

## Women in Public Life.

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,  
Attilt like a blossom among the leaves,  
And lets his illumined being o'er run,  
With the deluge of summer it receives;  
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings  
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;  
He sings to the wide world and she to her nest,  
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

### THE MAN'S VIEW.

As a class men do not take very kindly to verse, but every man who reads these words of Lowell will think that they are beautiful and appropriate. I can imagine my good friend, the alderman, who lives across the way, reading these lines with great appreciation, and commenting upon them in his own accustomed manner. "The whole truth in a nutshell Mr. Lowell! Very well put indeed! A fine definition of the duties of husband and wife! For her the peace and quiet of the fireside, for him the joy of the forum, the applause of the populace! For her the duties of home, but for him the larger interest of the community, the nation, humanity!"

Down the street is the preacher. How he relishes these words! Well he knows how to answer the poet's question—Which song is the best? Everybody must know that there is no song like the song of the sanctuary. Yet it is strange that everybody says his wife is the better man of the two and that she sings the sweetest though not the loudest song in the parish.

### THE OTHER VIEW.

So I feel like reasoning with my two good friends. They have been too hasty in their conclusions. Because the mother sings so sweetly in the home, it does not follow that this is her only place of song.

Yes, my good alderman, I know you have been very busy. Hardly a day has passed that you have not had your name in the papers. You have been entertaining the visiting delegations to your city, and smoking the cigars so freely purchased at public expense. And you have made three after-dinner speeches this last week, and good speeches too. If you keep on in this fashion you may some day become mayor of the city or perhaps find a place on a public commission. Truly, you are a valuable public servant, and your song is loud and increasing. But what of your good wife, whom you confess to be such a model of domestic virtues? Was it not owing to her that the "Home for the Aged" was built and equipped? Has she not provided for three new wards in the "Children's Home"? Has she not found time to serve on the Committee for decorating the school buildings? And is she not an active member of the Hospital Aid Society? It does seem to me, indeed, that though you have been saying things, and making great plans, and incidentally spending public money in a graceful but lavish fashion, your little wife has been the real public servant. It is her work that counts for the health and betterment of society.

And the same is true of you, my friend the preacher. You have reached the crowds without doubt. You have told them how to act in all matters public and private, but it was your quiet little helpmate that led in giving practical effect to your teachings. Indeed, if you will but confess it, you did the talking and she did the acting.

### WHAT WOMEN HAVE DONE.

As a matter of fact, have not women led the way in nearly all worthy public endeavor? They have led in education, in religion, in charity, in philanthropy, and in public morals. And when social wrongs had to be righted it was women who found a remedy. Further than this, when their economic and political sagacity have been tested they have held their own. They have "sung in their nests," but they have mighty little talent if in addition to this they cannot sing better songs to the wide world than many of their husbands and brothers.

### SHALL WOMEN VOTE?

Give them votes? Most certainly. Why not? Would they do any worse than is being done just

now, even in our own country, by the lords of creation? Who will say that if women had votes there would not be an improvement in legislation affecting prisons, temperance, education, and poverty? Would any one say that if women had a voice in government, trade conditions would be worse than they are?

### SIR EDWARD GREY'S VIEW.

Some one said the other day that the only people who should vote are the people who can take up a musket and defend their country. Have you noticed how Sir Edward Grey disposed of this argument?

"Defence of the country and the Army and Navy were man's province, practically exclusively, and fighting must be done by man. But the fact that there were certain things necessary to the existence of the State which could only be done by one sex was no evidence that the particular performance by the sex was more essential in the welfare of the country than what was done by the other. Without good homes we would not have the race to carry on trade, into which women were largely entering, or the fighting either."

And while we are at it, it might be just as well to quote another sentence or two from the address of this same national leader.

"It might be said that home depended in the majority of cases on the husband, the breadwinner, but the application of what was earned to the comfort and welfare of the home was done by women, and in moral considerations, connected with temperance, education, higher ideals in the home, and wider interests, women's part there was as great as that of man. Was it really contended that the prosperity of the homes of this country was being furthered by limiting the time, thoughts, and interests of women to household work? Surely the whole tendency of modern progress had been just the other way. It was said that public life was rough and vulgar, but women were invited by both sides to take part in contested elections, to organize and to canvass. He could understand the argument better if it were said that there were many things in public life from which they should stand aside. Let them talk to Australians, as he had done, about women, and they would be told that it was inconceivable that women should live in the State without it, and that the indirect effect of it on the position of women was such that women would never for a moment think of foregoing the vote, and the men would never think of taking it from them. The general effect of it he had been told, was to widen the horizon of every home. The introduction of women's votes into politics would have a humanizing and civilizing influence, and he believed that to be most true and most important. And it was one of the reasons why he must deplore violence in advocating the cause. If they had violent methods and scenes of disorder, especially when they took petty forms, they paralysed that argument."

Down in the south of England there is a very successful girls' school, founded and administered by women, and yet in 1906 when a national verdict had to be taken on education, the man who supplied firewood to the school was asked to vote, but the ladies in charge were held to be incompetent to give any judgment at all on the issue.

### THE VOICE OF LLOYD GEORGE.

Perhaps nothing could be more significant than the words of the most prominent politician in Great Britain to-day. This is what Mr. Lloyd George had to say in a recent address:

"He had received many deputations during the last few months, from municipal corporations, employers, no end of doctors, but one of the most interesting and effective was the deputation of mistresses and domestic servants. It was businesslike; the speeches were very much to the point; and when the servants interposed, their observations were very relevant and very emphatic, and their judgment invariably sound, and never given until they had heard both sides. That was a tip for men. And his friends the Attorney-General and Mr. Masterman, who attended, said afterwards: 'And yet they

say women are not fit for a vote.' If Queen Elizabeth had been alive to-day she would not have had a vote. If, instead of being a Queen, she had been running a great business, she would have had no right to express an opinion about the hours of closing her shop, while the person who swept out the shop would be asked his view. That state of things was quite indefensible. It could not last, and it would not last. To be quite frank, had the government by men been such an unqualified success that they could claim a monopoly for themselves? That meeting was near the seat of Government. They had got the Throne, the Houses of Legislature, and great stately public buildings from which decrees went forth, which affected the lives of people in the remotest ends of the earth. Within a mile of the Throne and the Houses of Parliament there were poverty, wretchedness, and squalor, which filled the heart with disgust and with horror. That was after ages of the Government of man. Why, men had not yet devised a better method of settling international quarrels than blowing each other's brains out. All great problems of life men and women had settled together, the deepest and greatest problems, the problems that really mattered. The difficulties of life, its sorrows and its trials, they had shared. It was the oldest partnership, the most enduring, and the most successful, and he said it would be a day of blessing for this Empire when that partnership was carried into the sphere of government."

### CASES NEARER HOME.

One does not have to go to England to get illustrations and arguments. Who is the greatest character in the city of Chicago to-day, the wisest and sanest, the coolest and brainiest mind there? None other than Jane Addams. Who the most competent director of education that city has ever known? None other than Ella Flagg Young. And so cases might be multiplied.

In this city in one section a horde of foreign-born and only half-nationalized beings have controlled the political situation for some years. They know next to nothing of our constitution, our laws and our customs, and are wholly out of sympathy with our aims and aspirations. Yet in that very section are many women of culture, refinement and intelligence, who are capable of exercising judgment in a marked degree—but who are debarred because they chance to be women.

Not half a mile away is a lady of wealth and culture and with sagacity that will be attested to by scores of witnesses. She is worth over half a million; she is Canadian born and bred; she is loyal and true. Yet when it comes to voting day she remains at home and the man who attends to her furnace casts his vote and comes home drunk.

### IF WOMEN LED THE WAY.

The alderman told me a few days ago that if women had a vote they would be dragged down to the level of men; their dignity would be lowered and their womanhood lost. This, of course, is purely gratuitous. Women do not have to smoke cigars, to drink beer, to associate themselves with the machine. Their history is that they have elevated whatever society they have entered. They would elevate political life too, for they would insist upon moral standards. As it is now, nearly all legislation finds its explanation in finance. There is a continuous battle between monied interests, and the result is restrictive or protective legislation. Were women given a voice the battle would be between right and wrong, and their influence would be mainly on the side of right. It is high time that the emphasis should be placed where womankind has always wished to place it. It is high time that the watchword of our civilization should be "each for all" rather than "each for himself and devil take the hindmost." The substance of the whole matter is this: That women are wanted in public life because of their refining purifying influence. In some departments they would assume almost full control, in others they would not be found at all, but the ideal is a system in which the male and female elements are both represented. The starting point in representation is the extension of the franchise to womankind.