

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE ALSO

No longer ago than last week the conception of a married woman as a ward of her husband found expression in our Dominion House of Parliament, when Mr. Edmund Proulx, speaking of the motion to grant the Dominion franchise to any woman who had the provincial franchise, said that the franchise ought to be confined to widows and spinsters. If it were to be suggested as an alternative to this that when the women were enfranchised the vote should be taken from all married men, what would the advocates of this principle have to say to that? And, yet, where's the difference? The theory of the honorable member is evidently that the personality of husband and wife becomes merged in one. Why couldn't the merger work either way?

As a matter of fact every married man would consider it the very greatest indignity if the right to express his opinion upon public questions were taken away from him and the privilege of doing it for both conferred upon his wife. And so it would be. But what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and the married woman of today would find it no less humiliating than her husband to have the state decide that someone else should do her thinking for her.

Since such a proposition will never receive the serious consideration of our legislators, the circumstance would not be worthy of comment except that the thought back of it fairly permeates our daily life.

A certain woman in this city has a beautiful voice, but as she is a very busy person with little time for practice she is diffident about using it. Her husband doesn't just stop at urging her to use it, he even gets angry when she is asked and refuses. Now suppose, on the other hand, that he were asked by some men to enter into a game of curling and his wife were to get into a tantrum because he refused. He would think she had literally gone insane.

Another man, not a thousand miles away, has a spasm every time his wife wears evening dress, but if she were to let herself get into a temper because he came down some morning in a pair of grey trousers he would be simply dumbfounded. It will be many a long day yet before it is a generally accepted fact that women have exactly the same right to settle such purely personal matters according to their own consciences as have men. And yet until this comes to pass and women are regarded as responsible human beings who not only can, but must, make their own decisions independently, all of the things for which womanhood stands will be held lightly and cheaply.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

LETTERS MUST BE SIGNED

Two unsigned letters came to my office this week, and I regret that I was not, on that account, able to publish them. The Guide always respects the confidence of its readers and never publishes a name where the writer asks to have it withheld, but it expects its contributors to show sufficient confidence in it to trust the editors with their names. No letters are published whose authors neglect to observe this rule. F.M.B.

A PROBLEM IN DECORATION

Dear Miss Beynon:—I have seen in The Guide some useful suggestions given by you on home decorating, and as I would like to go all over my house this spring I would like if you would kindly advise me on the colors which would blend best with my woodwork.

My house is a small, cozy farm house, 26 by 24. It has kitchen, dining room, parlor and hall downstairs. There are none of the rooms large, but large enough for four of a family. To begin, the woodwork downstairs is all nicely painted and grained in medium shade oak finish. It is really well done and highly varnished, so it we can't change. Other things will have to be planned to suit it. I will send a plan so you can see as to the light in the rooms.

Upstairs is just plain white plastered walls and unpainted woodwork, so they can be done as fancied. I have four bedrooms, two with west light and two with east light, and just ordinary sized windows.

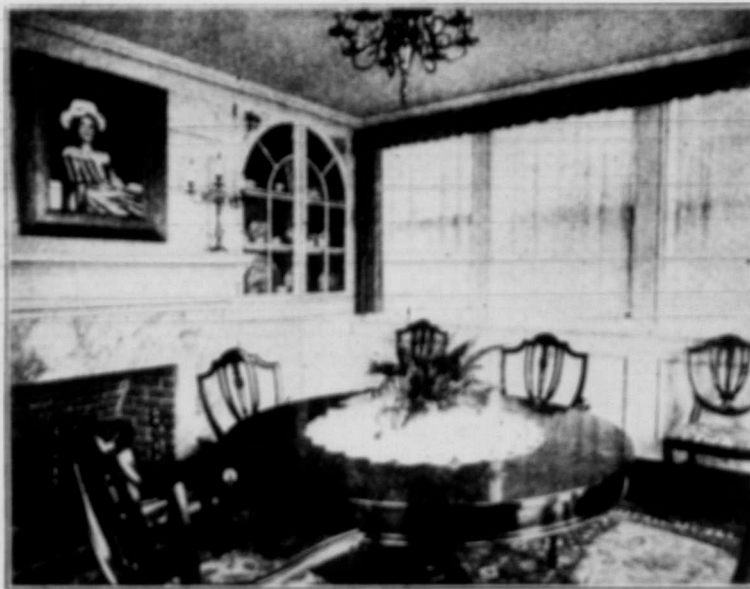
I forgot to mention there is a plate rail in the dining room and the picture moulding in the parlor is set down eighteen inches. If it isn't too much

trouble, I would like you to suggest decorations for each of these rooms. RAE.

Answer

When I was at Normal School we had a teacher who used always to begin by saying, "Fine, fine, but—" and I was reminded of him when I opened your letter and looked at the plan of your cozy little home. It is a dear little home, but—I am so sorry about the downstairs woodwork, because, in my opinion, woodwork that is painted and grained and varnished is a particularly bad beginning for a beautiful home. The reason I am so down on this particular kind of woodwork is that it is a decorative lie. Yes, just as bad as that. The object of doing the graining over the paint is to pretend that it is the natural grain of the wood tho, of course, anyone with even a quarter of an eye can see that it is no such thing. Still the object of the whole business is deception, which is opposed to that basic principle of all good house decoration—straightforwardness and honesty.

You personally, however, are not at all involved in this mistake of the person who finished your home, except that you will have to decide whether or not you will abide by it. Being very fastidious in these matters I wouldn't, if it were my home, even tho I had to go to bed every night for a month with a headache. I would go at that woodwork at once with a strong solution of borax and washing soda mixed with warm water, applied with a soft brush and left to dry, and if that did not remove



Note the quiet dignity of this room as a result of its lack of ornament

the varnish after a washing with clear water, I'd go at it once more and do the same thing over again. When I had completely removed the varnish I would give it one or two coats of pale cream paint and one coat of ivory enamel.

However, there may be twenty good reasons why you cannot give the time and energy necessary to re-finish your woodwork, and in that case you will need to use wall colors which will make it as inconspicuous as possible. I am sending you some marked color cards with suggestions for the different rooms of your home and also for the finishing of the woodwork upstairs. I would have been greatly helped in this, however, if you had remembered to tell me something about your furniture and furnishings, as harmony between these and the wall colors must be preserved. Lacking that information, I have recommended very neutral shades, which are a safe combination with almost any assortment of furniture. F.M.B.

INDIVIDUALS NOT TO BLAME

Dear Miss Beynon:—I take the liberty of asking your kind allowance to answer thru your page "Man's Chum." In his letter, published February 23, I found my name and thank him very much, as this fact gives me the right to enlighten this hard thinking "Chum."

He states: "When women write complaining about their husbands, I wonder why did they marry—and Mary Nicolaeff tried it a second time." Well, I wish, Mr. "Chum," you could understand this. Why? Because the nature did not care about special human existence and made the women just as the men, more obedient to its law than it was desirable for the sufferers in question. It is the first

reason why people marry under our present system of social life. The second reason is an economical one.

Was it for the purpose of rendering each other happy all the people you know married? I am doubtful, excuse me. As I stated in my letter some time ago, the overwhelming majority marry because they look for economical comforts. He wants cheap help, or, better, say servant. She wants protection against unemployment and helplessness of old age, too. Being a potential mother, the woman seeks a protector, father and a home for her offspring, as the present system of social life has made her cautious. In regard to Mary Nicolaeff, I'll tell you why she married. She isn't a superwoman, far off this. She came to Canada after she got a favorable allowance to do so from the Minister of Interior, Hon. Roche, who stated in his kind reply to her questions that a specialist in dairy and creamery, with good references and long practice, could get a position in Canada. Miss Beynon knows well this matter, as I gave her the above-mentioned Mr. Roche's letter to read. I couldn't get a position in my specialty and wouldn't starve, of course; therefore I took the opportunity to marry. If you were well acquainted with scientific Socialism you never would reproach Mary Nicolaeff. It is nonsense to blame individuals, men or women, for the hopelessness of the marriage of today. We Socialists don't blame, as you do, Mr. "Chum," the women or the men for being unhappy. We pity them only, as a doctor should pity his ignorant

patients who have no idea of hygienic life. We Socialists ask and implore all people, regardless of sex, to study the conditions of our present system, to criticize them from the standpoint of commonsense and rightness, and take their "fate" in their own hands, that is: To change the system in its whole and establish a new one, worthy to be a creation of conscious, noble, rightful, really human intellect.

If we blame our fellowmen it is only for their indifference to all that is not in their narrow circle of individual life, and then blaming either women or their husbands or the government or the gods and gods or the selfishness of their neighbors. The net of ignorance entangles the mind of the self-contented majority. Instead of looking for the great remedy—as the French say, "Aux grandes douleurs de grands remèdes"—the people, like Mr. "Chum," attack the very victims of the rotten system—the women. He imagines that women might, by their individual efforts, change the present distress into happiness. The women, as well as the men, have only one means to get rid of their misery—organize, study and fight boldly and relentlessly the whole perverse economical

system of today. You will say: They are too busy, they have no time. Lye! When called by your King to fight the enemy, you leave your home, wife and children and take up arms to kill or to be killed. When war changed conditions the women left their home, their children, and went to make shells and ammunition to help the men to beat the enemy. Look in your life of each day and you will find out that your worst enemy is the present system, and you'll leave your small duties to do the one, the real, the great duty of killing the present hideous economical system and liberating your posterity from murderous economical conditions which compel the babies of two and a half to six years to work for their daily bread. You wonder? Yes, the fact is undeniable that even babies are working in home shops—unhealthy, dusty, dreadful rooms. What can a little poor darling, being two and a half years old, do? He or she is sitting near their mamma, helping really to make artificial flowers which adorn our hats. Such cases are stated by statistics in New York. And what about child labor on the farm? What can the mother do when she badly needs help and lets her children work instead of studying or reading? And what does she think is more important, to earn clothes or to study the problem of improvement of the present life? How many men say to their wives: Leave your iron or needle and help me to find out the cause of wrongs and sufferings of human kind? How many?

MARY NICOLAEFF

Violinist: "Why do you use powder. Elsie?"
"For the same reason that you use rice, papa."
"How is that?"
"Why, to help me draw my beau."

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