

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

OUR FRIEND THE SOCIALIST

"You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink." So runs the classic proverb which all propagandists, but Socialists in particular, are prone to forget. In their vociferous declamations against wage slavery and social injustice they completely overlook the fact that their real slavery is to the intelligence of their neighbor, John Smith.

True, the better informed Socialist, when asked how he proposes to right social injustice will answer, "By education," but in his method of education the Socialist seems to the outsider to be psychologically at fault.

The true educationalist is not a belligerent person. His real business in life is not imparting knowledge, but stimulating an interest in and a desire for information on the part of the student. To be really fruitful education must come in response to a spontaneous wish to learn upon the part of the person who is educated. To create this desire requires tact and a profound understanding of human nature in both of which the majority of Socialists are wanting.

The Socialist is psychologically at fault also because he is absolutely a whole loafer. He will have a complete social revolution or nothing. Instead of rolling up his sleeves and helping to bring about such reforms as Woman Suffrage, Direct Legislation and Single Tax he adopts a critical attitude towards these movements. "Will it," he questions of each new movement in turn, "settle the capitalist system?" Answered truthfully with the statement that it will not, he declares scornfully that those interested in the movement are merely scratching the surface of the social fabric. What he fails to realize is that the average man demands a concrete goal towards which to work. Arrived there he will see another goal a few hundred yards farther on and, with a little persuasion, will trot along towards that, but he will not start off running generally without any particular goal in view except that of a complete social change.

The second psychological mistake of the Socialist is in his manner of approaching the unbeliever. His should be the attitude of the expert salesman, genial, sympathetic, quick to see the other man's point of view, clever at dropping just the right word in season and an interested listener. Instead he too often approaches his man belligerently, is dictatorial in his statement of his case, intolerant if the outsider, while being in sympathy, has so many other interests in life that he refuses to concentrate on "the class struggle," and he forgets the listening part of the program altogether.

Finally the Socialist falls too frequently into the serious psychological error of making greatly exaggerated statements, as the reader who recently spoke of polite literature, such as Hiawatha, as being written for the idle wives of rich men and who said that the rich farmer could not materially reduce the labor of his wife any more than the poor farmer, that her hard work was an economic burden she had to bear in common with her husband, as a result of the capitalist system. It is recommended that the rich and moderately well-to-do farmers try installing water works, electric light, power washers, mangles and vacuum cleaners and see what the women have to say about the effect on their labor. The statement in regard to literature is even more extreme, since there are only a handful of people in this Western country too poor to buy a few good books at the price books are today and none too poor to be rested and inspired by the beautiful and fanciful.

Such exaggerated statements, instead of making friends for Socialism, often antagonize those who would otherwise be prepared to lend a sympathetic ear to a statement of its principles.

There must, of course, be a spark of living truth at the bottom of this movement or it would not grow and spread, but it seems to the onlooker that it could be more quickly fanned into a bright flame if the advocates of it were to become less introspective and make a closer study of neighbor Smith, who can be beguiled, but not pommelled into sympathy with their cause.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE REFERENDUM LOST

Our readers will be interested, and most of them will be very sorry, to learn that the Woman Suffrage amendment voted upon recently by New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New York was defeated by large majorities in each case. The suffrage leaders refuse to be discouraged by this set-back, however, as they realize that these old states with their large cities are not only the strongholds of conservatism, but that they represent the very heart of all those industries that flourish thru sweated labor, liquor distribution, white slavery and the exploitation of child labor.

The women put up a wonderful fight and they must be very weary, but they are just going to draw a long breath and go at it again, and this time they'll win.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

WOMEN NEED BROADER OUTLOOK

Dear Miss Beynon:—I was much interested in the letters in the September 22 number. You women brought man down a few pegs, just where you should have had him long ago. Keep him right there now until he pleads guilty.

I have been working on farms for the last ten years and in that time I have worked for a good many farmers. The term "wage slave" was used by a lady writer in the last number, but I often think I am the free man and my employers the bond slaves; not slaves to work, but slaves to opinions and set ideas which have been handed down for generations; travelling in ruts worn deep by time and habit. I am glad that women are now awakening to the long hidden truths regarding their real duty towards themselves and humanity, that their duty is not to obey men, but to obey the right, not rightness according to their preacher's sermon, but according to their own conception, and that the time has come when they must freely use their own God-given brains and act accordingly. When

woman pledged herself for life to love, honor and obey man she signed an awful contract. The timid little wife who thinks her whole duty is to please her husband, to do and act according to his fancies regardless of herself, never succeeds. Human fancies are too inconsistent. She has smothered her own rights, yes, tramped her very soul beneath her feet to do his will. A despotic husband is her reward, making his ugly disposition an example for her children.

Let us now take the mother and family, not of Canada and Great Britain only, but of the world. The mother feeds and clothes a large family and washes and mends and does everything else a loving mother can do to make them good girls and boys, but the boys are no sooner in long trousers than they are off to join the colors and into the great fight to kill and be killed, while the girls and mother remain at home until starvation often ends their woe-begotten lives.

What is the cause of all this trouble? Mothers, ask yourselves: "Are you doing anything to help conditions?" Or what part of the blame for the war now raging can you take upon yourselves? Has your daily round of domestic drudgery, your

honest service, really counted for anything? Can we say honest service? Yes honest to the religion which is her highest conception of right. Service and obedience have been preached so much the last few years that some were forgetting they had minds and wills of their own.

The only way in which woman can blame herself for the war now raging is that she let man have too much his own way. In the near future, when women and men shall go side by side into law and politics, our country will then be governed by all humanity, our laws for humanity shall be made by humanity and not by man alone.

BUD.

ALL KINDS OF TROUBLES

Dear Miss Beynon:—As I am troubled with some little things I would be very grateful if some of the members of the Country Homemakers page could give me some good advice thru your paper.

The first is that the palms of my hands are so hard and rough that I do not know what to do, but hope earnestly that some of the members can tell me how to soften and make them smooth.

Then there is my hair. I want to know how to curl it so that it will stay curly for at least twenty-four hours, but I can never make it stay curly for any length of time, hardly more than two hours.

Hoping I will get a cure for all my troubles, I'll sign myself

TROUBLED.

THAT BOY

By C. E. Miller

How about that boy of yours? Sort of a provoking kid sometimes, isn't he? Never wants to [do the things you want him] to do, and; would rather play or trifle at a little bit of nothing? Well, maybe that's true. But don't forget that he's just a boy. And perhaps the things you don't like about him he has inherited or learned from you. Then, too, pleasure comes before duty to the childish mind. A boy can hear pleasure whispering a mile away, but duty can't disturb him if it shouts thru a megaphone at his side. Thus it was decreed by the Creator. He would not have the growing intellect burdened by duties which hang heavily even on the adult mind.

Remember, too, the next time you chide your boy for doing things that your neighbor's boy wouldn't (?) do, that you really see that neighbor's boy clothed, as it were, in his garb of best behavior. You see your boy as he is. Were you to exchange boys you would find, nine times out of ten, that your boy comes closer to what you consider as being about right than the other fellow's boy. Unless, perhaps, the other fellow has trained his boy better than you have trained yours.

Here, I believe, is where most of the trouble lies. Our boys are what we make them. We wish them to use sense and judgment, yet we don't use it ourselves in dealing with them; we expect them to be interested in what we want to do and what we like, but we fail to show interest in their activities; we desire them to grow up loving to work, but we, by our ignorance, bull headedness, or whatever you wish to call it,

are smothering out this very characteristic, blighting these most desirable qualities, when we don't give the child a chance for play.

Have you ever heard some father say, "Come, boys, I want you to help me this afternoon"? Then, after the greater part of the time has been spent in honest toil, he will say, "Now you can go and play for half an hour." Oh, how that half-hour flies!

Then parents often make another mistake which is equally fatal to their best desires concerning their children. While the child is hesitating with some work, the parent is continually planning for work to be done tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. Now I don't mean to discourage planning. The man or woman who does not plan is an undesirable citizen. But the point I urge is this: Don't cram and overwhelm the child by talking work, work, work, unless you wish him to hate it. Talk rather about his activities, his dams, bird houses, kites, water wheels, swimming hole, fishing and all those things which interest a boy. Make yourself appear interested in his interests, a companion to him. By doing this you will accomplish two things: First, you will discover erroneous ideas which he holds concerning certain things, which you can correct; and, secondly, you will double that boy's working capacity and his love for work. And when you give him play-time, don't always limit it. He must help you until your work is finished; give him, at least once in a while, a day or a half-day for his own. It is a poor farmer who cannot, and a miserable parent who will not, try to arrange his work in such a way that the children may have some time that belongs to them.

And, above all, don't fail to provide a few tools, toys, and so on for the children. Don't be so tight that you will not buy nails for them. If you have no boards which a boy can use, for a very small sum you can buy at the nearest store a few boxes which he will be glad to take apart, and which will supply him with plenty of soft wood to manufacture different things.

Give your boys and girls the best you have, and you will never need to wonder how to keep them on the farm. And besides this, when they are grown and you are old, both you and they will appreciate as never before the things done today.

PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

No matter if you disagree with the method of education, the teacher or the curriculum, remember that the school to which your child goes is the best available, and that, if you find fault with it in the child's presence, you are helping to give the child a disrespect which will discourage him from doing his best in his studies.

If the teacher is inefficient, or the school is not up to the standard you would like it to maintain, take energetic steps to improve conditions. But do not make the mistake of belittling teacher or school in the child's mind, because it will harm the child to entertain such ideas.

On the contrary, it is a good policy to praise the teacher and the school, not by directly urging the child to respect and admiration, but by discussing both with that attitude, where the child will hear you.

If you must criticize your school, criticize where and when criticism will do good, and not where it will do harm to the boy or girl who unconsciously adopts your point of view.

EQUAL TO THE TASKS

Do not pray for easy lives! Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come in you by the grace of God.

—Phillips Brooks



A COSY NOOK