

Women As Citizens

**A Lecture delivered in the Albert Hall, Adelaide (before the
Young South Australian Patriotic Association, March 21,
1895.)**

Parsons, J. Langdon (1837-1903)

University of Sydney Library

Sydney

2001



<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/fed>

© University of Sydney Library. The texts and images are not to be used for commercial purposes without permission

Source Text:

Prepared from the print edition published by W. K. Thomas and Co.,
Adelaide 1895

All quotation marks retained as data
All unambiguous end-of-line hyphens have been removed, and the trailing
part of a word has been joined to the preceding line.

First Published: 1895

Australian Etexts 1890-1909 prose nonfiction federation

2001

Creagh Cole Coordinator
Final Checking and Parsing

Women As Citizens

**A Lecture delivered in the Albert Hall, Adelaide (before the Young South
Australian Patriotic Association, March 21, 1895.)**

Adelaide

W. K. Thomas & Co.

1895

Women As Citizens.

Women have exercised a powerful and continuous influence in moulding and directing the destiny of the Human Race. Whether that influence has been greater, equal to, or less, than that of men, is open to argument; but that it has been mighty—for Good and Evil—profane and sacred history, all annals, traditions, and mythologies incontestably prove.

Ancient Egypt and Chaldea.

The oldest records which exist are the inscriptions on the temples, tombs, and monuments of Egypt; and on the carved diorite statues and stones, and the inscribed clay-cylinders of Chaldea: both of which conclusively establish that at a period from one to three thousand years before the Bible Chronology there existed in the Valley of the Nile and on the Plain of Mesopotamia a high order of civilization, in which women took an active and prominent part.

Mr. Samuel Laing in his "Human Origins," says:—"The position of Women is one of the surest tests of an advanced civilization; for in rude times and among savage races force reigns supreme, and the weaker sex is always the slave or drudge of the stronger one. It is only when intellectual and moral considerations are firmly established that the claims of Women to an equality begin to be recognised. Now, in the earliest records of domestic and political life in Egypt, we find this equality more fully recognised than it is perhaps among ourselves to-day in the Nineteenth Century. Birch, in his 'Ancient History of Egypt from the Monuments,' says:—"The Egyptian woman appears always as the equal and companion of her father, brethren, and husband. She was never secluded in a harem, sat at meals with them, had equal rights before the law, served in the priesthood, and even mounted the throne.'" (p. 107.)

Of the social and political status of Women in ancient Chaldea, the records are less explicit, but from the fact that in the old mythology Istar, the "lovely" goddess, who is described as a "great goddess in her own right," was one of the favourite and most powerful deities, it may be assumed that women occupied a position equal to that of the women of Egypt. For while to Ninus is ascribed the glory of founding Nineveh, he

was eclipsed in fame by Semiramis, his wife, who founded Babylon, and hung her gardens in the air of Medea.

Hebrew Scriptures.

In the Hebrew Scriptures from the account given in the first or Elohist record of the creation of the primal pair, it is evident that the perfect equality of the sexes is plainly taught.

“God said ‘Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He *them*.”

And in the second or Jahvehistic record, although man is represented as being first created, the expressed purpose of the creation of woman was that she might be a helpmeet—meet-helper or comrade—for man, which clearly implies equality in rank and endowments.

In the account given of the Temptation and Fall of humanity, the man and the woman are represented as perfectly equal in the eye of their Creator as recipients of His law and in their obligation to obedience. In the conversation between the woman and the Tempter, the Tempter asks: “Yea, hath God said, ‘*Ye* shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ ” and the woman replied, “God hath said, ‘*Ye* shall not eat of it, neither shall *ye* touch it, lest *ye* die.’ ” The sentence upon the woman for being first in the transgression was, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

The only fragment of antediluvian poetry which has been preserved is the song of Lamech, which has been rendered:—

“Adah and Zillah! hear my voice,
Ye wives of Lamech! give ear unto my speech;
For a man had I slain for smiting me,
And a youth for wounding me;
Surely seven-fold shall Cain be avenged,
But Lamech seventy and seven.”

This, whether a dirge over slain enemies, a sonnet of confession, or an ode at the invention of the sword by his son Tubal-Cain, is addressed by Lamech to his two *wives*, showing that he held them to be worthy of his confidence and fit to hear and judge of the matter to which the words refer.

In the Patriarchal times Sarah and Rebekah stand out as prominent

figures in the public and domestic life of Abraham and Isaac; and from Sarah's triumph in the matter of Hagar, and Rebekah's in the matter of Jacob, it is safe to conclude that the claim of woman's rights was not in any degree minished or brought low in their hands.

“The position of women in the Hebrew Commonwealth,” says an erudite writer, “was high and honourable. They played no inconsiderable part in public celebrations. Miriam headed a band of women who commemorated with song and dance the overthrow of the Egyptians at the Red Sea; Jephthah's daughter gave her father a triumphal reception; women fêted Saul and David on their return from the defeat of the Philistines with singing and dancing. The odes of Deborah and of Hannah exhibit a degree of intellectual culture which is in itself a proof of the position of the sex in that period. Women also held public offices, particularly that of prophetess or inspired teacher, as instanced in Miriam, Huldah, Noadiah, Anna, and, above all, Deborah, who applied her prophetic gift to the administration of public affairs, and was so entitled to be styled a Judge in Israel. The inhospitable and cruel deed of Jael and the treacherous blandishments of Delilah were wrought by patriot women. The active part taken by Jezebel in the government of Israel, and the usurpation of the throne of Judah by Athaliah, further attest the latitude to women in public life.”

Classic Mythology.

Let us now turn to classic mythology, which has been called “the large utterance of the early gods.” But as we attach to it no Divine inspiration, we can only regard it as the embodiment of the conceptions of the profoundest and devoutest minds of that Old Time and Civilization which, like the Golden Age, have “melted into the Infinite Azure of the past.” In it the lofty position and equality of the female sex are clearly taught.

In the Olympian System, Hera or Juno is treated with the same reverence as great Zeus or Jupiter—the Fulminator of Law. Zeus himself listened to her counsel and communicated to her his secrets. She was obstinate, jealous, and quarrelsome, however, so there were tremendous domestic jars in the celestial palace, and once Zeus hung Hera up in the clouds, with her hands tied and an anvil hung on each foot, that she might beat her music and kick her temper out, I suppose. Still she came to be worshipped as the Queen of Heaven, and she was specially the Protectress of all women.

Pallas Athena, or Minerva, who sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus, was the Goddess in whom power and wisdom were blended. She was the preserver of the State, and of everything which gave strength and prosperity to the State. Among the Greeks she was the Patroness of

agriculture, she created the olive, and invented the plough; and among both the Greeks and Romans she was the Patroness of the arts and trades.

Artemis—the chaste Diana—twin-sister to Apollo, shared with him the arrows of vengeance, and, like him, was the Defender of the Helpless. She was also the Goddess of hunting, a peculiarly virile and daring pursuit. Bellona, the sister of Mars, was the Roman Goddess of war.

Thus large realms of the life of mortals were under the control and sovereignty of female Deities; and all nature was under the sway and protection of the Nymphae—the Nymphs. The Oceanides watched over the seas; the Naiades over the rivers and springs; the Oreades over the mountains and grottoes; the Dryades and Hamadryades over the trees and woods.

Pandora, the first woman on earth, made out of earth by Hephaestus, was the All-Gifted. Aphrodite gave her beauty, and Hermes boldness and cunning, and each of the gods endowed her with some power; alas! —so 'twas said—to work the ruin of man; and out of her fatal box flew all the ills of humanity, Hope alone remaining.

Heroic Greece.

In the Heroic Age—the dim epoch which elapsed between the Divine period and human history—the female sex is equally honourable, active, potent. Mr. Gladstone, in his “*Juventis Mundi*,” says:—“It would be hard to discover any period of history, or country of the world, not being Christian, in which women stood so high as with the Greeks of the Heroic Age. . . . With respect to the employments of women, it appears to be at least open to question whether they were not capable of political sovereignty. The suggestion of the text of Homer is that Chloris was Queen in Palos; and the mention of Hûpsipulè with Jason is best accounted for by supposing that she reigned in Lemnos. On the departure of Agamemnon Clutaimnestra was left in charge; and in Ithaca Penelopè had a similar regency, with the aid of Mentor. Priesthood appears not to have existed among the Hellenes of the Homeric Age, but in Troas a woman was priestess of Athenè.”

Sparta.

When we come into the period of authentic history, one of the earliest States founded was Sparta. There, even in physical training, women practised a course of gymnastics almost as rigourous as that of men. Spartan matrons were treated with marked respect, and they took a lively

interest in the welfare and glory of their country, and were animated by a lofty patriotism. Motherhood gave them a high position as citizens. This is well illustrated by the conversation between a woman of one of the other Greek States and Gorgo, the wife of King Leonidas. "The Spartan women alone rule the men," said the stranger. "The Spartan women alone bring forth men," was the quick, proud reply. Husbands and sons were fired by their sympathy and words to deeds of heroism, and the reproach and contempt that awaited them at home if they allowed themselves to be vanquished saved them from yielding to their foes. "Return *with* your shield or *on* it," was their exhortation to the warriors they sent forth. The triumphant resignation of a Spartan mother at the heroic death of her son, and her fierce wrath when he proved a recreant coward, are contained in two striking poems which have come down to us.

Eight sons Demaeneta, at Sparta's call,
Sent forth to fight; one tomb received them all.
No tear she shed, but shouted "Victory !
Sparta, I bore them but to die for thee."

A Spartan, his companion slain,
Alone from battle fled;
His mother, kindling with disdain
That she had borne him, struck him dead.
For courage, and not birth alone,
In Sparta, testifies a son.

Rome.

In the Roman legends, while Romulus the Roman was held to be the framer of all the military and political laws, Numa Pompilius, the Sabine inspired by his wife, who was supposed to be the Muse Egeria, obtained the shield of Mars from Jupiter, instituted the worship of Vesta, built the temple of Janus, secured the ownership of land and the sacredness of landmarks, and founded all the religious and ecclesiastical institutions of the Roman people.

Women saved the Romans from a war of extermination with the Sabines, and the Matronalia was one of the first festivals of the Roman year. A matron's idyllic chastity overthrew the haughty rule of the Tarquins. Women, headed by the mother, wife, and sisters of Coriolanus, accomplished what Patricians, Pontiffs, and Augurs were powerless to secure from the offended Patriot; they saved Rome from the Volscians; and a temple was built and dedicated to Woman's Fortune. It was to Cornelia

the mother of the Gracchi that Rome really owed the land reforms by which the public—public, mark, not private—lands were restored to the people: and Livia was the constant adviser of the great Augustus Caesar.

England.

In the history of our own mother-country the greatest champion and warrior of the ancient Britons, who caused the destruction of 70,000 Roman legionaries and foreigners, was Boadicea the Queen of the Icenii; who, also, though she did not set the Thames on fire, burned down London to ashes. It was Queen Bertha who won over King Ethelbert to Christianity, and prepared the way for its reception by the Saxons and Britons. The reigns of Mary, Elizabeth, Mary of Orange, Anne, and Victoria occurred at critical periods in the history of England; and each one of these sovereigns proved to be a woman of will, and maintained to the full the prerogatives of the throne and the honour of the country; and those of Elizabeth, Mary of Orange, Anne, and our own Victoria are reigns conspicuous for military glory, learning, and progress in literature, art and science. In looking back over the long and chequered career of our motherland, these Queens, in dignity, capacity, and patriotism, have been among the greatest of the monarchs who have ruled over “Merrie England.”

Illustrious Women.

Of illustrious women of other nations the Empress Yuenfi is worshipped among the Chinese as the discoverer of silk; Esther the wife of Ahasuerus—probably Xerxes—saved the Jews from destruction; Joan of Arc led the soldiers of France to victory against the English; and Isabella of Spain provided Columbus with ships to discover America.

Women of Evil.

Of women who have wrought Evil, of whom I am sorry to say there is a very long and sombre list, there is Mother Eve who “brought death and all our woe,” according to the Scriptures; Delilah who betrayed her husband, the Judge of Israel, to his hereditary enemies; Helena, whose dreadful beauty and fatal frailty caused the long siege of “Windy Troy,” and the death of many great heroes; Jezebel, who made a murderer out of the covetous coward King Ahab; Cleopatra, for whom Marc Anthony “with a fine scorn did toss the world away”; Guinevere, who spoiled the purpose of Arthur's life, and unsoldered the goodliest fellowship of knights of which the world holds record; and Lucrezia Borgia, who was one of a family of

human wild beasts. There are more—many more—but these are enough.

Pauline Woman.

But how is the prevalent and popular notion of the inferior status of woman, and of the unfitness and impropriety of women exercising the full rights of citizens in Christian States, to be accounted for? There can be no doubt, I think, that it is in large part due to the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Now Paul was a bachelor, and at the time he wrote his Epistles he was an old and a very confirmed bachelor, with very strict views about women, which seem to read rather crusty, and are, to say the least, rather patronizing. For while he is careful to state that the acceptance of the Christian faith obliterates all other distinctions—“There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female”—yet Paul all through his writings seems to be struggling with the conviction that women were a kind of necessary—not evil; oh, no! not that by any means—but a necessary and embarrassing difficulty; that they required very judicious, delicate, yet firm, management; and therefore he lays down very stringent and very definite laws for them in the Christian community.

There is no resisting the conviction that he was determined to keep women in what he held to be their place, and that was a subordinate place, and on a lower plane than man.

He writes:—“The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. The woman is the glory of the man. The head of the woman is the man” (1 Cor. xi. 1–9).

“Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy ii. 11–14).

“Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35).

He lays down sumptuary laws for them—“I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” (1 Tim. ii. 9).

Personally he seems to have been opposed to marriage, for he advised men and women against it:—“I would that all men were even as I myself. . . . I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they

abide even as I. . . . Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife” (1 Cor. vii. 1–27), is his advice to men.

He counselled fathers to dissuade their daughters from marriage, and to withhold their consent if it were safe to do so:—“He that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.”

And concerning this there is an incident narrated full of Scottish humour. A Highland girl's lover was not acceptable to her father, and he used this text to prevent the marriage. “Ye ken, Janet, the Apostle Paul weel kenned what was best. He said that he that gaeth his daughter im marriage daeth well, but he that gaeth her not daeth better.” “Na doot, fayther,” Janet replied; “but I'm thinkin' that as, if ye'll let me hae Donald, ye'll dae weel, let ither faythers dae better if they wull. To do weel is gude eneuch for you and me.”

If women are so daring as to marry, Paul tells them that they must submit themselves to and be obedient to their husbands; and so far as the younger women are concerned, he defines the chief sphere of their activity; they are to “guide the house” (1 Tim. v. 16; Eph. v. 22). In the Constitution of the Christian Church there is the solitary mention of one deaconess—Phoebe, of Cenchrea (Rom. xvi. 1); and widows over sixty years of age, who had been the wives of one husband, were enrolled for a purpose not clearly specified.

No doubt there were special reasons, arising out of the general expectation of the immediate establishment of the Messiah's kingdom upon the earth; but it is impossible to resist the conclusion that Paul placed limitations upon women; and it cannot be questioned that while Christianity elevates the position of women it contributes nothing in favour of their equal rights as citizens, and the New Testament contains no directions to them to take part in politics, Parliament, legislation, or the government of the State. And, though we have the mythical account of the Amazons, who constituted a female nation, and find women ruling as Judges and Monarchs, nowhere outside Mythology are women found voting as citizens. Before the time of Cecrops they are said to have voted at Athens; but in the later Athens—the mother and exemplar of extreme democracy—citizenship and the right to vote were strictly limited to free men of full age; while in Rome, as a historian attests, notwithstanding the pure and lofty character of the Roman matron, “by the Roman law married women had no personal rights; they were subject to their husbands as absolutely as if they had been slaves.”

South Australia.

We now pass from Revelation, Mythology, Tradition, and History, to present-day conditions, and to the unique position of South Australian women as citizens. Women in South Australia have now, by Act of Parliament, and by Her Majesty's assent, equal rights of citizenship with men.

Every natural born woman of twenty-one years of age who has been resident in the Province for six months, is entitled to be placed upon the roll of electors for the Members of the House of Assembly; and if a natural born subject of Her Majesty or naturalized, and resident in the province for five years, to be elected a Member of the Legislative Council and of the House of Assembly. Every woman possessed of a freehold estate of the clear value of fifty pounds sterling, or of a leasehold of the clear annual value of twenty-five pounds, or who occupies a dwelling house of the clear annual value of twenty-five pounds sterling, is entitled to vote at the election of Members of the Legislative Council.

Every duly qualified woman who resides more than three miles from a polling place, or makes a declaration that by reason of her health she will not be able to vote at the polling place on the polling day; is entitled to vote through the post in a certain prescribed manner.

The women of South Australia, of New Zealand, of Wyoming, Colorado, and Dakotah, are, so far as I know, the only women in the world who possess, or who ever have possessed, the parliamentary franchise. And the women of South Australia alone of the human race possess, or ever have possessed, the right to become Members of Parliament, Ministeresses of the Crown, and Premieresses.

A stupendous fact like that demands reflection. Let us pause and reflect.

Various Views on Women's Suffrage.

The expansion of the parliamentary franchise so as to practically double the electoral body, and which enfranchises every woman in identically the same sense as every man is, as I said—a stupendous fact. It creates, suddenly, an enormous new factor in the constitutional history, the legislation and the administration of public affairs in South Australia.

A great many people are very oracular and dogmatic about the results that will follow, the effects that will be produced upon the body politic, upon the trend of legislation, upon social and domestic life, and upon the life, character, and happiness of women themselves. Extremists on both sides are very positive. The old buckram Tories exclaim, “The state will be ruined, society will become a bear-garden, the home will be a scene of angry contention, the woman is profaned and degraded.” The advanced

brigade of faddism, socialism, and communism chuckle and cry out with exultation, "The State will be regenerated, society will be redeemed from frivolity and become earnest and intense, the home will become academic, woman is elevated and has become the top stone of the temple of Progress."

Gentlewomen.

Between these wide poles there are many opinions. The dear, sweet, gentle-mannered women say, "We have had no training for this new duty. We have found no time to study politics. We shrink from public meetings where people wrangle, lose their tempers, and often abuse one another. We do not consider the Government of the world perfect, or the management of the business of the State what it might be, or what it ought to be. But we may not mend it, and certainly did not ask for this franchise. It has been thrust upon us, and before women are ready to exercise it intelligently and wisely. We are, too, old-fashioned enough to agree with Milton—

‘Nothing lovelier can be found
In woman than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.’ ”

Advanced Woman.

The Advanced Woman—for we will say nothing yet of the New Woman until the type is more clearly defined—finds the apt exponent of her aggressiveness in the Lady Psyche of the "Princess." She rails at the ungracious past. She sweeps contemptuously through the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines of empire and cries, "The woman's state in each, how far from just!" She fulminates her scorn against laws Salique and little-footed China, has an infinite contempt for Mahomet, and scant respect for the toying adoration of woman in the Age of Chivalry. And, rising on a wind of prophecy, she dilates on the future. Now that women have secured the full rights of citizenship—

“Everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind.

Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more;
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.”

Common Men.

Dull, gross, common men, in whom the animal is the predominant partner in the State of Being, without being able to express it half as well, are of the way of thinking of Tennyson's fat-faced curate, Edward Bull—

“I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up
And keeps us snug; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and, indeed,
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.”

Men of this class are usually a good deal married, and are profoundly acquainted with the fathomless meaning there is in the phrase “my *better-half*,” and know, by a protracted and often-learned experience, how much of truth there is in the homely adage, that the “grey mare is the better horse.” They also understand the exact signification of the barn door condition known as “hen-pecked,” and are already obedient subjects under petticoat government. In their secret souls and in their quaking spirits, without knowing it, they are of the same mind as blustering old Dr. Sam Johnson, who said “Men know that women are an overmatch for them, and therefore they choose the weakest and most ignorant. Some cunning men choose fools for their wives, thinking to manage them, but they always fail.” Discussing the question of the equal rights of women with the Quakeress, Mrs. Knowles, who claimed them for her sex, Dr. Johnson exclaimed, “It is plain, madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakespeare says, ‘If two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind.’ ” Dilly, who was present, jocularly interposed, “I suppose, Doctor, Mrs. Knowles would have them ride in panniers, one on each side.” “Then, sir,” replied Johnson, with characteristic adroitness and obstinacy, “then, sir, the horse would throw them both.” We may well hope that that restive steed, “The State,” will not fulfil Dr. Johnson's prophecy—in South Australia.

Mannish Young Men.

I won't say anything about those mannish young cosmopolities who are just beginning to handle a razor with confidence, and have at last succeeded in educating a downy moustache in the way it should lie, who are apt at bullying their sisters, and who talk with the scorn of advanced virility of "How absurd it is to give a vote to girls, don't-cher-know, I will have compassion upon them because they know only too well that their sisters can beat them at almost everything mental or physical, except cricket, football, rowing, smoking cigarettes, and slang; and because they know in their heart of hearts that they would rather meet the Tantanoola tiger than a bevy of bright girls bent on a mischievous tease and that in conversation with a clever girl, who is *not* "a sweet girl graduate," they find it as difficult to get anything except the most venerated common-places out of what they are pleased to call their brains as to know how to comfortably dispose of their hands. Their opinion on this question of "Women as Citizens" does not count—well, not for much.

The Up-to-date Man.

And now for the advanced and positively up-to-date New Man. Some of this species of male humanity who have taken up the cause of Women's Suffrage are coarse buffoons who make a mock at what most women esteem and prize, and expect somehow to exalt themselves by what they really believe to be the lowering of women. Some of them are mere political opportunists, who have grasped at this question as a lever to lift themselves into popularity, or use it as an *Oriflamme* to rally round them a discordant and dispersing majority. And some have seized upon it in the hope that they will be able to snatch an electoral victory by the sudden and premature enfranchisement of women; by the creation of a constituency as yet largely uninformed and uninstructed in political matters, movements, and manoeuvres; and by the abstention from voting of those who are too uninterested, too timid, and too delicate to brave the publicity, and the possible rudeness and jeers of the precincts of the polling-booths.

Perplexed Men.

Then there are the men who are in a state of honest and profound perplexity on the whole subject, who, with the highest respect for women's mental powers, and with a perfect knowledge of how rich they are in "saving common sense," are yet unable to approve of the enfranchisement

of women. "It may be right," they say; "but we cannot see it; and we cannot forecast how it will work out. It is a leap in the dark. And even the modern representatives of the wise woman of Tekoah are profoundly ignorant into what state of society they and we shall alight."

Convinced Men.

And then there are the men, who, as the result of reading, reflection, and the examination of the conditions of this efflorescent Age, in which so much that seemed intended to endure has been swept away utterly and for ever, in which so much that is absolutely fresh and novel has come to be and to remain; this Age in which universal and technical education, the new conditions of life, and the increased severity of the struggle for existence, have wooed and forced women out of their old retirement—the men who are convinced by the inexorable logic of events that the Enfranchisement of Women must have come, and that women are entitled to full citizenship with all that it brings, with all that it risks, and with all that it sacrifices. It was inevitable, and now it is an actual and constitutional fact.

Distinctive Womanhood.

Here I have to confess myself less steadfast in resolution than Mark Twain. He resolved that he would keep "Butchered to make a Roman holiday," out of his description of the Coliseum. And he did. I resolved that I would keep Tennyson's lines on "Distinctive Womanhood," out of this Lecture, because everybody uses them on a kindred theme. But they so exactly and purely express the purest philosophy of the subject, and the highest aspirations of patriots, reformers, and noble-men, that I am fain to give them, at the risk of a universal yawn and a unanimous comment of "hackneyed."

"Woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: Could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height.
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;

Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be."

Women Citizenship—A Fact.

Now we come to the practical part of the subject. Women *are* citizens in South Australia. Women are entitled to have their names placed on the Electoral Rolls. Women enrolled will have the right to vote at the next General Election. The names, therefore, of all women so entitled ought to be placed on the Electoral Rolls—and all women ought to vote.

The prime necessity at this present juncture is to arouse in women that interest in their political rights, privileges and duties which their importance to the State and to women themselves demand. In the need for such action we discern the evidence that the women of the colony as a whole were not desirous to become voters, and that the passing of the Women's Suffrage Bill by the Parliament was premature and in advance of the public sentiment and demand of women. That there were most intelligent, earnest, and eager championesses of Women's Suffrage is admitted, that they formulated their claim and expressed it by speeches, pamphlets, and petitions, is a matter of history. But it is indisputable that the majority of the women of the Colony held aloof from the movement and were silent, and not with a silence that meant consent.

Now that Women's Parliamentary Suffrage is the law, adequate measures must be taken that all women citizens be enrolled, that all women citizens be informed on political matters and the burning, smouldering, and coming questions, that all women citizens be impressed with the responsibilities which are cast upon them, that all women citizens be urged on no account to abstain from voting, and that at the polling booths a separate entrance and a separate compartment be provided so that all women citizens may be able to record their votes without having to run the gauntlet of the touts and hangers-on who congregate about the polling places.

Chivalrous Duty.

The United Labour Party—whose organization, discipline, energy, and enthusiasm deserve high commendation—will be certain to secure the enrolment of their mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts; and the Producers and Conservatives must be equally well organised, disciplined, energetic, and enthusiastic that the women voters who sympathize with their views, are enrolled also. And surely no more gallant and *galant* sphere for patriotic activity could be presented to the Young South Australian Patriotic Association than with all knightly grace and courtesy to perform for the good, the fair, and the debonnaire, all that chivalry demands in this Modern Tournament of the polling booths.

No doubt other political organizations will put forth efforts to secure the enrolment of women citizens, and probably women themselves will form an electoral society to secure both the enrolment and voting of the newly created electors. Where the work is done there will be no need for your Association to do it, but there will be the satisfaction of knowing that it *is* done.

And now being honoured by the presence of many of the voting “powers that be,” I shall venture upon a few words to them personally. This will be permitted to me because, when a member of the House of Assembly, I supported the Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women for the Legislative Council, and spoke and voted in favour of granting the franchise to all women as to men. As a friend of the movement, therefore, when some of the demonstrative champions of the present were either unheard of or opposed to it, I shall be granted audience.

Address to Women Citizens.

“Citizens: You are among the few women in the world who possess the Parliamentary Franchise. You are the only women in the world, I think, who are potential Members of Parliament and possible Prime Ministers. I congratulate you on the dignity and honour which have come to you. I am well aware that some of you regard it as a Pandora's box, full of ills, with bright Hope alone as compensation. I suspect you realize that if you jostle men in competition for places and wages, and claim and use equal rights of citizenship, that you must expect an abatement of consideration and surrender. You have taken, you must be ready to give up. With the dignity and honour there are corresponding responsibilities and duties. Whether it be that your enfranchisement be a confession by men of their want of ability to legislate and govern, as some say; or whether it be a slow recognition on their part of your rights and capacities, as others affirm, Parliamentary Suffrage is yours. It is your clear duty to exercise it, and, in

order to exercise it wisely, you must educate yourselves in the leading political matters of the Colony. In addition to household, social, and general literature, you must study the platform of the Defence League, and decide whether its conservatism and progressiveism will secure and increase the happiness and prosperity of the community. You must investigate the platform of the United Labour Party and conclude whether it is one broad and strong enough upon which to build a contented State. I direct your attention to the Land. Shall it be nationalized or retained by its present owners? And, if the latter, shall its annual rental value be appropriated as a tax for public uses? You will need to master the mysteries of the Unearned Increment, the Betterment principle, and the relative merits of the Land and Income tax, and a Wealth tax. Will you support the establishment of village settlements until all the unemployed are settled on the land, and, if necessary, kept there by Government aid and private charity? You must decide whether or not the Savings Bank deposits shall be controlled by the State and become available for founding a State Bank, issuing paper money and making advances to mortgagees who cannot borrow a current rates; and you must understand what constitutes a true *Credit Foncier*. The *Referendum* and the *Initiative*, as modes precedent to legislation, will claim your attention. The continuation or modification of the existing State school education awaits your decision. Shall the disputes between employers and employed be settled by the disputants or compulsorily by State Arbitration? Will you define the Standard and the Living wage? Shall individuals, firms, and companies continue to produce, manufacture, construct, and distribute, or shall the State assume the control over the instruments of production—land, capital and labour—and regulate everything, and distribute profits?

These are some of the subjects which, to vote wisely for members of parliament, you must study, investigate, and comprehend. You will require to extend your perusal of the newspaper beyond the columns devoted to the addition, multiplication, and subtraction of humanity, and read up the topics of the day and the speeches of Members in and out of Parliament. It looks formidable and it is onerous; but if you are in earnest and conscientious it must be done.

Many talk as if you are certain to vote with the citizens who are your fathers, husbands, and brothers. I doubt that; rather should I say, I am sure many of you won't. Beneath most roof-trees, even the happiest, there are many matters on which there are two opinions, which are never reconciled, but the wise agree to differ. In many, too, the duties of the Home Secretaryship and of the Chancellorship of the Domestic Exchequer are most efficiently discharged by women, often more efficiently than by many

men. The wife and mother has special opportunities for solving economic problems, and is often charged with heavy financial responsibilities, though the amounts are not large.

As Carlyle says:—"Men know not what the pantry is when it grows empty, only house-mothers know." And I venture to think on all the laws affecting supply and the household commissariat, citizenesses will be quick to perceive, prompt to act, and resolute in their vote.

Not airy *persiflage*, nor vague generalities, nor windy theories, nor empty promises, will blind or satisfy the woman citizen who is charged with the responsibility that the table be supplied with food, and that the children be comfortably clothed.

The policy that will suit the Home Secretary and the Domestic Chancellor of the Exchequer, and for which I venture to think they will vote, is that, in industry, the industrious shall not be held in perpetual leading-strings, or be hemmed in by arbitrary restrictions, but, hand and brain, shall be free; that the national conditions shall preclude the domination of the selfish few and the selfish many, over the individual life; a policy that, in the spheres of hand-work, permits of choice both as to kind and extent, and protects the worker against the tyranny of one and of the majority; and which in the case of wage-earners conduces to just relationships, regular and full employment, fair wages, and which reduces to a minimum the possibility of ruinous strikes and lock-outs.

They who think that the vote of the woman citizen will be a kind of pocket vote for the man citizen who stands in the nearest relationship will find that they have reckoned without their hostess. A gentleman at the National Defence League meeting was evidently impressed with the truth of the lines on the pillar in the Dane John Field at Canterbury—

"Where is the man who has the power and skill
To stem the torrent of a woman's will?
For if she will, she will, you may depend on't,
And if she won't, she won't, so there's an end on't."

Where women are satisfied that men are wiser than they are, and that their judgment may be trusted, they will be much influenced, but where they are convinced that men are not very wise and are apt to be misled, they will vote in such a way that will surprise their erstwhile lords and masters, and other esteemed relatives of the male persuasion.

Citizens, you will vote, I am sure, as you think right, and as you please. You will keep your own counsel, too, and the issues of elections in the future will be much more difficult to predict than they have been in the

past.

May I venture one counsel. Avoid “the falsehood of extremes,” and do not encourage legislation that aims at the impossible. Do not make the best that might be the enemy of the good that can be. Sacrifice the ideal for the real. Hold aloof from the meddlesome charlatans who proclaim that they can cure all the ills of the body politic, by a course of Legislative Acts, as quacks profess that they can cure all the ills that flesh is heir to, by a course of patent pills. For just as the worst treatment of disease is that which, for the sake of the outward appearance, drives it in to poison the fountains of life; so the worst legislation is that which, by undue stringency, provokes secret and sly law-breaking, and makes of honest men and women—hypocrites.

Citizens, may you live long. Be sure “that you enrol. May you vote wisely. May you bring in a better time, and be happy.”

Final Words.

And now, fellow citizens, young and old, patriots all, it must be clear to all of us that we have reached here, in South Australia, the summit of a great dividing range in history. Behind and below us slopes back the past, chequered, mystic, wonderful. What struggles and conflicts—what defeats and victories there have been in the ages that have gone by. Room enough for regret there is in the retrospect, but they see the past with jaundiced eyes, and regard it with a morbid discontent, who say that rightly summed up, it shows—

“Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne.”

And one wonders how a brave clear-souled man like Lowell could ever have written such a line for the Jeremiahs of politics to point there-with their dismal morals and to adorn their tales of woe. Wrong has often met its merited scaffold; Right has often ascended its well-won throne. And from these shining heights of To-day, we who are wise look back with a tender thankfulness for all the past brought and swept away; we look around with a cheerful confidence, albeit with some anxieties; and we look forward with hope, holding it true, with one of our own poetesses, that for the good estate of this and every other Commonwealth there must be

“Fewer programmes; we who have no prescience.
Fewer systems; we who are held and do not hold.
Less mapping out of masses, to be saved
By nations or by sexes. Fourier's void,

And Comte is dwarfed,—and Cabet, puerile.
Subsists no law outside of life.
. . . . The world waits for help.
Now press the clarion on thy woman's lip
And breathe the fine, keen breath along the brass,
And blow all class-walls level as Jericho's
Past Jordan; crying from the top of souls,
To souls, that they assemble on earth's flats
To get them to some purer eminence
Than any hitherto beheld for clouds.
What height we know not,—but the way we know,
And how by mounting aye, we must attain,
And so climb on. . . . The world is old:
But the old world waits to be renewed:
Toward which, new hearts in individual growth
Must quicken, and increase to multitude
In new dynasties of the race of men,—
Developed whence, shall grow spontaneously
New churches, new aeconomies, new laws
Admitting Freedom, new societies
Excluding Falsehood.”
