

Meersbrook - Nov. 1909 AL/1900

Sheffield

When a young girl, wished to live at eventful time in History. Now I know that realized. I felt sure of it in procession.

Look at Woman's movement. Read stories of 50 years ago, see what women did & were, - & what was current opinion as to what they must ~~have~~ be, do.

Crinolines was type of it, - must not work with mind or body. - no control of their own money. - their powers of mind ~~to be~~ confined within walls of own home. - if they did not get married were to be hangers-on of male relations. Allowed to hand out tracts to the poor. How ill treated in factories. Shaftesbury. Fanny Mendelssohn

Florence Nightingale - indelicate person. Now thousands of followers.

Elizabeth Blackwell - hundreds of others.

George Eliot.

Jr. Butler.

Women as Guardians, members of School Boards. Now Royal Commissioners, Inspectors of various sorts, Organizers of great charities, Travellers. & Civil service. Education. High Schools, Oxford. Cambridge.

All this the glory of Victoria's reign.

Now is the country as a whole (I mean the men & women & children) - better or worse off in consequence. Many other changes - cannot separate causes entirely. But for some parts of it every body enthusiastic. - men & women as guardians, & School Boards. On the whole has worked great good.

But what about decay of home life? Yes but which are the neglected homes? Not those of educ, working women. - but of pleasure seekers.

I propose further, Happiest & best ordered homes, the best trained children, the best cared for, & best inspired husbands are those of women who have learned to look beyond the four walls of their own house.

~~Such~~ Beneficent effect not yet fully visible.

It is a difference of ideals. In the days of the crinoline, clinging wig - fainting - delicate creature to be shielded from all the storms of this rough world. - but this ~~is~~ only be a class ideal. Doll. Such a woman ~~is~~ not be the mother of heroic sons, nor the help meet for a ^{worthy} ~~subtle~~ man.

Now it is because I have seen & rejoiced in all this that I want to go further & to have women recognized not only as servants of the state but as members of the state, - as citizens. They are not citizens now, & cannot be.

May argue from suffrage for many points of view. - because women are like men, & because women are unlike men. Both true, & ~~for~~ both reasons right. ~~But that~~ Because legislation about women needs women's control. Yes, but it will not be perfect then, - men & women together will make blunders, tho not quite so many as they ~~make~~ men alone. ~~It is not~~ We make a great mistake when we claim that it is ~~because~~ chiefly for legislation affecting women that we need it. Doesn't a man after understand his wife a great deal better than he understands himself?

The Neighbour Guilds Association,

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*Sweep out all building, as soon as
men have done*

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What I want to dwell on to-day is not so much the advantages of giving the vote, but the great wrong & injury of withholding it.

All this great women's movement described may be summed up as Education. Opportunities have been given to women to show the powers that were in them, waiting to be used for the Common weal. One woman with labour & pains against enormous difficulties gained the knowledge of how to tend the sick, - & by that the way was opened for all others. A handful of women studied medicine ~~sacrificing~~ as Jerusalem was built, sword & trowel together, & then they asked not a little individual toleration for themselves, but that the door sh^d be opened wide for others.

And now, a few women having mixed with politics not in the old back stairs way but in open fashion as comrades, having ~~found~~ shown the need & the duty on them, ask that the way may be open for the other women.

Nation make up its mind. When a nation knows its will

Are women fit to vote? see other papers.