

WOMAN'S  
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL  
RIGHTS.

THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE.

A LECTURE,

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Digestion, and Nutrition, applied to the Preservation of Health,  
and Promotion of Intellectual and Moral Science."

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"Are women fit for politics?"—"Are politics fit for women?"

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## WOMAN'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS.

### THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE.

#### SUBJECTS OF LECTURE.

INTRODUCTORY remarks—The nature, origin, and foundation, of Human Rights—The principle of popular Suffrage—The proper relation of the individual to the State—Existing legal provisions relative to the Elective Franchise—Qualifications of an Elector—The property qualification—What persons may not vote—Arguments against and for the exercise of the Elective Franchise by Women—Conclusions upon these arguments.

## INTRODUCTION.

We have long been deeply impressed with the consideration, that many of the women of our land are not sufficiently alive to the stake they have in the discussion of the subject of Human Rights. Our conviction is, that they are the chief sufferers by the political degradation of the masses. Many of them, it is true, are aware of this, and most valuable has been the aid which they have afforded in the prosecution of our political movement; yet we fear that by far the majority of them treat our efforts to extend the Elective Franchise, even to our male citizens, with either indifference or opposition. How common is it for our newspapers, when reporting certain classes of public meetings, to remark by way of peculiar qualification, "the audience was composed chiefly of Ladies." Now, such reporters do not yet know that they are thereby unwittingly paying the objects of such meetings the highest compliment in their power. When this can be truthfully said of our political meetings our success will be greater than hitherto; but we regret to say that the comparatively small attendance of women at our meetings proves that they have yet to learn how deep their stake is in our movement, and how essential their co-operation is to our success. Our fear is, that our politicians have not been sufficiently alive to this fact. What special efforts have been made with the view of enlisting women in our cause? We have had political lectures, political publications, political public meetings, and delegate demonstrations, but how rarely have they been specially addressed? Now,—Why is it so? A mere general scattering of political truth on the face of society is not sufficient to baptize with our great first principles, we must systematize our efforts, and no scheme of operations will be complete which does not make ample provision for the careful instruction of that class, by which all social questions are most powerfully affected. Enlist a man in favor of our cause, and good has been accomplished,—it is much to awaken and enlighten an individual,—but enlist a woman, and it may be you have gained over an entire family. Our purpose at present, then, is to show, if possible, that the Elective Franchise is pre-eminently a woman's question.

In entering upon this important discussion we have no wish to go a single step beyond the limits warranted by the established facts of political science. The possession of a true science of mind, or of a correct knowledge of human nature,—is indispensable to the discussion and understanding of human rights; because human rights rest upon, and proceed from the instincts and sentiments existing in man; the intellect perceives and declares these rights, and the whole forces of the mind acting in union and harmony are arrayed in their defence and vindication. We lay it down as a first principle, that a true science of mind is indispensable to the successful discussion of human rights, and we adopt the philosophy of Dr. Gall, founded on and demonstrable by means of the physiology of the brain as the basis of our conclusions. The necessity for founding this inquiry on the science of mind will become apparent from the mere statement of our fundamental principle—namely, that Wherever Nature has ordained desire,

she has spread before it the means of proper gratification. From this we infer the right to its indulgence,—and therefore also the whole of Human Rights. And because Government is called into existence by men living in society for the assertion and defence of their common rights, every citizen,—Male and Female,—who has an intelligent perception of his rights and duties, STANDS in the relation of PRINCIPAL to the Government, which, as to such citizen, performs the office of agent. A man or woman living in the society of other men and women, but without an Organized State, has devolved on him or on her the functions of Government so far as his or her individual rights are concerned. He or she declares those rights, determines what amounts to a violation of them, and takes the selected remedy. And when a man comes into an Organized State he acts precisely on the same principle to attain the same object, but he acts in concert with his fellow-beings, who are swayed by the same impulses as himself,—who have the same rights to assert and defend.

We are particularly desirous to point out the important fact, that a human being in an Organized State does not in reality surrender any rights; and we think we may further assert, that, as a general thing, he does not yield-up the power of vindicating them. His rights and his power to vindicate them, remain; but the manner of their protection is changed, and they are now upheld by the intellectual, moral, and physical forces of the social body. Nevertheless, the individual citizen must be permitted his or her personal forces with those of the other members of society. He can not, by the very constitution of his nature, be passive and indifferent, for he retains all the instincts and sentiments which were attributable to him out of organized society for the vindication of his rights. He is irresistibly impelled by his nature to their protection. In asserting his individuality, and struggling to maintain the rule of right for himself, and for all men, he obeys the paramount principle of his nature. His voice must be heard in the State, for he is one of the many persons who constitute it. It is for him as much as for any, that the Government exists. Because of his rights was it instituted, and because of his sense of justice it may be maintained. The *act* of justice which the man or the woman performed in a state of nature, has become transformed into a rule of justice in the State. The actor in the one case must be the law-giver in the other. What was right in the instance of the man in the state of nature, is now the rule of justice, and is the law. What was good for one man was good for all, and shall be upheld for their common benefit; all shall declare it, and all shall maintain it, and thus institute and maintain the State. And in such a State there will be little or no need for physical force to keep down the people. Benevolence and justice will supersede the bayonet. The cheapest and the wisest substitute for an armed force to subdue the refractory citizens, is, a just concession to the rights and dignity of man.

Now, in a free State men must assert their rights in person, or they must appoint agents to act in their stead. In a very small society the citizens can attend in person to the office of Government; but this is impossible in an extensive territory, and hence the necessity of their appointing representatives by an exercise of the Elective Franchise. An inquiry then arises as to what persons may of right exercise this power of appointment, or, in whom is the right of Suffrage

inherent? We answer,—*In those who have the intelligence and the moral impulse to prescribe and observe the rule of right, or whose organization leads them to act for the conservation of rights rather than to aggress upon them.* In the members of society this rule will hardly exclude five adult persons in a thousand who can read and write. The laws of this country, which recently abolished very justly the property qualification in representatives, still excludes certain classes of persons as unqualified to exercise the right of voters. Our laws require that the voter shall have a certain relation to a certain extent of property, and shall be of the age of twenty-one years, or at legal maturity, when it is supposed that the physical, intellectual, and moral man is so perfected, as that he is capable of acting his part in the affairs of life. Having now the property qualification, and having passed through the first stages of intellectual and moral culture and training, he is freed from parental control, and sent into society to act for himself. He is now an intelligent, moral being, whose tendencies are presumed to be toward truth, virtue, and justice. He is deemed competent to take part in State affairs; but he may still be rejected,—for, if the presumption in his favor shall be rebutted by such acts of immorality as lead to conviction for an infamous crime, or one involving deep moral turpitude, he is prohibited from voting; because it is thereby established in the most conclusive manner, for the time being, that he is deficient in that ordinary moral endowment and culture which is deemed necessary to enable him to appreciate the rule of right. He is shown to be of the class of men for whose restraint the State is Organized, and he at once becomes a subject rather than a director of the Government.

Apart from the property qualification, the voter is required to have been a resident of the State for a certain period, in order that he may have, we suppose, a certain acquaintance with the public affairs which are to be influenced by his vote, and with the candidates for election. Here the right of voting is suspended for a period, to allow the voter time and opportunity to acquire certain information which is necessary for him to possess, in order to an intelligent exercise of the Elective Franchise. These latter qualifications are, we may say, of an intellectual and moral kind. And it may be asked,—whether something further might not be justly required of an elector? Let it be admitted that the voter's qualifications should be purely intellectual and moral,—that to take part in the Government of society is but an exercise in moral science,—is but doing right on a large scale,—that every human being is concerned in this exercise, and has a right to participate in it at all times, provided he or she is possessed of the requisite intelligence and virtue,—that this intelligence may be of a very ordinary kind, and that this virtue may consist simply in freedom from gross crime; still we may deny what our laws assume, that every adult male citizen who is possessed of the legally-defined qualifications, and who is accordingly permitted to vote, is to be regarded as of course competent to discharge the duties of an elector. And yet we may find it difficult to suggest a practical method of testing a man's actual intelligence for the purpose of determining whether he is a qualified voter. But we may, however, inquire into his means of becoming enlightened to a certain extent. For instance, it might be readily ascertained whether a citizen can read and write the English language with intelligence; and since this is the language of our legislation and laws, and that the knowledge of

it may be universal, it is worth while to consider seriously whether a citizen can not be judiciously excluded from voting, who does not possess this means of ordinary intelligence. For ourselves, we do not doubt, that to require the Elector to read and write, would be both right in itself and salutary in its influence throughout society.

The advocates of the property qualification suppose, either that the fact of acquiring and maintaining a certain relation to a certain amount of property, is the only evidence of the requisite degree of intelligence and virtue in the Elector (of which it can not be said to be proper evidence at all,) or that property alone ought to be represented in the State. To the latter supposition it may be answered, that property is but one of many interests which claim the protection and care of the laws; that every other interest is as sacred and as much entitled to be represented as that; and that, therefore, these various other interests must be represented in the State. When the suffrage is sufficiently extended, property is fairly enough represented,—for all sane men and sane women have an instinctive sense of property, and a natural respect for the right originating from it. This innate love of possession is one of the many faculties which constitute humanity. When, therefore, human nature is fairly represented in the State, the right of property is necessarily represented there, as the whole includes every part. But let the representation be of the sense of property alone, and only a fragment of humanity assumes to answer for the whole. The sense of property has its rights and dignity; but after all, it is but an attribute of human nature, and must be represented in the State in union and harmony with all the other pressing claims of humanity.

We exclude, then, from the exercise of the Elective Franchise all those persons whose intellectual and moral defects cause the principal necessity for Government,—who are incompetent to perceive their true relation to the State and to ordain and to obey the laws; being rather a class of persons needing the guidance and control of the Government, than of the great majority, whose intellectual and moral natures are striving ever-more for the protection of human rights, and the maintenance of human liberty. There may be excluded, then: 1st. Those who have not attained to the age of discretion,—those whose intellectual and moral faculties are immature; 2nd. All persons whose intellectual perceptions are so disordered as to depart from the standard of truth; 3rd. All persons whose moral sentiments are so defective as that their impulses are chiefly in favor of the excessive indulgence of their physical desires, or who are without the ordinary restraints of the guiding principles of the mind; 4th. Those grossly ignorant and unenlightened persons who can not read and write. All these may be excluded from a participation in Government, since it emanates from the harmonious activity of the intellectual and moral faculties of men in a state of maturity and culture. Government, emanating from the intellectual and moral attributes of humanity, must supply the restraints which the natures of these men fail to impose upon themselves. They must be controlled by the superior intellectual and moral power of the social body. They must be constrained to pursue their own true interest and substantial happiness. They have failed to perceive it and follow the proper course, because of their defective organization or imperfect culture, and Government must restrain them until they are trained to a proper pursuit of happiness.

BUT UPON WHAT PRINCIPLE IS IT THAT WOMAN IS EXCLUDED FROM ALL ACTIVE AND DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF SOCIETY?

IS IT RIGHT OR EVEN EXPEDIENT THAT ONE HALF OF THE HUMAN BEINGS IN EXISTENCE SHOULD PASS THROUGH LIFE IN A STATE OF FORCED SUBORDINATION TO THE OTHER HALF?

This exclusion can not be excused on the ground of any such mental defects as we have just enumerated. At some period of woman's life, the advocates of her exclusion from all active participation in Government, will readily concede that she attains to the years of discretion,—that she has clear intellectual perceptions,—an admirable mental constitution, and is susceptible of the highest degree of intellectual and moral culture. Woman can not be excluded, then, from all active participation in Government, because she has not the mental capacity to perceive the true relation and object of Government, and the necessity and utility of the laws,—nor because her mental nature is too deficient to feel the obligation of conformity to them. It is not because woman has not the same rights as man to be recognized, to be protected by the Government and laws,—for, having the same mental constitution, she has of course the same rights. Why, then, we repeat, is woman excluded from all active and direct participation in the business of the government of society? Is it because she consents to the exclusion? If she withheld that consent could she, then, be still excluded? Does she yield-up her right to interfere with the business of Government because she prefers the retreat of the domestic hearth to the thoroughfares of busy society? Does she surrender this high exercise of her intellectual and moral faculties in obedience to the instincts of a gentler nature? Is hers the mere legislation of the fireside,—the government of human infancy, and the discipline of youth? Is hers the mere empire of the affections,—the mild scepter of persuasive force? Not to be misunderstood, it is necessary that we should distinctly disclaim the belief, that women are even now inferior in intellect to men. There are women who are the equals in intellect of any men who ever lived; and, comparing ordinary women with ordinary men, the varied though petty details which compose the occupation of most women, call forth probably as much of mental ability, as the uniform routine of the pursuits which are the habitual occupation of a large majority of men. Let us now examine into this matter, and see if these questions can be properly answered.

It is established by mental science, that woman is endowed with precisely the same knowing and reflecting faculties as man,—that, nevertheless, she enjoys some of these in a higher and some in a less degree than her sturdy brother. For instance, woman has, as a general thing, greater feeling of attachment, greater reverence, hope, fear, and love of offspring. Then, she has less of pride, firmness, combativeness, destructiveness, and oftentimes less of causality and comparison, or the logical faculties. A thorough master of mental science might state the argument thus: 1st. "In man generally, the brain is larger than in woman,—the physical system more vigorous and capable of severer and more continued activity. 2nd. Though

the mental faculties are alike in number and in kind, both in man and woman, they differ in extent of power very considerably. 3rd. In woman generally, philoprogenitiveness or love of offspring,—adhesiveness or the feeling of attachment,—approbativeness, cautiousness, and veneration, are relatively greater than in man. 4th. In man generally, amativeness, combativeness, destructiveness, self-esteem (love of power,) firmness, acquisitiveness, and all the leading intellectual faculties predominate over the same faculties in woman. 5th. It may be said by many, that these differences are made by continued social arrangements and education, and that, under other circumstances, different facts would be present; but any conclusions drawn from such a supposition would be based, not upon existing evidence, but upon conjecture, and be opposed to present facts. There are, however, numerous facts to show that woman's present inferiority results, *in great part*, from her unjust and unnatural treatment by man; but to some extent it would seem to be the result of organization." In view and consideration of all these facts it may be asked:—Are we not justified in concluding that women, in the higher mental attributes, are naturally intended to be subordinate to men? And would not any attempt to place weaker faculties on an equality, or on a par, with stronger, be unsuccessful? Nothing can, indeed, warrant man in being unjust to woman; but the question is,—*What is injustice?* And again,—it may be strenuously urged, that as Government performs the office of protection, and, as it will be perceived, that the combination of woman's faculties leads rather to a desire for protection than the wish to execute it, she naturally leaves this function to those whose mental constitutions are better adapted to discharge its office. And if she is inclined by the constitution of her nature to invite man to take the reins of Government, and naturally reposes with a sense of security upon his strength, justice, and love, then, surely it is not an act of tyranny in man to yield to her request, and to discharge the function of Government without her active interference. If it is further considered, that the intellectual faculties, moral sentiments, and all the instincts of the two sexes are alike in all respects,—differing only in degree of power and manifestation,—and that all laws for human government must be based upon, and adapted to, this common nature; then, it must follow, that those laws which man ordains in harmony with his own nature, must be in harmony with woman's also,—and she may thus be rendered secure and happy by the laws of society, without the labor of decreeing them. If the best state of human society is that of being divided into two parts, one consisting of persons with a Will and a substantive existence, the other of humble companions to these persons, attached, each of them to one, for the purpose of bringing up *his* children and making *his* home pleasant to him; if this is the place assigned to women, it is but kindness to educate them for this; to make them believe that the greatest good fortune which can befall them, is to be chosen by some man for this purpose; and that every other career which society deems happy and honorable, is closed to them by the law, not of social institutions, but of Nature and Destiny. When we ask,—why each woman should be a mere appendage to a man, allowed to have no interests of her own, that there may be nothing to compete in her mind with his interests and his pleasure; the only reply which can be given is, that men like it. It is agreeable to them that men

should live for their own sake, women for the sake of men; and the qualities and conduct in subjects which are agreeable to rulers, they succeed for a long time in making the subjects themselves consider as their appropriate virtues.

If we could, however, suppose a State composed of the gentler sex alone, a case would be presented where the office of legislation would necessarily devolve upon woman, and it can not be doubted that it would be readily executed. The same intellectual and moral forces, which now give law to mankind, would be found actively employed in such a social body, in ordaining the rules of human conduct. It is possible that there would be a departure from the existing laws relative to "marital rights," in case such a change of their condition should be contemplated by their legal code. It is possible that by way of some retaliation they would ordain, that in case a man should come among them and marry one of their citizens, the woman should be entitled after marriage to all her husband's property of every kind,—that his social existence should be merged in her's,—that her Will and pleasure should be his rule of action,—the measure of his liberty,—and that, if he proved refractory, she should have the power of "moderate correction and gentle chastisement;"—that he should be presumed by the law to be so much under her dominion as to be incapable of free action, inasmuch that no degree of drunkenness or low brutality on her part should free him from his marriage thralldom,—and as she took him "for better or for worse," *he* should have the worst of it altogether in every possible respect! But we have too much confidence in woman's generosity, to believe that she would ordain such laws, even in the spirit of retaliation,—and we have also too much faith in the natural justice and beneficence of developed man, to believe that he will much longer suffer similar laws in reference to woman to darken the pages of human legislation.

In former times, and among tribes which are still in a primitive condition, women were and are the slaves of men for the purpose of toil. All the hard bodily labor devolves upon them. The Australian savage is idle, while women painfully dig-up the roots on which he lives. An American Indian, when he has killed a deer, leaves it, and sends a woman to carry it home. In a state somewhat more advanced, as, for example, in Asia, women were and are the slaves of men for the purposes of sensuality. In Europe there early succeeded a third and a milder dominion, secured not by blows, nor by locks and bars, but by sedulous inculcation on the mind; feelings also of kindness and ideas of duty, such as a superior owes to inferiors under his protection, became more and more involved in the relation. But it did not for many ages become a relation of companionship, even between unequals; the lives of the two persons were apart. The wife was part of the furniture of home, of the resting-place to which the man returned from business or pleasure. His occupations were, as they still are, among men—among his equals. He was a Patriarch and a Despot within four walls, and irresponsible power had its effect, greater or less according to his disposition, in rendering him domineering, exacting, self-worshipping, when not capriciously or brutally tyrannical. It is somewhat otherwise now. The progress of improvement has imposed on all possessors of power, and of domestic power among the rest, an increased and increasing sense of correlative obligation. No cultivated man now thinks that his wife has no claim upon his actions,

but such as he may accord to her. All men of any conscience believe that their duty to their wives is one of the most binding of their obligations. Nor is it supposed to consist solely in protection, which, in the present state of civilization, women have almost ceased to need: it involves care for their happiness and consideration of their wishes, with a not unfrequent sacrifice of their own to them. The power of husbands has reached the stage which the power of Kings had arrived at, when opinion did not yet question the rightfulness of arbitrary power; but in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, condemned the selfish use of it. This improvement in the moral sentiments of cultivated men, and increased sense of the consideration due by every man to those who have no one but himself to look to, has tended to make home more and more the center of interest, and domestic circumstances and society a larger and larger part of life, and of its pursuits and pleasures. The tendency has been strengthened by the changes of tastes and manners which have so remarkably distinguished the last two or three generations. In days not far distant, men found their excitement and filled up their time in violent bodily exercises, noisy merriment, and intemperance. They have now, in all but the very poorest classes, lost their inclination for these things, and for the coarser pleasures generally; they have now scarcely any tastes but those which they have in common with women, and, for the first time in the history of humanity, men and women are really companions. A most beneficial change, if the companionship were between equals; but, being between unequals, it produces what good observers have noticed, though without perceiving its cause, a progressive deterioration among men in what had hitherto been considered the masculine excellencies. Those who are so careful that women should not become men, do not see that men are becoming what they have decided that women should be,—are falling into the feebleness which they have so long cultivated in their companions. Those who are associated in their lives, tend to become assimilated in character. In the present closeness of association between the sexes, men can not retain manliness unless women acquire it. In the present state of civilization, the idea of guarding women from the hardening influences of society, could only be realized by secluding them from society altogether. The common duties of common life, as at present constituted, are incompatible with any other softness in women than weakness. Surely weak minds in weak bodies must ere long cease to be thought either attractive or amiable.

But to return to, and to proceed with the argument. It may be further urged, that woman is at present substantially represented in the councils of the State, and that her's are charmed representatives—such representatives as *man* never had in the legislative halls:—for, that those halls are filled with Fathers, Husbands, Sons, and Brothers. Will not he who has smiled upon her infancy, fostered and protected her youth, and viewed her with the exulting pride and deep affection of a Father, ensure to her an adequate legal protection? Will not her chosen Husband guard her natural and social rights? Can the Son forget the Mother who bore him,—and, when he is performing the highest function he can execute in society,—will he fail to consider and protect the rights of that being who loves him most? Will the Brother allow his gentle Sister's rights to fail of protection? All these questions are answered in woman's favor, and hence it is claimed that she feels

sufficiently represented in the councils of State, when she beholds them composed of men; and that she has an advantage over the male constituency in having herself trained the legislator as well as the constituents of Government. If, then, woman perceives that her intellectual and moral character and her instinctive wishes are fairly represented by man,—if from her mental constitution she shrinks from public exposure and naturally prefers domestic peace,—if reverence and affection peculiarly great in her nature, dispose her to confide in man, it is claimed, that she naturally avoids all interference with State affairs, and that she would do greater violence to the constitution of her mind in attempting to wield the power of Government, in connexion with man, than would ever occur to her from his unjust legislation. We believe this is a fair representation of the arguments which have long been, and which may be still employed in favor of woman's past and present exclusion from participation in State affairs. Are they conclusive and satisfactory? Let us briefly examine them.

Human rights take their origin in the mental constitution; all men have the same mental attributes, and therefore we must, in justice, concede to them the same rights. Although at the same time we perceive that one man has far more liberal intellectual endowments than another, yet we hold that the right does not depend upon the *degree*, but wholly upon the character of the mental manifestation. The laws have never distinguished between the grades of intellectual endowments, with a view to the ascertainment of human rights. *Sanity* is all that the laws look to, either in reference to *rights* or *duties*. In the social state, all sane men of mature age, are, in accordance with justice, possessed of equal rights, and the laws devolve upon them equal responsibilities. He who has the least instinctive attachment to existence, has the same right to the protection of life as he who loves it most. The prodigal's right of property is as sacred to the law as the miser's,—the small possession of the poor, as the ample stores of the rich. So that the greatest intellectual endowments confer no more of the rights of humanity than the most ordinary mental capacity,—and in the eye of justice, the rights of the humble are as sacred as those of the great. It is of no importance, then, to establish woman's mental inferiority, even if it could be done, with a view to disprove her rights; for, if we concede to her the attributes, we must concede to her also the rights of humanity. The arguments which establish human rights upon a natural foundation, establish them to be inherent in woman as well as in man. But all this will be conceded, the argument being not so much against her abstract rights as against her power to vindicate and defend them; or in other words, against her participation in civil Government.

What, then, is the foundation of Government? It is simply the protection of human rights. For whose benefit is it established? For the benefit of all who have rights to protect. We hold that Government is the mere offspring of human rights, which institute it as their means of defence and vindication. Hence, it will be perceived that woman's rights are as sacred to the law as man's, and that her concern with Government is as great and important as his own. If so,—Why is she excluded from acting in reference to that which so immediately concerns her? She is an intellectual being, endowed with rights. Is she not the very being to guard them? Throughout sensitive Nature, does not each being act for himself in

assertion and defence? But of all others, is not an intellectual and moral being ordained for self-control and self-vindication? It is from nothing in the faculties themselves, but from the petty subjects and interests on which alone they are exercised, that the companionship of women, such as their present circumstances make them, so often exercises a dissolvent influence on high faculties and aspirations in men. If one of the two has no knowledge and no care about the great ideas and purposes which dignify life, or about any of its practical concerns, save personal interests and personal vanities, her conscious, and still more her unconscious influence, will, except in rare cases, reduce to a secondary place in his mind, if not entirely extinguish, those interests which she can not or does not share. We here come into collision with what may be termed the moderate reformers of the education of women; a class of persons who cross the path of improvement on all great questions; those who would maintain the old bad principles, mitigating their consequences. These reformers say, that women should be, not slaves, nor servants, but companions, and educated for that office, (they do not, however, say, that men should be educated to be the companions of women). But since uncultivated women are not suitable companions for cultivated men, and a man who feels an interest in things above and beyond the family circle, wishes that his companion should sympathize with him in that interest; they, therefore, say, "let women improve their intellectual powers and taste, acquire general knowledge, cultivate an acquaintance with science," and some stretch their liberality so far as to say, "inform themselves on politics, not as a pursuit, but sufficiently to feel an interest in the subjects, and to be capable of holding a conversation on them with the husband, or at least of understanding and imbibing his wisdom." Very agreeable to him, no doubt, but the reverse of improving. It is from having intellectual communion only with those to whom they can lay down the law, that so few men continue to advance in wisdom beyond the first stages. The most eminent men cease to improve, if they associate only with disciples. When they have over-topped those who immediately surround them, if they wish for further growth, they must seek for others of their own stature to consort with. The mental companionship which is improving, is communion between active minds, not mere contact between an active mind and a passive. This inestimable advantage is even now enjoyed, when a strong-minded man and a strong-minded woman, are, by a rare occurrence, united: and would be had far oftener, if education took the same pains to form strong-minded women which it takes to prevent them from being formed. The modern, and what are regarded as the improved and the enlightened modes of education of women, abjure, as far as words go, an education of mere show, and profess to aim at solid instruction, but mean by that expression, superficial information on solid subjects. Except accomplishments, which are now generally regarded as to be taught well if taught at all, nothing is taught to women thoroughly. Small portions only of what it is attempted to teach thoroughly to boys, are the whole of what it is intended or desired to teach to women. What makes intelligent beings is the power of thought: the stimuli which call forth that power are the interest and dignity of thought itself, and a field for its practical application. Both motives are cut-off from those who are told from infancy that thought, and all its greater

applications, are other people's business, while theirs is to make themselves agreeable to other people. High mental powers in women will be but an exceptional accident, until every career is open to them, and until they as well as men, are educated for themselves and for general society,—not one sex for the other. "Mankind," says a famous Graduate of medicine, "can never have a comprehensive view of any subject, until the mind of woman has been brought to bear upon it, equally with that of man. The two sexes have separate points of view; different thoughts, different feelings, and different modes of judgment; and no theory of human life, no scheme of society, nor any part of the one or of the other can be complete, till the distinct views of each have been formed on political and social art, in harmony with political and social Science." Women, properly speaking, at present, have no political or social science, no political or social art. They trust to man for these, unaware that themselves alone can solve their life's problem in its minutest particular. We are aware of the great progress in various directions, which many of the sex have lately made, but there still remains an immensity to be done, as none feel more than they do, who have entered on the march of progress. Women have hitherto been content to regard the world they live in, and themselves, through men's eyes; and their self-consciousness is thus very imperfectly developed. The attainment of self-consciousness on the part of woman, is to be gained in the same way as that of man, only by discovering her physical, intellectual, and moral relations to all parts of Nature and Society. There is, therefore, no subject which man has conceived or shall conceive and pursue, which woman should not also conceive and pursue according to her peculiar powers. Until she shall do this, neither she nor man will have a full or natural conception of the whole, as one of the grand sexual paths towards it will be unexplored. There is no department of knowledge, from which woman has been more debarred than from politics. If it was often thought inadvisable for certain classes of men to penetrate the assumed mysteries of legislation, for women it was long held infamous unless she happened to be a Queen. The narrow ideal which our imperfect conceptions have shaped for women,—of purity, modesty, love, grace, which are supposed to constitute her peculiar and sufficient sphere,—revolts from the very thought of her engaging in studies and pursuits of presumed so opposite a character. In all ages and nations has the development of woman been crippled and impeded by man's interference. Like the Chinese bandaging, and the Turkish prison-house, does her conventional character at the present day among ourselves, confine her natural energies, and prevent her mental expansion.

No study or pursuit would have a better effect in securing the balance of the female character than political and social science, and the practice of political and social art, in which the conditions of human welfare and happiness meet us on the very threshold, and command our most devoted attention. Nothing could be better adapted for developing woman as well as man, and for securing her attachment to the realities of the present life. Here is the scene of our human joys and sorrows; of our real trials and triumphs. Ah! not for woman only, but for all of us, is Mother Earth our present Paradise, our present Abode, our present Heaven! It is not by neglecting it and our real humanity, that man will become ennobled or immortal. Is this our gratitude for all that has been done for us, for the grandeur and sub-

limity by which our present life is surrounded? But political and social science, or political and social art, do not rest their claims on woman's reverential study any more than on man's, merely on the feeble grounds of expediency. It is not only the RIGHTS of woman that are here concerned, but also her duties. On her, as well as on man, the study of the conditions of human welfare is enjoined by Nature, as a duty second to none in its claims. All those who do not study them,—as is the case with the great majority of women and men in the present day—live a life of opposition to the Divine design, and are under the ban of Nature. The consequences of the want of reverence for political and social science in woman, have been as disastrous, probably more so, than in man. The ignorance and carelessness of woman, in all things appertaining to political or social science, and to political or social art, are proverbial, and form the principal ground of the despair of the most zealous politician. These views of the origin and nature of human rights, place them at once, it will be observed, upon their only true and stable foundation, that of Nature, and sweep away the whole code of arbitrary and artificial legislation.

We have already seen that Government emanates from the intellectual and moral nature of mankind,—that the laws have an intellectual origin and a moral aim. Now, the mental force which is aggregated in the social state, proceeds as much from woman's intellectual faculties and moral sentiments as man's; her moral endowment in the general case being proportionally greater than his own. But if they are inferior in some respects, it would not aid the other side, provided she is *morally sane*,—and that she is so regarded, is proved by the fact, that she is held morally and legally responsible to the fullest extent while she remains unmarried. If, then, woman's intellectual and moral nature contribute to that intelligent force in the social State from which the laws emanate, she has in her mental constitution the true source of the laws. It now appears clearly evident that there are inherent in woman both rights and the source of their protection. Why, then, ought she not to be permitted to draw upon the resources of her own nature for the protection of her rights? Why ought she not to be represented in the legislative body? It is said that it appears from her mental constitution that she is ordained to be subordinate to man. This argument, extended a little further, would defeat all human liberty. Slavery could be vindicated and upheld, wherever it should appear by the argument that the master had the superior mental organization. The principle would give the power of Government to a select few, with the best endowed minds, and exclude the great mass of the people from any participation in the affairs of the State. It would utterly subvert the first principle of political science. The same causes which operate to establish self-government for the mass of mankind, seem also to establish the right of woman to be represented in the councils of the State. We have only to maintain that woman is an intellectual and rational being, and disposed to obey the laws, in order to establish her capacity to vindicate her rights. She must fall below the average mental endowments before she can be excluded from any mental work which concerns her happiness, or that of the community. Government is a social institution, in which all mature and enlightened intellectual beings under its influence, who have an intelligent and abiding love of justice, have a right to be actors. For the interest, therefore, not

only of women but of men, and of human improvement in the widest sense, the emancipation of women—which the modern world often boasts of having effected, and for which credit is sometimes given to civilization—can not stop where it is. If it were necessary or just that one portion of mankind should remain mentally only half developed, the development of the other portion ought to have been made, as far as possible, independent of their influence. Instead of this, they have become the most intimate, and it may now be said, the only intimate associates of those to whom yet they are sedulously kept inferior, and have been raised just high enough to drag the others down to themselves. Then, we affirm, that the influence of the dependence on the woman's side is demoralizing to the character of both. The common opinion is, that whatever may be the case with the intellectual, the moral influence of women over men is almost always salutary. It is, we are often told, the great counteractive of gross selfishness. However the case may be as to personal influence, the influence of the position tends eminently to promote selfishness. With respect to the influence personally exercised by women over men, it no doubt renders them less harsh and brutal; in ruder times it was often the only softening influence to which they were accessible. But the assertion that the wife's influence renders the man less selfish, contains, as things now are, fully as much error as truth. Selfishness towards the wife herself, and towards those in whom she is interested, the children, though favored by the dependence, the wife's influence, no doubt, tends to counteract. But the general effect on him of her character, so long as her interests are concentrated in the family, tends but to substitute for individual selfishness a family selfishness, wearing an amiable guise, and putting on the mask of duty. How rarely is the wife's influence on the side of public virtue! How rarely does it do otherwise than discourage any effort of principle by which the private interests or worldly vanities of the family can be expected to suffer! Public spirit, sense of duty towards the public good, is of all virtues, as women are now educated and situated, the most rarely to be found among them; they have seldom, even, what in men is often a partial substitute for public spirit, a sense of personal honor connected with any public duty. Many a man, whom no money or personal flattery would have bought, has bartered his political opinions against a title or invitations for his wife; and a still greater number are made mere hunters after the puerile vanities of Society, because their wives value them. The influence of wives, generally speaking, is thrown into the scale either of the most common place, or of the most outwardly prosperous opinions;—either those by which censure will be escaped, or by which worldly advancement is likeliest to be procured. In many parts of England, and we may say in all Ireland and Scotland, the wife's influence is usually on the illiberal and anti-popular side: this is generally the gaining side for personal interest and vanity; and what to her is the democracy or the liberalism in which she has no part,—which leaves her the Pariah it found her? The man himself, when he marries, usually declines into stubborn conservatism; begins to sympathize with the holders of power, more than with its victims, and thinks it his part to be on the side of authority. As to mental progress, except those vulgar attainments by which vanity and ambition are promoted, there is generally a termination to it in a man who marries a woman mentally his inferior; unless, indeed, he is



unhappy in marriage or becomes indifferent. From a man of twenty-five or thirty, after he is married, an experienced observer seldom expects any further progress in mind or feelings. It is rare that the progress already made is maintained. Any spark of the *mens divinator* which might otherwise have spread and become a flame, seldom survives for any length of time unextinguished. For, a mind which learns to be satisfied with what it already is—which does not incessantly look forward to a degree of improvement not yet reached—becomes relaxed, self-indulgent, and loses the spring and the tension which maintain it even at the point already attained. And there is no fact in human nature to which experience bears more invariable testimony than to this—that all social or sympathetic influences which do not raise up, pull down; if they do not tend to stimulate and exalt the mind, they tend to vulgarize it.

But it is objected that woman has less of self-esteem, less of the love of power, less of combativeness, and less of destructiveness than man. We answer, that Government emanates from the higher mental attributes of mankind,—such as the sense of justice and benevolence,—and that self-esteem or the love of power is rather to be swayed by these higher sentiments, than to control them. The love of power is not the source of a free Government,—it may be of a despotic one,—and we apprehend that it has something to do with the exclusion of woman from her right to participate in State affairs. Then, as to the instincts of physical defence, combativeness and destructiveness,—these are to be directed and restrained by the enlightened moral sentiments of the social body; they are not to control the business of Government, since that is a moral and social concern. The constituency of the Government would not vary the case so far as the defensive power of the State was concerned; man has to defend the State now,—he would not have to fight any harder under the joint Government of the two sexes. Nay, we are certain that he would not have to fight so much, since woman is naturally averse to war, and her voice in Government would contribute to the prevalence of the public peace.

But it is said that man has a better endowment than woman of the logical faculties,—of causality and comparison. We hope we may be excused for conceding this to be true; merely for the sake of argument. It is sufficient for our purpose that woman is conceded to be an intelligent moral being. But granting to man superior logical faculties, these alone will not make him a better legislator than woman; he must have a better moral endowment also, for legislation is a moral work. But grant man a moral superiority over woman (which is unfounded in fact,) then he would be better qualified for the business of legislation; but so also is one man better qualified for this work than another, and yet all *men* are alike eligible to the legislative office. Suppose man, on account of these superior endowments, would legislate best, that would not exclude woman from *voting* for the representative body. Allow man to be exclusively eligible to the representative office, the question still returns,—By whose votes is he to be chosen? And ought not woman at least to participate in the exercise of the Elective Franchise?

But it is further maintained, on the other side, that woman is already sufficiently represented in the halls of legislation; since, her rights being the same as man's, and her mental constitution being

also like his, those laws which man ordains for the protection of rights, and which harmonize with his own nature, must afford to her all the protection which she can require. This argument would support a very limited suffrage of the male sex. It would be urged with the same justice in excluding nine-tenths of the male citizens from the exercise of the Elective Franchise. For instance, if the Constitution prescribed as a requisite qualification for a voter, that he should own a freehold estate worth one thousand pounds annually; the Elective privilege would then be exercised only by a still smaller portion of our citizens,—and yet, as the voters in this case might be supposed to support laws in harmony with their own mental constitutions, which are the same as those of the non-freeholders, it might be said that the laws would still be in harmony with the wants and wishes of the excluded class. The number of voters, on the same principle, might be diminished indefinitely, until a pure aristocracy of wealth should be established. It can scarcely be necessary for us to embark in a labored refutation of principles which lead to such a result in the present day.

But is it true that no adverse interests spring up between man and woman in society? Let us see. As to all in a single state, it may be asserted that a certain extent of harmony exists:—But, how stands the case between those in the married condition? The laws of Government control this relation, and declare the rights and obligations pertaining to it. The first question which the existing laws settle, is, whether there shall be any supremacy in the case, and they declare, not only that such supremacy shall exist, but also that it shall pertain to the husband. Now, it must strike every candid mind that woman is entitled to be heard on this point,—since it must be clear to every mind regulated by the principle of justice, that notwithstanding her great reverence, she revolts against this supremacy. If woman pleases to accord it to man after fair argument, on account of his superior love of power, and his large endowment of combativeness and destructiveness, then let him have dominion over her,—but it seems proper that her views and wishes should be represented in the Legislature, before she can be bound by the laws to obey her husband's will. In this supremacy is involved the delicate power of—"correction and moderate chastisement,"—and it might be deemed fair to consult her as to her willingness to submit to these polite demonstrations of conjugal authority. The most insignificant of men, the man who can obtain influence or consideration nowhere else, finds one place where he is chief and head. There is one person, often greatly his superior in understanding, who is obliged to consult him, and whom he is not obliged to consult. He is judge, magistrate, ruler, over their joint concerns; arbiter of all differences between them. The justice or conscience to which her appeal must be made, is his justice and conscience: it is his to hold the balance and adjust the scales between his own claims or wishes and those of another. His is now the only tribunal in civilized life, in which the same person is judge and party. A generous mind in such a situation, makes the balance incline against its own side, and gives the other not less, but more, than a fair equality; and thus the weaker side may be enabled to turn the very fact of dependence into an instrument of power, and in default of justice, take an ungenerous advantage of generosity: rendering the unjust power, to those who make an unselfish use of it,

a torment and a burden. But how is it when average men are invested with this power, without reciprocity and without responsibility? Give such a man the idea that he is first in law and in opinion,—that to will is his part, and hers to submit; it is absurd to suppose that this idea merely glides over his mind, without sinking into it, or having any effect on his feelings and practice. The propensity to make himself the first object of consideration, and others at most the second, is not so rare as to be wanting where everything seems purposely arranged for permitting its indulgence.

Again,—in the married state, the woman has interests adverse to her husband, in regard to the right of property,—as to what disposition shall be made of property owned by her at the time of her marriage, and as to what shall be her share in the joint acquisitions afterwards. Upon these points, the greater love of power and greater acquisitiveness of the husband, may need some restraint from the laws, and the woman may require protection from these superior instinctive impulses of man. He has so far legislated on this subject very much after his own way, insomuch that woman's rights in this respect seem to require vindication at her own hands. Again, as to what shall be proper causes of divorce? Woman's happiness is greatly involved in this question, and great injustice may be done to her by the selfish legislation of the male sex. And lastly,—woman has greater love of offspring than man, and, in case of voluntary or legal separation from her husband, the laws regulate the custody of the children of the marriage. In this question she manifests the most intense anxiety,—amounting to positive agony,—as recent cases in this country have abundantly shown. Ought she not, then, to have a voice in the enactment of all laws, affecting the care and custody of her children, since they so deeply concern her happiness? In all these cases of marital rights, her interest and wishes are too sacred to be disregarded; and it is not difficult to perceive, that the laws which man may ordain on this subject, under the influence of his selfish feelings, may do violence to the nature and rights of woman,—and that, therefore, she ought to participate to the same extent as man in their enactment.

We trust that it is now manifest, that if woman's mental characteristics are essentially the same as man's, the same arguments which uphold manhood suffrage for the male sex, must extend it also to the female. But it is not admitted that the sum of her mental character, is the same as man's. It is claimed that while the intellectual and moral forces of her mind are the same, yet their peculiar combination and relative strength distinguish her from man, in many striking particulars. Suppose, then, the sum of her character to vary essentially from man's; admit her to have peculiar views, peculiar interests, and moral wants; this but enhances the necessity for a peculiar representation of her mental and moral interests in the Legislature. Man, then, can not properly represent her, he can not fully appreciate her wants; not feeling them himself he can not answer them. This would entitle women not only to vote, but by their votes to elect a separate branch of the Legislature. They would have a separate election of their own peculiar representatives, from their own sex, who would constitute a separate branch of every legislative body. There seems to be no escape from the claims of woman to the full rights of citizenship, whether she is considered as possessing the same nature with man, or one peculiar and different. In the one case, she can claim to exercise

the Elective Franchise of common right, and in the other from a peculiar necessity.

The views presented in this Lecture as far as we have yet advanced, were drawn-up and arranged without any considerable acquaintance with the ideas or suggestions which have been entertained and thrown out by other writers on this interesting subject. We have discussed the subject very briefly, and by the light of mental science. Since the views we have now advanced were arranged for delivery in the Lecture form, it has been deemed proper to give the following quotations from an able article in the "Westminster Review," for January, 1861, upon "*Woman and her social position.*"

"We are indeed fully persuaded," says the reviewer, "that the progress of civilization will discern,—nay, has discovered many faults and defects in the laws which concern women, and it would be hard indeed to adhere to the wisdom of our ancestors only with regard to them. But if we are now arrived at such a pitch of civilization, as allows of women's possessing any of the privileges of citizens, we think it highly desirable that they should enjoy them; wherever they are singly incurring the liabilities or performing the duties of citizens, we should say that they had a right to them; for rights and duties have to our minds a necessary connexion. Ever since the Reform Bill,—that era of better hope—it has appeared to us a needless if not a prejudicial inequality to exclude women altogether from representation. In the Reform Act, a very small concession without disturbing the legal relations in which the sexes stand to each other, would have saved the appearance of injustice to females."

"No evil, in fact, could have arisen from placing men and women on such an equality in regard to the Franchise as the present system of law would admit. Wives, and Sisters, and Daughters, living under the same roof with Husbands, and Fathers, and Brothers, would have been excluded, not on the ground of sex, but on account of not being householders, sharing in this respect the condition of sons residing with their fathers, and of other mere lodgers. It would have been only widows and single women keeping house, or possessing the requisite amount of property, that could be entitled to vote, yet it is difficult to conceive the shadow of a reason why they should be deprived of the privilege, except the tumultuous proceedings which are the unruly progeny of unskillful arrangements. Compared with the general community, such persons (few in number, to be sure,) have yet a direct interest in the economy of public establishments, in the security of property, in the administration of justice; in a word, in all the objects of Government. While they contribute to its support, and are not exempted by the weakness of their sex from paying taxes, it seems to us a plain case that they should have a vote in the management of the revenue, and be able like other loyal subjects and citizens to register and go to the polls as well as to the cess office, or to receive the visits of the tax-gatherer or rate-collector. Any objections that we have heard against permitting females who possess the requisite qualifications, to enjoy the first and lowest degree of political power, have appeared to us extremely slight, and wholly groundless. The possible sway of male relations has been made an objection. At most, this could only neutralize the biased votes of females, and, acting indifferently on all classes, could not be turned to the advantage of one party more than another. We do not expect that the greatest legis-

lators, or most profound politicians, will be found among female householders, after the elective franchise has been extended to them. The Reform Bill, however, does not proceed on the supposition that the knowledge or wisdom of a Statesman is required in an elector, but on this, that within certain limits of intelligence and opportunities of instruction, every one understands his own interests best, and has a right to let them be known by the fittest deputy he can find. Now, whenever we see a woman, able by her own exertions, unassisted by the stronger arm or head of man, to place herself in a situation which would entitle him to have a vote in the choice of a member of parliament, we think it clear that such a woman is not without the necessary qualifications."

"The argument of incapacity," says the same reviewer, "loses much of its force at present, when a woman sits at the helm of Government in England. Is it not strange that the egregious anomaly should not have been felt, of institutions which sometimes invest a woman, educated in very unfavorable circumstances, with the state and amplitude of supreme political authority, and which nevertheless uniformly deny to woman, though trained in the most favorable circumstances, the exercise of the lowest and simplest political function, that which is essential to political existence, the elective franchise? In the common opinion of common Statesmen, the fitness of woman to vote for an individual's elevation to the temporary dignity of a legislator in the House of Commons, is a mere joke; yet her naming scores of persons legislators for life, and their heirs legislating too, through all generations, is an essential portion of that perfection of ancestral wisdom under which we live. She is vested with the entire power of the State,—or not entrusted with its meanest portion." We have left behind an host of vulgar objections, either as not worthy of an answer, or as answered by the general course of our remarks. A few words, however, must be said on one plea, which is generally made much use of for giving an unselfish air to the upholding of selfish privileges, and which, with unobserving, unreflecting people, passes for much more than its worth.

But women, it is said, do not desire,—do not seek what is called their political emancipation. On the contrary, they generally disown such claims when made in their behalf, and look with contempt upon any one of themselves who identifies herself with their common cause. Supposing the fact to be true in the fullest extent ever asserted, if it proves that European women ought to remain as they are, it proves exactly the same with respect to Asiatic women; for they too, instead of murmuring at their seclusion, and at the restraint imposed upon them, pride themselves on it, and are astonished at the effrontery of women who receive visits from male acquaintances, and are seen in the streets unveiled. Habits of submission make men as well as women servile-minded. The vast population of Asia do not desire or value, probably would not accept political liberty, nor the savages of the forest, civilization; which does not prove that either of those things is undesirable for them, or that they will not at some future time, enjoy it. Custom hardens human beings to any kind of degradation, by deadening the part of their nature which would resist it. And the case of woman is, in this respect even a peculiar one, for, no other inferior caste that we have heard of, have been taught to regard this degradation as their honor. The argument, however, implies a

secret consciousness that the alleged preference of women for their dependent state is merely apparent, and arises from their being allowed no choice; for if the preference be natural there can be no necessity for enforcing it by law. To make laws compelling people to follow their inclination, has not hitherto been thought necessary by legislators. The plea that women do not desire any change, is the same that has been urged times out of mind, against the proposal of abolishing any social evil,—“there is no complaint;”—which is generally not true, and when true, only so because there is not that hope of success, without which complaint seldom makes itself audible to unwilling ears. How does the objector know that women do not desire equality and freedom? He never knew a woman who did not, or would not, desire it for herself individually. It would be very simple to suppose that if they do desire it they will say so. Their position is like that of the tenants or laborers who vote against their own political interests to please their landlords or employers; with the unique addition, that submission is inculcated on them from childhood, as the peculiar attraction and grace of their character. They are taught to think, that to repel actively even an admitted injustice done to themselves, is somewhat unfeminine, and had better be left to some male friend or protector. To be accused of rebelling against anything which admits of being called an ordinance of society, they are taught to regard as an imputation of a serious offence, to say the least, against the proprieties of their sex. It requires unusual moral courage as well as disinterestedness in a woman, to express opinions favorable to woman's enfranchisement, until, at least, there is some prospect of obtaining it. The comfort of her individual life, and her social consideration, usually depend on the good-will of those who hold the undue power; and to possessors of power, any complaint, however bitter, of the misuse of it, is a less flagrant act of insubordination than to protest against the power itself. The professions of many otherwise intelligent women in this matter remind us of the State offenders of old, who, on the point of *execution* used to protest their love and devotion to the Sovereign by whose unjust mandate they suffered. The literary class of women, especially in England, are ostentatious in disclaiming the desire for equality or citizenship, and in proclaiming their complete satisfaction with the place which society assigns to them; exercising in this, as in many other respects, a most noxious influence over the feelings and opinions of men, who unsuspectingly accept the servilities of a loathsome toadyism as concessions to the force of truth, not considering that it is the personal interest of these women to profess whatever opinions they expect will be agreeable to men. It is not very often among men of talent sprung from the people, and patronized and flattered by the aristocracy, that we can hopefully look for the leaders of a democratic movement. Successful literary women are just as unlikely to prefer the cause of women to their own immediate social consideration. They depend on men's opinion for their literary as well as for their feminine successes; and such is their bad opinion of men generally, that they believe that there is not more than one in a thousand who does not dislike and fear strength of mind, sincerity, or high spirit in a woman. They are, therefore, anxious to earn pardon and toleration for whatever of these qualities their writings may exhibit on other subjects, by a studied display of submission on this; that they may give no occasion for vulgar men to

say (what nothing will prevent vulgar men from saying,) that learning makes women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be indifferent or even bad wives. But enough of this; especially as the fact which affords the occasion for this lecture, makes it impossible any longer to assert the universal acquiescence of women, (saving individual exceptions) in their dependent condition. In many parts of the country, there are women now organized for action on the public mind, who demand equality in the fullest acceptation of the word, and demand it by a straight-forward appeal to men's sense of justice, not pleading for it with a timid deprecation of their displeasure. Like other popular movements, however, this may be retarded by the blunders of its adherents. What is wanted for woman is equal rights, equal admission to all social privileges. The strength of the cause rests on the support of those who are influenced by the principles of justice. The first step has been taken in that part of England where every serious movement in the direction of political progress has its commencement,—the manufacturing districts of the North. It will be remembered that, on the 13th of February, 1851, a petition of women, agreed to by a public meeting at Sheffield, and claiming the Elective Franchise, was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle.

All the Sciences, all the Arts, wait at present for woman's mind and hand, to give them new life, to impart to them new impulses; and none solicit her attention more imperatively than political science and political art, and social science and social art. Men and women must equally co-operate in the work of reducing political and social science to practice,—to the regulation of the conduct of social life. Each sex has a logical relation and logical duties to fulfill towards the other. Each has to discuss and argue for the other on all subjects; to criticise, and endeavor to mould the other, according to its conceptions of what is just and good; and in every way to strive to present to the other as complete as possible a picture of the aspect it bears towards itself. But, hitherto, man only has thus mentally examined woman. Man has been for ages shaping his model of the female physically, intellectually, and morally; dwelling upon, and endeavoring to elevate and perfect her ideal, as it appeared to him. In social science and in social art, as well as in political science and in political art, man alone has thought of and argued on woman; she has never ventured to think for him, and to render him his portrait in return. How much men lose by this, has been deeply felt in society, where there are constant complaints, that woman, with regard to man, knows not her own mind, and therefore, that all men come in a manner alike to her. She will not criticise, or at least not reflectively, and therefore, little dependence can be placed in her judgment of men, which is guided in great measure by caprice or conventionalities. But rarely, alas! too rarely, does woman succeed in choosing for herself an independent path in any inquiry. She is yet too weak from the swaddling clothes, and can scarcely be expected to surmount the great obstacles which obstruct her freedom in almost every direction. When the first glow of self-reliance and independence kindled by her intense feelings, has passed, doubts and irresolution succeed; the old woman, trained in long passive habits, and dependence on the opinion of others, reasserts its sway; and after a sad and agonizing struggle, she falls back into the accustomed beaten tracks, and her noble aspirations for the

unknown and untried are dissolved like the melting vapor. "How should she presume to think for herself; how did she ever imagine she had the power to open-up, or the privilege to enter upon a new world; why was she disturbed by elevating thoughts, she whose soul was so conscious of its own weakness? The very wish to serve mankind and develop herself in unaccustomed ways, was a deadly sin, showing the secret presumption and pride of the intellect. Oh, no! humility and gentle submission were her element; and love and contrition, not bold aspirations, her duty;" and thus is she, in all probability, sooner or later absorbed into the fashionable ideal, which by the mesmerism of conventionality fascinates all those who lose their self-reliance.

Who shall fathom the depths of a mother's affection? It has been beautifully said, there is an enduring tenderness in the love of a mother to a son that transcends all other affections of the mind. It neither is to be chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor stifled by ingratitude. She will sacrifice every comfort to his convenience; she will surrender every pleasure to his enjoyment; she will glory in his fame and exult in his prosperity; and if misfortunes overtake him, he will be dearer to her from his misfortunes; and if disgrace settle on his name, she will love and cherish him in spite of his disgrace, and if all mankind beside cast him off, she will be all the world to him. What a power, then, is that with which mothers are invested over their offspring! The first smile that greets us is the smile of woman, and the last tear that falls on our cheek is the tear of woman. She it is who guides us through all our helpless years, teaches us what we first learn, and what we last forget. Now, it is this mighty influence wielded by woman, which we seek to enlist on behalf of our cause—in behalf of the practical recognition of human rights. Why has Nature invested woman with such power to win? Why has GOD so richly endowed her with His Own peculiar attribute of Love? Not that she may command the homage of man, but that she may be a power in Society for the repression of all evil, and the attainment of all good. Would that woman rose to the full apprehension of her mission! Would that she knew the power she might wield for the destruction of vice, for the building up of virtue, for the removal of the political degradation under which the great majority of our people suffer! No system of society can long exist which she condemns. No form of injustice can survive long which she chooses to attack. No form or modification of class-legislation can survive the ban of her disapproval. To whom, then, can we look more hopefully for the promotion of our cause? Women hold in their hands the destiny of thousands, and they have but to give to this movement the influence which they possess, in order to its being conducted to a glorious consummation. Oh! how great is woman's influence as mothers and as wives! This movement opens up to women a path to honor and usefulness. It provides for that sad deficiency in so many womens' lives, the want of some specific aim. Shall we then appeal in vain when we propose to woman's ambition a nobler object than living to please and be pleased, when we implore them to demand their political and social rights, and to become the promoters of all that is useful and good.

Having in this first Lecture carefully discussed "The nature, origin, and foundation of Human Rights.—The principle of popular Suffrage.

—The proper relation of the individual to the State.—Existing legal provisions relative to the Elective Franchise.—Qualifications of an Elector.—The property qualification.—What persons may not vote.—And furnished arguments against and for the exercise of the Elective Franchise by Women,—and having drawn important conclusions from these arguments:—“We propose to devote the second Lecture to the further discussion of “THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN,”—To demonstrate the Equality of the sexes in the eye of Justice.—To show that Rights know no distinction of sex.—That the Rights of Woman are to be inferred from her mental constitution.—That the idea of Marriage being a civil contract is erroneous.—Those who may contract Marriage.—The nature of the right of Divorce.—That the test in cases of Divorce should be the Physical, Intellectual, and Moral fitness for Marriage of the party complained against.—That Divorce should be total in all cases.—That Marriage is a sacred natural ordinance and not the production of the law.—The nature of the relation of Husband and Wife under existing laws.—The Objections which are to be urged against the legal annihilation of the Wife.—The loss of moral dignity of the Wife under the present system.—And the sacrifice of the Wife's Rights of person and property.

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## LATEST INTELLIGENCE

FROM

## THE PLANET VENUS.

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MANCHESTER:

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LATEST INTELLIGENCE FROM THE PLANET  
VENUS.

*(Reprinted, by permission, from Fraser's Magazine.)*

It may be reckoned among those things not generally known that within a short time direct telescopic communication, by means of signals, has been established between the earth and the planet Venus, and that at certain stations regular interchange of intelligence is now carried on. The results have hitherto been kept secret, partly, it is said, owing to the disappointment of the astronomers at finding in the new country but a mirror of our own, with an hereditary constitutional monarchy, two Houses, a civilisation in about the same stage of advancement as ours, and political and social institutions generally similar. The single remarkable difference presented to their notice is one they are loth to reveal, for fear, we believe, of the family discords it might possibly excite at home, and we are the first to acquaint our readers with the curious fact that in the planet Venus, though the present sovereign happens to be a king, all political business, electoral and parliamentary, is allotted to the women. Women only have the right to vote or to sit in the House of Commons, and the Upper House is formed of the eldest daughters of deceased Peers. Politics, therefore, are included among the usual branches of ladies' education, but except in this respect their social condition presents no unusual features.

This monopoly by women of political power is as old as their system of government, and until a few years ago no one dreamt

of complaining or of questioning of its wisdom. But a pamphlet advocating the enfranchisement of males has lately been published by a clever female agitator, and caused a considerable stir. It is not pretended that a majority of the sex ask or even desire the privilege. The plea put forward is abstract justice backed by possible expediency, and, the cry once sounded, arguments are not wanting, petitions flow in, idle men have taken the matter up and find supporters among the younger women, and last night a member of the Government redeemed the pledge made to her constituents last election, to bring forward a bill for removing the electoral disabilities of men. She has no lack of supporters, some sincere, some interested. Her greatest difficulty was in persuading the House to treat the measure seriously. The notion of admitting young cornets, cricketers, and fops of the Dundreary pattern to a share in the legislation, the prospect of Parliamentary benches recruited from the racecourse, the hunting-field, and the billiard-room, was a picture that proved too much for the gravity of the Commons. A division, however, was insisted upon by the original proposer. At this juncture the leader of the Opposition, a lady as distinguished by her personal attractions as by her intelligence, moderation, common sense, and experience, arose, and made the following forcible speech, which we transcribe for the benefit of all such as it may, directly or indirectly, concern :

“Madam,—Before proceeding to state my opinions on this question, or my reasons for holding them, I wish to impress on you a sense of the importance of the measure just brought forward, that it may at least obtain from you the attention it deserves. I must urge you not to allow party or personal motives to blind you to its nature and bearings. The supporters of Male Suffrage are seeking not only to introduce a

startling innovation into a system of government that has hitherto worked remarkably well, but in so doing they would tamper with the foundations of society, and in a blind cry for equality and suppositious justice ignore the most elementary laws of nature. The question is not a political, it is a scientific and physiological one. About the equality of the sexes we may go on disputing for ever, but with regard to their identity there can be no manner of doubt. No one has ever ventured to assert it. Each sex has its special sphere—mission—call it what you will, originally assigned to it by nature, appropriated by custom. What now are the special and distinguishing natural characteristics of the male sex? Assuredly muscular strength and development. With less quickness of instinct, flexibility and patience than women, men are decidedly our superiors in physical power. Look at individuals, men of all classes—mark their capability for, nay their enjoyment of, exertion and exposure. If these do not naturally fall to their lot they find artificial employment for their faculties in violent games and athletic exercises; some indeed go as far as to seek it in the distant hunting grounds and prairies of uncivilised continents. This quality of theirs has its proper outlet in the active professions. To man, therefore, war and navigation, engineering and commerce, agriculture and trade, their perils and toils, their laurels and gains; to man, in short, all those callings in which his peculiar endowment of greater physical force and endurance of physical hardships is a main and necessary element. Those with superior mental gifts will turn to such scientific pursuits as specially demand courage, exposure, and rough labour. It is most essential that their energies should not be diverted from these channels. We should then have bad soldiers, bad ships, bad machines, bad artisans. Government, on the other hand, is no game to be played at by

amateurs. The least of its functions claims much honest thought and watchfulness. Either, then, the manly professions will suffer, or else—and this is the worst danger of the two—the suffrage will be carelessly exercised, and the mass of new voters, without leisure to think and judge for themselves, will be swayed by a few wire-pullers, unprincipled adventurers, who, seeking only to feather their own nests, will not hesitate to turn to account the ignorance and preoccupation of the electors.

“ Now turn to the woman. Her organisation no less clearly defines her sphere. With finer natural perceptions than man, less ungovernable in her emotions, quicker and clearer in intellect, physically better fitted for sedentary life, more inclined to study and thought, everything seems to qualify her specially for legislation. For the judicious application of general rules to particular cases, peculiar delicacy of instinct is required, and in no capacity have any but women been known to approach the ideal of government—that perfect rule—all-efficient, yet unfelt.

“ Take the family as a rough type of the nation. To whom, at home, is naturally allotted the government of young children? To the mother. To whom that of the domestic household? To the mistress. Widowers and bachelors are proverbially the slaves and victims of spoilt children and ill-trained servants. In all such home matters the husband defers to his wife, and would as soon expect to have to instruct her in them as she to teach him fortification, boxing, or mechanics. Little time or thought, indeed, has the professional man to spare for household superintendence; how much less for matters requiring such careful study as the government of a nation. The clergyman, wearied with his day’s visiting of the sick, teaching or preaching; the doctor after his rounds; the merchant or tradesman

overwhelmed with business; what they require when their daily toil is over is rest, relaxation, not to be set down to work out complex social and political problems, to study the arguments for and against the several measures to which members offer to pledge themselves, and to form a judgment on the merits of respective candidates. What time or opportunity have they for qualifying themselves to do so? But the wives of these men, on the other hand, have lives comparatively unoccupied, and of physical and intellectual leisure enough and to spare. Here, then, is a commodity; there a demand and a field for it, and this surplus, so to speak, of time, strength, and attention with us has been always applied to the science of government, nor do I see how a happier or more judicious arrangement could have been made.

“ I will proceed now to enumerate a few of the dangers to which the enfranchisement of men would inevitably expose us. Male voters will view each political question in a narrow professional light, irrespective of its justice or general expediency. Large proprietors will stand up for the game laws, eldest sons for primogeniture. Publicans, brewers, and railway directors will exercise a baneful, blind, one-sided influence on our counsels. An impartial debate or decision will soon become a thing of the past, fairness sink into the shade, and a majority of direct pecuniary interest turn the scale in all cases.

“ Again, the bulk of the national property being in the hands of the men, the openings and temptations to bribery would be enormously increased. Few women have the power, had they the will, to offer bribes sufficient to suborn a constituency, but when millionaires are admitted to the suffrage we may expect to see parliamentary elections bought and sold, and going, like other wares, to the highest bidder.

“ But there is a more alarming danger still. The muscular



force of the community being male, an opportunity would be afforded for an amount of intimidation it would shock us now even to contemplate. Right has ever been might in our land. Shall we reverse our motto? Shall we, who have ever taken pride in the fact that our counsels are swayed by reason and judgment alone—a fact from which men have benefited at least as much as women—invite the fatal indefensible element of force to enter in and meddle with our elections, and let the hustings become the scene of such struggles and riots as in certain countries where, by a singular distortion of judgment, the management of political affairs is thrust entirely on the men? Supposing that the suffrage were irrespective of sex, and supposing it to happen that the men in a wrong cause were arrayed against and outvoted by the women in a right, would they not, as they could, use force to compel the women to submit? And here we are threatened with a relapse into barbarism from which the present constitution of our State affords so admirable a guarantee. And that something of the sort would ensue I have little doubt. Probably the next step would be to oust women altogether from the legislature—the standard of female education would then decline, and woman would sink lower and lower both in fact and in the estimation of men. Being physically weak, she must always, among the rough and uneducated classes, be especially exposed to ill-treatment. Of this in our country, I am happy to say, there are but rare instances, nevertheless. But there are lands where men monopolise the suffrage, and where a state of things exists among the lower classes—let us hope the upper and civilised orders do not realise it, for their apathy would otherwise be monstrous—which if widely and thoroughly known would be recognised as the darkest page of modern history, something to which a parallel must be sought

in the worst days of legalised slavery. Penal laws have utterly failed as a remedy, and it is obvious that they must always do so. What has been our guard against this particular evil? Is it not that point in our social system which raises woman's position, both actually and in the eyes of the men of her class, by entrusting to her functions of general importance, which she is at least as well qualified by nature to fill as man, and which we take care that her education shall fit her for, as a man's, necessarily unequal, semi-professional, and engrossing, can never do? Thus men have an irksome, thankless, exacting, life-long labour taken off their hands, which are left free to work out their fame and fortune; educated women their faculties turned to the best account; while among the lower orders, the artificial superiority conferred on the female sex by its privilege of the suffrage, raising the woman's status in fact and in the eyes of her husband, acts as an effectual check on domestic tyranny of the worst sort, and the nation has the advantage of being governed by that section of the community whose organisation, habits, and condition best enable them to study political science.

“That any wrong is done to men by the existing arrangement, I entirely deny. Most of them are married, and it is so seldom that a wife's political opinions differ materially from her husband's, that the vote of the former may fairly be said to represent both. The effect on the sex itself would be most undesirable. It is a fatal mistake to try to turn men into women, to shut them up indoors, and set them to study blue-books and reports in their intervals of business, to enforce on them an amount of thought, seclusion, and inaction, so manifestly uncongenial to their physical constitution, which points so plainly to the field, the deck, the workshop, as the proper theatre for their activity. The best men are those who are most earnest and laborious in their professions, and do not

trouble themselves with politics. Already they have sufficient subjects to study—special studies imperatively necessary for their respective occupations. Do not let us put another weight on the shoulders of those who, from the cradle to the grave, have so much less leisure than ourselves for reflection and acquiring political knowledge, or else, let us look no more for calm and judicious elections, but to see candidates supported from the lowest motives, and members returned by a majority of intimidation, bribery, private interest, or at best by chance, all through the ill-advised enfranchisement of an enormous body of muscular indeed, but necessarily prejudiced, ignorant, and preoccupied members of society.”

The honourable member here resumed her seat amid loud cheers. On a division being taken, the motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority, and the question of Male Suffrage may be considered shelved for the present in the planet Venus.

B. T.

A LETTER

TO THE

RT. HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

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FROM

A LADY IN "THE GALLERY"

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London:

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1876.

TO THE RT. HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

*London, May, 1876.*

SIR,

I listened to your Speech in the Women's Suffrage debate with painful interest.

If I had any personal feeling with regard to your public opposition to a reform which you once supported, and for which your nearest relatives have given years of labour, this feeling was second to another. My chief regret lay in my belief that history would have to record that your long and useful career had been stained at its close by an ungenerous act to your countrywomen.

I felt "the pity of it" when you rose with pale face and laid a trembling hand on the table before you for support, whilst, with hesitating accents, you repeated against us the worn out arguments you have so often, and so mercilessly, exposed when uttered by your opponents.

The bench on which you sit has often, as you know, done its utmost to obstruct the cause of the Representation of the People. If it is to play that part again, should it not be represented by some other voice than yours?

I watched you, and I watched the faces on our side the House. If you looked ill at ease in your novel *rôle*, the liberal benches contained anxious and constrained countenances. They reminded me of those we used to see on the other side of the House when Mr. Disraeli was engaged in the process of "educating" the conservatives to "Household Suffrage." You are now submitting the liberal party to an opposite species of training, and this is the doctrine you wish to enforce:—that it would be a most dangerous thing for the Constitution and social life if Household suffrage should become a reality.

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If it were less pathetic, there would be something irresistibly comic in these two pictures of the education of the conflicting parties of the State by their respective leaders in principles radically opposed to those they commonly profess. On the one hand we have a great conservative statesman diligently educating his party to liberalism; on the other we have a great liberal statesman industriously training his followers in the traditions of toryism. All that is wanted to complete the parallel is that Mr. Disraeli should rise and retort on you the taunts you have so often hurled at him for poaching on other people's manors.

I wish to address you with the greatest respect, for the women who are now working for the right of representation owe you much.

You have been in the past the true expounder and defender of political justice; you have fearlessly assailed power in high places which oppressed the weak; you have contended against privilege on behalf of the people; you have denounced class legislation, and you have destroyed the theory of "virtual representation;" you have made the English people care for, and understand the meaning and use of representative institutions.

Who ever thought to see John Bright plead for privilege! Who ever thought to hear him praising indirect or "virtual representation!" or saying that people "did not suffer in the least from not having what was called direct representation in that House," and expounding to his astonished audience that it is "no advantage" to the governed to be able to select their governors!

You say that our "Bill is based on an assumed constant and irreconcilable hostility between the sexes." It is, on the contrary, based on the belief in the constant and trustful sympathy between the sexes. We believe that it is entirely owing to this sympathy, and to the necessary mutual dependence of men and women that the present unjust legal position of women does not make *every* home wretched.

We are assured that men are willing to do us justice; we are equally assured that they don't know how. You, who came forward as the defender of family peace and male justice, are still obliged to confess that men fail in justice, sometimes through ignorance. That confession is all we require. Is it possible you can believe that men alone ought to have the prerogative of declaring what is just and what is unjust in legal relations of the sexes, or in the laws which govern women? If men were to carry out such a theory in our houses, what would become of us? Why, all the life and joy and heart of the household would die out, if women had no voice in its interests, but were in fact—what they are in law—the dull slaves of their master.

Our Bill is based, then, on faith in men, not on hostility to them. Do we assert hostility when we affirm that we are likely to be better judges of our own feelings, and views, and interests, and grievances than anybody else can be? And do not millions of women love men and care for their interests, and work day and night for them, as much and more than men do for women? Yet would you think a demand for the entire exclusion of men from political representation on the ground of this devotion reasonable?

Our Bill is based on the belief inspired by your own words, "no class can legislate for another class." You say women are not a class. Let us not quarrel about words. If a woman believes she has a right to something, and the law allows a man to take it from her by force, it will take a great deal to persuade her that she does not belong to a class widely separated from the robber, even though he should bear the name of "husband."

Women are more than half the nation, and when they tell you in gentle and dignified language that they are treated as a class, that they are legislated for as a class, that the delicate instincts and feelings you are so anxious to shield are daily outraged by the Acts of a Parliament of which you were a Member, and of a Government in which you held high

office; when they can say that, though thus deeply responsible and holding your own female relatives so "near to your heart," you have, yet, during eight years, never raised your voice in protest, nor lifted a finger in this matter on behalf of the miserable daughters of the people, how can you ask them to believe that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, is better able than yourself to represent the honour and safety of their countrywomen?

You say the House is disposed to judge fairly on all questions affecting the property of married women. It is true that the "Married Women's Property Bill," which professed to give women equal rights of property and contract with men, passed a second reading in 1873, and was voted into Committee, where it remained entombed till the close of the Session. Why? There was a large majority in its favour, and the only reason I can find is, that every time it came up for discussion not 40 Members could be got to take the trouble to keep a House and vote it through Committee. It was counted out six times in that Session. Do you think if it had been a "Married Men's Property Bill" this would have happened? Yet the Members of the last House were as well supplied with mothers and wives and daughters and sisters as the Members of the present House. The conclusion we are driven to is in strict accordance with the principles you have always preached, and which you now appear shocked to find that we have learned by heart. Human nature is a curious study. Some months ago a man murdered his wife in a savage manner. When asked his motive for the crime, he said, because he "*loved her so much!*" It is obvious from this, that even love requires sometimes to be controlled and directed in the particular mode of its manifestation. It is true, however, that the tenderest and kindest feelings may exist in the hearts of men towards women, and yet that men may act in a way distinctly prejudicial to women's interests. It is the moving force of direct political responsibility to women that is required in the

House of Commons. Effusive tenderness is seen to most advantage at home, where it never need be hurt by any signs of incredulity.

Now I have no intention of detailing our grievances to you, because you evidently consider it "monstrous" that we should have anything to complain of, and—if I may judge from the tone of your speech—still more monstrous that we should think fit to make our complaints public. You also deny that if cause for complaint existed, it would be a "sufficient argument for asking for a vote." I will only remark that it is one of the main grounds upon which men have hitherto asked for votes, and it is the reason which you have always deemed unanswerable when demanding the enfranchisement of your own sex.

Your main argument against our plea appears in the form of an indignant question why we should not be able to trust ourselves absolutely in the hands of our male relatives. Well, I may say in answer that you yourself consider these male relatives so "fierce and unscrupulous" that you are unwilling even to allow us once in five years to be canvassed by them, lest the "taint" of their social and political corruption should infect us. Do I speak too strongly? I only use your own words, "humiliation," "shame," "disgust," "taint and pollution." If these words are rightly applied to the political doings of our husbands and fathers and sons, we are sorry for them; but we don't understand why, under the circumstances, we should be called upon to give them, unhesitatingly, absolute control over the greatest interests and over the most secret actions of our lives. You cannot, I think, in consistency, tell us that men who would be willing to degrade us in order to obtain our votes, are yet sure to act towards us like chivalrous gentlemen in the House of Commons.

Another inconsistency strikes me—but your speech is so full of them that if it had been spoken by a woman it would have been used by our opponents as a perpetual peg on

which to hang the charge of the logical incapacity of the sex—you give us your theory, that the interests of men and women are identical, and yet you say you "would vote for the measure if you were voting solely in the interests of men." Surely this throws up the case, for it distinctly implies that men have interests, not only separate from, but antagonistic to those of women.

Although I shall not detail our grievances, I will take one case—the case of the law of primogeniture, because as you have a deep rooted hatred to that system, it will serve as an illustration to bring to your mind the added indignity which women suffer, as women, in connection with it. You ask, "What can be more unjust than that?" And I answer, the position of women in relation to that law is more unjust than the position of the younger sons. In the first place, men have it in their power to alter this law whenever it pleases them so to do; in the second, not all the sons are disinherited, though only one succeeds to the property. There is always a chance for each. But although a woman is the first-born she may never inherit the patrimony. She is ignominiously thrust on one side in favour of her younger brother, or sometimes of the more distant male relation. "What can be more unjust than that?"

You allude to the greater mercy shown to women criminals than to men; but in the cases you have mentioned it is not the law (for women are tried under the same laws in these cases as men), but the administrators of the law who are what you call "merciful." To avoid a difficulty, however, let us grant that the English law—though, as Judge Coleridge says, "a disgrace to a civilized country" when it deals with the poor toiling mothers of the nation—is soft and lenient to women murderers and other criminals. You shall have all you can get out of that argument. Still I find it a little hard that because your sex is too weak to deal impartially with criminals who are women, that this should be given as a reason for refusing the small measure of justice

we ask for your wives, your sisters, your mothers, and your daughters. Is it not truly astounding that husbands and brothers and fathers and sons should be so terribly afraid of giving votes to duly qualified relatives so "near to their hearts and sympathies?"

But who are the women who are asking this boon? It appears that an Hon. Member has told you that "wherever he goes all the best women seem to be against this measure." Did you inform him that your own daughter, Helen Bright Clarke, is working and speaking before large audiences on behalf of the enfranchisement of her sex?—or that you own sisters, Mrs. McLaren, wife of the Member for Edinburgh, and Mrs. Lucas, have given it their constant and hearty support?—or that the daughter of your old friend, Charles Sturge, is a strenuous advocate of this measure. If there are any better women than these, they have not happened to cross my path.

You might have told that Hon. Member that there is hardly a woman engaged in any work for the good of her sex or mankind, from Frances Power Cobbe and Mary Carpenter to Josephine Butler, who does not believe that this measure is necessary. It has received also the warm approval of such women as Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Somerville, Mrs. Grote, and Florence Nightingale. Who and where are the "best women" who oppose it?

You say "the country has a right to decide how it will be governed." How is it deciding? I appeal to public opinion out of doors shown by the yearly increased mass of petitions in favour of the "Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women." I appeal to the hundreds of crowded meetings that have been held in every part of the country, which have passed resolutions affirming the equal electoral rights of men and women, on grounds even of political expediency. I appeal to the Reform Union Conference lately held in Manchester, which has adopted an equal Suffrage as a part of its platform. This Union, I



believe, represents over seventy towns. I appeal, lastly, to the decision—the unanimous decision—of the “Council of Four Hundred” at Birmingham—your own constituency—which you do not represent in this matter, as it has repeatedly, in public meeting, pronounced its verdict in favour of our cause.

Do not say that we wish “to arm the women of this country to defend themselves against their husbands, their brothers, and their sons.” Rather say, We wish to send true men, armed through the ballot box, with power and right to speak authoritatively in our behalf to the House of Commons, and so to put an end to the unseemly differences of Members, who, judging each by the gossip of his own little coterie, presume now to speak in our name without having received our authority.

In conclusion, here is the criticism of a Birmingham paper on your doctrine of physical force :—

“Mr. Bright says, ‘If all men and women voted, the general result must be the same, for by an unalterable natural law strength was stronger than weakness, and in the end, by an absolute necessity, men must prevail.’ Here is the open and undisguised advocacy of the law of force as opposed to the law of right. It is not a new argument, but one which has been used as long as we have had any political history. The only new feature is the promulgation of the worst principles of Toryism in the name of Liberalism. It would, however, be unfair to call such a principle Toryism—it is barbarism. The vital principle of civilised life is the admission of right irrespective of power.”

I am, Sir,

A LADY IN THE GALLERY of the House of Commons on the 26th of April, and a devoted adherent of the principles for which you have suffered and toiled for forty years.

THE BIBLE  
AND  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

BY  
JOHN HOOKER,  
HARTFORD, CONN.

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## THE BIBLE AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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**T**HE opponents of Women's Suffrage draw an argument against it from the Bible. Many of them regard the position of the Bible as clearly and directly antagonistic to it and as alone decisive of the question. Many of the friends of the cause are embarrassed by the claim.

I believe that it admits of demonstration, that the passages of Scripture relied upon by the opponents of Women's Suffrage, conceding all that they claim as to their meaning, and as to the permanency and universality of their application, have nothing to do with the question, and must be ruled out of the discussion for irrelevancy.

I make the attempt to show this not merely in the interest of Women's Suffrage, but of the Bible as well. The enemy of all good could not do a greater service to the cause of evil than by leading Christian men blindly to interpose the Bible as a barrier against every great social reform, so that when the reform triumphs, it shall seem to the unreflecting mass of men to be, not merely the defeat of the opposers of the reform, but the overthrow of the Bible also. This book is too precious, and a recognition of its authority too important to the world, for its friends and the friends of truth to expose it so unnecessarily to discredit. The Bible can be put to a better use, it cannot be put to a worse, than to be thrown into the street to help form a barricade against every attempt to overthrow old dynasties of wrong.

I have said that my argument would proceed upon a concession of all that is claimed on the other side, as to the interpretation, and permanency and universality of application, of the passages relied on. It will of course be understood that this is conceded merely for the purposes of the argument. This concession must cover all that is claimed by those who go farthest in their adverse interpretation and application of these passages.

The scriptural declarations relied upon, consist in the curse pronounced on woman at the time of the fall, "Thy husband shall rule over thee," and in several passages in the New Testament, in which Paul repeatedly, and Peter once, enjoins on wives obedience to their husbands, and in which the former, in addressing the Ephesians and Colossians, enjoins on women to keep silence in the churches, and if they would learn anything ask their husbands; and in addressing the Corinthians, enjoins on them not to pray or prophecy with the head uncovered; giving as the reason that it is a shame to a woman to have her head shorn, and a shame to a man to wear long hair, that the man is the head of the woman, that the man was not created for the woman but the woman for the man, and that the woman was of the man and not the man of the woman.

The ordinary mode of disposing of these passages by those who would lift woman from the burden of them, is by saying—that the subjection, if imposed as a curse, would not seem to be an ordinance of nature, and that Christ came to remove the curse under which both men and women lay; that the injunctions of Paul as to keeping silence in the churches were evidently meant only for the particular churches addressed, inasmuch as he directs the women of one church to keep silence, and those of another not to pray or prophecy (preach)

without having the head covered, two utterly inconsistent directions; that the rule that he lays down, that if a woman would learn anything she must ask her husband, is utterly repudiated by all Christian society, and women are freely admitted to institutions of learning; that the proposition that the man is the head of the woman as Christ is of the man and God of Christ, can have no political meaning whatever, if it really has any practical meaning, and especially that no superiority can be inferred by those who contend that Christ is the co-equal of God; that in stating that man was made first, and woman afterwards, he is only stating the understood historical fact, his inference that woman was made for man having no force as an argument, because she might have been made, as claimed on her side, as his equal companion; and that Paul's statement that woman was of the man, and not man of the woman, shows that he was dealing only with the historical fact of her origin, the real fact in every case since having been directly opposite; and that the declaration of God at the creation, and the recorded history of that creation, are far better authority than Paul's obscure reasoning about them—the Almighty having said, in the day of creation, "Let us make man in our image, and let THEM have dominion," to which the inspired historian adds: "So God created man in his own image, male and female created he them," and again, "Male and female created he them, and blessed them and called their name Adam;"—all which the advocates of woman's equality say, shows that the equality of the sexes was the design of nature, and that Paul, in laying down certain rules of propriety for the churches of his day, was merely enforcing his directions by referring to certain current notions of the Jews, availing themselves of their hold on the popular mind, but not intending to endorse them as really sound in themselves,

and especially not intending to give them a new sanction and a perpetual authority.

The question as thus stated is wholly one of interpretation and construction. But I propose in this argument to avoid all questions of interpretation, and take these passages as meaning precisely what the opponents of Women's Suffrage claim them to mean. It is, I think, a fair statement of that meaning in its utmost severity, that they declare, 1st, The subjection of the wife to the husband, and 2nd, The duty of all women in religious matters of a public nature, not to make themselves prominent in any noticeable way; or, to take Paul's own language, to keep silence in the churches. And I am to be understood as conceding not merely this meaning of the passages relied on, but their continued force as practical directions, and their application to human affairs in all countries and through all time.

Now the question comes up, "What has all this to do with Women's Suffrage?" Very clearly the fact that she may not preach, and may not pray unless covered, has nothing to do with it. But what has her subject condition, her servient condition as we may term it, to do with it? The same Paul, in the same Epistle in which he enjoins submission upon wives, says also to servants, "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling." And Peter, in the same chapter in which he enjoins obedience upon wives, says also, "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward." Can the subjection imposed upon the wife exceed that here imposed upon servants? And if the imposition of this subjection upon women was meant to be permanent and universal, that imposed upon servants in the same connection could not have been of temporary and

limited application. And yet who ever thinks of claiming that a servant cannot vote? No proposition could be presented to the American people that would seem more absurd.

There is no better way to bring out distinctly the proposition that must be established by those who use the Bible against women's suffrage than that of presenting their argument in the form of a syllogism. This, it is true, is but a restatement of what I have already stated, but it brings the proposition into special distinctness, and such special distinctness of statement is necessary to those, and their name is legion, whose habits of thinking are careless and inaccurate.

I will take first and by itself, as most important, the argument from the subject condition of the wife. This argument in syllogistic form is as follows:

*Major premise*—Persons in a subject condition ought not to vote.

*Minor premise*—Married women are in a subject condition.

*Conclusion*—Therefore married women ought not to vote.

Here it is to be seen, 1st, That the major premise, the truth of which is necessary to the conclusion, is utterly unsound, inasmuch as servants are allowed to vote without objection; 2nd, That the minor premise, the truth of which is necessary to the conclusion, is admitted only for the purposes of the argument, and is open to controversy when independently asserted; and 3rd, That the conclusion is of little or no value, inasmuch as it leaves the case of unmarried women entirely untouched. As therefore a conclusion must in some manner be secured which will cover the case of all women, married and unmarried, we must enlarge our major premise, and as we do so we will add, to make the proposition complete, the preaching and praying disability. It will then stand thus:

*Major premise*—All that class of persons, of whom a part

are in a subject condition, and all of whom are forbidden to preach, ought not to vote.

*Minor premise*—All women are of that class.

*Conclusion*—Therefore all women ought not to vote.

Here the conclusion is satisfactory, as it covers the whole ground. And this conclusion cannot possibly be arrived at except by employing the premises proposed, and the absolute truth of both these premises is essential to the conclusion.

Now the minor premise, let it be observed, is admitted only for the purpose of the argument, and would have to be established in dealing with any person not so admitting it. But the major premise is as absurd a proposition as can well be conceived. Just think for a moment of presenting it to the intelligence of this age of common schools and common sense, as a self-sustaining proposition, that "the entire class of whom a part are in a subject condition (including, of course, all servants,) and who are forbidden to preach, ought, by reason of those facts alone, never to be allowed to vote." If any one will undertake to sustain this proposition before the people of this country, he must expect to encounter merely ridicule. And yet those who contend that the Bible is opposed to women's suffrage must sustain that proposition or abandon their ground.

But the opponent of women's suffrage may here say, and consistently, "I do not care to contend on Bible grounds against the mere act of *voting*, if the participation of women in political affairs could stop there. There may be a justice and propriety in allowing her, as a member of the body politic, and often a tax-payer, to vote for the men who shall rule the state and especially who shall lay and expend the taxes. But voting implies more. It implies *eligibility to office*, and political office often involves *political ascendancy*,

and it is this aspiration after and possession of ascendancy, which the passages of Scripture relied on forbid."

Well, my candid opponent, I cheerfully take up the question precisely as you have presented it to me. But first let us see where we stand. Let us clear up the ground around us, so that we may see just how far we have advanced.

May I understand you then as conceding that, so far as any objection to mere voting is concerned, you no longer interpose the Bible against it? That is, that so far as any Biblical objection is concerned, you would take no exception to a law that should allow women to vote, but should forbid their holding office? You must either answer my argument or concede this. I understand you to concede it.

And now a word as to what we are to understand by office-holding. There are a great many offices that involve no political ascendancy, and which could be held by women to the great benefit of the public service, and with a reasonable profit to themselves. Shall I understand that you interpose no Scriptural objection to her holding these offices? If your objection to her office-holding generally is on the ground that she might thus be placed in a position of political ascendancy, which ascendancy alone is the thing forbidden, you of course would leave all other offices open to her. And it is to be observed that probably nineteen offices out of twenty involve no political ascendancy. Indeed the proportion must be much greater. May I understand then that a law would satisfy you that should give women the right to vote and to be eligible to all offices not involving political ascendancy? You must concede this if I have represented you fairly in putting your objection now wholly on the ground of the ascendancy involved in office-holding. And I have intended to represent

you with all the fairness in my power; and besides, I know it to be the only ground that you can take.

But there is one point more to be settled in advance of the further argument. The subjection prescribed by Scripture is only of the wife to the husband. There is therefore no Scriptural objection to unmarried women holding offices that involve ascendancy. Shall I consider you as conceding this? I know that you cannot escape the concession in the position in which you stand.

The Biblical objection is therefore now limited to the holding by married women of offices involving political ascendancy. The objection as thus narrowed and made precise, I proceed to answer.

For convenience sake I will drop the matter of woman's disability as to preaching and praying, as it has little application to the subject, and an answer to the objection founded on her subject condition will cover the whole ground. The point now made by our objector rests of course on this Scriptural subject condition of married women. Now for the purposes of this argument I will assume that subject condition to be as extreme as any one has ever claimed; as extreme, I will say, as the English common law of two hundred years ago made it. Under that law, and under the claims of some interpreters of the Bible, the man is the absolute legislator and ruler of his wife and household. He may not compel her to commit a crime, but he may compel her to serve his convenience or pleasure. If he wishes to sell his home and remove to another, and she is opposed to it, the house is to be sold. If she wishes her son sent to college and he to the shop, the boy must go to the shop. If she wishes for flowers in the garden and he wishes for none there must be none—always provided she cannot persuade

him to comply with her wishes. No matter how unreasonable and unkind he may be in asserting his will, his will when asserted is law. Now all this power on the one hand and subjection on the other I admit for the purposes of this argument to be the ordinance of God. And I put the case thus strongly, not for the purpose of making the impression that all whom I am combating would go so far in theory, or that any of my opponents would approve anything that should approach to tyranny in practice, but that the case that I am to meet and overthrow may be the strongest that can possibly be put. For the more complete the Scriptural subjection of wives to the power of their husbands, the more that subject condition would seem to stand in the way of their holding offices that involve political ascendancy, and which may give them ascendancy over their husbands.

Now does it not occur to you, my candid opponent, that you have narrowed down the question till what is left on your side is hardly worth contending about? Married women will generally choose to stay at home. They have cares there that both require their constant attention and that hold their affections. And besides, if eligible to office, a woman could not get it without a majority of the votes of the district, and the voters would not be likely to vote for a woman who could not leave her home. And further, if she happens to have abundant leisure and the requisite ability, her husband very likely would assent to her taking office, and as the restriction upon her is simply for his benefit he can at any time waive it. The cases therefore of married women who aspire to office against the assent of their husbands, and who get the office, will be too few to be talked about; especially too few to make any reason for excluding all women, not only

from all offices of ascendancy, but from all offices whatever, and from the right of voting too.

But I will meet this Biblical objection in every form in which it can be put. We will suppose that the subject condition, limited upon any interpretation of Scripture to married women only, extends to *all women*, and that all the offices of the State and nation are offices of *political ascendancy*. The rule to which the woman is subject must be still the rule of a husband; but we will consider all women as destined to be married, and so as potentially under subjection. For the purposes of this argument I concede all this.

Now what is this dominion of the husband to which the wife is subject? It is too clear for argument that it is dominion *only as to family matters*. It is, we will call it, an absolute power, but only *within its jurisdiction*. It is the same exactly in this respect as the power of the father over the child, or of the master over the servant. The will of the father and of the master is law, *within their jurisdiction*. I may tell my servant to drive me east when he wants to go west, and my will is law. I may tell my servant to mow to-day and hoe to-morrow, and my will is law. But I may not command him to name his boy John when he wants to name him Peter. I may not command him to go to a Protestant church when he wants to go to a Catholic. Why? Because these last matters lie wholly out of my jurisdiction. I may tell my minor son to go to the post office when he wants to go to play, and to spend his evenings at home when he wants to be in the street. But if, as is sometimes wisely done, the discipline of the school he attends is left to the scholars, and he happens to be on a jury to try some alleged offender, I may not command him to find the boy guilty, nor to find him not guilty. Why? Because that is his own matter and

wholly beyond my jurisdiction. My wife may desire to be a Superintendent of a Sabbath School. Upon the theory of subjection which I have conceded I may have the right to say that she shall not do it; that I want her at home on Sundays to read or sing to me. But if I assent to her taking the place, I have no power to control her as to the lessons she appoints, or as to her discipline of the school. Why? Because it is wholly outside of any subjection that she is under to me. I may be a professor of Greek in a college, and my wife, with my consent, a professor of chemistry. I should have no right to direct her as to her mode of instruction. Why? Because it is wholly outside of my jurisdiction. My wife may own property in her own right, over which and the income of which I have no control. Fathers often leave property to their married daughters in that way. I should have no right to command her to make over the income to me; none to command her to sell the property and give me the proceeds. Indeed, laying all benefit to myself out of the case, I should have no right, simply because I thought it best for her, to require her to sell her property and invest it in some other manner. My wife may be an executor or trustee, but I would have no right to control her actions as such. She may lawfully be elected a member of a school district committee. This thing is beginning to be done, and will be more extensively done, to the great benefit of our schools. I cannot control her action as a member of that committee. I cannot command her to employ this teacher or reject that. Why is all this? Because in all these cases the matter lies wholly outside of the limits of her subjection to me as my wife.

So a woman in her political relations is wholly outside of the limits of her subject state. When admitted to these re-



lations she will stand in them as an individual, responsible to God for her vote and for her political action in every respect, but in no manner responsible to her husband or subject to him. This is no repudiation of the doctrine of subjection. There was always a field of individual right that lay beyond the husband's jurisdiction, and the existence of such individual rights must either be perfectly consistent with the ruling power of the husband within his jurisdiction, or else that ruling power cannot be held to exist.

Do you still adhere, my candid opponent, to your Scriptural objection? Then I have one practical question to ask you: Does the Bible, in your opinion, condemn the reign of Queen Victoria? If you say it does not, you yield the whole argument; if you say it does, you run against the entire Christian sentiment of the world. Notice that the question is not one of monarchy (*that* you may condemn), but of a Queen as against a King. Would the Bible approve the one and disapprove the other? Notice also that it is the clearest possible case of political ascendancy, and that Victoria is not merely a woman, but has been till recently a wife.

It will not do to say, as Rev. Dr. Bushnell does (in another connection, however, and pertinently to the matter he has in hand), that the women who have reigned have been merely nominal rulers, while men have really administered the government. History, I feel sure, establishes the fact incontrovertibly against him. But if the fact be as he claims, it has no pertinence here, for it is the mere *holding* of an office of power, not the vigorous *administration* of the office, that constitutes the offence against the Bible.

But you may say, after all, that the political equality of women with men, though not expressly forbidden by Scripture, is yet directly against the spirit of its teachings, and that

Paul, if called upon to speak directly upon it, would have expressed his disapprobation of it. If you make this point you are in good company, for it has been made by so able a man as Rev. Dr. Bushnell in his book against women's suffrage. He says (page 81), "The assertion of their political equality with men would have shocked any Apostle." Now suppose one of Paul's churches had proclaimed the political equality of all *men*—of the humblest with the most exalted, of the subject with the king, would he not have been astonished? Suppose a convention of men had adopted our declaration of independence, and declared that all men had equal natural rights, would not Paul have been astonished? Suppose the next day another convention had declared that women too had the same rights, how much would his astonishment have been increased? Would it at all? Well, this additional astonishment of the second day above that of the first would be the precise measurement of his astonishment that has any pertinency to the matter in hand. But when we have obtained the exact measurement of Paul's astonishment, what is it worth? If he could have had a vision of the nineteenth century he would have found a thousand things to astonish him; not material things merely, which are of no consequence to this point, but current and established moral ideas, and moral ideas which are the legitimate fruit of his own teachings. He would have been astonished, shocked, if you please, to see woman putting herself forward into such a place of power in literature. He would have been astonished at her position as a power in society, at the recognition she has obtained for herself in science and art. Paul was not inspired to advise this century in practical matters. He was inspired to advise his own age as to such matters, and to lay down great principles of universal application. But he himself had no

conception of all the workings of those principles in their application in later ages to human affairs. The wisdom of the average man of to-day as to what is practically best to-day, is better than the inspired wisdom of Paul brought down bodily from his age, and applied literally as so much practical advice for to-day. Paul, if he was living to day, would, I have no doubt whatever, be among the foremost in advocating women's suffrage. The great principles of liberty and individual responsibility which Christ laid down, could lead to no other result.

Still, it is not so certain that Paul would have been shocked at this claim of equality for women. How does Dr. Bushnell know that he would? He had heard of the Queen of Sheba, and there is no reason to think he was shocked at every mention of her name. And the magnificent Cleopatra had then just finished her reign, and he had heard of other women on thrones. He was very free to speak his mind, and wrote many epistles. If the tenure of political power by these women shocked him, it is a little strange that he has not somewhere put his emotions on record.

It may be said that, conceding the propriety in itself of a woman's holding office, yet upon the theory of subjection which I admit, the husband would have the right to forbid her taking the office, or to require her to resign it, and that thus a great practical difficulty would arise, the liability to which is enough to show the inexpediency and perhaps absurdity of opening the political field to women; and I may be asked if I concede the right of the husband thus to interpose his will in the matter? I reply, that upon the theory of subjection which for the purposes of the argument I have admitted, I feel bound to admit that the husband would have a right to forbid his wife's accepting office. Where, however,

she has accepted office with his consent, he would clearly have no right to require her to resign it. Every analogy of the law is against such a right. A consent thus given and acted upon can never be recalled, especially where, as here, the rights of the public and of third parties are concerned. A husband may refuse to allow his wife to be a dressmaker, but if he assents to it, and she contracts as such to make certain dresses for a lady by a given time, he cannot stop her short in her work, and by the interposition of his mere will make her abandon it. Society would never tolerate such a law. The right which I here concede of the husband to forbid her to assume office, ought to satisfy every one who objects to her holding office on the ground of Scriptural subjection, since the husband, to whom alone her subjection relates, has a right to waive his privilege, and thus there would be in fact no office-holding by women that would in fact conflict with the claims of her subject condition.

But as the difficulty here suggested, even to those who do not hold the subjection theory, may seem a serious one, I depart for a moment from the concession of my argument to state what I believe to be the only sound rule on the subject. I regard husband and wife as perfectly equal in their relation to one another, and they ought to be made perfectly equal by the law. Under this law of perfect equality all their interests are more completely one than where the existence of the wife is substantially merged in that of the husband. In the application of this rule I should hold the agreement of both essential to the undertaking by either of any important matter seriously affecting the family welfare. Thus the wife ought not to take office unless upon a full consideration of the matter together they both think it best. And the husband ought not to accept an office which may seriously

interfere with the family support, or perhaps take him a long time from home, unless upon full consideration by them both they shall both be satisfied that it is best. I would carry this rule so far as to make it the duty of the husband to consult his wife as to any important business investment, the failure of which may seriously affect the family welfare. Her happiness in the marriage relation is just as important a thing to be secured as his, and she will consider as faithfully and as wisely as he every matter bearing upon the family welfare. He has no more right to wreck the family welfare by his folly, than she to wreck it by hers. A consultation upon all important matters will result in the wisest thing being done. The caution of the one will always be a check on the rashness of the other, and a discussion by two minds is always valuable. Where, upon the agreement of both, a course is taken which proves disastrous, there will be no room for mutual reproach, and the calamity will be borne bravely and cheerfully. There will be many cases where this rule cannot be applied literally. Each must often decide upon a course of conduct in the absence of the other, but a knowledge of each other's general ideas will help each to judge more wisely, while the duty to consider the wishes of the other will make each more cautious. There will of course, too, be exceptions to the rule, as where a drunken husband leaves his family to suffer; there she will have a clear right to resort to any honest employment that will enable her to feed herself and her children. I do not propose that all this be enacted by human law. It cannot be. But it will become a potent law when established as the Christian rule of the family.

The family relation is the last one that will suffer from the establishment of women's suffrage. It will only be heightened and its happiness enriched by it.

It is foreign to my argument to attempt to meet any objection to women's suffrage except that founded upon the Bible; but I cannot forbear, even at some expense of unity in my argument, to notice a kindred objection to the tenure of offices of authority by women, made by Rev. Dr. Bushnell. In his book on woman suffrage he draws a strong contrast between men and women in respect to the force-power which characterizes the one sex, and is strikingly wanting in the other, and from it infers that women were made to be subordinate and men to rule. Now, when two classes of people or two races are thus brought into contrast, the one as superior in every attribute of power, the other as inferior in these respects, the object (and the comparison has no real pertinence except as it bears on that object) is generally to show that the superior class or race is made to rule the other. Thus it was a favourite argument with those who defended slavery, that the white race had very positive qualities of superiority, and the black race very positive qualities of inferiority, the inference being that the white race was born to rule the black, and the black to serve the white; the power of the one finding its object in the weakness of the other. Now, Dr. Bushnell does not intend that the inference be drawn from the case as he puts it, that men are to rule over women. But it is only as aimed at such a result that his facts have any real pertinency. Taking the result which he seeks, namely, that men as a sex, and as distinguished from women as a sex, have the natural power of domination, and we find it to be a domination not over women, but over men as well. Indeed, nine-tenths of all the governmental force ever used in the world has been to keep down men and not women. The case then is, that the sex which he says contains this element of dominion, contains

also in vastly larger measure the element of *subjection*, for where there is one man who is a natural ruler of men, there are ten thousand who seem only made to be subject. The division, then, should not be by a perpendicular line dividing the sexes, but by a horizontal line separating the few whom God has made for great natural leaders from the immense mass below them whom He has made only to be led. The matter, therefore, is not one of sex, but one of individuals. And if it be a matter of individuals wholly, then we may reasonably expect that nature will provide occasional master-spirits among women as it has done among men. But we are not left to speculation alone on the subject. History furnishes examples of magnificent administrative power among women. It is no answer to say that there have been very few natural governors among women as compared with men. There are very obvious reasons why such instances should be rare. Aside from the fact that in the rude ages of the world power naturally fell into the hands of those who had the most physical strength and courage, there is this further fact, which is entitled to great consideration. In all ages the field of political ambition and power has been open to men, and has been their natural field, and those men who have exhibited the greatest power of leadership are those who rose from humble ranks under the inspiration of this ambition and opportunity. Women, on the other hand, shut out from all such opportunity, have occupied only such thrones as have come to them by inheritance, or by some pre-existing law, and it is only as power has chanced to fall in this way into the hands of those who proved themselves natural rulers, that history has furnished any examples of true sovereignty among women. They are, therefore, to be compared only with the kings who have obtained their

thrones by inheritance, and not by their own strength; while it is to be considered that the laws of many countries wholly exclude women from the succession, and thus place their sex at great disadvantage even in this already disadvantageous comparison. It is to be considered, too, that women have long been denied the education that has been given to men, while they have not been able, like men, by converse with large subjects, to find a practical substitute for it.

Whatever might be said with regard to the unfitness of women for authority in past ages, cannot reasonably be said now. The world has heretofore been governed by force. Although force cannot now be dispensed with, yet it is no essential personal quality of a king or other ruler. Government is now far more by reason, and where reason does not suffice and the use of physical force is necessary, that physical force is embodied in an army or in a police, which the ruler never heads in person, but puts into motion by his mere command; and that command can be issued by a queen as well as by a king.

It will, of course, be seen that in setting aside the Bible objection to women's suffrage, the writer leaves every other objection untouched. The questions still remain, whether women have the same moral right to enfranchisement that men in the same relative position have, and whether it is for the benefit of society that they should be enfranchised. These are great questions, which the writer will be glad to discuss at some other time. He has aimed in this article merely to show that these questions are to be discussed purely on their merits, and with no embarrassment from any supposed Scriptural intimations on the subject.

So far from Scriptural authority being against the enfran-

chisement of women, the whole tenor of Christ's teachings, which we must all accept as the highest authority, and which to the writer are the teachings of a Divine Master, present a great law of liberty and personal responsibility, which can find its full application only in the perfect equality of man and woman in the home and in the state. When it receives this application society will have taken the greatest step ever taken since Christ came toward a perfect Christian civilization, and the reign of Christ, which his followers have worked for and waited for so long, will be nearer at hand. It is the perfect conviction that this movement is one of true progress toward that promised and blessed reign, that gives the writer his deepest interest in it, and makes him certain of its success.

HARTFORD, CONN.,  
November 24, 1869.

THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF WOMEN  
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

A PAPER BY MISS BECKER,

*Read at the Conference on behalf of extending the Parliamentary  
Franchise to Women, held in the Victoria Rooms, Clifton,  
Bristol, on January 24th, 1879.*

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## THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

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Representative government is the fundamental principle which regulates the conduct of public affairs in this country. The principle had its origin in local government. The application of this principle in the supreme government of the country appears to be of comparatively recent origin. Before the reign of Egbert consolidated the Saxon kingdoms into a nation, all government might be said to be local government. During the reign of the Saxon kings, the representative assemblies had a real share in the government. Women took part in these assemblies. Gurdon, in his antiquities of Parliament, says the ladies of birth and quality sat in council with the Saxon Witas. The Abbess Wilde, says Bede, presided in an Ecclesiastical Synod.

The Norman conquest introduced the feudal system of government, in which the kings were little more than military chiefs. The various struggles for the crown from the death of Henry I. to the accession of Henry VII. were determined by military successes, and not in any sense by the choice of the people. A few hundred knights and men-at-arms, fighting hand to hand, gave the crown first to one prince, then to another, the people as a party standing aloof from a struggle which, in truth, concerned them very little. But local or

municipal government was not dead. It survived in the government of parishes, cities, and counties, and it formed the basis of the more general representative government which first took definite form under the guidance of Simon de Montfort, the man who caused to be summoned the first House of Commons.

Women were not left out of consideration in the earlier forms of parliamentary government. We learn from Gurdon that in the times of Henry III. and Edward VI., four abbesses were summoned to Parliament, namely of Shaftesbury, Berking, St. Mary of Winchester, and of Wilton. In the 35th of Edward III. were summoned to Parliament, to appear by their proxies, Mary, Countess of Norfolk; Alienor, Countess of Ormond; Anne Despenser Philippa, Countess of March; Johanna Fitzwater Augusta, Countess of Pembroke; Mary de St. Paul, Mary de Roos, Matilda, Countess of Oxford; Catherine, Countess of Athol.

This indication of a sketch of the rise of parliamentary government, and of the connection between this and the earlier form of local government, is intended to prove that the annual local franchise, instead of being a secondary and subordinate vote of little or no importance politically, is in truth the foundation on which the whole of our system of government is built. Women have, and always have had, coeval rights with men in regard to local franchise; they have a share in the foundation, and they have a right to a corresponding share in the superstructure that has been reared upon it.

For an illustration of the proposition that local self-government, by means of representative assemblies, is antecedent to national self-government, we may turn to the condition of the village communities in Russia. Here representative government in imperial affairs is non-existent. The Czar is abso-

lute autocrat. But local affairs are regulated by village communities named "Mir;" these are described by Mr. Mackenzie Wallace as "a good specimen of constitutional government of the extreme democratic type." The constitutional members are the "Heads of Households." The "Mir" apportioned the land of the community, regulates agricultural operations, and exercises authority over the taxes, and also over the movements of the villagers. Women are represented in these gatherings. Mr. Wallace says:—

"In the crowd may generally be seen, especially in the northern provinces, where a considerable portion of the male population is always absent from the village, a certain number of female peasants. These are women who, on account of the absence or death of their husbands, happen to be for the moment Heads of Households. As such they are entitled to be present, and their right to take part in the deliberations is never called in question."

Should parliamentary government come to be established in Russia, these village communities will in all probability form the basis of the electoral districts, and we may see representative government in imperial affairs accorded concurrently to women and men.

Men in this country obtained parliamentary representation in and through local government. They used the power they had, and they obtained more extended power. We urge women to follow their example—to take an interest in the local affairs in which they have a legal right to be represented, to make their votes felt as a power which must be recognised by all who would govern such affairs, and to be ready to fill personally such offices as they are liable to be nominated for, and to seek those positions to which they are eligible for election.

The parochial offices to which women may be nominated are



churchwarden, overseer, waywarden or surveyor of roads, guardian, parish clerk, and sexton. Women now occupy, or have very recently occupied, all these offices. Recently, a parliamentary petition was placed in my hand signed by a lady as churchwarden of a parish in Wales. There are many parishes now in England where women are overseers. There is a parish in Cheshire where there are but six or seven farmers eligible for the office of overseer. One of these is a lady, and she takes her turn with the rest. Moreover, while many of the men employ a deputy, she performs the work herself.

The office of overseer is a very responsible one. When the guardians or other lawfully-constituted authorities require money for the relief of the poor or for other purposes, they issue a "precept" to the overseers to furnish the required amount. The overseers are then personally liable for the sum. On the other hand, they are armed with stringent powers over the property of the ratepayers. They have to adjust the burden of the impost equitably among those who are to bear it, and they must collect the money from the people, either personally or by deputy. They have power to seize the goods of any person who does not pay the rate, and their own goods are liable to seizure if they do not collect the money from the parish. The office of overseer is unpaid, and the persons on whom the duties are imposed must discharge them under the penalty of a considerable fine. Women are not excused from these duties on account of their sex, and many women are now discharging these duties in various parts of the country.

A few years ago, Mrs. Gold, a widow lady of sixty years of age, was appointed overseer of her parish in Montgomeryshire. She objected to serve, and applied to the Court of Queen's Bench to release her from the obligation to do so. Her application was refused; she would therefore be compelled either to

fulfil an office entailing much trouble and no honour, or to pay a heavy fine.

A widow lady was recently appointed waywarden of a parish in Westmoreland. This lady had complained to the surveyor of the state of the roads, and at the next election he prevailed on the ratepayers to elect her to the office. Perhaps he imagined that she would decline to serve, and render herself liable to the penalty of twenty pounds for refusal. But the lady was equal to the occasion. She accepted the duties imposed upon her, and as she keeps a clerk and has ample means, she has no difficulty in obtaining a thorough supervision of the work. It is said that she has made some important discoveries as to the state of the accounts.

The conditions of local government vary greatly in different districts of England. They may be classified under three heads:—

1. Government of parishes by vestry meetings, in which every ratepayer had a right to vote, and which were convened for the imposition of rates and the election of parochial officers.
2. Government by vestries or other local commissioners under the provision of some local act applying only to the particular district therein specified. This is the condition of the metropolitan parishes outside the city of London, and of large districts in the country.
3. Government by local authorities elected under a general Act of Parliament specifically applied—a kind of permissive act, which may be extended on application by the ratepayers of any district in which it is not in force. Of this nature are the Public Health Act of 1848, the Municipal Corporations Act of

1833, with its amendments of 1869; and the Elementary Education Acts of 1870—1876.

In all of these provisions for local government, the rights of women are recognised.

I have before me, as I write, a copy of an Act passed in the year 1774, when George the Third was king, for the local government of the parish of Clerkenwell. It is a quaint document, printed in black letter. The preamble sets forth that whereas the poor of the said parish are very numerous, and the present workhouse is not large enough to contain them, and a considerable debt for their relief has been unavoidably contracted; and whereas the present method of raising and applying money for the relief of the poor is attended with many inconveniences, &c., &c., &c., the Act proceeds to set forth the names of a number of gentlemen to act together with the ministers, churchwardens, and overseers of the parish as guardians or governors of the poor for carrying the Act into execution. The Act further provides that in the event of a death, or removal, or refusal to act of any of the before-named persons, it shall be lawful for the inhabitants of the parish paying to the rates for the church and the poor to assemble and meet together in the vestry-room of the said parish, on Tuesday in Easter week every year, or within one month after, to elect one or more persons to be guardians.

It is further provided that the inhabitants as aforesaid are authorised and required to assemble on the Tuesday in Easter week, or within ten days after, to nominate a list of eight persons to be overseers, and the persons so nominated shall be bound to serve under a penalty of ten pounds. It is further enacted that the churchwardens, overseers, and inhabitants are authorised and required to assemble on Tuesday in Easter week,

or oftener, as occasion serves, to make a general equal pound rate or assessment for the relief of the poor, or for the other purposes of this Act.

The requirement to assemble in the vestry on the Tuesday in Easter week, for the election of overseers and the imposition of rates, is laid on all inhabitant ratepayers, without mention of sex. There is no doubt that women ratepayers are summoned equally with men, and that they may attend and vote.

In the clauses relating to the qualification of guardians masculine pronouns only are used; it is said no person shall be capable of acting as guardian unless *he* shall be assessed at the annual sum of twenty pounds, &c. Also, in the provision relating to the penalty for refusing to serve as overseers, the words "if *he* or they shall refuse," &c., are used. Notwithstanding this, it is probable that women might be guardians or overseers under this local Act, and it is certain that they may fill these offices in other districts.

But when it comes to the clauses providing for the payment of rates there is no possibility of mistake as to whether women are intended to be included. The pronouns *he*, *she*, or *they*, *his* or *her* house or houses, etc., occur. These feminine pronouns are not, however, introduced everywhere, and it would not be possible to construe the Act so as to exclude women in every case where masculine pronouns only are employed.

This old Act is the only one which I have had the opportunity of examining, but, as it is probably a type of many similar ones for other parishes, I have thought it worth while to describe its provisions.

I desire particularly to impress on women the fact that Tuesday in Easter week is the day for vestry meetings and parochial elections of churchwardens and other officials, that

women ratepayers have equal rights with men in such elections, and I would urge them to assert these rights by taking part in the elections whenever practicable. Thus Tuesday in Easter week would in parishes become what the first of November is in boroughs, a day when thousands of women in different parts of England may be seen taking part in public affairs, forming a demonstration of women electors, and giving a practical proof that women desire and care for the suffrage.

The Public Health Act of 1848 contains an interpretation clause in virtue of which, to use the clumsy and ungrammatical phraseology of our legislators, "words importing the masculine gender are deemed and taken to include females." There seems to be nothing to prevent women from becoming members of Local Boards of Health; and I cannot help thinking that some of the energy which is successful in keeping the insides of our houses clean and well ordered might be usefully extended to the care of the outside arrangements for the same end.

The Municipal Corporations Act was originally intended to apply to men only. When its operation was extended to women in 1869 the extension was specifically declared to be to the right of voting for councillors, auditors, and assessors. It seems therefore probable, though not absolutely certain—because the question has never been raised in such a form as to call for a legal decision—that women are not eligible for election to Town Councils.

The Elementary Education Act, on the other hand, was from the beginning intended by its framers to include women in all its provisions. Women have not only the right to vote, but to sit on School Boards, and to be elected to any official position in connection with the work for which men are eligible. A woman may be chairman, vice-chairman, or clerk of a School Board, and ladies actually fill such offices.

The principle on which this part of the Act was based is that, as half the children to be educated are girls, women have an equal right with men to regulate the conditions of the education. But if this is allowed in the case of education, its application cannot be logically arrested here. Half the people to be taxed are women, half the people to be governed are women, half of the people whose interests are affected by the national policy are women; women therefore have as much right to a share in regulating these matters as they have to a share in the regulation of education.

Political freedom begins for women as it began for men, with freedom in local government. It rests with women to pursue the advantage that has been won, and to advance from the position that has been conceded to them in local representation to that which is the goal of our efforts—the concession of the right to a share in the representation of our common country.



OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

BY  
VISCOUNT HARBERTON.

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PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,  
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1882.

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## OBSERVATIONS ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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IN approaching the subject of the Extension of the Franchise to Women one is at once met by the difficulty of saying anything on the subject that has the least show of novelty or bringing forward any arguments that have not been a thousand times repeated. The adversaries of the movement indeed, are themselves ready for the most part to admit the *primâ facie* validity of what has been urged in its favour; and it has become sufficiently clear that it is not so much the measure itself against which their opposition is directed, as the principle which it involves. It arises in fact from a totally different conception of the rights, duties and position of women from that which is held by its supporters. As regards, indeed, the men who take the negative side of the question, it is much more a matter of feeling than abstract reasoning and therefore bears a strong resemblance to those religious controversies where neither side has a common ground of argument, or can entertain a reasonable hope of acting upon or convincing the other. Indeed, some of the opponents have taken a religious ground in this very matter and have discovered, to their own satisfaction, that the Bible is clearly opposed to woman's suffrage. As, however, clergymen and others as religious as themselves, who have taken the opposite

view can find there nothing of the kind, I think we may allow those gentlemen to fight out the point among themselves. And I do so the more readily, because, as far as my experience goes, every party find what they disapprove of themselves condemned in the Bible, while their adversaries on the other hand, so far from being convinced of this, are persuaded that it is rather inculcated. Nor, so far as I know, do they ever come to an agreement, except, indeed, in lamenting the power of prejudice in blinding men's eyes to what is clear as daylight if they would but see it.

For my part, I would venture to say that as regards the extension of the franchise to women, we are not likely to obtain any more particular information from the Bible than with respect to the lodger franchise. If, however, we are convinced that their admission to it will be for their benefit and that of mankind in general, in doing our best to bring this about we shall be at least obeying the precept to love our neighbour as ourselves and as to that being found in the Bible, there cannot, I suppose, be much doubt or dispute.

As, however, after all, if women are ever to obtain the suffrage it must depend in a great measure on themselves, and nothing can be more fatal to this object than their indifference or hostility, I would wish to point out how they are affected by the principles at issue and how their dearest interests are concerned in this question. If, indeed, it were only the unfeeling and the vicious, bad fathers and bad husbands, who were opposed to the suffrage (although it would be difficult, I think, on the other hand, to find any such persons who are in favour of it) there would be little need of any further argument on the subject. But when we find men who profess, and with sincerity, a strong desire for the welfare of women and who even admit that

they are often unjustly dealt with in the present constitution of society; when we find, I say, men of this stamp arguing and protesting against women's suffrage their views are no doubt entitled to be respectfully considered. But in considering them let a woman carefully observe on what estimate of the moral and intellectual capacities of her sex they are based. If this estimate is such as she can in justice to herself and her fellow-women adopt, then, but not otherwise, she will be justified in accepting them. For my own part, if any woman will fairly weigh the principles at issue on either side, I have little doubt as to the conclusion she will arrive at, speaking generally. There can in any case be no comparison between the case of those women who are opposed to the suffrage after fairly examining the question, and those who are against it from mere apathy and indifference.

A very few examples will sufficiently illustrate what I mean.

One of the stock arguments, as we all know, is that a woman has no business with politics. She has her husband and her house and her children to look after; that is her true sphere of activity. Now setting aside the fact that this is not a question of duties but of rights, of whether women who are ratepayers and householders are or are not to have the suffrage to which their qualifications entitle them, let us see what this argument amounts to. A man who uses it can hardly look upon any woman as fit to be his friend or companion. What he wants is a good housekeeper and head nurse who will make his home comfortable and be at once useful and ornamental. All this is very well, and I am far from disputing the value of it, but a man ought, I think, to look for something more for his own sake and still more on behalf of his children. A man who takes an intelligent interest in public affairs, as all men ought to

do, can hardly have a real respect and value for a woman who is incapable of sympathising with him in these matters, or sincerely look upon her as an equal or companion. Nor can he hope that as a mother she will stimulate the intelligence and develop the moral nature of her children, as no one but a mother can do so effectually, and which can hardly be done by any mother who has no thoughts or ideas beyond the narrow circle of her home. It seems to me, therefore, that those who would say that women do not require votes, because they have nothing to do with politics, take a somewhat low and narrow view of their place in the world, and while they prize, and justly prize, their usefulness as wives and mothers, fail to see, that in seeking their proper place as citizens, they are so far from neglecting their duties, that they are qualifying themselves to perform them more efficiently.

Again we are told that women have nothing to gain by the suffrage, which will not be as effectually obtained for them by the efforts of men on their behalf. It is admitted that, as regards women's rights to their property and earnings, and, what touches them even more nearly, their right to the care of their own children, the law, as it stands at present, leaves much to be desired. But the progress of civilization, it is urged, has done much and is doing still more to mitigate these evils. This is true as far as it goes, but this progress is somewhat slow and imperfect, and, such as it is, to what is it due? Chiefly, I think, to the growth of a public opinion among women on these points which has acted in its turn, as it could not fail to do, on men who are not devoid of sympathy or a sense of justice. Now are these women who have borne a part in stirring up their fellows to a sense of their position, and these men who have sought to obtain a larger share of justice for women, in favour of the suffrage or against it? There can, I sup-

pose, as regards women, be but one answer to this question and speaking generally, the same will apply to men. Among men who desire to treat women fairly and justly you may find those who think the suffrage would be of little benefit to women, or that it might even place them in a position of antagonism to men, but out and out opponents of it never. To convert them little more is required than that women should show they themselves desire it as a body and that not to act in opposition to men, but to protect themselves from two different kinds of injustice inflicted on them by law. The one arises from the old barbarous notion that because women are weaker than men, they are therefore unfit to have any control over their own property in the married state, or to have any voice in the bringing up or disposal of their children. The other presents itself in a more modern and specious form. It shows itself in those enactments which are nominally for the protection of women, but in reality are simply hindrances to their earning their living. And when you consider that those who, whether ignorantly or from worse motives, advocate these measures have votes while those who are to be affected by them and know the mischief of them have none, it is easy to see which side has the chances in its favour. All these evils arise from the fixed idea, common to all opponents of the suffrage, that women are to be classed with children as beings without judgment sufficient to enable them to take care of their own interests and therefore for their own good to be kept under a perpetual tutelage. But as this hypothesis is false to start with, nothing but absurdity and injustice can come of it. If women can only be protected from brute force, they are as well able to look after their own interests as men are, provided they receive the proper training to enable them to do so.

These are the principles on which the suffrage is claimed

for women, and no greater step could be made towards enforcing them than to obtain it. Once let women be admitted to the suffrage, and it will give an immense help to the general acceptance of the following propositions, as to which most thinking women and not a few of the leaders of opinion among men, are agreed.

- 1.—That girls are entitled to as good and thorough an education, mental and physical, as boys are.
- 2.—That women, married or single, should have as full a control over their property and earnings as men have.
- 3.—That the claims of married women to the management and possession of their own offspring should be settled on equitable principles, and not be subject to a mere legal presumption of the absolute right of the father.
- 4.—That grown-up women, like grown-up men, should be free to engage in such work as they think proper, on such terms and for as long a time as they may see fit.

HARBERTON.

JOHN BALE & SONS, Steam Printers, 87-89, Gt. Titchfield Street, W.

## ADDRESS

UPON

### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE in WYOMING,

DELIVERED AT

ASSOCIATION HALL, PHILADELPHIA,

BY

GOVERNOR JOHN W. HOYT,

(OF WYOMING TERRITORY, U.S.A.)

APRIL 3rd, 1882.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

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1882.



ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR JOHN W. HOYT,  
UPON  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN WYOMING.

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After some introductory remarks, Governor Hoyt said :

In the territory of Wyoming, in the year 1869, the experiment was begun of giving to woman first of all the ballot ; giving her the weapon with which to fight her own battle, in other words. You know, at the end of the war, when there were millions of slaves emancipated, there was a proposition to give them civil rights, and these were accorded. It was then found that they were not sufficiently able to protect themselves ; that their rights were infringed upon ; and so there quickly followed upon the heels of that constitutional amendment another, giving to them the ballot. Statesmen on the floor of Congress said, "Give to these men the ballot, and they will then be better able to protect themselves in those civil rights, which have been confirmed by the former amendment." And that proposition, you will remember, was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Has this principle lost its force that we may not apply it to woman? Not so, thought one large-hearted man out in the territory of Wyoming, two thousand miles from the centre of the world, which I suppose is right here ; said he, one day, "Betty, it's a shame that I should be a member of the Legislature and make rules for such a woman as you. You are a great deal better than I am ; you know a great deal more, and you would make a better member of the Assembly than I, and you know it. I have been thinking about it and have made up my mind that I will go to work and do everything in my power to give you the ballot. Then you may work out the rest in your own way." So, he went over and talked with other members of the Legislature. They smiled. But he got one of the lawyers to help him draw up a short bill, which he introduced. It was considered and discussed.

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WESTMINSTER, S.W.

People smiled generally. There was not much expectation that anything of that sort would be done; but this was a shrewd fellow, who managed the party card in such a way as to get, as he believed, enough votes to carry the measure before it was brought to the test.

I will show you a little behind the curtain, so far as I can draw it. Thus he said to the Democrats: "We have a Republican Governor and a Democratic Assembly. Now, then, if we can carry this bill through the Assembly and the Governor vetoes it, we shall have made a point, you know; we shall have shown our liberality and lost nothing. But keep still; don't say anything about it." They promised. He then went to the Republicans and told them that the Democrats were going to support his measure, and that if *they* did not want to lose capital they had better vote for it too. He didn't think there would be enough of them to carry it, but the vote would be on record and thus defeat the game of the other party. And they likewise agreed to vote for it. So, when the bill came to a vote it went right through! The members looked at each other in astonishment, for they hadn't intended to do it, *quite*. Then they laughed, and said it was a good joke, but they had "got the Governor in a fix." So the bill went, in the course of time, to John A. Campbell, who was then Governor—the first Governor of the Territory of Wyoming—and he promptly signed it! His heart was right. He saw that it was long-deferred justice, and so signed it as gladly as Abraham Lincoln wrote *his* name to the Proclamation of Emancipation of the slaves. Of course the women were astounded! If a whole troop of angels had come down with flaming swords, for their vindication, they would not have been much more astonished than they were when that bill became a law, and the women of Wyoming were thus invested with the rights of citizenship.

Well, they exercised the privilege of voting when occasion offered, and in two years there came another Legislature of about the same complexion as the preceding one, which thought to repeal the law and put things back where they were before, but which did not accomplish it; and from that day to this the women of Wyoming have exercised, not only the right of

suffrage, but all the powers of male citizens; for the first Legislature was broad enough in its views to frame laws to match the suffrage act. They enacted liberal laws to secure women in all their civil rights. \* \* \* \*

Almost on the first day of my arrival in Wyoming there was an election. It was a general election for all the officers of the city, town, county and territory, and I went early in the morning, you may be sure. I had assumed the *role* of student, and observed with great interest. I wanted to see what there was in this contact of delicate and refined women with the ruder elements of the population at the polls. The polls were opened in the office of the hotel, a very pleasant place. The window was on the side near the private entrance. There were steps there for the convenience of persons alighting from carriages, and they could pass easily to the window. Inside this pleasant office were the judges of the election—two women and one man. The secretary was a lady. There was considerable discussion of different questions outside, not boisterous, but lively and animated, and I was listening to it and observing. By-and-by I heard, running through the entire company, "Sh-h-h-h-h!" What does that mean? I turned, and saw ladies were coming to cast their ballots. Everything was quiet. Instantly the gentlemen pressed back, making a passage, and one of them, hat in hand, opened the carriage door. The lady stepped down and deposited her ballot, the gentlemen lifting their hats as she passed; she was politely helped back into the carriage, and drove away. I said, "*Surely that woman is not hurt.*" As soon as the ladies came in sight there was a transformation among the men, in every case. There could not have been a more quiet place in the world while those women were present. It was the same whether they came in carriages or on foot. There was always a ripple when they approached, succeeded by a "Sh-h-h-h-h," then all was as still as the unruffled sea. The women seemed to be pleased with so courteous a reception; they felt that they had acquired a new dignity, a new power. To me, a stranger, it was very unexpected that there should be found so real a gentility in this new country, where men are supposed to be of ruder manners than in the older communities,

but where they are in fact a noble, intelligent people from the East, with the best blood in their veins, and with much cultivation of the intellectual powers, as well as of the social amenities. How much of this was due to the influence of women I do not know, for this condition of things had existed a number of years before I arrived there. But I have no doubt that it should be in large measure ascribed to their influence.

I will say here, as a tribute due to my territory, that I have never met anywhere a people surpassing them in the matter of social courtesies. I have never seen even a hod-carrier or a man with a load on his back pass a lady in the streets of Cheyenne without taking off, or at least, touching his hat. And I regret to say that when travelling in many parts of the country, I have found some lack in these regards. I have found it even in what are generally considered very cultivated and refined communities. I am therefore inclined to ascribe the difference in some part to the superiority of women's influence when thus possessed of the dignity and the honour of full citizenship.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—Do all the women vote?

Gov. HOYT.—That probably is not true, if you mean absolutely every one. I know one or two ladies who prefer not to vote—that is, who told me some three years ago, that they had no inclination to vote, that it was a matter of indifference to them. They came from the East with probably a little prejudice on this subject, and were not quite cured. Otherwise I can answer the question affirmatively, that the women do all vote. Those ladies who are said to be "first ladies," that is, who are acknowledged to be of the highest intelligence, are active participants in the elections, going to the polls and manifesting intelligent interest in the matter in hand. I think it may be said fairly that as many women vote as men, in proportion to the number in the territory.

The question has often been asked, and perhaps I had better anticipate it, in regard to the influence woman suffrage exerts upon certain moral questions. I have said lately, and it may have been quoted, that by reason of the ballot we have in Wyoming *better laws, better institutions, better officers.* This is

*emphatically true.* We have better laws, for although the women do not seek a place in the Legislature, do not assist in making the laws, they have a voice in advance, and hence of necessity influence legislation. I have also known cases in which the voice of women upon pending measures has decided their fate. Then again, we have better officers in consequence of woman suffrage, because, although the women do not attend the primary meetings, do not go into the caucuses and help to nominate the men who are to be chosen, they have the veto power in the ballot, and that is well understood. The men know that if they put up candidates who are unworthy, if they nominate dissolute men, irresponsible or incompetent men, woman will certainly be at the polls with her veto in the form of the ballot. They are not so wedded to party lines as to be willing to cast a vote for the candidate representing the party of their preference if he be decidedly unfit, and on the other side stands a worthy man.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—What is the condition of your schools?

Gov. HOYT.—Excellent. When I reached Wyoming and visited the schools I expressed my surprise at the excellent condition in which I found them. They were conducted by men from the Eastern colleges and taught for the most part by ladies, many of whom are graduates of the normal schools at the East. In towns like Cheyenne and Laramie ninety per cent. of the children are in attendance; for the schools are attractive enough to draw them, even without the help of the law, which makes attendance obligatory. We have school buildings that cost large sums of money, and the people are ever ready to vote liberal amounts for school purposes.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—What is the effect on temperance?

Gov. HOYT.—We have what is known as a Sunday Law. There has been no effort at prohibitory measures. Ours is a new country, where, as I said, the population is in larger part of men—men who live upon the plains or work in the mountains, a great many of whom are accustomed to the use, in some form, of spirituous and other liquors.

But it has been proposed that Sunday shall be kept sacred, and so places where these liquors are sold during the week are closed on that day. The Sundays are as quiet in the city of Cheyenne as in any village of Massachusetts. I have never known of a brawl or a disturbance, or of any loud talking even, in the streets of Cheyenne on Sunday during the four years of my residence there, and the same good order prevails elsewhere.

Questions have been asked as to various social evils, and the influence of women upon them; and while I have to say that there is room for improvement, I must also say, on the other hand, that in view of the fact that hitherto, during these early years, a large proportion have been young women, but recently arrived and without definite expectation of remaining there for life, are there to stay until their husbands can gather up a fortune, and naturally have not felt the same deep interest in social reforms which would be felt by women in a community where they were planted for life; activity in social reforms could hardly be expected. But as these women increase in years, and children are added to the family circle, the interest begins to deepen in all means of social advancement. Already women are taking hold of such matters and giving evidence that the explanation which I have suggested is the true one.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—What is the influence of women, if discoverable, upon business affairs? Do men, so far as can be seen, conduct their business more honestly?

Gov. HOYT.—I shall have to say, in reply to this question, that it is exceedingly difficult to make an answer that I would feel any certainty about. That is a matter one can hardly reach. How far they are influenced will have to be judged from the general influence of women upon men. But where men are surrounded with upright, honorable women, who have a voice as well as a special interest in public affairs, where they are in all respects equal, the influence of such women will be felt to a greater extent than that of women who are held to be inferior and who are hence denied the dignities and privileges of citizenship. That is the general conclusion I must draw, without being able to answer the lady's question very directly. I will further remark, however, that I have known nowhere

among any business people a higher toned class of business men than I find in Wyoming. I have remarked it repeatedly, that our men engaged in the cattle business, and our men in mercantile and other affairs, are what we sometimes call "square" men—that is, upright, straight-forward, manly, honourable men. I think it is so to a remarkable extent; but how far they are influenced from the feminine side I cannot say. I give the fact and the general philosophy bearing upon it.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—Is there any or much objection to woman suffrage in the territory?

Gov. HOYT.—After four years' residence there, with my ears open to every remark touching this subject, I have never heard a solitary citizen within the bounds of Wyoming object to woman suffrage.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—If your Excellency will permit, I would like to propose a question suggested to me by some persons seated near me. One of the most forcible objections to woman suffrage in this section of the country is that women are pre-eminently religious and fill up the churches; that they are very much under the control of the clergy, and it is feared that priests and ministers of religion will exert an undue influence upon the elections through the women voters.

Gov. HOYT.—I have never discovered any such tendency, and my attention, I ought to say, has been somewhat directed to that point, for I have endeavoured to view this subject from every side. But, after a little reflection, I thought I could understand how it should *not* be the case; because in proportion as woman is liberated as to person, property, children and all else, her mind is liberated and she thinks for herself. One of the best things in the world to save women from the domination of undue influence of any sort, whether religious or otherwise, will be to enlighten them and make them free. Let them understand these questions through investigation, and then they will not take the say-so of priest or king.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—Are those women who enjoy the same privileges that men do as easily bought as men?

Gov. HOYT.—I have never known one to be bought. I am

sorry to say that men are sometimes purchased, even in the best of communities.

THE VOICE.—It is very important.

Gov. HOYT.—Yes, that is an important point. I have never heard any intimation that any woman had been bought; and I do not believe that women as a class are as open to temptations of this sort as men. It is the theory of the world, whether just or false, that women are morally superior, that they live on a higher plane. It may be that it is this moral nature, this superiority of the spiritual in them, which takes them to the churches, and it may be that with much of false dogma they also get a strengthening of the moral nature by the inculcation there of those divine principles taught by Christ; and so we might expect that women in political affairs would be freer from the dangers to which reference has been made.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—When woman is met on the ground where the ballot will place her, will not all men treat her with more respect than if she had not that command?

Gov. HOYT.—This is the declaration of an important principle which I intended to dwell on if I found sufficient time. By the restoration to woman of the dignity which belongs to the human soul, but which has always been denied her, she would unquestionably gain in respect and influence. The question asked suggests one of the greatest wrongs that has been done her. That the wife and the mother of children, who is ranked as inferior before the law, has not the same influence with husband and child that she would have if she stood upon the same platform with the father is *most manifest*. I have seen that in a hundred homes, where a mother, intelligent and noble in every way, with the highest aspirations for her children, with a love beyond expression, desiring to stimulate and elevate them, was crippled in her powers, palsied in the presence of her children by some belittling remark of a displeased husband. I have known fathers to undermine the influence of a mother of the highest and noblest character by mere incidental denials of her equality of right and authority, by indirectly opening the eyes of their children to the fact that, before the law and before society, she was inferior to the father. Accord to woman all

the rights and privileges that are inherent in her because she is a woman, a person, because she is a constituent member of the nation, dignify and honour her as she deserves, and she becomes a new power.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—Will it hasten the time when arbitration shall be substituted for the arbitrament of the sword?

Gov. HOYT.—Just a moment before I come to that question. In continuation of the point I was making in answer to the previous question, let me say that there is no such thing as great and permanent influence without authority. Influence comes largely of authority—in the family, in the State, in the world. If one who has no authority speaks, of what avail is it? But when there is power behind it, the voice is heard. When the government which represents the nation speaks, the individual listens, because behind that are mailed men with power to compel the enforcement of the decree. So in the home, the mother, when she speaks, if she have the influence that she ought to have, I mean that the child needs she should have, must have *authority* to speak. It is often remarked that the mother's influence reaches on: that although it may not be felt at the hour, it is felt in after years; so that the boy, when he comes into trouble in subsequent life remembers the injunctions of the mother, and then respects her. But why does he then respect her? Because he has found by experience that the Eternal was behind the mother in the truths she uttered. When the man finds that it was God's voice speaking to him through her—that there is power, therefore, to enforce the injunction, and that he is to-day suffering the penalty which God, not the mother, has brought upon him, then it is that he bows with a new and larger respect to the memory of his mother.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—If a prohibitory liquor law were passed in Wyoming by a small portion of the men and the solid vote of the women, would it be possible to enforce it?

Gov. HOYT.—Unquestionably; for the people of Wyoming are, as I said, among the most law-abiding people I have ever known.

In concluding, I desire to say that it is not alone for woman's sake that this restoration of rights, the full emancipation of

woman, is necessary. Observe, I do not say "conferring" of rights; it is not in the power of men to *give* rights to women. God gave her these when He gave her existence. There are certain rights which are inherent. We call them natural because they lie in the nature of man; they lie in the nature of woman, at the foundation of personality. If I am a person I am allied to the Infinite; I have my existence from Him; He has conferred upon me certain powers; He has given me certain prerogatives, and no man can *give* them. Man may usurp what God has bestowed; man may rob woman of the *exercise* of a natural right, but of the right itself he cannot rob her, for that is inherent, it dwells in her; it is a part of her moral existence. God himself cannot take away that which He has decreed shall be an inherent, constituent part of the human soul; and so I use the word purposely, *restored* exercise of rights. If a man has robbed another, if he has stolen from another, he may restore the property taken; so if man has taken from woman the privilege of exercising a right, the power to bring her right into play, he must restore it to her, or the Almighty will hold him a robber. Can I make it stronger?

Returning from this digression, I say again, not alone for *woman's* sake is reform demanded. It is demanded in the interest of man also. Man himself cannot stand before God in his uprightness, man himself cannot develop into his completeness while he is halved, while he is less than himself, because of denying the full development and exercise of powers to her whom God gave to be his complement. A woman who is only half a woman, who is cramped, suppressed, restricted and restrained; she cannot be all that a man needs; and so I plead in the interest of my own sex while pleading for her. I shall walk freer myself when I know that no denial is made to woman of what belongs to her—not to my wife only, but to every woman on the earth. I shall be more a man; I shall stand up in the presence of mankind and before the Father of all, with an uprightness, with a conscious dignity and nobility, which I cannot possess so long as aught is denied to her.

Again, the enlargement of woman's privileges is demanded in the interest of the nation. The nation is not a mechanical

contrivance; it is not a piece of machinery with wheels and cogs and shafts; the nation is an organic something; a living personality; it is a moral personality. The nation has a being, a moral, spiritual existence; and it cannot be a grand nation, it cannot be a true nation, it cannot fulfil a grand and glorious mission among men in the development of men to their perfectionment so long as the nation is diseased in spirit—so long as it carries in its heart this denial of God-given rights. Let then, the restoration be made, and this nation, without a slave, without a limitation of powers for any individual composing it, will arise in its dignity and glory, put on its crown and go forth to the fulfilment of a mission worthy of the American Republic.

Finally, the emancipation of woman is needed in the interest of all mankind, of nations abroad as well as the nation at home. We are a nation favored of heaven as no other on the earth. Foreign people assent to this. The people of all nations love their country; patriotism is a sentiment of the human soul; it belongs to it naturally, for man, as Aristotle said, is a political being. The nation is a necessity of man, to aid in the development of his powers. The nation must, therefore, be a whole nation, a grand nation, that its influence upon the world may be pure and ennobling. We have a mission to other nations as well as to our own people. Every nation has a mission just as every man, every soul has a mission. And what is the mission of our nation? Was it not indicated in the Declaration of Independence, that grand proclamation of freedom and of equal rights? The great doctrine of equality was promulgated there, and the doctrine of equality is that upon which we stand as a republic. That is the corner-stone, is it not, of the American republic—the equality before God, of all men? It was the power of this truth that made some of us burn for the day to come when the shackles should be knocked from the limbs of four millions of slaves; it is that which makes our hearts burn yet more that the shackles may be struck from the person and powers of twenty-five millions of women. Can we preach liberty to the captive in foreign lands while we have captives at home? Dare we boast of equal rights, and proclaim the glory of free institutions to other lands while we deny them

to half of our own people? If we would be true to our mission as a nation, as the promulgator of great principles to other countries, we must ourselves obey the command of the Almighty, "Loose the bands and let the oppressed go free." When we have reached this high level, when the women of this and of all enlightened countries have come, as *come they will*, to the exercise of their God-given rights, then, my dear Sir (addressing one of his interrogators) the day of war will have passed for ever; for in the bosom of woman rests, with folded wing, the sweet dove of peace.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE.—I would like to ask one question. It has been urged by the opponents of this measure in this State, and in this very city, that we already have too much suffrage and too little intelligence, and that, if we extend the suffrage, we will make the matter worse, instead of better.

Gov. HOYT.—They claim that the women are less intelligent than the men?

THE VOICE.—Oh, yes; of course.

Gov. HOYT.—I thank the gentleman for calling my attention to an objection which I am satisfied is felt to be serious by not a few liberal-minded citizens, men who cherish no prejudice against woman suffrage *per se*, but who recognize the danger that lurks in a ballot undirected by intelligence.

A number of answers suggest themselves. First of all, the experience of Wyoming has shown that the only actual trial of woman suffrage hitherto made—a trial made in a new country where the conditions would not happen to have been exceptionally favorable—has produced none but the most desirable results. And surely none will deny that in such a matter a single ounce of experience is worth a ton of conjecture.

But since it may be claimed that the sole experiment of Wyoming does not afford a sufficient guarantee of general expediency, let us see whether reason will not furnish a like answer. The great majority of women in this country already possess sufficient intelligence to enable them to vote judiciously on nearly all questions of a local nature. I think this will be conceded. Secondly, with their superior quickness of perception, it is fair to assume that when stimulated by a demand for a knowledge of political principles—such a demand as a sense of

the responsibility of the voter would create—they would not be slow in rising to at least the rather low level at present occupied by the average masculine voter. So that, viewing the subject from an intellectual standpoint merely, such fears as at first spring up drop away, one by one, and disappear.

But it must not be forgotten that a very large proportion of questions to be settled by the ballot, both those of principle and such as refer to candidates, have in them a *moral* element which is vital. And here we are safer with the ballot in the hands of woman; for her keener insight and truer moral sense will more certainly guide her aright—and not her alone, but also, by reflex action, all whose minds are open to the influence of her example. The weight of this answer can hardly be over-estimated. In my judgment, this moral consideration far more than offsets all the objections that can be based on any assumed lack of an intellectual appreciation of the few questions almost wholly commercial and economical.

Last of all, a majority of questions to be voted on touch the interests of woman as they do not those of man. It is upon her finer sensibilities, her purer instincts and her maternal nature that the results of immorality and vice in every form fall with more crushing weight. Aye, it is woman who hath given hostages to fortune of all that is most precious on earth. Trust her, then, oh ye doubting men! Trust her, and so receive, in countless ways ye know not of, the unfailing benediction of Heaven.

Fellow citizens:—This movement for the emancipation of woman is in a right line toward that universal freedom which is the ideal condition of the human race. To doubt of its ultimate success is to question the wisdom and justice of God. It cannot fail, for the good of mankind demands that it triumph. It is a work which, in this enlightened Christian land, should, and I believe will, have early accomplishment. It but remains with us who are men to decide, with the least of further delay, whether this grandest of all the struggles for freedom since the beginning of history, shall be carried through by woman alone, or whether, turning our backs on the false prejudices and groundless fears of the past, we too, will join heroic hands for its furtherance.

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