

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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THE DIVINE RIGHT OF THE MALE.

Old prejudices die hard, and the average male human very reluctantly surrenders his "divine right."

Held blindly for centuries, deeply ingrained in his racial consciousness, is the belief that certain positions and privileges are his, not because he is the best qualified to perform the duties appertaining thereto, but solely because he is a "man."

A glaring instance of this occurred at England's old historic University. Reluctantly it opened its educational privileges and degrees to women students, but its highest educational awards must still go to the male. And so it had to submit to the disgrace of inscribing in its records, "Above the Senior Wrangler, Miss Fawcett." The position she had rightly won by her brilliance of intellect he held by "divine" right as a male. In a smaller degree the same thing is being enacted in our own Dominion. Slowly, and fighting desperately every step of the way, women have won their right to citizenship. No longer are they classed with criminals and lunatics, as unable to exercise the privilege of the Franchise. By sheer power of intellect and force of character, combined with unlimited patience and perseverance, she has won her way to the front rank in the educational world. But she has trusted too much to men's chivalry, and has allowed them to monopolise almost every seat on our Boards of Education. And these chivalrous gentlemen, on at least one Education Board, are trying to cheat women teachers of the higher positions allowed them. In certain schools, which the Education Department have

allowed women the right to be Heads of, this Board advertises these positions as Head Masters wanted. In this way women are debarred from the right of applying. The Women Teachers' Association very rightly has questioned this proceeding, and the Educational Institute has called the Board's attention to the fact that it is acting ultra vires. The Board is seeking legal advice.

This Board is inflicting a double injustice—1st, upon its women teachers, who render it such loyal, capable and devoted service; and 2nd, to the children of our schools, who are entitled to the most capable and efficient Head Teacher irrespective of sex. No man has the right to be head of a school just because he is a man, if there is a woman applicant with better credentials. There should be no "divine right of the male" to any position in our schools or educational bodies. The Education Department has practically admitted this by at long last appointing a woman as Inspector of Schools.

Still another Education Board is agitating for a change which will inflict still further injustice upon the children in the schools, and still further reduce their chance of securing the best teacher available. It is asked that married women shall not be eligible for appointment as teachers in our public schools if their husband's income is sufficient to maintain them. Now, what has a husband's income to do with a woman's ability as a teacher? Why should good teachers be forced out of the profession just when their long experience is fitting them for wider spheres of usefulness? And mark! this Board does not object to them because they are mar-

ried, but because of the size of their husband's income. Many a man whose income is large spends the greater part of it upon his own pleasures, grudgingly paying necessary household expenses, and grumbling every time his wife asks for a penny. Before a husband's income becomes a factor to hinder his wife from earning, the law must insist that a certain proportion of that income is secured to his wife. What a tragedy it is to see a fine, cultured woman who, before marriage, earned a good income, forced to become the unpaid servant of the home, often with not a penny she can call her own.

Strange that no effort is made to hinder a married woman from earning so long as she is content to slave at the washtub, the scrubbing brush, or the sewing machine.

Whenever positions in our schools are advertised, they should go to the most capable applicant, either male or female, and irrespective of whether they are married or single. No other course is fair to the children in our schools. So much for Education Boards and their vagaries.

But male jurors are also trying to close avenues of service to women. A woman driving a service car was unfortunate enough to meet with an accident, and the jury added a rider to the verdict that licenses to drive service cars should not be granted to women. But lately many male drivers have met with accidents, some of them serious ones. In some cases carelessness, in some cases intemperance, has been proved against the driver. Licenses have been cancelled for longer or shorter periods, but no jury has asked that licenses to drive service cars be