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Ford Hall Folks

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THE GOSPEL OF ELLEN KEY*

By HORACE BRIDGES

OF all human institutions the most successful is that of monogamous marriage, because it has won out in the struggle for existence. We are living today in an age when men and women are absolutely free to abandon monogamous marriage if they like, and yet only one marriage in twelve in this country is divorced. That, I think, shows that marriage cannot be quite so terrible a thing as the revolted against it think. People like Shaw and Ellen Key have overlooked the mass of men, and are legislating for a tiny minority.

We are all intensely conscious today of the great evils there are in the world. We have a kind of sense as if these evils were new. But what is really happening is that the public conscience is advancing, and we are now seeing as evil things that former generations took for granted. There has been no increase in immorality proportionate to the increase in population in the past century, but actually a decline. And so my first word is a word of comfort.

When I read the shrieks of people like Ellen Key and George Bernard Shaw I am reminded of a newspaper campaign in England a few years ago, to assure us that white bread was absolutely unnutritious. The newspaper began to manufacture and advertise "standard bread." Then suddenly a man inquired, "Why are you telling us that we are getting no nourishment out of a thing which we have all been living on all our lives?" That is the way I feel about the agitation against marriage. Ellen Key suggests that we should make divorce absolutely free at the will of one or both parties continued for a certain length of time, and that we should recognize on the part of every healthy woman a right to motherhood, quite irrespective of marriage. New laws are to be passed under which the state is to maintain these women and their chil-

Let me define briefly my own ideal of what

for divorce should be limited to adultery, insurable insanity, to either party's getting a prison conviction of ten years or more, and (by consent of both parties) in cases where after ten years the marriage proved to be sterile. But I should endeavor to educate public opinion so that mistakes before marriage would be avoided. (Applause.) Then the divorce laws would in time automatically become a dead letter.

No human institution should be held responsible for evils if it is clear that you can abolish the evils without abolishing the institution. Further, no institution should be abolished unless at the same time its evils can be abolished. In arguing for the abolition of marriage, we have an error in logic. The republican form of government has displayed many evils, but we do not propose to abolish it because of them. The evils of marriage would arise just as much in connection with any other system, and probably a number of others also.

The second presupposition of the free love school is that marriage and love are sometimes opposed to each other. That this should be so I consider an insane antithesis. For anyone except degenerates or spoiled children love and marriage are synonymous. You sometimes find one without the other, but the normal fact, which I accuse the free love school of overlooking, is that love and marriage go together. (Applause.)

A still profounder error is the idea that you can make a thing moral by passing a law sanctioning it, when it is inherently immoral. Miss Key says that free love will contribute to the abolition of prostitution. I quite agree that if free love is legalized it will tend to the abolition of the word "prostitution." But will you have got rid of the thing? She also says that we can abolish adultery by means of free divorce. That is exactly as if you should propose that we

should abolish stealing by calling the thief a financier and calling stealing business. We often do that (Laughter), but that doesn't change the moral status of the facts involved.

The next error I wish to deal with in this free love school is the idea that happiness or unhappiness in marriage is an absolute fatality, which you cannot in any way control by your own will or self-discipline. They always talk about love as if it were a thing like the measles. That is really the idea that is back of all our divorces for incompatibility of temper. We talk about sin as if it were a thing for which we were not to be blamed. We don't dream of allowing this laxity in any other department of life, then why in the most important department of all, socially?

If you take a moral standard like that of self-discipline you can cut under two more absurdities of the free love school. One is that marriage is simply a means to individual happiness. That is a false ethical principle, and anti-social. It would justify suicide if brought to its logical conclusion. The other is the perpetual harping on the theme of individual rights. That carries in its train all the social injustices which we today are endeavoring to rectify.

The only right you and I can ask for is the right to discharge our duty. And so I say marriage was never instituted merely to promote individual happiness or secure individual rights, but that men and women should fulfill their duty to the race with the maximum of efficiency; and if it does that then criticism is at an end. The truth is, that in the modern world, when our ideals conflict with circumstances, we have fallen into the bad habit of surrendering our ideals instead of throttling the circumstances. That prostitution of the end of life to the means is what dominates today, and it is what we have got to get away from.

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Let me define briefly my own ideal of what ought to be the marriage of man and woman. It is the old-fashioned one of one man and one woman so long as they both shall live. (Applause.) That is, I am aware, the conservative view, but I do not hold that view on authority of any sort, but freely, after studying the comparative methods of uniting the sexes and perpetuating the species. I quite agree with Miss Key that monogamy was made for and by man, and therefore I agree that if any other system than this could be proved to be better to meet the physical and psychic natures of men and women, then monogamy would have to give way. What impresses me is that all these new plans for lease-hold marriage, etc., have been tried in primitive life, and some in more advanced societies, and they have gone under because they would not work.

I think that for a number of causes divorce ought to be allowed by the law. There ought to be one uniform divorce law for the entire nation. (Applause.) But it ought not to be so lax as many of the divorce laws of the present day are. I think the causes

*The speeches and the questions and answers reported by Miriam Allen de Ford.

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THE PRAYER

In fear and trembling we contemplate the awful ravages of those sexual diseases that blight and destroy men, women and children by the tens of thousands. The compelling urge to pass on the torch of life to another generation has come to us from Thee, our common Father. With all the intensity of our souls, we pray that we may be saved, ourselves and the nation, from both the misuse and the abuse of this exalted function. Help us to remove those economic barriers and social prejudices which hinder the accomplishment of Thy divine intentions. Help us to be unashamed of the highest blessing and greatest responsibility which Thou hast entrusted to human beings. Give us, O God, the courage to know the truth about ourselves and this intimate relationship with another. As a people, we acknowledge ignorance, recklessness and rebellion; we pray for light, steadiness and repentance. Amen.

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That is at the bottom of nine-tenths of this free love argument. Because men get bad pay, and women must earn more money by abandoning their natural functions as wives and mothers, we say, "Let us postpone or abandon marriage," instead of saying, "We will amend these rotten economic conditions which make these things possible." Then we have writers like Ellen Key saying that we should give people a right to parenthood, without realizing that the economic problem remains unchanged, for it is not marriage that is expensive, but having children. There is a real economic problem, to be sure, but there is also a false social standard. The perpetuation of the race is the highest duty of the fit, and there is actual danger at the present day because of the large abstention from parenthood by those who are most fit.

My chief objection to Ellen Key's doctrine of the right to motherhood and the general free love doctrine is this: People overlook the fact that the moment you sanction such a thing as that then every married man or woman becomes as much a possible candidate for selection parenthood as the single man or woman. Any such proposal would make society a moral chaos.

THE QUESTIONS

Q: In assuming that eleven out of twelve marriages are happy, have you ever found out whether prostitutes are patronized by married or single men?

A: By both, of course; but if you think abolishing marriage would be a cure, you are more optimistic than I.

Q (Mr. Isaacs): Is a eugenic marriage a basis for a happy married life?

A: In the majority of cases I believe so.

Q (Same): What do you think of second and third marriages?

A: I haven't any experience to go by (Laughter), but I see nothing against them in theory.

Q (Same): What do you think of the maxim, "When misfortune enters the door love flies out of the window?"

A: I don't believe it.

Q: Does Socialism include free love?

A: No. Socialism is an economic theory, and has nothing to do with the question of marriage. I may say that I am a Socialist. (Applause.)

Q: What right has society to compel two persons to live together without love?

A: The right that society is responsible for their children, and that they have contracted to carry on the duties of man and wife.

Q (Mr. Cosgrove): Is the absence of divorce in England due to a higher moral standard or a lower financial standard?

A: Both, and also to the abominable injustice of the English divorce laws.

Q (Mr. Lippenberg): Where do you connect the fact that marriage should be a union of souls, and the fact that a woman must live with a man she does not love for the sake of support?

A: I did not make both those statements. If the thing is absolutely abhorrent, I believe in legal divorce.

Q: Do you believe in teaching sex hygiene?

A: I do. I think it ought to be taught in the high schools, but the teacher should give it all the dignity of a religious lesson.

Q: Will you kindly define the word "soul?"

A: I mean by "souls" approximately the difference between a living man and a dead one. (Laughter.)

Q: You believe love should become more

Q: What is the use of divorce when if a drunkard is given a divorce he marries another woman?

A: What is the other woman doing to marry him?

Q (Mr. Bodfish): Is it practicable to put Socialism in operation today?

A: No, you will get it just as soon as the character of the nation is worthy of it and the brains of the nation have been educated up to it. (Applause.)

Q (Mr. London): How can a young man nowadays keep his morals in the company of the modernly dressed young woman? (Laughter.)

A: I can't answer the question.

Q: Are not Chambers and Caine as bad as the writer you condemn tonight?

A: My education has been grossly neglected. I have not read those authors for ten years.

Q: Do you believe in disallowing school teachers to become mothers?

A: No, I emphatically think they should be allowed to marry without loss of position.

Q (Mr. Sachmary): Will you give your definition of Socialism?

A: The nationalization of land and capital, that is, of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Q: Are we really living under the institution of monogamy? Have we not a forced monogamy for women and promiscuity for men?

A: We are not living up to the ideal. But our society would be still lower if our ideal were lower.

Q: Why should not the matter of a divorce be left to the parties concerned?

A: Because those two persons jointly have made a contract with society.

Q: Do children bring more love in the family? Do divorced persons generally have children?

A: I think the statistics show that children are a safeguard against divorce. The normal marriage is the one with children.

Q: Is it not true that the children of loveless marriages are not so happy nor so apt to become good citizens?

A: There are no data which would warrant a scientific assertion to that effect.

Q: Have you read Mr. Gilchrist's

A: The system recommended by Ellen Key is being practised today in many savage communities, and they have not progressed.

Q: Why are there so many mothers-in-law to meddle with marriage? (Laughter.)

A: I am not holding a brief for the mother-in-law.

Q: Will not a spur to good citizenship be removed if we cannot get a divorce for an unhappy marriage?

A: I think that conclusion is false. Some of the finest work in the world has been done under the pressure of unhappiness.

Q: What do you think of Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata"?

A: I do not care for it. I think the greatness of Tolstoy is very much exaggerated today.

Q: Isn't there a certain happiness in doing one's duty?

A: Yes, certainly; often greater than the pain of not doing it.

Q (Mr. Ballou): How old is Ellen Key, and has she been a mother?

A: She is over 60, and I know nothing about her private life except that she is Miss Key.

Q: If Ellen Key's ideas prevailed, might there not still be eleven happy monogamous marriages to one unhappy?

A: No, I think the educative influence would be bad. Moreover, marriage now is considered to be a settled thing, and then it would not be.

Q (Miss Crawford): If there were some distinguishing title for the eligible man as distinguished from the married man, like the woman's "Miss" and "Mrs.," would it not help matters?

A: Yes, I think that is an excellent idea.

Q: Do you believe in pensions for mothers?

A: Yes. (Applause.)

Q: Would you grant a divorce in the case of extreme drunkenness, commencing after marriage?

A: Yes, I think so.

Q: What is your own definition of love? (Laughter.)

A: I really haven't one that is my own property.

Q (Mr. Whitman): Would it not be an injustice to both of them for a young man with a small income to marry a girl and lower the standard of living to which she was accustomed?

A: If marriage were merely a bargain I should agree with you. But both would

tracted to carry on the duties of man and wife.

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A: I mean by "souls" approximately the difference between a living man and a dead one. (Laughter.)

Q: You believe love should become more spiritual. Do you believe that soul attraction would make for better breeding of the race?

A: I believe it would. But it isn't necessary to talk about the predominance of the soul over the body. In the ideal union there is a correlation of the two.

Q: What is your remedy for the 21,000,000 young men and women of marriagable age who cannot marry for economic reasons?

A: Socialism. (Applause.)

Q (Mrs. Solomon): You say that all married people should have vacations. Will you tell us all how to get ocean voyages?

A: I have nothing to add to my answer to the previous question.

Q (Mrs. Hoffman): Why haven't we progressed in morality as we have in other things?

A: Because you get progress only where you fix your attention and make up your mind to push the thing along. I believe there will be great reform in the next 50 years.

Q: If the ballot is granted to women, will that change the laws on divorce?

A: I think I must ask you to address that question to the infinite Creator. I think it will, but how am I to know?

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Q: Have you read Mr. Gibbs' book, "The Eighth Year," and what do think of it?

A: I am getting badly shown up. I haven't read it.

Q: What do you think of a man, married eight or nine years, with five or six children, who leaves his wife and family?

A: That there were too many of them.

Q: Can you tell us the cost per capita for bringing up children under proper conditions?

A: My experience is mainly confined to England, but there it can be done with four or five children on \$10 a week. Perhaps someone else can answer for America. (A gentleman in the audience): I can. I live in the country. Until twelve years ago I brought up eight boys and four girls in good style on \$9 a week. Now I make sometimes \$100 a week, but it goes just the same. It is all in the standard of living.

Q: I ask again, how can a young man keep himself pure in view of the suggestiveness of the dress of women today?

A: He can, if he has dignity and self-respect, but it is a great shame that this extra strain should be put on the virtue of young men.

Q: Can a country where polygamy is practised secretly progress as a country could under the system of Ellen Key?

it would not be.

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A: Yes, I think that is an excellent idea. Q: Do you believe in pensions for mothers?

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A: If marriage were merely a bargain I should agree with you. But both would gain more than they lost.

Q (Miss deFord): Does not prostitution, properly defined, include a money exchange or its equivalent; and, properly thus defined, would not a reform of the marriage system tend to abolish it?

A: I think not, necessarily, because a part of Ellen Key's proposal is a project of support for women of this kind and for children to be born to them.

Q: Haven't we entered into the temple of the holy of holies tonight with very ruthless hand?

A: I don't think it is for me to answer that question, but I should like to say that absolute frankness is far better than the surreptitious discussion which often takes place. I think the subject has been seriously treated tonight. (Applause.)

Q: What would you think of submitting divorces to a local board of arbitration?

A: Simply as an advisory measure I think it would be excellent. I think something of the kind is being done in the County of Domestic Relations in Chicago.

Q: Which would you consider worse for a community—to go on as we do in the liquor business or to have irresponsible houses of prostitution?

(Continued on Page. 4.)

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Our Town Meeting is surprising both the...
pessimists and the optimists. At the...
very first session some one was heard to...
name a very short time within which the...
thing would "bust up." For myself it has...
already prospered beyond my expectations...
The immediate consideration of a number...
of serious problems by well-organized com...
mittees is most gratifying. The vigorous...
presentation of widely opposing views al...
set forth within strict parliamentary de...
corum, reflects great credit on so young an...
organization. It is sure to be a fine train...
ing school for all who are anxious to equip...
themselves as competent citizens.

A week ago Sunday night Moderator Fos...
ter went to a new forum in Melrose to ex...
plain the spirit and method of our work...
Last Sunday afternoon I was telling the...
story to two hundred men in Woonsocket...
R. I. and on Sunday afternoon, the 8th...
shall be in Gloucester. The other day...
was in Manchester, N. H., making particu...
lar inquiries as to the progress of their...
Open Forum.

Our work is beginning to acquire the dig...
nity of age. Although we are only six year...

AS IT LOOKS TO ME

By GEORGE W. COLEMAN, Director of the Ford Hall Meetings

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How quickly people adapt themselves to an entirely new situation. Our discussion last Sunday night of marriage and divorce, with all the implications of the subject, was as natural, wholesome and satisfying as though we had been used to that sort of thing all our lives. It refutes entirely that old stand-pat defence of everything that is wrong on the ground that you cannot change human nature. And it illustrates most vividly what Professor Small of Chicago said to us a few Sundays ago, that human nature has shown itself to be subject to the very greatest changes. The applause of the audience when Mr. Bridges answered the question of the woman who thought a public discussion of marriage and divorce was most reprehensible, showed conclusively the attitude of the people on that matter. It marks a wonderful change in the popular mind and is full of promise for better conditions in the days to come.

There is every indication that the citizens of the Ford Hall Town Meeting were most happy in their selection of Mr. W. H. Foster as Moderator. His idea of establishing a Credit Union among the Ford Hall constituents is worthy of our most serious consideration. At the next meeting of the Ford Hall Folks, February 15, we shall give some time to the further discussion of this very interesting and practical method of helping the right people to get small loans under reasonable circumstances.

It is a joy to us to welcome to our platform once more Professor Steiner of Iowa. He is the man who confessed to me that he thought our audience was the most difficult audience in America to speak to. And he said that after he had had an evening with us that was exceptionally successful from every point of view. Professor Steiner has probably met as many different kinds of audiences as any man before the public, and he knows how to handle an audience as well as any man I ever heard, and I have heard not a few of the greatest and best the country affords.

Our Town Meeting is surprising both the pessimists and the optimists. At the very first session some one was heard to

old I am finding out that there are those among us who do not know anything at all of our beginnings. One of our constant attendants asked me last Sunday night questions about the organization of our work, the answers to which I had supposed were familiar to everybody. He said he could not tell his friends how long the meetings had been running, how they were started, where the money came from and so on. How would it do to get Miss Crawford to write a little history of the Ford Hall Meetings and ask the Ford Hall Folks to publish it in leaflet form for general distribution?

There was a young man last Sunday night who got a second chance to ask a question by moving into another section of the hall after he had already had one turn. I have his portrait in my mind's eye and will be ready for him next time.

Rev. Dr. Phineas Israeli of Roxbury was on the platform last night and propounded the last question but one that was asked.

Did you notice that group of men to whom I gave seats together on the further end of the platform just before the musicians arrived last Sunday night? They were shoe salesmen, associates of mine in business. They travel all through the South and Southwest and are in Boston only for a few days twice a year. They are high grade men and will carry with them wherever they go the splendid influence of that meeting, which was their first taste of a Ford Hall gathering.

A friend of mine in Oklahoma City recently wrote me telling of a travelling man he had met in Alabama who was a devotee of the Ford Hall Meetings. When they discovered that they had a mutual friend in me the flood-gates of friendly intercourse swung wide open, and my friend Taylor of Oklahoma was so impressed with what his new-found friend thought of our meetings that he took the trouble to write me that we might have this added evidence of the good our work is doing.

OTHER MEETINGS.

School of Social Science: Lorimer Hall, Monday, February 9, at 7.30 P. M., "Socialist Tendencies in Literature," by Prof. Vida Scudder, Wellesley College. 10c.

Sunday Commons: Huntington Chambers Hall, Sunday, February 8, at 3.30 P. M. Dr. Charles Fleischer, leader.

Temple Adath Israel: Thursday, February 12, at 8 P. M. Public Conference on Juvenile Delinquency.

Public Library: Monday, February 9, at 8 P. M. "Municipal Gymnasiums," by Dr. Dudley A. Sargent. Thursday, February 12, at 8 P. M. "The Landmarks of Paris: A History in Stone," by Huger Elliott.

Lowell Institute: Huntington Hall, Monday, February 9, at 5 P. M. "Mohammedanism," by C. Snouck Hurgronje. Monday, February 9, and Thursday, February 12, at 8 P. M. "The Spirit of the Common Law," by Roscoe Pound. Tuesday, February 10, and Friday, February 13, at 8 P. M. "Sound Analysis," by Dayton C. Miller.

LAST WEEK'S TOWN MEETING.

Most of last meeting was given to a discussion of Mr. Victorson's immigration bill, which finally passed by a vote of 68 to 20. Mr. Victorson himself, Mr. Weitzner and Mrs. Hoffman were among the most ardent supporters of the bill; Mr. McKenna and Mr. Lunenberg chief among those who opposed it. We all had an enlivening and instructive time over this bill. It was decided to co-operate with other Massachusetts societies to present the matter to President Wilson, in connection with the literacy bill now before Congress.

Among our guests were representatives from the Women's Municipal League and the Consumers' League, who are co-operating with our Courtesies Committee, of which Mrs. Foster is chairman, in a "clean-up" in the West End. Miss Angela Morgan of The American was also present, and may have something to say about us later in her paper.

This was our largest meeting thus far, 148 being present. Let us hope the citizens will keep up and break this record.

Will Mr. Peter Timbley, Mr. August Anderson and Miss Turner, or someone who knows them, give their addresses to Mr. Boston

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 (Applause.)
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 omed?
 marriage were merely a bargain
 agree with you. But both would
 than they lost.
 deFord): Does not prostitution,
 fined, include a money exchange
 ivalent; and, properly thus de-
 ld not a reform of the marriage
 id to abolish it?
 hink not, necessarily, because a
 llen Key's proposal is a project
 for women of this kind and for
 o be born to them.
 ven't we entered into the temple
 ly of holies tonight with very
 and?
 on't think it is for me to answer
 ion, but I should like to say that
 frankness is far better than the
 ous discussion which often takes
 think the subject has been ser-
 ted tonight. (Applause.)
 at would you think of submitting
 o a local board of arbitration?
 mply as an advisory measure I
 would be excellent. I think some-
 the kind is being done in the Court
 tic Relations in Chicago.
 igh would you consider worse for
 nity—to go on as we do in the
 usiness or to have irresponsible
 prostitution?

(Continued on Page. 4.)

very interesting and
 helping the right people to get small loans
 under reasonable circumstances.

It is a joy to us to welcome to our plat-
 form once more Professor Steiner of Iowa.
 He is the man who confessed to me that he
 thought our audience was the most difficult
 thought in America to speak to. And he
 said that after he had had an evening with
 us that was exceptionally successful from
 every point of view. Professor Steiner has
 probably met as many different kinds of au-
 diences as any man before the public, and
 he knows how to handle an audience as
 well as any man I ever heard, and I have
 heard not a few of the greatest and best the
 country affords.

Our Town Meeting is surprising both the
 pessimists and the optimists. At the
 very first session some one was heard to
 name a very short time within which the
 thing would "bust up." For myself it has
 already prospered beyond my expectations.
 The immediate consideration of a number
 of serious problems by well-organized com-
 mittees is most gratifying. The vigorous
 presentation of widely opposing views all
 set forth within strict parliamentary de-
 corum, reflects great credit on so young an
 organization. It is sure to be a fine train-
 ing school for all who are anxious to equip
 themselves as competent citizens.

A week ago Sunday night Moderator Fos-
 ter went to a new forum in Melrose to ex-
 plain the spirit and method of our work.
 Last Sunday afternoon I was telling the
 story to two hundred men in Woonsocket,
 R. I. and on Sunday afternoon, the 8th, I
 shall be in Gloucester. The other day I
 was in Manchester, N. H., making particu-
 lar inquiries as to the progress of their
 Open Forum.

Our work is beginning to acquire the dig-
 nity of age. Although we are only six years

ness. They travel all through
 and Southwest and are in Boston only for
 a few days twice a year. They are high
 grade men and will carry with them wher-
 ever they go the splendid influence of that
 meeting, which was their first taste of a
 Ford Hall gathering.

A friend of mine in Oklahoma City re-
 cently wrote me telling of a travelling man
 he had met in Alabama who was a devotee
 of the Ford Hall Meetings. When they
 discovered that they had a mutual friend
 in me the flood-gates of friendly inter-
 course swung wide open, and my friend
 Taylor of Oklahoma was so impressed with
 what his new-found friend thought of our
 meetings that he took the trouble to write
 me that we might have this added evidence
 of the good our work is doing.

Ford Hall Folks

Edited by Thomas Dreier.

PUBLISHED weekly by the Ford
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 is to create, assemble, and
 distribute ideas that will help
 men and institutions grow more
 helpful in serving society, and which
 will promote "peace on earth, good
 will toward men." It is the official
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 ings, which are held, under the direc-
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 26 numbers.

now before Congress.

Among our guests were representatives
 from the Women's Municipal League and
 the Consumers' League, who are co-operat-
 ing with our Courtesies Committee, of
 which Mrs. Foster is chairman, in a "clean-
 up" in the West End. Miss Angela Morgan
 of The American was also present, and may
 have something to say about us later in
 her paper.

This was our largest meeting thus far,
 148 being present. Let us hope the citizens
 will keep up and break this record.

Will Mr. Peter Timbley, Mr. August An-
 derson and Miss Turner, or someone who
 knows them, give their addresses to Mr.
 Foster or Miss de Ford?

Mrs. Foster's bill to close Hull street and
 make it a day-time playground for chil-
 dren is first on the order of the day next
 Thursday. If you are interested, come, and
 enroll as a Town Meeting citizen.

We Will Write It For You

Come to the Scribe, if you would have your
 letters of social acknowledgement, condolence,
 congratulation, love-letters, business pullers,
 messages to shut-in friends, composed and writ-
 ten for you, as in the ancient time. If, by rea-
 son of defective advantages or other causes, self-
 expression in clear English is difficult, come to
 us for friendly, expert help. Rates moderate.
 All matters confidential. Office of the Scribe, 603
 Boylston street, Room 46. Hours—Mondays,
 Wednesdays, Fridays, 10 A. M. to 3 P. M.

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 ing apply to Jacob London, Room 707, Ford
 Building, Boston, Mass.

LITTLE LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

THE TRUE GOSPEL OF ELLEN KEY.

February 2, 1914.

My Dear Mr. Coleman:

The subject announced for last evening's address by Mr. Bridges was, "The Gospel of Ellen Key." What Mr. Bridges really gave us was a highly dogmatic defense of monogamous marriage, an attack upon which he would seem to insist constitutes the burden of Miss Key's "gospel." Now it is not necessary that one should have read any considerable part of Miss Key's books with more than ordinary honesty and intelligence to know that any such interpretation of her message is grossly unfair and misleading. Not only do the three or four detached sentences quoted by Mr. Bridges from "Love and Marriage" not express the essential part of Miss Key's gospel, but they really have nothing to do with that gospel, except in a most remote sense. Surely Mr. Bridges knows that Ellen Key holds the highest spiritual ideals of the marriage relation. He ought to know, too, that the responsibility of the parents toward their children is emphasized most strongly throughout all her works. In "The Century of the Child" she says: "Not until father and mother bend their heads to the dust before the greatness of the child, not before they perceive that the word child is only another expression of the idea of majesty, not before they feel that it is the future which in the form of a child sleeps in their arms, will they understand that they have as little power or right to prescribe laws for this new creature as they have the right to regulate the course of the heavenly bodies."

Yet in spite of this, Mr. Bridges would leave his hearers with the impression that Ellen Key favors having the children cared for somehow in state barracks. This is only one instance of the unfairness which characterized all he had to say.

Mr. Bridges referred repeatedly to Miss Key as a representative of the free love school. If we are to understand that free love is a sort of legitimized prostitution, it is a rank injustice to Ellen Key to class her with the advocates of any such doctrines. In one place Miss Key says: "Man has as little right to satisfy desire by unchastity as he has to satisfy hunger by

by ex-President Taft. Once more the restrictionists are trying to impose their will on the country. This, notwithstanding the fact that we all accept as trite the statement that acquired knowledge does not indicate the possession of character or conscience. An illustration of this, which comes at once to my mind, is the Russian spy system and the men who are a part of it. Political spies in Russia are well educated and exceedingly shrewd. They could not otherwise hold their position, for they have to mingle in the highest and most cultured circles. But if they were not morally corrupt, not totally lacking in character and conscience, they would not wish to hold such jobs. Whom would you rather have here—that type of literate, or the good-natured, honest, industrious, though illiterate and superstitious peasants and laborers of the Russian Empire?

Look at Italy and the Balkan countries. The mass of people who emigrate from those countries, though honest and industrious, are almost necessarily unable to read and write for the reason that the governments of these countries are bent only upon increasing their armies and navies. Are we to close our doors to these unfortunates and still profess to live up to the principles laid down by the founders of this country?

The Literacy Bill is unsound and unjust. Moreover, it would exclude the better classes of immigrants instead of the worst. It would give rise, too, to an appalling dissonance between our professed principles and our actions. Therefore, it should meet with the complete and final disapproval of Congress and be eliminated from the public mind once and for all.

H. S. Victorson.

THE QUESTIONS.

(Continued from Page 2.)

A: As a choice of evils I should prefer the present system. I think no community ought to recognize the licensing of prostitution. (Applause.)

Q: What is your opinion of the fact that race suicide most prevails in the United States, the most prosperous of countries?

A: I am not sure of the fact, but we always find that the birth rate declines as

A: I refuse to answer about a dead woman. Many Socialists have advocated free love, but that should not disgrace Socialism any more than it would the Democratic or Republican parties, members of which have also practised it. (Applause.)

Q: What is your definition of society, and why do you think Socialism is a cure?

A: Society is equivalent to humanity, but it is differentiated into nations and tribes. Many of our evils are due to the unjust distribution of wealth, and Socialism would cure those. (Applause.)

Q: Is immorality as widely spread as plays like "Damaged Goods" say it is? Is it true that almost every man is corrupt?

A: I don't believe it is.

Q. (Dr. Israeli): I should like to ask which country of the world has the least marriages? Is it France?

A: I believe so, but of course that would not be proved simply by the fact that it has the smallest birth rate.

Q: Is it fair to make an analogy between the marriage state and the republic?

A: I simply took that analogy as an exposure of the false logic of those who advocate free love.

"BREEDING MEN" NEXT SUNDAY'S TOPIC.

It is not often that we copy anybody's idea in our meetings, here at Ford Hall. Mostly the topics and the treatment are framed up on the premises—and others then accord to us that imitation which is said to be sincerest flattery. Next Sunday's topic, however, is a frank steal from the Forum at Rochester, New York, in which our friend, Prof. Rauschenbusch, is interested, and over which, on Sunday evenings, Rev. Paul Moore Strayer, whom we heard here with so much pleasure and profit earlier in the season, presides. They had a wonderful night at Rochester when this subject was up, and we ought to have the same here, for all three of our speakers are men of character as well as of profound knowledge.

Dr. Hugh Cabot's subject is "The Problems of Sex Education." Dr. DeWitt G. Wilcox's "The Scourge of Venereal Disease" and Rev. Edward Cummings' "The Responsibilities of Parenthood." Dr. Cabot is well known for the advanced position he has taken in Boston concerning the necessity of education in sex matters. Dr. Wilcox will be remembered as having once before given sane and sound advice from this platform concerning health, happiness and hygiene. Mr. Cummings

Child" she says: "Not until father and mother bend their heads to the dust before the greatness of the child, not before they perceive that the word child is only another expression of the idea of majesty, not before they feel that it is the future which in the form of a child sleeps in their arms, will they understand that they have as little power or right to prescribe laws for this new creature as they have the right to regulate the course of the heavenly bodies."

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A gentleman in the audience in putting a question referred to Miss Key's book as "reprehensible," and Mr. Bridges' remarks were calculated to give precisely that impression, if one had no other acquaintance with her ideas. May I suggest that it is impossible for any one to read even a chapter in any of Miss Key's books and not feel the nobility which inspires everything she writes? It is not necessary that a person accept all her conclusions as to how the high spiritual ideals which she sets before us are to be attained. Mr. Bridges has a perfect right to decline to accept her conclusions; but the least he could have done was to give a fair statement of her teachings instead of attempting to convey the impression that she was somehow opposed to all that is beautiful and good and true.

Sincerely yours,

Roy Stockwell.

820 Massachusetts avenue, Cambridge.

THE LITERACY TEST.

Editor *Ford Hall Folks*:

Congress has again taken up the Literacy Bill which was so justly and sensibly vetoed

ing their armies and navies. Are we to close our doors to these unfortunates and still profess to live up to the principles laid down by the founders of this country?

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H. S. Victorson.

THE QUESTIONS.

(Continued from Page 2.)

A: As a choice of evils I should prefer the present system. I think no community ought to recognize the licensing of prostitution. (Applause.)

Q: What is your opinion of the fact that race suicide most prevails in the United States, the most prosperous of countries?

A: I am not sure of the fact, but we always find that the birth rate declines as the economic conditions rise. That is not an evil until it attacks the fit, which I fear it does here.

Q (Mr. Meltzer): Would not a drastic revision of our social system wipe out many evils of our marriage system and make possible many more marriages?

A: Yes, certainly.

Q: What is your view of Havelock Ellis and why he considers Ellen Key one of the strongest moral factors of the day?

A: I think he has done good service in many fields, and he commends her because he agrees with her.

Q: Does the greater amount of divorce exist among the rich or the poor?

A: Among the idle rich, chiefly. (Applause.)

Q: Do you think a spirit of revenge is a cause of divorce?

A: Occasionally, no doubt.

Q (Mr. Samuels): When a woman finds a man is not what she thought him, is she to have no redress?

A: It is very, very sad, but she should have been thoroughly educated on the subject.

Q: Did or did not Eleanor Marx, the daughter of Karl Marx, practise free love, and do not many Socialists?

the premises—and others then accord us that imitation which is said to be sincerest flattery. Next Sunday's topic, however, is a frank steal from the Forum at Rochester, New York, in which our friend, Prof. Rauschenbusch, is interested, and over which on Sunday evenings, Rev. Paul Moore Strayer, whom we heard here with so much pleasure and profit earlier in the season, presides. They had a wonderful night at Rochester when this subject was up, and we ought to have the same here, for all three of our speakers are men of character as well as of profound knowledge.

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STREET BOYS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE FOLKS' MEETING.

Philip Davis of the Civic Ser was himself a street boy once. You managed to get into—and through—Harvard College! There's a whole lot of inspiration therefore, in hearing him talk about the problems and the personalities of 'he street boys with whom, and for whom, he now works. Give your name now to Miss Crawford that you may receive a formal invitation to come to the Folks' Meeting, which he will address next Sunday afternoon at 3.30, in Kingsley Hall, downstairs in this building. After the meeting we all have supper together (25 cents), and it is in order that we may know for how many people to provide that we have to ask you to send word by Wednesday if you are coming.