

## - Equity of Suffrage -

When Adam and Eve were placed in the garden, they were instructed to till it and keep it. Being subjected to the Divine law, they were deprived of their luxurious habitation upon the first betrayal of that trust.

From that time on down through the ages, we find men whose only aim is freedom, but whose right to govern and be governed comes from the general good of the whole community. They do not consider even the right to help in the moulding of the power which they are to obey as being a natural right. Men are not born free and equal, consequently the right of suffrage, does not stand as the necessary pillar of the social state, but becomes a question of expediency and its practical application demands all the skill of acquired in-



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tellect in the judgments of those who exercise it. They must educate themselves to it.

Their ideas are perfectly natural. A ship's crew, having lost its captain, was without a commander. In selecting a proper officer, one would think, they would make their choice from the most experienced, but because all lives were in danger they all had a right to vote. The result was the selection of an inferior seaman and soon the vessel, with its logical crew, was a wreck upon the rocks. Anyone, with scarcely a critical eye, can see the point here. Place two men at work in the same field and one will continue a common laborer while the other may become a Clay or a Lincoln. Can both frame laws equally as practical?

Upon this basis many countries are now governed. Certain classes



grow up to maturity cultivating themselves in the moral obligations of statesmen, and to them is given the sole power of making laws. The others the laboring classes till the soil, manufacture, and are content to be governed.

But as the world is gradually evolving from its old forms and customs; as the shackles of servitude are gradually becoming rusted; the people plead for a universal rule, "a government of the people by the people and for the people". The negro of America has been leased from bondage and intrusted with power equal to his masters. And why? It was not only to save the people of the south from themselves and the nation from detriment on their account; but because of the obligation which we owed to the negro as a fellow being.



Gradually the enlightened masses pray for the responsibility to rest on all alike and not on a few and gradually suffrage becomes a moral natural right only restricted by the expressed judgment of the majority.

When our forefathers framed the Constitution, of the United States, it is doubtful if the most sanguine of them conceived, in his wildest dreams, such a population as we have today. They showed remarkable wisdom in all their laws, but diversity of character compels annihilation of defects brought out by modern ideas. An extremely heterogeneous mass of immigrants fills our country, adding to its strength but deprived of moral obligations in assisting in making the laws which they must obey. To such Congress has given power to become



the sons of our republic, but under laws regulated by the individual states. As a result different periods are agreed upon and thus some states are overladen with a foreign element, because of the ease by which enfranchisement is obtained.

Can anyone claim that such a code of laws is just?

There is no equitable solution of the problem, except in a common "all governing" law. And, because the average ability of American citizens is greater than that of alien residents, it becomes their duty, as a wise people, to use the most easily obtained means for safety. In America, it means to enfranchise the woman, to bestow upon her the right of suffrage.

She does not differ essentially in her intellect from man



and even if she did it can be but for the better. Granting that Mrs Stowe could never have written "Paradise Lost", that Mrs. Cleveland could never have tridged through bloody sieges to don the plumes of a Napoleon, does it lessen their resources or weaken their capabilities? You or I will never become a Webster, but is that any reason for saying we cannot vote? Because your mother or my mother has not the physical strength of a man, shall she be deprived of civil rights?

Woman can no longer safely trust to the watchful and generous care of man. Her common sense and vast experience have proved the fallaciousness of a trusted right in their votes.

No longer can the division of labor, which confines her to the household cares, bind



her to the narrowmindedness of her great grandmother. Female seminaries and coeducation have elevated the minds of the present women to a higher level. Women teachers and authors are filling places vacated by the world's most renowned; "yet with what gracious condescension little men continue to lecture and preach on the female sphere and female duties"

It is not because of the foreign element, which flock to our shores, that we would enfranchise the woman. It is not because she pays taxes and should help regulate those things from her savings that we would give her the ballot. But it is because of her abstinence from evil tendencies, which makes her man's superior and a fit person to govern a great people. What is more pure than a woman's character;



what more fitting to raise the morals of a nation than the expression of her views brought on by experience with an intoxicated club member for a husband?

The curse of rum, which for centuries has weakened the intellect of man, yet lives a detriment to us all.

Of the eight hundred and fifty prisoners, in our penitentiary, but twenty-five are women: of the twenty-seven church members which attend our class-meeting but five are men. Does not this plainly show upon whom we must rely, to maintain the principles of morality? If this condition of affairs is not soon altered "there will not be men enough in heaven to sing bass".

Strong as we are, we need the energy that slumbers in our mothers breasts to make



us stranger. We want no longer any humble melancholy drudges of the women. We want the activity of a cheerful helper, and not to endure the moral blight which the existence of unappreciated effort necessarily inflicts upon those among whom it exists.

Exclude the women from political rights; teach them that the luxurious privilege of suffrage is to be enjoyed by men alone and you stamp them as a degraded caste inferior to the colored man who was for so long in abject slavery. Enfranchise the woman and you make a new nation; disfranchise her and you have sapped the foundations of loyalty, dried up the springs of patriotism, expelled liberty from our literature and made your sisters the objects of your selfishness.

W. H. Edelblute.