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"Why I Oppose Woman Suffrage,' a pamphlet not an essay," by George R. Lockwood

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Why I Oppose Woman Suffrage

A PAMPHLET, NOT AN ESSAY

BY

GEORGE R. LOCKWOOD

OF THE ST. LOUIS BAR

"Disguise our bondage as we will,
'Tis Woman, Woman rules us still"
—by love, not laws.

PAM
10117
1912



WHY I OPPOSE WOMAN SUFFRAGE

A PAMPHLET, NOT AN ESSAY

By

GEORGE R. LOCKWOOD

Of the St. Louis Bar

I.

Introduction.

On one occasion Mr. Gladstone visited a small town in England for the purpose of making a political speech. He was to be introduced by the Mayor of the town, who was noted for never losing an opportunity of making a speech himself. On this occasion he desired, before introducing Mr. Gladstone, to make some announcement; and therefore when he commenced, the audience thought they were to be inflicted with one of the Mayor's tedious addresses; so they began to cry Gladstone! Gladstone! Mr. Gladstone! Mr. Gladstone. The Mayor gave them the William Jennings Bryan benedictional sign for silence, which is much like a duplex, drooping, dispirited Chautauqua wave without the handkerchief. But still they clamored for Mr. Gladstone, until the Mayor finally shook his fist at them and shouted: "Shut up! I'm not going to make a *speech*; I've got something to *say*." So this pamphlet is not to be an *essay* on Woman's Suffrage; I've something to *say* on that subject. And I mean to put what I have to say in as familiar and colloquial a form as possible, and thus have a friendly talk with my readers.

The first thing I wish to say is that I love some women, respect many, and think the sex generally the salt of the earth, interspersed here and there, however, with a little foreign matter. In my eyes

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the most sacred thing in this world is a mother with her baby in her arms; and I rarely see a woman carrying a child that I do not have a conscious feeling of man's inferiority to woman in much that makes life worth living. Indeed, I subscribe to the lines:

"It is written that God made woman
To help where He could not trust man;
He needed her goodness and patience
To finish His wonderful plan."

A clever woman of my acquaintance was discussing some friends, when one of her auditors said: "Oh, come, don't criticise, don't criticise." In the sweetest voice she replied: "I'm not criticising, I'm only stating facts."

And so if I say some things that seem hardly to accord with my admiration of women, please believe that I am merely stating facts rather than criticising.

Before giving my reasons for refusing to women the right to vote, let me dispose of what I conceive to be some utterly invalid grounds for refusing to them the elective franchise.

II.

Woman's Physical Incapacity No Reason for Refusing Her The Right To Vote.

Some years since I saw a letter written by the small son of an American Missionary in Brazil. He wrote to a member of the family in this country as follows: "I have a little sister. I wish she was a boy. Girls are no good. They can't teach, preach, climb trees, nor catch monkeys by their tails." Of course, this kid was very much mistaken. I don't know how it may be in Brazil, or was thirty-five years ago; but in this country, and many other parts of the world best worth living in, women make very acceptable teachers, though Dr. Muensterburg and some other high-brows amongst pedagogues, are saying things about women teachers that sound strange in the ears of those of us who, like myself, think we know so many admirable women teachers. Preaching also is a vocation fairly well accomplished by women, and the condition chiefly mitigating against its more general adoption by them is the

fact that, as a rule, women will not be preached to by women. The young scribe whom I have quoted had probably never seen bloomers or the harem skirt, or he might not have thought so poorly of women's ability to climb trees; while the skill shown by some women in catching small boys by their ears convinces me that the sex generally could easily learn to catch monkeys by their tails, if the art was worth learning. But even if this young exiled American's indictment of women had been a true bill, and women also cannot go soldiering, or be policemen, none of these things, nor all of them, would be a good reason for refusing the ballot to women. Many men have never been physically capable of being soldiers or policemen, and some of us have passed the military age, and yet no one contends that men incapable of military or police duty by reason of age, or inherent physical disability, should be disfranchised. Women may not be able to go "a soldiering," but they can nurse the wounded, and inspire the courage that smiles at death. The spirit of the women at home has much to do with the conduct of the men on the firing line. Such was the notable fact with respect to the women of Sparta, and it was no less the case in our civil war. I know of one woman in the beautiful Valley of Virginia, who had six sons, the youngest only sixteen, in the Confederate army. Three of them were killed, and the fourth wounded seven times in as many different battles, while she also lost in battle a son-in-law and a brother. During the four long years of those dreadful times she stood with bleeding heart, but dauntless mien, and without flinching in her devotion to the cause for which so many of her dear ones were dying. Think you for a moment that anyone of those men, dishonored as a soldier, would have dared to face that mother and sister? And there were thousands of women like this noble Virginian in every state; but to her was given a heavier burden of sorrow than fell to the lot of most of her sex during the unhappy years of 1861 to 65.

I admit,—no, I do not admit, I proclaim with joy—that dauntless courage, suffering nobly borne, loving devotion, and that goodness and patience necessary to the completion of the divine plan, is to be found in thousands upon thousands of the women of our land, aye, and of other climes, too; and if these divine virtues entitled women to vote, that is, made it best for them that they should vote, there

would be an end of the whole discussion, for no electorate in the history of the world can show more of true nobility than is possessed by the women of this country.

Yet believing in the nobility of women as I do, and thanking God for it, I would nevertheless deny her the right to vote. Is it necessary to say, however, that I would deny women votes for their good, as I see it? Is it possible for any other motive to influence me in this matter? I would say to the women of our land that I oppose giving them votes chiefly for their own good, or in the ultimate analysis of the question I may say solely for their own good. I may fail to convince many that it is best for women in this country not to have the ballot. But, however far I may fail in this endeavor, I hope that even the most ardent suffragists will believe that I have a sincere conviction that it is not for the interests of women that they should vote.

III.

My Objections to Woman Suffrage.

Having brushed away, as unworthy objections to women suffrage, some of the reasons frequently given for refusing women the ballot, I come now to a statement of the grounds on which I base my opposition to "votes for women."

I classify my objections under these four heads:

1. Where there is substantially universal manhood suffrage, as there is in this country, all persons, including women and children, are practically represented by the voters.
2. Substantially universal womanhood suffrage, (and that is what is demanded) would add nothing to the voting wisdom of the present electorate of this country.
3. The legal discriminations against women in this country, and especially in Missouri, are but few in number and unimportant in character, and the enfranchisement of women is not necessary for the correction of these discriminations.
4. Because giving women the right to vote will have an injurious effect on the relation of the sexes, and be to the detriment of the best interests of women.