

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Francis Marion Beynon

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In spite of the hot sticky limp kind of weather we are having, I feel righteous indignation bubbling up within me every time I betake myself to the reading of political news. Why is it, I want to know, that our newspapers are so contemptibly personal in their attitude to their political opponents? One can understand that the man who offers himself in the political field as a candidate for office leaves himself open to any amount of abuse, and that his private life will be hauled into the limelight and its faults carefully inspected thru a magnifying glass. Well and good—the man who enters the political arena takes his chance of this sort of thing.

But what I am exercised to find out just now is why a private citizen can't express an opinion publicly concerning the political issues of the day without leaving himself open to having a torrent of abuse heaped upon his undeserving head? It seems to me that it is about time our newspapers ceased to insult the public intelligence by offering this sort of retort to those whose opinions meet with their disapproval.

The only effective rebuttal of opinions that are not well founded is to point out their unsoundness, and if they are fundamentally mistaken the public will come to see it just as surely and quickly without the necessity of black-guarding the one who gave expression to them. Would it be an unkindness to mention here that men, being, according to their own way of it, the logical sex, might have been expected to realize that when John McGuinness says that education is being sadly neglected in the Province of Manitoba, it is no answer to the charge of neglected education to say that John McGuinness is a partisan, an intellectual prostitute, a favor-hunter, waiting patiently upon the doorstep of those politically powerful. It would seem to my feminine, and therefore unscientific mind, that the way to answer such a charge would be to show, if possible, that everything was being done for education that could be done.

But that is not the way the party newspapers deal with such charges. Very often they don't make even a show of answering the arguments raised against their side, but, instead, open up their whole vocabulary of insulting language and pour it upon the head of the one who dares to question the righteousness of their adherents. To be sure we are not confined in jail for expressing our ideas, and in that we are ahead of Russia.

Yet, after all, this evil, like the political corruption mentioned in this page the other week, comes home to roost, and it lies with us—the common people—to say whether we will countenance this sort of thing or whether we will demand a higher and more intelligent treatment of political issues and of those who support them.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

KEEN FOR EDUCATION

Dear Miss Beynon:—It is to you as a champion of education that I am addressing this letter, but first let me tell you that I am a most interested reader of The Guide, and specially enjoy your few words each week. I am an ardent supporter of the several causes which you uphold.

Could you let me know if it would be possible for a person to take a public school course at home with sufficient success to obtain a second class teacher's certificate for use in Alberta. I am past thirty, and have duties which absolutely prohibit my attendance at a school, but I should much like to take the course at home if it would be possible to do so. Apart from ways and means—such as correspondence courses and access to perfectly educated persons—could you find out for me if it can be done. I can answer for the plodding and study part.

Hoping that you may be able to assist

me, and with best wishes to you in your excellent work.

HOPEFUL

P.S. Would it be possible to get a report of the Homemakers' Club convention, giving the different addresses in full.

I don't think there is anything to hinder you from taking the teacher's course out of school, but I would advise you to write the Deputy Minister of Education, Edmonton, Alberta, and ask him to send you a program of studies and full particulars about writing on examinations. With all my heart I wish you success in the undertaking. Now, as to the papers given at the Homemakers' convention, you might be able to get a full report by writing to Mr. S. E. Greenway, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask.—F.M.B.

LEGAL INEQUALITIES

Dear Miss Beynon:—I have read with keen interest the letters on your page each week. Most of them I enjoy. Topsy's letter, of May 6, was splendid. If more women of her type came to the front, our battle for justice would make rapid progress. Della asks, do we think we can govern the men? My reply is we are not asking to govern the men, but as fellow citizens of this country we ask our right to a voice in its government. Yankee says we have not shown plainly our need of the vote. The following true story will perhaps make plain the position in which we are placed. A woman friend of mine married and came

offend his honor, all is over. He has power to sell the home over his wife and family, he has power to will it to someone else at the last, he even has power to give away the children, should he choose to do so. Don't you think we ought to be allowed the right to speak a word in self defence?

Della thinks the vote would make the women mannish. There is no good reason why it should. It may mean guarding our rights better. Stroll out further, Della, and you will find just as many anti-suffragettes as suffragettes who favor mannish dress and ways. I am for manly men and womanly women every time, but men must have found out there was honor and power in the vote for they certainly did some fighting for it and I believe they would fight for it just as quickly today. It ought, then, to be worth our asking for. As to women thinking and speaking according to the dictates of their husbands, no woman of intellect should be expected to do so. The ordinary school-boy or fourteen years is given a wider scope, and as women and mothers of those boys, it ill becomes us to be mutes.

Now I have a suggestion to offer on which I ask the advice of our worthy editor and the fellow readers of this page. Why not the mothers of each district get together and form a society of investigation for the protection of their daughters? For instance, in each locality we see young men and women meet and become intimate friends, finally marrying, regardless of the previous lives they have lived or their personal character.

SEPARATION

BY BRIAN HOOKER

Dawn light and bird song, and trees against the blue—
All the light of heaven, dear, are fair because of you!
But now the fields are fallow, and all the skies are gray—
Empty of the sight of you to light love's way.

Hearth light and home song, and voices by the fire,
Merry with your mirth, dear, and warm with your desire—
But now the house is hollow, and all the fires are chill,
Barren of the joy of you to wake love's will.

Come to me, bring back to me the worth of day and night,
The body of all beauty and the soul of all delight!—
Sunbeam and starshine, roses after rain,
The color and the melody, the laughter and the pain,
And all my life alive in me to hold you close again!

West fifteen years ago. She toiled faithfully with her husband, going thru all the hardships of pioneer life, living forty-five miles from town part of the time. During this time her husband had to haul his grain to town, leaving her alone with the care of the home and the stock during some of our most severe winter weather. In summer she also did outdoor work to help along, as they could not afford hired help, the husband always encouraging her on with the promise that half of all the property was for her. Now that they are comfortably fixed and debts have been paid, the tables have turned—all is his and if she is not satisfied she can go. Nothing belongs to her, even money she had saved before marriage and had spent on the place. Now she is penniless and completely broken down in health. Perhaps you may ask what is done with the money which, in every sense of justice, ought to be shared with that woman. Records show that in nine cases out of ten it is spent in drink, bad women or some unsuccessful deals. Yankee, I believe if we had the vote that woman who has been a faithful true wife and done her parts in making a home and helping to build up the nation would not be cast aside as a broken toy which no longer captivated the fickle fancy of man, with no compensation for her years of toil. Our laws at present leave a woman with no defence against a mean man. She may serve a man for twenty, thirty or forty years, but if in one moment of weakness should she

In many such cases it has meant a life of misery. To prevent this, let us do the work of a secret service society and with help from our young people get all necessary information from their home and country as to whether such a couple are eligible for marriage with each other. Don't you think it might be the means of our young men and women living better lives? No doubt there would be cases where all efforts would fail, but we could feel that our duty had been done by them in letting them know exactly the character of the person they are marrying. Don't you think our getting the start would mean success in most cases? I should like to hear what you all think about it.

Meanwhile, are the grain growers going to let our dower question be kept in cold storage much longer? Our hearts are becoming thoroughly chilled while waiting.

OBSERVER.

I am afraid the secret service idea wouldn't work any happiness for the investigators and with the present lack of education among women on such matters, I don't believe it would stop one marriage in a hundred. No, I think we will simply have to educate boys and girls to an appreciation of the value of purity.

F.M.B.

FROM AN INVALID

Dear Miss Beynon:—As I am a lonely shut-in and my husband a subscriber to The Guide, I must tell you how much

I enjoy the Sunshine and Country Homemakers page. When the mail comes I'm always anxious to get The Guide and read the above pages.

I have had very poor health for the past four years and am unable to get about as I would like, to call on my neighbors, make a garden or raise chickens and so many things which a good farm woman should do and enjoy. I must say that I get very lonely and, really, the only pleasure I can enjoy is fancy work. So I would be pleased to get information from some of the sisters on embroidery, especially the long and short stitch and the stitches used for the solid embroidery in colors on cushions, and the punch work.

I am piecing a crazy quilt and would be very grateful for some pieces of silk, wool and velvet to use for same, if any of the sisters have any to spare, as it would help me to pass my lonely days.

LONELY SHUT-IN.

BETTER MOTHERING NEEDED

Dear Miss Beynon:—Female suffrage is an interesting theme to fight for and to fight against. Allow me to put on the gloves—not that I have the slightest notion that either side will be greatly benefited thereby. Let me present myself as one who considers woman's brain as capable as man's. Does everyone realize that, in comparison with the relative weights of men and women, women's brains are heavier than men's? Let that fact stand for what it is worth. The pre-historic savage had a larger brain than we of today.

Man's brain has been trained thru countless ages of struggle; woman's has lain dormant thru enforced peace along that line or on account of her mission. Without doubt woman can train her mind in time—many have done it—till they obtain the utmost keenness that man is capable of. Their brain power surely entitles them to vote. As producers of wealth they are morally entitled to it, but, in the first place, you're too idealistic and not rational enough to vote. By that I mean you're satisfied with only perfection at a bound. Don't you realize that legislation is improving slowly but surely every year? Man must rise by stepping stones to higher things. Dynamite gets one there soon enough, but the result of suddenly applied and disproportionate force is unsatisfactory. It is the home influence as a rule that makes a good legislator.

Let a woman do her best in the home to train her children. She will do more there than at the polls. The nation is no better than its women—and no worse. If women are careless about bringing up their families, all the votes on this side of eternity won't help the nation. I have wandered most of my life, and I don't drink. Why? I have always been able to take it, and what very little I ever did take I liked, but mother, from the time I was a little shaver, taught me that it was the great curse. Had mother passed all the laws in Canada on temperance and never taught me, it would have done no good. Mothers must be tied to their children—slavery, if you like—but fathers slave just as much to support their wives and give them the chance to keep their eyes on the children.

Love is sacrifice. The father gives his life to supply bodily needs. Let the mother give her's for the spiritual ones—teach her boys it is not manly to swear, drink, gamble, be disrespectful to girls, or be cruel. Let her try to see that both boys and girls are educated as far as means allow; that they are taught at home what they otherwise learn on the street—and often too late; that home be so attractive the children don't desire to go on the street. A man's life, health and happiness can only be rendered safe by slow teaching when young, not by legislation. Let the mothers see to it, remembering every outcast has had a mother.

DON LEE.