

"The New Woman"

By Robert Jukes, Fellow Colonial Institute

The silent revolutions of today are the accomplished facts of tomorrow. The progress of startling thoughts that yesterday shook the timid and the vacillating, will, a generation hence, be regarded as the commonplaces of everyday existence.

The unimaginative, the staid, and the conventional dearly love to wander along pleasant shaded paths. Today the daring and the intellectual constantly push them toward the banks of that stream of progress on which, if they would only boldly embark, there would open to their astonished eyes vast fields and new pastures possessed of an infinitely wider range of possibilities than their poor dreams ever revealed.

With the silent evolution of new thought and new angles of view, their hearts and minds would open gradually like the flower to the dawn.

The men and women of tomorrow, who are the children of to-day, will ponder in amazement over the terror and the turmoil that such advances caused, seeing, as they will do, that the goal, if reached, has been attained only through the wounded hearts and hopes of a human mass wandering in the mist of ignorance.

Some of us view with apprehension and misgiving, that mysterious form now emerging on a startled world, the intellectual emancipation of that inscrutable entity—Woman.

Woman, that from the dawn of existence has been regarded as an inferior unit, in the drama of life: Woman, upon whose life the breaking of a new light, so long withheld, will exercise a new influence upon a new generation.

The bigot and the fanatic may regard such changes with alarm, but to the brave of heart, to the lovers of Truth and Justice, the opening of a new era in Woman's life should be greeted with enthusiasm.

Let us for a moment examine the meaning of those words, "The New Woman." What do they convey? Have they any meaning? Or is it merely the foolish patter of that shallow crowd ever thirsting for novelty, ever craving for excitement of new sensations? I venture to think that it does not fall within that dreary category. I dare to hope that it reveals the dawn of a new spirit, a hope based on that intellectual force that impels large groups of women in every country, to realize the possession of dormant faculties and latent power, urging them to action in the interest of their fellow creatures, a force that gains in power, reinforced as it is by that natural instinct of their sex, and to which we, as men, owe so much—tenderness of heart.

If, therefore, through the mysterious evolution of nature, a type of woman should evolve, exhibiting increased intellectual strength, without impairing that divine gift of tenderness, a new agency would arise possessed of direct influence for good in the world.

The sympathetic union of men and women, together linked in loyal faith to meet life's temptations, its dangers, its sorrows and its joys, but also linked to solve the problems that encompass the unthinking mass steeped to the lips in the contemplation of their own interests alone, would present an irresistible combination of altruistic energy.

That this new and higher type of woman in complete union with man, and engaged with him in those affairs of life, that were previously his exclusive domain, will fail to beneficially react on both, is hard to imagine.

The man should not sink into the slough of effeminacy. The woman should not fall to that ghastly level, the masculine female. On the contrary, each retaining their marked characteristics, the result should be a moral and physical improvement in the race, at every point.

Such are my reasons for hoping that the "New Woman" will achieve,—that she will achieve much I frankly believe. That she will commit many blunders I feel convinced. That she will "make good", as the expression goes, is almost certain. That she may electrify a curious world by the sudden exhibition of one of her leading peculiarities,—contrariness,—is entirely possible.

But, that under new and strange influences, she will lapse into a mere bundle of nerves and emotions, I refuse to believe, and I refuse to believe that she will fail to make a real effort to "play the game," in conjunction with that creature, "mere

man". But of all things I am sure of, I know that she will still remain the enigma she has ever been since the day she enjoyed the Apples of the Garden of Eden.

Perhaps, however, it is too early to predict. Let us therefore extend to her that chivalrous support that is her due from every fair and loyal man.

The opponents of the modern woman contend that her entrance into the rougher avenues of the world, will act detrimentally upon her character as a wife and a mother. I firmly believe that the direct opposite will result. Contact at close

range with some of Life's darker problems should, if she is possessed of any force of character at all, react favorably both on her husband and her children. The former would be conscious always of the presence of a kindly critic competent to analyse his disposition and tendencies, from an intelligent angle.

The children, while in no danger of the risk of a lack of maternal tenderness, would in their early training, probably be less exposed to the influence of pure sentimental emotion in excess, resulting in greater strength of moral fibre—an immense advantage when they step into the struggle of life.

Moreover, in the selection of their careers, the father's decision would not be

final, as it would be the claim of the mother also to judge, a claim based on the experience gained by her more direct contact with some of life's deeper problems.

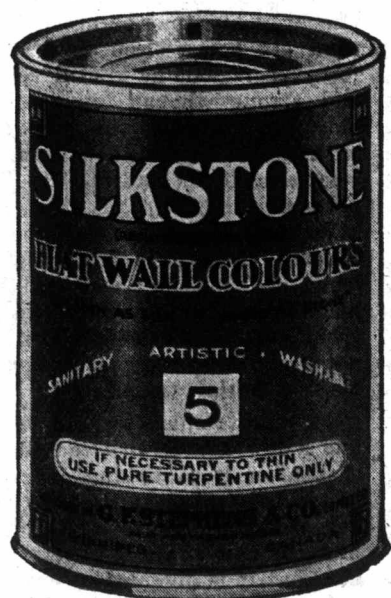
This, however, opens other avenues of thought and discussion, so I must now, for a time, take leave of our fair pioneer—"The New Woman."

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"New Hampshire," quickly answered the boy.

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