CUSTER COUNTY REPUBLICAN

By D. M. AMSBERRY,

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Feminism in France.

The prediction of the countess of Aberdeen made at the International Council of Women in Paris, that the French woman will be the first to obtain the vote upon any large scale may well have caused surprise among the British, German and American delegates. American writers upon "the woman question" have often fallen back upon two absurdities: the first, that Tacitus described the Germans whom the Romans fought as paying special deference to their women; the second, that "the French have no word for home." Add to this the misapprehensions of a five-weeks' tripper "seeing Paris by night" and a hasty observation on the Salic law and you have the genesis of an impression of the position of women in France which is as prevalent as it is preposterous. The fact is that Tacitus' observations would have applied quite as well to the Franks as to other early northern tribes, that the French get along very well with the word "home" so long as they have the thing; that French family life is at its best of almost ideal beauty, and that their sticking so long to the Salic law was one of the blunders of the Bourbons which does not in any case affect opinion of the republic. Since the revolution in France many things have changed. For one thing, the waste of men in war has familiarized women with varied industry and with the management of estates and business establishments as in perhaps no other country. The French "family council" system retains for a woman not only the respect of her grown son, but even a considerable measure of legal control over him long after English and American law would emancipate him. He canont even marry without his parents' consent. In a hundred ways, says the New York World, France is the country of the married woman. That young girls are still carefully watched and secluded is of minor importance. The system works not badly. There may even be lands where daughters have too much freedom and power for their own good and where mothers are too meek. The growth of "feminisme" in France of recent years has been rapid. It compelled the institution of a divorce law. Woman suffrage is a cardinal tenet in socialism, which has nowhere more power in actual government than it has attained in France. In Russia, which is largely dominated by French thought, the douma has declared for the woman's vote. American woman suffragists were for years divided into two bitter hostile factions on the question whether to work with the public in the several states or to appeal direct to congress. The French feminist adopts the latter course without hesitation. According to the countess of Aberdeen, she has commenced by trying to convince the legislator instead of the public. It is a method well adapted to France, where abstract ideas have always had a fascination for public men.

The "Silence Cure."

Some noble and deep thinking physician has discovered what he calls the "silence cure" for all diseases of the nerves. To apply the cure, "all that is necessary is for the woman to sit apart for an hour each day, in absolute silence. Husbands who have been able to try this cure report great benefit, but, of course, it is very hard upon the ladies. Only the self-sacrificing devotion of a wife, who places her husband's welfare above everything would be capable of carrying out the terms of this cure, and it is an ordeal that cannot but be injurious to them if persisted in. So far, there have been no explosions, but suppressed conversation is very dangerous, and at any time we may expect to hear of such an accident, wrecking the home and maiming the family. Whilst the "silence cure" is undoubtedly of benefit to the patient, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, it is attended with such grave menaces that it is doubtful if it ever become popular. Our native chivalry would cause us to refuse to take advantage of it. We would prefer to go on having our nerves frazzled, rather than have our devoted wives and mothers make this heroic sacrifice. And, after all, there are other means, answering the same end, and safer. There is the "vacation cure." A man takes the "vacation cure" by sending her home to see her folks. It is expensive, but safe. And it does not entail suffering upon the part of his devoted helpmeet.

A large sum of money has been raised for the purpose of providing a memorial of the poets Keats and Shelley in Rome. One of the remarkable things about poets is that people are generally willing to do a good deal for them after it has been made certain that they will never produce any more poetry.

"Keep your eyes on the stars," says the president to the graduates. But most of the dear things would rather be than see one.

FROG WAS TO BLAME.

Weather Prophet Had Simply Put Faith Where He Believed He Had a Right.

James Wilson, the secretary of agriculture, was discussing an antiquated kind of farming.

"It is about as profitable and logical," he said, "as the weather reading of a Connecticut farmhand I used to know.

"This farmhand claimed that he could read the weather infallibly. On a walk with me one afternoon a frog croaked, and he said:

"'We will have clear weather for 24 hours. When a frog croaks in the afternoon you may be sure of 24 hours of sunshine.'

"We walked on, and in 20 minutes or so a heavy shower came up and we were both drenched to the skin.

"'You are a fine weather prophet,' said I, as we hurried homeward through the downpour. 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

"'O, well,' said the farmhand, 'the frog lied. It's to blame, not me. Am I responsible for the morals of that particular frog?'"

Benjamin Jeans, who recently retired as guard on the London and Birkenhead express after 54 years of service, probably holds the world's record for travel. It amounts to more than 4,000,000 miles, or the equivalent of 160 times around the equator.

Be grateful the longer you are blind. The happiness is rare that can stand being scrutinized with keen eyes.

Over 540 pounds, or one hogshead and one and quarter pints of blood, pass through the heart in one hour.

The girl with the money to burn usually has plenty of flames on hand.

The brain of a man is more than twice that of any other animal.

There's no argument equal to a happy smile.

An Admirer of Shakespeare.

BY R. MURRAY GILCHRIST.

The very mention of Eunice Beaumont's library brought a warm glow to the Grassbrook pride. The village lies amidst the sycamores near Darrand bridge—a remote place where, until within the last few years education consisted of the three "R's," plain sewing for the girls, and for either sex, the rules of old-fashioned courtesy.

Eunice, however, had natural talents; she loved to widen her outlook; and so, being in straightened means, she made herself mistress of the few books she had inherited from her sire particularly the works of Shakespeare in seven volumes.

She derived a small income from the rent of two cottages near the church; for the rest she did fine needlework for such of the well-to-do as were too conservative to use machine-stitched underclothes. The old parson—Parson Swallow—would wear no other shirts than those she made.

On the afternoon when my Lady Danmon sent the message for her to present herself at Cresswell hall, she was gathering white raspberries in a narrow garden where luscious century-old things rioted.

"Good mornin', Miss Beaumont," said Mrs. Danmon's young groom. 'Her ladyship's housekeeper, Mrs. Dunn, she's sent me to inquire if you're free to come down to Cresswell to-morrow? A darning job on an old chair as has been stored in the lumber-room for Lord knows how long. Her ladyship came upon it awhile ago, and wants it in use again. Mrs. Dunn she spoke of you, and here I am to ask if it's convenient."

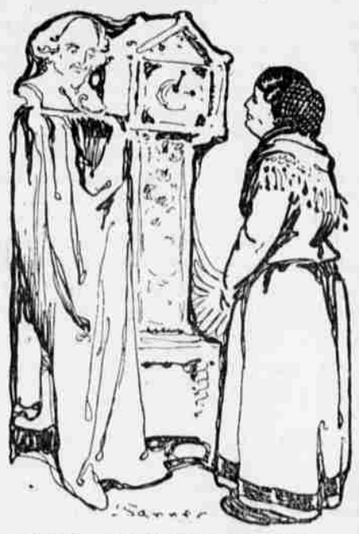
The old woman flushed with pleasure; never before had such an interesting piece of work fallen to her lot. "'Tis vastly good of Mrs. Dunn," she said, "and of her ladyship, too, for that matter. Ay, I'll be glad indeed to come."

The next morning she was shawled and bonneted by nine; but the young man did not appear until 11; and the stable clock at Cresswell hall was striking 12 when she alighted from the dogcart. She had never visited the place before save on the rare occasions when it was thrown open to the public; now that she was about to occupy herself beneath its roof, the magnificence seemed to increase tenfold.

An elderly woman, portly and dignified, came out into the courtyard. She wore a black silk gown, and a white muslin apron with a crimped border. Eunice curtsied; the other did the same, then offered a friendly hand.

"I'm glad you could come so promptly," she said.

After many timorous questions concerning etiquette, the old maid was taken upstairs to a small boudoir, where Lady Danman, a tall and handsome woman of middle age, sat in the window recess writing letters. She nodded kindly, then sealed her envelopes with faint-hued wax, and after



"TO THINK OF IT!" SHE SAID.

dismissing Mrs. Dunn preceeded Eunice along a gallery and up several staircases to a great attic lighted with semicircular windows.

"This is the room," said the lady, "and here is the chair." She removed the chintz cover. "The needlework, as you see, is frayed, particularly on the arms. I want you to restore it. It was, I have found, given to Lord Danman's ancestor by Queen Elizabeth herself. By the merest chance I came upon a mention of it in an old housekeeping book."

As she reached the doorway, a shrill cry of something not unlike terror made her turn. "My lady! my lady! I most humbly ask your pardon, but—"

"You are afraid of being alone?" said Lady Danman. "One of the young maids shall sit with you—"

"'Tis not that," said Eunice, in a low voice. "I was but taken aback seeing a gentleman looking at me from between the clocks!"

Her ladyship laughed merrily. "My good soul," she said. "It is but a bust of Shakespeare—a copy of the one in Stratford church. Ah, I see it does look real, with the light falling on its painted cheeks and the old curtain hanging from the bracket."

Eunice's hands were tightly clasped. "I ask your pardon again, my lady," she said; "but—did you say Shakespeare—the great Shakespeare of the plays?"

"The very Shakespeare," said Lady Danman. "The immortal bard. And now I really must go. You will be in excellent company."

She retired, leaving the spinster and the bust in a silence as profound as that of an empty church. For a time Eunice resolutely attended to the matching of her silks; but at last a reverent curiosity forced her to approach the presentment of the genius. Dust lay thick upon brow and nose; she took a folded cloth from her apron pocket, and with trembling fingers carefully wiped all away. The coloring now became vivid; she could have sworn that the bland face grew kinder because of her touch.

"To think of it!" she said with bated breath. "To think as I should be alone with him!"

The clock struck somewhere in the distance. She was too conscientious to spend time in adoration that should be spent at work, so she filled her needle and knelt beside the chair, steadfastly striving to forget the wonderful strangeness of her surroundings. The exquisite darning appealed to her; she put into it all her skill. It was slow, however; and when Lady Danman came up again about five o'clock, only one-half was done.

"You are doing it beautifully," said the lady. "Now, be off to Mrs. Dunn's parlor—you've done quite enough for one day."

The spinster deliberately replaced her needle in a huswife of pale green silk embroidered with purple and rose-colored flowers. She turned toward the bust, her eyes filled with an odd wistfulness.

"My lady," she said, "I feel in my heart that you are kind—that you will not believe that I ask for the mere sake of folly—"

"Ask anything you please; I'll answer if I can."

"About the head—do you believe that Shakespeare was really like that? I'd be glad to know—to know would save me from much pondering."

Lady Danman assumed her wisest look. "Most authorities agree; yes, I believe it."

"I thank your ladyship most earnestly. I cannot describe the gratification I have felt in being so near—in working almost as it were under his supervision—in winning his approval. And it seemed to me as if the distance betwixt him and me were not so great, after all."

Lady Danman withdrew in a maze of thought. "Good Heavens!" she said. "The creature's either mad or a genius! What a remarkable thing—a woman of her order knowing anything of Shakespeare!"

At home the old maid moved in a dream of delight. Her cottage that evening was transformed into a romantic grange, her garden into Juliet's garden, into the Temple garden, into Sweet Anne Page's garden.

In the morning she rose early, set her house in order, and after breakfast went to a clough where Grass of Parnassus grew in a marsh with Ragged Robin and Water Speedwell and tall bullrushes. The first flower had tempted her; Grass of Parnassus must surely be the finest to place before the effigy of her genius. It grew sparsely, two hours passed before she found more than a little posy. Then her skirts were draggled, her feet wet, her wrinkled cheeks gleaming with the heat. But she felt no weariness now; in her veins flowed the blood of immortal youth.

The groom found her curiously silent during the long drive; in fact more than once she failed to reply to his observations upon the weather.

At Cresswell hall, after her dinner with good Mrs. Dunn, she placed her tribute on a little table before the painted bust, and set to work immediately. The darning became poetry; the chair was sacred as having been in existence in the days when Shakespeare lived.

Lady Danman came up again in the afternoon, and stood for awhile in the doorway, the old maid kneeling beside the great chair, diligently plying the bright needle. So engrossed was Eunice in her work that her ladyship moved to her side before she was aware of her presence.

Her eyes fell on the flowers before the bust; she was still sensitive enough to feel a curious pang, as if something had thrust her back into the distant past.

"Grass of Parnassus!" she said. "How strange—how very strange!" Eunice snipped the last thread. "The work's finished now," she said. "I hope and trust your ladyship'll be well satisfied."

"I am more than satisfied," said Lady Danman. "I thank you—I have learned something from you—something that I cannot pay for."

Eunice replaced her needle in the huswife. "My lady," she said, "I'll be better pleased if no mention of payment is made—if you'll take what I've done as a gift. . . . It has been a privilege—I'd a hundred thousand times not have money. It has meant much to me—far more than I can ever tell you. Ay, I know that I'm presumptuous in asking this favor; but once in my life I'll sew for nought. . . . It seems a sacrilege to talk of money before him."

She pointed to the bust. Lady Danman's perplexed frown gave place to a radiant smile. "I'll offer you no money." She took Eunice's gnarled hand; the old maid stood very proud and stately in her own little way.

"I thank your ladyship," she began.

"But Shakespeare has never had greater honor paid him. The bust is yours; it shall be taken to your house this very evening."

"My lady! my lady!"

"It is yours," said Lady Danman, again, moving to the door, half-ashamed of the weakness that made her voice quaver.

Medical Student—What did you operate on that man for?

Eminent Surgeon — Five hundred dollars.—Puck.

Dr. Ernst, a Metz physician, has been decorated by the pope with the order of St. Gregory for maintaining at a conference for medical men that the best cure for lupus is a visit to Lourdes and the use of the Lourdes water.

A woman can put this and that together and tell everything her husband is doing. But a woman can fool her husband whenever she wants to. Fortunately, women do not often care to fool their husbands.

Shelter Tents.

There is a probability of the Australian military authorities encouraging the manufacture or importation of shelter tents, as used in Japan during the late war. The tent consists of a waterproof sheet with hooks and eyelets, the weight being trifling. Each Japanese soldier carries one of these sheets in his kit, and any number of them can be laced together, the custom being for four men to form a bivouac. Arms are piled in the usual way, and the sheets are spread over the pile weapons, affording shelter from both heat and rain. They can be utilized in many ways for sheltering the soldiers.

Andrew Carnegie, at Gravesend, when he was the first distinguished stranger to receive the freedom of the borough, said that he only understood one machine—the human one—and he always patted it on the back.

"The best hearts are ever the bravest," said Sterne.

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