

Elizabeth Smith Shortt  
on Women's Sphere

To the Editor of the Times

Sir. Although it cannot but be obvious to all readers that the article "Woman's Sphere" by Hans ~~June~~ June 21 is fully answered, more than answered by the one in June 13 yet for humanity's sake I will expend this much time to re-explain my remarks to him, if you will kindly give me space, for it were a vast pity even one unit of the human race should so misunderstand his native tongue.

'Truth is divine' a good text thank you, I remember it only too well when ( may Hans ~~June~~ do the same tho' his memory did fail him when he wrote ) he ascribes to me the words 'the evils of tightlacing can never be known by woman till she is a licensed physician' It was never said. That some knowledge of their own anatomies known to all women would have averted the late exposee of woman's ignorance thro' the tightlacing controversy is truth! That some knowledge, the more the better of Hygiene, Physiology, medicine would make fitter mothers is truth. That higher education would lead the feminine thought to higher & more delicate paths than 'setting her cap' 'making a good match' &c is truth, divine truth. That she would be able to fill any & all positions circumstances made her fill, meet all exigencies of her life better, truer, fuller, by a greater general knowledge, by a knowledge of herself, is truth. Ay truth is divine. I thank thee Hans for teaching me that word.

Over all, above all, Hans, she would be more competent to mature the young ideas committed to her charge, more competent to aid them, physically, intellectually & morally if her own were wide than were they 'cabined, cribbed, confined.'

That, Hans T. , misquotes Dr. Guthrie deliberately is a question, that he does so, is truth, for Dr. Guthrie emphatically approved of the advancement of the education of women, he said "I believe there are tens of thousands of women in the country who will hail the day when ladies pass as qualified physicians as a blessed one, and it will be a great relief to their feelings" And he not only approved with his voice but worked for us in his life, especially in gaining the admission of women for study to Edinburgh hospital.

The next departure, the fantasia his disordered imagination plays on the words virtue modesty, delicacy, has but one merit -age. Oh we have heard so much on this score from such sources, so much. Such futile attempts to frustrate the progress of good, the growth of morality & intellectuality as his, oh we know the keynote well.

Who ever heard of Dr. Guthrie, Prof Masson, Prof Huxley, John Stewart Mill or any of the largeminded men of past or present times who gave the subject thought trying to veto womans right to all & every good, by a weak play upon the words modesty, delicacy virtue?

Oh no, they & the best men of every time believe womans moral character as of stronger stuff than to perish with the first contact with what they call the rude buffetts of the world.

As a learned writer said " Are charwomen & seamstresses 'less virtuous' & modest than their neighbours because they have to fight their way & win their fame in the struggle for bread? Are the Turkish women veiled & secluded as they are kept more virtuous than those of European nations? Is her innate modesty so small a thing, of so frail a material, that it will bear no contact with externals?

If you admit it is then I answer that I deny that a woman possess either virtue or honor who cannot without harm read & live & work as holy men have read & lived & worked... Bear in mind too that the women who enter into public competition go armed with a higher education mental, moral & physical than those have whose thoughts never soar above the contemplation of a comfortable home & plenty of excitement"

The only part of Hans Junr's effusion worthy "A woman's" notice is that 'she retire from (presumably his)vulgar notice. For when such as he are ousted in any argument of this nature, in any case where woman is concerned, their who so quick as our would be guide, protector & lover of delicacy, to hurl insult as he. A pretty guide to all things good & pure such would be!

Yes uncalled for - unwarranted, by anything said, by anything hinted, he uses the poisoned arrow of insult as the most effectual weapon at his command & that to against a woman, for women for right. None other than he, who so loudly assigns us our place, second to him, subservient to him.

Would it not seem well for Hans Junior to think more of the true rendering of 'man's sphere?'

It would seem more appropriate at least if he should occupy his hours of leisure in cultivating his own moral character, than attempting to crush those who object to his dictation, by falsity & insult. How dare any creature assign his fellow creature his rights, his limits, his or her sphere? Co-equal of the 'same flesh & soul consisting God made them man & woman. It seems a huge impertinence that either should assign the other place, or dwarf their powers.

That some should have the disposition to do so is too evident, that they should have the power is lamentable. It would serve the interests of society better if such men would so nourish their own moral & intellectual characters that they might attain to that strength " to be in the world but not of the world" That they might grow to that nobility of character that is strengthened by trial, purified in the furnace & made lasting from victory, rather than that abnormal article of gourdlike growth that perishes in the using which they call virtue, honor, delicacy "words in some hands is a sceptre in their a rattle". In short that they might do & be the best man may do or be, as many men have been before them, as many & many men & women have been before & now.

If Hans Jur. never knew such men & women it is to be regretted & certainly forms some excuse for his judgement of them. For he would lead us to believe society was in this state! Society consists of individuals, individuals signifies man & wife, man means the greater part of the individual, who goes into the world ( i.e. among his fellow men) grows callous, evil, debased, quite lost to delicacy virtue, truth. Wife means a small part of the individual, a help who stays all by herself within four walls, to preserve her modesty & virtue, & exists a very useful (?) angel. Truly a worthy mixture, worthy of Hans imaginings! The man the guide ( to what? ) helper ( to what? ) protector ( from what? ) how can anyone imagine a more illy assorted individual, scarcely a pair, for there is no equality. Was anything ever more incongruous more strangely awry than this picture?

Of course it is fully understood that this is only a dream of Han's, that a few minutes may dispel, for most people of civilized races believe that the ideal man & wife

is vastly different from that. Not only the ideal but the real, where education & generous ideas have had room & breathing space.

The man possessing a moral character too high, too strong too sure to be lost by contact with the world. The wife all virtuous modest & true & withal educated enough to be able to sympathise, to understand, to follow the daily progress it may be of the man. He her protector because of his manliness, not because of her ignorance, her counsellor because of his wisdom & her intelligence, not because of her imbecility.

If we would believe Hans's Junr. it would seem that a wife's life is so unbearable that if she could maintain herself alone & knew enough to take care of herself alone, she would do anything rather than marry. It's a very sad thing if he knows any such unhappy, still it is only fair to suppose that an educated woman was never the cause of his misery by marrying him. An educated woman no (sic) marrying with any less than her equal, it is only fair to suppose he will never be made this unhappy.

Just here Hans is enigmatical even to himself. He avers if women are highly educated they will not marry. Yet he believes education matures the mind sharpens insight makes wise. And still he asserts most emphatically that marriage is the highest good, the happiest end woman can achieve. If so, as we would fain believe it, why with growth of intellect would she not the better see it, choose it?

The gross insult cast on all women supporters of the Suffrage Movement by Hans is of too small moment to discuss.

That it is wholly false those who know anything of the subject know well. Whom he thought to delude by such a heinous indictment is hard to imagine. And for his own

benefit let me advise Hans to read the Apothegms of the Womans Canadian Suffrage Association" before he pronounces such sentiments as "Free Love" as their prominent characteristic on his own responsibility.

To think of such womanly women as Mrs McEwen & her colleagues being thus insulted by this intellectual stripling is rather an ill advised jest, indeed it is all sui generis & not worthy notice for truth is Divine.

But it Hans has not awakened ere this from his chaotic dream, it is evident it is too late to save him from fatal syncope & from the heart of a happy household. I finally say Requiescat in pace.

A Woman