

Can Women Ever Get the Franchise?

By THE MONOCLE MAN

THE visit of Mrs. Pankhurst to Canada has created something of an interest in the woman suffrage question—a topic not very “live” with us except when we are temporarily stirred up by outside agitators. It may be more correct to say, perhaps, that our people have been interested to know what could be said in defence of the astonishing “Suffragette” tactics in England, where they seem to have about succeeded in finally killing all chances that woman suffrage will carry. Still they resemble a “sporting event”; and our people have never been accused of lacking interest in “sport.” They seem to be a sort of glorified “scrimmage,” with the “female team” made up of members of the aristocracy. I have not heard Mrs. Pankhurst, as I write; but I am told that she is a very gentle, refined and cultured lady, not at all like the virago the antics of her party would lead you to expect; and, in some curious fashion, this is taken by some people as practically cancelling the effect of the antics.

HOWEVER, there is no question of the ladylike character of many of the “Suffragettes.” I know one myself—a Canadian—who is a perfect gentle-woman. Yet I haven’t the least doubt that, in her devotion to a holy cause, she would smash a policeman on the nose with a stocking full of stones, and be all the time tremendously sorry that the innocent policeman and his still more innocent wife simply must, MUST be sacrificed. We have, however, quite a number of Suffragists in this country who deplore the tactics of their sisters, while holding sincerely that the suffrage should be given to women. They insist, too—like Mr. Lloyd-George—that the movement should not be damned because it is supported by a few crazy advocates. There is, however, a very close connection between the objection to “Suffragettes” and the objection to woman suffrage itself which these people seem to miss. The objection to the “Suffragette” movement at bottom is simply this—The women are trying to employ an “argument” which all masculine suffrage movements have employed with great success, but which women do not properly possess; and that is the “argument” of Force. If women could really marshal Force on their side, few would deny that a display of that final arbiter was the best method of getting their way. But the truth is women have every other weapon in the arsenal, except Force; and for her to demand the franchise by Force is as if a generation of dwarfs should demand the vote on the ground that all tall persons ought to have the franchise.

IT was all right for the peasantry of France to argue with Force; for they had Force, as the Place de la Revolution proved. Force frightened the

British Parliament into carrying the Reform Bill; but it was real Force. It could, if driven to desperation, have won a Civil War. But the Suffragettes are merely showing how wholly without Force they are. They are like angry children who kick their nurse’s shins. Still are they not right in seeing that Force—if they only had it—is the true key to the position? Think a minute! What is this suffrage that they want? How did we men come to get it? What does it mean? We use it to-day to decide who shall govern the nation, and what the general policy of that nation shall be. Did we always govern ourselves in this fashion? Let us look back. They were discussing which party should be in power in England a little before Columbus discovered this enlightened Continent. Were they holding a general election? Not exactly. They were fighting the Wars of the Roses. They were settling this purely political question by Force.

OH! but that was long ago. Come down a bit. Some people in England did not like the government of Charles I. Did they vote him out? No! they Forced him out. They had a Parliament, too, then; and they had what we call the franchise. But when a real issue arose, they took to Naseby and Marston Moor. Come nearer. There was another “general election” in England which resulted in the overthrow of the Government of James II. One of the “polling booths,” Toronto will never be allowed to forget, was held at the Boyne. Force once more. Then when Anne died and the House of Hanover came in, the English people had a narrow squeak from another “general election” with powder and shot. The King by now was regarded as pretty much the creation of Parliament; and yet the Stuarts did not try to carry the “elections”—they appealed to Culloden. As for the rest of the world at this time, France had not even the States-General; the Hapsburg was absolute in Austria; Germany and Italy were only geographical terms. The Franchise was beginning in England alone to make its way as a method of measuring Force.

FOR that is what it is. We do not go to war to change our Governments now; we count noses and take it for granted that the greater number will have the greater Force. It saves waste and bloodshed. But even yet, when the issues are important, the minority at times appeals to the Supreme Court of the battlefield. Lincoln, for example, was elected by an anti-slavery majority; but the pro-slavery minority believed that the “greasy mechanics” of the North would not fight. So they appealed to

Force. And I believe that the Americans of 1860 were of a higher average of intelligence and morality and reason than the Americans of to-day. Always our elections mask possible Force. Did you not hear threats of Force when it looked as if Bryan would carry the Republic for “free silver” and so ruin the East? Aren’t they talking Force in Ulster to-day?

THE ballot-box is a Force Meter. Run a lot of non-Force ballots through it; and you will be in the position of the householder who finds that a lot of air has been run through his gas meter. He will no longer accept its verdict as true. Let the ladies put their ballots in the ballot-box, and then let a real issue arise; and a largely masculine minority will appeal to Force. Do you imagine, for example, that a majority of Englishmen would permit the ladies to vote the Empire out of India, if they had been stirred by some such crusade as the Lock Hospital affair? Do you imagine that that same male majority would allow a feminine majority to plunge Britain into war with Belgium over the Congo atrocities when such a step would throw Belgium into the arms of Germany? Woman Franchise would create a profound distrust of the ballot-box as a Force Meter; and so give civilization a setback it might not recover in a century. I am not joking when I say that, with the best will in the world, we cannot give the ladies the ballot—we can only let them “spoil it,” as a substitute for the horrors of Civil War. It might be a gallant action, but gallantry has small place in national warfare.

NOW, of course, by the franchise, I mean the National Franchise. If the ladies will take hold of our schools, they will help them a lot—the education of their own children is precisely one of the tasks for which they are especially well-fitted. The ladies are our home-makers; and they would make unmatched municipal house-keepers. They would give us clean streets that were clean, stop the spitting habit, put sanitary cars in commission, find us pure water, and generally make the cities better worth living in. By all means give them the municipal franchise. Personally, I wouldn’t like to see them jostling with aldermen in the council-room; but I would dearly like to see a Woman’s Committee or Commission with civic tasks of its own. But this sort of voting is an entirely different thing from the Franchise—the substitute which Civilization has painfully found for Force. If the women want to keep us on the present higher level where we settle our differences in superior fashion to the brutes, then, in the name of humanity, do not let them tamper with the intricate machinery of the Force Meter which we have slowly learned to trust!

Going Through College

By CLARK E. LOCKE

A COLLEGE education to-day is not a matter of money, but of ambition. A power of application and a knowledge of hard work are more essential to the student than a balance at the bank. An Arts graduation is no longer regarded as an aristocratic luxury, but as a democratic privilege; and for every man capable of the aspiration, it exists as a possibility abundantly capable of fulfillment. The sweat of his brow by which a man eats bread will also warrant his education.

People do not readily recognize that the self-made college graduate is a possibility. The dizzy glory of the plunging half-back hides him; the sage grey heads nodding in approval at scholarship laurels ignore him. But this lack of recognition bothers him little; he has his own peculiar glory, the self-satisfaction, the confidence which only comes to those who have fought a good fight and finished their course. Now there was the case of John.

IT was an eleventh-hour decision on John’s part, for not until the last year at High school did he determine on a university training. He was but an ordinary youth, and to him as to every other at one time in his life came the thought of a college education, and his eyes grew bright and his heart swelled at the thought of it. But he had suppressed it. “It is out of the question,” he had said, “there are several reasons why I can never do it.” Even as he spoke he felt his many reasons dwindle

and merge into one, the mighty one of finance. And here stood the boy on the eve of matriculation, and once more the university thrust its wonderful bulk before his imagination and beckoned him. And he, foolishly enough he thought, allowed the temptation so long subdued to again appear. Thrusting his hand into his pockets the jingle of a few coins brought him to his senses. Ah, the money. That was the trouble. Fifteen dollars and twenty cents and thinking of college. Faugh! What was the use of it? Father could not help; were there not yet three children to be educated.

At this juncture the thought came to him, “Why not put myself through?” It may seem ridiculous to know that the boy regarded this idea as an inspiration. He had never heard of fellows paying their own way through an advanced education. The country town he lived in, took no interest in universities. Most people were content to have William and Mary pass the Entrance examination, and then consider their education completed. The High school staff even never looked beyond the turning out of teachers and matriculants, and taught but two languages with that end in view. But no matter, in this his last year at High school John had determined to go to college.

IT is a moot question as to which makes the most out of his four academic years, he who enters with expenses all paid, or he who struggles with his

finances all the way through. And the question is not so one-sided as may at first appear. Granting both men determination, ambition, and application, as students they rank about the same, but their circumstances are necessarily different. A mistake is frequently made in this connection and that, too, with a good intention. It is claimed that the self-made student graduates the stronger man. Is this a fact? Yes and no. Because of his position, the self-supporting man perforce must spread his energies into different fields. His means of livelihood demands a large part of time and thought, and then turning to the scholarly part, for the sake of application he is forced to redouble his energy. On the other hand, the scholar with only the purely educational part to consider, finds more time, opportunities, and advantages, to assist him toward his purpose. It is conceded that university authorities throughout the world, in lowering fees and making general expenses lighter, are beginning to recognize that whereas the young man who puts himself through, may prove a splendid scholar and be better fitted for pushing his way in the business world, his more affluent contemporary has enjoyed opportunities for scholarly advancement which are usually beyond the reach of the other. But John had settled the matter for himself; he would be responsible for his own Art’s course.

That summer he spent as usual, clerking in Tanner’s corner grocery. In the Fall he reckoned up his accounts. Two months and a half at ten dollars per week, had made him an even hundred. This,