

From a Woman's Point of View

Women in the Light of Today

(By Emily Wright).

The terms "vexed question" and "problem" are losing somewhat of their terror for us. We are becoming accustomed to them and one more or less seems to make little difference. There is revolution in the political world, evolution in the industrial, unrest in the Christian, and confusion in the economic. There is also the almost unrecognised but yet startling and overwhelming problem of race, which will demand the attention of the "whites" throughout the world sooner than perhaps is realised. Then, of course, every community has its "affairs," every city has its strikes, every nation has its "woman problem." Many of these problems are the direct result of the war, others, of gradual development, were eventually bound to force themselves upon us for solution.

Authorities on these questions sound a pessimistic note when warning the public of these various troubles, yet we in our ignorance but with a superb faith cry: "God is in His Heaven; all's right with the world."

We feel convinced that this is so with regard to the problem of woman. Her position in the world is changing, but we feel that "all's right with her." If progress is to be made in all departments of life, then woman cannot stand still.

Whatever kind of a time she had before she "sinned," it is very certain she has had an uphill fight ever since. She was created to be a "help meet"—not a "help-mate" which sounds too much like hired help without adequate recognition—and "help meet" really means "a helper as before, ahead, of him," which is vastly different from the ordinary conception of her. However, she is slowly but surely rising, by constant endeavour against adverse circumstances, to the position which was hers "in the beginning."

Only a few years ago it was considered that the restless activity of public life, the bustle of party strife, even the freedom from the restrictions of home would be sufficient to degenerate a woman; it was thought that when she entered into man's sphere of labour it would be at the cost of her womanliness. But times have changed, and we have come to think that it is indeed fortunate that professions and occupations unthought of for women a decade ago are open to them now. There is an immense army of women, in Europe especially, who must be self-supporting. The spinster of other days, who often devolved into the household drudge and who became soured through disappointment and an aimless life, will be less and less in evidence as such. She need not now be minus of a vocation. If she has a talent she will hear its call. The world is open to her and in it she shall find some of the happiness which otherwise would have been denied her, she shall find wider opportunities for service to mankind, and feel that she counts for something in the life of the nation.

The franchise has brought new responsibilities to women. It has given to them the greatest possible incentive to take an interest in national affairs. We are living in a great age, when the balances are swaying this way and that and need the steadying minds of sound judgment in their adjustment. It is therefore of supreme importance that young women, particularly, should acquaint themselves with the serious questions which are confronting the country so that they shall be able to exercise the ballot intelligently. It must not be said that a privilege has been thrust upon a frivolous and politically ignorant generation.

Ecclesiastically, women have not made so much progress. In the secular world the judge has been jealous for the bench, the barrister for the bar, the politician for Parliament, but all have had to give way for the admission of women. The clergyman is a man, much as they, and is jealous for his pulpit. But unwholesome prejudice is a barrier to progress. Eventually, the Church will have to fall into line. If a woman has a vocation and hears the "call" to the pulpit, and it is debarred her, just to that degree is the Church poorer and less efficient. St. Paul has had to bear the blame for far more than he deserves. Professor Trumpour of Vancouver is calling for a "restatement of doctrine." He is reported to have said: "How some of us are preaching I do not know, when I see the Commentaries on their library shelves." Let us hope if this proposed restatement ever becomes an accomplished fact that there will be a restatement concerning St. Paul's attitude towards women, and an honest comparison made of the women of his age and of those of the twentieth century.

Although women may be grasping after what some may think (but erroneously so) the bigger and wider things of life, it will ever remain that the home life is woman's natural sphere; it is the finest and fullest life, for it is upon this that the foundation of the Empire is built. It may bring restrictions and overwhelming duties in its train, but it also brings a peculiar power and incomparable love to compensate. Man is fascinated as he seeks to penetrate into the inmost recesses of a woman's mind, and woman delights in permitting him thus to do—just so far as she pleases. They view life from entirely different angles and so, constantly, they hold each other's interest. His may be the dominating will in the household; hers is its animating soul, breathing her thoughts and feelings into the very atmosphere of the home. It is here in the depths of her nature—which men can never understand—wherein lies the secret of her power.

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