

# Editorial Reflections

## The Progress of Feminism

**W**OMAN'S era has begun; the burgeoning of the sex, clad for action, thrusting up like poppies in a field of corn, red and warm with the hues of a new dawn, is perhaps the one bright spot in our post-war life. Marvellous indeed are the changes revealed to the student of the affairs of the body politic—forced upon the notice of the most casual observer strolling down life's pathway. Almost with the speed of light have they come upon us, and a light to the world is indeed their message and portent. Less noticeable perhaps in this freer dominion, than in the caste-ridden social systems of the older nations, woman's progress is still definite, absolute and astounding. The changes are for the better, there is only one thing that has crashed—mystery.

Sex mystery was a thing unknown to the ancients; neither Greek nor Roman knew it; the Egyptian was never bound in its shackles. The mystery of woman arose out of the wars of Christianity; a gift from the Orient that the Occident might well have been spared. The womenfolk of the Turk and the Moroccan are never seen; they live on cushions, locked up, and they grow disastrously fat and stupid. Chivalry imported some of these methods into the West, with its troubadours and love-singers, whose place was later taken by the poets of eroticism. The mystery became a tyranny under Puritanism, a tyranny that persisted until it was exploded by the suffrage Acts passed by the Dominions, and decently buried when despairing Englishwomen smacked the faces of policemen in the streets of London. Followed the women of the war, magnificently self-sacrificing and courageous, out of whom evolved the flapper, to be succeeded by the strong, wholesome woman of to-day—without a mystery. The hysterical fainting damsel of the early Victorian era has gone, the self-reliant woman, sure of herself, and insistent on her equality, ready to prove her worth in a world of work, has come to force man to adjust his opinions. The more women emerge as workers, thinkers, doers and fighters for impersonal ends, the quicker will man respond to this adjustment.

The sex war is at an end. Women have won to a sensible freedom. Girls are being educated to stand four square, and on their faces the most confirmed misogynist can detect the bloom of confidence. Women are moving up. The home may be more noisy under the newer system than that of the stern Victorian, but it is infinitely more joyous and companionable. And so throughout the wide world, the spirit of the time has carried women of all creeds and races on its wings to a broader life and a newer freedom.

## Some Forward Movements Among Women

**E**VEN in India, that most conservative stronghold of masculinity, women have not only demanded, but have obtained, legal sanction to share with men the responsibilities of local government. In Karachi, for instance, the sex qualification has recently been removed which prevented women from becoming municipal councillors. A movement in a similar direction is on foot in Bombay, and there can be no doubt that women in India are now having opportunities for public service opened up in various directions.

In South Africa the woman movement progresses slowly. The citadels of conservatism are strongly entrenched in that country, but its women are congratulating themselves that their enfranchisement is not so very far distant, since the Woman's Suffrage Bill was defeated recently by the very narrow majority of four votes only. Nor are women permitted to practise law in any province of the South African Union as yet.

Curiously enough, the women of Jersey are similarly restricted, for in that interesting little island a woman may not practise either as a barrister or a solicitor. Compared with New Zealand in this respect, they are far behind us; for it is quite twenty years since women have been admitted to the legal profession in this country. We are now so accustomed to use our vote, and to the presence among us of women lawyers and doctors, to say nothing of women on town councils, hospital and education boards and committees, that it certainly comes as a surprise to learn that neither Italian nor

French women have as yet obtained the general suffrage, though in Uruguay, where the Woman Suffrage Bill has just been postponed, it has every prospect of early success.

## In the Business World

**I**T is still said in some quarters that women do not succeed in the higher walks of business. Although this is undoubtedly true of women in the aggregate, it must be admitted that in quite a number of cases in which opportunities were ready to hand, individual women have made their mark. It would seem that want of capacity or of business acumen is not their handicap. No one can deny that French women have the business sense very well developed, but English women have not yet made a very conspicuous showing in that direction. We certainly have Lady Rhondda proving that mine management, and the successful conduct of an immense business, is not beyond the grasp of the feminine brain. She merely succeeded, however, to a firmly-established industry. She did not create it. It is true that she had a long preparation for the work, and it may be inferred that, given the necessary training and incentive, women are perfectly well able to make a success of those callings which demand a firm grip of business conditions. Whether it is desirable that they should strive to fit themselves for such callings, is quite another matter, and does not enter into this discussion at all.

## Women As Bankers

**I**T is not long since the notion that women knew anything about financial matters would have been treated as a joke. Outside the large army of stenographers and girl clerks, a woman's knowledge of banking was for the most part limited to the successful banking of her husband's cheques. But here, again, the war wrought great changes. While it lasted, women clerks in great numbers were to be seen in English, as well as American banks, and, on the whole, they were fairly satisfactory; but, at the close of the war, the men resumed their old positions, as far as England was concerned. In America, however, though the girl clerk disappeared to a great extent, the woman bank official remained. She had come to stay; and she has done so to some purpose.

Prominent among those who remained is Mrs. Lainbeer, who, after serving with the United States Mortgage and Trust Company, showed such capacity that she was made assistant secretary of the Company—a post which placed her at the head of the women's departments of the various branches of the Bank. To her has fallen the notable distinction of being the first woman ever invited to address the American Bankers' Association. Naturally enough, she is a staunch believer in the fitness of women for undertaking such work as hers. "I have come," she said recently in a noteworthy speech, "to look upon women in the trust company as serving the part of *liaison* officers, who act as a connecting link between the bank and its customers, not only women, but men."

## They Are Practical, Too

**T**HESE women have some very thorough, as well as novel methods. Thus, Mrs. K. Cammack, who had superintended the War Relief Surgical Work Headquarters in New York, was at the close of the war appointed assistant secretary of the New York Trust Company. Her speciality is bank extension work, and she carries it out by addressing clubs, schools, and public gatherings, showing the advantages of making definite income arrangements. In this connection she gives valuable instruction to young people, particularly to girls, in handling their allowances or their earnings.

Altogether there are more than twenty women who are to-day filling important responsible positions in United States banks and trust companies. Of these, at least three have founded savings banks for women, and in these the whole staff consists of women also. One of these banks has a branch devoted to what is called the "baby business." It is really a babies' savings bank. By addressing a letter to every new-born infant in the community, the parents are encouraged to open a savings bank account in the baby's name, and, although the bank has been opened only three years, the business resulting in this department alone has proved quite satisfactory.