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## WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

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Some questions in the course of settlement take a certain acute form which permits free discussion. For a considerable period, any one who ventured to call in question the method by which temperance reform was sought to be accomplished, was instantly anathematized as the champion of the saloon and the advocate of vice. So in relation to female suffrage. The disposition of the hour is to intimidate any person from venturing to call in question its wisdom or necessity. If a man offers an opinion that the interests of society do not call for the direct interference of women in the affairs of legislation, he is at once put down as an enemy of the sex and the opponent of justice and moral reform. The latter charge one can stagger under, but to be considered other than devoted to the interests of the gentler sex is a strain no man can endure.

It is in a spirit of justice and sincerity that a few observations are offered on the other side of the question—not, indeed, in any dogmatic spirit, and certainly with no other than warm feelings of regard for woman. But how can a just conclusion be reached unless there be the freest discussion and the most untrammelled opinion. It is denied at the outset that opposing the conceding of the use of the

ballot box to women, implies any lack of regard for the sex: any question of their intellectual equality, which is freely conceded; any question of their moral superiority, which is as freely acknowledged. The question is, would woman's position in the world be improved by this concession? Would the general interest of society be promoted by such a step?

A general idea is abroad that man, by dint of physical strength, got political power into his hands and now refuses to share it with woman after civilization and enlightenment have made mental and moral power superior to physical strength. This is an entire error. The origin of state duties devolving upon men only, and the withdrawal of women from this range of action, was the special fitness of men for the rough encounters of the world and a chivalrous sense of woman's weakness and timidity. In the days of chivalry, men had too lofty a sense of the charming qualities of women, too much innate appreciation of their delicacy and worth to wish to subject them to the rude encounters of the battle field, the council of state, or the legislative arena. There were bickerings and ill nature, and sometimes danger in all these spheres of action, and woman was too pure, too dependent, to be harassed with such unnatural re-