



Woman Suffrage



THE agitation which is taking place in the English-speaking world for the enfranchisement of women is worthy of considerable attention. It has only been in recent years that women have shown an inclination to take up political questions, and many believe that this introduction of the feminine element into political affairs would be the cause of many good results; others think the contrary. The main argument upon which women have based their claim for equal suffrage is not whether they will make a good use of the

ballot or not. If it were, it would also be the essential thing in the case of male suffrage; and, as we all think that those who do not vote as we do make bad use of the ballot, so those opposed to woman suffrage on the grounds that women would make a good use of the ballot, must also favour disenfranchisement of those men voting differently from themselves. If women must live under a certain government and are forced to obey its laws, why should they not be entitled to a voice in that government?

At least eight of the States in the American Union have adopted equal suffrage. Originating in the West, this movement is moving towards the East. Its supporters have lost no ground, and are gaining steadily. Although the effect of granting woman suffrage has not been a complete revolution in public affairs, still this new element in public life has been the cause of many considerable reforms which can in no way be despised. It is indeed the truth to say there is a wide difference between the minds of women and those of men, and this is particularly evident when women act in the capacity of jurors in the court-room. As one writer upon this subject says, "At this age it will do them no harm to admit that they care less for abstract ideas of law and more for human justice. And this is what is needed in our courts to-day."

Those opposed to woman suffrage are saying that the entrance of women into politics has not affected political conditions to any great extent. But the results have been such that in places where equal suffrage exists there has been, as yet, no demand for its abolition. Since women were admitted to the franchise greater courtesy and chivalry prevail at public meetings. The qualifications and ability of those women elected to office are at least equal to those of their male associates, and in general women require to have better talents than their male opponents in order to secure election.

The opponents of equal suffrage are, as a rule, recruited from the ranks of capitalists and large employers of women and miners. They fear for their own selfish interests if women are enfranchised. In California it was the vote of the workingman that won the victory for woman suffrage, and the influence of women in public affairs immediately became manifest. Their greatest work has been in the line of temperance reform. From this may be understood the bitter opposition of the liquor interests to woman suffrage. This new force comes into the political system at a time when there is great need of the infusion of a new spirit.

L. GUILLET, '15.