THE DAWN

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

A paper read at the Dawn Club by the President.

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The popular idea of an advocate of women's rights is that she is an angular, hard-feathered, withered creature, with a sharp, harsh, nervous countenance, spectacles on nose, and the regressive title, "blue-stocking," attached all over her. Metaphorically she is supposed to be half-way over the bar which separates the sexes, slinging her skinny fast at men and all their works. I don't think it is difficult to mislead this idea as soon as we get people to think about the subject at all; for it is remarkable that almost every thinking man who does investigate the topic seriously, at once hands in his allegiance. For as all American women have said—there are no arguments against woman's suffrage—only objections.

Now as we have no time to be elaborate or diffuse, we must be methodical and we will take the reasons why women claim the right to vote; then, when we pick up the objections one by one and turn them inside out, to show their entire vacuity, and finally resolve the difficulty, we find that women are doing new in other countries in order to show how usefully we in New South Wales are behind the times.

For the thoughts we entertain upon this and other sections of the woman's question are utterly scattered, unounded blocks lying rough in the chart, while in America and England they are already squared and set together in the foundations of that new social edifice which the 19th century is building.

The whole principle of the justice of the woman's vote question may be概括化 into a question—

Who ordained that men only should make the laws to which both men and women have to conform?

No strong faction however honorable they might be, can ever look at the rights and interests of a weaker party with quite the same consideration as they bestowed on their own concerns; no parliament responsible only to its members. But it is the interest, the joy of each individual, the view of things, although both men and women are equally concerned, and in fairness the reason of both sides should be heard. Why should one half of the world govern the other half? Is it just to first ensure the safety of a citizen's status, and then conform them that by the laws of the stronger section this is the way they must go, and then treat with the same care? A woman's opinion is useless to her, she may suffer unjustly, she may not have her beauty, bread the power to weightily petition against man's laws, no representatives to urge her grievances by only method to procure relief, reform, or change, to pass the same way it is to pass the hope that after many years the justice in the majority of the rules may be altered and some fairly ceded, perhaps in time to benefit her grand-daughters.

The Times in an editorial, "Crows and Women," remarks that in Maine the lobster question, important to the fishers, was discussed in Parliament and fully passed in convocation; a price was set on the heads of the crows on the piece of the men voters; the gazette related the first year the direct right to motion of men who, having voted, had power, the laws were made more stringent; but even the women of Arkansas sent, in a petition that temperature might be taught in the State schools they promptly had leave to do so. The Bill was hardly presented before a resolution to take it was carried without discussion; the women had no votes so they had no voice.

The form of liberal government is a government in accordance with the will of the people; these wishes are written down and put in a ballot box for convenience in counting and in thus taking the sense of the community. If Chromas have been committed from participation in the right not to vote, the minor, the idiot, the drunkard, and women; why women? what kind of liberal government or government by a major ity this is? Does it express the wish of any other woman or employment make any one vote until to conscientiously and usefully record a vote, that, bring or writing up a loader? Is it not the right to rule which woman want; have they no desire to change places with men? only claim the right to record an opinion; a right difficult one we think, to justify deny an intelligent creature. Here in New South Wales every man may vote, let him choose to be his judgment purchaseable, and his intellect of the weakest, but an honorable thoughtful and good woman may be lauded as by such men, they can carry what laws they please in spirit, her. It cannot be urged that women have no need to vote because justice is always done even though they are silent. It is only since 1860 that a mother's right to share in the guardianship of her children has been legally admitted, even now in some places the husband may separate the children from their mother if he wills to do so. Not alone as a citizen but even as a mother a woman has not felt legal recognition. If offenses men are protected from infidelity—no women. In interstate estates women do not deal equally as men. In educational emoluments and benefits they have not the same privileges. Women may still be forced to live in the same house with a husband whose they hate or fear. Have, women's need of a vote to protect them in these things and the multitude of other interests affecting women and children; to say nothing of the larger questions of vice and drunkenness in which the happiness of women and children is always closely involved.

But the vote in these things is not all. The expression of woman's desires leads to the large part in public opinion which is far the powerful law. It leads many women to the influence of men in women, and to the purification of governing bodies; for women in the main will never vote for corrupt or dishonourable representatives.

They say that it women vote would destroy an effeminate nation, but those nations age strongest where the women are most free. How can we otherwise while the principles have not been smouldered, and the spirit of a race inherited from a people and are most influenced in their training by their mothers. From thoughtful women will come great women, and good women are needed who make the thoughts of women worthy. Their interests less selfish, their ambitions better and more noble. With a share in the national life they will learn to care for the good of others.

As to the effect of woman's initiative on government we can turn the hypocrisy to her. In Kansas with women voting and the prohibition law in force, more than half the state goals are now without prisoners. In Wyoming women have had the right to vote since 1869 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives has been there to get the result of his experiment. This is what he says: "I started with the strongest prejudices against women's suffrage and was decidedly opposed to it at all places, but on its introduction I became to see there was observed in the practical results. I have been twice Speaker of this House and I am now in the 3rd house have had opportunities of forming judgment upon the proceedings, I can now say that the more I have seen of the results of women's suffrage the less my objections have been realized and the more the thing considered useful. I believe it is good to the Territory and of no evil that I am aware of." He then refers to the influence of women's suffrage in
THE DAWN.

inducing both parties to choose respectable men as their candidates, and adds, that the interest taken by women in politics since their admission to the franchise, led to no domestic trouble, or made any of us speak slightingly of women.

Now we will consider the objections made to Women's Suffrage. I have collected all which I have ever heard or read.

She says:— "If you want to share men's rights you must share their responsibilities too; men have to fight, and women are only passive, do the same?"

The objection rests both way—if rights and responsibilities are exactly the same, the men must help to mind the children and do the cooking. But seriously if the time, is to fight is the one necessary qualification. Qualifying citizens to have a voice in the making of the laws which, they must obey all old men, and the lame, and the feeble, for they are as unfit to be soldiers as women are. You may not exclude dwarfs, and members of Parliament, for they don't fight—except amongst themselves.

Another objection is that women have no knowledge of politics and that to vote will interfere with their domestic duties.

It seems to me that a very large proportion of men voters use their voice without any previous close study of politics; moreover that a knowledge of the turnings of the day is very quickly learned even if it is not thrust upon the attention of all reading and thinking people. And insomuch as both men and women suspend their occupations at odd times on various pretexts without upsetting the order of things, files little time taken by the recording of a vote will not seriously disturb the conditions of domestic life.

Some say that women have no commercial training and would therefore endanger political questions.

Now we know that in the trading classes in France, and in the working classes in English speaking nations the financial affairs of the whole household are usually left in the wife's hands. We know that there are thousands of women managing business institutions, and hundreds of thousands of women managing their own households, and therefore getting political training—this is what commercial training means.

If housekeeping does give narrow views, give women an interest in the affairs of the nation and let their views become wider, then all the men will have to teach women to be housekeepers and the interest of all the world to have intelligible women.

Women have sufficient commercial talent to be postmistress; there are 3000 women in such positions in the United States alone.

As to women being inherently desirous of average talents; it is the contrary that the objection is hardly worth answering.

It is usual to allege that the instances relied on are instances of quite phenomenal women, but when we see so many thousands of women holding high places in all varieties of associations, it is transparently clear, that, if women have any stimulus to work, and fair chances to develop, their talent reaches mostly as high as that of men.

We could weary any one to death with instances, but taking merely a few more recent papers and records we find these fragmentary facts in evidence and they show what the sum total of women's public work today would amount to if it could be collected. In England we read in the few papers from which these facts we collected during the three years between 1856 and 1858, six women were employed to serve on school boards.

Women were elected on the New County Commutation the first time they were eligible. The London County elected Miss Emmie Colv to be an Alderman of the City but she will also probably be disqualified. Two women have been elected by the Council to sit on the Committee on the housing of the poor. Women have inaugurated and are managing Trade Unions among working women.

They are managing hospitals, some of the best in schools, and are appointed as Inspectors under the Poor Laws Act. They collate on even terms with men as artists, musicians, journalists, dentists, photographers, farmers, stonecutters, and their success in literature is numberless.

Miss Waterson has taken the diplomas of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, and is the first woman to take the Certificate of the Medical Physiology Society. Miss Candock medical officer to the women's clerks at the Liverpool Post office it has been a member of the Liverpool Medical Society. Two lady students took the highest prizes for descriptive and practical anatomy at the Irwell Royal College of Surgeons. The report of the Dublin University shows that in 1832 one woman took the degree of L. L. D. two took the M. A. degree, and 18 the B. A. degree. At the London University, one woman has taken the L. L. D. degree, two that of Doctor of Science, the M. A. degree, the degree of B. B. A. 150 the degree of B. A. At Oxford and Cambridge they have done as well, but at those Colleges no degrees are conferred.

Recent papers from America, not complete statistics I must remind you, mention that no less than 7000 women hold first class diplomas from duly incorporated medical colleges. There are 60 women dentists. Reformers have made it to two women who are licensed practitioners of steam vessels in the Mississippi, to two women auditors, and to several women editing newspapers. The Vassar College is founding a Chair of Astronomy. Professor Marie Mitchell who has long worked in the department of Astronomy at that College is Miss Sinton, a Commissioner of Dwell in New York. It is a Commission which was created by the Charter of 1868.

Prince Commissioner. Dr. Schuyler Millard has been appointed by the Senate the Chairman of a section. Miss Hayden has just been among five men in an original architectural design at the Institute of Technology, Boston. Margaret Bourne was for many years edited by a woman. Miss Leslie's illustrated was not successful until Mr. Kipling took charge after her husband's death. There are 23 clubs of women formed in New Orleans for the study of political economy.

It is clear that women are at work and that they are fit to vote. Alas they are not told but my information is scanty.

There are 16 women doctors in Paris and at the recently opened Medical College in St. Petersburg tWo women doctors attended. The Professor of Literature at Stony Brook, the only man, is a woman, who was the Professor of English and Latin and the only man.

If these and the thousands of other instances are all cases of men, then there must be a great many exceptions to the "Smaller brain than man's" theory.

The latest obstacle in the Fortnightly Review by saying that women's judgements are hasty, and that they lack sagacity, well this is merely generalising to all working women. Mrs Gough, Widow of the late Professor Gough. Generally the only real basis of conjecture as to the ability of the Woman's brain is its use, which employed publically have already done.

Women served as jurors in Washington Territory, and this is what Chief Justice Greensays of them: "That the terms of Court which have held in which women have sat are even or more satisfactory than other terms to the satisfaction of the fact that we have or ever held in this territory. For 13 years we have been trying to put men on the bench in the last six months felt the growth and among them, and the vast weight of the people in the accordance of the law, and of the people's call for them, to serve as jury."