

Editors' Table.

OUGHT AMERICAN WOMEN TO HAVE THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE?

We put the question on the basis of duty. Women have not the physical ability to gain for themselves this political privilege or right. If it be their duty to vote, the right must be conferred on them by men who believe (as some rationalistic philosophers do) that the best good of the nation will thus be advanced and secured.

The late Mr. Buckle, in his philosophical history, and John Stuart Mill, in his political philosophy, both uphold the idea that woman is the moral power of society. The Bible teaches a higher destiny for woman; from Genesis to Revelation she is shown to be the moral power of humanity. But does it follow that it is her duty to use this power coercingly, in public or political life? Is the world where men congregate the best, the fittest place for her mission? If she have not, at the cradle-side, trained her own boys to their *moral*—that is, *manly* duties, will she be able to reform men at the ballot-box?

The Word of God settles the question of differences between the sexes in perfect accordance with the natural laws that indicate the best way of human happiness and progressive improvement. The summary may be thus stated. Man is the *protector, provider, and lawgiver*. Woman is the *preserver, the teacher, or inspirer, and the exemplar*. Our American homes are now settled on these Bible doctrines. Our government is based on man's authorities and woman's influences. Let us see what these have done for our nation, estimating the standard of excellence by the status of womankind.

As far as exemption from the hard work of "subduing the earth" (which God has laid expressly on men), the women of America are freed from all oppressive out-door work; and their homes are made more comfortable and pleasant than those of any other women, generally speaking, in the world. There is not now, nor has there ever been a nation where the men were so careful to provide for their families, and devoted such thought, skill, and expense for domestic appliances, intended to lighten the tasks of women. The love and liberality of fathers and husbands are apparent in the comforts and luxuries of American home life, and in the personal appearance of their wives and daughters.

We do not agree with those who would place women in competition with men in their industrial pursuits. Such a course would not only deteriorate the feminine nature but fatally injure society, because giving material things a still greater preponderance over moral goodness than is now to be found in Christendom.

Radical changes are not required in American life. What we do need is to increase the power of the good influences now active and to restrain and eradicate those which are evil. For the first, we need means of culture both for girls and women. The higher—that is, the more thoroughly trained the mother has been in all branches which her children will need to learn, the better able she will be to form their minds for the reception of culture. On the right ordering of households depend the health and comfort, the improvement and enjoyment of every human being.

Does not the lady who presides over the duties and destinies of family life require the aid of a thorough train-

ing, mentally as well as morally, in order to become capable of using her own faculties to the best advantage? The eminent Mr. Ruskin, in his Lectures on Education, places a high estimate on the capacity of the feminine mind, and says that a "young lady requires all such knowledge as may enable her to understand and even aid the work of man."

And yet in America, while the young men have schools and colleges richly endowed by public and private bounties, to fit them for all manly professions, there has never been an institution in our land founded and endowed by State or National bounty for the young women. And there is but one endowed institution in all our wide country. VASSAR COLLEGE stands alone in its just design of giving "to the young women of America an education as thorough as our colleges are accomplishing for young men." The founder of Vassar College has the glorious honor of leading in this—the right way of individual and national improvement.

Moreover, women have never yet had any suitable means of education for their household duties. Domestic Science, far more important to the health, happiness, and morality of mankind than any other sort of scientific learning, has never yet had a college or school founded to teach its arts, rules, method of practice, and deep mysteries of knowledge. Congress has liberally given millions of acres of public lands to found Agricultural Colleges for working men; working women have no recognition in this national bounty. Is it not time to begin the experiment of fitting woman for her own work? She certainly has many things to do. Among these duties there must be some of importance to the public weal. Do not the daughters of the Republic require more for their culture than the elementary education of the common schools?

Medical Science belongs as surely to women as to men. Woman is the preserver; the study of the laws of health and of the healing art would harmonize with her feelings and her intuitive faculties. She has a right to this knowledge and to the means of acquiring it, so far as her own sex and children are concerned. The profession of "Doctress of Medicine" should be considered, like the duties of mother and nurse, which it closely resembles, a proper sphere for educated women—if they choose to enter it.

And while these beneficent changes for women are in progress, legislation must be invoked to suppress those vices and crimes of men that destroy the happiness of home, where woman's world centres. Drunkenness, gambling, licentiousness—these are the blasting sins that now defy law and disgrace the manhood of American citizens. Surely there are enough good and true men, would they unite, to accomplish all these reforms in our country.

The bayonet or the ballot-box must govern the world. Wherever the latter bears rule, moral power is in the ascendant, and there the influence of woman predominates. Would it be better if the sex was admitted to participate directly in the administration of government, voting and holding offices equally with men? No—I reply unhesitatingly, no! Feminine power is not coercive, but persuasive. However salutary moral influences may be, yet in civil governments the laws must, in the last resort, be upheld by material force. This duty wo-

men could not perform; nor could they share in the government unless the other sex permitted. When men are prepared, from their appreciation of feminine goodness, to do this, they will be good themselves, and therefore better fitted, by their masculine power of sustaining law, to uphold and discharge all the duties of government, than woman can possibly be. Besides, our American women have the controlling power over their homes, their children, and social life; it is but just that men should enjoy a separate theatre for the cultivation and display of their own talents and virtues.

Would the true wife desire to supersede her husband? Would the good, intelligent mother, who has trained her son to the glorious ambition of serving his country and gaining a noble fame—would she, were it in her power, pluck the laurel from his brow and place it on her own? Would she be willing that any woman should enter the lists against her son? If not, is it right for this mother to encourage the competition of her own sex against the sons of other mothers?

Greatness is most perfect when it acts with the least reference to *self*; power is more efficient when moving the will through the heart. Let us American ladies cultivate the virtues, the knowledge, the accomplishments which will influence, imbue, and aid men to do the work of the world to the glory of God; then the woman will truly shine forth as "the glory of the man."

GERMAN GIRLS.

An English lady, who resided some years in Prussia, and evidently had a good opportunity of seeing and understanding the ways of the people, has given a lively description of the manners of training girls and treating women in Germany.

We think our readers will be interested in these details respecting woman's position in that old land of the Goths where, in the age of Paganism, women were held in the highest honor; and in the days of chivalry were arbiters of all noble and heroic deeds of men. Prussia is now, nominally, Christian; with a system of public and universal education. Germany claims the highest mental development in philosophy and classical learning.

In selecting from the impressions of this English lady we will give a few of the salient points that indicate the differences between the present state of Teutonic womanhood and that of their Anglo-Saxon cousins the daughters of Great Britain and America. In which nation are the women most honored?

CHILDHOOD IN PRUSSIA.

"A German girl comes into the world with two original sins—the vice of coffee-drinking and an indisposition to take exercise. A German baby is a piteous object; it is pinioned and bound up like a mummy in yards of bandages, which are unfolded once (at the outside twice) a day; it is never bathed, but I suppose it is sometimes washed in some occult matter. Its head is never touched with soap and water until it is eight or ten months old, when the fine skullcap of incrustated dirt which it has by that time obtained is removed by the application of various unguents. Many German ladies have assured me that the fine heads of hair one so often sees in Germany are entirely owing to the skullcap.

GIRLHOOD.

"As the little girls grow older, they have their coffee like their elders, and by degrees form a number of acquaintances of their own age, with whom they have daily meetings, so that society is a large ingredient of juvenile life. Then comes the time for going to school. With little knapsacks on their backs, containing books, slate, etc., whole gangs of little students are to be seen walking through the streets, always chattering, and

generally with apples, bread or cakes, to distribute and consume, making in this way friends or enemies. This continues until a girl is grown up.

MAIDENHOOD.

"And now comes the solemn rite of confirmation. I do not like to speak at length on this subject; but I have been pained beyond measure at the way in which this turning-point in a young life, this moment of enthusiastic resolves and passionate repentance, of ardent aspirations and humble regrets, is regarded (as a rule) in Germany.

"The young girl goes to so-called confirmation classes. It is a sort of received idea amongst these young people that they shall then select an object (if they have not already done so) upon which to fix their affections, the youths who attend these classes claiming the like privilege. 'I am going to have my visiting cards printed, Amalia,' says one young girl, coming out of the confirmation lecture. 'And mamma has promised me a new black silk for the confirmation-day, and a blue silk, made long and gored in the skirt, trimmed in each seam with velvet to match,' says the other. 'But there is Otho X—and his cousin. Let us walk quickly down the Brunnen-Strasse, and we shall meet them there again before they cross the Schloss Garden.'

YOUNG WOMANHOOD.

"Thus the child grows into girlhood, the girl into maidenhood, and the maiden by degrees into young womanhood. Being now confirmed, she has the privilege of coming down in the morning in the universal cap, which often covers untidily arranged hair. If she is of a domestic turn, after swallowing several cups of coffee and a few rolls of white bread, she will go into the kitchen; here her time will be passed until eleven, when she will withdraw to her room, and spend an hour or more in dressing. At length *coiffée et habillée*, she is 'at home,' if any one should call; or, should the day be fine, she will perhaps walk with her favorite friend on the fashionable promenade, exchanging greetings with acquaintances and criticising the toilets of her lady friends and enemies. Then comes dinner; and at three o'clock she will set off to her coffee-party. The afternoon will be spent in gossip: the last pieces at the theatre and the favorite actor will be discussed. At six o'clock the party will break up, as some of the young ladies are sure to be *abonnées* in the theatre, that is to say, regular subscribers, and entitled to go once, twice, thrice, or more times a week to that temple of the Muses, according to the terms on which they have secured their tickets.

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"It is not the custom for young ladies to teach in Sunday-schools as it is with us—to visit the poor and make garments for the needy. Nor is it the custom even for them to go to church. That some women go to church is not to be denied, and that some may visit the poor I am not prepared to refute, but that it is customary to do so I am sorry to say is not the case.

"The day passes in cooking, in dressing, in talking, perhaps in walking a little, if the weather be fine, in dining, and coffee-drinking, in gossip and snipping; but no outward token of religion graces any of their occupations or pastimes. Domestic servants seldom or never go to church, nor do masters and mistresses make it their business to see that they do so. Some masters and mistresses may so busy themselves, and some few servants may do as they are told, but the majority do not, and it is of the majority I now speak. They have one bugbear, these people without an object in life, and that is what they call *mode*, a monster between public opinion and Mrs. Grundy.

"I should like to sketch that picturesque old house," said I one day to a pretty young girl of sixteen who was walking with me.

"For heaven's sake do not speak of such a thing," she said; "people are not so emancipated here. *Sie wissen ja, es ist hier keine Mode.*"

"Girls have no out-of-doors amusements in Germany; no riding, no boating, no swimming, no croquet. They do not go for long country walks, nor do they wear thick boots and waterproof clothes. They are so little accustomed to the society of young men, that if a gentleman is ordinarily civil, they either imagine he is desperately in love with them or conceive a romantic passion for him on the spot.

"Thus I often came to pity those young German ladies, whose life is so restricted in all of its amusements and pleasures. In the balls it was not much better; the division of the sexes could scarcely have been more strictly observed in a Puseyite church.