

### Votes for Women: Why and Why Not?

(Continued from page 5.)

women vote the prohibition law would be made effective.

Then there are many large employers of labor who fear that if the women vote there would be an end to the exploitation of child labor, and that the hours of labor and the age of employment would be strictly enforced. The labor element is also of the same opinion, for there is not a labor union in North Carolina or anywhere between the two oceans that is not solidly in favor of suffrage for the women. Both sides know their own interests.

Then in every state, in every county and in every city and town there is more or less a knot of men who are styled "The organization", "The Machine", or "The Ring". These are in most cases avaricious of power. Sometimes their operation is injurious to the public welfare, and in others they may be fairly legitimate, but in all cases they are more or less fearful that the advent of a large moral element may interfere with their control of party organization, and this has been a powerful agent against the admission of the women to the ballot box.

There are lesser causes of opposition, such as pride of opinion on the part of men who, having opposed suffrage in the past, are unwilling to see it succeed in spite of their opposition. Then there are men of shady personal character, as to whom a witty speaker recently said, "They oppose suffrage because they

know that for them it would be an answer to the Psalmist's prayer: "Teach me to know mine end, and the number of my days". Then there is, too, the ultra-conservatism of many elderly men and of many illiterates, who are opposed to any change of any kind in anything; but it is significant that all the whiskey drinkers and gamblers, the vicious and the immoral element, are opposed. And invariably this is true of every officeholder who has a rotten record, though the women pay half his salary.

Then we have the hackneyed statement that "suffrage is a privilege, and not a right". This rests upon no foundation whatever except the "imperturbable perpendicularity of assertion". If it is a privilege, who gave the men the right to grant it to the women or to withhold it? Did the men obtain it by divine right, as king and kaisers asserted as to their crowns until the 11th November last?

We did not fight Great Britain in our Revolution for the "privilege" of self-government, but for the "right" to govern ourselves by our own votes. Every person who has sufficient intelligence and good character has a right, and not a mere "privilege", to share in the government—and this without regard to sex. Those who have this intelligence and character have the right to exclude lunatics, idiots, infants and illiterates because they are not mentally competent, and to exclude convicts because they are morally defective. We excluded negroes till 1868 because they were mostly uneducated and incompetent. It was a mistake that the state and federal constitutions admitted them to the suffrage in 1868, for as a mass they were still unfitted for the suffrage. On that account the grandfather clause in 1868 excluded a large part of them—not as negroes, but as illiterates.

In a few months, probably at the November election 1920, from ocean to ocean, women will be voting for everything from constable to president, and men will be ashamed of the flimsy excuses (for not a single reason has been found) they have made against it. Probably the most amusing is the statement of the solemn ass who says "My WIFE is against it", when he knows the statute would not require her to vote, but would merely permit those women to vote who wish to do so.

Upon what ground do we exclude women? Are they mentally or morally defective? Women are competent, morally and mentally, as men, and have the same right to vote and should not be excluded except in those cases in which men are excluded—i. e., when they are lunatics, idiots, infants, illiterates or convicts. It would be retributive justice if those men who strive to keep their mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters in that class should themselves be added to those disfranchised classes.

This is a world-wide movement. In Australia, New Zealand, throughout Canada, in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in Norway and Denmark, Iceland, and the larger part of this country, women are voters, and hardly a month passes without some additions. In the last few weeks 21,000,000 women voted in Germany and only 18,000,000 men. In Poland they also voted at the election this month on a parity with men. They have likewise been admitted in the last sixty days to suffrage in Hungary, Austria, Sweden, and in Holland. In China and in Russia they have also been admitted to the suffrage; but in the unsettled condition of those countries we do not know how far either men or women have availed them-

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selves of their right. We know that in England, where a few years ago they were imprisoning Mrs. Pankhurst and her associates for desiring the suffrage, last December 6,000,000 women voted, and Lloyd George has stated that is was owing to their conservative vote that he defeated the radical and socialistic element in that country.

The province of woman is the home. It is for that very reason that above all she should be entitled to the vote. She has more at stake. Sanitation, morals, and education are peculiarly her care, and upon these things rest at last the welfare of every nation.

In North Carolina and throughout the south the democratic party has owed its power largely to the moral influence and support of the women. Politicians who look solely to the machine and manipulation for success are not aware how dangerously near they are to alienating that powerful influence from all support of the democratic party. Wisdom requires heed before it is too late. This warning is given in good faith

and with a knowledge that the danger is greater, and that the disaster would be more deadly than can be conceived.

Josh Billings said that he never "argued agin a fact". When we see the steady progress this movement has made in the nation and throughout the world; when we consider that in the republican congress already elected and which is to meet in a few weeks in special session, two-thirds of each house are pledged to the prompt passage of the Suffrage amendment, and that in all human probability it will be ratified next winter even if special sessions of some legislatures are necessary, and therefore, that it is almost a certainty that the women in 1920 will not only be voting for president, as they are already entitled to do in twenty-four states, but for a purpose in all of the forty-eight states, that man is judicially blinded who does not see that continued opposition is arguing against an accomplished fact.

The movement on behalf of suffrage is like an elemental force of

### WHETHER THERE BE PROPHECIES THEY SHALL FAIL



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