

Copyright, 1912, by American-Examiner. Great Britain Rights Reserved.

"My Experiences with a Society Suffragette"

The Intimate Anecdotes of Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont's ex-First Aides, Who Quit Because She Couldn't Approve of Fashion, Food, Beauty and "Votes for Women" as Team Workers

EVER since the Political Equality League started Miss Mary Donnelly has been one of its active managers. The P. E. L. is the central organization of the American militant suffragettes. Its headquarters are in New York and it is controlled by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont. Miss Donnelly is now no longer Mrs. Belmont's first aide. Here she tells why:

By Miss MARY DONNELLY

HAVE left Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont's combined suffrage, restaurant and beauty parlor because I cannot work out the exact relations between women's rights and corn plasters; political equality and hair tonics, and because, while I realize that a restaurant, where a working girl and a working man can receive excellent food at reasonable rates, is a good thing to color a mind toward suffrage, I am perfectly sure that the combination of society, suffrage, food and hygiene is terribly indigestible for our cause.

There are lots of women just as important to our cause as Mrs. Belmont, who object to this pot-pourri of industries. It is a fact that Miss Inez Millholland, the prettiest suffragette in America, has tried to act as a balance wheel. As for me, I am for suffrage for women, and only suffrage, and I do not believe that society methods, how-to-be-beautiful ideas, or pink pills can bring about votes for women. That is why I have cut away from my position as first aide to Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, the leader of the Political Equality League, as it now stands.

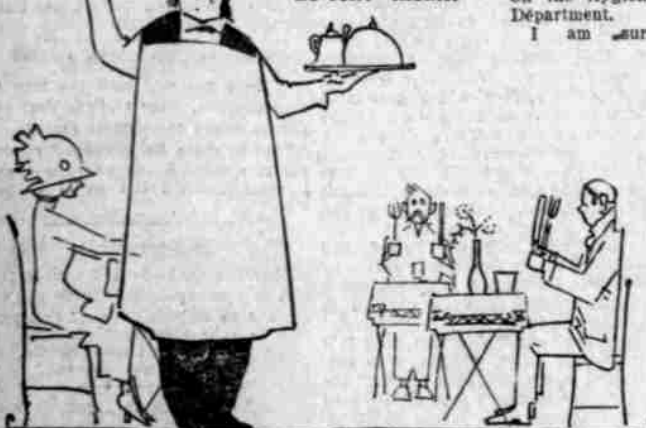
I am going to give you a part of the inside story of my experiences at society suffraging. Mrs. Clarence Mackay founded the Equal Franchise Society for idle rich. Mrs. Belmont founded the Political Equality League for the working poor. She spent thousands of dollars on branch clubs. She provided free gymnasiums, free dancing lessons, free books. Hundreds of girls, and many men, joined under her banner. Every few weeks she arranged entertainments for her combined organizations.

A year ago, in September, she opened a clubhouse and lunch room on Thirty-fourth street. This was the gathering place for the Fourteenth Assembly District. All sorts of working people came to eat. Artists, writers, doctors, bankers. This enterprise was a financial and suffrage success. There is, and always will be, a close connection between suffrage and food.

In the evenings the young women of the district met there, and, naturally, the men followed. They talked suffrage and "down with man," and danced the Boston dip and two-step. Those were happy days for suffrage! But they are all over now, and the songs of the suffragettes have given way to the songs of the Beauty Barkers. It is soap, not votes for women, it is down with corns, not with man, to-day.

Mrs. Belmont, at heart, means well. Whatever she does is for the good of the cause. But in her recent experiments that she is using bad judgment, is the opinion of the majority of the prominent women associated with her. Of course, the Political Equality League is a one-woman organization. It is Mrs. Belmont's club, supported by her money. Consequently whatever she says, goes. In Mrs. Mackay's club there is a Board of Governors. Mrs. Belmont has thus been free to work out her own projects. Many of them have succeeded admirably.

"And Mrs. Belmont's high-priced butler had to put on a waiter's apron and serve 25-cent meals."



Last September, just when great success was smiling on the Thirty-fourth street lunch room, Mrs. Belmont abandoned it and opened the new headquarters on East Forty-first street. She had spent thousands of dollars in transforming the original building. When all was ready she told the members of the Thirty-fourth street branch that they must move on to the new headquarters. They moved. And what did they find? Instead of the old neighborly hospitality there were formal talks in hygiene and how to be pretty, though plain. Instead of cozy sitting rooms and reading tables, there were soap counters and shelves filled with pills and dandruff cures.

Mrs. Belmont sent forth circulars into New Jersey, Connecticut and up the State, advertising her hygiene department, and suffrage became subservient to hygiene.

Well, at first the new idea worked well. Soaps, skin foods, hair tonics and corn plasters sold like hot cakes. Women came in from the country expecting to get free dental treatment and free doctor's attendance? They thought hygiene covered everything.

A few weeks ago the business dropped off. The demand was for food, not soap and pills.

Mrs. Belmont is a good business woman. She manages the big estate left by her husband, and takes charge of her own investments. She saw that to get business, she must go after it, and so she established her Beauty Barkers, and this is the move which conservative suffragists deplore as undignified.

Of course, the pills and hair tonic are not sold on the same counter as the pies and sauerkraut. The medicated restaurant is on the ground floor.

You go in the street door and turn to the right. You stop at the desk in the office (it used to be my desk), and pay in advance for what you want. Then you go into the restaurant and help yourself. At least you do if you can escape Mrs. Belmont and her beauty barkers. Right at the door they stand and sing the songs I have mentioned at the beginning of my tale.

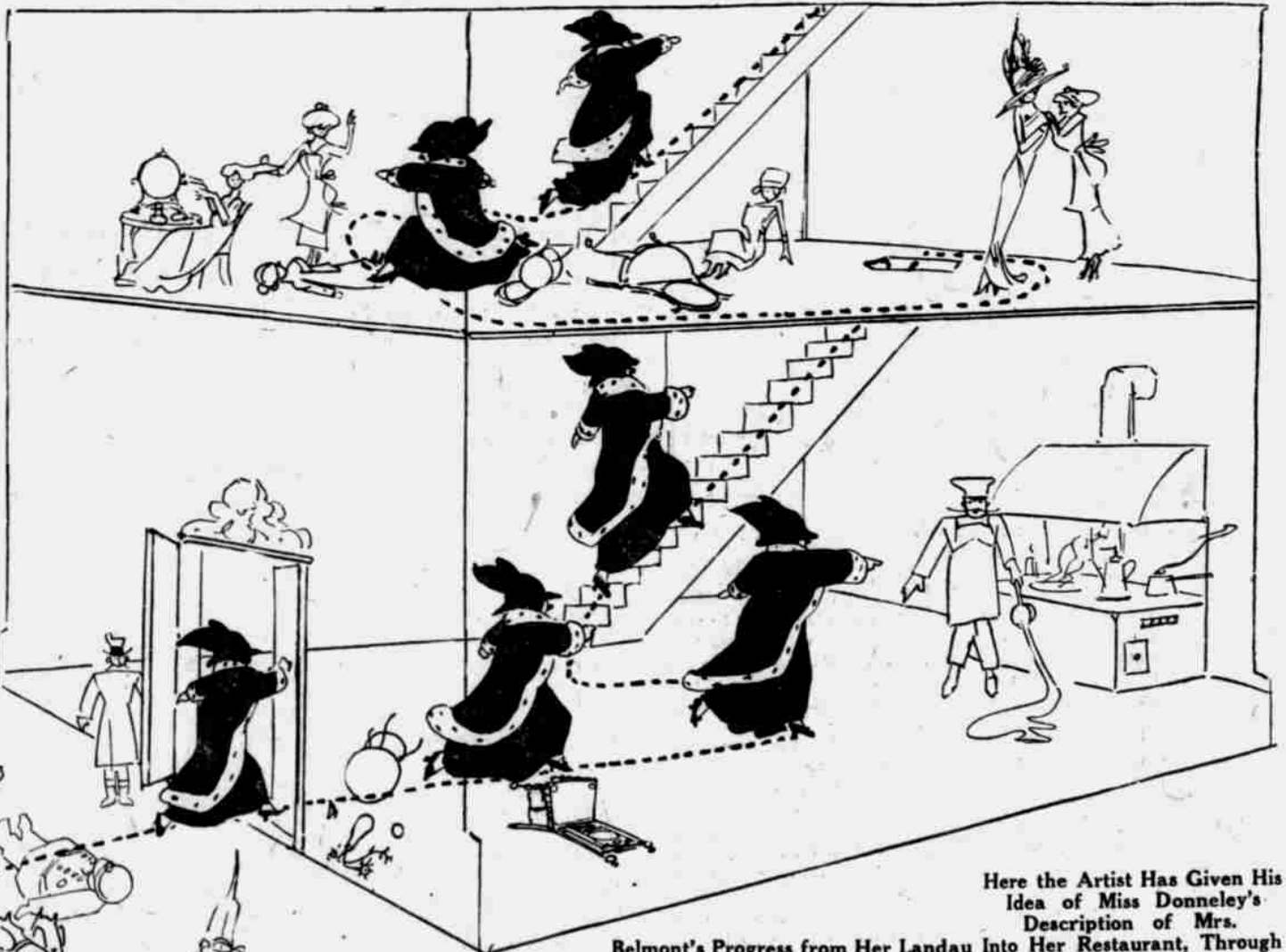
The Hygiene Department is up one flight, over the restaurant. There is one street door. Customers who want the perfectly delicious food served there, enter and turn to the right, where I had my office. There were always several chairs here, and customers would stop and talk suffrage on their way in. This was all changed a few weeks ago.

Mrs. Belmont stationed her barkers at the door, and as soon as a woman entered she was greeted with:

"Have you tried our hair tonics and pink pills?" If a man entered, another barker would sing out: "Won't you try our corn plasters and dandruff cure?"

Now, I ask you, was this the way to advance our great cause? Was this the way to convert man to our standard?

Mrs. Belmont's contention is that as she loses money on the restaurant, she must make good on the Hygiene Department. I am sure



Here the Artist Has Given His Idea of Miss Donnelly's Description of Mrs. Belmont's Progress from Her Landau into Her Restaurant, Through Her Kitchen Up to Her Hygiene Department and to Her Private Beauty Parlor.

that Mrs. Belmont works hard enough to succeed. Every morning she arrives at the headquarters at 10 o'clock. Her footman hops down from the box, opens the door of the limousine and stands at attention until she enters the building. Then he drops his head manner and hustles in to help. His mistress is already hard at it by that time. First she rushes into the restaurant, oversees the setting of the tables, helps fill salt cellars, dusts the chairs and inspects the kitchens. And she knows just how things should be.

She won't have any loud talking or any noise. One day she objected to the waitresses calling out: "Beans and—for two!" "Mercy me!" she ejaculated, "this is no hash house. You must walk slowly, but gracefully to the left and gently say: 'Pork and beans for two, please.'"

One day the waitresses struck—it seems hard to keep help at the headquarters—Mrs. Belmont ordered her butler down to help. He is awfully English and grand, and he did look funny in a bit, white apron over his handsome livery! But this did not help our cause! It turned him, a voter, against it.

The next day there were no dishwashers, and she ordered her footman in to help to clear up. "Here, take my apron and wash those plates," she said. But he refused, and she fired him. And turned him against us, too! Next day his mother came around and remonstrated. "Why, my son never had to wait on the table even at his own home!" she said.

But Mrs. Belmont believes that if she is willing to do things, every one else should. After the tables are ready, she goes out and pastes up the cards announcing "specials." "Sauerkraut and Frankfurters 15 cents." "Pork and Beans 10 cents." "Lamb Stew 25 cents." And she is the mother of the Duchess of Marlborough. Pills and hair tonics are great social levelers. Mrs. Belmont does not encourage any one to speak to her on any other subject. One day she sat in my office counting the customers. A woman came in and said: "Is this Mrs. Belmont?" "No," she replied, "I am Mrs. Belmont's secretary." (He's a man.) "Oh, I wanted some hair tonic," the woman said. And right there Mrs. Belmont's business instinct got the better of her exclusiveness and she said: "Come right upstairs. It's the best stuff I ever used. It keeps my hair on." And off they went like twins.

The soap and drug department is her pride. She fixes the shelves, fills the bottles and dusts everything, with her footman to help. One day when she was perched high on the step-ladder dusting, Dr. Mary Walker came in. Mrs. Belmont at first thought she was a man, and was quite annoyed at being caught.

Then there was the farm. It is all broken up. That farm had been on the market for four years. When the public read about the farmerettes, it got busy buying, and to-day the last acre has been sold.

When the farmerettes went to Brookholt they signed an agreement to stay two years. This was last March. In September Mrs. Belmont sent them all away. They could not pack their trunks. Mrs. Belmont kindly sent her Turkish servant to pack for them. Selim is a full blooded Turk. He wears the Turkish costume, tunic, turban and trousers. Oh, it was funny to see him buried under billows of lingerie and fluff frocks!

Selim did not like the job. He is used to forming part of the decorations of the reception hall at Brookholt Manor House and not to working.

With all its drawbacks, the farm was better for suffrage than the Department of Hygiene! One could draw in deep breaths of ozone without getting soap, hair tonic, pills and corn plaster odors all mixed together.

Waste That Can Be Turned to Money
THREE hundred million eggs are thrown away in this country every year, according to the figures of the Department of Agriculture. These represent 15 per cent of all the eggs produced in the United States—the total money loss by this particular waste being not less than \$45,000,000 annually. Nearly all of the loss is due to improper methods of handling eggs on the farm and at the rural store, and every penny of it comes out of the farmer's pocket.

This is only one of many food wastes. There are many parts of this country where actually it does not pay to harvest apples. It is cheaper to let them rot than to pay for labor to pick them and barrels to hold them, the price the farmer can get for them being so low. Yet apples of the same kind are selling in our markets at prices so high that only well-to-do people can afford to buy them.

Many vegetable and other canneries have "waste" of seasons, during which their plants are idle. In Germany the expedient has been adopted of utilizing the equipment of such canneries, during the off time of the year, for putting up meat and fish "entrees" with sauce, and other "made dishes" from inexpensive materials. This has already proved very profitable.

A Table Set in the League Restaurant—"Votes for Women" on Every Plate.



Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont at Her Desk in Her Political Equality League.