

Canadian Suffrage Association

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**Canadian Woman
and
Her Work**

BY

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The Canadian Woman and Her Work

ONE need not be a seer or a prophet to discern the signs of the times. *The women* of this day and generation are in line, intelligently, methodistically *in line*, and marching on towards the highest kind of citizenship. Seeing that they want the Suffrage, and that, like the Heilan' Laddie, they "do not ken how to pipe a retreat," they will likely go straight on till they get it. They are coming into their full share of power, and of the responsibility which power exacts. But, says a critic, women are not ready for the ballot, they must be educated along certain lines before it will be of service in their hands. There is something mysterious in all this. What is this knowledge which, escaping intelligent women, comes by instinct to the lad of twenty-one, to the foreigner freshly arrived, to the man who can neither read or write his own name? Educating should be done, but let it be general, let the sexes share alike in the blessing of knowledge. At present, there is this difference, that, while women, having the fact of her ignorance dinned into her ears many times and oft, is trying hard to master the meaning of citizenship, and the sacredness of the ballot, the average man is content to know as little as need be. The thing for the *government* to do, is to take off its hat to her, as a coming citizen, and, seeing that mother nature in the very beginning formed her with methods peculiarly her own for making her way across, above, or al the way around the highest wall of prejudice



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a man can rear, throw wide open every avenue of knowledge that she may be all the better qualified for the duties that wait. We have faith that she will bring to these duties a clean conscience and a clear vision—two grand qualifications.

I do not like to think of women as athirst for excitement, greedy for name and place, hysterically making a wild bid for notoriety. I like to think that this is the woman's century—the woman's day—that she has had the call divine.

"Come ye faith holders of the nation, ye children bearers of the nation, come out into my world; come with your deep desires for good, your truth, your tenderness and your patience; my world has need of you as never before; let your standard of purity be higher, your influence stronger, your ideals greater than they have ever been; come out, O woman of the mother heart, and help me to win my world to a Christlier civilization."

The women of this Canada of ours have a right to be strong, and fearless of anything but evil, they have had some grand precedents.

"I search the pages of our history over
For a courageous one whose name shall stand
For staunchest patriot, and for truest lover,
And prove the same, by deeds done for the land.
And my heart thrills, for 'tis a woman bears it,
You'll find it, marble carved, on Laura Secord's
grave,
And you and I, and every woman shares it—
The right to stand for what is true and brave."

Why harp upon the good old days? The days to come are better. When Queen Victoria of blessed memory was crowned in splendor in Westminster Abbey, that June day of 1838, the Constitution of

Great Britain did not contain one law specially framed for the protection of children—think of it ! To-day—owing largely to the untiring efforts of women, the rights of the child are recognized by Church and State ; in Canada special laws are enacted to safeguard him. If he goes astray he has a children's court to be tried in, and a child's judge (who is also a friend and a father) to correct, advise, see that he gets justice, richly tempered with mercy. In Montreal it was the Women's Club who brought about this splendid state of affairs ; "let well enough alone " was the municipal maxim there, as it is elsewhere, but when women get a real heart interest in any work, they cannot be bribed or scared into letting go, until they see results. Thank Heaven for the obstinacy of good women ! This is but one instance, out of many, of the influence which Canadian women wield, even when working under a severe handicap. They are marching on. The men of yesterday lifted up their hands in holy horror, and hurled the word "unsexed" at a woman who dared to aspire to a vote ; the man of to-day, while not in love with the idea, sees the reasonableness of it—but the Boy, who is now learning things from his mother, who is espousing her cause, and fighting her battles—he will be the politician of to-morrow ; and so we say to-morrow is the woman's day. In the meantime she is making progress—and why not ? To let go a Right, because some one objects to our possession of it, is to build up injustice and intolerance in nation or individual.

JEAN BLEWETT, in *Collier's Weekly*.