

A paper by Mrs. S. L. Robertson, recently read before a joint session of the Sesame and Monday Review Clubs, and published in full by the Hillsboro Mirror, has been laid upon my desk.

As one of the women who are giving themselves in unstinted service to the cause of Equal Suffrage, I would like to lay the other side of the case before you and ask you, because of the value of hearing both sides of any great question, if you will not read it to your club, and give it equal publicity in your paper with the other article?

Without quoting the brief statement of Suffrage claims "reduced to their simplest terms," heading the paper, I would like to say that in spite of years of earnest study given to the principles and claims of our Cause, I have never anywhere seen them so stated and do not feel that this is a clear and just expression of our ideals; but, passing that and accepting what the writer claims is the crux upon which turns the whole issue, and quoting verbatim from the paper, we have this: "It must be demonstrated that the women with the vote have attained superior laws and conditions to those that are accorded to them without the ballot. Otherwise, on the one score of not being worth while, we have sufficient reason to reject women suffrage. In this connection it is interesting to note that not a single law, not one improvement, is, or can be claimed as the exclusive result of the votes for women. The male suffrage States lead in mothers' pensions, child labor, limitation of hours for working women, maternity acts, supervision of dairies, pure food, weights and measures, extension of educational facilities, improved sanitation, etc. The great Eastern States have worked out their social problems without women suffrage to a higher standard than that reached by the States where women vote."

Accepting, for the sake of argument, the statement that we must demonstrate that Woman Suffrage better things (but for the sake of argument alone, because when the American people established a "Government of, for, and by the people," when they proclaimed Liberty in this land in the name of and by the authority of the people, when they adopted a Declaration of Independence which states plainly and specifically, "Governments derive the just powers from the consent of the governed," - the foundation stones of woman's right to participation

in the government were permanently laid right along with man's, as indeed should be the case, since men and women together constitute "the people," the human race, and it is vain to seek to separate the destinies of man and woman because it cannot be done. - we stand or fall together,) but, accepting the challenge to demonstrate the value of Equal Suffrage, permit me to say there follows the most astounding statement I have ever seen. Read from, "In this connection it is interesting to note that not one single law, not one improvement is or can be claimed as the exclusive result of votes for women." Not one single law, not one single improvement to the credit of Equal Suffrage! Why there are books full of them, - but I say unto you if we had to our credit only the single improvement of Chicago's garbage system, and the removal of the dumps and the saving of the children's lives and health in that pitiful quarter of Chicago, it would be vindicated.

Write to Miss Mary McDowell, Hull House, Chicago, one of Chicago's five "Maiden Aunts," lovingly called by the poor in that pest ridden district "The Angel of the Dumps," and find out how long she worked voteless over that problem, and how swiftly she got action when the mothers got the vote. Ask her if she thinks Equal Suffrage worth while! And far from adding to the expense of the state, Chicago now gets an income from its garbage where it paid so much per ton to have it dumped to pollute the air and breed flies and sickness.

And then the statement, "The male suffrage states lead in mothers' pensions, child labor, limitation of hours for working women, maternity acts, supervision of dairies, pure foods, weights and measures, extension of educational facilities," etc. Well, of course "male suffrage states" do lead in child labor, but why that blot on our national life should be used to show that the system that permits it is good, I cannot imagine. Dr. Owen Lovejoy, Chairman of our National Child Labor Committee, working for the abolishment of this outrageous sacrifice of our children, says that if Equal Suffrage prevailed in the United States Child Labor would disappear almost over night. Certainly the voting mothers of the west are "doing their bit" to save the children.

Every Equal Suffrage state has an effective child labor law, backed up by efficient inspection. This is not so of all "male suffrage states," and particularly our Southern States stand shamed with material prosperity resting on the bowed backs of little children.

As to Mothers' Pensions: All of the Equal Suffrage States have this law except Arizona, where it was adopted and then declared unconstitutional and will have to be reframed. Less than half of the "Male suffrage states" have Mothers' Pension laws! And yet the writer says they lead.

As to limitation of the hours of labor of working women, permit me to submit the following figures: Four Equal Suffrage states, California, Colorado, Washington and Arizona, have an eight-hour law for women, and they are the only states in the union that have! Two, Kansas and Oregon, have a Commission empowered to establish minimum wage and maximum working hours for women and children. Two, Idaho and Utah, have nine-hour laws. Only three of the "Male suffrage states" have even nine-hour laws, Texas, Missouri and Massachusetts, and of these none are as yet perfected. Three from thirty-seven leaves thirty-four male states in which the working woman is unprotected as to hours of labor against eight from eleven, leaving three of the Equal Suffrage states!

"In the extension of educational facilities." Let us see! There is no equal suffrage state without a compulsory education law. In seven, the percentage of illiteracy over ten years of age is less than one(1) per cent; and in three, one to three per cent.. The eleven most illiterate states in the Union are "male suffrage states", and not all of the "male suffrage states" have adequate compulsory education laws.

It would be possible to touch upon every once of the points named by the writer of the article and show how Equal Suffrage states have handled these problems more efficiently than states where men alone do the voting, however I do not wish to make this letter unbearably long. But to sum up, permit me to make it clear that in contrasting the conditions in Equal Suffrage states with those in the states the writer has chosen to call "male suffrage states," I do it in no spirit of criticism for men. The men of those states are carrying the double burden of their responsibility to state and nation and that of the women. We

would think shame to make our husbands carry a double responsibility to the home; we shoulder our share of the burden and go cheerily along by his side. Some of us think shame to longer neglect our responsibility to the state and the nation, and desire to shoulder our share of the burden and go on cheerily by the side of our men, relieving them of the double burden and of the unjust criticism for the neglect of our share of governmental interests. And who shall say the care and education and protection of children is not equally, at least, our responsibility?

Thanking you, if you have read so far, for the fairmindedness which makes you willing to hear both sides, I am,

Very truly yours,

President,
Texas Equal Suffrage Association.