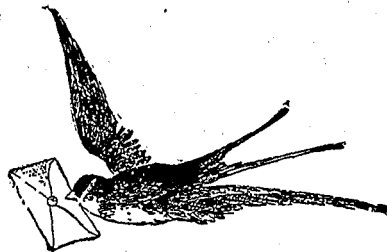


## Our Foreign Letter.

### DUTCH WOMEN INDIGNANT.



The indignation of Dutch women has been kindled by a new Bill before Parliament, which, if passed, will interfere with the private life of many women. The Bill, if brief, is unjust enough, since it aims at the dismissal at their marriage of all women teachers and all women in Civil Service. A few exceptions only have been made—viz., women marrying after their 45th year, women who can fulfil their official duties in their own home or in an office communicating with the home, and women teachers whose duties do not exceed ten hours a week.

As everywhere else, the question as to whether a woman should continue to earn her living after her marriage is much discussed here in Holland. The views expressed are most contradictory, and the trite argument—the woman's place is in the home—is still quoted, mostly, however, by people who have never taken the trouble to study the Women's Cause.

The women's feelings are so strong firstly, because this Bill was drafted without consulting them at all; they were simply disposed of, nobody asking their opinion about a matter which will affect them so deeply. In the second place they are of opinion that no legislator has the right to interfere in the private affairs of the home. The question as to whether the wife on her marriage should attend exclusively to home duties, or whether she may keep her situation, thereby adding to the revenues of the family, is a question for the husband and wife to settle between themselves. A hard and fast rule cannot be laid down for all married couples, seeing that so many different factors must be taken into consideration for each couple individually. Besides, even if the wife did wish to resign, the present economic conditions compel her in most cases to do her share in earning a competence for the family. The protection of women's work has, at least in our country, resulted in closing most remunerative trades to women, thus obliging them to fall back on the "sweated" means of livelihood. This new Bill, if passed, will oblige another large group of women to look out for other branches of work, which will probably take up more of their time, give them less salary, and fewer holidays. In this way the compulsory dismissal of women teachers and women officials, instead of being a gain, will become a serious loss for the home. An arbitrary measure of this kind could only be warranted if it could be proved that the work of married women suffered as compared with that of the single woman. This, as the Minister knows well enough, would be impossible to prove. The motive he affects, to say the least of it, is illogical.

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In his introductory explanation of this *wonderful* Bill he says that according to his religious views the woman's place is in the home; to allow her to exercise a profession which takes her away from that home is tempting her to make use of means to avoid pregnancy, for the birth of children adds to the financial cares of the parents.

Now who can understand such reasoning? Dutch women do not. It seems to us that the financial cares resulting upon the birth of children can be more easily met if there is a sufficient income through the joint salaries of father and mother than when expenses have to be paid out of the earnings of the father alone. Therefore, instead of discouraging the use of Neo-Malthusian means, and the raising of large families, it will have exactly the opposite effect. It is to be feared that many couples will put off marriage altogether, and simply live together, avoiding pregnancy for fear of detection.

All things considered, the Bill is a disgrace to our country, and it has rightly aroused the wrath of the liberal-minded women, who are convinced that the women's work, even of the wife and mother, is needed by society. In most towns meetings to discuss this Bill have already been held; a monster protest meeting will soon be held in Amsterdam. To be sure, a great number of nurses should be present, all of them being concerned in this matter that forms part of the Women's Cause, but specially those nurses who are in the service of the Government, for though as yet none of them has desired to keep her situation after marriage, the case may alter, and then they would be very much disappointed if they got their dismissal on their wedding-day, sent by way of a wedding-present. This most arbitrary Bill is a strong incentive for all women to take an active part in our struggle for suffrage. If by now we had been enfranchised the Home Secretary would not have had the effrontery to propose such a measure.

I am reading with great interest all your news about the Nursing Masque. I should love to come over, but I don't know as yet if it can be managed. I am sure it takes up much of your time.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,  
J. C. VAN LANSCHOT HUBRECHT.

The feeling in South Africa in regard to the recent series of outrages on white women by black men is intense—and no wonder. No doubt the reprieve of the Umtali criminal by Lord Gladstone has been discussed throughout the kraals in South Africa; no doubt, also, white women, who have been silent in regard to outrages, are now putting personal feeling on one side and speaking out. Is it conceivable that if any white woman had to choose between murder and violation by a black man, with the possibility, as a consequence, of bearing a half-breed, illegitimate child, she would not welcome the former fate? What would life be worth after such a defiling horror?

The Women's Unionist Association here has forwarded resolutions to Lord Gladstone asking for the death sentence in cases of outrage.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)