

# Woman Suffrage Leaflet.

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## Objections to Woman Suffrage Answered.

BY HENRY B. BLACKWELL.

### 1. *Suffrage is not a right of anybody.*

To say so is to deny the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. "Governments derive their just powers from consent of the governed"—women are governed. "Taxation without representation is tyranny"—women are taxed. "Political power inheres in the people"—women are people. To deny these principles is to justify despotism. "The men who refuse the ballot to women can show no title to their own."

### 2. *Nobody asks for Woman Suffrage.*

Over 21,000 citizens of Massachusetts have petitioned for it within six months. More than 50,000 others have petitioned for it in previous years. Not a dollar has ever been spent in circulating these petitions. Repeated efforts have been made and money spent to circulate petitions against Woman Suffrage, and they have had few signers.

### 3. *What eminent men have favored Woman Suffrage?*

Among others, Abraham Lincoln, Chief Justice Chase, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Samuel G. Howe, John G. Whittier, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, President Hayes, Governors Banks, Boutwell, Claflin, Washburn, Talbot, Long, Butler, Brackett and Greenhalge, U. S. Senators Geo. F. Hoar and Henry L. Dawes; John M. Forbes, Robert Collyer, Bishops Haven, Bowman and Simpson, Neal Dow, George William Curtis, the Republicans of Massachusetts in successive platforms since 1870. The national Republican conventions of 1872, 1876, and 1896.

### 4. *What eminent women have favored Woman Suffrage?*

Among others, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Frances D. Gage, Lucretia Mott, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Ward Howe, Mary A. Livermore, Louisa M. Alcott, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Clara Barton, Frances E. Willard, Abby W. May, Lucy Stone, Mary F. Eastman, Frances Power Cobbe, Harriet Prescott Spofford.

### 5. *Most women do not want to vote.*

Except in years of presidential election, a majority of men in Massachusetts do not vote. This is shown by statistics. The right to vote for governor, State legislature, municipal, town and county officers, often calls out less than half the male voters, in spite of public opinion, party machinery, torchlight processions, newspaper articles, expenditure of money, and personal efforts of candidates. From 10,000 to 20,000 women in Massachusetts register every year to vote merely for school committee. Yet that is only a small and disjointed part of the system of Municipal Suffrage. It does not include a vote on the management of schools, or a share in the nomination of candidates. Small as it is, the right is restricted in the case of women by limitations which make it troublesome to exercise. A woman must apply every year to be registered. Under parallel conditions not 500 men would have voted for school committee.

That over 20,000 women have done so in a single year, under such restrictions, is a proof of eminent and unselfish public spirit.

### 6. *It is a step that once taken can never be recalled.*

Municipal Suffrage for women, on the contrary, is an experiment which can be repealed at any time by a Legislature of men alone, elected by men alone. If the presence of women at town-meetings and municipal elections proved distasteful to the men, the Legislature would soon repeal the law. Every fair-minded opponent of Woman Suffrage should vote for Municipal Woman Suffrage, in accordance with Governor Long's recommendation, as the shortest way to put an end to the agitation for Woman Suffrage by giving it a trial.

### 7. *We have too many voters now.*

Where will you draw the line? No one proposes to disfranchise any class of men who now vote. Every extension of suffrage has proved on the whole a benefit to all concerned; first to poor white men; then to ignorant colored men; why not now to intelligent women? Are Democrats who have given suffrage to poor men of foreign birth, or Republicans who have forced negro suffrage on the reluctant South, afraid to share political power with their own intelligent mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters?

### 8. *Women are represented already.*

Men cannot represent women, because they are unlike women. Women as a class have tastes, interests and occupations which they alone can adequately represent. Men specially represent material interests; women will specially represent the interests of the home.

### 9. *Only bad and ignorant women would vote.*

Our ten years' experience of School Suffrage for women proves the contrary. The women who have voted are admitted to be good and intelligent. The demand for suffrage comes from the respected leaders and educated representatives of their sex. No woman can vote in Massachusetts unless she can read and write.

### 10. *It is contrary to experience.*

Not so. In England women have voted for twenty-seven years in municipal elections. Hon. Jacob Bright has written to the Massachusetts Legislature that in England Woman Suffrage has proved "good for women, good for Parliament, and good for the country." It has worked so well there that it has been extended to the women of Scotland. Within three years it has been granted to the women of New Zealand and South Australia. Women now vote for all National, State and local officers in the States of Wyoming, Colorado and Utah, also on property qualifications in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's Island, Ontario, and Manitoba. Are American women alone unfit to be trusted with political responsibilities?

### 11. *There is no precedent in this country.*

In Wyoming, women have voted for twenty-seven years on all questions, on

the same terms as men. Every governor has announced in his annual message that Woman Suffrage is a success. Successive governors, the judges of the Supreme Court, the members of Congress, the presiding elder of the M. E. Church, the newspapers of both parties, all agree that Woman Suffrage works well and gives satisfaction in three States, viz.: Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah.

12. *It would put the control of State and nation into the hands of the foreign element.*

In every State there are more women who can read and write than all the illiterate men and women combined. In every State there are more American women than all the foreign men and women combined. In every State the votes of women will double the intelligent majority, and diminish the influence of the ignorant minority one-half. In the Southern States taken together, there are more white women than all the colored men and women combined. So that the white majorities when women vote, will be larger than the total number of white male voters, if all women and colored men were excluded. There are in Massachusetts 574,390 women over twenty years of age who can read and write; those only can become voters under the State constitution; 401,365 of these are Americans; 173,025 of foreign birth. (See U. S. Census of 1885.)

13. *It would put our cities under Roman Catholic control.*

There are in all our large cities, even in New York, more Protestant women than Roman Catholic women; more American women than foreign women. There are in Boston 117,950 over twenty years old, who can read and write; 67,934 of these are Americans; 50,016 are of foreign birth (See U. S. Census of 1885.)

14. *It would diminish respect for women.*

Voting is power. Power always commands respect. To be weak is to be miserable. How many men are tolerated in society only because they are rich and powerful! Woman armed with the ballot will be stronger and more respected than ever before.

15. *It is contrary to the Bible.*

Not so. In the beginning, we are told, God made man in his own image male and female, and gave them dominion; not man dominion over woman. Among the Jews, God's chosen people, Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, a married woman, was judge, and led their armies to victory. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one. Women as well as men are commanded to "call no man master." Nowhere is it

said in the Bible to women, "Thou shalt not vote."

16. *Women have not physical strength to enforce laws; therefore they should not help make them.*

One-half our male voters have not physical strength to enforce laws, yet they help make them. Most lawyers, judges, physicians, ministers, merchants, editors, authors, legislators and congressmen, and all men over forty-five years old, are exempt from military service on the ground of physical incapacity. (See statistics of the late war.) Voting is the authoritative expression of an opinion. It requires intelligence, conscience, and patriotism, not muscle. All the physical force of society is subject to call to enforce law, but cannot create law. Moral force, such as women possess, is as necessary as physical force to national well-being.

17. *If women vote they must fight.*

Women are the mothers of men. Lucy Stone says: "Some woman perils her life for her country every time a soldier is born. Day and night she does picket duty by his cradle. For years she is his quartermaster, and gathers his rations. And then, when he becomes a man and a voter, shall he say to his mother, 'If you want to vote you must first kill some body?' It is a coward's argument!"

18. *It will make domestic discord when women vote contrary to their husbands.*

In cases where husbands and wives vote together it will be an additional source of sympathy and bond of union. In cases where they vote differently they will agree to differ, as they now do in religious matters. A man will not respect his wife the less because she has an opinion of her own and is free to express it.

19. *It will only double the vote—women will vote as their husbands do.*

Then the family will cast two votes instead of one. But the quality of the voters changes the quality of politics. A political party of men and women will not be the same as a party of men alone. Women on an average are more peaceable, refined, temperate, chaste, economical, humane, and law-abiding than men. These qualities will influence the character of the Government. The united votes of men and women will give the fullest, fairest, and most accurate expression of public opinion. The most civilized class of men now spend their leisure in the society of educated women. They go with women to lectures, church meetings, concerts and parties. They do not go to the primary meetings because the women are excluded. Let the women go, and the men will go too. Instead of neither we shall have both as voters.

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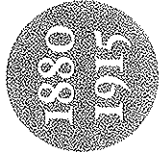
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