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Henry Miller Showalter, 1904

H. M. Showalter.
May, 1904.

"Should Women Vote?"

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The question of woman suffrage, has agitated the minds of some of our best statesmen, during a period of several years. In the great commonwealth of the United States there are four classes of individuals who have no recognition at the polls, - namely, women, minors, paupers and the insane. There are various reasons for this given by our law makers but the following, are, I think, the principal ones accepted.

Minors, or persons under age, and paupers are not allowed to vote because they are dependent;

and it is presumable that they would vote under coercion, and not according to their independent judgment. Moreover, because the insane are not capable of managing their private business, they should not have a voice or influence in shaping our public affairs. It is probable that women are denied the right of franchise because the greater part of them are in a state of dependence; and the law makes no exceptions. In some of the states, educational qualifications have been proposed and will surely be adopted within the next few years. The Baker Ballot Law of

our own state is a step in that direction. Where public or free schools are accessible to the whole population, there could be no injustice in requiring that only those who can read and write should exercise the power of the ballot.

The right to vote in this country dates back to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. It says, "We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." And Miss Frances

E. Willard rightly says that "Ever
then and there invoked that trinity
of issue which are today involved
in the mighty "Human Question",
namely, The Labor Question, The
Temperance Question and The
Woman Question." Will has the
poet say that "Men and women
rise and fall together, dwarfed or
god-like, bound or free". At first
she was placed at the bottom of
the human pyramid, but I
rejoice to say that she has risen
from her low estate, until to-day,
she occupies the highest pinnacle
of fame, fortune and knowledge.
There is no recognized channel of

business today in which woman is not an important factor. She stands pre-eminently at the head of every charitable institution of the known world.

After hearing the above, some one may ask, "why should women not vote?" I must confess that I do not know one good reason which I can advance on the negative side of the question. After making a careful study and investigation of the subject, I am impelled by reasonable logic and history to take the affirmative position. My reasons for taking such a position are as follows:

First, God created man and woman equal, and they are to occupy equal rights in the Kingdom of Heaven, hence she has a divinely appointed equality.

Secondly, - The Constitution of our noble government gives her equal rights with her brother, hence she has Constitutional rights.

Thirdly, - It is by and through the unselfish love, tenderness and devotion of their mothers that every man of eminence has risen to his high station in life, hence woman has in a great measure, been instrumental in shaping governmental affairs.

Fourthly, — The Civil Rights Bill says,
"That all persons (not all male persons)
born in the United States and not
subject to any foreign power,
excluding Indians, not taxed are
hereby declared to be citizens of
the United States." And the courts,
subordinate and supreme, have
accepted the above interpretation,
and woman has a lawful right
to vote.

Fifthly, — It is my opinion that
if women were allowed the use
of the ballot, the greater part of
the corruption, drunkenness and
debauchery at the polls would
soon be abolished.

Sixthly,- A woman pays taxes, the same as a man, hence she is subject to "taxation without representation," one of the cardinal points at issue during the war for Independence; and the decision of that great struggle would give her a right to use the ballot.

Lastly,- If women were allowed the privilege of voting, the great temperance question, which is one of the paramount issues of to-day, would be settled for all time to come at the next general election, and the five hundred thousand men who are busy three hundred and sixty five days in the year

preparing thirteen million souls to
fill drunkards graves, would
speedily have to get into better
business or else starve to death.

In conclusion, by all means,
endow women with equal privileges
in church and state and

maladministration of any kind
will cease forever and this country
will not only enjoy a season of
the greatest prosperity in its history,
but it will also have solved the
greatest economic question of
the ages.

F. M. S.