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Votes for Women: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921

Woman suffrage in New Jersey. An address delivered by Lucy Stone, at a hearing before the New Jersey Legislature, March 6th, 1867

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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
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AT A HEARING BEFORE THE
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WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN NEW JERSEY

Gentleman of the Committee:-

Grateful for the hearing so promptly accorded, I will proceed without preliminary to state the object of the petition, and to urge its claim.

Women ask you to submit to the people of New Jersey amendments to the Constitution of the State, striking out respectively the words "white" and "male" from Article 2, Section 1, thus enfranchising the women and the colored men, who jointly constitute a majority of our adult citizens. You will thereby establish a republican form of government.

I am to speak to you of Suffrage. In any other country, it would be necessary to show that political power naturally vests in the people. But here the whole ground is granted in advance. When our fathers came out of the war of the Revolution, made wiser by those seven years of suffering, they affirmed these truths to be self-evident: "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

The Declaration of Independence, affirming these self-evident truths, was unanimously adopted by the representatives of the thirteen United States. The descendants of those representatives have held these principles in theory ever since. We have called it "The Immortal Declaration." It has been read in every State, on every Fourth of July, since 1776. We have honored its authors and the day that gave it utterance, as we honor no other day and no other men. Not only we, but, the wide world round, men suffering under hoary despotisms, by a quick instinct turn their longing eyes to this country, and know that in the realization of our self-evident

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truths lies the charm by which their own bonds shall be broken.

New Jersey, in her State Constitution, in the very first Section of the first Article affirms that, "All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness." Again in Article 2. That, "All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection and benefit of the people, and they have a right, at all times, to alter, or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it."

Gentlemen will see it is no new claim that women are making. They only ask for the practical application of admitted, self-evident truths. If "all political power is inherent in the people," why have women, who

are more than half the entire population of this State, no political existence? Is it because they are not people? Only a madman would say of a congregation of negroes, or of women, that there were no people there. They are counted in the census, and also in the ratio of representation of every State, to increase the political power of white men. Women are even held to be citizens without the full rights of citizenship, but to bear the burden of "taxation without representation," which is "tyranny."

"Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." Not of the governed property-holders, nor of the governed white men, nor of the governed married men, nor of the governed fighting men; but of the governed. Sad to say, this principle, so beautiful in theory, has never been fully applied in practice!

What is Suffrage? It is the prescribed method whereby, at a certain time and place, the will of the citizen is registered. It is the form in which the popular assent or dissent is indicated, in reference to principles, measures and men. The essence of suffrage is rational choice. It follows, therefore, under our theory of government, that every individual

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capable of independent rational choice is rightfully entitled to vote.

The alien who is temporarily resident among us is excepted. He is still a citizen of his native country, from which he may demand protection and to which he owes allegiance. But if he become a permanent resident and renounce allegiance to foreign potentates and powers, then he is admitted to all the rights of citizenship,-suffrage included.

The minor is excepted. He is held an infant in law. He has not attained mental maturity. He is under guardianship, as being incapable of rational choice. He cannot legally buy, nor sell, nor make a valid contract. But when the white male infant arrives at years of discretion, he may do all these things and vote also.

Idiots and lunatics are excepted, because they are incapable of rational choice and so cannot vote.

None of these cases conflict with the principle. But when a person is disfranchised because he is a negro, the principle of rational, individual choice is violated. For the negro possesses every human faculty. Many colored persons are wiser and better than many white voters. During the late war, the negroes were loyal to a man. Neither threats nor bribes could induce them to join their enemies and ours. They freely shared the poverty of their small cabins with our sick and wounded soldiers, tenderly offered the cooling cup to their fevered lips, and, again and again, at great personal peril guided them to our lines. Two hundred thousand colored soldiers wore the blue uniform of the United States and fought bravely in the Union ranks. Their blood was mingled with ours on many a hard-fought field. Yet this class, so loyal and patriotic, have no vote in the loyal State of New Jersey!

So, too, when a woman is disfranchised because she is a woman, the principle is violated. For woman possesses every human faculty. No man would admit, even to himself, that his mother is not capable of rational choice. And if the woman he has chosen for a wife is a fool, that fact lies at least as much against his ability to make a rational choice as against hers, and should accordingly put them both into the class of excepted persons.

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The great majority of women are more intelligent, better educated, and far more moral than multitudes of men whose right to vote no man questions.

Women are loyal and patriotic. During the late war, many a widow not only yielded all her sons to the cause of freedom, but strengthened their failing courage when the last good-bye was said, and kept them in the field by words of lofty cheer and the hope of a country really free.

An only son, crowned with the honors of Harvard University, living in elegance and wealth, with every avenue to distinction open before him, was offered the Colonelcy of a regiment of colored volunteers. His mother, with pulses such as thrilled the proud mother of the Gracchi when she called her sons her jewels, hailed that son's acceptance of the offer of fellowship with the lowliest for his country's sake. And when he fell, murdered at Fort Wagner, and was "buried with his negroes," her grief for his loss was more than equaled by the high satisfaction she felt that that young life, so nobly lived, was so nobly given back to Him from whom it came. That mother is classed politically with madmen and fools. By her side stand ten million American women who are taxed without representation and governed without consent. Women are fined, imprisoned, hanged-and to no one of them was ever yet granted a trial by "a jury of her peers."

Every Fourth of July gentlemen invite women to "reserved seats for the ladies," and then read what these women too well knew before, that governments are just only when they obtain the consent of the governed. Strange to say, men do not seem to know that what they read condemns their practice.

But it may be said, "the consent of the governed is only a theory, a glittering generality"-that, in fact, the governed do not consent and never have consented. Yet this theory is the "golden rule" of political justice. The right of the citizen to participate in making the laws is the sole foundation of political morality. As Mr. Lincoln said of slavery-if a government without the consent of the governed is not wrong, nothing political is wrong. Deny this and you justify despotism. On

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the principle of limited suffrage, aristocracy is blameless and republican institutions are impossible. Can you believe that when God established an immutable code of morals for the individual, he left society without a moral code-a mere battle-ground of force and fraud? The men who deny political rights to the negro and the woman can show no title to their own.

Now, as there can be no argument against a self-evident truth, so none has ever been attempted. But ridicule, without stint or measure has been so heaped upon those who claim political equality, that many women have been induced to deny that they desire it, lest "the world's dread laugh," which few can bear, should burst upon them as unsexed viragos, "strong-minded women who wish to drive men to the nursery while they take the rostrum." As, in the days of the Revolution, Tory priests sought to weaken the hands of our fathers by the Scripture, iterated and reiterated, "Honor the King," so now the haters of human liberty hurl texts at women and do not know that the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them,"-that central truth round which all other divine utterance revolves-would settle this question in favor of women.

We are asked in triumph: "What good would it do women and negroes to vote"? We answer: "What good does it do white men to vote? Why do *you* want to vote, gentlemen? Why did the Revolutionary fathers fight seven years for a vote? Why do the English workingmen want to vote? Why do their friends-John Bright and Thomas Hughes and the liberal party-want the suffrage for them?" Women want to vote, just as men do, because it is the only way in which they can be protected in their rights. To men, suffrage stand for "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work." The workingmen of England do not get that because they have had no vote. Negroes and women in America do not get it, because they have no vote.

In Auburn, New York, the teachers of the public schools, male and female, united last spring in a petition for an increase of salary. So \$200 was added to the salary of each

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man, and only \$25 to that of each woman. The women, indignant at the injustice, wrote an ironical letter of thanks to the Board of Education for their very large liberty. Thereupon the Board required them to retract the letter, and coupled the demand with a threat of dismissal if the teachers did not comply. A part, driven by necessity, succumbed. A part, who preferred their own self-respect and a poorer crust, refused. Would those women have been thus treated, either in regard to salary or dismissal, if, as voters, they could have had a voice in the selection of the Board for the following years?

It is said that women are now represented by their husbands, fathers, brothers or sons. Would *men* consent to be represented by their wives and sisters? If it were possible for any class to legislate well for another, it might be supposed that those who sustain to each other these tender relations, could do so. But we find, on the contrary, that in every State, the laws affecting woman as wife, mother and widow, are different from and worse than those which men make for themselves as husband, father and widower.

I will quote a few laws to show how women are represented in New Jersey.

A widower is entitled to the life use of all his deceased wife's real estate, but a widow is entitled only to the life use of one-third of her deceased husband's real estate.

A widower succeeds to the whole of his deceased wife's personal property, whether she will, or not, with the right to administer on her estate without giving bonds. But a widow has only one-third of her deceased husband's personal property (or one-half of it if he leaves no children), but none at all if he choose to will it to any one else, and if she administer on his estate she must give bonds.

A mother inherits the whole of her deceased child's estate only when that child leaves no brothers, nor sisters, nor children of brothers and sisters, and no father. But a father inherits the whole property of such a child when all these survive. In this State, where my child was born, a father has the sole custody of the children. The law provides (see Revised Statutes, page 915, Sec.9,) that "any father, whether

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he be of age, or not, by a deed executed in his life-time, or by a last will, may dispose of the custody of his child, *born or to be born* -and such disposition shall be good against the child's mother and against every other person. And if the mother, or any other person, shall attempt to acquire the custody of the child, she, or they shall be subject to an action for ravishment, or trespass." Thus, the minor, whom the law holds incompetent to make any valid contract, whose written promise to pay even is worthless, who is not old enough to vote, is empowered by law to come to her side, whose wild strife with death and

agony is ushering their child to life, to seize the new-born being and will it from her sight forever. The successful attempt on her part to recover her God-given right, the law calls "ravishment." The only woman in this State who is legally entitled to her child is the unhonored mother whose baby is a bastard!

By the law of New Jersey the sole definition of an orphan is "a fatherless child." And yet, in contempt, we are asked "why do women want to vote?" There are women, too, who say they "have all the rights they want!"

"When any husband and wife live in a state of separation, and have minor children, the Chancellor, the Supreme Court, or any Justice of said Court, may, if the children are brought before them by habeas corpus, make an order for the access of the mother to her infant child, or children, at such times and under such circumstances as they may direct-and if the child, or children are under seven years of age, shall make an order to deliver them to the mother, until they are seven." And then, still just as much in need of a mother's love, they must go back to the custody of the father. (Statutes page 361.)

Thus she has no legal right to her children, whose breast blessed their baby lips, whose tender care soothed their baby sorrows, whose hand guided their first tottering footsteps, and whose love for those who are "the bone of her bone and the flesh of her flesh" will last when all other love but the love of God shall fail!

"A widow may live forty days in the house of her deceased husband without paying rent, or even longer if her dower has not, within that time, been set off to her." But when the

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dower is assigned, this home, made by the mutual toil and thrift of husband and wife, this roof under which her children were born and where her husband died, hallowed by associations of their early love and of her recent loss, can no longer give her shelter, unless she pay rent. The very crops, which would have been her food if the strong arm on which she leaned were not cold in death, are no longer hers. Appraisers have searched cupboard, closet and drawer, have set a market value upon articles of which no money could pay the price to her;-a sale is made, and this woman is houseless, as well as widowed.

But if death had chosen her for its victim, instead of her husband, the widower could remain in undistributed possession of house and property, could gather his unmothered children around the still warm heart-stone, desolate indeed, but not robbed.

A husband can sell his real estate and make a valid deed subject only to the wife's right of dower. But a wife can neither sell her personal property, nor her real estate, nor make a valid deed, without her husband's consent.

A husband can make a will of everything he possesses, except the dower of his wife. But a wife cannot will her personal property at all without her husband's consent indorsed upon the will. And even then if, after her death, the husband recall his consent before the will is admitted to probate, her will is null and void.

The above quotations show how women are now represented. They prove the truth of the old adage, "If you don't want your business done, send another; if you want it done, go yourself."

And still men object: "Women and negroes don't know enough to vote." As though it were possible for

us to do worse for ourselves than they have done for us. Do they fear we shall return evil for evil? This objection comes with an ill grace from those who welcome to the polls voters of every degree of ignorance, so only they be white men. When a white man comes of age, it is never asked whether he knows enough to vote. He may not know the first letter of the alphabet. He may be an habitual drunkard, a haunter of

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gambling houses and brothels. But he belongs to the "white male" aristocracy, and so the way is prepared, without his asking, by which he shall take his place with the self-constituted sovereigns, to whose law-making power women and negroes must bow in silent submission. All such men think that "women don't know enough to vote." Will intelligent men rank their wives politically lower than these?

It is said that "if women vote it will make domestic discord." On the contrary, we always find that those who wish to secure the votes of others are extremely polite to them. Witness any election. "My dear fellow, I rely on your invaluable aid." "In this emergency, America expects every man to do his duty; let me treat you." "Here is a five dollar bill." "How is your good wife? Are the children well?" And straightway the deluded voter goes after him to vote, perhaps against his own interest and that of the State.

But seriously, does any man mean to say that if his wife have a different political opinion from his own and dare to express it, he will quarrel with her? Will he make his own narrowness and ill-temper a reason why his wife should not exercise a God-given right? If so, the argument is against him and not against her. A husband and wife often hold different religious opinions, respect their differences, and go quietly to their respective churches. It will be so in politics among decent men. But the unfortunate woman who has married a brute needs a vote all the more. With or without a vote, he will pound her all the same.

It is said that "it will demoralize women to vote." On the contrary, the presence of women would purify politics. Why is the political meeting which admits women an orderly assemblage, while that which excludes them is boisterous? If the wives and daughters of ignorant and intemperate men are not demoralized by daily association with them, it is scarcely possible that going once or twice a year to vote would do so. Are women demoralized by going to the market, or the post-office? But experience has already proved the contrary. Women now vote in Michigan, Kentucky, and Canada upon school questions. In Holland, women who are property holders vote. In Sweden they do the same. In Austria,

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women who are Nobles in their own right, are members of the Diet.

But we have an example nearer home. In New Jersey, women and negroes voted from 1776 to 1807, a period of thirty-one years. The facts are as follows:

In 1709, a Provincial law confined the privilege of voting to "male freeholders having one hundred acres of land in their own right, or 50 current money of the province in real and personal estate," and during the whole of the Colonial period these qualifications continued unchanged.

But on the 2d of July, 1776, (two days before the Declaration of Independence) the Provincial Congress of New Jersey, at Burlington, adopted a Constitution, which remained in force until 1844, of which Sec. 4 is as follows: "Qualifications of Electors for members of Legislatures. All inhabitants of this Colony, of

full age, who are worth 50 Proclamation money, clear estate, in the same, and have resided within the country, in which they claim a vote, for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote for representatives in Council and Assembly, and also for all other public officers that shall be elected by the people of the country at large."

Sec. 7 provides that the Council and Assembly jointly shall elect some fit person within the Colony, to be Governor. This Constitution remained in force until 1844.

Thus, by a deliberate change of the terms "male freeholder," to "all inhabitants," suffrage and ability to hold the highest office in the State, were conferred both on women and negroes.

In 1790 a committee of the Legislature reported a bill regulating elections, in which the words "he or she" are applied to voters, thus giving legislative indorsement to the alleged meaning of the Constitution.

In 1797 the Legislature passed an act to regulate elections, containing the following provisions:

"Sec. 9. Every voter shall openly and in full view deliver his or her ballot, which shall be a single written ticket containing the names of the person, or persons, for whom he or she votes," etc.

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"Sec. II. All free inhabitants of full age who are worth 50 Proclamation money, and have resided within the country in which they claim a vote, for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote for all public officers which shall be elected by virtue of this act, and no person shall be entitled to vote in any other township, or precinct, than that in which he, or she, doth actually reside at the time of the election."

Women voted. Yet no catastrophe, social or political, ensued. Women did not cease to be womanly. They did not neglect their domestic duties. Indeed the noble character and exalted patriotism of the women of New Jersey all through the Revolution have been the subject of historical eulogy. There is no evidence that the women and free negroes abused or neglected their political privileges. It is said that "women don't want to vote." Yet, in New Jersey, when they were allowed to vote, they manifested a growing interest in public affairs. Mr. Wm. A. Whitehead, of Newark, an opponent of female suffrage, expressly states that as time elapsed "the practice extended," and that "in the Presidential election of 1800, between Adams and Jefferson, females voted very generally throughout the State and such continued to be the case until the passage of the act (1807) excluding them from the polls. At first the law had been so construed as to admit single women only, but, as the practice extended, the construction of the privilege became broader and was made to include females 18 years old, married or single, and even women of color; at a contested election in Hunterdon County, in 1802, the votes of two or three such actually electing a member of the Legislature."

But, unfortunately, New Jersey remained a Slave State. And, like all communities cursed with slavery, she had no efficient system of free schools. Her soil proved less fertile than the newer States of the West, and the more enterprising class of emigrants passed on. The later settlers of New Jersey were far inferior to the original Quaker and Puritan elements which controlled the Constitutional Convention of 1776. Society retrograded. Slavery smothered the spirit of liberty. In the spring of 1807, a special election was held in Esser

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County to decide upon the location of a Court House and Jail-Newark and its vicinity struggling to retain the County buildings, Elizabethtown and its neighborhood striving to remove them to "Day's Hill."

The question excited intense interest, as the value of every man's property was thought to be involved. Not only was every legal voter, man or woman, white or black, brought out, but on both sides gross frauds were practised. The property qualification was generally disregarded; aliens and minors participated, and many persons "voted early and voted often." In Acquackanonk Township, thought to contain about 300 legal voters, over 1800 votes were polled, all but seven in the interest of Newark.

It does not appear that either women or negroes were more especially implicated in these frauds than the white men. But the affair caused great scandal and they seem to have been made the scapegoats.

When the Legislature assembled, they set aside the election as fraudulent, yet Newark retained the buildings. Then they passed an act (Nov. 15, 1807), restricting the suffrage to white male adult citizens, residents in the county for the twelve months preceding and worth 50 Proclamation money. But they went on, and provided that all such, whose names appeared on the last duplicate of State or county taxes should be considered worth 50; thus virtually abolishing the property qualification.

In 1820 the same provisions were repeated, and were maintained until 1844, when the present State Constitution was substituted.

Thus, in defiance of the letter of the Constitution and of the Statutes and uniform practice of a generation, women and negroes were disfranchised by an arbitrary act of the Legislature, without discussion and almost without comment. Yet the very act which disfranchised voters whose only crime was sex and color, set aside the property qualification and admitted to the polls all white male tax-payers, however ignorant or degraded. Therefore, women come before you here in New Jersey with a peculiar and special claim. We have had this right. We have exercised it. It has been unjustly and

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illegally taken away, without our consent, without our being allowed to say a word in our own defence. We have been condemned unheard, not by the people, but by the Legislature. To-day, we ask you, after the lapse of more than half a century, to give the people of New Jersey an opportunity of rectifying an act of atrocious political usurpation and injustice. For it was worse in principle than the "coup d'etat" of Louis Napoleon. He, at least, went through the form of submitting the question to the verdict of the people. The Legislature of 1807 did not submit it. Our disfranchisement can only be justified upon the robber's plea that "might makes right."

It is said that "women would vote as their husbands and brothers do." If so, why should men object? These votes, at least, they could get without bribery, and thus double the vote of their party. But does not one believe that the drunkards wives would vote with the drunkards? I do not.

It is said that "women do not want to vote." Then, let those who do not, stay away from the polls. No one is compelled to vote. Let those who do wish to vote be free to do so.

It is said that "women would sometimes want to hold office." Certainly. Those who bear the burdens of government should share its honors. Why should not a woman be President of the United States? The

names Elizabeth of England, of Catherine of Russia, of Isabella of Spain, of Maria Theresa of Austria—each of these proves woman's capacity to govern. And to-day, no sovereign in the world receives such love and loyalty as Queen Victoria. Are American women alone incompetent for great responsibilities? If so, alas, for free institutions!

It is said that "bad women will vote." True. But so do bad men. In both cases, the bad are a small minority.

It is asked "who will take care of the children while the mothers go to vote?" Who takes care of them now, while the mothers go to church fifty-two miles a year? Who takes care to them while the mothers are at parties and balls? If care-takers can be found for the children on all these occasions, it will be easy to find some one to care for them during the half hour it takes the mother to go and vote, that she may have

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a legal right to take care of them and to share in their guardianship. Hon. Richard O'Gorman made a speech in Cooper Institute, Sunday evening, Feb. 24, in behalf of the destitute poor of the South. He said, "The women now-a-days did not want loyalty, did not want respect for their sex. They demanded liberty and equality." Whereupon there was "great laughter and applause." He said, "Women would have to talk a great deal, before they could eradicate from the pure heart of man its delicate submission to the weaker, but nobler sex." More applause. Then he drew a picture of a country ravaged by a war of the "nobler sex," showing how very bad affairs would be in such a case, and he received more applause. In conclusion, he had the hardihood to make an especial appeal to the ladies, to help him raise the funds he wanted. By-and-by, when women have the ballot, Mr. O'Gorman will probably ask us to vote for him.

It is said that "women would be insulted and annoyed by contact with rowdies to the polls." A friend in Canada West told me that when the law was first passed, giving women who owned a certain amount of property, or who paid a given rental, a vote, he went trembling to the polls to see the result. The first woman who came was a large property holder in Toronto; with marked respect the crowd gave way as she advanced. She spoke her vote and walked quietly away, sheltered by her womanhood. It was all the protection she needed. But, if it seem best, what can be easier than to have separate polls for women?

These are some of the arguments against woman's demand that she may give her consent to the laws she is required to obey; that the political power which "inheres in the people" may be shared irrespective of sex, or color, by the more than half of the people to whom it is now denied.

Now let me state some of the reasons why women and negroes need to vote.

- 1. Because it is right. Wendell Phillips once said: "The broadest and most far-sighted intellect is utterly unable to foresee the ultimate consequences of any great social change. Ask yourself on all such occasions if there be any element of right and wrong in the question, any principle of

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clear, natural justice that turns the scale? If so, take your part with the perfect and abstract right, and trust God to see that it shall prove the expedient"

- 2. To repeal unjust laws, some of which I have quoted.

- 3. To enable women and negroes to share all profitable employments, and thus to obtain fair wages for fair work. Colored men can now only be bootblacks, barbers or waiters. It is skilled labor that pays. The skilled labor is monopolized by white men who shut them out. In the South, indeed, where white men think it a disgrace to work, the trades were all in the hands of colored men, before the War. The master pocketed the proceeds, but the negro proved his capacity to excel in every branch of skilled labor. While voters of every grade of intelligence are freely admitted to all industrial pursuits, colored men, who are not voters, but in every other respect competent, can get no openings but such as no one else will use. A colored mechanic, a Georgia slave, whose labor as a harness-maker earned him matter from three to five dollars a day, ran away to the North. A gentleman who had known him in the South found him a waiter in a hotel at Saratoga. Being asked why he did not work at his trade, he replied that he would gladly do so, but in the North, nobody would employ him. At one harness shop, the proprietor was willing to give him work, but every mechanic in his employ refused to "work with a nigger." Slavery had robbed him of all his earnings while a slave. He had no capital with which to establish himself. And so, this strong, skilful harness-maker, whose skill is his only capital, and who might provide for his family a comfortable home, and add to his country's wealth, can only earn as a waiter the pittance which supplies his daily bread. Give this colored man a vote and the harness shops will no longer exclude him. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, there is a smaller percentage of drunkards, paupers and criminals among our Northern black population than among our whites. You seldom see a negro beggar. To women also, who are not voters, and because they are not voters, only the poorest employments are open, except that of teaching. Even as a teacher, while a woman instructs

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as many pupils, for as many hours, in the same studies, and with equal ability, she gets only form one-third to one-half as much salary as a man gets who does similar work in every respect. This is true of the schools of New Jersey and of every other State. Horace Man advised the employment of female teachers because, he said, "they were better teachers and could be hired at a lower rate." The last annual report of the Superintendent of Public Schools in New York City stated that the salaries of the male Principals range from \$2000 to \$3000, those of female Principals from \$900 to \$1200; of male Assistants from \$800 to \$1500, those of female Assistants from \$500 to \$800. The great mass of women are crowded by the narrow range of female occupations into house-work and needle-work. But the law of supply and demand knows no exception, and these employments, always over-stocked, are always underpaid. Rarely, by these occupations, can a woman save anything, either to make a home, or for her old age. Is it strange that multitudes, driven by the hunger-cry for the bread that perishes, should fall into the ranks of abandoned women, whose dreadful trade the New York Legislature is actually petitioned to license? Oh, if legislators could only see that neither "midnight missions" nor licenses can avail to regulate or destroy this unspeakable crime! Let them arm woman with the ballot. Acknowledge her right to protect herself, and when society has had time to adjust itself to the new, conditions, this class will disappear. Believe me, when woman can earn her bread in honor, she will not seek it by disgrace.

- 4. Women and negroes need the ballot to secure equal means of education. The children of all white voters of every nationality are admitted to the public schools of New Jersey. But the colored children are excluded. In my immediate neighborhood is an aged colored man who owns and built with his own hands the house which he has occupied for more than twenty years. He possesses 2 acres of ground. For twenty-three years, he has paid taxes for the support of the school of his

district. All white children, native or foreign, go freely to the school, but neither his children, nor his grandchildren have ever been admitted. The colored school

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in Newark is so far away, that virtually no education is provided for the descendants of this respectable, law-abiding, tax paying colored man. The two disfranchised classes, women and negroes, are the only ones excluded from the highest schools of the State, from the colleges, from the schools of Law, Medicine, and Theology. The avenues to the highest and widest spheres of influence are thus closed to us both.

But, in Boston, colored men are voters. What follows? Their children are in all the schools, doing as well as white children. They are admitted to Harvard College. Two colored men are members of the Legislature, and several others are lawyers in successful practice. Thus it is easy to see how much better it is, as a matter of policy, to open to every class the avenues to respectability and usefulness, instead of incurring, by shutting them out, the inevitable result of ignorance and degradation. The vote is a power. With the vote women can protect themselves. In the District of Columbia, previous to the passage of the recent suffrage bill, the colored people had been for years unable to get their share of the public school fund. Within a week after the passage of the bill, \$10,000 was voted to them, without their asking, by the very men who had hitherto refused the money. At the late election in Georgetown, D. C., the colored men cast a solid vote for a loyal mayor, and elected him. Their quiet and orderly behavior in face of the grossest provocation was worthy of all praise.

Again, Society needs the direct, responsible influence of women to purify politics. Men too often think and speak of politics as "a dirty pool," an ignoble scramble for place and power, a scene of bribery and intrigue. Such is not the American idea of politics. Such will not be the case when women share the political life of the nation. Our legislation now lacks precisely what women can give and what no other class can give—viz., moral tone, a recognition of higher principles than were force and personal interest. Women will influence legislation by their tastes and character. Being temperate, they will be a power for temperance. Being chaste, they will repress licentiousness. Being peaceful, they will discourage war. Being religious and humane, they will create a religious and humane spirit in legislation.

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In all ages, principles have been symbolized by female forms. Wisdom is represented by a woman. So, too, are Victory, Peace and Mercy. Liberty is a Goddess. These ideal figures all stand in our National Capitol chiselled in marble, silent, but perpetual reminders that from the earliest period the instinct of the race has, in this way, pointed to the fact that woman should be admitted to the administration of Justice, the guardianship of Liberty, and the dispensation of Wisdom.

One great practical argument for woman suffrage is the effect which the exercise of the duties of citizenship would exert upon the character and life of women. It would enlarge their sphere of thought, by obliging them, like men, to think upon great questions of public interest. They would learn to care less for fashion and folly, more for the duties of life. They would develop habits of self-reliance and independence, and rise out of the sphere of personalities into that of principles. As the European woman is more intelligent and virtuous than the Oriental woman shut up in the seraglio, so the American woman,

who is also a citizen, when she is a voting citizen, will become more of a woman from her higher range of thought and feeling. She will be a better wife and a better mother.

Wherever the influence of men and women is united, the result is mutually beneficial. Witness churches, where, though women have a subordinate place, their presence ensures respectability and purity. So, also, in lectures and concerts and social entertainments. In colleges, where coducation exists, the spirit of lawlessness, so common elsewhere, is unknown. I am told that professors at Princeton quote the good order of Oberlin and Antioch as an example to their students. The students will follow the example, when the professors themselves imitate those of Oberlin and admit students without restriction of sex or color.

But there is a political argument for extending suffrage to every adult citizen. Republicans and Democrats alike desire the success of their respective parties, believing that this will conduce to the prosperity of the country. A party can only succeed by getting votes. In the days of Jefferson, the Democrats

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gained a thirty years lease of power by advocating the extension of suffrage to a disfranchised class. Almost all the States inherited from their colonial charters property qualifications for voting. Under these circumstances, the Democrats demanded and obtained suffrage for poor white men. As champions of white manhood suffrage they won the popular heart. And to this day they retain a majority of the votes of poor white men. Every emigrant who lands upon our shore is informed that he must support the Democrats because they are "the poor man's party." Property qualifications have long been abolished. No single States has ever restored them. The old issues are dead and buried. Yet their ideas remain.

Now the political condition of New Jersey is exceedingly critical. By the census of 1860, our white population was 646,699. In 1866, the total votes cast were 129,489, divided as follows:

- Republicans, 65,542
- Democrats, 63,947
- Republican majority, 1,595

Thus a change of only 800 votes at our next election would suffice to elect or defeat the State ticket. A change of one vote in one hundred would turn the scale. But the colored population of the State in 1860 was 25,336. This would give over 5,000 colored men above 21 years of age. Whatever party, therefore, extends suffrage to colored men will probably secure the predominance in New Jersey, because these 5,000 men, once made voters, will attach themselves to the party which enfranchises them. It may be said that the attempt to enfranchise the negroes would break down the party proposing it. I think not. For if so, the Republicans would have been defeated at the last election. They were everywhere charged by their opponents with favoring negro suffrage, and every influence which such a charge could exert was brought to bear against them. But the fine, generous, human instinct, which always rallies to the support of liberty and justice, and which would have aroused popular enthusiasm like the peal of a trumpet, did not help the Republicans, because, instead

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of meeting the issue, they disclaimed any intention of extending suffrage to anybody.

I regard to giving women suffrage, the same principle holds true. In New Jersey, there are over 1134,00 women above 21 years of age. If only one woman in ten wishes to vote, the party which proposes to enfranchise women will have the earnest efforts of the 13,000 women put forth in the behalf during the struggle, and several times 13,000 new votes when the struggle is ended. The party which has the sagacity to advocate suffrage for every adult citizen will control the State of New Jersey for fifty years to come.

There is a peculiar propriety in immediate action. The nation has adopted the principle of "manhood suffrage" by abolishing all political distinctions of color in the District of Columbia and in the Territories. It has gone farther. It has made negro suffrage the condition of Southern State reconstruction. This step is final and irrevocable. With what consistency can New Jersey continue to disfranchise her 5,000 colored men who would compose less than one twenty-fifth part of her voting population, when her Senators and a majority of her representatives have compelled South Carolina to enfranchise the colored race who form three-fifths of her entire population?

It may be said that the white people of South Carolina are almost all rebels, while the blacks are loyal, and therefore, that negro suffrage there is a necessity. But because it is a political necessity in South Carolina, it has become equally so in New Jersey. The Southern States are already making preparations to come back on the new basis. The leading Northern Democratic newspapers are urging them to do so. Once back, all parties will be obliged to accept the fact of negro suffrage. The only question now is which party will secure the control of this State by being the first to propose the enfranchisement of our negroes.

Let us not be behind the South in comprehending the logic of events. Northern States are earnestly discussing the duty of giving suffrage to colored men and to women. The Republicans of Connecticut have just adopted the following resolution, in their State Convention.

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"Resolved, That the only just basis of human government is the consent of the governed: That in a representative Republic such consent is expressed through the exercise of the suffrage by the individual citizen, and that the right to that exercise should not be limited by distinction of race, or color."

Since women are individual citizen, this resolution pledges the Republicans of Connecticut to "universal suffrage" without distinction of sex or color. The same party in Rhode Island has recently adopted a similar resolution. Bills have been introduced into then Legislature of Maine, Ohio, and other States, this winter, to strike out the word "male" as well as the word "white". Tennessee has struck out the word "white." The Missouri Legislatures has adopted an amendment striking out the word "white." A meeting is called in St. Louis to urge the Legislature to strike out the word "male," also. The Legislature of Kansas has proposed to strike out the words "white" and "male," and have submitted these two separate propositions to the people, and have also submitted, separately, an educational qualification. The vote upon these will take place in September next. Thus, Kansas, the gallant young State which fought the battle for free soil in the beginning, leads off in the battle for free suffrage.

Last week, the Senate of New York, by a vote of 20 to 4, agreed to submit the election of delegates to the coming Constitutional Convention, to the people, irrespective of sex, or color.

The Senate of the United States have this winter devoted more than two entire days to the discussion of woman's right to vote. Many Senators ably supported our right, and declared themselves willing to vote for it as a separate measure. Among others, Wade of Ohio, Gratz Brown of Missouri, Wilson of Massachusetts, Anthony of Rhode Island, and Foster of Connecticut; and nine Senators gave their vote for woman suffrage.

In view of the rapid growth of public sentiment, and inasmuch as amendments can only be submitted to the people of New Jersey once in five years, let me respectfully suggest that you do as they have done in Kansas, propose to strike

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out the word "white" and the word "male," as separate propositions, and submit both to the people for their verdict.

In this solemn hour of our National Reconstruction, each State owes it to the Country and to God to establish its institutions on the immutable principles of the Declaration of Independence. All questions of mere personal and party interest should be forgotten, while men of all parties make common cause for the general good of the Republic.

But let no man dream that National prosperity and peace can be secured by merely giving suffrage to 800,000 freedmen, while that sacred right is denied to eight millions of American women. That scanty shred of Justice, good as far as it goes, is utterly inadequate to meet the emergency of this hour. The problem of American statesmanship to-day is how to embody in our institutions a guarantee of the rights of every citizen. The solution is easy. Base government on the consent of the governed, and each class will protect itself. Put this great principle of universal suffrage, irrespective of sex, or color, into the foundation of our temple of Liberty, and it will rise in fair beautiful proportions, without the sound of a hammer, or the noise of any instrument, to stand at last perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Omit it, and only He, who sees the end from the beginning, knows through what other national woes we must be driven, before we learn that the path of Justice is the only path of peace and safety.

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