

As One Woman Sees the Issues

THE editors of the NEW REPUBLIC are curious to know how the newly enfranchised women voters are facing the perplexities of their first practical decision between presidential candidates. That we are regarding the question with great and even excessive conscientiousness is evident to everyone; indeed, no doubt we sometimes give the impression to a casual listener that we believe the fate of the election hangs on our individual decisions. It is so new, this real sharing in the great national questions, that we must be forgiven if we take it and ourselves a bit too seriously.

It would be impossible for me to give any idea as to how the greater number or even any number of Illinois women will vote this coming November. I can only give a description of my own reactions to the different sides of the problem as they have presented themselves, but I am sure they are not unusual and that probably they are much the same as those of a fairly large number of women.

No voter can quite rid himself of his inherited bias, and I ought to say at the outset that I was brought up in an atmosphere of what we call Jeffersonian Democracy, though as I know little about Jefferson, I should like to call it the school of John Bright, even if Bright was no American. Free trade was almost a religion to my father, so was individual liberty and home rule, and as a corollary, no interference with the affairs of other nations. These principles I cannot hold with the same intensity as he did, but very probably they do subconsciously influence all my thinking.

After the nominations I kept my mind open till Mr. Hughes should have given out his own platform and I read with care all his first speeches. I was eager to learn what his stand would be on certain questions upon which the President's attitude had been disappointing. The European war and our relation to it now and in the future was to my mind the most important question of the day, and on this I could glean from Mr. Hughes's speeches not a single definite statement, nothing but what were to me quite unwarranted attacks on the President's conduct. To say that Mr. Wilson should have prevented the sinking of the *Lusitania* seems to me silly. Nobody took the warnings of the Germany Embassy seriously, nobody believed for a moment that such a crime was possible—witness the almost paralyzing horror that swept over the country when the news came. Also I think it is very rash to say that we should have run no risk of war with Germany if the *Lusitania* notes

had been couched in more imperious and threatening language. It so happens that I was in Berlin the day the first note was made public. I asked a German connected with the War Office if he feared complications with us and he only shrugged his shoulders indifferently. "Why should we care?" Others told us that a war with America would be rather welcomed than not, since we could not possibly be a formidable foe and it would shut off the sale of munitions of war to the Allies. At that time apparently Germany was not thinking of a long-drawn-out war of endurance. When the Sussex incident came she had learned that America as an aid to the Allies during the war and a trade confederate after the war might prove a very formidable antagonist. It was then that the President used more imperious language and reaped the result which his understanding of the changed temper of Germany doubtless led him to expect. To me as to many Americans Mr. Wilson is the President who has kept the country out of the war. From some of Mr. Hughes's speeches one gains the impression that he does not hold Mr. Wilson entitled to this honor, from others that he does not hold it to be an honor.

Second in importance only to the European war seems the Mexican situation, and with regard to this I have been deeply disappointed in Mr. Hughes's speeches. Perhaps the President has blundered in Mexico—nobody seems able to explain the Vera Cruz incident—but his policy is clear: no armed intervention in Mexican affairs, the right of the Mexicans to work out their own salvation, but at the same time the conviction which he as a student of history could not fail to hold, that the working out can come only through the settling of the land question. It is this last consideration, I suspect, which has led him from time to time to throw the weight of the United States into one side of the scale. This may not have been done wisely in all instances; of that I cannot judge. But I am one of those who approve heartily of his general policy. What Mr. Hughes's policy would be I am unable to discover.

On the issue which people prefer to call "preparedness" many of us Middle Westerners have differed strongly with the President and have been disappointed in his attitude during the latter part of his administration. There is no need to go into details. Everyone has seen a decided change during the last year in Mr. Wilson's stand on the necessity for increased armaments in this country, and those of us who are opposed to militarism think

that the change has come during a time when our country had less and less to fear from European aggression. Nor have we been able to get a clear idea as to the purpose for which our big-bigger-biggest navy is to be used, or whether, in case disarmament does not follow the war, we are to join in the European race for big armies and navies.

If Mr. Hughes had come out with a definite, detailed policy, with a statement of what our relations to other nations ought to be and on what basis the size of our army and navy should be determined, he would have won our respect and it may be our votes. As it is he contents himself with generalities and, like Mr. Wilson, fails to give us any definite program of foreign policy. As between the two candidates there seems no choice on this count, although Mr. Wilson's speech before the League to Enforce Peace and his careful handling of the Japanese situation lead us to hope for wise action if once his second term is secured and he is no longer under the necessity of forestalling Republican criticism. In the early days of his administration, his dealings with other countries were unusually fair and wise. People seem almost to have forgotten his courageous stand on the repeal of the Panama toll act and his proposal to reimburse Colombia for the territory taken from her, but to those who care more that our country should be scrupulously just and fair than that she should be keen for her own advantage and quick to resent injuries, these acts of the President loom very large indeed.

Mr. Hughes has much to say concerning the demoralization of several branches of the service by unworthy appointments. This seems a very just criticism of the first period of the administration, but not of the later period, for the President has made several admirable appointments during the last year. Of course we need far more expert service at home and abroad, and the reforms in this field and in the civil service which Mr. Hughes urges with much feeling are most desirable, but they do not seem to me crucial as are other measures on which he is less outspoken.

His attacks on the administration on the score of extravagance, especially that form which we call "pork-barrel" legislation, are clearly justified. If I could believe that he would bring about radical changes in this domain of politics there would be a strong argument for choosing him, but I cannot believe that he would be able to do it, however good his will may be. The Republican machine is surely more strongly organized than is the Democratic, in spite of the solid South, and who will say it is more disinterested? When one reads the names of those who will come back into power with a return of the Republican party one sees a group

of astute and experienced gentlemen far more formidable than any group the Democrats can muster. Much more important in my eyes is the issue of the protective tariff, and here certainly Mr. Hughes is outspoken in favor of the principle of protection. To me he seems absolutely wrong, and this at a time when wrongness on such a subject is more disastrous than ever before. Surely there is no such prolific breeder of wars in our day as the protective tariff; there is no one thing which would so quickly make for universal peace as free trade; and it seems sad that we Americans who are not hampered by the hatreds engendered in this war should be hurrying to copy the warring nations in passing measures which will keep alive national jealousies and create new causes of friction. Republicans tell us that the Democrats are hedging on this issue, that they are admitting the possibility of a tariff imposed for the purpose of protection, not only for revenue; and unfortunately this seems to be true. Nevertheless I should feel safer with a party which regards protection as a grudgingly yielded concession than I should with a party which proudly proclaims its allegiance to the principles of McKinley.

The question of woman suffrage, of the federal amendment, is the one that perhaps a newly made woman voter would be expected to consider first of all. I find that I cannot base a decision between the two candidates upon that issue alone. It seems ungenerous for one who is already emancipated not to do all in her power to help emancipate the rest of womankind, and indeed I would gladly help, but not at the expense of measures which though perhaps no more important are immediately urgent, and must be settled rightly now if we are to escape grave national disasters. In the next four years it will be decided what our relations to Mexico are to be and what part we are to play in the new world after the war. The cause of woman suffrage will not be lost even if the federal amendment is not submitted to the states during this coming administration.

Moreover even if I did put the extension of the franchise to women in the place of first importance I doubt if I should feel obliged to cast my vote for Mr. Hughes. His personal approval of the federal amendment is gratifying, but its value depends on his willingness and his power to coerce an unwilling party. Nothing in his history leads one to think that he would care enough about the suffrage issue to sacrifice much for its sake. The planks of the two parties are identical, and even if in fairness it must be admitted that the chance for a federal amendment is better under a Republican administration than under one dominated by states' rights Democrats, still the chance is so re-

mote as not to weigh heavily in the balance.

To sum up: On the subject of Mexico Mr. Hughes is vague, so vague that I cannot be sure he does not favor intervention; therefore I prefer Mr. Wilson. On the subject of the European war he is as indefinite, but he conveys an intimation of greater aggressiveness, which makes me wary. On other issues he seems to me sometimes wrong, as on the issue of protection, sometimes right but probably powerless, as on economy of administration, appointment of experts to office, the federal amendment for woman suffrage. On the other hand, although I cannot follow Mr. Wilson in all things, I feel profoundly grateful to him for his wise conduct of the affairs of the nation through several difficult and serious crises, and I believe that on most questions of foreign and domestic policy he is right.

For all these reasons I decide to cast my first presidential vote for Woodrow Wilson.

ALICE HAMILTON.

Achille

I WONDER how the war has affected my old friend Achille. "Gaspard" probably appeals to him, but the ascendancy of Barrès must be a bitter pill to swallow. Certainly before the catastrophe the French nationalist school of fiction was anathema to him. He disliked the *jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui*, with their cult of gayety and activity, almost as much as the despised *unanimiste* poets, with their social consciousness. In his day dogma was not the business of a novelist, and poets were romantic egoists writing in traditional meters. In his day Academicians were glorious personages, who wore top hats and gardenias; melancholy was the fashion; taste was more important than morals; and the only thing you could be sure of was that you could be sure of nothing. In his day, in brief, the man of letters was supreme, and second only to him was his understudy, the literary bookseller.

Achille is the last living example of the species, and his move from the Boulevard, several years ago, marked the end of an epoch. To Achille himself it seemed equivalent to a burial, and the leading newspapers bore him out by publishing obituary notices. The special occasion for his failure was the infidelity of a trusted clerk, but the real cause lay deeper: in the fact that books are now sold, even in Paris, like shoes or neckties, instead of like works of art. When Achille set up for himself in the 'eighties, on the still un-Americanized boulevards, one of the regular daily occupations of the Frenchman of the world—

writer, lawyer, banker, artist, actor—was a visit to his bookseller. Achille was unable to realize a customer in the twentieth century was a person who gives two minutes and three francs fifty for the first common yellow-back that catches his eye. To him a customer was still a friend: somebody who spent from half an hour to an hour and a half turning over all the books on the counter; somebody who must be discreetly guided, cajoled and amused.

Because I liked to delve in the archives of nineteenth-century literary Paris I followed the old man to his obscure retreat up several flights of stairs in the rue Rossini. The new shop was nothing more or less than Mme. Achille's salon. So do French women meet circumstances. Shelves had been put up along the blue satin-striped wall, and all through the long entrance corridor; they extended even into the kitchen. Between the windows stood a glass-fronted bookcase of elegant design, which contained Achille's chief treasures: a collection of authors' copies, all heavily inscribed. "*A mon ami Achille, l'arbitre des réputations littéraires*"—when Anatole France has written this dedication in your copy of "Thais," and Lamartine has made you smoke your first cigar, even adversity cannot bring you low.

Achille in his old age was a little deaf. One of his eyes turned up. There was often a suspicion of red flannel about his waist line, for he suffered from lumbago. If I came upon him unawares, sitting forlornly by his window, with a black silk handkerchief bound about his neuralgic forehead under his skull-cap, he looked a dismal and shabby old figure. But the moment he caught sight of me off came the handkerchief, and in his manner of bowing over my hand I got a sudden impression of what the delicate culture and liberal dilettantism of the last century were like. His eyes, when he conversed, had a blue flame, and there was real distinction in the poise of his pale head, with its fine white skin and exquisitely curled white hair and beard. The Couture drawing over the mantelpiece—his second greatest treasure—was still very like him, though it represented a young dandy of twenty-five.

The yellowing photographs of actors and painters and writers that hung between the bookshelves dated from the same enchanting but disenchanted quarter century that preceded the birth of the twentieth. There was Sarah Bernhardt at the height of her allurements, Ludovic Halévy, dark and melancholy, Dumas *filz*, foppishly detached, and so on: all inscribed like the books, "To my friend Achille." With the same words, "Achille, mon ami, ca va-t-il?" spoken with affectionate solicitude, the clientèle that remained faithful used