

great solicitude. The newspapers and interests which had disparaged and ridiculed their suffrage, now thoroughly alarmed about local conditions, are using every effort to prevail upon the women to register and vote, vying in the matter with the oldest suffrage advocates.

The surprisingly large Socialist vote at the Los Angeles' municipal primaries, some 20,183 to the Good Government's 16,790 and scattering 8,570, and the fact that Los Angeles must borrow \$18,000,000 within the next two years to complete her municipal aqueduct, power-plant, harbor, railroad, and other big enterprises before the opening of the Panama Canal, are responsible for woman's glorious though hurried entrance into the field, and some 70,000 have been registered since the passage of the amendment only one month ago, in order to qualify for the elections of December 5th.

In San Diego a \$1,000,000 bond issue, a now-or-never opportunity to obtain a municipal harbor, and requiring a two-thirds vote of all the ballots cast, has also made the votes of the women of vital importance. A large registration is the result. In both cities schools for voters have been established to instruct women in the proper method of casting a ballot. Serious-faced women compose a large proportion of all public meetings.

But the path of the women may not be all roses. Apprehensive interests which fought the suffrage amendment, now taking advantage of the small majority in its favor, threaten a referendum on the subject in 1912, and count upon the vote of the women who have all along opposed or been indifferent to suffrage to destroy their new political freedom. It will not be difficult for the Interests to obtain the necessary signatures; but women, having been given the ballot and tasted its power and influence, will they now allow themselves to be disfranchised? Quien sabe?

SEYMOUR W. TULLOCH.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE UNIVERSALITY OF DEMOCRACY.

Chicago.

Every good cause suffers as much from the bad arguments of its advocates and friends as from the weak and illogical reasoning of its opponents. The social reformer is by no means exempt from the faults and inconsistencies incident to our imperfect human nature. The ability to think clearly on one subject and the courage to espouse a difficult cause are not always accompanied with mental breadth or deep sympathies. Too often the merits of great leaders are those of the special pleader, who may be useful, even highly efficient, but whose spirit is essentially partisan and who has little moral perspective.

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Woman Suffrage presents no exception to the rule. Its advocates often employ as bad arguments in its support as any that are offered against it from press or platform. An example is found in some recent utterances of an able leader in this field: "Let the Negro alone. It will offend the South. All colored

men are opposed to woman suffrage." These words have the commander's imperative ring. One wonders who could have touched upon this theme on a suffrage platform in more challenging terms, but let that point pass.

"Do not touch the Labor question. It will offend our capitalist friends." The same kind of warning might be spoken against affiliation with the temperance cause, the tariff or Singletax, since in every case we run the risk of offending some one.

There are times and places, we will agree, when a particular subject has the right of way and the platform must be yielded to the occasion and the main issue. A temperance gathering cannot spare time for a discussion of the tariff, or a Singletax conference for an argument on temperance or suffrage; but that would not be a very enlightening discussion of any of these issues which eliminated comparison or ignored the vital relation of each to each. Every social question of the hour is but a phase of one and the same subject—our growing democracy. The suffrage, the labor and the race or color questions reveal a like situation among different groups suffering the same kind of social injustice, choosing different methods of relief. The analogies between the woman and the color problems in this country are particularly strong and striking and show how human and generic is the special issue of each.

Moreover our politic concern for what shall and shall not be said on a particular platform is politic and not philosophic or even rational. Our reform conventions suffer from a narrow and ex parte treatment of a single issue. A philosophic temper as well as a warm all-round humanity is conspicuously absent at times. Social progress is not to be measured in terms of a single propaganda or creed.

Woman suffrage is but one line of march towards the goal of true democracy, yet the proportion of sincere intelligent democrats in the suffrage ranks is not large. We may well look with dread and discomfort on many of the aspects of this movement in this its day of rapid growth and popular favor. Women are as yet preferably aristocratic, exclusive and conservative. Their prevailing attitude in the work of social relief and uplift in which they are so busily engaged is that of class assumption and patronage. The mainspring of action is an intense, easily aroused and easily diverted sympathy. The motive which springs from a conviction of justice or the essential worth of human nature per se is one she is reluctant to accept, nor is it any answer to say that the same is true of men.

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How many women suffragists believe in their good cause as part of a general forward movement seeking the complete emancipation of the race with equal opportunity for all? Very few.

Yet woman suffrage has worth and meaning only in its relation to suffrage at large, to that growing ideal of freedom of which the ballot is one form and symbol. Unless women can rejoice and feel their cause strengthened in every gain in manhood suffrage they have not gone far in true understanding of the cause in which they are so heroically engaged.

Over and over again do we hear from the suffrage

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platform such arguments as these: "Is it not a shame that my coachman has the right to vote when I am deprived of that right?" Or, when the contrast is painted in still darker colors, the question runs, "Is it not a shame that my colored coachman can vote?" etc. Why should not the coachman vote, even when he is colored?

The argument for a restricted suffrage shows a poor understanding of the worth and meaning of a republic, yet there is scarcely a woman's suffrage assembly where it does not find eloquent voice and advocacy.

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We are told that "all Negroes are opposed to woman suffrage," an astonishing statement which will not bear examination. I have worked with and among colored people for many years. In the institution with which I am connected, the Frederick Douglass Center, the subject of woman suffrage is a familiar and welcome theme. Suffrage meetings have been held in our assembly room where the subject was discussed by white and black. I have yet to hear a serious argument on the negative side from a colored speaker.

The feeling of the most thoughtful Negroes on this subject is one that does equal credit to heart and understanding. "I know what disfranchisement means," said one of these in my hearing. "I have suffered from it, my race suffers from it still. I should be ashamed to impose such a wrong on any other class." Compare this to the rallying cry, "Do not touch the Negro problem!"

It may be well in this connection to tell the story of one of Miss Anthony's very early visits to Chicago, her first I believe. She had come in the hope of securing a chance to speak her gospel word. Church after church was solicited from the white clergy and invariably refused. It so happened that the friend with whom Miss Anthony was stopping lived near the colored district and was on friendly terms with her dusky-skinned neighbors. She called on the pastor of Quinn Chapel, the oldest and largest colored church in the city, whose use was promptly granted. Thus it was from a colored pulpit and in the main to a colored audience that our Susan addressed her first argument in the City of the Lakes.

Woman suffrage had no more loyal friend than Frederick Douglass. Doubtless he injured himself in many more cautious minds by thus openly allying himself with a cause which was in those days far more unpopular than the black man's. Did anyone say to him, "Let the woman question alone"? One can easily imagine the reply he would have made, he who said: "I know no race problem; there is a human problem." His last public act was to attend a meeting of the National Association, where Miss Anthony spoke words of gratitude and praise to him, pinning a flower in his buttonhole. He went to his home and an hour later was dead.

Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Mary Livermore, Theodore Parker, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and a host of other men and women came into the woman suffrage work through the anti-slavery door. Human freedom was the great cause they served.

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It is natural and right that we should choose our

particular line or field of work, but when in particular zeal for one class we are led to speak words of discouragement and opposition to another class in equal or greater need and seeking the same high ends, our power of usefulness and our understanding of the real situation are sadly impaired. Let us adopt Henry George's motto: "I am for men." Not for one kind of man, but the generic man, the black, brown, red or yellow man no less than the white, the woman and little child; every state and condition of being that needs a helping hand, for whose ultimate and common benefit all our social reforms are working. When we have learned to join hands in our common task, to help each other no less than ourselves, to recognize our common heritage and kinship, we shall find ourselves much nearer the ends we seek.

CELIA PARKER WOOLLEY.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Monday, November 27, 1911.

American Singletax Conference.

An unofficial Conference of Singletaxers of the United States, participated in by Singletaxers of Canada, assembled at Chicago on the 24th under the call of The Joseph Fels Fund Commission of America. This Conference, designed by the Commission to be advisory only and to go out of existence with its adjournment on the 26th, conformed strictly in its proceedings to that design. The earlier meetings were held at the La Salle Hotel, as all the others were to have been, including a general dinner of delegates and their friends; but when the hotel refused to serve Negroes, of whom there were five or six among the expected guests, the Conference refused to draw "the color line" and went elsewhere for its meetings subsequent to the afternoon of the 25th. For the dinner, it chose Kimball's Cafe, after having canceled its arrangement with the La Salle Hotel; for its meetings of the 26th it engaged Willard Hall, in the Woman's Temple. The latter change might have been necessary in any event to accommodate the audiences; but the dinner change, although a lower price was in fact secured by it, was due wholly to the race question. Over 175 reservations for the dinner at the La Salle Hotel had been made (and there were reasons for expecting at least 50 more) when the Conference managers were confronted with the Hotel's ultimatum. They rejected it before hunting for another place for the dinner function and subsequent meetings, and with no assurance that they could find any accommodations at all. At one time there was apparent danger of a diversion