

Study of Rea

Solution of Problems Is Freedom for Women

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Elisabeth Freeman Campaigns for Cause

All of the troubles of the world seemed to her to be bound up in the fact that women were not economically or politically free, and so Elisabeth Freeman, former militant suffragette and pacifist, decided to do something about it.

That she accomplished much of the work to which she devoted many years may be readily seen in the changed status of women today. Miss Freeman, who is in this city visiting her brother, John Freeman of 19 Pearl Avenue, has watched many improvements which have resulted from her work.

Her interest in public work on behalf of women first started when, hardly more than a young girl, she went to England to recuperate from an illness. She had only been in that country for two weeks before she was jailed.

"I was riding on an omnibus," she recalls with a twinkle in her eyes, "when I saw a policeman grabbing a woman and treating her roughly. I jumped off the bus and grasped his arm with my hand and begged him to stop. Instead I, too, was arrested for assault—you see, I had touched him—and we were taken off to jail. The woman was a militant suffragette, on her way with others of her group with a petition to the British government. Of course I began to investigate the movement and I became tremendously interested in it."

Joins Movement

It was at that time that Miss Freeman decided that the ills of the world were bound up in the economic and political inferiority of women, and she determined to devote herself to the suffrage movement. For five years she worked in England.

Then she came back to the United States under the auspices of the National Women's Suffrage Association, where she worked for the New York State branch. She continued the suffrage work until American women won their right to vote.

Miss Freeman smiles a little when she recalls going about the country in a little yellow cart, pleading with the populace for her cause. She worked hard in those days, resorting to soap-box oratory, newspaper publicity, and every other such means to bring her suffrage principles before the public eye.

In the course of her campaigning she attended a state suffrage convention held in Binghamton, and afterwards conducted a short speaking session here before various local groups.

Peace Issue

But suffrage work is only one of the issues that have taken Miss Freeman into public life. During the World War she was wont to turn suffrage meetings largely into pacifist meetings. She was fully as ardent in her fight for peace as she was for women's right to vote.

Miss Freeman helped to start the American Neutral Conference before the war broke out. When war was declared, the name was changed to the Emergency Peace Federation and work was still carried on. During this part of her career, she organized 10,000 persons to march on Washington in the demand for peace.

After peace was declared Miss Freeman went again to England to study the British Labor movement, intending to bring back those principles to America. Following this, she began publicity work at the New York Lighthouse for the Blind, later giving up public work.

Interesting Contacts

In the course of her career, Miss Freeman recalls encounters with numerous persons of international fame. At the Fabian Society in London she met George Bernard Shaw, King Edward and Queen Alexandra, and other notables. She has worked side by side with Carrie Chapman Catt, Jane Addams, Mrs. Harriet Stanton Batch, and many others, and her work has led her into contact with many presidents.

Interesting contacts with stage personages may also be numbered in the long list. When Katharine Hepburn, stage and screen favorite, was only 12 years old, Miss Freeman was a guest at the Hepburn home in Hartford. She was attracted to the youngster, and asked her what she intended to be when she grew up.

"I'm going to be a great actress!" Kate replied fervently, drawing herself up with pride.

Miss Freeman tells one on saucer-eyed Eddie Cantor which is not in the books. With another worker, she was peeping around the wings of a little East Side children's theater. She saw a dirty little urchin, capering up and down the stage and rocking the young audience with laughter at his antics. Finally he capered just a little too close to the wings, and a social worker reached out and grabbed him off the stage.

"We told you not to come around here until you were cleaned up," the woman scolded, sending him off. True enough, the youngster had been forbidden the premises until he had the benefit of a bath.

Some years later Miss Freeman was walking down Broadway. She lifted her eyes to the signs about a theater and saw huge pictures of Eddie Cantor, his big eyes popping out from the images. "Where have I seen that person before?" she thought. Suddenly it flashed across her mind with photographic accuracy. Here was the same urchin of earlier days, still making a hit with the same caperings!

Knew Will Rogers

Her favorite story, though, concerns the beloved Will Rogers. While she was doing Lighthouse work, she went about to famous persons finding entertainers to speak before the blind at their



Elisabeth Freeman

Sunday afternoon gatherings. She went to Will Rogers and asked him to perform.

At first Mr. Rogers shook his head. He was willing to give his time and talent, but he was afraid to perform before a blind audience. The idea depressed him, but he finally succumbed to Miss Freeman's pleading and agreed to give a performance.

He put on a great show, and was enthusiastically received by his sightless audience.

"It was a fine performance," Miss Freeman recalls. "After the show, Mr. Rogers came to me, almost with tears in his eyes. 'That was the most responsive audience that I have ever played to,' he told me."

The next day Will Rogers sent a most generous check to the Lighthouse for its blind work.

Woman's Place

As to women's place today, Miss Freeman has much to say. Women must and should work, she believes. The whole economic setup is changed, she points out. Women's work has been taken out of the home and into the factory, and she has had to go out to earn money to buy things that she used to make. Weaving, baking, and numerous other tasks fall into this category. Women have gone into men's jobs at less wages than men, doing the work just as well, and they have made a place for themselves, Miss Freeman firmly believes.

Ardently a feminist and a pacifist, Miss Freeman says, "I judge men by two things—their opinion of women, and their opinion of war!"

Today retired completely from public life Miss Freeman, a smartly groomed woman with beautiful auburn hair, now runs an antique shop each Summer in Provincetown, Mass., the famed old town where first the Pilgrims settled. After such an active career, one is inclined to wonder if antiques can satisfy her.

Miss Freeman only smiles. "Antiques? I adore them!" she says.

Christmas Kitten

Buying the Christmas kitten will be the high spot of your Christmas shopping, whether you do it for yourself or for someone else, says Doris Bryant in House Beautiful. You may choose a long-haired cat for its beauty and charm, or a short-haired one who will grow into a sleek and sinuous animal. There are lovely fluffball Persian kittens, who, as you know, will become majestic cats; the exotic Siamese, who is friendly and affectionate; and the husky short-tailed Manx, who makes so fine a pet. Don't make the mistake of getting a "bargain" kitten, she warns, for he will undoubtedly cost you much more in the end—in doctor's bills.

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