

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Francis Marion Beynon.

THE FOREIGNER

In a recent issue of a certain daily paper there appeared a letter criticizing some of the pictures in the Winnipeg Art Gallery. To the writer's opinion of art in general and the moral effect of this exhibit in particular we are utterly indifferent, but that any reputable newspaper should have allowed a certain sentence in that letter to pass censorship in this supposedly enlightened age is a matter for comment.

The sentence to which we take very indignant exception is this: "It is also painful to think that the portraits of two negroes, possibly late attendants in disorderly houses, should be allowed to besmirch the walls."

The pictures referred to are merely two very excellent and respectable portraits of negroes and the only reason for the base insinuation against the originals is the writer's race hatred.

That there are those mean and cowardly enough to cast such an unfair aspersion on a people not strong enough in the community, either numerically or financially, to make an effective protest is conceivable, but that a paper with any standing in the community should lend its columns to so contemptible an end gives one a shock of surprise.

Because we of the Anglo-Saxon race have been able to bully less militant and aggressive peoples into handing over their territory to us is a poor basis for the assumption that we as a race are the anointed of God and the one and only righteous and virtuous people.

Even if we could draw the curtain of forgetfulness over certain dark and un-beautiful passages of our history, ancient and modern, and believe ourselves to be all that we ought to be, it would hardly justify us in denying the claims of any other race to those same virtues. Certainly nothing could excuse the brutality of such wholesale condemnation of another race merely because it does not happen to be born of the same color as ourselves.

The pity of it is that this base innuendo that any and all of the women of the African race are apt to be immoral is all of a piece with a too common attitude on the part of our race towards foreigners. We throw the doors of our country wide open to them and when they enter we treat them as if they were the very dust beneath our feet. The wonder is that they submit so patiently to this unchristian treatment and struggle as hard as many of them do to become good citizens of our country.

SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT MOVING

The suffrage movement in Manitoba has been moving ahead so rapidly during the past two weeks that we have to do a quick step to keep pace with it.

First there was the deputation to Parliament to ask that the franchise be conferred upon women on the same terms as men, and the Premier's halting and troubled answer, which converted more people to the cause than the eloquent pleadings of the suffragists.

On the heels of this achievement there followed the Suffrage Play and Woman's Parliament in the Walker Theatre on the night of January 28. By Monday noon of that week the theatre was nearly sold out and by Wednesday night, to the merriment and glee of all ardent suffragists, people were telephoning madly about the city for seats. It was an enlivening sight to observe lawyers and doctors and other august professional men, who condescendingly strolled in at the last minute, turning away from the box office with a chastened air and hiking to the rush seats in "the gods." The loud applause that greeted the opening number, a suffrage song rendered by a male quartette, promised an interested and sympathetic audience, which promise was amply fulfilled before the evening was over. The play was built up around the supposition that the women had struck and had one and all gone home to live on their nearest male relative until such time as the men were willing to bury in forgetfulness that antiquated old platitude that woman's place is the home and grant them the vote. It was cleverly acted and brought round after round of applause.

Then followed the Woman's Parliament, a brilliant satire on the present system of government and the existing condition of our laws. For one evening the women were in power and the government was adamant to all the pleadings of the more tender-hearted members of the Parliament who were inclined to alleviate the miserable condition of the men. Mrs. Perry begged for a dower law for men, basing her appeal touchingly on justice and decency and all the finer sentiments which human beings could be expected to entertain. Miss Kenneth Haig in reply protested that it was bad form to mention justice in a House of Parliament. It was true, she said, that it was a government of half the people, by half the people and for all of the people. In short, it was a one-eyed Parliament and it was outrageous to ask that legislation be passed favorable to a section of the community that had no votes to offer in exchange for it. She did not know of anyone who had a greater affection and admiration for men than she had. She was not sure whether she had them on a pedestal or a higher plane, but she had them shelved. Mrs. A. V. Thomas was

BRANDON GRAIN GROWERS' CONVENTION

Dear Miss Beynon:—May I come in for a little chat as I have been to the Grain Growers' convention at Brandon as a delegate from the Roaring River Woman Suffrage Association. I was disappointed in two things; first, that there was no lady speaker as promised for the first evening; secondly, the small attendance of ladies. I do not think there was a dozen on any occasion except the evening session, when there was a fair sprinkling of strangers, both male and female.

This would have been a splendid opportunity to have formed local branches of Women's Associations in the province and also a central organization. One has only to attend a convention like the one at Brandon to see the power of organization and co-operation.

Several of the speakers referred to the question of woman suffrage, and one could plainly see that the spirit of the convention was in favor and prepared to help, but it is up to us to work ourselves and to be prepared to take our stand definitely, to read and study all we can

WOMAN SUFFRAGE WOULD NOT REFORM THE WORLD

Dear Miss Beynon:—The letters in your most interesting department are usually of Western origin—as they naturally must be—and I almost hesitate to break into the charmed circle with a word from the East, and am only impelled to do so by that most charming letter from Wolf Willow, in which she unveils her identity. She says so much, and says it so convincingly, that I write, not to cavil or condemn, but to extend and broaden a bit out of my wider masculine experience—or what I fondly conceive to be such—some points which she has noted.

For instance, when she speaks of the demoralizing influence which her sons may hereafter be subjected to from the "painted women," etc., has it ever occurred to her that her sons may be in danger of being prepared to succumb the more easily to these same evil influences by a preliminary training at the hands of those young "respectable" girls between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, whom indiscreet or indifferent parents allow to roam about at their own sweet wills, angling for masculine admiration? These thoughtless young creatures are almost always without any moral principle higher than keeping out of actual trouble, and are ready to condone—nay, to admire—any sexual iniquity in a young man, if he will only pay them attention. Can it be wondered that a young fellow meeting such fledglings as these at his most impressionable time of life should imbibe a contempt for women as a class and look at the idea of marriage with aversion, if not with loathing? Sadder yet, in that minority of cases where the young woman is possessed of too much native refinement to indulge in reckless husband-hunting, her mother may be depended upon to break down her modest scruples.

As a case in point, I know a young lady of modest demeanor and absolute purity, whose character is in every way admirable, save that she is morbidly shy and lacking in self-esteem, tho' not in self-respect, and is devoted to her mother, a coarse-minded, strong-willed woman, who is repaying that devotion by attempting to force her daughter to marry a drunken, dissolute fellow, the victim of a loathsome complaint contracted from his abandoned female associates. This is known to the community, and, thru the strengthening influence of friends, the girl has so far been encouraged to refuse, but at any moment the influence of the mother may prevail and the iniquity be consummated. Would it not mend matters greatly if this mother had the ballot?

I am an old man now, some years past sixty, and for some thirty of these I have been convinced that there was no moral or social reason why women should not have the franchise, if they wanted it; but I am equally convinced that no millennium would ensue in consequence of their getting it. As with Wolf Willow, my relations and associates are about equally divided between the two sexes, and I find that each sex has its peculiar weaknesses and its peculiar excellences, and that in point of all-around virtue neither predominates over the other. If all women were like Wolf Willow—and I judge her by what she has written—no sane man would wish to deny them the ballot. "She opens her mouth with wisdom," and if on her tongue is not "the law of kindness," then her writing very much belies her.

AN EASTERNER.

REPORTS OF LOCAL HOUSES TOO VAGUE

Dear Miss Beynon:—Re Premier Scott's letter in your editorial of December 31, I would like to mention the following facts:

Last fall, being anxious to know what was actually said and done in the Provincial House re the woman suffrage question, I wrote to our member asking if he could obtain me a copy of official records of the recent proceedings of the House. I herewith enclose a copy of the reply I received:—

Office of Executive Council,
Regina,
31st October, 1913.

Dear Madam:—
Mr. C. H. Cawthorpe, M.L.A., was in Regina yesterday and handed me your
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FRIENDSHIP

By Edith Wyatt in Colliers

Not mine are purple muscadine,
Green wine and precious salve;
I bring a token more divine—
I give you what I have.
My roof, my road, my soul's abode,
The winds that scent my day,
My firelight's shade, my fig-tree's load,
Are yours upon your way.
But ask no foregone beauty
Of money, musk or wine,
Nor call the name of duty;
Of stuff far more divine
The gladness in whose name I'll give
You anything that's mine.

moved nearly to tears by the need on the part of the men for equal guardianship rights of their children with women. If children could have only one parent, that parent ought to be the mother, she thought, but with parents to the right of us and parents to the left of us, parents in front of us and parents behind us, why not in the name of commonsense let them have two parents?

In conclusion the House resolved itself into a committee to receive a delegation of men asking for the franchise, to whom Mrs. Nellie L. McClung, as Premier, gave a hard, relentless and absolutely final negative. The arguments—if one can call them so—that she offered against this reform were so delightfully reminiscent of the speech addressed to the women recently by one high in authority that the audience was convulsed with laughter. Needless to say the House adjourned leaving the men as voteless and as badly discriminated against in our laws as before.

That in presenting this entertainment the Political Equality League has covered itself with glory is generally admitted thruout the city and many are the demands from all sides that it be given over again, which the Attorney General and several other members of the late Parliament are dubious about, but it is being considered.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

on this subject and see how we can further the work.

One resolution sent in by the delegate from the Roaring River Grain Growers' Association read thus: "That this convention reaffirm their decision to support the woman suffrage movement, and further suggest that each secretary of Manitoba Grain Growers' Associations bring before his Association some scheme to form a Woman Suffrage Society in connection with the local Grain Growers' Association." This resolution was passed and I would ask all readers who are interested to keep this in the mind of the men folks and give them no rest until there are Woman Suffrage Associations formed in connection with the different branches of the Grain Growers' Association.

We are only demanding our rights when we ask for equal suffrage, and as our daughters have to go out into the world and work side by side with our sons, so they should have equal rights in the making of the laws by which they are governed and a voice in choosing who shall represent them.

Shall be glad to answer any enquiries in regard to our method of working, if any one desires to organize.

FANNIE E. LIVESEY.

Swan River, Man.

Sec. Treas.