

THE SUFFRAGE QUESTION.

A Woman Defends the Movement for Equal Rights Before the Law.

—To the Editor:—Please allow me space for a brief reply to an article in yesterday's PANTAGRAPH against "woman suffrage," by Mr. John D. Smith, of Mackinaw, Ill., who says it is evident to his mind that the advocacy of woman suffrage is one hindering cause to the progress of the Prohibition party. Mr. Smith says its advocates proclaim aloud that it is the only method to down the liquor traffic.

I am an advocate of "woman suffrage," but I do not proclaim aloud that it is the only method to down the liquor traffic; but when the liquor dealers themselves are a unit in declaring that the death knell to their business would come with the ballot of the motherhood of this country, I hope they know what they are talking about. Everybody must know that there is only one way to get rid of this legalized traffic—only the power that gave it birth can remove it. The ballot which gives it protection can remove it from us. The government of a republic can never rise higher than the average character of the citizens who compose that government. I think it is very wrong to put the ballot (the potent and all powerful instrument which decides the character of our government) into the hands of the distillers, saloonkeepers and bummers, and keep it from the motherhood of the race.

I say let the women help to decide the conditions that shall surround them and their children. The combined wisdom of both father and mother gives the best government. Legislation made and enforced by men alone is class legislation. If merchants can not be trusted to legislate for farmers, how can men alone legislate justly for women? If men can trust their wives with their children, their honor, their sacred interests of home, why not trust them with the ballot, by which she can serve and defend all of these.

Statistics prove that the rate of divorces increase in the suffrage states only half as fast as in other states. A recent report from Colorado shows some good results of woman suffrage in that state. One has been to bring out a larger vote of men. Thousands of men went to the primaries for the first time with their wives. It has also stimulated men to a closer study of public affairs. Many men had been so absorbed in business that they did not even know who their aldermen were, and when the women began to "ask their husbands at home" and they could not tell them, it was very embarrassing to the dear fellows. It was because women could vote that Colorado got the state home for dependent children, the law raising the age of consent to eighteen years, and the law giving mothers equal guardianship of their children with the fathers. The Colorado women are making a greater effort to enforce the laws they have rather than to get more. The women are studying politics and the men regard it as a favorable sign that their wives and other women are willing to give up some society privileges and kindred matters to study them.

Mr. Smith quotes the bible and Paul as against woman suffrage. Nowhere in the bible are we told that woman shall not vote, but "I suffer not a woman to teach," is one of Paul's plain declarations. Does this apply to all women? The whole history of the church, old and new, is against such an interpretation. I think Paul's ideas of human equality and rights were very broad. Let us study the scripture with the key thought that the bible is both just and rational and never contrary to reason.

Mr. Smith claims political rights will have a tendency to lower women's virtue and refinement. I don't think voting will degrade women. Voting is power; power commands respect. If politics is degrading it is no argument against woman suffrage. It is an argument in its favor. Men have always had control of politics, and, if they have allowed them to become dirty, it is time women should come to the rescue and help clean things up. If the ballot is not fit for my daughter, it is not fit for my son. I am doing what little I can to free my sisters, for I am truly woman's friend. The large majority of women appreciate my efforts, while a few do not.

Mrs. M. A. Cooper.

Normal, Ill., Feb. 27.

Another Woman's View of Suffrage.

—To the Editor:—Perhaps there is no subject more worthy of the attention of all good people, at the present time, than this one—Woman Suffrage. To my mind the strongest argument in favor of it is woman's right to true citizenship.

There are those who believe woman may not care for the ballot, that many of them

say they do not want it and would not vote if it were granted. I think the words of a gentleman of London answer this well, which were reported in the *Literary Digest* of February 27: "Whether women themselves really desire the franchise or not may be a doubtful point. But those who do not want it need not use it; and is it just for the sake of these to exclude from it a large number of educated and intelligent women who, as Prof. Jebb truly says, are eagerly demanding it? We do not think that either in the polling-booth or the house of commons—if they ever get there—their conduct would be likely to contrast unfavorably with their male relatives. At all events, a returning officer in New Zealand, where women have the suffrage, has said that he would rather poll 200 women than seventy men."

The question is not, moreover, how she may vote and will vote, but if the right shall be granted her. This is a free country, and no man or woman should be compelled above his convictions. I would as soon think of persecuting a person of another denomination as I would to coerce him in the matter of voting. In the ballot granted woman in the school trustees, some voted the Prohibition ticket, some the Republican ticket, and others the Democratic ticket. This was the right accorded each. No true man or woman thinks to persecute another at this point.

I do believe, however, that if woman had the ballot, it would be for the good of our country. It would further an interest in purer and better laws, and we all know that there are more good women than good men. The love that the gentler sex bears to the home and to humanity at large, urges her to chose the good things. Now, we must look at things honestly and not critically. What is, is; and what will be, will be, and no man can change the inevitable. God moves in a mysterious way and has called people into this life not to seek self-honor, but the furtherance of his cause. Scripture teaches this: Paul's injunction to women was not stronger than that preached to man. His special injunction to the Corinthian women was called forth because of the boldness and wickedness of the women of Corinth. The city was corrupt and given over to sin of every character, and the disloyalty of the wives to their husbands had called forth such teachings. If, however, this apostle demanded much of the women he demanded equally as much of the husbands and fathers. To them he said: "Provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in nurture and admonition of the Lord." If we touch upon any failure of the mothers, we must look likewise upon the remission of duties in fathers, for there are fathers and fathers who fail, especially in the training of the children, if it is right for one to judge. The example of many men who are upright in nearly every point, but failing in some one point hinder others by the one failure. You may take today the great reform against tobacco. You find many good men who use it, but you would not consider a woman who used it true and good. You would not consider her a lady if she went smoking through the streets. We do not want to ever see such a thing. You would say at once, why, this would spoil motherhood. Look at the fatherhood of the nation for a moment. I have heard a good mother say: "I cannot talk to my boys about using tobacco because their father uses it, and yet I know it is injuring them." Ah, example is more than precept. Women are not perfect, but it is true of our nation that the mothers are purer and better than the fathers. This is generally true, I say.

It may be inferred by some if the ballot is granted woman all women will become office-seekers. Are all men office-seekers because a few are? No. Some of the best men in this country are strong in their parties' interest, and yet do not even care for an office. It is also true that there are men filling places in this world who were not seekers of such positions, but received them as honors of trust. They were capable and known to be, and thus called to fill them.

Now as to representation. Men cannot represent women nor women men. In every department of life both are needed. They work naturally and easily together. Way back in the Genesis of time God saw that it would not be good for man to be alone, so He made him a helpmeet—not a slave, not a subordinate, but a dear, loving companion; not to be what the Indian makes his wife, but one to move jointly in every detail of life. Yes, and all over this world there are good men and good women who desire to seek the highest interests of the home and the social world. They have learned that this life is only a school preparatory to another. They are learning a lesson above mere opinion or creed. It is the good above the evil and that which will make the community better. If it is wrong for women to have anything to do with the

political arena it must be for men. God has made no double standard for human beings. He requires of one as much as of another; the new birth and a pure life. The password into heaven is not sex, but Jesus Christ. The life to be followed, the life of Christ. If there is any wrong attached to the ballot then all good men and good women should retire from it. We all know that many questions of right have been presented by some of the organizations of brave women of our country to the legislature. It has been done for the good of people. Take our communities today—how much is due these women? Look at the effort made to save the boys and girls of our towns from the use of narcotics. Do these women love their homes any the less because of their brave efforts? Do they love their husbands any the less because they would throw safeguards about their lives. Do we not all admire any person who saves the life of another? Shall we admire any the less any woman who would protect her home? In my mind there is no doubt but that the majority of the women who do ask the ballot, ask it because they believe they could better the lives of their husbands, sons and brothers, and protect the sisterhood of the nation. At this point of our country's history every true individual looks on with marked interest. What senator was it who grew enraged because a bill was presented asking the prohibition of the liquor traffic in the national capitol? Is this too much, to ask that pure men at least legislate for the nation? Many women who today seek this are criticised. They simply long and ask for the right over wrong. But look today at the good they have already accomplished. The anti-tobacco law in the school room and on the playground about the school house. Look at the compulsory law of scientific temperance in the public school. Look what protection your children are receiving in being taught these things. "Knowledge is wisdom." Who would not have it?

I am often reminded of a woman who impressed me very much a few years ago. She was the wife of a wealthy man and the mother of nine boys. She was interested in everything that concerned her boys from woman having the ballot to the boys' training in every detail. She was very faithful to her home. She educated each one of these boys herself, preparatory to the grammar school. Four of these boys attended Harvard. There was nothing that concerned their lives or her husband that she did not enter into. Beside all this she found time to advance herself in study. She took the C. L. S. C. and graduated in the class of '84. This woman found time for home, for her boys and outside interests. Was she any less faithful to the personal duties that came to her because of her interest in woman's progress? Has the queen of England been any less faithful to her home's interest because called to rule over a great country? To every man according to his several abilities, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Let every individual do as God would have him regardless of sex. And let everyone remember that God is above all people and will suffer to come to pass eventually those things which will further his cause. If the ballot will do this—that is promote his cause—he will call woman to it. Remember whatever we do, we do it after all unto him, who said: "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these of mine, ye do it unto me." M. L. M.

McLean, March 2