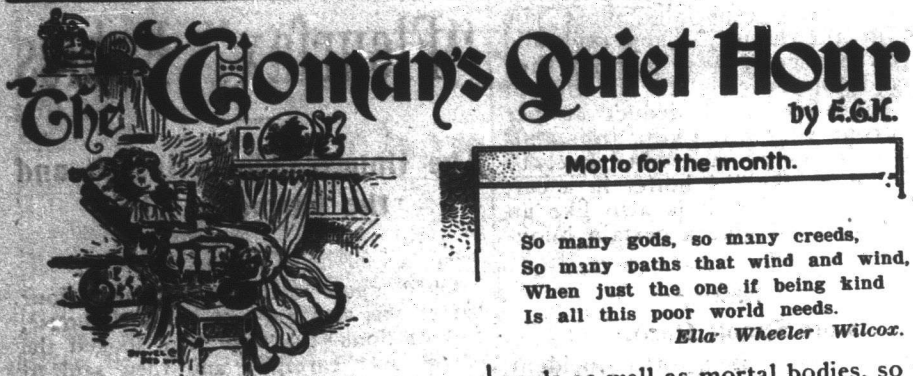




Race Suicide.

The decrease in the number of children born to American parents has become so marked that the President of the United States has seen fit to take the matter up and discuss it seriously; it is the subject of endless newspaper and magazine articles in America; and of late ministers of the gospel in Canada have taken up the cry, and have gone so far as to declare that many society women in Canada practice "race suicide" regularly. Just here let me say that I believe it to be a libel on the women of Canada, of any and every class, to say that they are guilty of this most revolting of all crimes. I have no desire to discuss this crime, but the increasing decline in the birth rate among English speaking Canadians is in sharp contrast to the ever increasing birth rate among the French Canadians in the lower province. The Roman Catholic Church claims much credit for this, basing their claim on the strong teachings of the church on race suicide and the intense domesticity of their women.

The causes of the decreased birth rate among English speaking Canadians are complex, but two stand out with special clearness—the later date at which people marry and the bad health and lack of physical vigor of many of those who do marry. But without discussing the result of these causes at length I will take up the question as it appears to relate to farm homes.

Children on the Farm.

The hope of Canada is in her farm homes; here life should be the most normal and healthful, and it has always been a marvel to me that on farms, where the breeding of fine cattle, horses, hogs and sheep is a matter of almost daily discussion, there should be such small regard for the bearing and rearing, under the best conditions, of strong and beautiful children. The young farmer, who from childhood to manhood has heard the discussion of the need of preserving type, the transmission of traits from the sire, the care needed in the selection of dams in order that the best features of a breed be preserved and the undesirable ones eliminated, seems never for one moment to apply that knowledge when seeking a wife, and yet he hopes to have children, strong physically and bright mentally. Having married, this same young man will have great care for his brood mare lest she be strained by overwork and the life of her foal, or its beauty and strength be endangered; but he never pauses to consider whether his wife, who is a prospective mother, is being overdone by the burdens of the house; he does not ask either himself or her if she is living a life calculated to produce healthy offspring. The girl on the farm home, she has seen the beauty of form and the general perfection of type, which care in selection and breeding in the farm animals has produced. She loves a well bred horse and will often point out the things in which he resembles sire or dam. She chooses a husband and she hopes to have children, no decently minded normal woman marries without that hope at her heart, yet does she ever ask herself whether the husband she is choosing is the best possible father for the children she hopes to bear, is he sound physically and mentally, has he the qualities of gentleness and self-control she would like to see in her sons? The children that shall be born of this union will have immortal

souls as well as mortal bodies, so that any mistake on the part of father or mother may affect them not only for time but for eternity. Have I put this matter too broadly? I think not. Race suicide consists not merely in refusing to bear children, but in a far greater degree in the bringing into the world of children who have not a fair fighting chance, children who are unwelcome, and for whose coming no loving thought has been taken, and for whom neither father nor mother have made sacrifices or exercised self-control. This is a great question and one of vital moment and I shall be glad to hear from either man or woman who has given it thought.

Hymns and Their Writers.

The other Sunday morning a certain congregation in the City of Winnipeg listened to a very forceful sermon from Professor A. B. Baird, of Manitoba College, on the text "Lovest thou me more than these," and as a fitting climax to the discourse, sang that sublime hymn of the poet Cowper:

"Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;
Tis thy Saviour; hear His Word,
Jesus speaks and speaks to thee:
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?"

From the fulness and vigor with which it was rendered it was evidently a favorite, and I could not help wondering how many of those who sang ever turned a thought to the gentle spirit who, out of his own darkness and despair, had sent the world so grand a message. It is generally known that William Cowper suffered from melancholia that amounted at times to dementia, and Thomas Wright, author of one of the most recent of the Cowper biographies, states that this melancholia, though inherited, was increased by a dream which came to Cowper in 1773. The import of this dream was "it is all over, thou hast perished," and the remaining twenty-seven years of his life were shadowed by this terrible idea that his soul was lost. The marvellous thing is, that it was during this period that many of his hymns that breathe the most profound and trustful faith in and love towards God and the Saviour were written, and among them the one of which a verse has already been quoted. There is hardly a hymn in the numerous collection of sacred songs that more beautifully express faith, and the knowledge of the writer's acceptance with God. Cowper's hymns are wonders of phrasing and melody, but quite apart from literary merit this hymn is a masterpiece in its exposition of a loving and hopeful christian spirit. The first verse presents the idea of the Saviour making his old inquiry of Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me?" then in the second verse, the writer describes the work of Christ:

"I delivered thee when bound.
Turned thy darkness into light."
And again
"Mine is an unchanging love.

Free and faithful, strong as death."
And the last verse is the answer to the Saviour's inquiry.
"Lord it is my chief complaint
That my love is cold and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore,
O, for grace to love Thee more!"

So many souls have been comforted by this hymn that the conditions under which it was written should never be forgotten, as they furnish at least one answer to the world-old question "the why" of pain and sorrow.



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The Agricultural College.

The appointment of W. J. Black, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, as principal of the Agricultural College, should be cause of rejoicing to the women of Manitoba, for Mr. Black, I am glad to say, is a firm believer in the girls as well as the boys of the farm homes enjoying the advantages of the college. He may not be able to do all he desires in that direction at once, but there is nothing like having a strong friend at court, one who has the will to help, when opportunity offers.

Three years ago when this college began to be seriously talked of, I made it my business to correspond with the women principals of several of the large agricultural colleges in the United States. Very bright and capable women they are, and easily able to give reasons for the faith that is in them of the advantage to the farm homes of the co-education for the boys and girls in the agricultural colleges. The answers from different states differed with the varying conditions, but there was one advantage in this form of education in which they were all agreed, and that was that it tended to keep both the boys and the girls on the farms. The percentage of marriages among the students after leaving college was large, and the percentage of divorces (that bug-a-boo of American life) very small. One principal, in speaking on this point said, "I do not wish to be understood as advocating co-education of farmers' sons and daughters in agricultural colleges, as a marriage market, but my observation, over a long period of years, has led me to believe that the only way to keep the boys on the farm is to keep the girls there, and there is no way in which the girls can be kept so readily as by giving them an interest in their work, and raising what has so often been regarded as drudgery to the dignity of a profession."

This is high testimony for the co-education of boys and girls from the farms in our agricultural college.

One way in which the women of Manitoba could materially assist in the establishment of a women's section of the college would be by addressing letters of inquiry as to what is to be done in this direction to Mr. Black. This would give him an intelligent idea of the number of women interested and would materially strengthen his hands in applying to the government of the day to have this section established.

Books on Canada.

Some of the books on Canada are sufficiently provoking to make an angel take to very vigorous Anglo-Saxon. One Herman Whitaker has perpetrated an atrocity called "The Probationer," in which he describes threshing gangs running their machines with the thermometer 40 below zero, and the weather at Christmas being 65 and 70 degrees below zero. Quite a number of the farmers, according to this authority, live in huts made by threshing so that the straw will fall on a support of poles. He must have visited with the hogs when he came West. This man is one degree worse than John Foster Fraser, who, in his "Canada as it is," describes Fort William and Port Arthur homes as being built of rough-hewn logs; the city of Winnipeg as being noted for its absence of children and the Territory of Alberta as suffering from continuous rains, and yet claims to have travelled extensively in the Canadian West in 1904. Why, oh why, cannot these good people let the West alone, or tell the truth.

Sometimes I fear that women are not wholly blameless in this matter, particularly in writing to the old land. They speak casually of some spell of cold weather, which may be quite out of the usual, as if it is usual and common, and many women are painfully inaccurate in their statements of thermometer reading. Having lived 23 years in the Canadian West, I am fully aware that it is not

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