

An Open Letter to Mrs. Lockhart, Anti-Suffragist.

DEAR MADAM,

I wish to thank you for the paper you gave our Society, "The Anti-Suffragist's Views," and at the same time make a few remarks upon it.

You argue that, owing to their sex, women are inferior to men, both in intelligence and capability. And as men, because of their sex, are gifted with greater intelligence and clearer judgment (indeed nobler beings altogether) women should not ask to have a voice in public affairs, but accept, without question, whatever laws may be made which affect them, no matter what suffering or injustice such laws may render them liable to.

Since the Anti-Suffragist women so cheerfully proclaim their sense of inferiority and their inability to decide what is best for them, of course it would never occur to them to doubt the sense of justice or wisdom of our law-makers, but we women who are seeking the franchise not only claim intellectual equality, but are proving it, and not only dare to question the wisdom and justice of some laws, but rebel at the flagrant injustice of enforcing taxation upon women and withholding the vote which should go with it.

To assume that because some women are devoid of common sense the rest must be, is as absurd as saying that all men are unprincipled because some are. When you can prove that intelligence is a question of sex and not of the individual, we may believe, but not until then, that we are born inferior.

For we know (and no doubt so do you) that, in spite of being credited with more intellect, men are daily benefitting by the cultured intelligence of their wives or female friends in helping them with their sermons, speeches, literary work, or business affairs, and, I am sorry to say, in many cases do not hesitate to take all the credit.

It is absurd to bring the deficient intelligence of woman forward as an argument against granting the vote, for I have never heard of the intelligence of male voters being tested before they are allowed to record their vote. If that were the case there might not be the dissatisfaction in the country which exists at present.

You consider that the only work women are fitted for is that of performing the duties attendant on marriage and motherhood. I do not wish to depreciate either, under proper conditions, but the anti-'s view of marriage and motherhood I do not agree with, for it means that a married woman has to give up her individuality entirely—letting her husband think for her, and decide for her, and to have no interests outside the home unless with his approval. How could any intelligent, self-respecting

woman find real happiness or even content under such conditions?

You also warned us of the danger to the race from the over-education of women, as their children could not have healthy constitutions. I think there is more to be feared from the ignorance of women, as the infant mortality among the poorer class is due almost as much to ignorance as to poverty or neglect. Surely the intelligent mother, who knows and follows the laws of health for herself and children, before and after birth, is more likely to rear a healthy family than the ignorant mother.

In advocating marriage and motherhood as the only positions women should fill, you were only speaking of the dependent women who have husbands to provide for them. You evidently forgot that there are thousands of women workers who have neither husbands nor male relatives to depend upon for support, but have to rely entirely on what they can earn for themselves. Their work is as well done as that done by men, who have had the monopoly so long; but, being women, they are only paid about half what the men get. We have to thank the working women for proving that it is not ability our sex lack, but opportunity to show what they are capable of.

I cannot help saying that I think the attitude of the Anti-Suffragists towards their own sex is not to be admired, for it is so utterly selfish. Having no use for the vote themselves, and not caring to know how much it might benefit others, they try to hinder the movement, rather a dog-in-the-manger attitude.

After all I must admit that your paper had some result (although not perhaps what you hoped), for it roused the indignation of the women to hear themselves spoken of in such a contemptuous manner, and made them more determined than ever to fight for their rights.

Of course, I can only surmise the effect your paper had on the men who were present. I rather think they must have felt a little embarrassed at being told how very noble and clever they were, and, perhaps, just a little doubtful if they quite deserved all the flattering words. However, if they went away with the resolve to live up to the Anti-'s ideal, then most assuredly your paper was not given in vain.

I am,

Yours truly,

A SUFFRAGETTE.

What is the difference between a Suffragist and an Anti-Suffragist? One is an Ibsen Girl, and the other a Gibson Girl.