

Let the Women Vote

By F. J. Dixon, M.P.P.

"Votes for Women" is now a familiar slogan. It is a new utterance of the voice of freedom; it is an audible manifestation of the inward and spiritual growth of democracy.

Political liberty was greatly extended during the nineteenth century. The right of the people to govern themselves is now admitted in all civilized countries, but in this extension of democracy women have been largely overlooked. Women should have entered into the enjoyment of their political rights and duties at the same time and on the same terms as men. One of the unfinished political

battling on one side for "things as they ought to be" against those who fight for "things as they are." The fundamental division is between those who believe the people should be ruled and those who believe the people should rule.

Wendell Phillips puts the democratic phase of this question squarely when he says: "While woman is freely admitted to the tax list, the gallows, and the gaol, we have no right to debar her from the ballot box." Those who believe in government by all the people and believe that women are people must believe in votes for women. Some men flatter themselves that they are too chivalrous to allow women to soil their lily white hands in the dirty mess of politics. These same men usually have no objection to their wives washing dishes, tho that certainly is harder on the hands than marking ballots.

Woman's Place the Home

"Woman's place is the home," we are told by our chivalrous friends. We will admit that for the sake of the argument—alho the property is usually in the man's name. But what of the women who leave their homes and their children to go out scrubbing and washing? What of the hundreds of thousands of women and girls in the factories, offices and workshops? Will our friends send them home? No. It is only when woman wants to mark a ballot that some persons suddenly discover that "Woman's place is the home."

We find women on the battle fields trying to alleviate the sufferings inflicted by men upon their brother men; we find women in the hospitals as nurses fighting heroically against loathsome diseases; we find women in slums and in sweatshops. Is the polling booth fraught with greater danger to the finer sensibilities of womanhood than battlefields, hospitals, theatres, hotels, slums, factories and workshops?

Some men act in a very contradictory manner. They hasten to open ordinary doors for women, but put their backs against the door of the polling booth to prevent women from entering in; they lift their hats when they meet women on the street and stamp their feet when women want to enter politics; they give up their seats upon the street car for women, but try to bar them from sitting on the school board.

If women are to be condemned to an endless round of sewing, scrubbing, cooking, washing, peeling potatoes and milking cows, or bridge and balderdash, they may well cry out with Thomas Hood:

"It's O! to be a slave,
Along with the barbarous Turk;
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work."

It is not sufficient that we wear women's pictures in lockets if we restrict their hands to menial tasks; it is not enough that we praise their beautiful faces if

we attempt to stultify their no less beautiful brains.

Home is the origin and basis of our civilization; we entrust and enthrone women there as wives and mothers and then refuse these queens of the home a voice in public affairs. They have found out that soft talk will not solve the hard problems of life and are demanding that they be allowed to play their part in the battle for democracy. They put their case strongly, but fairly, when they say: "We want justice rather than chivalry, if we cannot have them both." Chivalry should be a supplement to justice and not a substitute for it.

The woman question is one that has agitated the mind of man since the eve of creation. Women were once classed as chattels and chained with the rest of the slaves. The bracelets and rings with which we adorn our loved ones today are simply relics of the barbarous ages when women were led away, chained by their masters.

Noble Women

In spite of the handicaps under which they have labored, women have made striking progress. Who can judge the full effect of the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Julia Ward Howe in the destruction of chattel slavery? In "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Harriet Beecher Stowe exposed the horrors of slavery as they have never been exposed before or since, and Julia Ward Howe's inspiring hymn goes echoing down the centuries, an inspiration to all fighters for freedom: "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in his vision that transfigures you and me,

As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,

While God is marching on."

When we speak of William Lloyd Garrison and Abraham Lincoln we cannot forget Harriet Beecher Stowe and Julia Ward Howe.

Then there is that noble woman who, when the wounded were perishing in the Crimea for want of medical supplies, which could not be issued without an official order, had the doors broken open and the stores distributed. A woman so much beloved by the soldiers that when at a Balaklava dinner the old veterans were asked to write on a slip of paper the name of the man who would be the longest remembered for his services in the Crimean war; the same name was found on every slip and that name was—Florence Nightingale.

Mention might also be made of our own Laura Secord, who did such heroic service at Beaver Dam in 1812.

In the realm of art there are Rosa Bonheur, the great painter; Adeline Patti, the great singer; Sarah Bernhardt, the great actress; to mention only three. In literature, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In science, Madam Curie, who was awarded the Nobel prize in the year

1911 for her contributions to the science of chemistry. In finance, Hetty Green takes second place to none; Jane Addams has achieved world fame by her great settlement work in Chicago, and Francis Willard is one of the saints of the temperance movement. Many of our leading educationalists today are women. For example, Dr. Maria Montessori, who has given a new system of primary education to the world, and Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, the \$10,000.00 a year superintendent of the Chicago schools, who is sustained in that position by the people against the wishes of corrupt



The Soldier: "Women are not entitled to vote. They cannot bear arms."
The Mother: "No, but we can bear armies."

tasks left over from the last century is the enfranchisement of women.

We are still far from the goal of democracy defined in that immortal phrase of Abraham Lincoln's, "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Political equality and economic justice are still things of the future—ideals, dreams, aspirations.

"These things shall be; a loftier race Than e'er the world hath known, shall rise.

With flow'r of freedom in their souls,
And light of science in their eyes."

That these things may be, we need enduring faith and untiring industry, patience and courage. In the midst of graft and corruption we must keep the faith, we must fight the fight and carry forward the banner of democracy.

War that Never Ends

The woman movement is part of the great forward movement in the war that never ends—the war of the spirit of liberty against despotism in all its forms. In this war the contending armies are composed of persons from all ranks of society. Individuals align themselves according to their mental views and psychological temperaments, irrespective of social status. There are aristocrats clad in overalls and democrats dressed in silk. In this war there are no dividing lines of race, class, creed, color, or sex; all forward looking men and women are



The Barkeeper: "When women get the vote my job will be gone."
The Toper: "Down with the Suffragettes."

politicians, who have made several unsuccessful attempts to remove her. Many other brilliant and clever women might be mentioned, but these are enough to remind us what women have done, and are doing, for the race in spite of the heavy handicap under which they labor.

There are certain members of society who are very properly barred from voting, namely: idiots, criminals, insane persons and treaty Indians; but why women should be put in the same class has never been satisfactorily explained by the anti-suffragists. The fact that they are so classed is unjust and unfair. Self-respecting women when they become seized of this fact naturally want to graduate out of this class into that of the full fledged citizens, with all the rights and privileges which that name implies.

Some Comparisons

Apart from the justice of their plea and the general good which women may achieve with the ballot, there are special reasons, peculiar to their own welfare, for their enfranchisement.

Our criminal code makes our boasted chivalry look cheaper than the proverbial thirty cents. For example, compare these punishments:

Section 211—Seduction of young girls between fourteen and sixteen, previously

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SOME OF THE THINGS WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO DO BY MEN WHO SAY THAT TO PERMIT THEM TO VOTE WOULD DESTROY THEIR SWEET WOMANLINESS