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heart and hatred of men. Their legislative programme is licence for themselves or else restrictions for man.

Next there file past the incomplete. One side of their nature has undergone atrophy, with the result that they have lost touch with their living fellow men and women. Their programme is to convert the whole world into an epicene institution—an epicene institution in which man and woman shall everywhere work side by side at the self-same tasks and for the self-same pay. These wishes can never by any possibility be realized. Even in animals—I say *even*, because in these at least one of the sexes has periods of complete quiescence—male and female cannot be safely worked side by side, except when they are incomplete. While in the human species safety can be obtained, it can be obtained only at the price of continual constraint. And even then woman, though she protests that she does not require it, and that she does not receive it, practically always does receive differential treatment at the hands of man. It would be well, I often think, that every woman should be clearly told—and the woman of the world will immediately understand—that when man sets his face against the proposal to bring in an epicene world he does so because he can do his best work only in surroundings where he is perfectly free from suggestion and from restraint, and from the onus which all differential treatment imposes. And I may add in connexion with my own profession that when a medical man asks that he should not be the yoke-fellow of a medical woman he does so also because he would wish to keep up as between men and women—even when they are doctors—some of the modesties and reticences upon which our civilization has been built up. Now the medical woman is of course never on the side of modesty, or in favour of any reticences. Her desire for knowledge does not allow of these.

Inextricably mixed up with the types which we have been discussing is the type of woman whom Dr. Leonard Williams's recent letter brought so distinctly before our eyes—the woman who is poisoned by her misplaced self-esteem, and who flies out at every man who does not pay homage to her intellect. She is the woman who is affronted when a man avers that *for him* the glory of woman lies in her power of attraction, in her capacity for motherhood, and in unswerving allegiance to the ethics which are special to her sex. I have heard such an intellectually-embittered woman say, though a man had taken her to wife, that “never in the whole course of her life had a man ever as much as done her a kindness.”

THE QUESTION OF INTELLECTUAL EQUALITY.

The programme of this type of woman is, as a preliminary, to compel man to admit her claim to be his intellectual equal, and, that done, to compel him to divide up everything with her to the last farthing, and so make her also his financial equal. And her journals exhibit to us the kind of Parliamentary representative she desiderates. He humbly, hat in hand, asks for his orders from a knot of washerwomen standing arms a-kimbo. Following in the wake of these embittered human beings come troops of girls just grown up. All these will assure you, these young girls—and what is seething in their minds is stirring also in the minds in the girls in the colleges and schools which are staffed by unmarried suffragists—that woman has suffered all manner of indignity and injustice at the hands of man. And these young girls have been told about the intellectual and moral and financial value of woman—such tales as it never entered into the heart of man to conceive. The programme of these young women is to be married upon their own terms. Man shall—so runs their scheme—work for their support—to that end giving up his freedom and putting

himself under orders for many hours of the day ; but they themselves must not be asked to give up any of their liberty to him, or to subordinate themselves to his interests or to obey him in anything. To obey *a man* would be to commit the unpardonable sin.

It is not necessary in connexion with a movement which proceeds on the lines set out above any further to labour the point that there is in it an element of mental disorder. It is plain that it is there.

A FATUOUS DOCTRINE.

There is also a quite fatuous element in the programmes of the militant suffragist. We have this element, for instance, in the doctrine that, notwithstanding the fact that the conditions of the labour market deny it to her, woman ought to receive the same wage as a man for the same work. This doctrine is fatuous, because it leaves out of sight that, even if woman succeeds in doing the same work as man, he has behind him a much larger reserve of physical strength. As soon as a time of strain comes a reserve of strength and freedom from periodic indisposition is worth paying extra for. Fatuous also is the dogma that woman ought to have the same pay for the same work—fatuous because it leaves out of sight that woman's commercial value in many of the best fields of work is subject to a very heavy discount by reason of the fact that she cannot, like a male employee, work cheek by jowl with a male employer, nor work among men as a man with his fellow-employees. So much for the woman suffragist's protest that she can conceive of no reason for a differential rate of pay for man. Quite as fatuous are the marriage projects of the militant suffragist. Every woman of the world could tell her—whispering it into her private ear—that if a sufficient number of men should come to the conclusion that it was not worth their while to

marry except on the terms of fair give-and-take, the suffragist woman's demands would have to come down. It is not at all certain that the institution of matrimony—which, after all, is the great instrument in the levelling up of the financial situation of woman—can endure apart from some willing subordination on the part of the wife.

It will have been observed that there is in these programmes, in addition to the element of mental disorder and to the element of the fatuous, which have been animadverted upon, also a very ugly element of dishonesty. In reality the very kernel of the militant suffrage movement is the element of immorality. There is here not only immorality in the ends which are in view, but also in the methods adopted for the attainment of those ends. We may restrict ourselves to indicating wherein lies the immorality of the methods.

There is no one who does not discern that woman in her relations to physical force stands in quite a different position to man. Out of that different relation there must of necessity shape itself a special code of ethics for woman. And to violate that code must be for woman immorality.

WOMAN AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.

So far as I have seen, no one in this controversy has laid his finger upon the essential point in the relations of woman to physical violence. It has been stated—and in the main quite truly stated—that woman in the mass cannot, like man, back up her vote by bringing physical force into play. But the woman suffragist here counters by insisting that she as an individual may have more physical force than an individual man. And it is quite certain—and it did not need suffragist raids and window-breaking riots to demonstrate it—that woman in the mass can bring a certain

amount of physical force to bear. The true inwardness of the relation in which woman stands to physical force lies not in the question of her having it at command, but in the fact that she cannot put it forth without placing herself within the jurisdiction of an ethical law. The law against which she offends when she resorts to physical violence is not an ordinance of man, it is not written in the statutes of any State, it has not been enunciated by any human law-giver. It belongs to those unwritten and unassailable and irreversible commandments of religion, ἀγραπτα κάσφαλλῇ θεῶν νόμιμα, which we suddenly and mysteriously become aware of when we see them violated. The law which the militant suffragist has violated is among the ordinances of that code which forbade us even to think of employing our native Indian troops against the Boers, which brands it as an ignominy when a man leaves his fellow in the lurch and saves his own life, and which makes it an outrage for a man to do violence to a woman. To violate any ordinance of that code is more dishonourable than to transgress every statutory law. We see acknowledgment of it in the fact that even the uneducated man in the street resents it as an outrage to civilization when he sees a man strike a blow at a woman. But to the man who is committing the outrage it is a thing simply unaccountable that any one should fly out at him. In just such a case is the militant suffragist. She cannot understand why any one should think civilization is outraged when she scuffles in the street mud with a policeman.

If she asks for an explanation it perhaps behoves a man to supply it.

Up to the present in the whole civilized world there has ruled a truce of God as between man and woman. That truce is based upon the solemn covenant that within the frontiers of civilization (outside them of course the rule lapses) the weapon of physical force may not be applied by man against woman nor by

woman against man. Under this covenant the reign of force which prevails in the world without comes to an end when a man enters his household. Under this covenant that half of the human race which most needs protection is raised up above the waves of violence. Within the terms of this compact everything that woman has received from man and everything man receives from woman is given as a free gift. Again, under this covenant a full half of the programme of Christianity has been realized ; and a foundation has been laid upon which it may be possible to build higher, and perhaps finally in the ideal future to achieve the abolition of physical violence and war. And it is this solemn covenant, the covenant so faithfully kept by man, which has been violated by the militant suffragist in the interest of her morbid, stupid, ugly, and dishonest programmes.

Is it wonder if men feel that they have had enough of the militant suffragist, and that the State would be well rid of her if she were crushed under the soldiers' shields like the traitor woman at the Tarpeian rock ?

THE FUNCTION OF THE VOTE.

We have sufficiently considered her, and with her we have considered the thousands of her sympathizers and subscribers. We may turn now to that section of woman suffragists—one is almost inclined to doubt whether it any longer exists—which is opposed to all violent measures, though it numbers in its ranks women who are stung to the quick by the thought that man, who will concede the vote to the lowest and most degraded of his own sex, withholds it from “even the noblest woman in England.”

When that excited and somewhat pathetic appeal is addressed to us we have only to consider what a vote really gives. The Parliamentary vote is an instrument—and a quite astonishingly disappointing instrument it is—

for obtaining legislation ; that is, for directing that the agents of the State shall in certain defined circumstances bring into application the weapon of physical compulsion. Further, the vote is an instrument by which we give to this or that group of statesmen authority to supervise and keep in motion the whole machinery of compulsion.

To take examples. A vote cast in favour of a Bill for the prohibition of alcohol—if we could find opportunity for giving a vote on such a question—would be a formal expression of our desire to apply through the agency of the paid servants of the State that same physical compulsion which Mrs. Carrie Nation put into application in her “bar-smashing” crusades. And a vote which puts a Government into office in a country where murder is punishable by death is a vote which, by agency of the hangman, puts the noose round the neck of every convicted murderer. So that the difference between voting and direct resort to force is simply the difference between exerting physical violence in person and exerting it through the intermediary of an agent of the State.

The thing, therefore, that is withheld from the noblest woman in England while it is conceded to the man who is lacking in nobility of character is in the end only an instrument by which she might bring into application physical force. When one realizes that that same noblest woman of England would shrink from any personal exercise of violence, one would have thought that it would have come home to her that it is not precisely her job to commission a man forcibly to shut up a publichouse or to hang a murderer.

One cannot help asking oneself whether, if she understood what a vote really means, the noblest woman in England would still go on complaining of the bitter insult which is done to her in withholding the vote.

A REPLY TO THE POLITICIAN.

But the opportunist—the practical politician, as he calls himself—will perhaps here intervene, holding some such language as this :—“ Granting all you say, granting, for the sake of argument, that the principle of giving votes to woman is unsound, and that evil must ultimately come of it, how can you get over the fact that no very conspicuous harm has resulted from woman suffrage in the countries which have adopted it ? And can any firm reasons be rendered for the belief that the giving of votes to women in England would be any whit more harmful than in the Colonies ? ”

A very few words will supply the answer.

The evils of woman suffrage lie, first, in the fact that to give the vote to women is to give it to voters who as a class are quite incompetent to adjudicate upon political issues ; secondly, in the fact that women are a class of voters who cannot effectively back up their votes by force ; and, thirdly, in the fact that it may seriously embroil man and woman.

The first two aspects of the question have already in this controversy been adequately dealt with. There remains the last issue.

From the point of view of this issue the conditions which we have to deal with in this country are the absolute antithesis of those ruling in any of the countries and States which have adopted woman suffrage.

When woman suffrage was adopted in these countries it was adopted in some for one reason, in others for another. In some it was adopted because it appealed to the *doctrinaire* politician as the proper logical outcome of a democratic and Socialistic policy. In others it was adopted because opportunist politicians saw in it an instrument by which they might gain electioneering advantages. So much was this the case that it sometimes happened that the woman's vote was sprung upon a community which was quite unprepared and indifferent

to it. The cause of woman suffrage was thus in the countries of which we speak neither in its inception nor in its realization a question of revolt of woman against the oppression of man. It had and has no relation to the programmes of the militant suffragists as set out at the outset of this letter. By virtue of this all the evils which spring from the embroiling of man and woman have in the countries in question been conspicuously absent. Instead of seeing himself confronted by a section of embittered and hostile women voters which might at any time outvote him and help to turn an election, man there sees his women-folk voting practically everywhere in accordance with his directions and lending him a hand to outvote his political opponent. Whether or no such voting is for the good of the common weal is beside our present question. But it is clearly an arrangement which leads to amity and peace between a man and his women-kind and through these to good will towards all women.

In England everything is different. If woman suffrage comes in here it will have come as a surrender to a very violent feminist agitation—an agitation which we have traced back to our excess female population and the associated abnormal physiological conditions. If ever Parliament concedes the vote to woman in England it will be accepted by the militant suffragist, not as an eirenicon, but as a victory which she will value only for the better carrying on of her fight *à outrance* against the oppression and injustice of man.

A conciliation with hysterical revolt is neither an act of peace nor will it bring peace.

Nor would the conferring of the vote upon women carry with it any advantages from the point of view of finding a way out of the material entanglements in which woman is enmeshed, and thus ending the war between man and woman. One has only to ask oneself whether or not it would help the legislator in remodelling

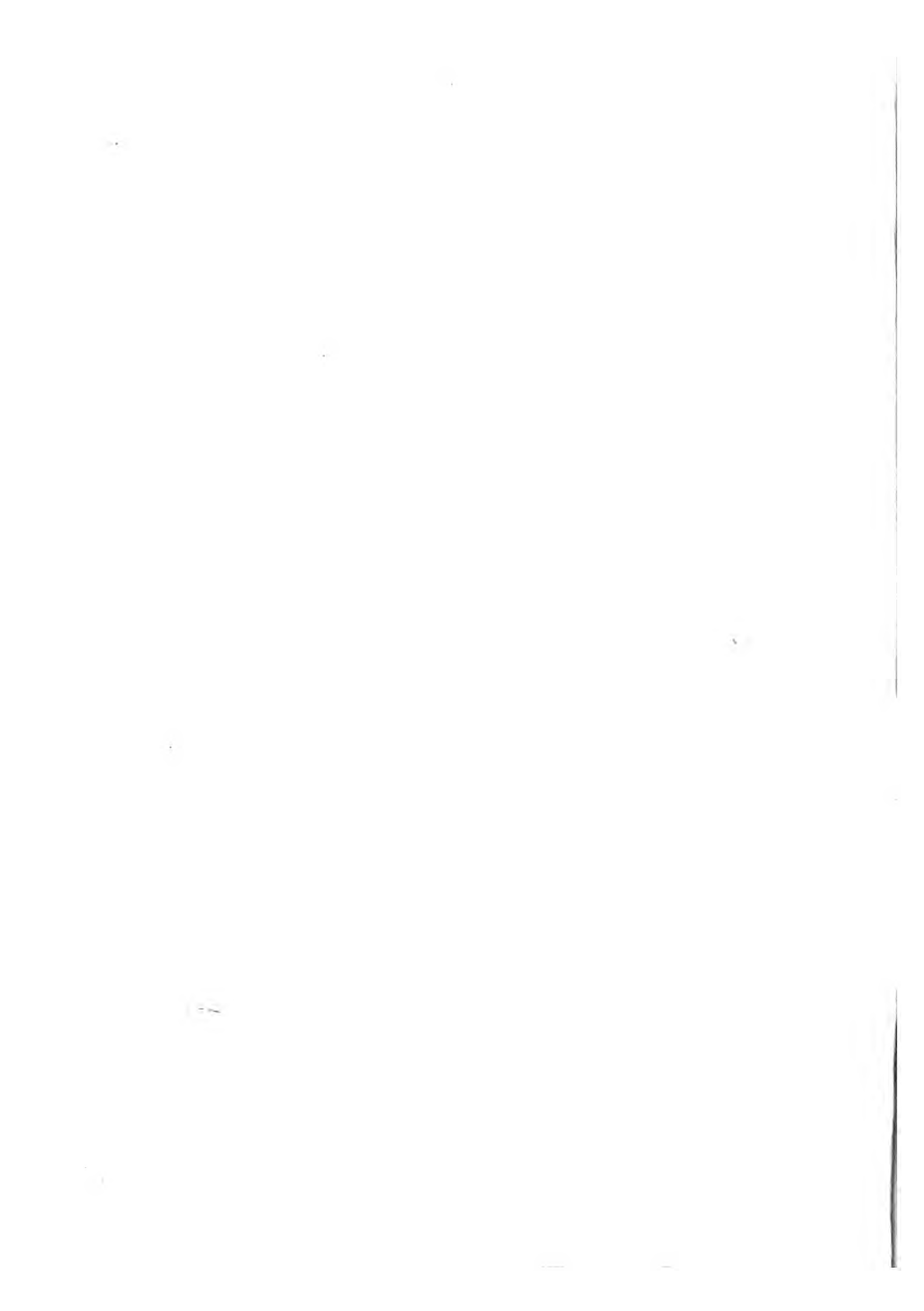
the divorce or the bastardy laws if he had conjoined with him an unmarried militant suffragist as assessor.

Peace will come again. It will come when woman ceases to believe and to teach all manner of evil of man despitefully. It will come when she ceases to impute to him as a crime her own natural disabilities, when she ceases to resent the fact that man cannot and does not wish to work side by side with her. And peace will return when every woman for whom there is no room in England seeks "rest" beyond the sea, "each one in the house of her husband," and when the woman who remains in England comes to recognize that she can without sacrifice of dignity give a willing subordination to the husband or father, who, when all is said and done, earns and lays up money for her.

March 27.

A. H. WRIGHT.





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