

# The White Ribbon

For God, and Home, and Humanity.

## Thought for the Month.

"There is no freedom on earth or in any star for those who deny it to others."—Elbert Hubbard.

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### EDITORIAL :

## FRANCHISE

## DAY

### Fundamental Freedoms

September 19 is close upon us again, with its reminder of the end of a great struggle for the women, by the women, to be granted the right to vote. The years fly by, and these notable days seem to come round so quickly. One wonders whether it is really necessary to keep them every year.

Well, if it is only to help us to remember that we were not always as well off as we are now, as women, possessed of normal brains and capacities, we should make a point of observing them. Nor should we allow ourselves to think that the upward march towards freedom of thought and action ended with the victory of 1893. That was only the beginning. The "labour and the wounds" still go on. Only by constant vigilance and persistent claiming of recognition does the status of women slowly assume its proper form and development.

It comes as something of a blow to learn that even today our own country's representative is voting against equal rights for women on UNO's Human Rights Committee. The feeling of outrage should find some expression regarding this grossly retrograde position. Whether the representative is voting under Government instruction, or of his or her own choice, is a matter worth investigating.

The point is that here we have a case in clear illustration of the need for far keener interest in, and understanding of, our actual appraisal value to the State. If this is so low as to bring about a humiliation like this at the hands of our own Government, or its appointed representative, then we have still a long way to climb. We are told by people from other countries that we, the women of New Zealand, are too inarticulate, and that we allow injustices to ourselves that women in some other lands would not tolerate. Be this as it may, the call to greater awareness and keener desire for full recognition as members of the State, should be the aim of our keeping of "Franchise Day" this month. Let us awaken ourselves and our sisters to the fact that our emergence from the long inactivity of many centuries is still proceeding, and that many of the world's greatest reforms are being held back by the fact that it is not yet completed.

Among the basic objectives of the Trusteeship system, in accordance with the purposes of the United Nations, we find the following: "To encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, etc." Good. This will not be possible without the counsels of women. We must hope and work still to secure for generations yet unborn, "this freedom."

### FREEDOM

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet;  
Above her shook the starry lights,  
• She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gathered in her prophet mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then step't she down through town  
and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men revealed  
The fullness of her face.

Her open eyes desire the truth,  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and  
shine  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes.

—Tennyson.

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