

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

THE BURNING QUESTION OF THE MOMENT

About a year ago a suffrage speaker, in an unusual burst of slang, said, "Those of you who want to have a part in winning the franchise for the women of Manitoba had better start today and help while the helping's good." While this statement was felt to have a good deal of point at the time, it is far more apt today, only today we would be inclined to say, "Help before the helping's over."

It is generally conceded that the women of Manitoba are on the eve of winning the right of citizenship. The government in power is pledged to grant it upon being presented with a petition signed by fifteen per cent. of as many adult women as there were men voting in the last election.

The Political Equality League of Manitoba has had the petition forms prepared and is distributing them thru-out the province to any person who is willing to work. The provincial officers of the Grain Growers' Association, and the W.C.T.U. have assisted splendidly by sending out petition forms to their local organizations, but, unfortunately, not all of these societies have taken the work up very thoroughly.

In answer to appeals thru various organs between fifteen hundred and two thousand sheets have been sent out to individual workers, but we would like, within the next few weeks, to place as many more in the hands of men or women who are willing to give a little time to help in this important campaign. Workers are wanted in the little towns and in the country districts, and if only everyone who believes in this cause will do his or her mite we will be able to present the largest petition ever brought before the government of Manitoba.

Each petition form has room for thirty names. Write today for as many as you think you can fill, to Mrs. F. J. Dixon, Suite 22, Tremont Apts., Winnipeg, Man.

SUPERANNUATION

Much has been said during the past five weeks on the question of the superannuation of aged ministers, and in some quarters the argument has waxed hot and hotter, but as yet no one has pointed out the real crux of the matter, which is that the church frequently retires ministers because, as they grow older, it becomes increasingly difficult to find pulpits for them to fill. This, of course, puts an entirely different aspect on the matter.

I have no patience at all with the able bodied man whose ambition in life is to retire, the assumption being that work is the greatest curse in the world instead of the greatest blessing. Our little towns in Ontario and Manitoba are steadily filling up with the dead-wood of retired farmers, men who have ceased to be any use either to the world or themselves. But it is quite a different matter when a man has to retire or suffer the painful humiliation of being given to understand that he is not wanted anywhere. To a sensitive person this is an almost unbearable cross.

So, in considering whether ministers should be superannuated one must take into account the reason for their superannuation and whether their retirement from active service is voluntary or done more or less under compulsion. It may be a hardship to have too much work to do, but it is a still greater cross to want work without being able to get employment.

In all fairness it must be admitted that there is no particular reason for the assumption that the minister's life is an idle one, but even if this were the case, who demands that men lead this sort of life but the church people themselves?

As we have said already, parishioners are very sensitive about having their preachers engage in any other business than that of being a preacher. They are equally sensitive about any

neglect on his part to visit them frequently and regularly.

Now we all know that ninety per cent. of us do exactly what the community in which we live expects of us, and I will guarantee that we would do it twice as quickly if our bread and butter depended upon the goodwill of our neighbors. Personally I have no brief for the preachers, but I do think it is a bit unjust to tie their hands behind their backs and then abuse them roundly for not using them.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

NO WAR BABIES

Dear Miss Beynon:—It is impossible for me to refrain from criticising "An Englishwoman," and throwing some light on the war babies.

Ye gods and little fishes! I never dreamt that an Englishwoman existed with such a muddled idea of affairs. She is another of the pen type who blindly cry for peace without ever thinking what the British nation are up against. She thinks it "downright wicked for the clergy to pray for victory or to revile the enemy." What would she have them do? Strive for peace, I suppose. Does she actually think that German ministers would co-operate with British ministers in de-

neglect on his part to visit them frequently and regularly. Is there any comparison between such women and our own? I fail to see any. Another of her statements, "we can never bring back the many lives that are being wantonly thrown away." Are these lives thrown away? What encouragement to the brave young lads already preparing or on their way to the front! Never did knight who bore the lance and rode the charger do anything more honorable, more glorious; yes, more noble, than our brave soldiers who have stemmed the wave of Teutonism which threatened to sweep Europe, to sweep the world. Every young man who should the rifle for the Empire does so to save the civilized from the relentless uncivilized world, to save every independent state, from Serbia to the United States.

Now, about the much talked "war babies." I noticed several weeks ago your comments on the war babies and the greater need for women to train their daughters. That's all right, but the criticism is uncalled for. Before discussing or criticising it is advisable to seek reliable information, otherwise blunders will result. However, Miss Beynon, I don't altogether blame you. I saw so much talk in the press about the numerous war babies that I almost believed it myself. After waiting on

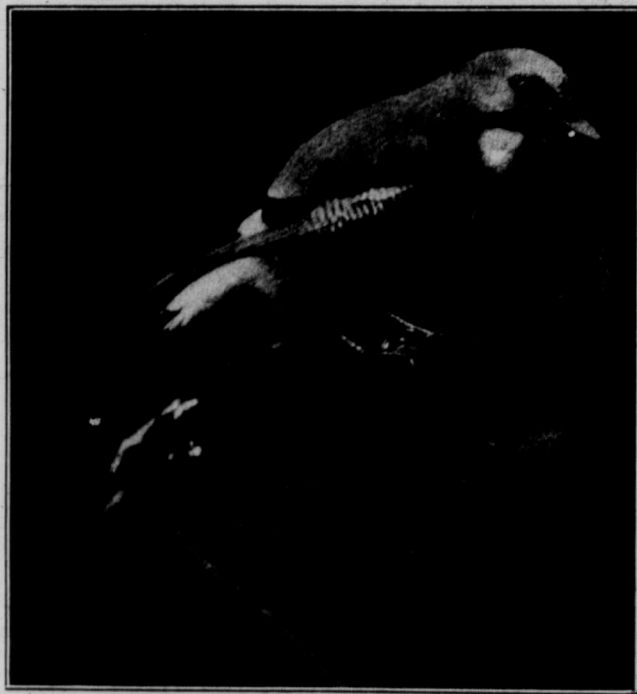
empty hands and in filling them to obtain a permanent hold on the respect and interest of the children and to provide interests for the many years of active and useful life which I hope still remain for a woman so intelligent and well educated as Mrs. M. W. B. has shown herself to be. There is so much work to be done in the world—work that is crying out to the women who have practically finished their hard work as mothers, and who in its performance have cultivated the mother spirit.

To me, the most obvious work is for woman suffrage, the first step to bringing the mother spirit freely and fully into politics. To become an active and intelligent worker in this movement means to ensure to herself the respect of her children in days to come when woman suffrage will be the rule. It means to have interests and ideas that will benefit the children, and moreover it means a larger, wider life of usefulness which will renew youth and bring new and unsuspected joy and incentives into life.

If this movement does not attract there are many other lines of usefulness which are crying out for aid. There is the Red Cross work, there are many forms of philanthropy and rescue work. There is work in town or country for every willing pair of hands, and the doing of something real and worth while will win affection and respect from those grown up children to a degree quite incomparable with the degree of respect that will be accorded because the trigonometry is nearly as good as that of a college undergraduate.

Like Mrs. M. W. B., I kept close pace with my children thru the preparatory years, but after they no longer needed my help, I was glad to let the old studies slide. I found that altho I believe my education was more thorough and more profound than any that they are getting in the colleges here; there were many little differences—I was educated in England—which to them make my ways appear old-fashioned. However, that makes no difference to their respect for me and my judgment, nor to their love for their dearest confidante. They know that I have a real knowledge of something more important than classical or mathematical studies—of life; and they know that my heart is in the effort to make life brighter, better, holier on this old world of ours, and this conviction causes them to yield me always my old place of a mother to look up to as well as a mother to love and cherish.

A SUFFRAGIST MOTHER.



The English jay, which has figured in literature

nouncing the war? Alas! she is hopelessly mistaken. The Germans are as one; their clergy fervently desire the destruction of the allies in double quick time. Don't mistake that. Again let us suppose they desired peace. We should know then that they realized the hopelessness of their cause and preferred to retire from the field the undefeated bullies of Europe. If the German clergy prayed twenty-four hours a day for peace it would not make one whit of an impression on their nation, nor, I trust, on the allies, either.

We don't want peace agitators, because a world lasting peace cannot be secured until we knock Germany to her knees. Germany has every intention of holding Belgium. What does "An Englishwoman" think of that? A mock peace, then, would not reinstate the Belgians, would not, could not, repay devastated and murdered Belgium. No, the allies must remove once and forever this intriguer, bully and murderer from European affairs.

She is awfully considerate of the other side, I mean our enemies. She talks of "other women's sons, other wives' husbands," until I am almost sick. Last week I read a letter from a German woman to her husband, an officer, telling him to shoot all the Englishmen he could, as they had no room for prisoners. Some "other husband's

the report of different commissions, whose duty it was to investigate, I find that all this talk has been gross exaggeration. Moreover, in one district, where a thousand cases were reported, an investigation found only one. This is typical of all districts. Also the report showed that the number of illegitimate children was less since the war started than previously. Don't you agree, Miss Beynon, that an apology is due old country mothers? Trusting to find this in your most valuable columns.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. G. H. SMITH.
Zelma, Sask.

A MOTHER, THEN WHAT?

Dear Miss Beynon:—I have the greatest possible sympathy with Mrs. M. W. B., as I am in much the same position myself, except that I have four children and they are a little older than hers. I think, however, she is on the wrong track. College life is woefully short, and after the children have finished with their studies, trigonometry and latin are quickly put behind them and all the hard work done by the mother in brushing up her knowledge of these studies does her no good. She is faced again by the same problem.

The better solution is to fill the

A Blackboard Eraser for Your Stairs

I have hardwood stairs finished with a wax finish in my home, and I have found that one of the felt blackboard erasers to dust down the stairs not only takes up all the dust and holds it so that it can be carried to the door and cleaned with a few strokes, but it polishes the waxed surface as well. The square corners of the eraser clean well in the stair corners, and it is a quick and easy way to keep the stairs in good condition.

To Protect Comforters

To protect comforters from becoming soiled on the top, catstitch a piece of muslin about twelve inches wide to the top of your comforter and embroider the desired initials in the centre, in the prevailing color of the comforter or to match the draperies of the bedroom. This not only protects the top of the comforter, as this strip can easily be removed and washed, but it is also very pretty.

LETTERS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Any person desiring to communicate to a contributor to this page must enclose the letter in a plain stamped envelope and forward it in another envelope to the editor of this page, with a note saying for whom the letter is intended. Addresses will not be sent out under any circumstances.