

What Shall a Man do for his Wife?

Man! a word with you. Do you remember how twenty or thirty years ago as a young man you sought the society of the charming lady you asked to become your wife. You didn't own much then. A spare quarter was a luxury, attendance at a paid entertainment was an event. Yet you found nothing too good for your girl, and you paid out gladly, and even made a fool of yourself into the bargain, by doing things you are angry to think about to-day. And what did you not promise the girl? You would think of her always, cherish her, comfort her and be a good and loyal helpmate. That was thirty years ago.

Now, how is it? You have made some money or you own some acres of land, so that you are known to the world as a man of means. You are fairly well fixed. You have accomplished this result by close economy. You have made saving a matter of habit. "To have is to hold." You have grudged every cent that ever went out of your fist. You paid by cheque rather than in coin of the realm because it did not seem to make such a strain on your heart strings. And as for your wife, you developed or tried to develop in her the same close spirit. If she agreed with you it was because she wanted to please. Yet if you stop to think it over the thing she was yearning for and the thing you promised her all these years you never gave. She didn't want your money. She didn't want a bank balance. She wanted your affection and she wanted you to show it as you did before you were married. But you have had no time for it. You have even persuaded yourself that it is unmanly to tell your wife that you appreciate all her years of sacrifice on your behalf. In other words you have denied that feeling is the greatest and divinest thing in man, and you have made yourself a brute. When Christmas comes other men give their wives a kiss and a ring or some other token, and some honest manly word of appreciation, but you let the day go by in a grudging fashion and rave about the silliness and extravagance of the season. You have led in a crusade against the Santa Claus myth. Yes, sir, in all theological discussions you are an authority. Talk is cheap. But in practical kindly deeds—deeds of honor, love and duty—you are a mockery. When your marriage day first came round, you remembered it, and you actually spent enough money for ice cream for two. When the next one came round your wife had to remind you of it, and never since has it been so much as mentioned. Do you know what any decent man, with such a good wife as yours would have done on such occasions? There would be nothing good enough in all Canada to get if he had the money to pay for it, and if he hadn't the money he would have told his wife all that she was to him, and he would have taken her out for a walk or found for her a bouquet of flowers. Man! I'm ashamed of you. You have grown small and selfish. You should be a refuge and a solace for your wife. If you ever think of her in a kindly way she does not know it, and she is clean dispirited and disgusted. In a great lonely land what is a woman to do who has no husband to comfort her? In the name of all that is good and holy, what is a husband's first duty if it is not to make his wife's life full of love and sunshine and beauty? Away with your money! It is dirt. Away with your scheming. It is profitless. Be a man! Pour out your soul! Live a free, joyous, thankful and somewhat demonstrative life, because in so doing you will enter the Kingdom.

Look here! you say you will not spend money on finery, because you hate conceit. Just halt a minute. You are more conceited or rather vain than the dummy in a shop window in spite of your profession. Do you remember how, when Brown came over last week you showed him through the new barn—a testimony to your thrift and economy—do you remember how as he praised it all, your heart and your head swelled and you thought yourself to be one of the lords of creation. You were rotten with pride. Your wife's delight in dress and comfort is just as permissible as your pride in your property. And yet you left your good wife to wear her life out in that miserable little shack that has never been added to nor enriched all these years. You have implements and hired help, she has nothing but her honest hands and her faithful heart. And she doesn't mind the work, but she does like a word of appreciation. Wake up man! Be a man! That is all.

Should you think this onesided then write the other side yourself and if you have a good case gladly shall we find room for you to have your say.

A PICTURE PUZZLE—FIND THE ETHIOPIAN.

It is about two years since the Western Home Monthly published some facts and figures dealing with the cost of living, in which it was shown that the prices paid for the necessities of life by the ordinary wage-earner were preposterous when compared with the prices paid to the original producer—whether farmer or manufacturer. The articles written were pretty severely censured by a few middlemen who pleaded innocence, and who claimed that the figures presented were not authentic. The

public, however, did not look at the matter in this way, and the agitation then begun has gradually gathered force until to-day we have a real live inquiry, and promise of municipal markets in all the large towns of the West. And, of course, the cry continues on the part of all the dealers that there is no robbery. Yet when a farmer can get no more than thirty seven cents for potatoes in wholesale lots, the grocery stores are selling them to the laboring men at a dollar a bushel, and when some gardeners are permitting their beans to rot on the growing plants because it does not pay them to gather them at one and a half and two cents a pound, the consumer in the dark alley must pay ten cents if he wishes some for a Sunday dinner. And it is also the same with manufactured articles. The "spread" in prices reminds one of the quotations for flax in the markets of Manitoba and Minnesota, or of the street prices and the elevator prices for wheat, in the olden days in Western Canada.

And yet, there is a universal cry "No guilt here! these hands are clean!" "Bless you," says the manufacturer, "I make next to nothing on my business these days. Power is so expensive, labor is so high, new machinery cost so much to instal, money is so tight and credit so bad, that it is only by the strictest economy I can live. It is only by claiming one-third of each workman's labor as a reward for giving him the opportunity to work, that I can get along at all. Surely if I pay a man twenty dollars a week I should make ten dollars as my share, because I put up the money and take all the risk. And what does it matter if I have seventy-five employees? I have all the greater risk, and if you want proof of my poverty just compare my home and the rings and gowns of my wife and family with those of my workmen, who are toiling just as faithfully, and risking everything they have."

And the railways, have they not been charged publicly with charging exorbitant prices, and are they not now demonstrating clearly that they are not guilty? Even now the Commission is about to receive evidence that the injustice is not in this quarter. Let us pause while the case is presented. Nor are the jobbers guilty. They are all poor men—notoriously so. Did you ever know one of them who owned more than two launches or more than six automobiles? Nor is the ordinary retail dealer who is guilty, for everyone from the butcher to the grocer is able to prove to a demonstration that between cost and selling price there is the smallest possible margin.

If this is the state of affairs as between manufacturer and consumer, the situation as between the farmer or the market gardener and the consumer is even more remarkable. Mr. Whelams, a well known market gardener near Winnipeg at a public meeting last month gave figures, which point conclusively to the existence of a large Ethiopian somewhere. It might not be a bad idea to publish a vegetable picture-puzzle with a prize for the first person who discovers the concealed "colored gentleman." Here are some of the figures:

August 15.
Potatoes. Price offered to grower 45 cents a bushel. Price asked from consumer \$1.25 a bushel.
Cabbage. Price offered to grower 1 cent a pound. Price asked from consumer 10 to 15 cents each.
Beets. Price offered to grower ½ cent a pound. Price asked from consumer 6 pounds for 25 cents.
Carrots. Price offered to grower 1 cent a pound. Price asked from consumer 6 pounds for 25 cents.
August 27:
Potatoes. Price offered to grower 35 to 37 cents a bushel. Price asked from consumer 70 to 75 cents a bushel.
Cabbage. Price offered to grower \$8 a ton (1-4 cents a pound.) Price asked from consumer 5 to 10 cents each.
Beets. Price offered to grower ½ cent a pound. Price asked from consumer 8 pounds for 25 cents.
Carrots. Price offered to grower 40 cents a bushel (60 pounds). Price asked from consumer 8 pounds for 25 cents.

French Beans. Price offered to grower 2 cents a pound. Price asked from consumer 10 cents a pound.
Peas. Price offered to grower 2 cents a pound. Price asked from consumer 10 cents a pound.

Of course there are two sides to every question. The greatest wholesale vegetable dealer in Winnipeg commenting on Mr. Whelams figures had this to say. "If he is satisfied that it is so easy to make money out of it he should have no difficulty in securing capital and there are at present three empty stalls in the market, one or all of which he can rent, and if he will take a lease of them for a year, we will welcome him to a share of the trade with open arms and even pay half of his rent for the first three months to help him give a practical demonstration of how vegetables can be sold at or near cost and the seller remain solvent."

Your intelligent readers will readily understand that we have no "lead pipe cinch" on the vegetable trade, producers being at liberty to sell when and where they please. But the thing that has impressed itself most on me with regard to the trade is that

the gardeners in this vicinity are not willing to go to the trouble and expense of storing their produce and marketing as the trade demands, - their only thought being to turn the produce into money as soon as grown, consequently the market is flooded at this time of the year and further many of these men will come to us when we are carrying all the stock we can dispose of and insist on our purchasing their load at some price because they may have sold us in some former time of scarcity. This method of handling by the gardeners compels us to do all the storing and is productive of considerable loss to us and is also responsible for our having to keep in touch all the time with the produce men of the South so as to be able to supply our trade the year round.

We are quite willing to show to any interested party that on the year's turnover we do not make more than a fair rate of interest on the capital invested, and that if it were not for our wholesale trade we could not stay in business at all, so far as the retail end of our trade is concerned we do not make enough on it to pay the wear and tear on delivery equipment necessary to handle it."

But what they do not explain nor can any of the middlemen explain is why the price of commodities keeps up when the market is glutted. Granted that 10 cents a pound is reasonable for beans in the early season, why should they not go down to three cents later on? Why retain a maximum price the whole season through? Are these men afraid that if the price once is lowered it will never rise again?—Well, be assured it is going to lower one of these days, and towards that end the municipal market, with ample storage facilities, will be common in every great centre, co-operative purchasing and selling.

It is a monstrous thing for any man or corporation to exploit poverty. One half a cent on coal oil is little for ten gallons but it means a fortune to the man who owns all the wells and an annual toll of hundreds of thousands to a great territory like ours. One third of a cent extra for freight seems little on paper but it soon makes a million dollars pass from the pocket of the poor man into the coffers of the rich. And so it is all the way through. We all ignore trifles and it is trifles put together that make up the astounding mass. The ocean is made up of rain drops. In our mad rush towards individualism we have overlooked the fact that we have made robbery possible in a thousand forms, and the prices paid by consumers indicates that in one of its forms it is practiced by somebody in our midst to-day. Every man who can assist in this investigation, who can help to get the original producer full value for his wares, and the consumer a fair price for his necessities will prove himself a public benefactor.

NOT FOOD BUT SERVICE.

Apropos of this question of the cost of living, a very valuable contribution has recently been made by one of the Chicago churches. A dinner consisting of five courses was given to one hundred and fifty people and the cost was fourteen cents a plate. The very same dishes served at a prominent hotel in the city at the prices marked on the daily menu would have cost three dollars. There is a "spread" that any one can appreciate. How can we explain the difference between fourteen cents and three dollars? The only answer is this, that it is not the food but the service which costs. It is the building and its furnishings, the retinue of servants, the music, the art treasures, and all the forms of luxury, that bring up the prices. The waiter who keeps guard over a man's hat indirectly charges more than the church society did for its whole dinner. This craving of ours for display in servants, silverware and all the rest, explains the increased prices not only in the high-class restaurants but in the humbler homes. Blessed be the man these days who can live the simple life.

A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION.

A good illustration of the fondness for display, for conspicuous waste, was a ball recently given at Newport in a palace which overlooks the sea. It was peculiar in this that it was essentially a man's ball—their dresses outshining those of the ladies—for all the men came not in evening dress nor dressed as clowns and peasants, but arrayed in the gorgeous robes of Eastern potentates. The host wore a turban studded with jewels. One of the guests wore a white Turkish costume with a red sash and fez and rapier; another wore the dress of an English officer when on service in India. Another was arrayed in white satin as an Indian rajah, another as an Arabian prince and so it was throughout.

It is difficult to make a word-picture of the house the theater and the guests. No account absolutely correct will ever be printed. Both men and women with the talent for remembering details supposed to be abnormal, were absolutely stunned by the magnificence, so far as everybody and everything was concerned. Both men and women of good eyesight say

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