

● Who Started Woman's Leap Year Wooing?

Nobody knows, for certain, who invented the idea of women proposing during Leap Years.

In the middle Ages there were laws giving maiden ladies this liberty. Here is a Scottish law of 1288, which also gave bachelors a chance of escape by paying up to one pound (roughly \$5 in our money):

"It is statut and ordaint that during the rein of hir maist blissit Megeste, for ilk yeare knowne as lepe yeare, ilk mayden layde of bothe highe and lowe estait shall hae liberte to bespeke ye man she likes, albeit he refuses to taik hir to be his lawful wyfe, he shall be mulcted in ye sum ane pundis or less, as his estait may be; except and awis gif he can make it appere that he is betroithit ane ither woman he then shall be free."

want to have to propose to a husband; and she should certainly not do so."

What would improve matters, Dr. Popenoe believes, is this:

"Better education of both men and women for marriage, with the elimination of some of the feminist influence, will solve such problems as now exist. They cannot be solved by trying to override the age-old distinction between masculine and feminine behavior."

And that brings us to the plain-spoken recommendation of an anthropologist, Prof. Earnest A. Hooton of Harvard University, noted for his straight-from-the-shoulder criticisms of the human species.

"What this civilization needs is fewer and better babies," began Prof. Hooton's terse reply to the query about women proposing marriage.

Prof. Hooton in recent years has been warning all who will listen that mankind may be good at gadgets, but human beings compare unfavorably with apes in many ways as efficient members of the animal kingdom.

Human beings go right along, indifferent to the production of morons, criminals, and social ineffectuals. They are told that biological science offers hope for improving mankind. But they take little concern for the future.

All of which explains why, while Prof. Hooton prescribes "fewer and better babies" for a better civilization, he adds gloomily:

"Since both sexes are equally ignorant of human genetics, it makes no difference which chooses. 'Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?'"

Prof. Hooton is fairly cheerful about

the rising generation, though. He has given it credit for having enough clever youngsters to push ahead with the hard task of evolving a code of biological ethics. Such a code put into practice, he believes, would enable mankind to become more honest, unselfish, decent, and

considerate in all his human relations.

That anthropological advice seems a long leap from Leap Year—with which this account started—but it does end with an idea of science for improving civilization.

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CLIMATOLOGY

Apparent Climatic Shifts Are Really Fluctuations

Experts Declare That Crediting the Warm West Coast Weather on Movement of Japan Current Is Just Guess

APPARENT climatic shifts, such as the current one that has brought a warm winter to the whole Pacific Coast while the entire country east of the Rockies has had to shovel snow, are to be regarded as fluctuations in a longer or shorter cycle rather than permanent changes. Such is the consensus of opinions independently expressed by scientists of the U. S. Weather Bureau, the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Hydrographic Office of the U. S. Navy. And whatever causes them, a supposed shift in the Japan Current must not be held responsible.

There is a slow, wide swing in air temperatures, not only for the Pacific Coast but for the whole world, that takes about a century to go through, stated J. B. Kincer of the U. S. Weather Bureau. There was a succession of warm years about a hundred years ago, and we seem to be having another one now. In between, shortly after the middle of the nineteenth century, there was a group of low-temperature years, with cool summers and severe winters. Rainfall cycles (if they can properly be called that) are of considerably shorter duration than this long temperature swing, Mr. Kincer said.

Crediting recent warm Pacific Coast winters to a southward shift in direction of the Japan Current was scouted as unfounded guesswork by both H. A. Marmer of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and Comdr. H. Hartley of the Hydrographic Office. It is a case of reasoning backward: A shift in the Japan Current could cause a change in climate; the climate on the Coast seems to be changing; therefore the Japan Current has shifted.

The only trouble with that proposition is that nobody knows whether the famous current has shifted or not. It would be possible to go and find out,

but that would take ships, men and money, none of which are available now—or likely to be, with Congress cutting deep even into existing research appropriations.

Until valid evidence to the contrary is brought forth by a well-supported well-planned, long-continued research program, there is no justification for supposing that the Japan Current has shifted or is shifting. If revolutionary changes had taken place in the ocean bottom recently, with tremendous, world-shaking earthquakes, we might be justified in assuming a shift in the current; but such cataclysmic events have not taken place. So we must let the "Kuro Siwo" flow in peace.

From the Pacific Coast, Prof. George E. McEwen of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, at La Jolla, Calif., offers support to his scientific colleagues in Washington. "Although it may seem as though the climate is changing," says Prof. McEwen, "there is no evidence that the trend will continue in the same direction."

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Set Important New Date For American History

AN IMPORTANT new date for history books has been worked out by two Harvard University geologists: Nearly 25,000 years ago the first Americans arrived. Dr. Kirk Bryan and Louis L. Ray reached this verdict by intensive study of the camp ground of Folsom Man in Colorado, and it looks as though a long scientific argument over antiquity of man in America is about over. Incidental weather note: Folsom hunters found Colorado chillier than it is today.

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