WOMAN

IN

Civil Service Reform.

BY

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"Give a woman a chance for independence, and you give her a chance for virtue. Open one more door to labor, and you close one more door on vice."—Page 37.

"Ah! a gallant's bow on the promenade and a smile in the parlor may be a consideration to the woman who has the world at her feet, but they will not be worth a moment's thought when she feels the world clutching at her hungry throat."—Page 42.

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WOMAN IN CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

Without alluding in any way to disputed political points, it is absolute fact, that we American women are human beings, not household animals. Whether we vote or not, whether we ought to have a vote or no, we American women are to this extent American citizens, in that we are entitled to equal laws; that we have equal rights with men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that we have, or ought to have, equal rights with men to work or to win wages, an equal right to all the chances at money or fortune, of which we can avail ourselves.

The right to labor is based upon the needs and the capacities of the would-be laborer. Now a woman’s needs are as urgent as those of a man, while her capacity for ordinary avocation is about the same. In the few departments of work and dexterity which are open to her she holds her own; and even in those lines in which thus far she has been found incompetent or incomplete, why is she thus? Simply because it has ever been taken for granted by men that she is, and because she herself has ever taken it for granted that she is so.

The negroes were in this country held for years to be fit only for slavery, and while this idea held it was true. But as soon as the
negroes obtained their chance, it was found that they were capable of being fitted for freedom. So with woman. So long as she is held to be incompetent for special lines of business, incompetent for that special line she will be; but when the theory is reversed the facts will be reversed also.

A right makes right. Give a woman the right to work—to earn—even to vote, like a man, and it will soon be found that it is right it should be so.

And surely a woman has a natural right to all the rights she can secure and maintain. God knows she needs them all, for in a country like ours, where there is no landed aristocracy and no settled wealth—in this country of strikes and panics, and shrinkage of values, and commercial revolutions, and speculations and bankruptcy, the number of rich people who suddenly find themselves poor, is large, so large as to challenge the earnest attention of the sociologist and the moralist, of the thinker and the speaker—while the army of women whose pecuniary and social condition trembles on the very verge of the balance, vibrating on the edge of that abyss which divides comfort and independence from a dependence on charity, is immense, when looked at from the standpoint of the philanthropist or the philosopher. Consequently as a woman—as a well-wisher for my sex—I am justified, nay, by my sense of duty I am compelled, to consider the condition of woman, her chances and her rights. Therefore, without further preface, only with an earnest request that my hearers will not only "lend me for a while their ears," but give me their whole hearts, I will proceed to consider the subject.

I propose in this address—this plea of a woman for women—to
point out the inadequate, the frightfully insufficient provisions which the world has made for the helpless gentlewomen cast suddenly and involuntarily upon its stony-hearted bosom. It is but trifling with the truth to say that there is anything that even approaches adequate provision for the "lady" who is suddenly thrown upon her own resources. It is sheer falsification to pretend to say that woman is provided for to one tithe the degree of man in similar circumstances.

The woman of the lower social class, the woman thrown upon her own resources from childhood, prepares herself for a future as all men are prepared. But the woman of the higher social grade, the class termed "ladies" in this country and "gentlewomen" abroad, the wives, sisters and daughters of men who were once well off, women who, to use a sad but common figure of speech, "have seen better days," the special class for whom this work is written, are unfortunately not reared for any work, and are practically excluded from those numerous occupations which women of a more humble grade enter as a matter of course.

The average gentleman suddenly reduced has his choice of a hundred fairly paid, respectable avocations; but the reduced "lady" has no avocation open to her by which she can live with any degree of comfort. True, there are opportunities enough for the extremes of the female scale—for the woman who is without education, who has no ability, no aspirations above her daily bread, who makes no pretensions to refinement. True, there is provision also for the woman of precisely the opposite stamp, extraordinary women, women of genius; there is a place all ready for the Charlotte Cushman, and the George Eliots, and the Rosa Bonheurs; brains and work prac-
tically directed will tell alike in men and women. But what of the refined, educated woman, nurtured in luxury, whose soul comprehends and craves all the refinements of life, but who lacks the trained skill to gratify her cravings? What of the woman who has all the refined instincts and cultured tastes of the artist, without the artistic talent and training? What of her? Must she want, or beg, or must she be forced, simply because she is poor and a woman, down to the level of the menial? Is there to be no other chance for her? Is there to be no alternative but starvation, servitude, sin, or suicide?

A man suddenly reduced to this position, even though he were more ignorant and less refined than she, would have a dozen avenues open to him for work; "the world is all before him where to choose." The world to her is but a shop, a nursery, or a kitchen. Nor will it do to repeat the popular platitudes, that "necessity knows no law," that "beggars must not be choosers;" nor will it do to dismiss the matter with a sneer, to infer that a lady deprived of her externals has no right to "pride." Is a poor "gentleman" expected to bend his energies to becoming a day laborer or a waiter? Is he called "proud" because he naturally expects to find something better to do than to carry a hod or a tray? Is he sneered at if he aims at something better, even in his poverty, than drudgery or servitude? Is he not rather looked upon with deserved respect, if he refuses to black boots until, at least, he has tried every other way to earn a living? On what ground, then, is a woman to be satirized for simply striving to do that for which a man is honored? Why should that quality, which in a man is glorified as "ambition," be in a woman stigmatized as "false pride?" The world has always been unfair to
its women. It places them upon a dizzy pinnacle for which too oft they are unfit, or it consigns them to social depths for which they are altogether unprepared. Society makes a goddess of the woman who is rich, and makes a martyr of the woman who is poor.

Besides, advancing from the consideration of the lady as an individual to that of woman in the aggregate, we find on a calm, dispassionate survey of the situation, that the ranks of the lower classes of women who are poor are already sufficiently numerous and are swelling every day. Every week there are hundreds of servants, shop-girls, and seamstresses, who are only fitted and only anxious to become such, added to the thousands who have gone before. Consequently the best interests of these people imperatively demand that there should be no interlopers, even from a superior sphere. It is for the welfare of the servant, the shop-girl, the seamstress and others of this class, as for the educated woman, that there should be no rivalry of work—there should not be, there must not be competition between classes so allied in position though so antagonistic in character. Each class has its own dangers, its own trials, and its own rights, and chief among these rights is the right to work in its own way for its own good.

Those who would confuse the classes into which humanity naturally divides itself, who would strive to ignore social and individual distinctions, are but the blind ministers of chaos.

In this there is no scorn for the seamstress, the shop-girl, or the menial. God forbid that honest labor ever should be aught but honored; but there is simply a true appreciation, alike of the operative and of the educated woman, and of the difference between them.
But in order to avoid the competition between the poor uneducated woman and the educated, refined poor woman, it is absolutely essential that the world should increase the avenues of employment for the latter.

What do we mean by increasing the avenues of employment for the lady or gentlewoman, or rather on what principle or basis would we increase these avenues? The last question covers the entire ground, and can be answered in one sentence. Open to woman every chance for a livelihood that is open to man—nothing more, nothing less.

By all means nothing less; in the name of humanity nothing less: by all that is sacred in womanhood, motherhood, wifehood, nothing less. Think what it means to be a refined, educated woman, and destitute. Ponder, if only for a moment, the infinite mortifications and privations which afflict the soul and body of the delicately framed and still more delicately reared woman who has suddenly met face to face with poverty. Where are her feasts of former days? gone with her former friends. Where are the silks and velvets of olden times? lying on the well filled shelves of the dingy pawnshops. Where are the rings and trinkets once so prized as the tokens of love? sold, sold to buy mere bread. Eating scanty food, wearing scanty clothing, shivering over a scanty fire, holding in her shrunken fingers a scanty purse. In God's name, would you, can you call yourself a man, and so much as think of lessening the at best too scanty chances open to this creature? Can you call yourself a Christian, and dream of adding to this wretched creature's already manifold temptations by narrowing her possible avenues of honest work? Can you for
one moment think of denying to this tenderly nurtured flower any chances for life that you extend to any and every experience hardened man? Oh! in Heaven's name no less, and yet no more. I protest against any diminishing of woman's chances as compared with man's, and yet I claim no increase of them. I make no special plea for woman; she is in the world and must be of it; let her take her chances, only let her have all the chances in it she can get—no more, no less than man's. A fair field—give her only this and she will ask no favors. I call upon no chivalry, I appeal to justice. Man's chivalry has its poetic aspects it is true, but, alas! it is too often perverted; well meant, but all one sided. It yields to woman a host of points, pleasant yet of no vital importance, while it denies to her that best of earthly boons, her independence. So I waste no words on chivalry, fickle, misguided chivalry; I demand but right and justice; and this brings me to the very heart of my subject.

Now it is a somewhat singular fact, that although the government of this favored land is professedly purely republican, although it is the loudly vaunted claim of American political institutions, that they afford equal, and elsewhere unequaled facilities to all citizens, naturalized or native, black, white, red and yellow, Caucasian, Mongolian or Teuton, yet it is a fact that the governments of the "Old World," which do not claim so much, afford far greater opportunities to the least influential portion of their citizens—their women. British, French, Austrian, Italian and even Russian women, enjoy opportunities for supporting themselves by serving their respective governments which are not enjoyed in the same degree by the women of America. The governments of France and Great Britain especially utilize “gentle-
women" in their various departments as government telegraphists, receivers, postmistressess, clerks, accountants, etc., etc., to an extent as yet unknown in this free country. And it is no exaggeration to say that the "Civil Service" of Great Britain and other European countries affords greater opportunities to women today than does the "Civil Service" of these United States of America.

Is this right? Is this just? Is it just either to America or to the women of America? Evidently and unanswerably, No!

Therefore in behalf of American institutions and American women, as well as in the name of absolute right and justice itself, I demand and assert the absolute and just right of women to hold, fill and enjoy all offices under and within the gift of the Government of these United States, not in themselves political.

We demand, in the name of national right and justice, that throughout the length and breadth of the land, from the Penobscot to the Pacific, from "God-voiced Niagara" to where "rolls the mighty Oregon, and hears no sound save its own dashings," each and all of these offices directly and indirectly in the gift of the government, and not in themselves of a political character, which are open to man, should be opened on precisely the same terms, under precisely the same chances, to woman.
pause awhile, for in my fancy's ear I hear, as heard the dying one in Longfellow's famous Indian poem, I hear a "wooing and a rushing like the falls of Minnehaha," calling on me in the distance. But 'tis not the sound of "mighty waters," 'tis not the roar of cataract that falls upon my listening ear; 'tis the roar of human indignation, of ridicule, of vituperation and objection.

Methinks the hack politicians of the land, all the thousands of men who hold government clerkships now, and all the thousands of thousands of men who hope to hold these clerkships in the "sweet by and by," rise up against me and protest. But in the name of all that is right and just I protest now against their protests. I call upon the true statesmen of the land, the patriots; I call upon the representative wisdom and honor of the country in Congress assembled, to listen to my plea, to hear me patiently for my cause, and hearken without prejudice to the arguments I am prepared to bring forward as my advocates. And then when I have finished, if I have uttered reason and spoken truth, if I have advanced a plea for my sex which should open to us women the doors of equal rights to governmental work, then by all that is manly and American, I demand that these doors be opened unto us.

One of the very strongest proofs that woman is fitted for these offices, is given in the fact, that here and there some of the minor offices in these same have been and are intrusted to women. In
Washington, in every department there are female clerks, many of whom are or have been ladies of high social position, ladies reared in affluence, and tolerably, though not technically, educated, who have been suddenly thrown upon their own resources. In the New York Custom House there are five or seven female detectives or searchers, whose duties are confined to the highly edifying task of searching the persons of females suspected of smuggling. There are a few postmistresses scattered along the mail routes of the far West, but these are but rare, very rare exceptions, instead of being, as I claim they should be, the illustration of a general rule. These are but sops thrown to the whale of public opinion, instead of being as they ought to be, the legitimate fruits of a recognized system.

No—what I, and what those who think as I do, ask for, is not here and there to grant a woman a favor, in order to get rid of her, or to make political capital of her case, or to yield a trifle to public opinion, in order to temporarily appease it. We demand our rights as rights; we ask for an equal chance at all these offices, in all States and in all cities, subject only to precisely the same conditions as man. There is nothing wild in this claim, nothing absurd in this proposition, as I strive to utter it; calmly stating it in its simple clearness, it sounds as sensible as any average statement, and yet so far in the history of this great American Republic, it has been found impossible to realize it. Time after time has the American woman tried to earn a living by obtaining a governmental clerkship, such a one as would be readily obtainable by an American man, and time after time has she been taught the utter futility of any such attempt in this direction. Day after day has the American woman,
who has suffered reverses at the hands of fate, been forced to suffer keener rebuffs at the hands of her own government. Day after day has she been refused a livelihood, because she was a woman, while she has been forced to see in bitterness of spirit the boon she craved, bestowed upon another, with perchance not half her ability, nor half her need, solely because he was a man.

A LEAF FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Let me show from a leaf from my own personal experience how difficult it is, for a woman suddenly forced by circumstances to support herself, to obtain any office in the gift of the United States Government, though it be of a non-political character, simply and solely because she is a woman.

Being well aware that hundreds, nay thousands, of average men, very average men, hold lucrative non-political governmental positions in the City of New York—being likewise familiar with the workings of the female clerk departments at Washington, I determined, at one crisis of my life, to apply for some non-political clerkship in the City of New York, of which city I was a resident.

First, I applied to Mr. Hillhouse, the sub-treasurer; he was a thorough gentleman, and as such received me politely and listened to me respectfully. But he was also an officer of the government, and naturally enough was averse either to exceeding or falling short of his proper duty. As a man, he confessed to me that women were in general available for much of the work in his department, or
could readily be fitted for it. But as a government officer, he assured me that he could not employ women unless specially authorized to do so under instructions from Washington. The employment of ladies in his department would be an innovation which might or might not be sanctioned, a bold experiment which might or might not be indorsed by his superiors; under the circumstances he did not propose to incur any responsibility, and under the circumstances I could not blame him personally.

Dismayed but not defeated, heartsore and footsore, but sustained by the strongest supporters humanity can possibly possess under any of its numberless emergencies, integrity and necessity, I visited the New York Custom House. Here I was also most politely received, every courtesy was shown me; as a lady I had nothing to complain of, but as a woman wanting work I was utterly ignored. I was favored with a personal interview with several officials; but alas! the burden of their statements was "ever the same sad thing." They granted as a matter of theory that women might be fitted for many of the custom house positions, nay, they confessed, when I pushed them to the wall, that they were thus fitted; but as a mere matter of fact, women were not eligible to custom house berths because they were not men. When they could overcome that little difficulty, then the only objection to their employment as custom house clerks would be overcome, but not till then.

This sounded like a ghastly mockery. It was indeed a sorry jest, but after all it was but the bald statement of an absurd but terrible fact—a fact which sent me back to my humble lodgings at night almost bereft of hope. But surely, said I in the morning, there must
be some department of the government where this unreasonable, this anti-American prejudice against employing women, has no weight. There surely must be some place under the government where it is not a disadvantage to be a woman. So one bright, sunny day, I visited the Post Office, and asserted my claims, or rather stated my wishes and my wants. Alas! I found that the post office was, as far as women were concerned, merely the custom house objections duplicated and indorsed: women were as utterly ignored in the one as the other. I could have cried. Being only a woman, I think I did weep silently; but weeping was a luxury, and work with me was a necessity, so I dried my tears, and as a dernier resort, I called upon that kindly gentleman and eminent public servant, Mr. J. J. Cisco. He received me not only courteously, but kindly, and in his sympathetic ear I poured my story, my struggles, and my total failures. He listened attentively to my narrative, he appreciated thoroughly my position, he acknowledged the force of my argument; but "cui bono?" What could he do? I asked not charity; I wanted work, and work was the one thing he could not give me, for it was not in his power to give. All he could bestow upon me was advice, and from his standpoint it was sound. He told me "to abandon my attempt, for it was attempting the impossible; I was worthy and a lady, but there were hundreds of other ladies who needed just what I was seeking, and could not obtain their needs; it was useless to argue the matter; it was the government as a body that was at fault; I must first convince the government, then all the rest was easy; until then, what I asked was impossible."

I thanked him, for I knew he spoke the truth, and withdrew in
silence, the silence of despair. How was I, one woman, one 
average woman, poor and friendless, to move the government of this 
vast country? I returned to my lonely little room a sadder and a 
wisest woman.

I cherished no illusions now; they had been effectually dispelled. 
In all this city of New York, in all this metropolis of America, in all 
the thousands of governmental positions here enjoyed by men, there 
was no place provided for its women. The brand of Cain, or worse, 
of mother Eve, was on our brows, and we must smile, be smiled 
upon, and starve as was the average woman’s average lot.

Heaven forgive me if for a while I mistrusted Providence and 
railed at fate, that had made me what I was. But with time and 
thought I calmed, and as I calmed I strengthened, and strengthening, I registered a vow to agitate this question of woman’s rights, 
of woman’s claim upon her government for employment, until 
my plea should be heard; and thus I keep my vow.

THE POINT AT ISSUE.

Now the point at issue, so far as my own personal experience just 
narrated is concerned, is not that the Collector, Sub-Treasurer or the 
Postmaster did not give me employment at that particular time. Oh! 
no, this might have been the case with any worthy man, who might 
like myself have applied for work, and been told as I was “that there 
was no work for him.” No, my point is this, that in my case, out-
side altogether of the question whether or no there was a place va-
cant which I could fill, there was the question raised of sex, mere sex,
for which I was certainly not responsible—a question which is never so much as thought of in a man. Had there been any office vacant, and had any man who applied been capable of filling it, he might under certain circumstances have gained the office. But, had there been a dozen places vacant, and had I been abundantly capable of filling each and all, I could under no possible circumstances have obtained any one of the twelve, because forsooth, I was guilty of the inexcusable blunder of being a woman.
THE MURMURERS APPROACH.

But I hear a murmur—a murmur which becomes more and more distinct, whose burden is remonstrance and dissent, mingled with some real or assumed astonishment and indignation. I see some men, aye, and some women lifting up their hands in what might pass for holy horror. And now the murmurers approach, and make their protest. "Do we understand you," they exclaim, "to advocate the right of women to concern themselves in political affairs?" "Do we comprehend aright when we regard you as wishing to introduce the female element into politics?"

Methinks I see a shudder pass through a portion of my audience at the bare idea of such a suggestion. In my mind's ear I hear an indignant rustling of silks. In my mind's eye I behold a portentous shaking of bonnets as the murmurers thus allude to that béte noir of the modern fashionable female mind, the "female politician."

But alas! that all this virtuous indignation should be wasted! pity that all this protestation should be without any basis of foundation; for, as it happens, I am not at present advocating the right of woman to concern herself in political affairs. I am not concerning myself in the slightest with "the female element in politics." It has nothing whatever to do with the matter in hand, for the offices which I con-
tend should be open to women have, or ought to have nothing directly to do with politics. If you ask me directly, "do I believe in women having political rights?" I can, so far as the subject of this address is affected, refuse to answer, for the question has nothing whatever to do with the subject. It has no more bearing directly on it, than my views on morals or religion. You might with equal propriety ask me if I was a Catholic or a Swedenborgian, an advocate of round dances or a believer in the "blue laws."

What has the routine work of a Post Office clerk to do with the principles of either the Republican or the Democratic party? What have the accounts of a clerk in the Treasury or Sub-Treasury department to do with the Foreign or Domestic policy of the administration? Why should a Custom House or Registry clerk concern himself, so far as his daily work goes, with the political aspect of the country?

Too much politics is the confessed curse of this over-governed land, and any attempt to make the merely clerical departments of the government independent of the political is a step in the right direction. So let the murmurers keep silent; let the protesters take their seats.

THE AVERAGE WOMAN A FORMIDABLE RIVAL OF THE AVERAGE MAN.

And for all the absolute work of the vast majority of the non-political government offices here referred to—for all the routine clerical duties required of their incumbents, women are as well pre-
pared, or could be with a very little practice in a very little time, as amply fitted as the men. Men go into these offices as ignorant of their duties as are women.

Such clerkships under the government as I refer to require no life-long training, no abstruse technical preparation; they are comparatively free to all tolerably educated individuals. A common school education, with a trifling special practice, will suffice for all; and for certain governmental non-political offices women are specially and confessedly adapted. Thus, in what is known as the "first division" of the Auditor's department of the custom house, there are employed some one hundred clerks, who have only light routine work to perform, and whose tasks do not bring them officially into contact with the outside world. What position can be more directly adapted to the average woman? If she could have herself the choosing of her work, what fitter work could she choose than this? Again, there are numerous, almost numberless, positions connected with the post office which are, as it were, providentially designed for women. Certainly the officials of the British government so think; for they act upon the thought. Sir James Manners, the English Postmaster-General, has not only appointed one lady to the position of postmistress with a salary of 3,000 a year, but he has given hundreds of minor posts to women, and has found in every case that the woman is thoroughly suited to the place.

I know that there are men who, occupying just these governmental positions, convey to the outside world the vague idea of tremendous responsibility and unflagging work. But there are
tricks in every trade, government offices not excepted, and the weary look of the government employe is as often due to excessive attachment to "a concha" or "S. O. P." as to the duties of his office. At any rate, I know of hundreds of women who use neither brandy nor cigars, who would gladly take a contract to relieve them alike of their arduous labors and their cruel responsibility.

I wish to avoid the charge of being vain. No woman is really vain, you know; but if all that a leading metropolitan daily journal says be true, we women are not only as well fitted for average governmental work as the average man, but are better, far better adapted for it.

A NEW YORK DAILY AS AUTHORITY.

Hear what the New York World says editorially (in answer to a letter of mine on the "Average Woman," which appeared in the New York Herald), on this branch of our theme: "When the average woman has prepared herself for average employment, it is safe to assert that she will not merely compete with the average man, but will actually drive him out of the labor market, for she can live cheaper than he can, and work at less wages; she is quicker to learn; neater in her habits, and less prone to the vices that endanger business success." Now it is not a woman that says all this, but a paper; not a female, but a male writer; a writer, too, who does not "enthuse" on the subject of woman's right to labor, and who differs
from the writer in many essential points. Consequently, his admission on this point is doubly valuable.

But with the natural modesty of our sex, we are willing to assume that the "World" writer is a little too gallant on this point, probably to atone for lack of gallantry on many other points connected with our controversy. Still the fact remains, that so far as ability to discharge the duties of average governmental office, an average woman is a formidable rival of the average man. Consequently, one possible argument against woman’s employment in these offices is forever disposed of most effectually.

"Let us have a chance at the glut."

"But," says the socialistic student, the man who knows by heart the state of the labor market, and who is infallible in his reading of the signs of the times: "There is a glut in the government clerkship market; the demand already exceeds the supply; for every office in the gift of the government of the United States there are one hundred men clamoring for the gift." Well, suppose we grant this, what then? We nowhere insist that the laws of trade or of supply and demand should be altered for our sake. If there is no place for women, we have nowhere desired that she should have perforce a place. All we women ask is, put us on an absolute equality with men. If the labor market is glutted, let us have a chance at the glut. We are willing to be refused a place, provided only we have the acknowledged right to seek the place. We claim no immunity from
the ordinary laws which govern humanity; we only demand the ordinary opportunities of humanity. That the world is too full, and that there is too little to do, is a matter which should be no more to us than to others. Whatever be the condition of things, it should be the same condition precisely to both sexes.
CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

Having thus plunged in *medias res*, having thus asserted our ideas of woman's right to civil offices, we are now brought face to face with one of the great questions which agitate the day, probably the question which agitates it most at present, "Civil Service Reform."

A woman who claims for herself and sex the right to hold civil offices, cannot shirk the question of reform in "Civil Service;" she must be either for it or against it. Time was when the slavery question agitated all hearts, but the war has settled that. Time was when the "Southern policy" perplexed the country to its core, but a decade of peace has laid even that ghost. But the time is now when the land is laboring in the throes of a new issue, "Civil Service Reform," an issue which involves the whole country.

The importance, the almost terrible interest attached to this last issue has been attested by the recent tragedy which literally alarmed a world—the assassination of James A. Garfield. This crime was but the legitimate, or illegitimate offspring of two evils that have so far been inseparable from the "Civil Service" of the United States—the pernicious greed for office, and the bestowal of office for purely party services and partisan ends.

Had it not been for the rampant growth of these two evils, James
A. Garfield would be a living man—and Guiteau would not be an assassin.

Slavery was a matter between two sections. The Southern policy was a question between two parties. But "Civil Service Reform" is a distinct issue between the politicians of both parties on the one side and the people of both sections on the other.

The great public is in favor of "Civil Service Reform;" of this there can be no doubt. But the hack politician, not the true, far-seeing, country-loving statesman, but the professional country-savers and self-servers, these are against it. Civil Service Reform, effectually carried out, would take the power from their hands—the power of place—and would reduce them to the ranks, and then they ask: "What would become of the country?" for politicians always call themselves "the country."

To the "hack" of either party the golden rule and the ten commandments are summed up in the famous maxims, "Væ victis," and "To the victor belong the spoils." In their eyes any and all places in the gift of the government are the property of the politicians of the party which chances to control the government. All offices in the public service, civil or political, are alike at the sole disposal of the dominant faction, to be used as the reward of partisan devotion. On this platform the "hack" politician must stand; withdraw it and he must inevitably fall. But the great American people, the people as apart from the politicians, are beginning to find by experience that they are too much governed—that a too ardent and widespread devotion to politics is growing to be a palpable and terrible curse. They find that according to the old system, the duties connected with an
office are forgotten in the perquisites attached to it. They see that the personal fitness of an individual for a position is lost sight of in the political claims made to that position by the individual.

Consequently, in the people's mind a desire has sprung up and intensified for reform in this respect. The people are beginning to demand that a man shall be fitted for an office before that office shall be given to the man. And they are also beginning to learn that mere political partisanship is not essential to the faithful discharge of a non-political position. Already they begin to see that the prime qualifications for a civil office are personal aptitude and personal merit—and so far, she who now addresses you is in favor of "Civil Service Reform."

But "Civil Service Reform," as at present held, does not go far enough. It is young yet, timid, modest perchance, and mistrusts itself. It should advance one step beyond, one logical step, and whilst it makes no distinction of party or persons should likewise make no differences of sex. Individual fitness and individual character being the great requisites for office, whenever and wherever these essentials are found to be combined in any person, whoever he or she may be, that person should be placed in the line of that position and promotion.

Such, some day, sooner or later, will be the received code of the civil service of these United States; and when that day comes civil service reform will obtain the warm approval of every intelligent and honest man and woman in the land.
EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES.

As for the examination of the candidates for civil offices, this must meet with the general indorsement, for this is absolutely essential to the scheme of the proposed reform.

How can an applicant's character be made known save through an investigation, an investigation which in itself every worthy male and female applicant would desire for his or her own sake. And how can an applicant's mental fitness for an office be determined save by a series of experimental inquiries concerning alike the office and the applicant.

Yes, only the vicious, the ignorant, or the unworthy will object to a proper examination alike of testimonials and of qualifications.

But then the examination must be proper and befitting. It must not be needlessly severe, it should not be irrelevantly absurd. And yet not a few of the examinations to which an applicant for office is subjected are either comic in their irrelevancy or crushing in their severity.

ANOTHER LEAF FROM PERSONAL HISTORY.

The speaker once subjected herself to one of these crucial tests, these civil service examinations, and she now takes this opportunity to show the world what they are and what they are not.
She desired the position of a "custom house searcher," a woman whose duty it is to examine females suspected of smuggling. She made her application in due form, in writing, obtaining the names of several well-known and prominent gentlemen as vouching for her respectability and need of self-support, also a doctor's certificate as to her health; was then notified of the time and place of the destined examination, and on the day appointed made her appearance at the custom house and was sent to a room on the top floor. There she found herself one of a score of women, mostly middle-aged, worn-looking, sorrow-battered, but unmistakably ladies, poorly clad, but attired in a garb which is beyond all price, refinement. With this meek-eyed score of rivals she was led into a room where several gentlemen awaited her and her companions. After politely saluting her, she was handed several sheets of paper in succession, each sheet containing printed questions and blanks in which she was to write her answers. As fast as she filled one page she was expected to sign it with her name and another was handed her in its place.

Now, some of these printed questions were apropos of the situation for which she was applying, but only a very few; the majority of the interrogatories appertained to subjects, a knowledge of which would have been as useful to Julius Caesar as herself, so far as her special fitness for a custom house searcher was concerned. Thus she was asked the names of all the generals in the war of 1812, the sources of the principal rivers of the world, and the height of the principal mountains; points very important possibly to a historian or a geographer, but technical data which, after all, were neither fair tests of
a general education, nor absolutely essential to me in my desired office of searcher.

Now, I am a tolerably well educated woman, the equal in general information, I presume, of the average of women; but I was not able to answer many of these questions on the spur of the moment, and, simple as these questions may sound, I respectfully but decidedly doubt if there is one individual out of every hundred who can at a moment, without any preparation or refreshing of memory, answer them fully and satisfactorily, and, in all probability, the one-hundredth one, who can answer them, will be some just graduated boy or girl fresh from school, who is really, in true knowledge, the inferior of the other ninety-nine. Such special questions as these do not afford a gauge of the general education of the party examined in the branches of study to which they refer. A person may possess a very fair and quite comprehensive knowledge of geography, may know tolerably well the main points concerning the distribution of land and water on the surface of the globe, the continents, the various countries, the general facts concerning the chief cities, rivers, and mountains, the system of latitude and longitude, and yet not have his or her memory burdened with all that detail on the subject, which can only be expected of a school girl or a school teacher.

And it is perfectly certain that, so far as the technical duties of a custom house searcher are concerned, a person might serve the government with perfect satisfaction and fidelity for fifty years, and know nothing of the war of 1812, saving the broad main facts of that eventful period.
Again, many of the questions which a female candidate for a searchership is compelled to answer, while they are, it is true, connected with custom house matters, are not concerned with her particular department of the custom house at all.

Thus, among the sheets which serve me as a sample of what the average searcher must know, or at least must answer, were the following. One sheet, No. 5, question 2, ran thus—The rates of duty on varnish being as follows: if valued at $1.50 or less per gallon, 50 cents per gallon and 20 per cent ad val.; if valued at over $1.50 per gallon, 50 cents per gallon and 25 per cent ad val., what would be the total duty on 48 casks of varnish, each cask containing 43½ gallons, and costing $1.40 per gallon?

Another, thus:

If certain sheet-copper weighs 18 ounces per square foot, what would be the weight of 375 sheets, each 48 inches long and 14 inches wide?

Now, in all due respect, but, in the name of common sense, let me ask, what had such interrogatories to do with the simple office of a searcher, a body-searcher, a female detective? Would it not have been much more appropriate, as I half laughingly suggested, had I been required to answer questions in anatomy? so as to show that I could tell at a glance the difference between the female figure, with or without a number of smuggled articles concealed upon it; or, in a moral and religious point of view, could I not have been interrogated as to my knowledge of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, especially that one of the ten which says, "Thou shalt not steal," or that injunction of the Divine Master
which is peculiarly appropriate to the custom house, "Render unto Caesar the things that be Caesar's?"

Still I am not ridiculing examinations as examinations; on the contrary, I indorse them heartily. I regard them as essential to the proper working of "civil service reform." Only by carrying these examinations connected with it too far, we are in danger of rendering it absurd; while at the same time by limiting its benefits to one sex only, we add to folly, cruelty, and injustice.
QUERY OF THE KNOWING POLITICIAN.

But I see some gentleman, some middle-aged gentleman, some shrewd, hard-headed, successful man of the world and politician, beckoning to me, and when he approaches he reminds me that thus far I have ignored altogether the very point of the whole affair; I have had nothing to say in regard to that necessarily most important element in government matters—"influence." "Must influence," he asks me, in his wondering wisdom, "must personal and political influence go for naught in so important a department of the government as the distribution of its offices?" "Does this idea of a personal fitness and personal need, independent of sex, contemplate the doing away altogether with the ordinary influence of social and political life?" "If so," concludes the knowing politician, "your plan will never work, for it contemplates an impossibility; so long as man is man, so long will influence be influence, especially in office giving, which, like kissing, goes by favor;" and with this appropriate illustration, the trained politician laughed in my simple face, and smiled a well-pleased smile, as of one who feels that he has made short work of an antagonist.
But I beg the gentleman's pardon—he has smiled prematurely;—his antagonist is not yet vanquished—being a woman, she will have the last word—I by no means consider mine a "Lost Cause."

For, if by "influence," this politician means influence that is legitimate, the result of time and the development of character, of acquaintanceship, family ties and the like, then while I confess with him, that "Civil Service," like all other departments of government, or life itself, would be an impossibility without it, as it must necessarily enter as an element, though a minor one, in every calculation, yet I hold that good women are as likely to influence this "influence" as good men. If by "influence," the politician means the direct and inevitable effect produced upon those who have met an individual, by that individual's personal, mental and moral caliber, by his or her manner, conversation and address, by his or her testimonials, certificates and recommendations, then with him I hold that this "influence" must be taken into account, and as a woman, I should be only too glad to have it courted, for women, good women, true women, can bring this "influence" to bear, and bear directly and most strongly upon men.

But if by "influence," our sharp but unscrupulous politician would imply that peculiar dubious element which figures so mysteriously about election times, and which we hear about so plentifully in connection with public offices; that wonderful something which the knowing ones name with a wink; that sphinx-like something which sounds so vaguely, yet which seems to mean so much; that something which those who use it most effectually shrink most from
defining clearly; that compound influence, which when reduced to its component parts, means bribery or cajolery, or undue social pressure, or nepotism, or corruption, then I hold two things; first, that such "influence" as this should not exercise any weight whatever, should not be permitted any longer, even as between man and man; that it is an incubus, a blot, a foulness, which has already eaten into and cankered our political institutions. Second, that true, good, honest women, have none of this "influence" to exert, and would not exercise it if they could; and this is a fact that is greatly in their favor, and which forms a powerful argument for the introduction of woman into "Civil Service."

ANOTHER PROTEST.

"But," I hear some one remark, "all this indignation, all this protestation, is very well, very well indeed; it is deserved, and there is much of truth in all you say; but nevertheless you must not forget, my dear lady, the fact, which even you must admit, that every government's first duty is to those who help to defend it and support it. Now men do both, while women can do neither. Men fight for their country in war, and they govern their country in peace. Women neither fight nor vote; consequently, even if all other points were equal, a man would possess a better claim upon any office in the gift of his government than would a woman. You demand justice, you advocate common sense; is not this sense and justice?"

I confess it sounds like both. I freely concede that there seems to be a basis of truth about this argument, and that it is fair enough
to appear formidable, and to deserve consideration. So let us consider it forthwith.

It is true that while women do not vote, men do, and it is likewise true that as a vote is in this country the basis of the government, the voter has a claim upon the party that may govern. But I, and those who think with me contend, that as voting is a purely political function, so the legitimate influence, prestige and power which it brings should be confined purely to a political sphere, and should affect matters only so far as matters are concerned with politics.

Political affairs as such should be the property of politicians, and as women have now in politics no voice, I here claim no political office. But surely, positions which are merely clerical or civil, offices which have no more to do with politics than with astronomy, offices which are no more affected by a party vote than by a comet, assuredly these non-political offices should be available for non-politicians.

Aye, more; it seems to me that having nothing else, a woman should be the more readily permitted to enjoy these minor offices. Man has his vote, his influence, his political power and his political place. He has all the prestige, he has all the greater prizes; is it just that he should likewise have all the world beside? Must there be nothing left for her? Shall she not be allowed to feed even upon the crumbs that fall from the political table?

There must be a place provided for the class of whom I write, and these government clerkships would be to them a blessed boon, havens of help, and arks of safety. Public morality as well as private weal pleads in favor of opening these places to women. Give
a woman a chance for independence, and you give her a chance for virtue. Open one more door to labor, and you close one more door on vice. Here is, indeed, a field for civil service reform; here is an avenue for woman’s work that should be opened; here is a chance for feminine labor that should be embraced, in the interests of womankind and of humanity.

I have done what I could, by tongue and by pen, to “find a way or make one” in this direction. But what can one weak woman do? It needs the hearty co-operation of women to impress the need of this reform upon the world; and above all, it calls for the influence in the premises of our leading men; it calls for the attention and prompt action of men like Secretary of State Frelinghuysen, Secretary of the Treasury C. J. Folger, Attorney-General Brewster, Postmaster-General Howe, Hon. John Sherman, Collector Robertson, Hon. Roscoe Conkling, Hon. J. P. Jones, Hon. Jas. G. Blaine, et al., of those who, having authority, feel the responsibility to use it aright.

There can be no nobler field in which even these illustrious statesmen can display their power.

Peter Cooper has won the gratitude of a world by opening for women artistic avenues which ere his time were closed against her. His name will “smell sweet and blossom in the dust,” because he will leave the world of women richer by several avenues of an honest livelihood than he found it.

Who then will do for woman in the civil service of the government what this venerable philanthropist has done in the cause of art and science?
Who will be the Peter Cooper of politics? We respectfully commend this question to the consideration of Chester A. Arthur, President of these United States of America, comprising among its population fifteen million women.
AN APPEAL.

Having now thoroughly, calmly, and without prejudice considered the whole broad range of my subject, it only now remains that I should address myself to all parties, all men and women directly or indirectly interested, all men and women who can control the destinies or the opinions of others.

TO MEN.

To the men of these United States I would say, man's opinion is cruelly unjust to women; unjust not from malice but mistake. Men are prone to a false delicacy in their views of women, and regard female independence and womanly self-support with a nervous, baseless species of horror rather than with its deserved meed of honor. The very chivalry of man towards women is manifested by mistakes. A father or a husband will like a true knight battle with the world for a lifetime to rear his darlings in comfort, and yet he will stubbornly and unwisely object to so educate his women to enable them if need be to do battle for themselves. He will bear with-
out a murmur the hardships and dangers of the life struggle, but he will not suffer those for whom he toils to be armed and fight for themselves beside him. Yes, men are often not only as valiant but as foolish as Quixote. And this mistaken chivalry, this false delicacy of fathers and husbands, does injustice, not only to themselves by overtaxing their energies, but it works bitter evil to the dear ones for whom they toil. It renders women helpless, and therefore in the great crisis of life hopeless. When, as happens every day, the bread-winner is reduced from affluence to poverty, or when his death reveals the fact that only his life stood between his loved ones and want, then the fondled and pampered widow and daughters are found to be as ignorant of real life and as incapable of real work as a child. Then they stand on the brink of ruin with folded hands and sigh and suffer, when, had the departed one, half fool, half martyr, been truly wise as well as loving, they might have had some means of livelihood with which to face and fight a frowning world. It is for man's sake as well as woman's that I appeal to man to give every chance for life to woman. Let them be half as just to us as they mean to be chivalrous, and our work is accomplished.

TO WOMEN.

And I now appeal to the great Republic of women who are and who must be by interest and sympathy concerned in any question which vitally affects woman. Let me appeal to them to exert themselves constantly in this cause. It is the inertia of woman that re-
tards her independence. She does comparatively nothing. She sits with folded hands and listens to the unthinking and prejudiced crowd around her, which insists that she has nothing to do; and really she seems to prefer the empty courtesies which men pay to her sex to the honest offer of equal work. Ah! a gallant’s bow on the promenade and a smile in the parlor may be a consideration to the woman who has the world at her feet, but they will not be worth a moment’s thought when she feels the world clutching at her hungry throat.

To the women of America, then, I would plead in their own best behalf, for, after all, it is to woman that woman must look mainly for reformation. Were the women of America as earnest in any one object, as thoroughly, practically in earnest in any one point whatever, as men are habitually in any and every point that concerns their welfare, they could, I am convinced, accomplish that object, in anywhere from twenty-four hours to twenty-four months, in proportion to their earnestness and determination.

TO THE SOCIETY WOMEN.

And to the society women of the land, the fashionable dowagers, the wealthy wives, the dashing belles, I would appeal by all the considerations that can sanctify a woman to her sex, not to despise their less fortunate though more industrious sisters, who only do now what they themselves may be called upon to do some day.

Social position is a necessity to an ordinarily refined woman; and
the mere “right to work” will justly amount to very little to a woman, if by working she is regarded as lowering her social status. Pecuniary independence and business ambition are considered honorable in a man; it should be regarded with equal estimation in a woman. But so long as the present prevailing code endures, and a man is deemed to gain caste by his own industry, and a woman to lose caste by her own exertions, so long a woman’s chances cannot be comparable to a man’s.

Ah! believe me, it is the lack, the utter barrenness of social life which renders the working lady’s existence so dismal and so dangerous. It is her social loneliness which oftentimes leads her to a life of shame. Believe me, it is the social ostracism which she meets with that forms the bitterest drop in the working woman’s cup; it is the social scorn of her own class which most deters her from honest industry, and drives her into dubious paths. Ah! yes, the broad, grand, simple truth that men and women need to learn is this—just in proportion as the world widens and extends the legitimate sphere of woman’s pecuniary independence and self-support without withdrawing its social sanction from her, just in that precise proportion does it narrow the range of feminine temptation, just so far does it lessen those peculiar evils to which all women are exposed. When the world has thoroughly learned and practiced this truth, the social millenium will be indeed at hand.
TO THE LAW MAKERS.

To the law makers of this free land, its Representatives and Senators in Congress assembled, I would plead for law and justice, for equal rights to both sexes to support themselves. As Congressmen, they may have to surrender some minor paltry perquisite; but they will thereby increase their legitimate influence with that element which is of all the most important to a politician in a Republic, their influence with the people.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

And I would appeal to those august statesmen, the Members of the Cabinet. I ask them, in the name of their mothers, their wives, their daughters, and their sisters; I charge them by all that is wisest and best for the interests of that glorious country which they guard, to see that woman has her modest and unobtrusive place under the benign government which they administer. I ask them to see that woman is not wholly forgotten in the civil service of the government throughout the land, and in the metropolis thereof.
TO HIS EXCELLENCY CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

And lastly, I appeal to the lately risen sun in the political firmament, to him who now holds the highest position in the gift of the people, to his Excellency Chester A. Arthur, the President of these United States. I beseech him not to pause till, in all his great and wise measures, his mother's sex is included as well as his own. Then will all parties praise him—not merely the party of the "present," but that grand party which is sure to come, and to come with power—the "woman's party of the future."

THE END.