

*Woman Suffrage*

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# Woman and the Suffrage

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# WOMAN AND THE SUFFRAGE<sup>1</sup>

## I—THE ASSAULT ON WOMANHOOD

**I**F I believed that the suffrage was the right of women, or would protect their rights, or would promote their interests, I should ardently favor it. For I seek to represent, and I believe that I do represent, a great silent constituency—the wives, the mothers, the daughters, who neither strive nor cry, and whose voice is not heard in the streets. If I fail in my undertaking, I ask their indulgence to one who, as son, husband, and father, has a triple reason to give them honor.

I am an advocate of woman's rights: her right to an open door to every vocation, her right to a fair opportunity for the highest and broadest education, her right to do whatever she can do and be whatever she can become; her right to determine her own appropriate sphere, not to have it determined for her by a lord and master; her right to be left free to follow the bent of her own divinely endowed nature, unchecked by vexatious restrictions, uncoerced by the presence of needless economic necessity, undiverted by the ill-judged appeals or the unfeminine sneers of her mistakenly ambitious sisters.

The book of Genesis gives two accounts of the creation of man, one in the first, the other in the second chapter. One represents man first made and woman added to be his helper and his subject. The other represents man and woman made in one act of creation, equally in the image of God, equally his children. What is popularly known as the Woman's Movement is a movement from one of these conceptions to the other—from the conception that woman was made as an afterthought to be a helpmeet to man, to the conception that neither alone, but both together, constitute the image of God. John Stuart Mill's monograph on "The Subjection of Woman," published in the first half of the nineteenth century, at once describes and interprets this movement.

<sup>1</sup> These two papers comprise in substance an address delivered December 4, 1908, by Lyman Abbott, in New York City, before the National League for the Civic Education of Women.

It was a necessary corollary to the awakening passion for liberty in France, England, and America. Under the inspiring leadership of noble, though possibly not always wise, men and women, it has achieved great things, not only for women, but for the human race. It has removed old and hampering legal restrictions. It has furnished much-needed protection to the wife from the cruelty of a sometimes brutal husband. It has opened the door to all—or nearly all—forms of productive industry, whether professional or manual. It has secured for woman the right to the best education and opened to her the doors to the great educational institutions. And, above all, it has brought society, and pre-eminently American society, to recognize the fundamental fact that she is not a mere upper servant of man's household, not merely a cheaply paid nurse-maid of his children, not merely a vivacious parlor ornament for his home, not merely a minister to either his sensual pleasure or his spiritual repose; but a divinely endowed child of God, no more man's servant than man is her servant, no more created for him than he is created for her—she created for herself as truly as he is created for himself; each created for the other, both for God. The old resistance to this movement has disappeared; the old arguments against it are forgotten, or, like some ancient hieroglyphs, are regarded only as curiosities in literature. If there are any who desire to go back to the priestly conception of woman as a divine afterthought created to be the helpmeet of man, I am not one of them. My conception of the origin, function, and nature of woman, and of her relation to her divinely appointed comrade and her God, is all summed up in the words of the ancient Hebrew poet: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." It is summed up in the words of the modern English poet:

"Nor equal, nor unequal; each fulfills  
Defect in each, and always thought in  
thought,



Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-celled heart beating with one full  
stroke,  
Life."

But no great movement in the world's history has been free from extravagances and excesses. The Reformation was accompanied by an individualism in religion from the baleful effects of which in sectarian divisions the Church still suffers. The democratic uprising in the eighteenth century was accompanied by a political tendency toward anarchism which still enfeebles and sometimes paralyzes government and begets lawlessness alike in rich and in poor. The revolt against feudalism in the nineteenth century begat a spirit of selfish competition which sometimes today converts co-operative commerce into industrial war. It is not, therefore, strange that the movement for the emancipation of woman has been accompanied by extravagances which constitute nothing less than an assault on womanhood. And this assault is the more dangerous to society not only because it is always veiled behind fine phrases, but also because it has among its leaders women prompted by noble motives.

But neither the phrases nor the leadership should blind us to certain vicious tendencies.

From the premiss that marriage is sometimes a species of bondage, reformers have concluded that it should be abolished. Divorce laws, originated to protect women from unhappy marriages, permit the dissolution of the marriage tie for any excuse or for none at all. Men have been divorced from their wives because the wife failed to sew on the husband's shirt buttons; women from their husbands because the husband did not take his wife to ride.<sup>1</sup> In at least one State the parties could be divorced whenever the judge thought they could not live happily together, and the courts usually left them to decide that question. As a divorce decree in one State is presumably binding in all, marriage in America has come perilously near marriage in pagan Rome, in which a husband or a wife could dismiss the other party to the contract as easily as in America a man can dismiss a gardener or a woman a cook;

<sup>1</sup> See "Jesus Christ and Social Problems," Chap. V, pp. 156, 157.

and there was no trade union to protect either party from unjust dismissal. How far this dissolution of the marriage tie has been carried is indicated by the fact that nearly a million divorces were granted in the United States during the last twenty years, that is, 1,000 every week, or an average of 140 every day.<sup>1</sup>

This is not, however, liberty enough for our extreme reformers. Experimental marriage has been seriously proposed by one writer on the family, to be followed, after a year of trial, by a more abiding union or by separation and a new experiment. It is just to this writer to say that she does not advocate this reform, but intimates that it might be better than the present practice. Some of the disciples of Socialism go still further. They would abolish *meum* and *tuum* altogether from the family as well as from the market, and would allow no man to say *my* wife and no woman to say *my* husband. Free as the birds of the air? Freer; for the naturalists tell us that the birds live loyally with their mates in spite of occasional bickerings.

Nor can these views of liberty be lightly dismissed as those of cranks and faddists. Said Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1853: "A union of souls alone constitutes and sanctifies true marriage, and any law or public sentiment that forces two immortal, high-born souls to live together as husband and wife, unless held there by love, is false to God and humanity."

It is not, however, enough to free the wife from obligation to her husband, but the mother must also be free from obligations to the children. One popular woman lecturer, whose special ideal is the economic independence of women, argues for the millennial time when the wife will go to the office, store, or factory with her husband, to earn her wage as he earns his, while the children are put into an asylum or refuge, to be cared for by experts. Statistics have conclusively shown that the death rate among orphans cared for by experts in asylums is greater than among the same class of orphans when adopted, under supervision, into

<sup>1</sup> The exact figures for the twenty years 1887-1906, inclusive, were 945,625, nearly two-thirds more than in the preceding twenty years, when the number was 328,716. See Special Census Report, spring of 1907.

private homes. The number of children in orphan asylums is insignificant compared with those in homes; but a recently published report in New York City shows that over forty per cent of the children in our reformatories come from orphan asylums. But when did a doctrinaire ever care for facts? The opening of all vocations to women has been followed by an inrush of women into industrial competition with men. Some find in this enlarged liberty an escape from what would otherwise be helpless poverty or ill-paid drudgery. They rightly welcome this relief from the conditions which Hood celebrated by his "Song of the Shirt." Some leave the mother to carry on unaided the daily routine of the household that they may earn pocket money for their unæsthetic luxuries. Some eke out the too scanty earnings of the husband by their own. Some—and these not a few—have crowded out the better paid work of their husbands and brothers, whose place as wage-earners they have taken, but who are quite incompetent to take the woman's place as home-builder. This competition in the labor market of women essaying the tasks which men formerly performed occasionally introduces into modern civilization old barbaric conditions. Landing at St. Thomas in the West Indies to take on coal, we watched the negro women carrying the coal in baskets from the yard to the steamer, while their husbands either took the lighter task of filling the emptied baskets or idly watched with hands in pockets their economically independent wives do the work for both. I am told that the supercilious negro with high hat, kid gloves, and fancy cane, whom one more than occasionally meets upon the city street, is generally supported by some woman wage-earner, and that in the cotton mills of Massachusetts it is not infrequently the case that the woman is the wage-earner, while the man idly potters at home doing ill the woman's work. One result of this inrush into masculine employments by women has been a real and serious increase in the death rate among women. In spite of generally improved sanitary conditions and a generally decreasing death rate in the population, the mortality among women, at least in the city of New York, has increased at an

appalling rate.<sup>1</sup> I would not close one single door of industry to woman. I would not deny her industrial freedom. But I marvel at the shortsightedness of economic reformers who glorify woman's incursion into the ranks of clerical and manual employment as her coronation, and imagine that a solution of our labor problem will ever come from a process which incites or drives the prospective wife and mother to underbid in the labor market her husband and her son, and pay for doing so by impairing her health and shortening her life.

I deny the economic independence of women, because I deny the economic independence of men. Economic independence is the hazy dream of an unintelligent doctrinaire. It has no existence except as a phrase on the pages of a book. The railway president is economically dependent on the trainmen; the trainmen are economically dependent on the president. The husband who works at the factory is economically dependent on the wife who works to prepare their meals at home. If they both go to the factory to work, they will become economically dependent on some one else whom they have hired to prepare the meal. We are all economically interdependent; the rich as much so as the poor, the men as much so as the women. The ambition for economic independence which drives the wife and mother from the home to the factory simply substitutes an interdependence purely economical for one that was inspired and sweetened by love.

While some so-called reformers are seeking, in the name of domestic emancipation, not to protect women in the family, but to dissolve the family, and other reformers, in the name of economic inde-

<sup>1</sup> The following table, quoted from a report of the Register of Records of the Health Department of Manhattan and the Bronx, I clip from the New York Tribune of December 7, 1908:

CIRCULATING DISEASES				CANCEROUS DISEASES			
Ages.	1868.	1907.		Ages.	1868.	1907.	
15-19 .....	.19	.58		35-44 .....	.75	1.22	
20-24 .....	.42	.45		45-54 .....	1.54	3.24	
25-29 .....	.51	.60		55-64 .....	3.13	5.34	
30-34 .....	.82	1.03		65 and over ..	4.86	6.90	
35-44 .....	.75	1.71					
45-54 .....	1.05	3.17					
55-64 .....	2.12	8.03		URINARY DISEASES			
65 and over ..	4.57	23.40		35-44 .....	1.19	1.34	
				45-54 .....	1.27	2.60	
RESPIRATORY DISEASES				55-64 .....	1.24	4.91	
45-54 .....	1.96	2.37		65 and over ..	3.70	12.57	
55-64 .....	4.72	6.65					
65 and over ..	14.59	20.85					



pendence, are not merely demanding that all industrial doors shall be open to her, but are glorifying the industrial conditions which drive her reluctant feet to tasks in the field, the factory, and the mine, which she abhors, still other reformers, or the same, in the name of equality, are demanding that men shall put upon her burdens from which hitherto, by the universal consent of Christendom, she has been exempt. The phrase "right of suffrage" is a misphrase. Suffrage is an obligation; it is a right only as it is the right of every person to fulfill the obligation which is justly devolved upon him. The question of woman suffrage is not, Shall the women who wish to vote be allowed to do so? If that were the question, it might be adequately answered by the proposal of an ingenious friend of mine who suggests that the men who do not wish to vote assign their rights to the women who do wish to vote. There would be more than enough of unused masculine ballots to supply all the feminine demand. The real question is, Shall women be required to assume the duties and responsibilities of public life? It is certain that the majority of women have at present no desire to do so. Property-owning women and mothers can vote in school elections in New York State. It is authentically estimated that about two per cent of them do so vote. In 1895 the women of Massachusetts were asked if they wished the ballot. Less than five per cent desired it. The other ninety-five per cent were either opposed to the suffrage or indifferent. In Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Oregon, recent movements for woman's suffrage have been defeated because of the opposition of women. In at least eleven other States similar defeats may be justly attributed to similar opposition. That women vote in States where they possess the suffrage proves only that they will conscientiously endeavor to fulfill any obligation which is imposed upon them. Mr. Taft and Mr. Hughes are both reported as saying that they are in favor of woman suffrage when the women want it. So am I. So are the great majority of men. Whatever ills might come from woman suffrage would be insignificant compared with the ills which would come from a great body of women, discontented because they thought them-

selves denied a right by men who desired to keep them in subjection.

The question of woman suffrage is therefore really one for the women themselves to determine. Whenever they wish the suffrage they will have the suffrage. At present they do not wish it. A few shrieking suffragettes are eager for it because they have entered the fray and want a victory. Some ambitious women are eager for it as an evidence of their political equality. Some philanthropic women believe that with the ballot they could accomplish moral and industrial reforms which now they can urge but not command. Some wage-earning women wish for the ballot as a symbol which they believe would secure for them in their vocation greater respect. These reformers have made their voices heard in the halls of legislation. The great body of silent women have until recently been without representation. The majority of these silent women pay as little attention to the advocates of woman suffrage as they would to the appeals of a recruiting sergeant in time of war seeking to form a regiment of amazons. They are so averse to public life that they will not even publicly protest against an endeavor to force them into public life. A few are really perplexed by the specious plea for political equality and by passionate appeals to their conscience to come to the help of the weak and the oppressed. The hysterical appeals of the suffragettes, the unfeminine appeals of the masculine women who wish that God had made them men, we may wisely disregard. I, for one, will not argue with them. But the serious-minded appeals to reason and conscience by serious-minded women who believe that the ballot in the hands of woman would elevate and educate her and would help to purify and redeem society deserve our serious consideration. To them and to their arguments, and to these alone, I address myself.

Equality applied to the sexes is as much a misphrase as economic independence. Women are not equal to men; men are not equal to women. Equality and inequality are alike inapplicable to beings who possess different natures, to organs which possess different functions. Are the lungs equal to the heart? Is a

yard-stick shorter or longer than half an hour? There was once a Joan of Arc. But no one would affirm that women make as good soldiers as men. I once knew a woman who could by her unaided strength lift a flour-barrel and put it on a wagon. But the steamship companies do not expect women to make good long-shoremen. There are required in the hospitals some men nurses. But all physicians agree that, save where exceptional strength is needed, men are not equal as professional nurses to women. I have known a widowed father who cared for his motherless children, and did it well—for a man. But they were still motherless.

"She sets herself to man

Like perfect music unto noble words."

Which is superior in a song—the words or the music?

The question of woman suffrage is not

a question of equality. It is a question of function.<sup>1</sup> The voters of America govern America. The ballot is a command. Do the women of America desire to take an active part in the government of America? Do they wish to command? I think not. And I will have no part nor lot in the endeavor to compel them to assume this duty which they do not wish to assume. Ought they to wish to take an active part in the government of America? Ought they to wish to command—their brothers, their husbands, their sons, or other women? I think not. And I will have no part nor lot in the endeavor to persuade them to do so. For they have a far greater function to perform, a far greater service to render, and one with which falsely called economic independence and falsely called political equality, if brought about, would tragically interfere.

## II—THE PROFESSION OF MOTHERHOOD

WHAT is the end of life? For what purpose are we in this world? A brief consideration of the course of life answers that vital question. A little child is born, grows up to manhood, marries his chosen mate, children are born to them, they give to these children the benefit of their knowledge and experience of life, train them to take advantage of its opportunities and fulfill its obligations. These children in turn marry and have children. The grandparents linger a little while to have the pleasures of the second generation of children without the responsibility of caring for them, and then go out into the unknown world that lies beyond. Generation after generation this process is repeated. We enter one door of life, pass through its educational experiences, and make our exit at the other. The end of life is the rearing and training of children into manhood and womanhood. It is the building of character. If you believe, with me, in personal immortality, then you will believe that this character-building is for some life of unknown splendor beyond the grave. If you believe, with the Positivist, only in a social immortality, still you will believe that this character-building

is the end of life, though its issue be a social order in some unknown future of the earth. In either case the object of life is the development of manhood and womanhood.

That this process may be carried on, the fathers and mothers and children must be fed and clothed and sheltered. So material industries are organized—agriculture, manufactures, commerce. They must learn the laws of nature and human nature with which they have to deal; for this purpose the higher institutions of learning are organized. Questions of mutual right and mutual obligation will arise between them which must be peacefully settled, by arbitration; hence laws and courts of justice. They will be threatened at times by wrong-doers within the community or by other communities foreign to their own; hence domestic government, hence also armies and navies. They must not only be equipped with intelligence but inspired with noble motives; hence the institutions of religion. But

<sup>1</sup> "I believe that man and woman should stand on an equality of right, but I do not believe that equality of right means equality of function; and I am more and more convinced that the great field, the indispensable field, for the usefulness of woman is as the mother of the family."—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.



all institutions, religious, military, political, judicial, educational, industrial, are tributary to the work of character-building, to the education and development of children into a divine manhood and womanhood.

In this work of character-building the mother takes the first place. The child in its plastic condition is given to her to mold, to fashion, to instruct, and to inspire. The teacher in the primary and secondary schools takes the second place. She is a kind of second mother, supplementing and continuing the mother's work. If in this great complex organization which we call life, in which every function is essential to the completed result, one work can be called more important than another, then the most important work in life is that of the mother in the home, and the second most important work in life is that of the teacher in the primary and secondary schools, the teacher of childhood. If in this complex organization which we call life, in which every organ is essential to the highest and best result, one organ can be called more important than another, then far more important than the army and navy, than Congress or court, than church or university, is the home; far more vital to the ultimate issues of life is the work of the woman than the work of the man. For, in spite of the modern tendencies of women to enter into competition with their brothers in bread-winning industries, the great majority of women are still engaged, in one form or another, as mothers or teachers, or as assisting aunts and sisters, or as co-operators in nursing, or in domestic service, in the work of the home and the childhood schools. Ninety per cent of men are bread-winners; twenty per cent of women are bread-winners, and if from this twenty per cent are deducted those engaged in teaching, in domestic service, and in kindred capacities, the proportion would be considerably lessened. Now comes the reformer under the guise of economic independence, demanding that the wife shall leave her home and intrust her children to specialists, and go with her husband to the office or to the factory, and under the guise of political equality that she shall leave her home and go to the halls of legislature and to the courts of justice, or otherwise enter the arena of public

life. In other words, professing to honor womanhood and emancipate woman, it is proposed that, instead of making men and women, she shall devote herself to making things or to performing sentinel duty, while the task of making men and women is intrusted to others. This claim of the extremists among the so-called reformers may be dismissed with scant courtesy. It is as true to-day as when the Song of Songs was written that love is stronger than ambition; and the attempt to divert women from the work of the home to less noble vocations, when openly avowed, will be made in vain.

But more subtle is the proposition to add to the responsibilities of maintaining sweet and pure and inspirational the homes where children are trained, and the supplemental work of the school-room and the sick-room, the added responsibilities of governing and administering the State.

This claim is defended on two grounds. The first is that the work of the home does not give sufficient scope for woman's activities; that it leaves her many hours for useless idleness and pernicious pleasures. I resent in the name of the mothers and wives of America this slanderous charge. The wives and mothers of America do not have idle hours and are not given over to pernicious pleasures. That there are idle, pleasure-seeking women is true; that they are more in number than the idle and pleasure-seeking men, or that their idleness or pleasure-seeking is worse, is not true. The home woman is industrious with an industry that knows nothing of an eight-hour day; she bears her burdens with a patience which is the admiration and the inspiration of her husband; she carries her cares with a songful cheerfulness which he cannot comprehend; she meets the perils which assail him or her children as well as herself with a courage which inspires in him an imitative heroism; and if, with it all, she maintains, as she often does, a spirit of repose, it is not the repose of idleness, but of a self-conscious and divinely inspired faith and hope.

The other defense for laying on women the added burdens of political responsibilities is that those burdens are light and can be lightly carried. "It is only," I have heard the advocate of wo-

man's suffrage say, "to cast a ballot in a box once a year." Let us not be deceived by any such elusive depreciation of political responsibilities. Politics is the science of government, and government is the exercise of a dominant will over other wills. Every election is in reality, not merely in name, a campaign. It is a conflict, not of opinions, but of wills. The Democratic ballot says, It is my will that Mr. Bryan be President and that the Government guarantee bank deposits; the Republican ballot says, It is my will that Mr. Taft be President and that the Government does not guarantee bank deposits. The proposal of woman suffrage is not merely that woman shall exercise influence in State and National affairs—she does that now and does it effectively—but that she shall enter into this conflict of wills, become a part of this campaign, assert her will as a dominant one over other resistant or reluctant wills. It means that she shall enter public life, and, what is more important, it means that public life shall enter her.

In a democracy, government is necessarily by parties. The most independent of the independents can exert an influence in politics only as, for the time being, he identifies himself with one party or the other by his ballot. If woman is to become a power in the political organization, she must identify herself in her feelings, her words, and her public actions with some political organization. She must not only know political questions, she must feel party emotions. How will this affect her work in the school-room? Will her influence for all that is highest and best and purest in life be enhanced with her Democratic children if they know her as a Republican, or with her Republican children if they know her as a Democrat? Will her authority be increased if it collides, on the great questions of the day, not merely with the opinion but with the authority of the mothers of the children? How will it affect the home? Either she will accept her husband's will and make it her own, in which case her vote will simply duplicate his, or the conflicts of the political campaign will enter the home and the loyalty of the children and their reverence for their parents will be perplexed and

strained. In heated political campaigns the husband will be more saintly than most men are if he patiently endures seeing his wife neutralized by her ballot the ballot which he has cast himself, and the strain will be the greater if he sees his neighbor, thanks to his wife's loyalty or to her subservience, casting two votes against his neutralized vote. This, I think, is what Mr. Bryce means when he says, in his "American Commonwealth," "To a European observer the question means one rather of social than of political importance," and adds that such misgivings as he entertains are not of a political nature. The arguments for laying upon woman the responsibilities and duties of the administration of the State and calling her to take active part in that conflict of wills from which she has hitherto been exempted must be strong indeed if they are to overcome her inherent distaste, confirmed and ratified as it is by these social considerations. In point of fact, they are not strong. Specious they may be, but they are inconclusive.

In my study of the suffrage movement, and it has been a subject of study with me for fifty years past, I have discovered but five arguments in support of this revolutionary demand.

It is claimed that the suffrage is a natural right, as much so as the rights of person and of property, and that we must do justice though the heavens fall. The notion that suffrage is a natural right is a relic of the French Revolution which has not survived in political philosophy the doctrinaires who gave birth to it. The rights of person are absolute and unconditioned. Whatever his age and condition, the child has a right to his life—killing the unborn infant is murder; his right to his property is absolute and unconditioned—if he is not old enough to administer it himself, a guardian is appointed, or his natural guardian is intrusted with its keeping and its care. But the right of suffrage is always determined by the community which grants it; it depends upon an age artificially determined on, upon a residence artificially defined. The would-be voter must have resided in the Nation a certain number of years, in the State a certain number of months, in the District a certain number of days.



In some States he must have an educational qualification, in others a property qualification, and in others he must have paid taxes. But the payment of taxes does not give him a right to vote. He may pay taxes in every State in the Union, and in every county of the State, but he can vote only in one county of one State. Suffrage is a prerogative conferred by the community and conditioned when it is conferred. A man has no more natural right to vote in a political campaign than he has to vote in a State Legislature.

It is claimed that women must be given the suffrage to protect themselves from the injuries inflicted on them by men. I confess that this claim arouses my indignation. To set class against class is bad, to set race against race is worse, to set religion against religion is even more perilous; but to set sex against sex is a degradation so deep that political polemics can no further go. That a hundred years ago women suffered under legal limitations which worked injustice is undoubtedly true. Some of them were framed for women's protection; others of them were a relic of an earlier barbarism. Both have disappeared with advancing civilization. All lawyers know that the prejudice of all juries and of many judges is in favor of woman in any case in which a woman is involved. All legislators know that a woman's lobby is a most difficult one to resist. If there are any disabilities under which women still suffer because they are women, I venture to affirm that a common appeal by women would invariably and quickly bring their repeal. I do not forget the appeal made last year by the teachers of New York City for a law requiring equal wages for equal work. But it was not an appeal by woman for woman; it was an appeal by a special class for that class. It was rightly vetoed by the Governor, for it violated the fundamental principle which has prevailed throughout the State of New York and, I believe, throughout all other States, according to which the details of school administration are left to the district in which the schools are situated; and it was irrational, because no man can exert a woman's influence and no woman can exert a man's influence in the school-room,

so that neither can do the other's work. That the suffrage is not necessary to protect woman against the oppressions of man is strikingly illustrated by a recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in which it was decided that a law limiting the hours of woman's labor in the factory is constitutional and that she has a special right to protection by the law because of her special disadvantages, a right which the man working at her side does not possess.

This decision, rendered by a masculine court, upon briefs presented by masculine lawyers, serves to furnish at least an illustrative reply to those who contend that woman's suffrage is necessary to benefit the condition of woman wage-earners. Whatever legislation can accomplish for women wage-earners, this decision makes clear, can be accomplished under present conditions. What cannot be accomplished by legislation cannot be accomplished by suffrage. I have looked in vain in the publications of the woman suffragists for any facts to show even remotely that political suffrage involves economic gain. It is true that the farm laborers of England obtained the suffrage and afterwards obtained increase of wages, but *post hoc* is not *propter hoc*, nor has any evidence been adduced that the improved industrial conditions were due to the changed political conditions. In our own country it is certain that the industrial condition of the negro under limited suffrage is far better than it was in the reconstruction period under unlimited suffrage, but it would be illogical to claim that the limitation of the suffrage has promoted economic welfare.

It is also claimed, with what adequacy of evidence I do not know, that wage-earning women desire the ballot, not merely, perhaps not mainly, because it will increase their wage, but because, as a symbol of equality, it would secure for them a greater respect in business dealings with men. The fact that twenty per cent of women are wage-earners and that only five per cent of the women in industrial Massachusetts voted that they wished the suffrage does not confirm this claim. But were it true, what then? Over two-thirds of the wage-earning women in the United States cease to be wage-earners at thirty-five; over half cease to be wage-earners

at twenty-five; that is, wage-earning largely ceases at the marrying age. It would be interesting to know how many of the wage-earning women who want the ballot as a symbol of equality before marriage desire its responsibilities after marriage. Certainly it is clear that those responsibilities should not be imposed on eighty per cent of the women of the United States on a vague suspicion that an unknown proportion of twenty per cent of temporarily employed wage-earners think it might add to their business standing during their temporary engagement in business.

Finally, we are asked to impose the ballot upon women as a means of securing moral reforms which the men are either unwilling or incompetent to accomplish. Perhaps the argument which has been most effective to counterbalance the objection of women to assume the responsibilities of the suffrage has been the argument that they could vote for the abolition of the saloon. In the ancient legend, St. George rescues the maiden from the dragon. I confess that I have small sympathy with the spirit which calls on the maiden to fight the dragon and leaves St. George on the other side of the wall looking on to see how the conflict will terminate. The women who are affected by this argument, and perhaps the women who use it, forget that Hebrew history had a Jezebel as well as a Queen Esther, and European history a Lucretia Borgia and a Catherine de' Medici as well as a Queen Victoria. Vice, ignorance, and superstition are not confined to either sex. Advocates of woman's suffrage aver improvement of conditions in woman suffrage States; opponents of woman's suffrage aver deteriorated conditions in woman suffrage States. Into the contention between these two classes of observers, each of whom probably see what they wish to see, I decline to enter. I accept instead the testimony of such impartial observers as the President of the United States, who has said: "I am unable to see that there has been any special improvement in the position of women in those States in the West that have adopted woman suffrage as compared with those States adjoining them that have not adopted it. I do not think that giving the women suffrage will produce any

marked improvement in the condition of women." I accept the testimony of Mr. Root, in a published letter from him based on his certainly large opportunities for a study of this question: "I do not myself consider that the granting of suffrage to women would, under the existing conditions, be any improvement in our system of government. On the contrary, I think it would rather reduce than increase the electoral efficiency of our people." I accept the testimony of Mr. James Bryce, as disinterested, impartial, and sympathetic an observer of American conditions as America has ever known: "No evidence has come in my way tending to show that politics either in Wyoming or in Washington are in any way purer than in the adjoining States and Territories. The most that seems to be alleged is that they are no worse; or, as the Americans express it, 'Things are very much what they were before, only more so.'" This was published in 1888. It is safe to say that nothing has occurred within the last twenty years materially to change this judgment.<sup>1</sup>

President Roosevelt, in his address before the Mothers' Meeting in Washington in 1905, said: "The primary duty of the husband is to be the home-maker, the breadwinner for his wife and children [and, may I add, to be her protector from violence]; the primary duty of the woman is to be the helpmeet, the housewife and mother." In these words Mr. Roosevelt has gone to the heart of the woman question. The call to woman to leave her duty to take up man's duties is an impossible call. The call on man to impose on woman his duty, in addition to hers, is an unjust call. Fathers, husbands, brothers, speaking for the silent women, I claim for them the right to be exempt in the future from the burden from which they have been exempt in the past. Mothers, wives, sisters, I urge you not to allow yourselves to be enticed into assuming functions for which you have no inclination, by appeals to your spirit of self-sacrifice. Woman's instinct is the star that guides her to her divinely appointed life, and it guides to the manger where an infant is laid.

<sup>1</sup> For Mr. Roosevelt's and Mr. Root's letters see The Outlook for December 19, 1908, p. 849; for Mr. Bryce's testimony see "The American Commonwealth," Vol. III, p. 297.