization.

He made the statement that Helen Gould would be a far better member of society if she were married. The noted millionairess and philanthropist promptly wrote Rev. Mr. Huffner a letter in which she protested that she and others, single like herself, were not hindering civilization, but advancing it, and that if she had found a suitable helpmate she might have spent her money in a way which might not have done as much good as it has done.

Other prominent spinsters of the country have voiced their protest.

What do Omaha spinsters think about it? Well, if Rev. Mr. Huffner had heard the complimentary remarks they made about him and knew of the scornful attitude—to put it mildly—they take toward his ideas as expressed in "Love, Courtship and Marriage," he would probably feel like crawling away to the desert island he has designed for them and hiding his ministerial head in the sand.

Some of the Omaha bachelor women think that Rev. Mr. Huffner and his ideas are a joke; others feel sure that he is a little bit touched—that his

gray matter is not quite up to the standard; others are downright indignant that anyone should think and say the things that he said.

All protest against being marooned on a desert island.

"Although," said one spinster of a very optimistic temperament, "we would no doubt form a very notable assemblage and would find many useful and interesting employments and ways of enjoying ourselves."

But they all protest that they do not want to be exiled. They believe that they ought not to be sent off to an island—desert or otherwise. They declare that they are needed here—that there is work here which they must do.

There is not a man-hater among them. They have not improved opportunities to marry—some because they have been needed to help in the support of their families, others because they believed that they would be happier and more useful single. A good many have been so very busy that they have not had time to consider the question at all.

There is probably no one in the community but what would admit that it would be a great loss to Omaha to have all our bachelor women sent away. For it is the women of Omaha who are taking the lead in and doing the actual work of the educational and philanthropic activities. The principal of the high school and of all the grade schools except one are spinsters, as are also the principal of the Teachers' Training school and the assistant superintendent of schools. Nearly all of Omaha's teachers are old maids or young maids.

The head and assistants in the public library are unmarried women, as are also most of the heads and workers in the charitable institutions. Our spinsters are prominent in the professions, as doctors, lawyers, trained nurses, musicians; in business, in offices, in department stores and wholesale houses.

A rapid canvass of a dozen or more bachelor

women was made one day last week to find out what they thought of Rev. Mr. Huffner's "maroon-em-to-a-desert-island" idea. My, how his ears must have burned that day!

This is what Miss Frances Graves said:

I can't understand just why the gentleman wishes to condemn us to an existence on a barren island. While it is possibly true that in some instances selfishness is the main cause of men and women refusing to marry; that a disinclination to assume the duties and responsibilities of married life has, in some individual cases, had something to do with men and women remaining single, it would seem that the punishment prescribed by the clerical gentleman was a little more serious than the offense would warrant. This seems especially true when one considers the fact that many married people exhibit a selfishness and lack of appreciation of their responsibilities in the raising of their children that would appear to the disinterested observer to be even more criminal than the simple refusal of parentage.

It would seem to me that the gentleman in question has made a rather wild statement. That he is not conversant with his subject; also that he is inclined to be a little vindictive. The condition of the birth rate in the United States would hardly seem to justify such a serious punishment for the failure of a comparatively small number of men and women to fulfill the primal purpose for which they were created.

I believe that by far the greater number of unmarried women do, in one way or another, follow as truly and faithfully the strongest instinct of their nature, the mother instinct, as does the woman who has fulfilled her great law of nature.

"Do I agree with the minister who has declared that the unmarried men and women of the world are a stumbling block to civilization?" asked Miss Joy Higgins. "Well, rather not! Most of the unmarried women I know, aside from providing for themselves and others, are so busy picking up and adjusting stumbling humanity they haven't time to contemplate or alter their unlovely state of singleness. Mind you, this stumbling humanity has not bumped itself against poor, boney spinsterhood. In some remote way or other its bumps have to do

MARY FITCH



MISS MABEL W. PORTER

with matrimony. I'm not discouraging the holy state; quite the contrary. I mention this because it is only the unmarried who have been attacked.

About these good women that the reverend gentleman has mentioned in particular. If anyone is cheated it is the Helen Goulds, the Jane Addamses, the Anne Morgans and countless other unmarried women who have given their lives to the good of others; not humanity, not civilization. The world gains. If these women have shut out of their lives the more intimate love and denied themselves the joy of holding their own children in their arms, it is that their hearts may be filled with a more universal love and their arms held out to all the needy little children of the world. Theirs is the sacrifice, but these good women are not looking upon it so. Strange, it seems only to be worrying the ministers! If one wanted to be real vindictive she might have some remarks to make about the hard, unrequited lives of many poor ministers' wives!

"Not to point a moral, only just to mention it in passing. Helen Gould's sister, Anna Gould-de Castellaine-de Sagan, obeyed the divine injunction. Is it not a fair question to ask which of these two sisters' lives is the more illuminating lesson to humanity?"

Miss Nellie Magee said that many single women prefer to remain so because they believe that they can be of more use in the world that way. She said: "I think that each individual should choose

her own way and, if she is doing her best, should not be criticised.

"I always wanted to do the things that no one else wanted to do. I drifted into mission work years ago and it has been my life ever since. I could not be happy unless I were doing it."

Miss Katherine Hughes said: "The single women are the ones who are progressive. They are all doing work which is worth while and making for the advancement of civilization. It used to be that marriage was the only outlook for a girl. She married often because it was the only thing to do. Now it is different. There are many number of interests and lines of work open to women. They are not dependent on marriage and do not rush into it. There is work for them in the world outside the home."

Miss Jennie L. Redfield: "This minister overlooks the fact that the women are doing the teaching and charity work of the world. The fact that Jane Addams and other women in social work are single gives them the opportunity to do what they could not if they were married, and civilization would certainly lose. The schools are unquestionably the greatest factor in civilizing, humanizing and uniting together the American people and the foreigners who come to this country. All of the schools in Omaha and most of them in other cities are supervised by single women."

"I deplore the fact that all women are not married and taking entire charge of their own children. But no woman can take entire charge of her children. This is community work and a part must be done by the single women."

Dr. Mary Strong: "I think that the minister ought to be taken before an insanity commission. I am an old maid. I have the old-fashioned idea that if a woman has a family she ought to stay at home and take care of it. But it is not for every woman to marry. Often there are family reasons why women should not marry. Many women are not fitted for married life and to be mothers, and may be successful at something else. These women should remain single and there is much good that they can do in the world."

Elizabeth F. McCartney: "I think that if the single women are sent off into exile as Rev. Mr. Huffner would have it, it would be a great loss to the world. (Continued on Page Twelve.)"