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**Premarital**  
It Was Not a Settlement of Property, but of Principle  
By EDITH V. ROSS

We cannot judge of the whole by a part. To say that because some people are not fitted to govern themselves no people are fitted to govern themselves is a non sequitur—that is, the conclusion does not follow the premise. Because some women are so interested in home, husband and children that they do not care to take part in politics we are not justified in assuming that women had much better let politics alone. Differences of opinion, of fitness, are the wheels of progress. A people of one mind on all subjects becomes stagnant.

Elsie Harbeson was an example of a girl who was tempted to enter the fray for the rights of women without fitness therefor. She was a lovable creature, very feminine and not especially gifted in a scholarly way. At any rate, while in college she had received the lowest possible rating, especially in logic. She was neither an officer of her class nor on any of the committees. Indeed, Miss Harbeson was not in any way fitted for a leader in the great and absorbing struggle for the political advancement of her sex.

When Elsie met "her fate" she found a man who was drawn to her on account of the feminine mold in which she was cast rather than her aspirations. The Scotch saying that we would be blessed at being able to see ourselves as others see us pertained especially to her. To Herbert Winston, her lover, it was plain that the cause of women would lose nothing by the defection of the girl he loved. He had no preferences for or against the cause, but he was opposed to Elsie wasting her time in a matter which other women were far better fitted to push than she. But Herbert was given to diplomacy rather than to open opposition and had no mind to fly in the face of his fiancée's views. He made no comments whatever on these particular opinions. Elsie believed that a matter in which she was interested and upon which her fiancée seemed indifferent should be settled between them before marriage and, bracing herself for a struggle, opened the subject.

"Herbert," she said, "there is one matter for us to consider before our marriage, a matter on which my heart is set, upon which you seem to be indifferent, but which is liable to make trouble unless there is a distinct understanding while we are still free."

"There is nothing to settle before marriage, because I propose to give way to you in everything."

"That's very sweet of you. But you don't seem to realize as I do that there is a good deal that is practical in married life, that romance changes to companionship, which is far more enduring, and that companionship is dependent upon a husband and a wife having the same views."

"That doesn't cut any ice in our case, because, as I have told you, your views shall be my views."

There was rather too much subservience in this to suit her; but, since she could not find fault with it, she took refuge in a side issue.

"I am sorry to see that you are becoming slangy. It would have sounded better for you to say 'make any difference.' But, to take up a far more important matter, I am very much interested in the struggle for the emancipation of women that has been going on for many centuries. It is one of the elements that have entered into the civilization of Europe and America."

"How?"

"How? Why, Professor Howland mentioned it in his lecture on civilization."

"It seems to me we are getting away from the subject which you consider of so much importance. I don't think it would pay us to enter upon a discussion of what goes back several thousand years. We'd have to put off our marriage indefinitely in order to get down to modern times. How would it do for us to make a compromise on this matter of the emancipation of women—I to have no opinions concerning it, you to have whatever opinions you like?"

"And express them?"

"Certainly."

"And act upon them?"

"Of course."

"That's lovely of you. I didn't think you would be so liberal."

"I'll be more liberal yet. If you like I'll coach you on the arguments pertaining to the cause you are to advocate."

"Will you?"

"Certainly."

"When shall we begin?"

"Any time—now if you wish it."

"Very well; mention some of the main arguments."

This was very mean of him. He had no business to lead her into such a trap. Having embarked in a struggle to wrest from man the rights of woman, she now signified her reliance on man by accepting his services to instruct her as to how to go about her work.

"Man," he said, "when left to himself, without woman's influence, becomes brutal. Ergo, he has in him the nature of a brute, which can only be kept in subjection by his wife. See?"

The conclusion to this argument was somewhat startling. Elsie could not follow it all at once, so again she took refuge in a side issue.

"Please don't use that word 'See'! Why not say, 'Do you understand me?'"

"Just so. I think it will be admitted by any woman who is or has been married that keeping her husband in subjection requires a lot of time. Then there is the household to look after, and the children, and a lot of other things—"

"I thought you were going to give me arguments in favor of the emancipation of women. You are proceeding to prove that a wife is too busy looking after her domestic affairs to— She hesitated.

"To keep her husband in subjection?"

"How absurd!"

"If you don't like that argument I'll give you another. I presume you studied political economy while in college."

"Yes, indeed, and it made me a free trader."

It was now the man's turn to be startled. He had not been able to fathom the free trade-protection problem himself, and he was impressed that Elsie had succeeded in doing so.

"You know," he went on, "that the old political economy of a half a century ago has all been upset by modern big business."

"Has it?"

"Yes, but it still holds good in small circles—the family, for instance. You know that the theory of the free trader is that each community produces what it is best fitted to produce, the whole going into the general market and each community selling what it is fitted to produce and buying of the others what it doesn't itself produce."

"I see."

"I thought you didn't like that explanation."

"They are not the same. You said 'See?' I say 'I see.' There is a great difference."

"My way is more phonetic."

"Go on."

"In the family, carrying out this same principle, the husband does the providing and the wife takes care of the household and the children. When the husband breaks in on his wife's prerogatives he's monkeying with the buzzsaw."

"Oh, heavens! What a horrid way of putting it!"

"Anyway he's liable to get scratched."

"Worse and worse. But complete your argument."

"For contra, if the wife breaks in upon the husband's prerogatives there is likely to be a monkey and parrot business in the family."

Seeing an opportunity to get in a blow for her sake without inveighing against slang, she said quickly, "I don't admit that politics is the exclusive right of the husband."

"In that case but one of two courses is open to us. Either I must give up attending to the duties of a citizen to you or we must both attend to them. The latter course would be a violation of the economic principle."

This argument resulted in silence between the couple for some minutes. Elsie saw that, pretending to give her an argument for her cause, he was arguing on the other side. She believed that there was a valid answer to his statement, but it did not occur to her.

"It seems to me," she said at last, "that we each have duties of citizenship to attend to in accordance with our consciences."

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," was his rejoinder. "Since you prefer that course, so shall it be."

"But you would prefer that one or the other of us should attend to the duties of citizenship for the family."

"I believe in a division of labor or, if you like another way of putting it better, in certain things being attended to by the wife and certain other things being attended to by the husband, but if we both decide to go to the polls to register our votes I have no objection to our doing so. At any rate, we can try it. Nevertheless I see no use in trying to cross a bridge till we come to it. We are not married yet. When we are all such matters will regulate themselves. But I reiterate seriously that if there is anything objectionable or useless in our both going to the polls to vote I will defer to you."

"What do you mean by useless?"

"Suppose we vote on different sides. We might in that case pair."

"Pair? What do you mean by pair?"

"We might do what we're going to do in marrying. If we intend to vote on different sides and neither of us votes at all the result is the same as if we voted. I, a man, and you, a woman, marry. There's one less bachelor and one less spinster. In other words, we are paired."

"I do think," she said, looking up at him with a pair of soft brown eyes, "that you use the funniest arguments I ever heard."

"They will be plenty good enough when we are married."

"How is that?"

"There are only two arguments which count for much between man and woman. Her best argument is tears; his is kisses."

With that he drew her toward him and kissed her.

There is no record as to Mrs. Winston's services in the cause of the amelioration of the condition of women. Winston is not reliable in his testimony, and what he says should be taken with a grain of salt. He declares that whenever there is an election he and his wife are on opposite sides and the result is a pair.

However this may be, the Winstons are a very happy couple, and a fine crop of children are growing up about them. Mr. Winston's statement that it is better not to try to cross a bridge before reaching it has turned out to be true. At any rate, the family differences are settled amicably from day to day.

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**Probate Order.**  
State of Michigan, the Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee.

At a session of the Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee held at the Probate Office in the City of Corunna, on the 11th day of October in the year one thousand nine hundred and fifteen.

Present, Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate.

In the matter of the estate of Bridget Quinn deceased.

The executor of said estate having rendered a final account to this court.

It is ordered that the 9th day of November next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, at said Probate office, be appointed for examining and allowing said account.

And it is further ordered, that a copy of this order be published three successive weeks previous to said day of hearing in THE OWOSSO TIMES, a newspaper printed and circulating in said County of Shiawassee.

MATTHEW BUSH,  
Judge of Probate.

By CLAIRBEL GALLOWAY,  
Probate Register.

**Order of Publication.**  
State of Michigan, the Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee.

At a session of the Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee, held at the probate office in the City of Corunna, on the 11th day of October in the year one thousand nine hundred and fifteen.

Present, Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate.

In the matter of the estate of Anna M. Wallace deceased.

The administrator of said estate having rendered a final account to this court.

It is ordered that the 9th day of November next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, at said Probate office, be appointed for examining and allowing said account.

And it is further ordered that a copy of this order be published three successive weeks previous to said day of hearing in THE OWOSSO TIMES, a newspaper printed and circulating in said County of Shiawassee.

MATTHEW BUSH,  
CLAIRBEL GALLOWAY,  
Probate Register.

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