

Family Council

Mrs. K. G.—My sister's suitor would make a good father to her boy.

Mrs. H. M.—I can't marry him for that alone.

Mrs. K. G.—My sister's husband died two years ago, leaving her with one little boy, aged 4. My sister then went to live with our mother and grandmother.

During the first year after her husband's death my sister was so heartbroken she would not consider any social activity. Recently, however, she has perked up a bit and gone out and met a man who wants very much to marry her.

This man is a widower with two young daughters. He is a fine person, has a good income and is a very good father. I feel that my sister is making a terrible mistake by discouraging him as she has. If only for her son's sake she should marry him. The boy needs a father. He only has contact with women under the present arrangement.

Mrs. H. M.—I can't see what harm it is doing my son to be with the three of us. Of course, I would like him to have a father, but I don't feel I can marry this man on that basis alone.

The man my sister speaks of is all she says he is, but I don't feel he loves me or that I love him. He has approached me on the basis that we both owe an obligation to our children to establish a home with two parents.

My husband and I were very much in love and I am afraid I could not live with a man I do not love. I am willing to make sacrifices for my son, but this one is just too much for me. My son is being very well cared for by the three of us. We do our best to encourage all his boyish interests and not make a slip out of him.

The Council: Mrs. H. M. is right to refuse to make a marriage for the sole purpose of supplying her son with a father. Such a step is not likely to lead to a very successful marriage. She should not, however, rule out this highly eligible man until she has gotten to know him better. He may just be using the wrong approach.

There is a strong possibility that this man feels he is using the most persuasive possible argument when he speaks to Mrs. H. M. of the need to make a home for their children. It is likely that he is attracted to her and romantically interested, but underestimates her own interest in romance.

Mrs. H. M. is probably somewhat offended that the man does not show enough interest in her as a woman. If she does not discourage him, she may quickly find this interest just beneath the surface, and may find herself readily responding to it.

The problem of her son may be considered separately. Although Mrs. H. M. and her mother and grandmother may be doing the best they can for the boy, they cannot supply him with something he strongly needs—a male figure with whom he can identify. This is important to his development and Mrs. H. M. should try to make up for the lack.

Frequent contact with his uncles or other male members of the family would help. Steady contact is needed, however. If this regular contact is not possible with a member of the family, Mrs. H. M. would do well to hire a male baby-sitter—a youth of college age who can spend a few afternoons a week with the boy and possibly take him on an outing over the week end. She should try to find someone who is willing to keep the job for a prolonged period, so that her son will not constantly have this male contact torn away from him.

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