

A Corrupt Vote

Then there is the corrupt vote to-day. Among men it is bad enough. But among women it would be much worse. What, for example, would the Tenderloin [red-light district] woman's vote be in New York? for good measures and better city politics? . . . Unrestricted suffrage must reckon with all kinds of women, you see—and the unscrupulous woman will use her vote for what it is worth and for corrupt ends.

Today, without the vote, the women who are intelligent and interested in public affairs use their ability and influence for good

measures. And the indifferent woman does not matter. The unscrupulous woman has no vote. We get the best, and bar out the rest. The state gets all the benefit of its best women, and none of the danger from its worst women. The situation is too beneficial to need any change in the name of progress. We have now two against one, a fine majority, the good men and the good women against the unscrupulous men. Equal suffrage would make it two to two—the good men and the good women against the unscrupulous men and the unscrupulous women—a tie vote between good and evil instead of a safe majority for good.

Then, beside the indifferent vote and the corrupt vote, there would be, in equal suffrage, a well-meaning, unorganized vote. But government is not run in America by unorganized votes—it is run by organized parties. To get results, one vote is absurd. An effectual vote means organization; and organization means primaries and conventions, and caucuses and office-holding, and work, and work, and more work. A ballot dropped in a box is not government, or power. This is what men are fighting out in politics, and we women ought to understand their problem. One reason that I, personally, do not want the ballot is that I have been brought up, in the middle of politics in a state that is full of them, and I know the labor they entail on public-spirited men. Politics, to me, does not mean unearned power, or the registering of one's opinion on public affairs—it means hard work, incessant organization and combination, continual perseverance against disappointment and betrayal, steadfast effort for small and hard-fought advance. I have seen too many friends and relatives in that battle to want to push any woman into it. And unless one goes into the battle the ballot is of no force. The suffragists do not expect to. They expect and urge that all that will be necessary will be for each woman to "register her opinion" and cast her ballot and go home.

Where would the state be then—with an indifferent vote, a corrupt vote, and a helpless, unorganized vote, loaded on to its present political difficulties? Where would the state be with a doubled negro vote in the Black Belt? Where would New York and Chicago be with a doubled immigrant vote? I have two friends, sisters, one of them living in Utah, the other in Colorado—both suffrage states. The one in Colorado belongs to the indifferent vote. She is too busy to vote, and doesn't believe in it anyhow. The one in Utah goes to the polls regularly, not because she wants to vote, but because as she says "The Mormons vote all their women solidly, and we Gentiles have to vote as a duty—and how we wish we were back again under manhood suffrage." Is the state benefited by an unwilling electorate such as that?

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A
Disagree

B *

Disagree

Let us take these three points of view singly. Why, in the first place, is the vote a mistake for women as individuals? I will begin discussing that by another question. "How many of you have leisure to spare now, without the vote?" The claims upon a woman's time, in this twentieth century, are greater than ever before. Woman, in her progress, has taken up many important things to deal with, and has already overloaded herself beyond her strength. If she is a working-woman, her day is full—fuller than that of a workingman, since she has to attend, in many cases, to home duties or to sewing and mending for herself when her day's toil is over. If she is a wife and mother, she has her hands full with the house and the children. If she is a woman of affairs and charities, she has to keep a secretary or call in a stenographer to get through her letters and accounts. Most of the self-supporting women of my acquaintance do not want the ballot. They have no time to think about it. Most of the wives and mothers I know do not want to vote. They are too busy with other burdens. Most of the women of affairs I know do not want to vote. They are doing public work without it better than they could with it, and consider it a burden, not a benefit. The ballot is a duty, a responsibility; and most intelligent, active women to-

day believe that it is man's duty and responsibility, and that they are not called to take it up in addition to their own share. The suffragists want the ballot individually. They have a perfect right to want it. They ask no leisure. And if it were only an individual question, then I should say heartily "Let them have it, as individuals, and let us refuse to take it, as individuals, and then the whole matter can be individually settled." But that is impossible, for there are two other aspects. The suffragists cannot get the vote without forcing it on all the rest of womankind in America; for America means unrestricted manhood suffrage, and an equal suffrage law would mean unrestricted womanhood suffrage, from the college girl to the immigrant woman who cannot read and the negro woman in the cotton-field, and from the leader of society down to the drunken woman in the police court. The individual aspect is only one of the three, and after all, the least important.

For no good woman lives to herself. She has always been part of a family as wife or sister or daughter from the time of Eve. . . . The American home is the foundation of American strength and progress. And in the American home woman has her own place

and her own duty to the family.

It is an axiom in physics that two things cannot be in the same place at the same time. Woman, as an individual, apart from all home ties, can easily enough get into a man's place. There are thousands of women in New York to-day—business women, professional women, working girls, who are almost like men in their daily activity. But nearly all these women marry and leave the man's place for the woman's, after a few years of business life. It is this fact which makes their wages lower than men's, and keeps them from being a highly skilled class. They go back into the home, and take up a woman's duties in the family. If they are wise women, they give up their work; they do not try to be in a man's place and a woman's too. But when they do make this foolish resolve to keep on working the home suffers. There are no children; or the children go untrained; housekeeping is given up for boarding; there is no family atmosphere. The woman's place is vacant—and in a family, that is the most important place of all.

The woman who might be a woman. is half a man instead.

C*

Disagree

The family demands from a woman her very best. Her highest interests, and her unceasing care, must be in home life, if her home is to be what it ought to be. Here is where the vote for woman comes in as a disturbing factor. The vote is part of man's work. Ballot-box, cartridge box, jury box, sentry box, all go together in his part of life. Woman cannot step in and take the responsibilities and duties of voting without assuming his place very largely. The vote is a symbol of government, and leads at once into the atmosphere of politics; to make herself an intelligent voter (and no other kind is wanted) a woman must study up the subjects on which she is to vote and cast her ballot with a personal knowledge of current politics in every detail. She must take it all from her husband, which means that he is thus given two votes instead of one, not equal suffrage, but a double suffrage for the man.

A Man's Place

Home is meant to be a restful place, not agitated by the turmoil of outside struggles. It is man's place to support and defend the family, and so to administer the state that the family shall flourish in peace. He is the outside worker. Woman is the one whose place it is to bear and rear the children who shall later be the citizens of the state. As I have shown, she can, if she wishes, go into man's place in the world for a while. But man can never go into hers. (That proves she is superior, by the way.) He cannot create the home. He is too distracted by outside interests, too tired with his own duties, to create an atmosphere of home. The woman who makes the mistake of trying to do his work and hers too, cannot create a home atmosphere, either. She cannot be in two places at

once. I have known even one outside charity become so absorbing in its demands on a woman's time and thought that her children felt the difference, and knew and dreaded the day of the monthly meeting, and the incessant call of the telephone. There are certain times in a wife and mother's life, such as children's illnesses, the need of care for an over-worked husband, the crisis of some temptation or wrong tendency in a child's life, and so on, when all outside interests must abdicate before the family ones, and be shut out for a while. The vote, which means public life, does not fit into the ideal of family life. The woman who is busy training a family is doing her public service right in the home. She cannot be expected to be in two places at the same time, doing the work of the state as the man does.

Individualism and Family Life

The individualism of woman, in these modern days, is a threat to the family. There is one divorce in America nowadays to every dozen marriages. There are thousands of young women who crowd into factory or mill or office in preference to home duties. There is an impatience of ties and responsibilities, a restlessness, a fever for "living one's own life," that is unpleasantly noticeable. The desire for the vote is part of this restlessness, this grasping for power that shall have no responsibility except to drop a paper into a ballot box, this ignorant desire to do "the work of the world" instead of one's own appointed work. If women had conquered their own part of life perfectly, one might wish to see them thus leave it and go forth to set the world to rights. But on the contrary, never were domestic conditions so badly attended to. Until woman settles the servant question, how can she ask to run the government?

This brings us to the third point, which is, the effect on the state of a vote for women. Let us keep in mind, always, that in America we cannot argue about municipal suffrage, or taxpaying suffrage, or limited suffrage of any kind—"to one end they must all come," that of unrestricted woman suffrage, white and colored, illiterate and collegebred alike having the ballot. America recognizes no other way. Do not get the mistaken idea—which the suffragists cleverly present all the while—that the English system of municipal or restricted suffrage, or the Danish system, or any other system, is like ours. It is *not*. Other countries have restricted forms of suffrage by which individual women can be sorted out, so to speak. But America has equal manhood suffrage ingrained in her very state, in her very law. Once begin to give the suffrage to women, and there is but one end in this country. The question is always with us, "What effect will unrestricted female suffrage have on the state?" We must answer that question or beg the subject.

One thing sure—the women's vote would be an indifferent one. The majority of women do not want to vote—even the suffragists acknowledge that. Therefore, if given the vote, they would not be eager voters. There would be a number of highly enthusiastic suffrage voters—for a while. But when the coveted privilege became a commonplace, or even an irksome duty, the stay-at-home vote would grow larger and larger. The greatest trouble in politics today is the indifferent vote among men. Equal suffrage would add a larger indifferent vote among women.

D*

Disagree



Agree

1. It gives women a position of increased dignity and influence. On this point I will quote from . . . people whose word has weight in our own land and abroad.

Miss Margaret Long, daughter of the ex-Secretary of the Navy, who has resided for years in Denver, has written: "It seems impossible to me that any one can live in Colorado long enough to get into touch with the life here, and not realize that women count for more in all the affairs of this State than they do where they have not the power that the suffrage gives. More attention is paid to their wishes, and much greater weight given to their opinions and judgment."

Mrs. K.A. Sheppard, President of the New Zealand Council of Women, says: "Since women have become electors, their views have become important and command respect. Men listen to and are influenced by the opinions of women to a far greater degree than was the case formerly. There is no longer heard the contemptuous 'What do women know of such matters?' And so out of the greater civil liberty enjoyed by women has come a perceptible rise in the moral and humanitarian tone of the community. A young New Zealander in his teens no longer regards his mother as belonging to a sex that must be kept within a prescribed sphere. That the lads and young men of a democracy should have their whole conception of the rights of humanity broadened and

measured by truer standards is in itself an incalculable benefit."

Mrs. A. Watson Lister, Secretary of the Woman's National Council of Australia, says: "One striking result of equal suffrage is that members of Parliament now consult us as to their bills, when these bear upon the interests of women. The author of the new divorce bill asked all the women's organizations to come together and hear him read it, and make criticisms and suggestions. I do not remember any such thing happening before, in all my years in Australia. When a naturalization bill was pending, one clause of which deprived Australian women of citizenship if they married aliens, a few women went privately to the Prime Minister and protested, and that clause was altered immediately. After we had worked for years with members of Parliament for various reforms, without avail, because we had no votes, you cannot imagine the difference it makes."

Ex-Premier Alfred Deakin, of the Commonwealth of Australia, says: "There is now a closer attention paid in Parliament to matters especially affecting the [feminine] sex or interesting them."

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Agree

Improving the Laws

2. It leads to improvements in the laws. No one can speak more fitly of this than Judge Lindsey, of the Denver Juvenile Court. He writes: "We have in Colorado the most advanced laws of any State in the Union for the care and protection of the home and the children, the very foundation of the Republic. We owe this more to woman suffrage than to any one cause. It does not take any mother from her home duties to spend ten minutes in going to the polls, casting her vote, and returning to the bosom of her home; but during those ten minutes she wields a power which is doing more to protect that home, and all other homes, than any other power or influence in Colorado."

Mrs. Helen L. Grenfell, of Denver, served three terms as State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Colorado, and is highly esteemed by educators throughout the State. She introduced in Colorado the system of leasing instead of selling the lands set apart by the Government for the support of the public schools, thereby almost doubling the annual revenue available for education. Mrs. Grenfell was appointed by the Governor to represent Colorado at the Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance at Amsterdam last summer. In her report to that Congress she enumerated a long list of improved laws obtained in Colorado since women were granted the ballot, and added: "Delegates of the Interparliamentary Union who visited different parts of the United States for the purpose of studying American institutions declared concerning our group of laws relating to child life in its various aspects of education, home, and labor, that

'they are the sanest, most humane, most progressive, most scientific laws relating to the child to be found on any statute-books in the world.'"

Wyoming, many years ago, passed a law that women teachers in the public schools should receive the same pay as men when the work done is the same. The news that Utah had granted full suffrage to women was quickly followed by the announcement of the passage of a bill providing that women teachers should have equal pay with men when they held certificates of the same grade. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Colorado says: "There is no difference made in teachers' salaries on account of sex."



Agree

Women's Influence

3. Women can bring their influence to bear on legislation more quickly and with less labor by the direct method than by the indirect. In Massachusetts the suffragists worked for fifty-five years before they succeeded in getting a law making mothers equal guardians of their minor children with the fathers. After half a century of effort by indirect influence, only twelve out of our forty-six States have taken similar action. In Colorado, when the women were enfranchised, the very next Legislature passed such a bill.

4. Equal suffrage often leads to the defeat of bad candidates. This is conceded even by Mr. A. Lawrence Lewis, whose article in *The Outlook* against woman suffrage in Colorado has been reprinted by the anti-suffragists as a tract. He says:

"Since the extension of the franchise to women, political parties have learned the inadvisability of nominating for public offices drunkards, notorious libertines, gamblers, retail liquor dealers, and men who engage in similar discredited occupations, because the women almost always vote them down." During the fifteen years since equal suffrage was granted no saloon-keeper has been elected to the Board of Aldermen in Denver. Before that it was very common. I quote . . . from Governor Shafroth, of Colorado: "Women's presence in politics has introduced an independent element which compels better nominations."

Ex-Chief Justice Fisher, of Wyoming, says: "If the Republicans nominate a bad man and the Democrats a good one, the Republican women do not hesitate a moment to 'scratch' the bad and substitute the good. It is just so with the Democrats."

Ex-Governor Hunt, of Idaho: "The woman vote has compelled not only State conventions, but more particularly county conventions, of both parties to select the cleanest and best material for public office."

And quoting once more from Judge Lindsey, of Denver: "One of the greatest advantages from woman suffrage is the fear on the part of the machine politicians to nominate men of immoral character. While many bad men have been elected in spite of woman

suffrage, they have not been elected because of woman suffrage. If the women alone had a vote, it would result in a class of men in public office whose character for morality, honesty, and courage would be of a much higher order."

3 The recent re-election of Judge Lindsey by the mothers of Denver, against the opposition of both the political machines, is only a striking instance of what has happened in a multitude of less conspicuous cases in the various enfranchised States.

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Agree

5. Equal suffrage broadens women's minds, and leads them to take a more intelligent interest in public affairs. President Slocum, of Colorado College, Enos A. Mills, the forestry expert, Mrs. Decker, and many others, bear witness to this. The Hon. W.E. Mullen, Attorney-General of Wyoming, who went there opposed to woman suffrage and has been converted, writes: "It stimulates interest and study, on the part of women, in public affairs. Questions of public interest are discussed in the home. As the mother, sister, or teacher of young boys, the influence of woman is very great. The more she knows about the obligations of citizenship, the more she is able to teach the boys." A leading bookseller of Denver says he sold more books on political economy in the first eight months after women were given the ballot than he had sold in fifteen years before.

6. It makes elections and political meetings more orderly. The Hon. John W. Kingman, of the Wyoming Supreme Court, says: "In caucus discussions the presence of a few ladies is worth a whole squad of police."

7. It makes it easier to secure liberal appropriations for educational and humanitarian purposes. In Colorado the schools are not scrimped for money, as they are in the older and richer States. So say Mrs. Grenfell, General Irving Hale, and others.

8. It opens to women important positions now closed to them because they are not electors. Throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, and a considerable part of Europe, a host of women are rendering admirable service to the community in offices from which women in America are still debarred.

9. It increases the number of women chosen to such offices as are already open to them. Thus, in Colorado women were eligible as county superintendents of schools before their enfranchisement; but when they obtained the ballot the number of women elected to those positions showed an immediate and large increase.

10. It raises the average of political honesty among the voters. Judge Lindsey says: "Ninety-nine per cent of our election frauds are committed by men."

11. It tends to modify a too exclusively commercial view of public affairs. G.W. Russell, Chairman of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, New Zealand, writes: "Prior to women's franchise the distinctive feature of our politics was finance. Legislative proposals were regarded almost entirely from the point of view of (1) What would they cost? and (2) What would be their effect from a commercial standpoint? The woman's view is not pounds nor pence, but her home, her family. In order to win her vote, the politicians had to look at public matters from her point of view. Her ideal was not merely money, but happy homes and a fair chance in life for her husband, her intended husband, and her present or prospective family."