History of Woman Suffrage, Volume I

Matilda Joslyn Gage,
Elizabeth Cady Stanton,
Susan B. Anthony

Matilda Joslyn Gage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony

History of Woman Suffrage, Volume I

PUBLISHER NOTES:

✓ **VISIT OUR WEBSITE**:

LyFreedom.com

INTRODUCTION.

THE prolonged slavery of woman is the darkest page in human history. A survey of the condition of the race through those barbarous periods, when physical force governed the world, when the motto, "might makes right," was the law, enables one to account, for the origin of woman's subjection to man without referring the fact to the general inferiority of the sex, or Nature's law.

Writers on this question differ as to the cause of the universal degradation of woman in all periods and nations.

One of the greatest minds of the century has thrown a ray of light on this gloomy picture by tracing the origin of woman's slavery to the same principle of selfishness and love of power in man that has thus far dominated all weaker nations and classes. This brings hope of final emancipation, for as all nations and classes are gradually, one after another, asserting and maintaining their independence, the path is clear for woman to follow. The slavish instinct of an oppressed class has led her to toil patiently through the ages, giving all and asking little, cheerfully sharing with man all perils and privations by land and sea, that husband and sons might attain honor and success. Justice and freedom for herself is her latest and highest demand.

Another writer asserts that the tyranny of man over woman has its roots, after all, in his nobler feelings; his love, his chivalry, and his desire to protect woman in the barbarous periods of pillage, lust, and war. But wherever the roots may be traced, the results at this hour are equally disastrous to woman. Her best interests and happiness do not seem to have been consulted in the arrangements made for her protection. She has been bought and sold, caressed and crucified at the will and pleasure of her master. But if a chivalrous desire to protect woman has always

been the mainspring of man's dominion over her, it should have prompted him to place in her hands the same weapons of defense he has found to be most effective against wrong and oppression.

It is often asserted that as woman has always been man's slave—subject—inferior—dependent, under all forms of government and religion, slavery must be her normal condition. This might have some weight had not the vast majority of men also been enslaved for centuries to kings and popes, and orders of nobility, who, in the progress of civilization, have reached complete equality. And did we not also see the great changes in woman's condition, the marvelous transformation in her character, from a toy in the Turkish harem, or a drudge in the German fields, to a leader of thought in the literary circles of France, England, and America!

In an age when the wrongs of society are adjusted in the courts and at the ballot-box, material force yields to reason and majorities.

Woman's steady march onward, and her growing desire for a broader outlook, prove that she has not reached her normal condition, and that society has not yet conceded all that is necessary for its attainment.

Moreover, woman's discontent increases in exact proportion to her development. Instead of a feeling of gratitude for rights accorded, the wisest are indignant at the assumption of any legal disability based on sex, and their feelings in this matter are a surer test of what her nature demands, than the feelings and prejudices of the sex claiming to be superior. American men may quiet their consciences with the delusion that no such injustice exists in this country as in Eastern nations, though with the general improvement in our institutions, woman's condition must inevitably have improved also, yet the same principle that degrades her in Turkey, insults her in this republic. Custom forbids a woman there to enter a mosque, or call the hour for prayers; here it forbids her a voice in Church Councils or State Legislatures. The same taint of her primitive state of slavery affects both latitudes.

The condition of married women, under the laws of all countries, has been essentially that of slaves, until modified, in some respects, within the last quarter of a century in the United States. The change from the old Common Law of England, in

regard to the civil rights of women, from 1848 to the advance legislation in most of the Northern States in 1880, marks an era both in the status of woman as a citizen and in our American system of jurisprudence. When the State of New York gave married women certain rights of property, the individual existence of the wife was recognized, and the old idea that "husband and wife are one, and that one the husband," received its death-blow. From that hour the statutes of the several States have been steadily diverging from the old English codes. Most of the Western States copied the advance legislation of New York, and some are now even more liberal.

The broader demand for political rights has not commanded the thought its merits and dignity should have secured. While complaining of many wrongs and oppressions, women themselves did not see that the political disability of sex was the cause of all their special grievances, and that to secure equality anywhere, it must be recognized everywhere. Like all disfranchised classes, they begun by asking to have certain wrongs redressed, and not by asserting their own right to make laws for themselves.

Overburdened with cares in the isolated home, women had not the time, education, opportunity, and pecuniary independence to put their thoughts clearly and concisely into propositions, nor the courage to compare their opinions with one another, nor to publish them, to any great extent, to the world.

It requires philosophy and heroism to rise above the opinion of the wise men of all nations and races, that to be unknown, is the highest testimonial woman can have to her virtue, delicacy and refinement.

A certain odium has ever rested on those who have risen above the conventional level and sought new spheres for thought and action, and especially on the few who demand complete equality in political rights. The leaders in this movement have been women of superior mental and physical organization, of good social standing and education, remarkable alike for their domestic virtues, knowledge of public affairs, and rare executive ability; good speakers and writers, inspiring and conducting the genuine reforms of the day; everywhere exerting themselves to promote the best interests of society; yet they have been

uniformly ridiculed, misrepresented, and denounced in public and private by all classes of society.

Woman's political equality with man is the legitimate outgrowth of the fundamental principles of our Government, clearly set forth in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, in the United States Constitution adopted in 1784, in the prolonged debates on the origin of human rights in the anti-slavery conflict in 1840, and in the more recent discussions of the party in power since 1865, on the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the National Constitution; and the majority of our leading statesmen have taken the ground that suffrage is a natural right that may be regulated, but can not be abolished by State law.

Under the influence of these liberal principles of republicanism that pervades all classes of American minds, however vaguely, if suddenly called out, they might be stated, woman readily perceives the anomalous position she occupies in a republic, where the government and religion alike are based on individual conscience and judgment—where the natural rights of all citizens have been exhaustively discussed, and repeatedly declared equal.

From the inauguration of the government, representative women have expostulated against the inconsistencies between our principles and practices as a nation. Beginning with special grievances, woman's protests soon took a larger scope. Having petitioned State legislatures to change the statutes that robbed her of children, wages, and property, she demanded that the Constitutions—State and National—be so amended as to give her a voice in the laws, a choice in the rulers, and protection in the exercise of her rights as a citizen of the United States.

While the laws affecting woman's civil rights have been greatly improved during the past thirty years, the political demand has made but a questionable progress, though it must be counted as the chief influence in modifying the laws. The selfishness of man was readily enlisted in securing woman's civil rights, while the same element in his character antagonized her demand for political equality.

Fathers who had estates to bequeath to their daughters could see the advantage of securing to woman certain property rights that might limit the legal power of profligate husbands.
Husbands in extensive business operations could see the advantage of allowing the wife the right to hold separate property, settled on her in time of prosperity, that might not be seized for his debts. Hence in the several States able men championed these early measures. But political rights, involving in their last results equality everywhere, roused all the antagonism of a dominant power, against the self-assertion of a class hitherto subservient. Men saw that with political equality for woman, they could no longer keep her in social subordination, and "the majority of the male sex," says John Stuart Mill, "can not yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal." The fear of a social revolution thus complicated the discussion. The Church, too, took alarm, knowing that with the freedom and education acquired in becoming a component part of the Government, woman would not only outgrow the power of the priesthood, and religious superstitions, but would also invade the pulpit, interpret the Bible anew from her own stand-point, and claim an equal voice in all ecclesiastical councils. With fierce warnings and denunciations from the pulpit, and false interpretations of Scripture, women have been intimidated and misled, and their religious feelings have been played upon for their more complete subjugation. While the general principles of the Bible are in favor of the most enlarged freedom and equality of the race, isolated texts have been used to block the wheels of progress in all periods; thus bigots have defended capital punishment, intemperance, slavery, polygamy, and the subjection of woman. The creeds of all nations make obedience to man the corner-stone of her religious character. Fortunately, however, more liberal minds are now giving us higher and purer expositions of the Scriptures.
As the social and religious objections appeared against the demand for political rights, the discussion became many-sided,

contradictory, and as varied as the idiosyncrasies of individual character. Some said, "Man is woman's natural protector, and she can safely trust him to make laws for her." She might with fairness reply, as he uniformly robbed her of all property rights to 1848, he can not safely be trusted with her personal rights in 1880, though the fact that he did make some restitution at last, might modify her distrust in the future. However, the calendars of our courts still show that fathers deal unjustly with daughters, husbands with wives, brothers with sisters, and sons with their own mothers. Though woman needs the protection of one man against his whole sex, in pioneer life, in threading her way through a lonely forest, on the highway, or in the streets of the metropolis on a dark night, she sometimes needs, too, the protection of all men against this one. But even if she could be sure, as she is not, of the ever-present, all-protecting power of one strong arm, that would be weak indeed compared with the subtle, all-pervading influence of just and equal laws for all women. Hence woman's need of the ballot, that she may hold in her own right hand the weapon of self-protection and self-defense.

Again it is said: "The women who make the demand are few in number, and their feelings and opinions are abnormal, and therefore of no weight in considering the aggregate judgment on the question." The number is larger than appears on the surface, for the fear of public ridicule, and the loss of private favors from those who shelter, feed, and clothe them, withhold many from declaring their opinions and demanding their rights. The ignorance and indifference of the majority of women, as to their status as citizens of a republic, is not remarkable, for history shows that the masses of all oppressed classes, in the most degraded conditions, have been stolid and apathetic until partial success had crowned the faith and enthusiasm of the few.

The insurrections on Southern plantations were always defeated by the doubt and duplicity of the slaves themselves. That little band of heroes who precipitated the American Revolution in 1776 were so ostracised that they walked the streets with bowed heads, from a sense of loneliness and apprehension. Woman's

apathy to the wrongs of her sex, instead of being a plea for her remaining in her present condition, is the strongest argument against it. How completely demoralized by her subjection must she be, who does not feel her personal dignity assailed when all women are ranked in every State Constitution with idiots, lunatics, criminals, and minors; when in the name of Justice, man holds one scale for woman, another for himself; when by the spirit and letter of the laws she is made responsible for crimes committed against her, while the male criminal goes free; when from altars where she worships no woman may preach; when in the courts, where girls of tender age may be arraigned for the crime of infanticide, she may not plead for the most miserable of her sex; when colleges she is taxed to build and endow, deny her the right to share in their advantages; when she finds that which should be her glory—her possible motherhood—treated everywhere by man as a disability and a crime! A woman insensible to such indignities needs some transformation into nobler thought, some purer atmosphere to breathe, some higher stand-point from which to study human rights.

It is said, "the difference between the sexes indicates different spheres." It would be nearer the truth to say the difference indicates different duties in the same sphere, seeing that man and woman were evidently made for each other, and have shown equal capacity in the ordinary range of human duties. In governing nations, leading armies, piloting ships across the sea, rowing life-boats in terrific gales; in art, science, invention, literature, woman has proved herself the complement of man in the world of thought and action. This difference does not

compel us to spread our tables with different food for man and woman, nor to provide in our common schools a different course of study for boys and girls. Sex pervades all nature, yet the male and female tree and vine and shrub rejoice in the same sunshine and shade. The earth and air are free to all the fruits and flowers, yet each absorbs what best ensures its growth. But whatever it is, it requires no special watchfulness on our part to see that it is maintained. This plea, when closely analyzed, is generally found to mean woman's inferiority.

The superiority of man, however, does not enter into the demand for suffrage, for in this country all men vote; and as the lower orders of men are not superior, either by nature or grace, to the higher orders of women, they must hold and exercise the right of self-government on some other ground than superiority to women.

Again it is said, "Woman when independent and self-asserting will lose her influence over man." In the happiest conditions in life, men and women will ever be mutually dependent on each other. The complete development of all woman's powers will not make her less capable of steadfast love and friendship, but give her new strength to meet the emergencies of life, to aid those who look to her for counsel and support. Men are uniformly more attentive to women of rank, family, and fortune, who least need their care, than to any other class. We do not see their protecting love generally extending to the helpless and unfortunate ones of earth. Wherever the skilled hands and cultured brain of woman have made the battle of life easier for man, he has readily pardoned her sound judgment and proper self-assertion. But the prejudices and preferences of man should be a secondary consideration, in presence of the individual happiness and freedom of woman. The formation of her character and its influence on the human race, is a larger question than man's personal liking. There is no fear, however, that when a superior order of women shall grace the earth, there will not be an order of men to match them, and influence over such minds will atone for the loss of it elsewhere.

An honest fear is sometimes expressed "that woman would degrade politics, and politics would degrade woman." As the influence of woman has been uniformly elevating in new

civilizations, in missionary work in heathen nations, in schools, colleges, literature, and in general society, it is fair to suppose that politics would prove no exception. On the other hand, as the art of government is the most exalted of all sciences, and statesmanship requires the highest order of mind, the ennobling and refining influence of such pursuits must elevate rather than degrade woman. When politics degenerate into bitter persecutions and vulgar court-gossip, they are degrading to man, and his honor, virtue, dignity, and refinement are as valuable to woman as her virtues, are to him.

Again, it is said, "Those who make laws must execute them; government needs force behind it,—a woman could not be sheriff or a policeman." She might not fill these offices in the way men do, but she might far more effectively guard the morals of society, and the sanitary conditions of our cities. It might with equal force be said that a woman of culture and artistic taste can not keep house, because she can not wash and iron with her own hands, and clean the range and furnace. At the head of the police, a woman could direct her forces and keep order without ever using a baton or a pistol in her own hands. "The elements of sovereignty," says Blackstone, "are three: wisdom, goodness, and power." Conceding to woman wisdom and goodness, as they are not strictly masculine virtues, and substituting moral power for physical force, we have the necessary elements of government for most of life's emergencies. Women manage families, mixed schools, charitable institutions, large boarding-houses and hotels, farms and steam-engines, drunken and disorderly men and women, and stop street fights, as well as men do. The queens in history compare favorably with the kings.

But, "in the settlement of national difficulties," it is said, "the last resort is war; shall we summon our wives and mothers to the battle-field?" Women have led armies in all ages, have held positions in the army and navy for years in disguise. Some

fought, bled, and died on the battle-field in our late war. They performed severe labors in the hospitals and sanitary department. Wisdom would dictate a division of labor in war as well as in peace, assigning each their appropriate department.

Numerous classes of men who enjoy their political rights are exempt from military duty. All men over forty-five, all who suffer mental or physical disability, such as the loss of an eye or a forefinger; clergymen, physicians, Quakers, school-teachers, professors, and presidents of colleges, judges, legislators, congressmen, State prison officials, and all county, State and National officers; fathers, brothers, or sons having certain relatives dependent on them for support,—all of these summed up in every State in the Union make millions of voters thus exempted.

In view of this fact there is no force in the plea, that "if women vote they must fight." Moreover, war is not the normal state of the human family in its higher development, but merely a feature of barbarism lasting on through the transition of the race, from the savage to the scholar. When England and America settled the Alabama Claims by the Geneva Arbitration, they pointed the way for the future adjustment of all national difficulties.

Some fear, "If women assume all the duties political equality implies, that the time and attention necessary to the duties of home life will be absorbed in the affairs of State." The act of voting occupies but little time in itself, and the vast majority of women will attend to their family and social affairs to the neglect of the State, just as men do to their individual interests. The virtue of patriotism is subordinate in most souls to individual and family aggrandizement. As to offices, it is not to be supposed that the class of men now elected will resign to women their chances, and if they should to any extent, the necessary number of women to fill the offices would make no apparent change in our social circles. If, for example, the Senate of the United States should be entirely composed of women, but two in each State would be withdrawn from the pursuit of domestic happiness. For many reasons, under all circumstances,

a comparatively smaller proportion of women than men would actively engage in politics.

As the power to extend or limit the suffrage rests now wholly in the hands of man, he can commence the experiment with as small a number as he sees fit, by requiring any lawful qualification. Men were admitted on property and educational qualifications in most of the States, at one time, and still are in some—so hard has it been for man to understand the theory of self-government. Three-fourths of the women would be thus disqualified, and the remaining fourth would be too small a minority to precipitate a social revolution or defeat masculine measures in the halls of legislation, even if women were a unit on all questions and invariably voted together, which they would not. In this view, the path of duty is plain for the prompt action of those gentlemen who fear universal suffrage for women, but are willing to grant it on property and educational qualifications. While those who are governed by the law of expediency should give the measure of justice they deem safe, let those who trust the absolute right proclaim the higher principle in government, "equal rights to all."

Many seeming obstacles in the way of woman's enfranchisement will be surmounted by reforms in many directions. Co-operative labor and co-operative homes will remove many difficulties in the way of woman's success as artisan and housekeeper, when admitted to the governing power. The varied forms of progress, like parallel lines, move forward simultaneously in the same direction. Each reform, at its inception, seems out of joint with all its surroundings; but the discussion changes the conditions, and brings them in line with the new idea.

The isolated household is responsible for a large share of woman's ignorance and degradation. A mind always in contact with children and servants, whose aspirations and ambitions rise no higher than the roof that shelters it, is necessarily dwarfed in its proportions. The advantages to the few whose fortunes enable them to make the isolated household a more successful experiment, can not outweigh the difficulties of the many who are wholly sacrificed to its maintenance.

Quite as many false ideas prevail as to woman's true position in the home as to her status elsewhere. Womanhood is the great fact in her life; wifehood and motherhood are but incidental

relations. Governments legislate for men; we do not have one code for bachelors, another for husbands and fathers; neither have the social relations of women any significance in their demands for civil and political rights. Custom and philosophy, in regard to woman's happiness, are alike based on the idea that her strongest social sentiment is love of children; that in this relation her soul finds complete satisfaction. But the love of offspring, common to all orders of women and all forms of animal life, tender and beautiful as it is, can not as a sentiment rank with conjugal love. The one calls out only the negative virtues that belong to apathetic classes, such as patience, endurance, self-sacrifice, exhausting the brain-forces, ever giving, asking nothing in return; the other, the outgrowth of the two supreme powers in nature, the positive and negative magnetism, the centrifugal and centripetal forces, the masculine and feminine elements, possessing the divine power of creation, in the universe of thought and action. Two pure souls fused into one by an impassioned love—friends, counselors—a mutual support and inspiration to each other amid life's struggles, must know the highest human happiness;—this is marriage; and this is the only corner-stone of an enduring home. Neither does ordinary motherhood, assumed without any high purpose or preparation, compare in sentiment with the lofty ambition and conscientious devotion of the artist whose pure children of the brain in poetry, painting, music, and science are ever beckoning her upward into an ideal world of beauty. They who give the world a true philosophy, a grand poem, a beautiful painting or statue, or can tell the story of every wandering star; a George Eliot, a Rosa Bonheur, an Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a Maria Mitchell—whose blood has flowed to the higher arches of the brain,—have lived to a holier purpose than they whose children are of the flesh alone, into whose minds they have breathed no clear perceptions of great principles, no moral aspiration, no spiritual life.

Her rights are as completely ignored in what is adjudged to be woman's sphere as out of it; the woman is uniformly sacrificed to the wife and mother. Neither law, gospel, public sentiment, nor domestic affection shield her from excessive and enforced maternity, depleting alike to mother and child;—all opportunity for mental improvement, health, happiness—yea, life itself, being ruthlessly sacrificed. The weazen, weary, withered,

narrow-minded wife-mother of half a dozen children—her interests all centering at her fireside, forms a painful contrast in many a household to the liberal, genial, brilliant, cultured husband in the zenith of his power, who has never given one thought to the higher life, liberty, and happiness of the woman by his side; believing her self-abnegation to be Nature's law.

It is often asked, "if political equality would not rouse antagonisms between the sexes?" If it could be proved that men and women had been harmonious in all ages and countries, and that women were happy and satisfied in their slavery, one might hesitate in proposing any change whatever. But the apathy, the helpless, hopeless resignation of a subjected class can not be called happiness. The more complete the despotism, the more smoothly all things move on the surface. "Order reigns in Warsaw." In right conditions, the interests of man and woman are essentially one; but in false conditions, they must ever be opposed. The principle of equality of rights underlies all human sentiments, and its assertion by any individual or class must rouse antagonism, unless conceded. This has been the battle of the ages, and will be until all forms of slavery are banished from the earth. Philosophers, historians, poets, novelists, alike paint woman the victim ever of man's power and selfishness. And now all writers on Eastern civilization tell us, the one insurmountable obstacle to the improvement of society in those countries, is the ignorance and superstition of the women. Stronger than the trammels of custom and law, is her religion, which teaches that her condition is Heaven-ordained. As the most ignorant minds cling with the greatest tenacity to the dogmas and traditions of their faith, a reform that involves an attack on that stronghold can only be carried by the education of another generation. Hence the self-assertion, the antagonism, the rebellion of woman, so much deplored in England and the United States, is the hope of our higher civilization. A woman growing up under American ideas of liberty in government and religion, having never blushed behind a Turkish mask, nor pressed her feet in Chinese shoes, can not brook any disabilities based on sex alone, without a deep feeling of antagonism with

the power that creates it. The change needed to restore good feeling can not be reached by remanding woman to the spinning-wheel, and the contentment of her grandmother, but by conceding to her every right which the spirit of the age demands. Modern inventions have banished the spinning-wheel, and the same law of progress makes the woman of to-day a different woman from her grandmother.

With these brief replies to the oft-repeated objections made by the opposition, we hope to rouse new thoughts in minds prepared to receive them. That equal rights for woman have not long ago been secured, is due to causes beyond the control of the actors in this reform. "The success of a movement," says Lecky, "depends much less upon the force of its arguments, or upon the ability of its advocates, than the predisposition of society to receive it."

CHAPTER I.

PRECEDING CAUSES.

As civilization advances there is a continual change in the standard of human rights. In barbarous ages the right of the strongest was the only one recognized; but as mankind progressed in the arts and sciences intellect began to triumph over brute force. Change is a law of life, and the development of society a natural growth. Although to this law we owe the discoveries of unknown worlds, the inventions of machinery, swifter modes of travel, and clearer ideas as to the value of human life and thought, yet each successive change has met with the most determined opposition. Fortunately, progress is not the result of pre-arranged plans of individuals, but is born of a fortuitous combination of circumstances that compel certain results, overcoming the natural inertia of mankind. There is a certain enjoyment in habitual sluggishness; in rising each morning with the same ideas as the night before; in retiring each night with the thoughts of the morning. This inertia of mind and body has ever held the multitude in chains. Thousands have thus surrendered their most sacred rights of conscience. In all periods of human development, thinking has been punished as a crime, which is reason sufficient to account for the general passive resignation of the masses to their conditions and environments.

Again, "subjection to the powers that be" has been the lesson of both Church and State, throttling science, checking invention, crushing free thought, persecuting and torturing those who have dared to speak or act outside of established authority. Anathemas and the stake have upheld the Church, banishment and the scaffold the throne, and the freedom of mankind has ever been sacrificed to the idea of protection. So entirely has the human will been enslaved in all classes of society in the past, that monarchs have humbled themselves to popes, nations have knelt at the feet of monarchs, and individuals have sold themselves to others under the subtle promise of "protection"—a word that simply means release from all responsibility, all use

of one's own faculties—a word that has ever blinded people to its true significance. Under authority and this false promise of "protection," self-reliance, the first incentive to freedom, has not only been lost, but the aversion of mankind for responsibility has been fostered by the few, whose greater bodily strength, superior intellect, or the inherent law of self-development has impelled to active exertion. Obedience and self-sacrifice—the virtues prescribed for subordinate classes, and which naturally grow out of their condition—are alike opposed to the theory of individual rights and self-government. But as even the inertia of mankind is not proof against the internal law of progress, certain beliefs have been inculcated, certain crimes invented, in order to intimidate the masses. Hence, the Church made free thought the worst of sins, and the spirit of inquiry the worst of blasphemies; while the State proclaimed her temporal power of divine origin, and all rebellion high treason alike to God and the king, to be speedily and severely punished. In this union of Church and State mankind touched the lowest depth of degradation. As late as the time of Bunyan the chief doctrine inculcated from the pulpit was obedience to the temporal power.

All these influences fell with crushing weight on woman; more sensitive, helpless, and imaginative, she suffered a thousand fears and wrongs where man did one. Lecky, in his "History of Rationalism in Europe," shows that the vast majority of the victims of fanaticism and witchcraft, burned, drowned, and tortured, were women. Guizot, in his "History of Civilization," while decrying the influence of caste in India, and deploring it as the result of barbarism, thanks God there is no system of

caste in Europe; ignoring the fact that in all its dire and baneful effects, the caste of sex everywhere exists, creating diverse codes of morals for men and women, diverse penalties for crime, diverse industries, diverse religions and educational rights, and diverse relations to the Government. Men are the Brahmins, women the Pariahs, under our existing civilization. Herbert Spencer's "Descriptive Sociology of England," an epitome of English history, says: "Our laws are based on the all-sufficiency of man's rights, and society exists to-day for woman only in so far as she is in the keeping of some man." Thus society, including our systems of jurisprudence, civil and political theories, trade, commerce, education, religion, friendships, and family life, have all been framed on the sole idea of man's rights. Hence, he takes upon himself the responsibility of directing and controlling the powers of woman, under that all-sufficient excuse of tyranny, "divine right." This same cry of divine authority created the castes of India; has for ages separated its people into bodies, with different industrial, educational, civil, religious, and political rights; has maintained this separation for the benefit of the superior class, and sedulously taught the doctrine that any change in existing conditions would be a sin of most direful magnitude.

The opposition of theologians, though first to be exhibited when any change is proposed, for reason that change not only takes power from them, but lessens the reverence of mankind for them, is not in its final result so much to be feared as the opposition of those holding political power. The Church, knowing this, has in all ages aimed to connect itself with the State. Political freedom guarantees religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, fosters a spirit of inquiry, creates self-reliance, induces a feeling of responsibility.

The people who demand authority for every thought and action, who look to others for wisdom and protection, are those who perpetuate tyranny. The thinkers and actors who find their authority within, are those who inaugurate freedom. Obedience to outside authority to which woman has everywhere been trained, has not only dwarfed her capacity, but made her a

retarding force in civilization, recognized at last by statesmen as a dangerous element to free institutions. A recent writer, speaking of Turkey, says: "All attempts for the improvement of that nation must prove futile, owing to the degradation of its women; and their elevation is hopeless so long as they are taught by their religion that their condition is ordained of heaven." Gladstone, in one of his pamphlets on the revival of Catholicism in England, says: "The spread of this religion is due, as might be expected, to woman;" thus conceding in both cases her power to block the wheels of progress. Hence, in the scientific education of woman, in the training of her faculties to independent thought and logical reasoning, lies the hope of the future.

The two great sources of progress are intellect and wealth. Both represent power, and are the elements of success in life. Education frees the mind from the bondage of authority and makes the individual self-asserting. Remunerative industry is the means of securing to its possessor wealth and education, transforming the laborer to the capitalist. Work in itself is not power; it is but the means to an end. The slave is not benefited by his industry; he does not receive the results of his toil; his labor enriches another—adds to the power of his master to bind his chains still closer. Although woman has performed much of the labor of the world, her industry and economy have been the very means of increasing her degradation. Not being free, the results of her labor have gone to build up and sustain the very class that has perpetuated this injustice. Even in the family, where we should naturally look for the truest conditions, woman has always been robbed of the fruits of her own toil. The influence the Catholic Church has had on religious free thought, that monarchies have had on political free thought, that serfdom has had upon free labor, have all been cumulative in the family upon woman. Taught that father and husband stood to her in the place of God, she has been denied liberty of conscience, and held in obedience to masculine will. Taught that

the fruits of her industry belonged to others, she has seen man enter into every avocation most suitable to her, while she, the uncomplaining drudge of the household, condemned to the severest labor, has been systematically robbed of her earnings, which have gone to build up her master's power, and she has found herself in the condition of the slave, deprived of the results of her own labor. Taught that education for her was indelicate and irreligious, she has been kept in such gross ignorance as to fall a prey to superstition, and to glory in her own degradation. Taught that a low voice is an excellent thing in woman, she has been trained to a subjugation of the vocal organs, and thus lost the benefit of loud tones and their well-known invigoration of the system. Forbidden to run, climb, or jump, her muscles have been weakened, and her strength deteriorated. Confined most of the time to the house, she has neither as strong lungs nor as vigorous a digestion as her brother. Forbidden to enter the pulpit, she has been trained to an unquestioning reverence for theological authority and false belief upon the most vital interests of religion. Forbidden the medical profession, she has at the most sacred times of her life been left to the ignorant supervision of male physicians, and seen her young children die by thousands. Forbidden to enter the courts, she has seen her sex unjustly tried and condemned for crimes men were incapable of judging.

Woman has been the great unpaid laborer of the world, and although within the last two decades a vast number of new employments have been opened to her, statistics prove that in

the great majority of these, she is not paid according to the value of the work done, but according to sex. The opening of all industries to woman, and the wage question as connected with her, are most subtle and profound questions of political economy, closely interwoven with the rights of self-government.

The revival of learning had its influence upon woman, and we find in the early part of the fourteenth century a decided tendency toward a recognition of her equality. Christine of Pisa, the most eminent woman of this period, supported a family of six persons by her pen, taking high ground on the conservation of morals in opposition to the general licentious spirit of the age. Margaret of Angoulême, the brilliant Queen of Navarre, was a voluminous writer, her Heptaméron rising to the dignity of a French classic. A paper in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a few years since, by M. Henri Baudrillart, upon the "Emancipation of Woman," recalls the fact that for nearly four hundred years, men, too, have been ardent believers in equal rights for woman.

In 1509, Cornelius Agrippa, a great literary authority of his time, published a work of this character. Agrippa was not content with claiming woman's equality, but in a work of thirty chapters devoted himself to proving "the superiority of woman." In less than fifty years (1552) Ruscelli brought out a similar work based on the Platonic Philosophy. In 1599, Anthony Gibson wrote a book which in the prolix phraseology of the times was called, "A Woman's Worth defended against all the Men in the World, proving to be more Perfect, Excellent, and Absolute, in all Virtuous Actions, than any man of What Quality Soever." While these sturdy male defenders of the rights of woman met with many opponents, some going so far as to assert that women were beings not endowed with reason, they were sustained by many vigorous writers among women. Italy, then the foremost literary country of Europe, possessed many women of learning, one of whom, Lucrezia Morinella, a Venetian lady, wrote a work entitled, "The Nobleness and Excellence of Women, together with the Faults and Imperfections of Men."

The seventeenth century gave birth to many essays and books of a like character, not confined to the laity, as several friars wrote upon the same subject. In 1696, Daniel De Foe wished to have an institute founded for the better education of young women. He said: "We reproach the sex every day for folly and impertinence, while I am confident had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves." Alexander's History of Women, John Paul Ribera's work upon Women, the two huge quartos of De Costa upon the same subject, Count Ségur's "Women: Their Condition and Influence," and many other works showed the drift of the new age.

The Reformation, that great revolution in religious thought, loosened the grasp of the Church upon woman, and is to be looked upon as one of the most important steps in this reform. In the reign of Elizabeth, England was called the Paradise of Women. When Elizabeth ascended the throne, it was not only as queen, but she succeeded her father as the head of the newly-formed rebellious Church, and she held firm grasp on both Church and State during the long years of her reign, bending alike priest and prelate to her fiery will. The reign of Queen Anne, called the Golden Age of English Literature, is especially noticeable on account of Mary Astell and Elizabeth Elstob. The latter, speaking nine languages, was most famous for her skill in the Saxon tongue. She also replied to current objections made to woman's learning. Mary Astell elaborated a plan for a Woman's College, which was favorably received by Queen Anne, and would have been carried out, but for the opposition of Bishop Burnett.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, there were public discussions by women in England, under the general head of Female Parliament. These discussions took wide range, touching upon the entrance of men into those industries usually assigned to women, and demanding for themselves higher

educational advantages, and the right to vote at elections, and to be returned members of Parliament.

The American Revolution, that great political rebellion of the ages, was based upon the inherent rights of the individual. Perhaps in none but English Colonies, by descendants of English parents, could such a revolution have been consummated. England had never felt the bonds of feudalism to the extent of many countries; its people had defied its monarchs and wrested from them many civil rights, rights which protected women as well as men, and although its common law, warped by ecclesiasticism, expended its chief rigors upon women, yet at an early day they enjoyed certain ecclesiastical and political powers unknown to women elsewhere. Before the Conquest, abbesses sat in councils of the Church and signed its decrees; while kings were even dependent upon their consent in granting certain charters. The synod of Whitby, in the ninth century, was held in the convent of the Abbess Hilda, she herself presiding over its deliberations. The famous prophetess of Kent at one period communicated the orders of Heaven to the Pope himself. Ladies of birth and quality sat in council with the Saxon Witas—*i.e.*, wise men—taking part in the Witenagemot, the great National Council of our Saxon ancestors in England. In the seventh century this National Council met at Baghamstead to enact a new code of laws, the queen, abbesses, and many ladies of quality taking part and signing the decrees. Passing by other similar instances, we find in the reign of Henry III, that four women took seats in Parliament, and in the reign of Edward I. ten ladies were called to Parliament, while in the thirteenth century, Queen Elinor became keeper of the Great Seal, sitting as Lord Chancellor in the *Aula Regia*, the highest court of the Kingdom. Running back two or three centuries before the Christian era, we find Martia, her seat of power in London, holding the reins of government so wisely as to receive the surname of Proba, the Just. She especially devoted herself to the enactment of just laws for her subjects, the first principles of the common law tracing back to her; the celebrated laws of Alfred, and of Edward the Confessor, being in great degree

restorations and compilations from the laws of Martia, which were known as the "Martian Statutes."

When the American colonies began their resistance to English tyranny, the women—all this inherited tendency to freedom surging in their veins—were as active, earnest, determined, and self-sacrificing as the men, and although, as Mrs. Ellet in her "Women of the Revolution" remarks, "political history says but little, and that vaguely and incidentally, of the women who bore their part in the revolution," yet that little shows woman to have been endowed with as lofty a patriotism as man, and to have as fully understood the principles upon which the struggle was based. Among the women who manifested deep political insight, were Mercy Otis Warren, Abigail Smith Adams, and Hannah Lee Corbin; all closely related to the foremost men of the Revolution. Mrs. Warren was a sister of James Otis, whose fiery words did so much to arouse and intensify the feelings of the colonists against British aggression. This brother and sister were united to the end of their lives in a friendship rendered firm and enduring by the similarity of their intellects and political views. The home of Mrs. Warren was the resort of patriotic spirits and the headquarters of the rebellion. She herself wrote, "By the Plymouth fireside were many political plans organized, discussed, and digested." Her correspondence with eminent men of the Revolution was extensive and belongs to the history of the country. She was the first one who based the struggle upon "inherent rights," a phrase afterward made the corner-stone of political authority. Mrs. Warren asserted that "'inherent rights' belonged to all mankind, and had been conferred on all by the God of nations." She numbered Jefferson among her correspondents, and the Declaration of Independence shows the influence of her mind. Among others who sought her counsel upon political matters were Samuel and John Adams, Dickinson, that pure patriot of Pennsylvania, Jefferson, Gerry, and Knox. She was the first person who counseled separation and pressed those views upon John Adams, when he sought her advice before the opening of the first Congress. At that time even Washington had no thought of the final independence of the colonies, emphatically denying such

intention or desire on their part, and John Adams was shunned in the streets of Philadelphia for having dared to hint such a possibility. Mrs. Warren sustained his sinking courage and urged him to bolder steps. Her advice was not only sought in every emergency, but political parties found their arguments in her conversation. Mrs. Warren looked not to the freedom of man alone, but to that of her own sex also.

England itself had at least one woman who watched the struggle of America with lively interest, and whose writings aided in the dissemination of republican ideas. This was the celebrated Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, one of the greatest minds England has ever produced—a woman so noted for her republican ideas that after her death a statue was erected to her as the "Patroness of Liberty." During the whole of the Revolutionary period, Washington was in correspondence with Mrs. Macaulay, who did much to sustain him during those days of trial. She and Mrs. Warren were also correspondents at that time. She wrote several works of a republican character, for home influence; among these, in 1775. "An Address to the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, on the present Important Crisis of Affairs," designed to show the justice of the American cause. The gratitude American's feel toward Edmund Burke for his aid, might well be extended to Mrs. Macaulay.

Abigail Smith Adams, the wife of John Adams, was an American woman whose political insight was worthy of remark. She early protested against the formation of a new government in which woman should be unrecognized, demanding for her a voice and representation. She was the first American woman who threatened rebellion unless the rights of her sex were secured. In March, 1776, she wrote to her husband, then in the Continental Congress, "I long to hear you have declared an independency, and, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention are not paid to the

ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound to obey any laws in which we have no voice or representation." Again and again did Mrs. Adams urge the establishment of an independency and the limitation of man's power over woman, declaring all arbitrary power dangerous and tending to revolution. Nor was she less mindful of equal advantages of education. "If you complain of education in sons, what shall I say in regard to daughters, who every day experience the want of it?" She expressed a strong wish that the new Constitution might be distinguished for its encouragement of learning and virtue. Nothing more fully shows the dependent condition of a class than the methods used to secure their wishes. Mrs. Adams felt herself obliged to appeal to masculine selfishness in showing the reflex action woman's education would have upon man. "If," said she, "we mean to have heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, we should have learned women." Thus did the Revolutionary Mothers urge the recognition of equal rights when the Government was in the process of formation. Although the first plot of ground in the United States for a public school had been given by a woman (Bridget Graffort), in 1700, her sex were denied admission. Mrs. Adams, as well as her friend Mrs. Warren, had in their own persons felt the deprivations of early educational advantages. The boasted public school system of Massachusetts, created for boys only, opened at last its doors to girls, merely to secure its share of public money. The women of the South, too, early demanded political equality. The counties of Mecklenberg and Rowan, North Carolina, were famous for the patriotism of their women.

Mecklenberg claims to have issued the first declaration of independence, and, at the centennial celebration of this event in May, 1875, proudly accepted for itself the derisive name given this region by Tarleton's officers, "The Hornet's Nest of America." This name—first bestowed by British officers upon Mrs. Brevard's mansion, then Tarleton's headquarters, where that lady's fiery patriotism and stinging wit discomfited this General in many a sally—was at last held to include the whole county. In 1778, only two years after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and while the flames of war were still spreading over the country, Hannah Lee Corbin, of Virginia, the sister of General Richard Henry Lee, wrote him, protesting against the taxation of women unless they were allowed to vote. He replied that "women were already possessed of that right," thus recognizing the fact of woman's enfranchisement as one of the results of the new government, and it is on record that women in Virginia did at an early day exercise the right of voting. New Jersey also specifically secured this right to women on the 2d of July, 1776—a right exercised by them for more than a third of a century. Thus our country started into governmental life freighted with the protests of the Revolutionary Mothers against being ruled without their consent. From that hour to the present, women have been continually raising their voices against political tyranny, and demanding for themselves equality of opportunity in every department of life.

In 1790, Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Women," published in London, attracted much attention from liberal minds. She examined the position of woman in the light of existing civilizations, and demanded for her the widest opportunities of education, industry, political knowledge, and the right of representation. Although her work is filled with maxims of the highest morality and purest wisdom, it called forth such violent abuse, that her husband appealed for her from the judgment of her contemporaries to that of mankind. So exalted were her ideas of woman, so comprehensive her view of life, that Margaret Fuller, in referring to her, said: "Mary Wollstonecraft—a woman whose existence proved the need of some new interpretation of woman's rights, belonging to that class who by birth find themselves in places so narrow that, by breaking bonds, they become outlaws." Following her, came Jane Marcet, Eliza Lynn, and Harriet Martineau—each of whom in the early part of the nineteenth century, exerted a decided influence upon the political thought of England. Mrs. Marcet was one of the most scientific and highly cultivated persons of the age. Her "Conversations on Chemistry," familiarized that science both in England and America, and from it various male writers filched their ideas. It was a text-book in this country for many years. Over one hundred and sixty thousand copies were sold, though the fact that this work emanated from the brain of a woman was carefully withheld. Mrs. Marcet also wrote upon political economy, and was the first person who made the subject comprehensive to the popular mind. Her manner of treating it was so clear and vivid, that the public, to whom it had been a hidden science, were able to grasp the subject. Her writings were the inspiration of Harriet Martineau, who followed her in the same department of thought at a later period. Miss Martineau was a remarkable woman. Besides her numerous books on political economy, she was a regular contributor to the London *Daily News*, the second paper in circulation in England, for many years writing five long articles weekly, also to Dickens' *Household Words*, and the *Westminster Review*. She saw clearly the spirit and purpose of the Anti-Slavery Movement in this country, and was a regular contributor to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, published in New York. Eliza Lynn, an Irish lady, was at this time writing leading editorials for political papers. In Russia, Catharine II.,

the absolute and irresponsible ruler of that vast nation, gave utterance to views, of which, says La Harpe, the revolutionists of France and America fondly thought themselves the originators. She caused her grandchildren to be educated into the most liberal ideas, and Russia was at one time the only country in Europe where political refugees could find safety. To Catharine, Russia is indebted for the first proposition to enfranchise the serfs, but meeting strong opposition she was obliged to relinquish this idea, which was carried to fruition by her great-grandson, Alexander.

This period of the eighteenth century was famous for the executions of women on account of their radical political opinions, Madame Roland, the leader of the liberal party in France, going to the guillotine with the now famous words upon her lips, "Oh, Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" The beautiful Charlotte Corday sealed with her life her belief in liberty, while Sophia Lapiérre barely escaped the same fate; though two men, Siéyes and Condorcét, in the midst of the French Revolution, proposed the recognition of woman's political rights.

Frances Wright, a person of extraordinary powers of mind, born in Dundee, Scotland, in 1797, was the first woman who gave lectures on political subjects in America. When sixteen years of age she heard of the existence of a country in which freedom for the people had been proclaimed; she was filled with joy and a determination to visit the American Republic where the foundations of justice, liberty, and equality had been so securely laid. In 1820 she came here, traveling extensively North and South. She was at that time but twenty-two years of age. Her letters gave Europeans the first true knowledge of America, and secured for her the friendship of LaFayette. Upon her second visit she made this country her home for several years. Her radical ideas on theology, slavery, and the social degradation of woman, now generally accepted by the best minds of the age, were then denounced by both press and pulpit, and maintained by her at the risk of her life. Although the Government of the