

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### Woman Suffrage in California.

The question of woman suffrage is to be voted on by the people of California at their referendum election of October 10th. This is an election at which every genuine democrat having the right to vote ought to vote; and we cannot conceive of a genuine democrat of any party as either withholding his vote from woman suffrage or casting it against woman suffrage, when an opportunity to vote directly on that question occurs. Here is an opportunity for all professed democrats of California to show their colors, and they should be judged in the future by the colors they show now. We hope we are well within the limits of prophecy in predicting, and we are sure we do not overstep the limits of fair judgment in assuming, that the vote of every fundamental democrat of the Golden State will be cast for woman suffrage.



Let no one be deceived or deceive himself by temporizing pleas. He who is not ready to vote for woman suffrage at this California election is opposed to it in his heart. By the same token he is disloyal to his professions of democracy if he makes any. If he says he wants woman suffrage but thinks California is not yet ready for it, he doesn't want it. Such men belong in the class of those who "believe in democracy but do not believe in putting it into practice." They are either pretenders or dupes. The time for excus-

## CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL:	
Woman Suffrage in California.....	969
Woman Suffrage in Colorado.....	970
"Votes for Women" in Sculpture.....	971
The Woman Mayor of Kansas.....	971
Causes of Poverty.....	971
A Correction.....	971
Dr. Wiley, President Taft and Mr. Glavis.....	972
The Power of Congress Over Courts.....	972
"So Much to be Done".....	972
Brother Against Brother (W. G. Eggleston).....	973
EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE:	
Gustav R. Weikert (Judson Grenell).....	974
Good Use of the Initiative in Maine (Christopher M. Gallup).....	974
INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS:	
How to Pull the Supreme Court's Teeth (W. M. H.).....	975
NEWS NARRATIVE:	
Premier of Russia Assassinated.....	976
Strikes and Food Riots in Europe.....	976
Conference of State Governors.....	977
Organizing the Democratic Party.....	978
The Liquor Question in Maine.....	978
Other Maine Referendums.....	978
Politics in Minnesota.....	979
An Extraordinary Woman Suffrage Meeting.....	979
News Notes.....	979
Press Opinions.....	980
RELATED THINGS:	
The Pageant of Woman (S. Gertrude Ford).....	981
Why Women's Suffrage Is Wrong?.....	981
Woman Suffrage in Colorado.....	981
A Moral Weakness in Our Government (C. H. Ingersoll).....	982
Theodore Parker on Women in Public Affairs.....	983
A Song Domestic (Mary Brecht Pulver).....	984
Woman Suffrage Involved in the Declaration of Independence (John K. Lewis).....	985
"The Women That Are at Ease in Zion".....	986
BOOKS:	
Commission Government.....	986
Votes for Women.....	987
"Shall the Home Be Our World, or the World Our Home?".....	987
Books Received.....	988
Pamphlets.....	988
Periodicals.....	988

ing dupes is over in California; the time for tolerating pretenders there is past. Let the ballot talk when the boxes open at the coming election.

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Five States already have adult suffrage regardless of sex, and their experience has proved the case for woman's voting. Out of one of them, Colorado, has come much criticism, and many willing dupes have been duped by it. But its source alone is enough to destroy its value as testimony. Catch an active adversary of woman suffrage in Colorado, and you've caught a prostitute of Privilege. Woman suffrage in Colorado is condemned by the very interests and for the very reasons that ought to commend it to every true democrat in the land. The facts alleged against it are false; the interests that originate them are predatory and socially vicious; the periodicals and individuals that circulate them are of the depraved, the reactionary, or the dupe class. From every point of criticism woman suffrage in Colorado has been a great civic success.

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Woman suffrage is a medium for the expression of that voice of the people which is the voice of God. And the voice of the people fully and fairly expressed is the voice of God; for in a full and fair expression of the voice of the people, conflicting selfishnesses neutralize one another and the human impulse for righteousness comes to the fore. But righteous impulses are feminine as well as masculine in their qualities and tendencies. To check or suppress the feminine influence is therefore to unbalance social order; and the civic result, consequently, is not a democracy but a bachelordom. Woman suffrage will make no paradise of human society in a day. No one expects it, no one has ever predicted it, no one but its enemies ever pretends that it has been expected or predicted. But it will help to make human society more tenderly human than masculine suffrage alone can make it. Without the co-operation of woman in the household, the household is not a home; without the co-operation of woman in government, government lacks all the qualities of a home which every government to be just and progressive must possess. And the only way in which woman can co-operate in government is through woman suffrage.

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The "mother's knee" method—both kinds—may or may not be more than temporarily influential; but none of its influence will be lost if the mother

have the ballot added to her equipment. And so of the "clinging vine" method. All that is really affectionate and useful in it not only survives woman suffrage but is purified and strengthened by the greater civic intelligence and keener sense of personal responsibility that is acquired by women with the ballot. The time has gone by for deploring the imposition of citizenship duties upon women. The man who does this is dishonoring womanhood with frou-frou flatteries of the drawing-room; the woman who does it is a civic shirk—unintentionally, no doubt, and without deserving harsh condemnation—but "shirk" is really the only word that fits. For women are citizens now. The ballot would impose upon them no new duties; it would only give them the means of better performing those duties of citizenship which they already owe. They must be excused for ill-performance of their civic duties while the ballot is denied them, but it is not so easy to excuse them for begging that its denial be continued in order to relieve them of civic duties. Women who try thus to shirk the feminine duties of citizenship may be good mothers, good wives, good daughters, good sweethearts, good Sunday School teachers, good bridge players, good dressers, good anything you please of a personal kind—and doubtless most of them really are in every way good women personally—but *they are bad citizens*. And those men are worse citizens, be they never so good personally, who take from such women their cue for condescendingly opposing woman suffrage.

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In a few days we shall have California's verdict on this question. That the promoters and dupes of Privilege may be left as far behind in the vote as they allow themselves to rank in social progress, should be the prayer of fundamental democrats of both sexes and all parties everywhere.

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### Woman Suffrage in Colorado.

The opponents of equal suffrage have been circulating a statement that Denver has a great amount of juvenile crime—presumably due to mothers neglecting their children for politics. Judge Lindsey calls this an "outrageous slander." He says that most of the children's offenses are "of a trivial character," and that during the year 1910, out of a school population of 50,000, only 49 children were so persistently delinquent as to be complained of a second time. Judge Lindsey adds: "The police officers of Denver would, I am sure,

cheerfully testify that the criminal conditions among youths that formerly existed in Denver have not only greatly decreased, but the serious cases that we formerly had to cope with from exceptionally bad gangs have almost entirely passed away." In this connection let it be also noted that all the State officers of the Colorado W. C. T. U. have signed a published statement that equal suffrage does not demoralize women or make homes unhappy, and that in Colorado "nothing is so feared by corruptionists as the vote and influence of women." None of this is news to anybody who has taken the pains to look into affairs in Colorado. The reports that woman suffrage is detrimental to Colorado come from the same corrupt sources in that State, are propagated through the same corrupt channels elsewhere, and are swallowed by the same gullible innocents from which, through which and by whom scandalously false stories about Judge Lindsey have come, and been propagated and swallowed.

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#### "Votes for Women" in Sculpture.

A statuette which has for some weeks been on exhibition at the headquarters of the Political Equality League in the Fine Arts Building, Chicago, impressively represents a "votes for women" ideal. Its varied symbolism, true and strong simply as symbolism, is nevertheless so unified and subordinated that the central idea, a clarion call of woman to women in behalf of the whole sisterhood, never once eludes attention. The work is by Ella Buchanan, an Art Institute pupil in sculpture under Charles J. Mulligan. One notable feature of this group is the sculptor's use of drapery so adapted as to make an appropriate departure from the more usual nude of similar work, but with no consequent loss in symbolic value or artistic effect.

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#### The Woman Mayor of Kansas.

Ever since the municipal elections of last Spring, "special correspondents" have kept newspaper readers informed of a deadlock in the municipal government of Hunnewell, Kansas; and that this deadlock is due to the election of a woman as Mayor—Mrs. Ella Wilson—is a fact which flavors all the reports. But if any newspaper reader has yet been able to learn from those reports *why* the election of the woman Mayor makes the deadlock, we congratulate him upon his acuteness. None of the reports disclose any illegality in Mayor Wilson's election. None of them show any unlawful or scandalous conduct on her part either as candidate or as Mayor.

Everything appears to be regular enough so far as she is concerned. But the town Council, all masculines, refuse to co-operate officially with her. And if one may fairly read between the lines of the newspaper reports, they do this in a brutal manner, without provocation, and with no regard whatever for their own official responsibilities. We must confess to ignorance of the mystical cause of the Hunnewell trouble, and of the origin and motives for exploiting it in half-told fashion through the press of the country; but probably any one with an old hat wouldn't have to eat it were he to offer to do so if there isn't licensed lawbreaking in Hunnewell which the Mayor wants to stop, and a distillers' press bureau behind the "news" of the deadlock.

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#### Causes of Poverty.

Increasing poverty in New York City is reported by the Association for Relieving the Condition of the Poor; and out of this report those who explain poverty by the intemperance of the poor will get no help. Intemperance is given as accounting for *only two per cent* of all the cases of poverty reported on. Pretty soon the game of blind-man's-buff in the hunt for causes of poverty will have to be given up. An open-eyed hunt for the causes of wealth would soon solve both problems.

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#### A Correction.

The Public tries to be fair in its expressions of opinion and accurate in its statements of fact, but it doubtless fails often in both. That is the reason it disclaims all pretense to infallibility. But when mistakes are made, the only remedy is to acknowledge and correct them if they are of enough importance to be unjust or misleading. Such a mistake, as yet uncorrected, has just been called to our attention. In the issue of August 18th we reported Senator Bristow of Kansas as voting against the bill for the admission of Arizona, with the judicial recall in her Constitution and subject only to referendum after Statehood, and this wasn't true. Mr. Bristow voted the other way. [See current volume, p. 853.]

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Our mistake was originally that of the Associated Press, which had named Senator Bristow as voting against the bill. Its report was published in the press of the country on the 9th of August. On the 11th of August Senator Bristow made the following statement in open Senate: "Mr. Presi-