

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

MORE ABOUT VOTING

Mr. Langley was right and I was wrong about the right of women to vote in Dominion elections in Saskatchewan. Since writing about this matter last week, I have found that the Dominion Elections Act is different for Manitoba from Saskatchewan and Alberta. That is, when the act was passed for Manitoba, women voting was such an unheard of thing that they did not put "male person" in the act. So that what I said about the women having the right to vote unless the act was changed or different lists made up, holds for Manitoba, but not for the two other prairie provinces.

Now, as you perhaps know, the government of Manitoba has not revised the voters' lists during the past year. The Dominion government revises the federal lists from the provincial lists if they are less than a year old. But the lists in Manitoba are more than a year old, so the federal government is making its own lists. The registration day will be announced before long, and every woman in Manitoba who has time at all should go to the registration place and demand to be put in the lists. That is every woman over twenty-one years of age, a British subject, and a resident of the province for at least a year, and of the place where registering for three months.

This is a matter with which the provincial government has nothing to do, so do not blame it. Already some women have been worried thinking it is an attempt to prevent the women having the provincial franchise. It is a Dominion government matter, and with that government our fight for the franchise has just begun.

L. B. T.

STORIES OF FARM LIFE

Dear Miss Bynon:—I simply must tell you of my appreciation of the articles on "Peace," by yourself, and "Fads in country schools," by "Wolf Willow," published recently in The Guide.

About agriculture in our country schools, "Wolf Willow" is right, and I am glad she has the courage of her convictions and isn't afraid to say what she thinks. I taught seven years, both in country and city. I know what the country children are up against—bad weather, long distances, farm work.

Many country schools are closed in winter. Do let the children get a good foundation for an education first, and afterward make it possible for them to add a course in agriculture or domestic science. Imagine a teacher with forty pupils in eight grades adding all the new fads!

A school garden is all right, but the pupils should cultivate it out of school hours. I have seen boys in the eighth grade hoeing by the hour during school time. Not one in the class passed the examination, but they got a prize for the garden. I can't see why it is so necessary to keep farm children's minds entirely on farm problems. Rather an effort should be made to interest city children in country life. Isn't it possible we might be spoiling a Spurgeon or a Marconi.

One thing more: Why try to keep farmers in a class by themselves? Stories about farm people, even those in farm papers, give the impression that farmers and their families are ignorant and illiterate. They usually begin by "Ma" having to go to the city to get new glasses. Many an ocean liner has gone to sea with less commotion. She is up at four a.m. to pack her butter. The eggs and poultry were prepared for market the night before. Father drives up with the big gray farm team and "Ma," with much inward trepidation, her bonnet tied under her chin, and with many a backward call to be sure to feed the speckled hen and look after the turkeys, is finally off to take the train for the city. Now, my impression is that that sort of thing disappeared with the scythe and cradle.

This country is new—less than ten years old—but when "Ma" goes to town her husband or son drives up with the auto or a good driving team. There is no poultry or butter to take, for they have regular customers for such articles. Mother is not going to town to buy a full-blooded cockerel. She may have her teeth attended to, but she is going to buy the winter supply of clothing, and for a rest and change. She will attend a concert and a splendid lecture. It will be something to think about for a long time. She doesn't care if she doesn't see a hen or a cockerel on the entire trip.

I was raised in the city. This is my first experience on a farm, but I have changed my mind about country people. When town people cease to patron-

ize farmers and their wives and realize that we all have similar aims and aspirations, and that people of rural districts are not all the hayseeds the press would make them out to be, it will go a long way to help in the "back to the farm movement."

A COUNTRY WOMAN

A DEFECTIVE LAW

A woman in Saskatchewan writes that the dower law in that province is defective, for woman's right to the homestead is gone if she moves away from it even temporarily, and if she is not actually residing on it at the time of the sale. In her case she was living on another place, that her husband bought without any capital to pay for it, but because she was living on that place he was able to sell the homestead without her consent. She says she put up a big fight to keep the home place for her children, but was unable to do so.

Just last week a lawyer from Saskatchewan said that the dower law in that province, which provides that the homestead cannot be sold without the consent of the wife, is protecting many women. It, of



READY TO TAKE A MAN'S PLACE

course, makes a lot of trouble, but as this man said, everything that interferes with the will of people makes trouble, but the trouble is necessary if the women are to have a square deal. The fact of the limitations of the law were not mentioned. The women of the Grain Growers' organization would doubtless be glad to know how this law is working out for others. If those who have found it defective give their experience, as the correspondent today has, it will be a help to those who have in charge the matter of "laws for women" to be brought up at the next session of the legislature.

TEACH THE OLD WAY

Dear Miss Bynon:—I have just been reading an article in The Guide of the 21st inst. from "Wolf Willow," on the subject, "No room for faddists." Now I must say that I think that "Wolf Willow" has hit the nail on the head good and hard at every lick in regard to rural schools. I agree with her all the way thru her writing on this subject. I lived in Manitoba for fourteen years, and during that time was observing the rural schools. I was interested in them, for I had children of my own to go to school. I will say that I think the rural schools of Manitoba, the way they were handled, were more of a curse than a benefit to the country at large. Most of our schools there were taught by girls from 16 to 21 years old. How can such a girl be expected at her age to properly instruct her younger sisters to rightly care for and look after a home and family in future years? Then, again, can she be expected at her age and experience to properly instruct boys of her school how to prepare and to properly take care of the farm? I am afraid that "Good old Manitoba" would be in a worse condition than at present if the farms were run according to the instructions of the rural school teachers of the present day. I believe most of the teachers do the best they can. They teach according as they were taught. They know nothing else. These "faddists" come along and, as they must make a show in the world, they must get up something new, such as teaching culinary work and farming in the school. But I will ask, where is the girl or boy that is born and reared on the farm

that does not get more and better training at home till they are 16 or 18 years old than they could possibly get in the schools as they are taught at the present? "Wolf Willow" touched on a subject that has a lot of truth in it. That is, educate the people to be ignorant, teach them culinary work and farming and that is all they can do. Keep them in ignorance and they can be the more easily managed, and those parasites that live off the working class earnings can the more easily make their livings and fortunes. If they will teach in the elementary schools such studies as spelling, reading, writing, grammar, mathematics, geography and the history of our country as a foundation and let them build their superstructures on this foundation, we will have a more learned class of people than we have at the present day. Where is the boy or girl that is taught in our schools among the rural communities were they to have a business transaction that required a written contract or agreement that could write it themselves? My opinion is they are few and far between.

I am glad to know that there is yet one in Canada that knows what it takes to constitute a proper elementary school for the proper training of the intellects of the children of our land, and I would like to meet her and shake hands with her for the stand she has taken in behalf of the youth of the land. My paper is getting too long, but this is a subject that everyone should be interested in. It is a subject of very great importance. I am and have been a reader of The Guide from its first publication.

I am, with respect,

W. E. KEEFER.

Stacy, Cal.

FACING TROUBLE

One day when I was a little child I went for a walk down the quiet street on which we lived. Some dim adventure beckoned me, as I skipped along singing softly. I went past the houses that I knew and on into a strange neighborhood. Then, of a sudden, I saw, looking down at me from a mass of shrubbery, a big savage-looking dog. With a shriek I turned and fled back toward home. I heard the dog behind me, the thump of his feet and his panting breath. I ran faster. I did not even cry out again, until I tumbled in to my mother's arms.

"What is it?" she soothed me gently.

"The dog!" I gasped.

"Where?"

I sat up and looked. He had not followed me after all.

"He was back at the big brown house. He barked at me, and tried to bite me."

"Are you sure?" asked mother's gentle voice.

I considered. "I think he did," I said.

"Let us go back and see him."

"Oh, no, mother," I begged.

"Yes, let us go. I will take care of you. You shall not be hurt."

Mother's promises were never idle ones. I took her hand and started back. From every gatepost I expected that beast to dart out upon us. Mother talked reassuringly, but my heart kept up a frantic beating. Then we came to the place. The dog still looked at us from the shrubbery.

"See, he does not move," said mother.

She drew me nearer. She put out her hand, and touched him. Then even my childish eyes could see that he was made of iron. I put out my hand and touched him, and laughed aloud. The terror of my little world was revealed in its true guise.

When I was older and read Emerson's dictum, "Do what you are afraid to do," I recalled that afternoon.

My mother taught us to face our troubles squarely. Many a time I have been on the point of fleeing, and have heard the terrifying steps close behind me. But I have forced myself to turn about and face my fear, or doubt, or trouble. They did not all turn out to be as harmless as the dog of iron, but at least I learned their true size and power, and could decide how best to overcome them. Many of them, however, turned out to be poor things, quite powerless to harm. It is the troubles we flee from that spread out, like the genie from the bottle, and supercloud our whole sky with clouds of terror and failure and despair. If we will, we may put our hand in the mightier hand reached to aid us, and walk back to face the trouble. We shall find that it was not poisoning us, and that it shrinks down to an insignificant thing that a confident spirit may easily overcome.—By Margaret Blain, in The Mothers' Magazine.