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DO NOT TAKE CHIVALRY 
versus 
JUSTICE

Why the Women of the Nation 
Demand the Right to Vote

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Chivalry versus Justice

There is no good quarrel with honest opposition to equal suffrage. Not only is the right to disagree guaranteed by the Constitution, but it is highly essential that every important political change should encounter antagonism in order to guard against hasty and ill-considered action.

The woman who has no need of the vote herself, and resists it as an added and unwelcome responsibility, may be selfish but she is frank. The man who holds that the opposite sex is not sufficiently intelligent to use the ballot wisely may be prejudiced but he is courageous. Men and women alike who feel that equal suffrage does not contain any effective remedy for admitted injustices and evils, may lack faith but they are sincere. Such as these are straightforward fighters who do not fear the open, and they are entitled to all the amenities of well-tempered debate.

In America today there are about nine million women who work, many of them engaged in pleasant professions and wholesome industries, to be sure, but the large majority engulfed in dismal and degrading drudgeries. In the face of this economic revolution that has leveled so many protective walls, how is it possible to grant good faith to the continued insistence that "woman's place is the home?"

The platitude, in effect, contends that these weary millions are not working from any real necessity, but possess homes in which they could remain did they but have the proper spirit and desire. According to its reasoning, the sea of bent backs is caused by nothing more vital than discontent and unrest.

Look where one will, women may be seen creeping across the icy floors of office buildings, night in, night out, scrubbing up the dirt of a man's day; toiling in mills and factories ten and twelve hours a day; flying swift needles in sweatshops; breathing the stifling air in steam laundries; making gewgaws in darkness tenements at an average wage of two cents an hour, or tearing fingers in the damp shucking sheds of the Gulf Coast States.

An equal measure of just resentment is aroused by the twin declaration that suffrage will entail "the disintegration of the American home." Here again there is the bland theory of vine-clad cottages and dense walls of fragrant honeysuckle behind which every right-thinking woman sits in security surrounded by her babes.

What of the squalid holes in the thirteen thousand licensed tenements, of New York City alone, where whole families and boarders often sleep, eat and work in a single room, toiling long, weary hours for incredible pittances? Or the ragged tents of miners on the bleak hillsides of the coal mining states? Or the sickening hovels of the coal and steel districts in Pennsylvania? Or the paper-walled shacks of the cotton mill towns where sleep waits on terrible exhaustion? What greater "disintegration" can come to these "homes" where families rot in despair, and boys and girls grow to maturity stunted in mind and body?

There is no intent to cry down chivalry or desire to repress a single poetic impulse. It is well indeed that men should hold the mother sex in tender, reverent regard, and it is to be hoped that love will never lose its romance and idealism. It is asserted, however, that true chivalry must have justice as its firm foundation. The kind that ignores crying evils and patent
wants in favor of high-sounding periods is nothing more than veiled hypocrisy.

There can be no denigration of the imperative nature of the equal suffrage issue. Eleven states and one territory have granted women the ballot, and in all others it is the principal agitation and demand. Why, then, is it not as high a duty to free the discussion of all faculties, menwomen and all classes, so that honest, sincere agitation for the enfranchisement of the American woman may have a clear field?

What is more, it is often pointed out that the demand for equal suffrage is not the exclusive concern of the author of the American queen, but is opposed by the law man in her own state and territory. But the law man, in his own state and territory, must be prepared to show that, in his state and territory, a law man is no more devoted to the protection and advancement of women in their homes, schools, workshops, or the streets, than is the law man in his own state and territory. Or that those who insist that the "fair sex" does not need the vote are being duped upon the issue, the claim that the women in their homes are without leverage.

In plain words, let chivalry be arraigned and made to justify itself. Is it the thing of perfect honor and protective tenderness, deep-rooted in adequate laws, or only housewife designed to dishonor pretensions; social motives and evil privileges? There are many cases, the citation of which will not only make the point clear, but also lead to a better understanding of the bitterness and ugly incidents that are dividing and confounding the entire equal suffrage question.

Senator Tillman, of South Carolina, for instance, bases his opposition upon the belief that the ballot will "mar the beauty and dim the luster of the American woman." This is not permitted to unsettle her placid contemplation of the beauties of her present condition.

There is not permitted to unsettle her placid contemplation of the beauties of her present condition. In South Carolina women work sixty hours a week in the cotton mills, and there is no prohibition of night work for women or girls over 16. The father is the sole and despotic owner of the children, being able to send them away from the mother if he wishes, and there are no laws that permit the wife to control her own property or her own earnings.

No matter how broken, worthless or brutal a husband may become, divorce is practically impossible, and if the woman fears the roof that such conditions have made unbearable, the state regards her almost as a fugitive slave who may not be held or situated.

South Carolina is one of the few commonwealths that still permit children to work a day (seven hours may be worked in exceptional cases), and as if this did not give sufficient opportunity to the forces of degradation, the modern tendency is to fill up the factory, to increase the preparation for factory inspection is but three thousand, five hundred dollars a year.

It also stands almost alone in refusing to declare prostitution an outlawed industry, nor is it one of the few commonwealths that have not forwarded steps of public indignation. The one protection against lust is the Unwritten Law, which says the state's foremost citizen, "Is the best law to protect woman's virtue.

The penalty for violating the eight-hour law for men is a fine of one thousand dollars or six months' imprisonment, while the nine-hour law for women may be violated for one hundred dollars and no imprisonment. Central O'Gorman of New York is one whose pinnacle of chivalry lifts him up above the sordidness of facts. Almost at the very moment he declared against equal suffrage as unnecessary, a New York judge was fining a factory owner twenty dollars for locking in one hundred and fifty girls, the most sordidness of facts. Almost at the very moment he declared against equal suffrage as unnecessary, a New York judge was fining a factory owner twenty dollars for locking in one hundred and fifty girls, the.

There is no need of allusion to South Carolina; his own state will do as well. Every Autumn a homeless army of women and children moves across the grizzly bays of New Jersey.

In California, by way of contrast, the voting women have forced laws that bear particularly upon their employment, calling for housing inspection, decent sanitation, a proper working day, and the payment of wages in the presence of a commissioner in order that reality contractors may be defeated. Senator Martine is challenged to show one single step that his state has made in the direction of such a wise protective measure.

In New Jersey, as in South Carolina, there is no state law against the keeping of houses of prostitution.

Saddest thing and most trying of all, however, is the fact that in New Jersey children born out of wedlock may not be legitimatized even though the parents are married afterward. A bill to lift this curse from the heads of innocents was introduced in the 1913 legislature, but failed of passage.

Mr. Lodge and Mr. Weeks, the senators from Massachusetts, are two others equally firm in the belief that woman has no need for the ballot owing to man's chivalrous willingness to grant her smallest wish. It took exactly forty years of begging for the mothers of Massachusetts to get a joint guardianship law, and even then it was curtailed only through the horrid concluding of tragedy. A despairing wife, driven mad by the certainty that her worthless husband meant to scatter the six children in institutions and, that the legislature passed a law to make it possible. Massachusetts's bountiful laws for the protection of working women are without teeth. Twenty-four inspectors are provided for five thousand manufacturing establishments, and although forty thousand of the toilers are women or children, only four women have been made inspectors.

The state possesses a drastic eight-hour plan for all men paid from the public treasury and all men employed by contractors doing work for the state, yet a nine-hour day is the best that the wage-earning woman has been able to win. Even this has a loophole that permits the woman to be worked excessive hours, and does not apply to stenographers, or women in clerical work, chambersmaids in hotels or domestic servants.

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It is a fact that until 1915 the New York legislature had steadfastly refused the request of the women's membership, and that the shame of the tenement workers' civic. It is assumed that if this law were necessary to the survival of the women's suffrage era, the New York legislature was doing a fine act of kindness.

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Then there is Mr. Heflin, a member of Congress from Alabama. At a recent meeting in Birmingham, Mr. Heflin forced Mr. Shapiro to point to services and earnings of his wife.

Senator Martin of New Jersey is another statesman who seeks to establish a chivalric base for his open hostility to equal suffrage. These excerpts from a speech may serve as an example of the society.

"When I hear this plea of women demanding their rights, I know of no country, and there is none, where women have more of her right than she has in free, democratic America."

"There is no need of allusion to South Carolina; his own state will do as well. Every Autumn a homeless army of women and children moves across the grizzly bays of New Jersey."
being won in the campaign against Commercialized Vice and the ancient, horrible theory of "necessary evil." California, Washington, Utah, Kansas, and Oregon have adopted the effective injunction and abatement law.

The two Carolinas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Mexico and New Jersey have no state law against disorderly houses.

Every equal suffrage state has an effective child labor law backed up by efficient inspection. It remains for Chivalry to rest material prosperity upon the backs of the little ones. Alabama, South Carolina, New Mexico and Mississippi permit children of twelve to work long hours for small wages, and in many another state, lack of factory inspection nullifies a seemingly good statute.

Florida, Washington, Oregon, Utah and California have enacted minimum wage legislation for women, while only four of the non-suffrage states have done as much.

"Mothers' Pensions" is an admittedly admirable plan for taking poverty-stricken motherhood out of the list of crimes, for it continues the home in its natural relation, and does not rob the widow of her most precious treasures of love. Eleven of the equal suffrage states possess this law—Illinois, Colorado, California, Idaho, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Minnesota, Kansas and Wyoming. In Arizona the law, adopted by the people at the polls, has been declared unconstitutional.

In densely populated states as Connecticut and Indiana, the legislature voted down "Mothers' Pensions," and in less than half of the thirty-seven non-suffrage states does the plan obtain.

It is in the vital matters of education, however, that there is opportunity for the most effective comparison between Chivalry and Justice. The eleven most illiterate states—Mississippi, Union with Louisiana, South Carolina, Minnesota, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri—are practically worthless. Alabamians, for instance, demand eight weeks of school attendance in the year, only six of which need be consecutive.

There is no equal suffrage state without a compulsory education law. In seven, the percentage of illiteracy over ten is less than one per cent, and in three from one to three per cent.

So runs the record in the great case of Chivalry vs. Justice. It is not meant, nor should it be inferred, that in this showing there is any indictment of the American man in the charge of premeditated cruelty or even of black-headed selfishness. More than the men of any other country to the modern, the father equipped with elementary and higher, and is practically worthless. Alabamians, for instance, demand eight weeks of school attendance in the year, only six of which need be consecutive.

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and beautiful, the things that suffragists are crowding out of life. We shall have exquisite music on the harp and stringed instruments. We shall have delicate French comedies and speakers of lofty ideas. Life is not all politics, you know. There are more important things to do than to clean streets and collect garbage. It does a woman more good to hear a nice harp concert than to listen to a discussion of white slavery. If women would pay more attention to the fine and noble things of life, the evil things would cease to exist."

Abolish slums with selections from Keats! Bring the eight-hour day with lectures on Etruscan pottery! Handel's "Largo" for mill women, factory drudges, sissy makers and scrubbers! When a factory catches on fire and all the doors are locked, a verse from Browning! If word comes that the wine-room and the cadet have snatched a daughter, make no outcry against Commericalized Vice, but buy a harp! Should philanthropists strike down loved ones, do not complain about garbage or an infected water supply, but read a French comedy!

Such a person simply does not understand, that is all! Surely, though, for the facts stand so grim and plain, there will come a day when the loved and sheltered women will realize with comprehension of the sufferings and injustices that burden their less fortunate sisters, and cease an opposition that is at once so selfish and so cruel.

Honest men, too, coming to realize the changed environment of the home, and their inability to legislate wisely and protectively for the nine million women in industry, will surrender an antagonism that perpetuates unhappiness and gross inequalities. It is not with such as these, however—the honest ignorant—that the real struggle comes. More accurately than any other, Chief Justice Walter Clark of North Carolina has segregated the deep, underlying causes of the bitter resistance to equal suffrage in these words:

"Women bear the burdens of bad government even more than men. Had they possessed the right of suffrage, the liquor traffic and cognate evils would long since have been abolished by law and the law enforced. With the aid of women's votes, we should have had a better educational system, laws against child labor, better sanitation and other enactments for the betterment of the conditions of the home and the more helpless part of society. It is certain that the main force which has opposed the adoption of equal suffrage has come from the whisky trust, the vice trust and the political machines."

It is the only possible explanation of the malignant and lavish expenditure that marks the fight against the spread of equal suffrage. Where does the money come from to pay for the costly literature with which the country is deluged? Why are the offensive pamphlets almost invariably anonymous? It is inconceivable that decent men and women, even though bitterly prejudiced, would brand the leaders of the equal suffrage movement as "masculine creatures" and "monsters of the brain"? or circulate the charge that equal suffrage means free love and the abolition of marriage?

Surely, though, the �leaders of the equal suffrage movement as "masculine creatures" and "monsters of the brain"? are devoted to the advancement of the welfare of women and children. Mrs. FrancesKelley, that splendid champion of the woman and child wage-earner, Jane Addams of Hull House, Mrs. Raymond Robins of the National Women's Trade Union League, Mrs. Nila Flagg Young, the famous educator, Julia Leaf, head of the Children's Bureau, Dr. Katherine Bement Davis, Commissioner of Correction of New York City, Mrs. Charles Farwell Edson, motive power behind so many of California's humane laws, Mrs. Helen Ring Robinson of Colorado, the Gordon sisters who brought factory reform to Louisiana—these and every other woman doing the big and tender things in the United States today, are leaders in the equal suffrage movement.

The issue is clean cut. Here are nine million women, forced out of their homes into industry, and asking for a voice in the establishment of conditions under which they work; a host of others who, through spinsterhood or widowhood, are the heads of families; thousands within homes who feel that those homes cannot be safeguarded without the vote, and, most splendid of all, a growing group of world mothers who are fighting to remove the ancient stones that block the upward climb to equal justice—one and all asking for simple justice and fair play.