

[FOR THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL.]  
A WOMAN'S PLEA FOR WOMAN.

According to Prof. E. D. Cope, "women of a higher race or family will display superior traits to men of a lower race or family, and hence women of superior lineage provoke favorable comparison with men whose ancestors have emerged from semi-savagery within a comparatively recent period."

It is not my intention to go into an exhaustive reply to all the Professor's statements, but I should like to speak a few words of defence for "weak women" whose frailties seem to increase as the ink flows from the writer's pen. Taking up a few of the charges such as: "We find in men a greater capacity for work in those departments of intelligence which require mechanical skill of a high order," if we remember the very short time that women have had opportunity to show what they may do in those departments, and how limited the opportunities are as yet, and then consider how feminine deftness has already given great promise, we may reflect with pride that in the coming years woman will compete with, and fairly rival, the master workman of her time.

As to the sop which the critic would give us in the possession of "capacity" in the department of aesthetics of the person, we could scarcely claim a monopoly with justice when one remembers that anomaly called the "Dude." As to woman's "deficiency of endurance of the rational faculty and a general incapacity for mental strain," Mary Somerville's superiority was admitted by the first scientists in Europe and Christine Ladd Franklin, a fellow of the Johns Hopkins University, is one of the best mathematicians in this country, and so I might go on citing many brilliant females whose reputations are world wide, but what end would be gained, as I should be told that they are the exception not the rule?

True, but give us time and justice and then behold the result.

To the statement that "the best emotions are aroused in the man who finds a woman dependent upon him for support," I would reply—had the critic carefully noted the police accounts, he would have found that many men refuse to contribute, from the marriage day, one cent of support for either wife or child, hence the constant appeals before the magistrate and suits for non-support. As to the difficulty of "reducing the male man to the condition of the drone-bee," of the process itself I shall not speak; but how about those who are to the manner born, who have been, and ever will be, drones,—creatures who are fed and clothed by the wife's earnings and who do not hesitate to accept all the comforts of lie from the inferior animal? There has been more than one kind of Mantellini, and Dickens could more easily have reduced him to the turning of the mangle on paper than in real life. Scores of weary women who are the sole bread-winners for their families, can testify to the hard-earned week's wage being wrested from them by their so called lords and masters, while they and their little ones go supperless to bed. Surely those who are students of human nature in the alleys and by-ways of life,—who have visited the Hospitals and Prisons, in the first, ministering to the victims of the cowardly ruffian whose "rational faculty" is the boast of his sex and whose right to vote is never challenged, or, in the second, counselling patience to the forlorn wretch who finds a barred cell a safer refuge than "the protection afforded her by the male,"—surely these have seen far more significant sights than "the loading up of wagons with women to vote the men's own ticket," which the Professor declares in italics, he has witnessed in Wyoming Territory.

I read also that woman suffrage would be a mistake on the score that man and wife might espouse opposite political theories, and then the husband would be unwilling to entertain the members of his wife's party at his table. This might be a natural prejudice, but in some cases the wife is the householder and doubtless welcome's many persons for her husband's sake who are otherwise quite detestable to her. There are instances of such magnanimity and might it not be possible as well as graceful for the husband to concede in a like case? I cannot believe that woman "would not improve the price of her labor by legislation." Is it not a rational inference that, if the labor of man and woman was recognized as having equal claims, payment therefore would be the same? Whereas now, there are always so many per cent. docked off for the weaker vessel, although it carry as much weight. I do not wish to be misunderstood; I am not a follower of Mrs. Stanton or of Miss Susan B. Anthony I have no wrongs of my own to redress, but I am no less sympathetic with those who do suffer from these unequal conditions. The woman who pays large taxes to the government, has no voice in its formation or in electing the rulers of the country which she helps to support.

The woman-teacher who performs the same duties as the man teachers, and who gives equal satisfaction to the board, but who is unhesitatingly cut down in the matter of salary, because she is a woman,—the woman-clerk, no matter how intelligent or ready a penman, who cannot obtain equal pay with a man,—the man-tailor who doubles his price and gets it over the woman-tailor,—even the little "cash" girls in our great stores who must submit to a smaller dole, than their little masters,—all of these suffer simply because they do not wear the pantaloons.

So it is from highest to lowest in position, woman is often the object of the greatest injustice. "She is kept tolerably well under, ain't she?" is said by more than one Noah Claypole; not that "she is so full of aimlessness and pettiness," as the professor kindly states, but simply because her sex is against her. Being under the old law "the woman that was given to be with the man," the new dispensation has not yet sufficiently emancipated her to permit her recognition in much, as man's co-worker, and entitled in simplest justice to the same remuneration.

It is for this large proportion of our popula-

tion that every clear-souled woman must feel a righteous indignation. The more sheltered and tended the condition of the one, the stronger the appeal of the other; pushed as she often is by the incapacity of the male into the hurly-burly of the market place, finding that man, who should be the readiest to help her on, regards her as out of her sphere or simply as a venturesome enemy who must beat a rapid retreat at the first fusillade. The best of men will give women compliments and caresses, but they refuse them, with a strange irrationality attributed only to the weaker sex, the earnest acknowledgement of their rights.

In the street car and in the crowded highway may be seen, night and morning, the women-toilers going to and from their daily labor. Surely they must be less frivolous and illogical than some charge them with being, or places could not be found in which they might work. Or is it that the capacity of man is greater than is generally supposed, and that he avails himself of these women employees, finding them quite as able and far less expensive than men?

Why ask whether women's work should be encouraged? Better ask how it could be dispensed with. Whole families have no other bread winners, and many a slender girl has earned not only her own sustenance but the means to send a stalwart brother to college through her own unaided efforts.

Then is it not more noble and gracious to yield women all that they ask, even the ballot itself? For, depend upon it, that is no longer a matter of option with men. If the women want the ballot they will get it. The colleges and professions are being opened to women, their relations to the government and its offices will adjust itself.

Before leaving Prof. Cope's very interesting but hardly liberal paper, I would add that, having meekly borne, with the rest of my sex, the odious classification of "women, children and idiots," has not the world grown too broad to rank the mothers and wives of the nineteenth century with the negro, whose suffrage, however unqualified, hardly places him on the same platform?

Prediction has already been made that from the ranks of woman, our future orators will come, and even the most grudging must acknowledge that woman, notwithstanding her pronounced "frailty of the rational faculty in thought and action," has worked out some problems of literature and science that have made her sex illustrious.

Sappho, Madame de Stael and George Eliot are more than names; and "abnormal" though they may be, have, by their own greatness, compelled the admiration and respect of the polite world.

From a sociological stand point, pro-creation may be said to be the principal aim of life, and marriage the means to preserve the species, but since the males elect in some instances to remain single, why should woman be brought up with the idea that the capture and taming of man is the primary object of existence?

For many generations it has been the fashion to sneer at women for their inordinate desire to propitiate the other sex; now the tables are turned and we are frankly told that that is the ultimate purpose of woman's creation. With all reverence for the sacrament of marriage, I cannot believe that every woman was intended for a wife.

Many serve God and humanity nobly by remaining single, and whether wife or maid, is not a woman better for all the decorous liberty that she can use? And is she not, as property holder and bread-winner, entitled to the fullest recognition from her brother man?

These questions are asked with due deference, of those men who owe the rise of their own greatness to the wise counsels listened to at a mother's knee; and of the husbands whose tower of strength has ever been, the supreme courage and clear judgement of the women they called wives.

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