

Chenery

6/14/1928

Saw Chenery at his office on the double standard, told him that I think, from his letter to Reynolds, that the article is not for them, as I contemplate a discussion and not a record of observations.

We discussed various things and settled on an article on the Democratic issues for 1928. He suggests that he will get Will White on Republican issues.

Told him I am doubtful whether their policy includes many articles on women - this apropos of the double standard. He says emphatically it does. I finally suggest a paper that I had in mind - the case of Mrs. Knapp, - and he snaps at it. Told him that I should like to make this really an exhortation to women to watch their steps in handling ^{public} money, that their training and experience has been such in the past as to make them feel that any way they can get money is justified, and that they have little rigid conscience about spending it. This is the natural result of so large a number of women having to ask for money. We both recalled our mothers' experience, and of women that we heard of, that took money out of their husband's pockets at night - confessed that our mothers never did that but used to weep when they had to ask for money.

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I spoke of the difficulty of women's comprehending the sacredness of a budget once settled on in a family. How often she will conceal bills when she has over-run her allowance. The man, trained in business, is shocked by this to him dishonesty. He knows that the woman frequently does things in handling this budget to which she has agreed which if his partner did in a business arrangement would be cause for severing the relationship, even a lawsuit.

We spoke of her indifference, even efforts to evade the customs duty. I told him how women buy evening gowns abroad, will bring them out possibly the last night on board ship in order to say that they have been worn, when they are examined. Also that women will bring in quantities of lingerie which they put on once or muss and stuff into laundry bags; and if an examiner tells them they seem to have a great deal of lingerie they are very high hat about it - say they never wear anything more than a day.

How busy women are the last day when they are bringing in large quantities of things, sewing on lace where no lace belongs, opening linings and tucking articles inside - scores of tricks. The woman who declares fully cannot but feel that she is naive, and, as a matter of fact, she is laughed at frequently by inspectors - I have had that experience myself. The whole question seems to be, How much you can get away with. It is very like the attitude toward Prohibition, so far as the law is concerned. Say that I want to go to Syracuse and to Albany to look into the case.