

Woman's Quiet Hour

By E. Cora Hind

During the past month I have attended the big fairs at Calgary, Edmonton and Brandon, and have been much struck with the many advancements in these fairs, along the line of educational opportunities for women, and the improvement in the prize lists offered for women's work. This matter of prize lists was particularly noticeable at Calgary, where not less than \$1300 had been set aside for prizes for bread and domestic cooking, and where it was possible for women with two loaves of bread, if made from a particular brand of flour, to win over \$75.00. I can remember the time, and not so long ago either, when 75 cents was about the highest that was offered as a prize for a loaf of bread. The women showed their appreciation of this prize list by competing in such numbers that in a single class there were as many as one hundred entries. At both Calgary and Edmonton the special farming train of the Alberta Government was drawn up and all visitors to the fair had the opportunity of going through it. Three out of the thirteen cars were devoted exclusively to things for women, and one car, which particularly took my fancy, was specially devoted to showing how many labor saving devices could be operated by gasoline or coal oil power, and in this connection a skeleton or open engine was demonstrated so that every woman could see exactly how the power she was dealing with was generated, and I am sure that witnessing the simplicity of the machinery did away with the fears of many women with reference to power conveniences. At both places there was brief, practical illustrated lectures on Home Economics, and the mothers of young children were able to enjoy these in peace and comfort, because they were provided with a nursery car in which to leave the little tots, and lest any mother should think that a car of this kind might be a place to breed disease, let me say that the car was regularly and thoroughly disinfected daily.

It was at Brandon, however, that the most important and practical exhibit for the benefit of women and children was put on. This was in connection with the Provincial Health Department. It was a small building, entirely devoted to demonstrations of the dangers to children from want of sanitary precautions in the home. There was electrically operated models, showing exactly how germs from stables and outbuildings find their way into the drinking water of the family. There was a very forcible illustration of how disease is spread in the form of a

sort of "Now you see it and now you don't." Looking through a vista you saw a dirty tramp, foul with disease, drinking out of a cup at a public well; suddenly and inexplicably the picture changed and it was a woman offering a drink to her beautiful baby from the same cup. There were wonderful charts and illustrations, and a most unpleasantly vivid working model of flies passing from the garbage cans immediately on to the food of the family. There were models of how things ought to be, as well as how they should not be. In the rear of the building was a beautiful room devoted to the babies. Here nurses, who are now at work in the country under the supervision of the Department of Health, were assembled and any mother anxious for information about her baby was at liberty to go into this room, have it examined, talk the case over with the nurse and get her best possible advice in the matter, and scores of women availed themselves of the opportunity. Perhaps the most poignant thing about the exhibit was the model illustrating the infant death rate of the Province of Ontario. On a revolving cylinder were tiny figures of children under one year of age, and as this cylinder revolved the scythe of Time came down and decapitated every fourth one. I do not know how it affected the other women who saw it, but it has haunted me ever since. One child in every four lost, under the age of one year, and probably fully 75 per cent of them from perfectly preventable causes.

Dr. Fraser, who is in charge of the Health Department of the Province, for many years practised as a general physician in the City of Brandon and the surrounding country. He knows country conditions from A to Z. He has always been an enthusiast along the lines of better conditions and better opportunities for women and children. Many years ago, when the majority of his professional brethren sniffed at the idea of women having a vote, he was an ardent advocate not only of the right to vote, for women, but their right to share the property of the farms which they had helped to make. To any one who has known the doctor for some years, it was a real pleasure to see him at last having the opportunity to illustrate practically, some of the lessons that for so long he has tried to teach by word of mouth, and he received royal backing from W. I. Smale, Manager of the Exhibition. He also has been a warm friend of women, and his exhibition has offered more comfortable accommodation for women and children than any other in the West.

During the past month my attention has been called to a case where an excellent teacher in a country district was discharged because she would not teach the Bible class in the Sunday School on Sunday. If this information had not come to me from a most reliable source, I would not have believed it possible that such narrow prejudice existed in the West. This woman was teaching an ungraded school and devoted a good part of her Saturdays to helping the advanced pupils to prepare for examinations. If she had not voluntarily done this work these pupils would have had to leave home and been put to a great expense in order to prepare for their examinations. She is a woman of high character and loved her work and she knew that she could not do that work justice unless she had her Sundays free in which to rest both her mind and her body.

I am afraid that there are still some people in our communities who think that school teaching is an easy job, whereas the teaching of a country school, where it is well and fully done, is one of the most slavish jobs on earth. The amount of education required and the energy expended, if given to almost any other profession would insure double the monetary return that comes from teaching. I know there are many careless teachers, but for that very reason when a school has secured a good one they should be very careful indeed not to infringe upon the rights of that teacher. I cannot help thinking that had there been a woman trustee on the board in question this piece of injustice would not have been committed.

During the month I have been asked whether I thought women have a right to smoke if they wish to do so. Unquestionably they have a perfect right to smoke just as any man has a perfect right to smoke if he chooses to do so, but what we have a right to do and what it is wise or expedient to do are two widely separate questions. Personally, while I know both good and charming women who smoke cigarettes, I do not think it is a wise thing for any woman to do who is serving the public in any way which brings them in touch with that public, in the position of instructors for adults or youths, indeed I think that it is absolutely fatal for them to indulge in any such habit. The very public which will condone the man teacher, the professor, the lawyer and the doctor who both smoke and drink, will shrink back in horror from the woman who indulges in an occasional cigarette. Of course this is unfair, but this prejudice exists and I hope so far as women are concerned it will always

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exist. The only change which I would like to see would be the common justice that would demand of the man the same standard that it demands of the woman. This is a big question and I have only time to allude to it in passing, but it is a question worth thinking about and one on which I would be glad for an expression of opinion from any of my women readers who feel strongly in the matter.

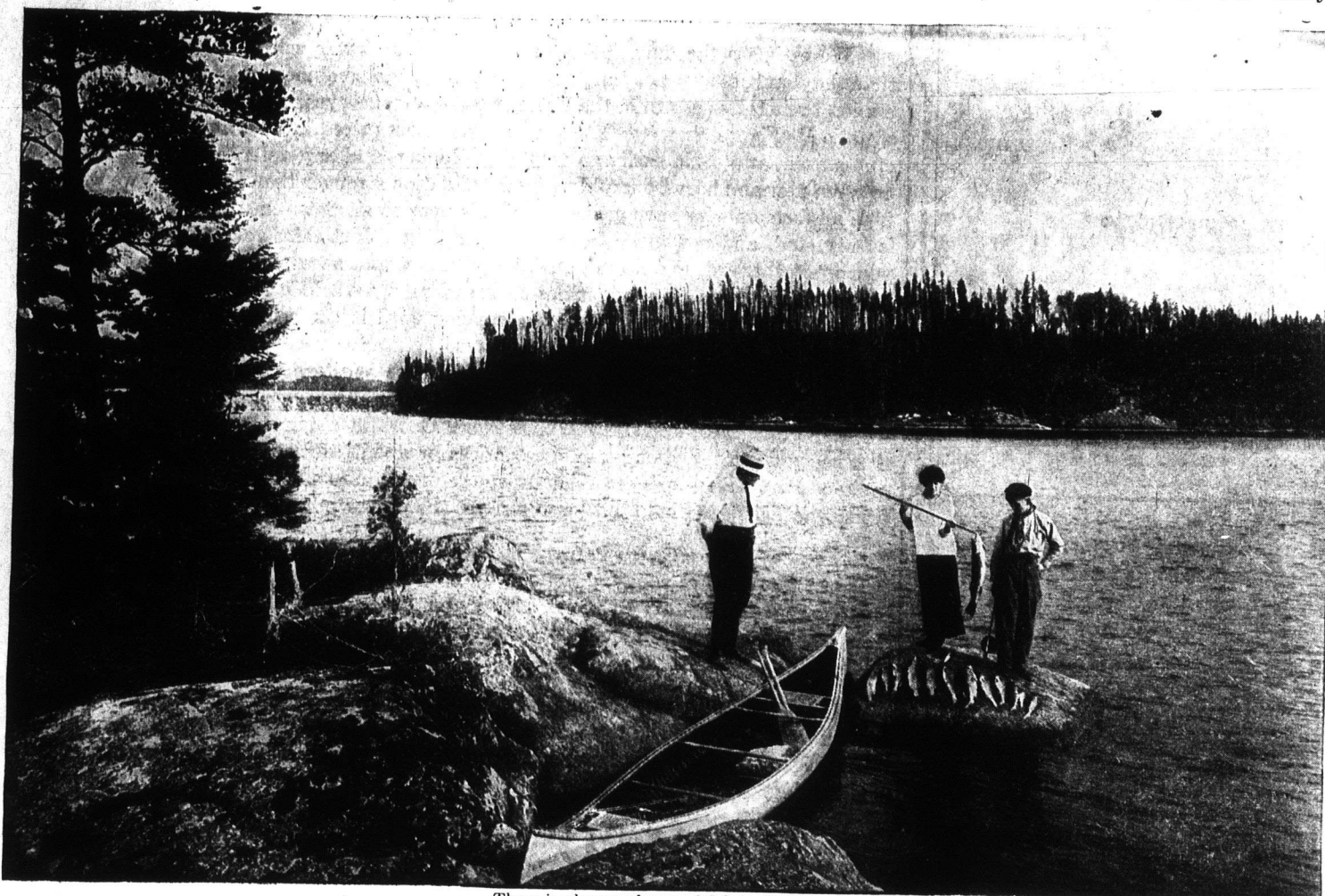
Generosity

Boy—"If you please, sir, I should like half a day off."

Employer—"Grandmother dead?"

Boy—"No, sir; I want to go to a cricket match."

Employer (with emotion)—"You are an honest boy, and such truthfulness should not go unrewarded. I myself will come back to the office after the game and tell you the scores."



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