The Anti-Slavery Bugle.

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The Anti-Slavery Bugle.

From The N. Y. Evangelist.

A MISSIONARY'S OPINION OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE.

The Rev. Mr. Bushnell, now in this city, has been a missionary on the Western Coast for thirteen years. He is stationed on the Gaboon River, right on the line of the equator and in the heart of the slave region. Their first mission-house was on the site of an old Portuguese slave factory, where the trade had been carried on for more than two centuries. On an island at the mouth of the river are heavy guns, brought there by the Portuguese two hundred and fifty years ago.

Thus ample time has been given for the great experiment of civilization. By this time the Slave Coast ought to be the seat of a high state of civilization. But the missionaries seem to think that this intercourse with other nations has only caused a deeper night to descend on that dark continent. Mr. Bushnell even goes so far as to say that the slave trade is the great curse of Africa; that it renders the wildest savages still more fierce and cruel, and that it baffles all attempts at civilization.

Of course all other commerce is killed by this traffic. The country is rich in natural products, and might furnish a large export. But all is kept down by this one trade. So soon as a British squadron, hovering on the coast, puts the slavers in fear, and causes their trade to languish, other branches of industry revive. The chiefs, finding less demand for human flesh bring down other commodities—ivory, palm oil, gold dust, dye woods, and ebony. Thus the instant the slave-trade is checked, there springs up a legitimate commerce. But while that is in full blast, it kills everything else, for it is more exciting and more lucrative.—The trade in slaves is more profitable than trade in ivory, for it is easier to steal a child than kill an elephant.

But the commercial loss is nothing to the moral dessolation which it leaves behind it. The slave-trade is the cause of almost all the wars between different tribes. It keeps them constantly fighting to procure fresh victims. It excites them to attack defenceless villages, and to sieze men, women and children. Thus it stimulates to burnings, to murder and to massacre.

Mr. Bushnell has taken away our chief consolation in this trade, which was that these poor wretces were only taken from being slaves in their own country to be slaves in ours—which seemed a great improvement. But he informs us that but for this foreign trade they might not be slaves at all! In fact, he doubted whether Slavery existed on this Western Coast until two or three centuries ago when the Portuguese tempted the chiefs to sell the bodies of men. It was Christian traders who first taught the poor natives these arts of cruelty. At any rate, if Slavery existed at all before, the whole system has been extended and fortified, and increased in horrors, by the demand for slaves to export. If left to itself, it would soon dwindle and die; for there is no internal cause to sustain it. Labor is not of value enough. A slave is good for nothing to keep, but only to sell. It is the cupidity of West India traders which spurs on the natives to burning and butchery, and which brings upon this desolate coast all the woes of hell.

A natural effect of such a trade in flesh and blood is to produce a frightful disregard of human life. It has reduced the value of a man to the trifle that he will bring from the trader. Many a man has been bought for a cask of rum. Lately the price has risen, so that an able bodied man will fetch about $40, and a boy or girl perhaps half that sum.

Of course it tends to destroy natural affection.—The natives are simple-hearted, and strongly attached to their kindred. But when every bad passion is excited, imbruted by war and maddened by rum, the father will sometimes sell his own child. "I have even known," says Mr. Bushnell, "a husband to sell his wife!"

It is often said that these poor Africans do not suffer much, for that they are incapable of feeling. They are a little above the beasts, and, like animals, all places are indifferent to them. "Having food and raiment, they are therewith content." But our informant tells us that, on the contrary, they are a very sensitive race. Natives of that torrid clime, they are true children of the sun. Living in the open air, they drink in bright influences from sunshine and from sky. Their feelings are quick. The slightest thing exalts them to a heaven of rapture or plunges them into an abyss of grief. When left to themselves, they are a careless, heedless, happy race; full of mirth and dance, and song. In many a sylvan glade, under the wide-spreading palms, may be witnessed scenes which would delight the imagination of a pastoral poet.

They have a passionate love of music. The gondoliers of Venice, floating on their grand canal were not more spontaneous and gushing in their melody than these Africans, floating on their inland waters. As the boats glide along the lagoons and rivers, the oarsmen keep time with a rising and falling strain. If any incident occurs in the sail they instantly improvise a rude poetry, and accompany it with a wild melody. Thus everywhere—in their boats or bamboo huts, in every scene of gladness or of grief, at the wedding or the funeral—their hearts find vent in song.

And do these simple children of nature feel nothing when away from their homes and country? "When I first landed on the coast," says Mr. Bushnell, "the slave-trade was flourishing, and there were many factories near us. I often visited the baracoons, and such utter woe and despair I never saw on any human faces." Their lightness and gaiety was all gone, their songs were hushed, and they sat silent and gloomy. It was not a grief which burst forth in wild lament, nor a despair which nerved them to fierce resistance, but a wan and weary look, a despair which was speechless and hopeless, as of those doomed to die. There they sat upon the shore chained together, now turning a last fond look to the hills and palm groves in the distance, and now looking to the slave-ship which began to show its dark hull on the horizon. Thus they watched and wept, their stifled sobs answering to the desolate moaning of the sea.

Such is the slave-trade, of which men in this Christian land speak in gentle phrase, and which some propose to revive. Many might be found who would not only defend it, but delight in it; who would find in this buying of men, not only the most lucrative commerce, but the most exciting sport. When Capt. Smith confided to us his experience in a slave ship his eyes shot fire as he depicted the scenes on the African coast. "Ah!" said the hero, "that's the place for fun!"

THE TRESPASS ACT.—The people who live in the rural districts should feel greatly obliged to the Legislature for the passage of the Trespass Act. This act makes the trespass on grounds, by cutting hoop-poles, destroying trees, taking fruit, robbing water-melon vines, in a word committing trespass on other people's property, a criminal offense. It is to be punished according to the aggravation of the offense, from double the value and cost up to thirty days in jail on bread and water. This law is much needed, and should be rigidly enforced.

Speaking on this subject, we may say that this sort of trespassing and its kindred vice, huckstering among farmers, are among the causes by which the prices in city markets are greatly enhanced. Much valuable fruit and vegetables are wasted by the promiscous pillage of farmers in the neighborhood of towns. It is for the interest of citizens, as well as farmers, to have a Trespass Act, and have it enforced.—*Cin. Gazette.*

REPORT

OF THE

Select Committee of the Ohio Senate,

ON GIVING THE

RIGHTS OF SUFFRAGE TO FEMALES.

The following petition, numerously signed by both men and women, citizens of this State, was, at the first session of this Legislature, referred to the undersigned select committee.

"Whereas, the women of the State of Ohio are disfranchised by the constitution solely on account of their sex.

"We do, respectfully, demand for them the rights of suffrage,—a right which involves all other rights of citizenship—one that cannot, justly, be whitheld; as the following admitted principles of government show:

"First. 'All men are born free and equal.'

"Second. 'Government derives its just power from the consent of the governed.'

"Third. 'Taxation and representation are inseparable.'

"We, the undersigned, therefore, petition your honorable body to take the necessary steps for a revision of the constitution, so that all citizens may enjoy equal political rights."

Your committee have given the subject referred to them a careful examination and now

REPORT.

Your committee believe that the prayers of the petitioners ought to be granted. Our opinion is based both upon grounds of position and expediency, which we will endeavor to present as briefly, as is consistent with a due consideration of this subject.

The founders of this republic, claimed and asserted with great emphasis, the essential equality of human rights, as a self-evident truth. They scouted the venerable old dogma of the divine right of Kings, and titled aristocracies to rule the submissive multitude.

They were equally explicit in their claim, that "taxation and representation, are inseparable."

The House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1764, declared, "That the imposition of duties and taxes, by the Parliament of Great Britain upon a *people, not represented* in the House of Commons, is absolutely irreconcilable with their rights." A pamphlet entitled "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted," was sent to the agent of the Colony in England, to show him the state of the public mind, and along with it an energetic letter. "The silence of the province," said this letter, alluding to the suggestion of the agent, that he had taken silence for consent, "should have been imputed to any cause,—even to despair,—rather than be construed into a tacit cession of their rights, or the acknowledgement of a right in the Parliament of Great Britain, to impose duties and taxes on a people who are not represented in the House of Commons." "*We are not represented, we are slaves!*"

Some of England's jurists acknowledge the truth of this doctrine. Chief Justice Pratt said, "My position is this—taxation and representation are inseparable. The position is founded in the law of nature. It is more; it is itself an eternal law of nature." In defence of this doctrine, they waged a seven years war; and yet, when they had wrung from the grasp of Great Britain the colonies she would not govern upon this principle, and undertook to organize them according to their favorite theory, most of the colonies, by a single stroke of the pen, cut off one half of the people from any representation in the government which claimed their obedience to its laws, the right to tax them for its support, and the right to punish them for disobedience.

This disparity between their theory and practice, does not seem to have excited much, if any, notice at the time, nor until its bitter fruits had long been eaten in obscurity and sorrow, by thousands who suffered but did not complain.

Indeed, so apathetic has been the public mind upon this subject, that no one is surprised to see such a remark as the following, by a distinguished commentator upon American institutions: "In the free States, except criminals and paupers, *there is no class of persons* who do not exercise the elective franchise."

It seems women are not even a class of persons. They are fairly dropped from the human race, and very naturally, since we have grown accustomed to recognize as *universal* suffrage, that which excludes by constitutional taboo, one half of the people.

To declare that a voice in the government is the right of *all*, and then give it only to a *part*—and that the part to which the claimant himself belongs,—is to renounce even the appearance of principle. As ought to have been foreseen, the class of persons thus cut off from the means of self-protection, have become victims of unequal and oppressive legislation, which runs through our whole code. We first bind the hands, by the organic law, and then proceed with deliberate safety, by the statute, to spoil the goods of the victim.

Whatever palliation for the past, hoary custom, false theology, and narrow prejudice may furnish, it is certainly time now, to remedy those evils, and reduce to practice our favorite theory of government.

The citizens thus robbed of a natural right complain of the injustice. They protest against taxation without representation. They claim that all *just* government must derive its power from the consent of the governed. A forcible female writer says: "Even this, so called, free government of the United States, as at present administered, is nothing but a political hereditary despotism to woman; she has no instrumentality whatever in making the laws by which she is govered, while her property is taxed *without* representation."

But this feeling, it is claimed, is entertained but by few women; on the contrary, they generally disown such claim when made in their behalf.

Suppose the fact to be true to the fullest extent ever asserted, if it proves that American women ought to remain as they are, it proves exactly the same with respect to Asiatic women; for they, too, instead of murmuring at their seclusion, and at the restraint imposed upon them, pride themselves on it, and are astonished at the effrontery of women who receive visits from male acquaintances, and are seen in the streets unveiled. Habits of submission make women, as well as men, servile-minded. The vast population of Asia do not desire or value—probably would not accept—political liberty, nor the savages of the forest, civilization; which does not prove that either of these things is undesirable for them, or that they will not, at some future time, enjoy them. Custom hardens human beings to any kind of degradation, by deadening that part of nature which would resist it. And the case of woman is, in this respect, even, a peculiar one, for no other inferior caste that we have heard of, has been taught to regard its degradation as its, honor. The argument, however, implies a secret consciousness that the alleged preference of women for their dependent state is merely apparent, and arises from their being allowed no choice; for, if the preference be natural, there can be no necessity for enforcing it by law. To make laws compelling people to follow their inclinations, has not, hitherto, been thought necessary by any legislator. The plea that women do not desire any change is the same that has been urged, time out of mind, against the proposal of abolishing any social evil. "There is no complaint," which is generally, and in this case certainly not true, and when true, only so because there is not that hope of success, without which complaint seldom makes itself audible to unwilling ears. How does the objector know that women do not desire equality of freedom? It would be very simple to suppose that if they do desire it they will all say so. Their position is like that of the tenants and laborers who vote against their own political interests to please their landlords or employers; with the unique admission that submission is inculcated on them from childhood, as the peculiar attraction and grace of their character. They are taught to think that to repel actively even an admitted injustice, done to themselves, is somewhat unfeminine, and had better be left to some male friend or protector. To be accused of rebelling against anything which admits of being called an ordinance of society, they are taught to regard as an imputation of a serious offence, to say the least, against the propriety of their sex. It requires unusual moral courage, as well as disinterestedness, in a woman to express opinions favorable to woman's enfranchisement, until, at least, there is some prospect of obtaining it.

The comfort of her individual life, and her social consideration, usually depend on the good will of those who hold the undue power; and to possessors of power, any complaint however bitter, of the misuse of it, is a less flagrant act of insubordination than to protest against the power itself. The professions of women in this matter reminds us of the state offenders of old, who, on the point of execution, used to protest their love and devotion to the sovereign by whose unjust mandate they suffered. Griselda, himself, might be matched from the speeches put by Shakspeare into the mouths of male victims of kingly caprice and tyranny; the Duke of Buckingham, for example, in "Henry the Eighth," and even Wolsey.

The literary class of women are often ostentatious in disclaiming the desire for equality of citizenship, and proclaiming their complete satisfaction with the place which society assigns them; exercising in this, as in many other respects, a most noxious influence over the feelings and opinions of men, who unsuspectingly accept the servilities of toadyism as concessions to the force of truth, not considering that it is the personal interest of these women to profess whatever opinions they expect will be agreeable to men. It is not among men of talent, sprung from the people, and patronized and flattered by the aristocracy, that we look for the leaders of a democratic movement. Successful literary women are just as unlikely to prefer the cause of woman to their own social consideration. They depend on men' opinion for their literary as well as for their feminine successes; and such is their bad opinion of men, that they believe there is not more than one in a thousand who does not dislike and fear strength, sincerity, and high spirit in a woman. They are, therefore, anxious to earn pardon and toleration for whatever of these qualities their writings may exhibit on other subjects, by a studied display of submission on this; that they may give no occasion for vulgar men to say—what nothing will prevent vulgar men from saying—that learning makes women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be bad wives.

But even if a large majority of women do not desire any change in the constitution, that would be a very bad reason for withholding the elective franchise from those who desire it. Freedom of choice, liberty to choose their own sphere, is what is asked. We have not heard that the most ardent apostles of female suffrage propose to compel any woman to make stump speeches against her will, or to march a fainting sisterhood to the polls under a police, in bloomer costume. Women who condemn their sisters for discontent with the laws as they are, have their prototype in those men of America, who, in our revolutionary struggle with England, vehemently denounced and stigmatized as fanatics and rebels, the leaders and malcontents of that day. But neither their patriotism nor wisdom have ever been much admired by the American people; perhaps, not even by the English.

The objection urged against female suffrage with the greatest confidence, and by the greatest number is, that such a right is incompatible with the refinement and delicacy of the sex. That it would make them harsh and disputative, like male voters. This objection looses most, if not all its force, when it is compared with the well established usages of society, as relates to woman. She already fills places and discharges duties with the approbation of most men, which are, to say the least, quite as dangerous to her refinement and retiring modesty, as the act of voting, or even holding office, would be. In our political campaigns all parties are anxious to secure the co-operation of women. They are urged to attend our political meetings, and even in our mass meetings, when whole acres of men are assembled, they are importunately urged to take a conspicuous part sometimes as the representatives of the several States, and sometimes as the donors of banners and flags, accompanied with patriotic speeches by the fair donors. And in great moral questions, such as temperance, for example, in the right disposition of which woman is more interested than man; she often discharges a large amount of the labor of the campaign; but, yet, when it comes to the crowning act of voting, she must stand aside—delicacy forbids—that is too masculine, too public, too exposing, though it can be done, in most cases, with as little difficulty and exposure as a letter can be taken out or put in the post office.

And then there is that large class of concert singers, and readers of the drama, who are eulogized and petted by those who are most shocked at the idea of women submitting themselves to the exposure of voting. In fact the whole question of publicity is settled to the fullest extent; at least every man must be silent who acquiesces in the concert, the drama, or the opera.

We need not dwell on the exposures of the stage, or the indelicacies of the ballet, but if Jenny Lind was "an angel of purity and benevolence," for consenting to stand, chanting and enchanting, before three thousand excited admirers; if Madame Sontag could give a full-dress rehersal (which does not commonly imply a superfluity of apparel) for the special edification of the clergy of Boston, and be rewarded with duplicate bibles, it is difficult to see why a woman may not vote on questions vitally affecting the interests of herself and children, or kindred.

But, with all our dainty notions of female proprieties, women are, by common consent, dragged into court as witnesses, and subjected to the most scrutinizing and often indelicate examinations and questions, if either party imagines he can gain a sixpence, or dull the edge of a criminal prosecution, by her testimony.

The interest, convenience, and prejudices of men, and not any true regard for the delicacy of the sex, seem to be the standard by which woman's rights and duties are to be measured.

It is prejudice, custom, long established usage, and not reason, which demand the sacrifice of woman's natural rights of self government; a relic of barbarism still lingering in all political, and nearly all religious organizations. Among the purely savage tribes, woman takes position as a domestic drudge—a mere beast of burden, whilst the sensual civilization of Asia regard her more in the light of a domestic luxury, to be jealously guarded from the profane sight of all men, but her husband. Both positions equally and widely remote from the noble one God intended her to fill.

In Persia and Turkey, women grossly offend the public taste if they suffer their faces to be seen in the streets. In the latter country they are prohibited by law, in common with "pigs, dogs, and other unclean animals," as the law styles them, from so much as entering their mosques.

Our ideas of the proper sphere, duties, and capabilities of woman do not differ from these so much in kind, as degree. They are all based upon the assumption that man has the right to decide what are the rights, to point out the duties, and to fix the boundaries of woman's sphere; which, taking for true, our cherished theory of government, to wit: the *inalienability and equality of human rights* can hardly be characterized by a milder term than that of an impudent and oppressive usurpation.

Who has authorized us, whilst railing at miters, and crosiers, and scepters, and shouting in the ears of the British Lion, as self-evident truths, "representation and taxation are, and *shall* be inseparable,"—"governments, to be *just*, must have the consent of the governed;" to say woman, one-half of the whole race, shall, nevertheless, be taxed, without representation, and governed without her consent? Who hath made us a judge betwixt her and her Maker?

It is said woman's mental and moral organization is peculiar, differing widely from that of man. Perhaps so. She must then have a peculiar fitness of qualification to judge what will be wise and just government for her. Let her be free to choose for herself, in the light of her peculiar organization, to what she is best adapted. She is better qualified to judge of her proper sphere than man can be. She knows her own wants and capabilities. Let us leave her, as God created her, a free agent, accountable to him for any violation of the laws of her nature. He has mingled the sexes in the family relation; they are associated on terms of equality in some churches. They are active working and voting members of literary and benevolent societies. They vote as share-holders in stock companies, and in countries where less is said about freedom, and equality, and representation, they are often called to, and fill with distinguished ability, very important positions, and often discharge the highest political trusts known to their laws.

Which of England's kings has shown more executive ability than Elizabeth, or which has been more conscientious and discreet than Anne and Victoria? Spain, too, had her Isabella, and France her Maid of Orleans, her Madame Roland, yes, and her Charlotte Corday. Austria and Hungary their Maria Theresa. Russia her Catharine; and even the jealous Jewish Theocracy was judged forty years by a woman. It is too late, by thirty centuries, to put in the plea of her incompetency in political affairs.

But it is objected that it would not do for woman, particularly a married woman, to be allowed to vote. It might bring discord in the family if she differed from her husband. If this objection were worth anything at all, it would lie with tenfold greater force against religious than political organizations. No animosities are so bitter and implacable as those growing out of religious disagreements; yet we allow women to choose their religious creeds, attend their favorite places of worship, and in some of them take an equal part in the church business, and all this, though the husband be of another religion, and no one on this side of Turkey claims that the law should compel woman to have no religion, or adopt that of her husband. But, even if that objection were a good one, more than half the adult women of the State are unmarried.

It is said, too, that as woman is not required to perform military duty, and work on the roads, she ought not to vote. None but "able-bodied" men, under a certain age, are required to do military duty, and the effect is practically the same in regard to the two days work on the roads, whilst women pay tax for military and road purposes the same as men. A *man's* right to vote does not depend on his ability to perform physical labor; why should a *woman's?* By the exclusion of woman from her due influence and voice in the government, we lose that elevating and refining influence which she gives to religious, social and domestic life. Her presence at our political meetings, all agree, contributes greatly to their order, decorum and decency. Why should not the polls, also, be civilized by her presence.

Does not the morality of our politics demonstate a great want of the two qualities so characteristic of woman, heart and conscience?

The female element which works such miracles of reform in the rude manners of men, in all the departments of life where she has the freedom to go, is nowhere more needed than in our politics, or at the polls.

We have endeavored to show that the constitutional prohibition of female suffrage is not only a violation of natural right, but equally at war with the fundamental principles of the government. Let us now look at the practical results of this organic wrong. After having taken away from woman the means of protecting her person and property, by the peaceable, but powerful ballot, how have we discharged the self-imposed duty of legislating for her? By every principle of honor, or even of common honesty, we are bound to see that her interests do not suffer in our hands. That, if we depart at all from the principle of strict equality, it should be in her favor. Let us see what are the facts.

When a woman marries she becomes almost annihilated in the eyes of the law, except as a subject of punishment. She loses the right to receive and control the wages of her own labor. If she be an administratrix, or executrix, she is counted as dead, and another must be appointed. If she have children, they may be taken from her against her will, and placed in the care of any one, no matter how unfit, whom the father may select. He may even give them away by will.

"The personal property of the wife, such as money, goods, cattle, and other chattels, which she had in possession at the time of her marriage, in her own right, and not in the right of another, vest immediately in the husband, and he can dispose of them as he pleases. On his death they go to his representatives, like the residue of his property. So, if any such goods or chattels come to her possession in her own right, after the marriage, they, in like manner, immediately vest in the husband."

"Such property of the wife, as bonds, notes, arrears of rent, legacies, which are termed *choses in action*, do not vest in the husband, by mere operation of marriage. To entile him to them, he must first reduce them into possession, by recovering the money, or altering the security, as by making them payable to himself. If the husband appoint an attorney to receive a debt or claim due the wife, and the attorney receive it, or if he mortgage the claim or debt, or assign it for a valuable consideration, or recover judgement by suit, in his own name, or if he release it, in all these cases the right of the wife, upon the decease of the husband, is gone."

The real estate of the wife, such as houses and lands is in nearly the same state of subjection to the husband's will. He is entitled to all the rents and profits while they both live, and the husband can hold the estate during his life, even though the wife be dead. A woman may thus be stripped of every available cent she ever had in the world and even see it squandered in ministering to the low appetite or passions of a debauchee of a husband. And when, by economy and toil, she may have acquired the means of present subsistence, this, too, may be *lawfully* taken from her, and applied to the same base purpose. Even her family bible, the gift of a dying mother, her only remaining comfort, can be lawfully taken and sold by the husband to buy means of intoxication. *This very thing has been done.*

Can any one believe that laws, so wickedly one-sided as these, were ever honestly designed for the equal benefit of woman with man? Yes, wives are said to have quite a sufficient representation in the government, through their husbands, to secure them protection.

But the cruel inequality of the laws relating to woman as wife, are quite out done by those resulting to her as widow. It is those stricken sorrowful victims, the law seems to have selected as its prey. Upon the death of the husband the law takes possession of the whole estate. The smallest items of property must be turned out for valuation, to be handled by strangers. The clothes that the deceased wore, the chair in which he sat, the bed on which he died, all these sacred memorials of the dead, must undergo the cold scrutiny of the law. The widow is counted but as an alien, and an incumbrance on the estate, the bulk of which is designed for other hands. She is to have doled out to her like a pauper, by paltry sixes, the furniture of her own kitchen. "One table, six chairs, six knives and forks, six plates, six tea cups and saucers, one sugar dish, one milk pail, one tea pot, and *twelve* spoons!" All this munificent provision, for, perhaps, a family of only a dozen persons! Think of it, ye widows and learn to be grateful for man's provident care of you, in your hour of need!

Then comes the sale of "the effects of the deceased," as they are called; and amid the fullness and freshness of her grief, the widow is compelled to see sold into the hands of strangers, amid the coarse jokes and levity of a public auction, articles to her, beyond all price, and around which so many tender memories cling. Experience alone can fully teach the torture of this fiery ordeal. But this is only the beginning of her sorrows. If she have children, the estate is considered to belong to them while she is but an "incumbrance" upon it.—She is to have the rents and profits of one-third part of the real estate her life time, which in a vast majority of cases, is so unproductive as to compel her to leave that spot, endeared to her by so many tender ties; the home of her early love, the birth-place of her children, for a cheaper, and less comfortable home.

But, bereaved of her husband and robbed of her property,

"The law hath yet another hold on her."

Following up the insulting and injurious assumption of her incompetency and untrustworthiness, implied in the denial of her right of suffrage the guardianship of her children is taken from her. Her daughter, at the age of twelve, and her son, at fifteen, are to go through the mockery of choosing for themselves a *competent* guardian. A proceeding calculated to destroy the beautiful trust, and confidence in the wisdom and fitness of the mother to govern and direct them, so natural, and so essential to the happiness of children. When the justifying pretext for the infliction of all this misery is the benefit of the children, her maternal nature will struggle hard to endure it with patience. But, until the passage of the law of 1853, "regulating descents and distributions," when there were no children of either parent, the law did not abate its rigor toward her, in the disposition of the real estate, which is generally all that is left, after paying the debts and costs of "settlement," though the whole of the houses and lands might have been bought with her money. two-thirds were immediately handed over to the relatives of the husband, however above need; and though they might have been strangers, or even enemies, to her. She had but a life estate in the other third which, at her death, also went, as the other, to her huband's heirs. She could not indulge her benevolent feelings, or gratify her friendship by devising by will to approved charities or favorite friends, the means she no longer needed. With a bitter sense of injustice, and despairing sorrow, she might well adopt the language of the unhappy Jew:

"Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that;
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live."

Such is the famous right of dower, which has been the subject of so many stupid eulogies, by lawyers and commentators.

Take an example of the effect of these laws, upon an over-burdened heart, which occurred just before the passage of the act of 1853. A young couple by their united means and patient industry, had secured for themselves a small, but comfortable home. It furnished the means of supplying all their simple wants. It was their own; doubly endeared by the struggles and sacrifices it had cost them. They were content. They had no children, but they had each other, and were happy in their mutual love. Death seemed a great way off; and life—it was a real joy. They knew little of the laws of estates. Owing nothing, they feared no intrusion upon the sanctity of their home. But the husband was killed by the falling of a tree: and after some hours, was found dead, by the agonized wife. There was no will. The wrung heart of the childless widow, in her utter bereavement, still clung to her home, which, though blighted and desolate, was still dear to her. There, at least, she would find shelter. But soon the inexorable law laid its cold, unwelcome hand upon that darkened home. There must be letters of administration had: an inventory of the "effects"—an appraisement. Every thing was explained by sympathizing council. The "right of dower" set conspicuously in the foreground; "one equal third part"—at length she comprehended it all. Her home was to pass into other hands: henceforth she was to be counted only as an incumbrance on it. Looking from the misery of the present, down the gloom of the future, she could see only widowhood and penury. And whilst the appraisers were performing their ungracious task of overhauling cupboards and drawers, and estimating the value, in cash, of presents received in her courtship, she in her quiet despair at this last bitter drop added to her full cup, arrayed herself in her best apparel, (which the law generously provides "she shall retain,") and without uttering a word of complaint, or farewell, walked to the nearest water and drowned herself.

If "oppression maketh even a wise man mad," ought we to wonder that a woman, almost crazed by a sudden and terrible bereavement, upon finding that her calamity, instead of giving her the jealous and compassionate protection of the law, was to be made the pretext for robbing her of what yet remained of earthly comforts, should, in the madness of her despair, cast away the burden of a life no longer tolerable? In India, she would have been burned upon the funeral pile of her dead husband; we, drive her to madness and suicide, by the slower, but no less cruel torture, of starvation and a breaking heart.

Whilst persisting in such legislation, how could we expect to escape the woe, denounced by the compassionate and long suffering Saviour, against the "hypocrites who devour widows' houses"?

It is said, woman can accomplish any object of her desire better by persuasion, by her smiles and tears, and eloquence, than she could ever compel by her vote. But with all her powers of coaxing and eloquence, she has never yet coaxed her partner into doing her simple justice. Shall we never get beyond the absurd theory that every woman is legally and politically represented by her husband, and hence has an adequate guarantee? The answer is, that she has been so represented ever since representation began, and the result appears to be, that among the anglo-saxon race, generally, the entire system of laws in regard to women, is, at this moment, so utterly wrong, that Lord Broughman is reported to have declared it useless to attempt to amend it—"there must be a total reconstruction, before a woman can have any justice."

The wrong lies not so much in any special statute, as in the fundamental theory of the law, yet no man can read the statutes of the most enlightned nation, without admitting that they were obviously made by *man*, not with a view to woman's interest, but his *own*. Our Ohio laws may not be so bad as the law repealed in Vermont in 1850, which *confiscated to the State* one-half the property of every childless widow, unless the husband had other heirs. But they must compel from every generous man the admission, that neither justice nor gallantry has yet availed to procure anything like impartiality in the legal provisions for the two sexes. With what decent show of justice, then, can man, thus dishonored, claim a continuance of this suicidal confidence?

There is something respectable in the frank barbarism of the old Russian nuptial consecration, "Here, wolf, take thy lamb." But we cannot easily extend the same charity to the civilized wolf of England and America, clad in the sheep's clothing of a volume of revised statutes; caressing the person of the bride, and devouring her property.

It is said the husband can, by will, provide against these cases of hardship and injustice.—True, he can, if he will, but does he? The number is few, some of the more thoughtful and conscientious; but this is only obtaining justice as a favor, and not as a natural right. But it is a majority of husbands who make these laws, and they generally have no desire to amend them by will.—Beside the will of the husband, is sometimes even worse than the law itself. Such cases are by no means, rare. Almost every man's memory may furnish one or more examples, that have fallen under his immediate notice. One or two, only, we will mention. A woman, advanced in life, who owned a valuable farm in her own right, in the border of a flourishing town, married a man who had little or no property. The farm was soon cut up into town lots, and sold at high prices. In a few years the husband died, leaving no children, but, by will, directed the division of nearly the whole estate, among his relatives, persons whom the wife never saw.

The only remedy in this case was to fall back upon her right of dower, and submit to the robbery of the law, in order to escape the worse robbery of the will. This will was not the result of any disagreement between the husband and wife. It was only the natural outgrowth of the whole policy of our laws, as regards the property rights of woman. Permit us to notice one other case, which occurred in a neighboring State. Many similar ones, no doubt, have occurred in our own. The law in both States being the same.

A woman who had a fortune of fifty thousand dollars, in "personal property," married. All this, by law, belonged, absolutely, to the husband. In a year he died, directing that the widow should have the proceeds of a certain part of this money, *so long as she remained unmarried.* If she married again, or at her death, it was to go to his heirs.

How different in all cases is the condition of the husband, upon the death of the wife. There is, then, no officious intermeddling of the law in his domestic affairs. His house, sad and desolate though it be, is still sacred and secure from the foot of unbidden guests. There is no legal "settlement to eat up his state. He is not told that "one equal third part" of all his lands and tenements shall be set apart for his use, for his life time.—"He has all, every thing, even his wife's bridal presents too are his. If the wife had lands in her own right, and if they ever had a living child, he has a life estate in the whole of it; not a beggarly "third part."

Such is the result of man's government of woman, without her consent. Such is the protection he affords her. She now asks the means of protecting herself, by the same instrumentality which man considers so essential to his freedom and security, representation, political equality—THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE. The removal of this constitutional restriction is of great consequence, because it casts upon woman a stigma of inferiority, of incompetency, of unworthiness of trust. It ranks her with criminals and mad-men, and idiots. It is essential to her, practically, as being the key to all her rights, which will open to her the door of equality and justice.

Does any one believe, that if woman had possessed an equal voice in making our laws, we should have standing on our statute books, for generations, laws so palpably unequal and unjust toward her? The idea is preposterous.

If our sense of natural justice, and our theory of government, both agree, that the being who is to suffer under laws, shall first personally assent to them, and that the being whose industry the government is to burden should have a voice in fixing the character and amount of that burden; then, while woman is admitted to the gallows, the jail, and the tax list, *we have no right* to debar her from the ballot-box.

Your committee recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

J. D. CATTELL,
H. CANFIELD.

Resolved, That the Judiciary Committee be instructed to report to the Senate, a bill to submit to the qualified electors at the next election for senators and representatives, an amendment to the constitution, whereby the elective franchise shall be extended to the citizens of Ohio, without distinction of sex.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

We publish below so much of Mr. Buchanan's Inaugural as refers to the question of slavery:

FELLOW CITIZENS:—I appear before you this day to take the solemn oath that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. In entering upon this great office, I most humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties in such a manner as to restore harmony and the ancient friendship among the people of the several States, and to preserve our free institutions throughout many generations. Convinced that I owe my election to the inherent love for the Constitution and the Union, which still animates the hearts of the American people, let me earnestly ask their powerful support in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate these, the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation. Having determined not to become a candidate for re-election, I shall have no motive to influence my conduct in administering the Government except the desire ably and faithfully to serve my country and to live in the grateful memory of my countrymen.

We have recently passed through a Presidential contest in which the passions of our fellow citizens were excited to the highest degree by questions of deep and vital importance; but when the people proclaimed their will, the the tempest at once subsided, and all was calm. The voice of the majority, speaking in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, was heard, and instant submission followed. Our own country could alone have exhibited so grand and striking a spectacle of the capacity of man for self-government. What a happy conception, then, was it for Congress to apply this simple rule, that the will of the majority shall govern to the settlement of the question of Domestic Slavery in the Territories! Congress is neither to legislate Slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom; but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and reg-