

THROUGH A MONOCLE

WOMEN JURORS FOR WIFE-BEATERS.

I AM not a "Suffragette," nor yet a Suffragist; but I am coming to the conclusion that there is one branch of our machine for maintaining law and order with which women should be invited to co-operate. That is the jury system, in cases affecting women. Especially would such a step be wise in instances of wife-beating and wife-murder. I do not like to admit that our sex is not chivalrous enough to protect defenceless women; and it is particularly painful for me to confess that we fail at times in protecting that most defenceless and most confiding specimen of her sex—the true wife. But when, for example, I hear men say, and when I even see it written in the public prints, that the intoxication of the husband serves as some sort of an excuse for his brutality toward his wife, how am I to escape the admission that we not only lack chivalry—we lack common justice and ordinary decency?

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HAS the habitual intoxication of the husband who—one almost hesitates to write the word—STRIKES his wife with his fist, deliberately chokes her with his fingers or inflicts some other physical torture upon her, made it any easier for her to bear her humiliating torment? Has it not rather been an aggravation of the offence? Has it not deprived her of the presence in the home of those gentler feelings and juster instincts to which she might have appealed for protection? I am not writing a temperance lecture. But I am saying that, when a man takes a woman from the shelter of her father's home and asks her to trust her future entirely to his keeping, he is under bonds not to permit himself an indulgence of any sort which will unfit him for living up to his side of the agreement. If drinking on his part does not lead to neglect of or brutality towards his wife, it does not come within the scope of this article. But if a man finds that drinking is apt to betray him into making a brute of himself at home, then I say that that man has no right to drink. He has entered a partnership whose terms forbid it.

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NOW that is why I want women on these juries. I want them to say, when a husband comes up for wife-beating, "we find him guilty and we think he ought to go to prison for a year and work while there for the support of his wife." Then when his lawyer objects—"But he was intoxicated at the time," I want that woman jury to have the power to amend its verdict, and demand that he be sent to prison for two years for thus "aggravating the offence." Of course, I am mixing up the functions of judges and juries and even law-makers; but you know what I mean. We have, for example, a case of wife murder occasionally. Some poor, persecuted, tortured woman, who has endured the brutalities of a foul and drunken husband for months or years, finally succumbs under a particularly savage attack. The husband finds, after a last kick or two, that she is dead—she is beyond his power to torment forever.

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WE arrest him. We all feel that hanging is too good for him. We regret that the days of legal torture are over. We would like to make him feel some of the things he made his wife feel. But just then somebody is sure to bob up with the extenuating explanation that the man was drunk at the time—that, in fact, he has the misfortune to suffer from an appetite for liquor and is often drunk. He was a good soul when sober; but he was a devil in his cups. Dear! Dear! And I can just see the male jury getting ready to find that the woman really died of an enlarged artery or incipient tuberculosis, and to offer to declare the man guilty of a mild form of manslaughter if the charge be re-framed that way. Murder? Why, of course not. He was drunk. Now here is where the jury of wives would come in. "He was drunk, did you say?" they would ask. "He was often drunk and as often abused the dead woman? Very well; we find him guilty of murder in the first degree, without the smallest recommendation to mercy."

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THE "Suffragettes" charge that man-made laws are not fair to women. There should not be the slightest foundation left for that charge. I am quite aware that it is ill-founded in many respects to-day. That is, our laws are framed upon the theory that woman is the weaker vessel and requires

special protection. Women are not allowed to do certain things or to carry certain responsibilities because it has been believed that these burdens and duties can be better looked after by their husbands, their fathers or their natural male guardians. Of course, this sort of paternal talk renders the average "Suffragette" speechless with indignation. She does not want to be protected. She feels quite capable of looking after her own interests. But, right or wrong, our laws are based on the theory that women need protection; and it is unfair to represent them as denying women rights when they only absolve them from responsibilities and guard them from dangers.

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STILL, this does not cover the whole case. There are legal disabilities for which there is no excuse, save in the minds of certain grand-fatherly individuals who think that a woman should never be without a needle or a dish-cloth in her hands. Women are adults. There is no question of mental equality between the sexes. They are mentally dif-

ferent—that is all. On this Continent, the average of feminine intelligence is probably higher than that of masculine intelligence. That is, women, as a rule, know more about the things in life which really matter than men do. Men, for their part, know more about the methods of money-making. I think they have the greater mental power as well as the greater physical power; but they are harnessed to the dollar-machine as the women are not. However, this is getting far away from the matter with which we started—and getting, possibly, onto somewhat dangerous ground.

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WHAT I want to say is that women should be allowed to impose upon the administration of justice their view of the true meaning of justice in cases of offences against themselves. I should like to see a jury at least half of women, sit on the case of every wife-beater. I would not be sorry to see it all women in the case of every man charged with wife murder. As for the soulless devils who engage in what we call "white slavery," I would always send them before a jury of mothers whose daughters work in departmental stores; and I would put a mother, who had suffered in this respect before, on the Bench. The law should then permit hanging, with previous application of the lash. That's the kind of a "Suffragette" I am.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

THE MAN FROM SOUTH ONTARIO

Continuation of a Conversation on Reciprocity as Debated on a Railway Train by two Manufacturers and a Farmer from South Ontario

By WILLIAM HENRY

THE man in the armchair was obstinate.

"I, for one," he urged, "do not approve of having our tariff made in Washington. This reciprocity treaty, or pact, or whatever you call it, is nothing less than the surrender of our fiscal independence into the hands of Congress. When they commence to make our tariff laws in the capital of the United States it will be only a short time until they make the rest of our legislation.

"Quite right, quite right," added Mr. Brown. "If reciprocity is not the thin edge of the free trade wedge it is certainly the thin edge of a great big annexation wedge. What is the good of being devoured piecemeal? Let them swallow us all at once, my farmer friend."

"I am afraid I am monopolizing the conversation," replied the man from South Ontario, "but if you gentlemen persist in asking me questions I must try to answer them. Let me begin as the Irishman does, with a question. Have any of you gentlemen read the letters that passed between Mr. Fielding and Mr. Knox in regard to this question? I mean the letters that constitute the arrangement."

Mr. Brown said he had read them at the time in the newspapers, or abstracts from them, while the rest of us had to admit that we had never seen them, and did not know that the arrangement had been brought into effect by a series of letters.

"It is strange," continued the farmer, "that you are all so interested in the subject and have not taken the trouble to read these letters. Anyone who is without political bias and wants to learn the truth in justice to himself, should obtain copies of these letters. I think they can be had for the asking from the Government. I have copies here; let me read one or two extracts, which I think will throw some light on the question. Mr. Fielding in his letter to the Secretary of State of the United States, brings out two points which are very material to the subject under discussion. He states, first, 'The desired tariff shall not take the formal shape of a treaty, but that the governments of the two countries will use their utmost efforts to bring about such changes by concurrent legislation at Washington and Ottawa.' Second: 'It is distinctly understood that we do not attempt to bind for the future the action of the United States Congress or the Parliament of Canada, but that each of these authorities shall be absolutely free to make any change of tariff policy or of any other matter covered by the present arrangement that may be deemed expedient.' It must be remembered that these are the exact words used in the agreement between the Canadian and the United States representatives, and are thus a part of the arrangement—a very important part of it. Now, under these conditions what question can there be as to the sacrifice of fiscal independence? The Canadian Parliament passes Canadian tariff legislation to-morrow. The United States Congress has already passed it. As a result of the action of these two legislative

bodies, the tariff acts of both come into force, and then both Parliament and Congress are at liberty to amend or repeal these laws in exactly the same way as they would deal with any other laws on the statute books."

The farmer then went on to quote some figures as to the amount of trade Canada is now doing with the United States as compared with what it is doing with Great Britain. But the man in the armchair did not seem impressed.

"My boy, your figures are all very fine," said he, "but when you are as old as I you will think the old motto, 'Let well enough alone,' a pretty good one. The country is prosperous; why make a change? If we were in the sloughs of industrial depression it might be good policy to look for trade with the United States, but at present we don't need them commercially, and we don't want them politically."

The man from South Ontario paused a minute before replying. "I agree with you that politically we can let well enough alone," he began. "I, for one, am satisfied to remain a Canadian and a British subject, but industrially I contend we should always try to improve our position. The government would be recreant to its trust if it did not take advantage of every legitimate opportunity to increase the trade of the country. I am sure no man of affairs would adopt in the conduct of his business the policy which you advocate for the government. There is—"

"But," interrupted Mr. Brown, "we always assume that the change is for the better."

"I think I can prove that easily enough," was the answer, "but let me put it to you this way. If reciprocity be a good thing and we don't try it, we have missed a good thing. Is that plain?"

"Yes," reluctantly admitted Mr. Brown, "but—"

"Just a minute. But if after adopting reciprocity, we find it is a bad thing, we can change it any time. A law passed by Parliament for the regulation of the tariff can be changed as easily as a law for the suppression of weeds. Where can we possibly go wrong by giving it a trial?"

"It is easy enough to say change, my boy," answered the voice from the armchair, "but you will find in practice it is not so easy."

"Why not? One law is as easy to make or unmake as another," was the reply. "The tariff pact will not remain law one instant longer than the people of Canada and their representatives want it."

The young manufacturer who was listening in silence for some minutes now took up the thread of conversation. "I think the people would be more willing to give the pact a trial if they had more confidence in the representatives who negotiated it at Washington, but when two old 'Hasbeens' go down to Washington and deal with those smart Yankees, you can't blame the people if they lack confidence in the results of their bargain."

"What have you to say to that argument?" said
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