

The Diary of Diana

As Edited by Candida

I have just returned from my first visit to Uncle James and his wife. Never before have I so realized what poor, crawling, helpless worms of the dust, we women are. He is calculated to squash thoroughly any latent vanity which may be found in womankind.

I had always longed to meet Uncle James for it had been impressed upon me, that although his physical make-up was rather indifferent, his bump of intelligence was prodigious. He is a small but effectual pillar of the church and business world, besides being the most worshipful Grand Big Bug of the Independent Order of Polywogs or some such society.

With a desire to make a good impression upon my relatives, I labored two hours over my toilet trying to acquire that freshly sponged and creased look which is supposed to be the sign of the successful business woman. Then I spent another painful hour practising "Take Your Girlie to the Movies," and "The Maiden's Prayer," not knowing which would be the more appropriate.

The visit started very auspiciously with the High Cost of Living and the state of the weather to add spice to the dinner table. After dinner I settled down to talk with my Aunt Anne. Uncle James was busy with the sporting news somewhere in the background. I have not said much yet about Aunt Anne. She is a very worthy person and a most dutiful wife.

We warmly discussed the price of eggs, my cousin's latest suitor and the life giving properties of "Lack of Tan." It was at this point that my evil genius awoke from slumber. Some remote train of thought led my mind from Lack of Tan to Prohibition and that started it. I merely stated that I was anxious to register in time to vote on the above question.

It was then that Uncle James came to attention and proceeded to give his unvarnished opinion of a woman who so little valued her womanhood as to wish to dabble in filthy politics. He said politics would either lower and debase the pure minds of women or politics would become such an effeminate sickly sort of thing that men would no longer care for it. Plague on the women anyway! Didn't they try to run everything else. Why couldn't they leave this Man's game alone?

A woman's place was clearly intended by nature to be in the home looking after her husband and children. When I mildly suggested that I, with many other women, didn't possess either, he said he didn't wonder. He hoped I never talked that way to younger men. It would ruin my matrimonial chances for ever and an old maid in the family was clearly against the Jones traditions.

Of course, it was unthinkable that I should fail the family in this way but on suggesting that Leap Year was far from ended, I was told very haughtily that my levity was extremely ill-timed and out of place.

Uncle James then hunted out the family Bible and endeavored to show me my womanly place from the scriptural point of view. For a short while I cordially detested St. Paul but remembered in time that he wrote for the conditions of his day and age. When I contended that some of his writings did not hold good for the present day woman, Uncle was shocked and said that if we were going to do away with the "keep silence" and "obey" verses, we might as well throw away the whole Bible as lacking inspiration. He is very much like the great Dante, inasmuch as he arranges Heaven, Earth, Hell and Purgatory to suit his own tastes.

At this point my Aunt tried to change the conversation but was silenced by a look from her lord and master. He was at a loss to know where I got my Pankhurst, Carrie Nation,

Bolshevick ideas. Certainly not from my mother. She was never allowed to have any of these crazy notions.

Into my heart was born at that moment a newer and deeper understanding of my little mother. She has certain periodical outbursts against the established order of things which seem inconsistent with her gentle placid character. The divine fire of discontent is still there although smothered by years of repression. She occasionally suffers from what a modern novelist has called "the cabin fever."

When I came out of this reverie, Uncle James was still holding forth on the subject of women. He declared that three-fourths of them never looked at a newspaper or if they did were interested only in the births, deaths, marriages and agony column.

As for their interest in legislation, why it was nothing but their meddling curiosity which loved intrigue and could smell a scandal a mile off. Each fresh tirade ended with "and you say women should vote." It smacked a little of Mark Antony's funeral oration for Caesar.

At this point I decided to return home while I had the strength left. I have met an Uncle James in all walks of life but I had never hoped to have one in my family. All I ask is to be safely cremated before he crops out too strongly in me.

A half truth is the worst kind of falsehood.

Who never made a mistake made not anything.

All the artillery of Europe cannot enforce a lie.

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