

THE EMBLEM OF FORCE

THE vote, says the Monocle Man, is the Emblem of Force—why trust the ballot to the hands that lack force? Women have everything else, he admits. "It is folly to argue that mentally, a woman of education cannot cast a more intelligent ballot than the day labourer whom she hires to dig up her garden. But the day labourer would do better work in the trenches; and surely in this terrible time when it is being demonstrated to us that the world is ruled by force, and force alone, we cannot fail to perceive the true character of the ballot box. It is a force meter."

What an extraordinary idea! We have always advocated a brain-test for voters, but it surprised us to see this test for brawn put forward in a progressive paper like the Courier—yet how simple it would be! One of those machines that they have at country fairs would serve the purpose, and anyone who could wield the great hammer and register the required amount of force would be entrusted with the ballot. This would exclude all weaklings and people past the prime of life, no matter how clever they may be, no matter how many years they have devoted to the study of political economy. It would give the vote to thousands of school boys and girls who play hockey and exercise in the gymnasium. It would actually register the nation's potential army; but, applied to Canada, it would be far from accurate as to our actual fighting force, unless conscription were introduced at the same time.

NOW don't for a moment think that this force test would exclude women—far from it! We are quite prepared to admit that the male of the human species has greater force than the female, both physically and mentally, but in view of the fact that 30,000 British women are actually in the war zone acting as nurses, orderlies, army cooks, and motor truck drivers, and that millions of them are making munitions and doing other heavy manual labour to release men for service, it is ridiculous to think that we could register the fighting force of the nation without taking women into consideration.

MALE anti-suffragists are tiresome, but it is difficult to understand why any women should be fiercely opposed to the vote. Most of them are indifferent to it, but there still exist women who are intellectual aristocrats definitely opposed to democracy, who prefer underhand influence to the open vote, who wish to behave nicely to the poor and keep them in their proper place with a firm but gentle hand and by no means accompany them to the polls. Now, which will cast the more intelligent vote—the working-woman, whose daily life is affected by questions such as pure water or rapid transit; the business woman, whose affairs will prosper under tariff reforms, or the wealthy parasite who rolls around in her limousine behaving nicely to the poor?

"Do you believe in woman suffrage?" someone asked a salesgirl.

"Well, I don't know," she said; "I am very much afraid of the ignorant vote."

"Don't you think the working-woman is capable of voting?"

"Oh, yes!" she replied. "It's the leisure class I'm afraid of."

BUT the anti-suffragist is a rare bird these days. His voice is seldom heard in the land. The opposition of Mr. Asquith has heretofore been the greatest obstacle in the way of equal suffrage in

Britain, but the splendid patriotic services of women since hostilities began has wrought such a complete change in his mind that he has publicly announced that any franchise bill must be drafted in contemplation of woman suffrage. In Great Britain women have fought bitterly for the vote; in Australia and New Zealand they had merely to ask for it. The victories of the suffragists in the U. S. A. have been comparatively easy. Already there are four million women voters, chiefly in the Western States, and the tide rolls eastward steadily. In Canada, too, the West leads. In January, 1916, Manitoba extended the franchise to women, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia soon followed, and now it looks very much as if the women of Ontario would be called upon to share the same burden . . . privilege . . . which is it?

SOME will receive the announcement with joy and celebrate a hard-fought victory, others will betray annoyance, and a still greater number will show absolute indifference. But the vote incurs a responsibility. It places us in the governing class

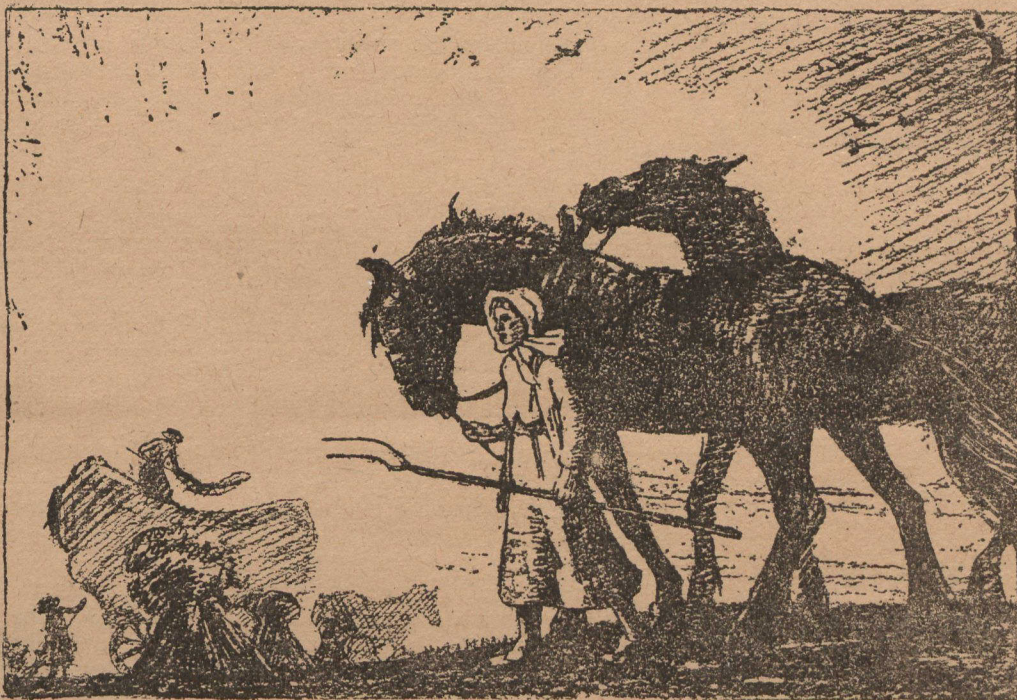
voting expedition, but in vain. Underhand influences had been at work, the government, fearing my deadly power and superior to the bribe of my income tax, had basely removed my name from the voters' list, and I went ignominiously home. Since then I have neither voted nor paid taxes.

ON the one occasion when I exercised the limited franchise, I was assured by the man in charge of the voters' list that I was the only unmarried lady who had voted that day, though several women property owners had cast ballots for the school board. Indeed, he insisted that I was entitled to a vote for the Board of Education and nothing else, though in reality I had the privilege of voting for everything except that. It is difficult for the male mind to grasp these legal subtleties, but I patiently explained the law that governed women's voting privileges in Ontario, where every widow or spinster in receipt of an income of \$400 has equal municipal privileges with men. The district in which I voted was one of comfortable homes and numerous eligible daughters, nearly all of whom possessed the required income, yet here was I—late in the afternoon—the only one who had presented herself at the polls! Perhaps they looked forward to marriage, which would disqualify them from voting, and did not want to acquire the habit.

MOST women may only vote when they are either too young or too old to care about it. At twenty-one few women—or men, either, for that matter—take an interest in politics; and the majority of widows are old or infirm, and having been debarred of this privilege for the greater part of their lives, they ceased to want it. Important elections bring out a larger percentage of voters, and when women were allowed to vote only for minor elections, it was not surprising that they did not turn out in full numbers. To say that women will vote in opposition to men is absurd. There is little real unity amongst us, while the sex attraction which links men and women to-

gether is the strongest thing in the world. It is as ridiculous to suppose that enfranchised women would ever unite to oppose men, as it would be to imagine the blondes all voting one way and the brunettes another. There are some questions touching the home and family, in which women feel more keenly than men, and moral reforms, such as mothers' pensions and the segregation of the feeble-minded, soon follow the enfranchisement of women, because these reforms are also supported by thinking men.

THE enfranchisement of woman is coming; it is impossible to stop it, but it is not a cure-all, for women, alas, are faulty human beings, no better, and no worse, than men. There is a constant complaint that "good men" will not come forward for either parliamentary or municipal office. Are not we women somewhat to blame? Has there not been a certain feeling that "I didn't raise my son to be a politician"? What did we raise him to be—a millionaire? Possibly. In any case, a success. The ideals of true statesmanship have not been sufficiently impressed upon the imaginative youth and the ideal of success has driven into politics men who thought they could "make a good thing out of it." Perhaps the war may bring about a quickening of public interest. It has already developed the ideal of service, and as the brawn of our country is giving its life-force overseas, surely the brains should be given to the responsibilities of government given to us by the ballot.



If the Ballot stands for Force, surely these women should vote.

instead of the governed, and while we have all been taught how free and glorious is a democratic government, we have not been instructed in our responsibility in this line. We should no longer stand aside and criticize the government, saying **THEY** do this and **THEY** do that. We must remember that it is **WE** who elect our representatives, **WE** who govern.

A WOMAN who is about to become a mother may think it will be very jolly to have a baby, but she must also consider her personal responsibility; and women about to be entrusted with half the power of Federal government should not consider it lightly. A kind of holy joy should, I think, be the proper emotion, but we can't all manage to feel it. Personally, I find it difficult. To be recognized as the equal of **MAN** does not elate me. Since our most gallant souls have gone to the front I have been treated to no end of equalities (like the privilege of standing in the street cars), and the idea of casting a ballot does not cheer me. I did cast one once at a municipal election, having gone to a good deal of trouble to register. It cost me seven dollars in income tax and there was little choice between the aldermanic candidates; but having once registered as a voter, I determined manfully to continue. The next year my voter's notification did not arrive. I telephoned a complaint to the City Hall, and they assured me that the card must have gone astray, so on New Year's day I accompanied the family on its