

SHOULD WOMEN VOTE?

ASTRA THINKS THEY ARE BETTER WITHOUT DOING SO.

Tremendous Possibilities of Discard in the Family Circle—The Wife Has an Influence Now Which Would be Lost if She Used the Ballot.

To-day, in the household, the man is the voter. Suppose the wife becomes a voter, too. She will, says the North American Review, either reproduce her husband's political views, and there will be in one house two Democratic voters, and in another two Republican voters where there had been one. And this is no gain toward a deciding of questions. It is only a multiplying of ballots, producing no change of results. Or else she will take the opposite side from her husband's and, instantly, with all the heat and violence of party differences and political disagreements, a bone of contention is introduced into the home; a new cause of dissension and alienation is added to the already strained relations in many families. Then there is the question of mistress and maid. Shall the cook leave her kitchen to cast a vote, which shall counterbalance the vote of the mistress, or shall the employer undertake to control the politics of the kitchen cabinet? And all this, not merely on the voting day or in the deplorable of the ballot, but the weeks before and after the election are to be spent in the heat of discussion or in the smart of defeat. The American home is not so sacred and secure to-day to make it safe to undermine it with the explosive materials of politics and partisanship. And meanwhile, as things are now, the intelligent woman, interested in some great measure of reform, has in her hand, not the ability to rival, offset, or double her husband's vote, but the power of her persuasion, her affection, her ingenuity to influence it. It would be incredible if it were not shown to be true, that any large number of thinking and intelligent beings knowing, feeling, using this tremendous power, should be willing to run the risk of losing it by substituting a thing far lower and feebler in its stead. And with the experience of what she has gained for her sex, with the evidence of what voting men have brought about for her under the influence of non-voting women, and through solicitude for their interests, the rashness of this proposed experiment defies description.

The great question of female suffrage has frequently presented itself to me in a good deal the same light, though in less felicitous language than the above. I have often wondered whether the large and influential body of women who are anxious to vote, ever thought of that side of the matter themselves and realized the domestic complications which might result, if they won the desire of their hearts! It is a sufficiently risky experiment to marry a man whose religious views differ from your own, but awful possibilities of domestic strife would be opened up should the risk of a difference in politics be added to the elements of discord.

Of course the danger that the autocrat who rules the kitchen, may be a red hot conservative, both by conviction and heredity, while the mistress is an ardent liberal, should the master of the house happen to be a liberal also, the complications of the situation will scarcely need to be explained, and in times of political excitement, such as elections, there is no end to an amount of friction in that household sufficient to make the strongest minded woman hesitate before making a choice between domestic peace and political importance.

Should there happen to be children, the complications would naturally be even worse, once the olive branches learned how matters stood, and it would scarcely be a pleasant sight to witness little Tommy whose sympathies are entirely with papa so far forgetting his incipient manhood as to black one of sister Mollie's eyes in a hand to hand fight, said sister Mollie being a red hot liberal. I really think the scenes in such a household on the evening of an election day, would, as the newspaper reporters say "defy description." Whatever the issue, there would be war, and the probability is that scarcely two members of the family would be on speaking terms with each other, while the cook and her mistress would be at sword's points for weeks.

Taking a perfectly serious view of the matter—it is terrible to think of such an occasion for strife between husband and wife, arising. People of different views, both political, social and religious, will go on marrying I suppose, as long as the world continues to swing in space, and the little blind god to rule his subjects as heretofore. But where the wife is satisfied to be prominent only in society in her household or some chosen vocation of her own, such as art, music, or even literature, if she pines for an independent existence, and an entity distinct from Mr. Somebody's wife, it seems to me that there would be more chance of happiness and unity in the family. Women are entitled to perfect freedom of thought I think, and have every right to differ in opinion from their life partners if they choose! Marriage will not change the political views of a thinking woman, any more than it will change the color of her eyes or hair. If she has arrived at the conclusion that a liberal policy is best for the country, after a careful and intelligent study of both sides of the question, the mere fact of marrying a conservative who is equally certain that the conservative platform is the only thing which can save the country from ruin, will not change her convictions. But at the same time if she is a wise, and really values her happiness

she will keep her opinions to herself as much as possible, and give her husband to understand that politics had better be left out of their subjects for discussion.

I confess I cannot imagine a woman who loved her husband even a little showing him such open defiance as voting on the opposite side from the one he espoused! It would imply such utter disregard for his opinions, and almost contempt for his judgment, that I should think a husband would find it an offence very hard to forgive. It may be an old fashioned, and non-progressive opinion for any woman who pretends to be at all up-to-date, to hold, but I confess I think that while it may be very delightful for a woman to feel that she has sufficient political importance in the world for her vote to be of value to one side or the other of the conflicting parties, her position in her husband's heart is of more importance still, and it is better to hold unquestioned sway there, than to have a hand in moulding the destinies of nations.

One uncomfortable thing about working for nations or the public in general, is the fact that it is such a thankless task! No one seems to know anything about the noble work you are doing in the interest of a great political cause, and if they did know they would not care. What a very small matter it is even to the candidate for parliamentary honors himself that you held by your convictions and voted as your conscience dictated, instead of as your husband would have wished! He does not care how you voted—after the election is over—while your husband—Well, if he ever loves you quite so dearly afterwards, he is no ordinary man, and I don't know that I should repeat him very much if he did.

Read the very clever paragraph I have quoted, my dear friends who are hoping for the day when you can vote, and tell me candidly whether you do not agree with the writer that there are some things in this world of more importance than political influence, and that it is better to cling to the enormous influence we possess now rather than risk losing it altogether by trying an experiment the success of which is so very problematical that some of the wisest heads in the world decline to look with favor on it!

ASTRA.
ABOUT SWEENEY TODD.
The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, and His Famous Revolving Floor.

Many readers of PROGRESS have heard of the notorious Sweeney Todd, the demon barber, without knowing just what crimes he committed. A writer of a recent letter on the flash literature to be found in London says as follows:

One of the worst of these books, if not the worst, is "Sweeney Todd." This personage, in his literary guise, has curdled the blood of generations of British errand-boys, and, from the point of view of the gutter, is quite a national character. I cannot do better than introduce him by quoting an advertisement from the back of one of the thirty-six, in which the publisher tempts the investment of juvenile peace:

SWEENEY TODD.
THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, OR, THE STRING OF PEARLS

This double-dyed villain and murderer actually lived in the reign of George the Third, and the house in which he resided and committed his heinous crimes stood until a few years ago, when it was pulled down and converted into a place of business, which, for obvious reasons, we cannot name.

SWEENEY TODD, THE DEMON BARBER, OF FLEET STREET, Had for an accomplice a wretched woman named

MRS. LOVETT, RESIDING IN CHANCERY LANE. She carried on the business of a pie-maker, and was patronized especially by the clerks engaged in the Temple.

THE STORY OPENS WITH ONE OF SWEENEY TODD'S ATROCIOUS MURDERS.

The Theft of the String of Pearls—The Victim's Dog's Unconsciousness—The Doubts of Tobias (Sweeney Todd's Apprentice)—and other exciting details. Then follow Adventure after Adventure of the most Thrilling and Dramatic incidents. Description of the Cellar in which the Pies were made—The Imprisoned Baker's Dream—More Victims of the Demon Barber—The Fate of Mark Leggett—Mr. Grant on the Track—Johanna Oakley's Grief—The Dog Avenger—

THE DISCLOSURE OF HOW THE PIES WERE MADE.

Arrest, Trial, and Execution of Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney Todd.

Revolting as it may be to put the story in words, it must be said that Sweeney Todd shaved many customers who never left his shop, and that Mrs. Lovett sold thousands of pies without incurring a proportionate expense at her butcher's. In Sweeney's shop—

There was a piece of the flooring turning upon a centre, and the weight of the chair when a bolt was withdrawn by means of simple leverage from the inner room, weighed down one end of the top, which by a little apparatus, was to swing completely round, there being another chair on the under surface, which thus became the upper, exactly resembling the one in which the unhappy customer was supposed to be "polished off." Hence was it that in one moment, as if by magic, Sweeney Todd's visitors disappeared, and there was the empty chair. No doubt he trusted to a fall of about 20 feet below, on to a stone floor, to be the death of them, or, at all events, to stun them until he could go down to finish the murder, and—to cut them up for Mrs. Lovett's pies! After rob-

bing them of all the money and valuables they might have about them.

This is how the story is told of the manner in which the demon barber did his business. A customer is seated in the chair, and, having been lathered, Sweeney makes an excuse to leave him and go into the adjoining room—

"Sit still, sir—I shall not be gone a moment; sit still, if you please, sir. By the way, you can amuse yourself with the newspaper for a moment?" "Oh! hang it, yes," the sailor replied; "but don't keep me waiting here an age." "Not a moment longer than I can help I assure you."

Sweeney Todd walked into the parlor and closed the door. Then came a strange sound. It was compounded of a rushing noise and a heavy blow, and immediately after Sweeney Todd emerged from the parlor. He told his arms and legs, not upon the sailor, but upon the vacant chair in which the man had been seated a moment before. The man had gone, leaving not the slightest trace of his presence behind, save his hat. Sweeney Todd pounced on it as a hawk pounces on a sparrow, and thrust it into a cupboard in one corner of the shop.

Now the barber was a fearful spectacle to gaze upon. His breath came in thick short gasps. The muscles of his face twitched convulsively, and the veins in his low beetling brow stood out like whipcord. "Ha! ha!" he said; "he told me not to laugh! I can do so without his interference now; Hahaha! no! no! the laugh is all on my side."

Horror after horror is narrated in this style, but worse remains in the description of the scenes in the pie-shop. The publishers who can issue such an atrocity as "Sweeney Todd" must be utterly destitute of a sense of moral responsibility. If the existing law is not sufficient to put a stop to the sale of their wares, the law ought to be strengthened in the interests of public decency.

A Siberian Feast

When I returned in the afternoon to the choom in a driving storm of sleet, I found Vasil and his wife in great fettle. He had killed a deer in the morning, and they had been indulging in one of their big feasts.

In fact, as I sledged up to the choom, he and his wife were only just concluding a three hours' feast. Squatting on skins, they had a rough piece of plank in front of them, on which lay the stomach of the reindeer. This was almost full of blood drained from the deer; in fact, it formed their soup tureen. They each had a hind leg, on which some of the hide still remained, and cutting chunks off this meat, were dipping them into the crimson soup and then greedily swallowing the bonne bouche.

As a fitting background to the picture, pieces of the carcass, still dripping with blood hung all round the interior of the choom. In the ground were small, dark pools of blood, and every sleeping bag, though as well out of the way as size of the interior would allow, was well sprinkled with the same natural dye. As they sat there grinning a welcome to me, with their cheeks and brows all smeared with gore, they looked for all the world like the blood-eating ghoul of one's childish fancy. —A Winter Journey.

The Philosophy of Age.

"My son," observed the good man, "the great lesson you should learn is self-denial. Never ask yourself, 'Can I get this?' but, 'Can I do without it?' Economize! Skimp! Skimp!"

Youth—But, father, what shall I get out of life at that rate?

"Get? Do you suppose life is a mere playtime to pander to material and carnal appetites? Nay, your young and strong years are the proper years for toil, for drudgery, for saving."

"But, father, I would read; I would study; I would be enlightened, and as a concomitant must have exercise—recreation—"

"Recreation? Why, sir, the years of activity are your workday. Life is a day. You must begin toiling in its early morning and toil far into its afternoon. Never mind the noonday meal! A crust and a promise will do. Gather in the harvest. Toil! Skimp! Deny! And toil on, until the darkness comes and the old limbs are failing—"

"Reward? Think of the supreme joy of sitting in life's gloaming and telling your children and grandchildren about it." —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

He Knew Too Much.

A story is told in the India Rubber World of a meek looking stranger, with a distinctly ministerial air, who applied for permission to look over a large rubber factory. He knew nothing at all about the rubber business, he said, and, after a little hesitation, he was admitted. The superintendent showed him a rout in person, and the man's questions and comments seemed to come from the densest ignorance. Finally when the grinding room was reached, he lingered a little, and asked, in a hesitating way:—"Could it I have a specimen of that curious stuff for my cabinet?" "Certainly," replied the superintendent, although it was a compound the secret of which was worth thousands of dollars; "certainly, cut off as much as you wish." With eager step the visitor approached the roll of gum, took out his knife, and, wet the blade in his mouth, and—"Stop right where you are!" said the superintendent, laying a heavy hand upon the young stranger; "you are a fraud and a thief. You didn't learn in a pulp it that a dry knife won't cut rubber." So saying he showed the impostor to the door, and the secret was still safe.

Liquor Sent to Africa.

In spite of the professions that England is trying to keep liquor out of Africa, the value of spirits imported into the Niger protectorate alone rose from \$650,000 in 1893 to \$1,170,000 in 1894, the duties im-

posed on liquor forming 95 per cent of the revenues from customs.

Leaves of Gold.

They walked together under the stately maples—Virginia De Claire and Augustus Knickerbocker—and with every breath of wind the golden leaves of autumn fell at their feet.

"Augustus, she murmured as she stooped to pick up a particularly brief leaf, "you know everything, don't you?"

"Yes, darling—everything worth knowing," he replied as he gave her a tender look.

"Then you must know why the leaves fall in autumn time?"

"Of course."

"I have been wondering why they didn't fall in spring. Is there any particular reason why they shouldn't fall till the first breath of winter is felt in the chill winds which sway the branches and rob them of their foliage?"

"The best reason in the world, my pet."

"Oh, Augustus, you are so noble to find a reason. See how they also now down like leaves of gold! Listen to the sobbing of the breeze, as it grieves and weeps at parting leaf from twig! In a few days more these trees will stand desolate and forlorn, and their wind-whipped branches will point to heaven as if appealing for mercy. Tell me, Augustus, if it is really as positively necessary, for the leaves to fall at all, and if so, why they should fall in the autumn time?"

"The leaves must fall once a year, my treasure," he softly said as he caressed the pulled sleeve of her jacket, "and, seeing this is positively necessary, it was decided to have them fall at this particular season in order that the farmer might gather them—"

"Might gather them to decorate his walls and keep him in touch with the beautiful in nature during the rigidity of winter?"

"No, darling. That he might gather them to bed down his hogs and cover up the pile of pumpkins in the barnyard! That's all—look out for caterpillars as you go pawing around." —Detroit Free Press.

Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt.

The New York World puts into a nutshell various facts concerning Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt, who is to wed the young Duke of Marlborough. The summary is as follows:

Age—Eighteen years.
Height—Five feet six inches.
Color of hair—Black.
Color of eyes—Dark brown.
Eyebrows—Delicately arched.
Nose—Rather slight, retroussé.
Weight—One hundred and sixteen and one-half pounds.
Foot—Slender, with arched instep.
Size of shoe—No 8. AA last.
Length of foot—Eight and one-half inches.

Hand—Delicate, with tapering fingers.
Size of glove—Five and three-fourths.
Length of hand—Six inches.
Waist measure—Twenty inches.
Length of skirt—Forty-four inches.
Face—Somewhat oval.
Complexion—Clear olive, with rosy cheeks.

Chin—Pointed, indicating vivacity.
Mouth—Small and without character.
Teeth—White, regular, and well kept.
Lips—Full, and describing a cupid's bow.

Accomplishments—Music, painting, languages.
Chief accomplishment—None.
Marriage settlement—Ten million dollars.

Ultimate fortune—Twenty-one million dollars (estimated).

Eyes—Small and close to the head.
Head—Well rounded and well poised.
Special talent—None.
Favorite color—Pink.
Favorite sport—Tennis.
Favorite exercise—Bicycling.
Favorite flower—American beauty rose.

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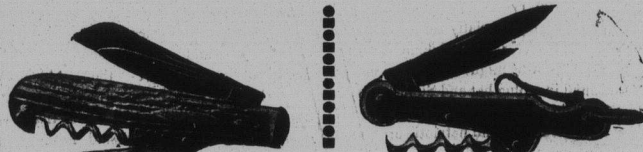
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