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Side Talks by Ruth Cameron

A LETTER.

Here is a letter which has come to me recently:

"I would like to ask you to write your opinion of a man married the second time who, whenever some body comes to the house or he meets anybody on the street or anywhere, never misses a chance to refer to his first wife in the presence of his second wife."

"To my way of thinking this is very humiliating and insulting to his second wife, and yet he tells her he loves her. What do you think of him?"

"Yours truly, 'Unhappy.' Silly Or Cruel."

What could anyone think of such a man? That he is either silly or cruel, I suppose.

I started to call him tactless, but that seemed a bit weak for an action which anyone with a glimmer of sense must know would embarrass and discomfort.

And yet how often one hears husbands and wives who unquestionably really care for each other, nevertheless rub each other the wrong way with what seems to an outsider like the most unnecessary crudeness.

"That's Just Like You."

For instance, the wife makes some mistake and the husband promptly says, "Yes, that's just like you." Now to be told that an awkwardness

which one wishes passed over as an unexpected accident, is typical of one is specially maddening.

A wife at a dinner table where I was a guest recently, went to cut some extra bread and cut it crookedly. The husband pointed to it— "That's the way she always cuts this bread," he said. His wife protested indignantly that she did not and one of those strained moments which a guest detests, ensued.

Now what was the use—Maybe she does cut it that way and maybe she doesn't, but anyhow there was no need to hurt her that way, especially before a third person.

Another man I know never missed a chance to speak of some "children" or "peach" or "apple" or whatever the worst chance was to be at the time, which he had seen or met. And the points which he expressed himself as particularly admiring were always those which his wife notably lacked.

Thought He Loved His Wife.

Yet I am sure this man felt that he loved his wife.

Again I know a wife who has that outrageous trick of referring frequently to her first husband in the presence of her second and telling what he had been able to do for her. It is a right and beautiful thing to respect a memory and to preserve one's love for a dead husband or wife. But it is not right, nor beautiful, nor kind, nor decent, to be constantly thrusting that memory upon the notice of one who, by all the laws of human feeling, dislikes to be reminded of it.

If the dead have reached any higher plane of understanding and sympathy, as we like to think they have, they will certainly not thank their relatives for that tribute.

An Ordinary Amendment.

CONSTITUTION NOT INVOLVED.

Editor Evening Telegram.

Dear Sir.—There is something of melo-drama, or mock-heros in Mr. Macdonnell's planting of himself on the constitution, striking a "Come-one-come-all" this-folk-shall-fly-from-one-base-as-soon-as-I-attitude, and ascertaining that he will never, never recede from his determination to protect the constitution of the land. Mr. Macdonnell is all alone in his solitude for the constitution. It is not involved.

The granting of women suffrage would be a change in the constitution, says Mr. Macdonnell, and the legislature has no mandate to do that, and they couldn't do so without the mandate. I may be wrong, but I have a hazy idea that even with that mandate the legislature wouldn't have power to change the constitution—I fancy that the Imperial Parliament would do that little thing. As a matter of fact, the matter of constitution doesn't come in. The Election Act does. To make women suffrage operative it is necessary only to amend that act so as to read "all males and females over 21." The legislature is supreme in Newfoundland. It has power to amend the Election Act, power which on more than one occasion at least it has used. It need take no plebiscite on the question at all. Then, again, it may take one from the present constituents—the men. Still again, it may take one from the women only. Again, it may take one from men and women—and in either case act contrary to the result of the plebiscite or in accordance, just as it chooses. Now, it is quite constitutional for the legislature to amend the Election Act to give women suffrage, without taking any plebiscite. Perhaps it may be undemocratic. I do claim this: that it would be less undemocratic to amend without a plebiscite than to amend with one from the men—when the matter is one which affects all the people, men and women. That is to say, if there is to be a sounding of views, it should be a sounding of the views of all the people, considered, or none. Suppose that to amend the Election Act without any plebiscite was undemocratic in the short run; would not the fact that it was done to ensure greater democracy justify it? When two principles are involved the greater one should prevail.

Mr. Macdonnell wants to have the women suffrage matter referred to the men (i.e. part of the people concerned), who are the legislature's constituents. Now, Mr. Macdonnell happens to be interested in Ireland. Sup-

pose that I should propose that the way to settle the Irish Question was for the British legislature to take a plebiscite from the people of England, Scotland, Wales and Ulster, but not the part of Ireland outside Ulster. Mr. Macdonnell would not accept that. Why? Because, for one reason, the plebiscite would not have been taken from all the people concerned—all the Irish people outside of Ulster are not constituents of the British legislature.

Now for one or two points of Mr. Macdonnell's observations on democracy. He says that there is no democracy but political democracy. He denies that there is or can be any such thing as social democracy—or such a thing as the principle of democracy worked out in industry. Then under what huge hallucination are the Social Democratic organizations of England, Germany, France, Italy, etc., laboring? Tell that yarn to the eighty millions who have dedicated their lives to the attainment of social democracy, Mr. Macdonnell!

Mr. Macdonnell seems to have fallen into the error which befalls many minds less clear than his own. Referring to "equality" he says "men as men are equal, but not equal as individuals." Strictly he doesn't make the common mistake, that anyone supposes that men are equal in capacities, attainments, cleverness, brilliancy, etc.? He must know that equality means equality in the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—in other words, equality of rights.

One more point and then I'll close for lack of space: "I am unaware of any democracy in ancient times where women had a vote, and no one can deny that these democracies boasted of rule by the people." What if they did boast?—clearly they didn't have rule by the people and for the people, because women are people, in spite of the heinous crime of their sex.

May I appeal to the liberalism which must be in Mr. Macdonnell and to the breadth of his view and vision, to vote for woman suffrage? Mr. Macdonnell, like myself, is unmarried; also like myself, he must know that such a fine young fellow cannot long remain in this condition. Why not save himself an enormous amount of trouble, by ceasing his opposition to woman suffrage? I will make him feel better. I know.

Yours sincerely,
J. R. SMALLWOOD.
June 12, 1921.

Animals Doctor Themselves.

A child's pet canary recently received surgical treatment at the German Hospital, Greenwich. The bird's leg was badly fractured, and its owners appeal for help met with a ready response from the house-surgeon.

He very tenderly lifted the tiny leg, gravely applied a match splint, and the fracture was set. The patient is reported to be doing well.

Usually, animals are their own medical advisers and surgeons, and some wonderful cures have been put on record. Cats off colour chew grass, as do dogs; but the latter require a certain kind, commonly known as "dog-grass." It is thicker and coarser than the usual variety.

Sheep and cows seek out a certain herb. Rheumatism-sufferers stay out of the sun's glare. A wounded ape stanches the flow of blood by dressing the injury with leaves and grass. The sting of a viper seldom kills one of the four-footed tribe; they know how to deal with this danger.

Most wonderful of all is the anti-world ambulance and hospital. Numbers of these marvellous little creatures are allocated first-aid duties,

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We ask your consideration and by the Excellence of our Footwear and the Fairness of our Prices we hope to win your patronage.

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Thoughtful Bricklayer.

(From an Exchange.)

A man was walking along the street, when he drew near to some laborers, who were engaged in building a house. As he passed the scaffolding a brick accidentally fell, striking him on the shoulder.

Looking up to the men who were

two stories high, he shouted indignantly: "Hi! up there! You've dropped a brick on me!"

"All right!" responded one of the bricklayers. "You needn't trouble to bring it up!"

A similar cable has been laid in one of the channels of New York Harbour, and these are the only two in use at present.