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Edited by Theodore Stanton

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### The Woman Question in Europe

The American journalist Theodore Stanton (1851–1925), son of the leading feminist and suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, published this remarkable collection of essays in 1884. His intention had been to get from each European country 'the collaboration of one or more women, who ... had participated, either actively or in spirit, in some phase of the women's movement'. In seventeen chapters, all but two written by women, the progress of 'the woman question' – the debate on the rights of women to financial independence, higher education and the franchise – across Europe (and in the Ottoman empire) is described, largely for an American and British readership. The work, introduced by the veteran feminist Frances Power Cobbe, has among the contributors (each given a short biography) many famous names in the struggle for women's rights at the end of the nineteenth century, including (from Britain) Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Jessie Boucherett and Maria Grey.

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# THE WOMAN QUESTION IN EUROPE

A SERIES OF ORIGINAL ESSAYS

EDITED BY

THEODORE STANTON, M.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

FRANCES POWER COBBE

"If you would know the political and moral status of a people, demand what place its women occupy."—L. AIMÉ MARTIN, "On the Education of Mothers," Book I., Chapter VI.

"There is nothing, I think, which marks more decidedly the character of men or of nations, than the manner in which they treat women."—HERDER, "Philosophy of History" (French Edition), Vol. II., Book VIII., Chapter IV.

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, AND RIVINGTON

CROWN BUILDINGS, FLEET STREET

1884

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I DEDICATE THIS WORK

TO MY MANY COLLABORATORS, AND, ABOVE ALL, TO MARGUERITE  
BERRY, MY WIFE, WHOSE PARTICIPATION HAS NOT BEEN LIMITED TO  
A SINGLE CHAPTER, BUT EXTENDS THROUGHOUT EVERY PAGE OF THE  
VOLUME.

T. S.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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I BEGAN collecting the materials for this volume in the winter of 1880-'81. It was my wish to secure, in each country of Europe, the collaboration of one or more women, who, in connection with a literary training, had participated, either actively or in spirit, in some phase of the women's movement,—that remarkable social revolution now going on in old Europe as well as in young America. With the exception of the chapter on Portugal and a portion of the chapter on France, all the contributions are from the pens of women.

One of the most distinguished Portuguese authoresses, Mrs. Maria Amalia Vaz de Carvalho, had promised to speak for her country, when a sudden illness interrupted her work. Mr. Rodrigues de Freitas, the well-known Portuguese publicist and republican, kindly came forward to fill the gap.

The chapter on France differs materially from the others, both as regards its form and its amplitude. France, while accomplishing less than almost any other country in the practical amelioration of woman's condition, has, in the field of ideas, always led the world. What her thinkers and reformers have written and spoken, other nations have put into practice. France has already solved theoretically the woman question, as she has all the other great problems of the nineteenth cent-

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ury. Hence it is that so much space has been devoted to this one country. It is hoped that the brief historical retrospect with which the chapter begins will explain and complete the other chapters. It has been my endeavor, as far as possible, to have each separate topic treated by a writer possessing special information on such topic. It is therefore believed that the statements and conclusions will be found trustworthy and important.

It will be noticed that England has the first place and the lion's share of the volume. But, as it is in Great Britain of all Europe that, on the whole, the most marked progress has been made, especially in the direction of political rights, the *summum bonum* of the age, the largest space and the post of honor justly belong to the Mother Country.

In the arrangement of the chapters, I have striven to observe an ethnological order. First comes Anglo-Saxon England, followed by the Teutonic countries—Germany, Holland and Austria; then Scandinavia, embracing Norway, Sweden and Denmark; next the Latin nations—France, Italy, Spain and Portugal; then Latin-Teutonic Belgium and Switzerland; afterward the Slavonic States—Russia, Poland and Bohemia; and, finally, the Orient.

Hungary should have had its separate place in the Slavonic group; but, after repeated efforts, I was unable to find a collaborator in that country, and the reader, unfortunately, must be contented with the few words devoted to Hungarian women in the chapter on Austria. However, as Hungary is an integral part of the empire of the Hapsburgs, much of what is said in the chapters given to Austria and Bohemia applies equally well to Hungary.

I have endeavored to make this volume on the Euro-

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pean movement for women a storehouse of facts rather than a philosophical study. The latter itself presents, however, a theme of the deepest interest, and one which, if I may be permitted to say so, might well be based on the material found in the following pages. Exactness, therefore, has been one of the chief cares of the editor. In order to secure this end, the translated portions of this work were, before being sent to the printer, submitted to the authors in the English form. The first proofs, and, in some cases, the second proofs also, were passed under their eyes, and, in many instances, were carefully examined by third parties, natives of the countries treated therein. It is hoped that, by this means, accuracy has been secured, not only as regards the facts, but also in the orthography of proper names, so often disfigured in passing through a foreign press.

I beg, however, the indulgence of the reader for any errors which may be discovered in these pages; for, with the editor on one side of the Atlantic, and the publisher on the other, the difficulties of proof-reading have been greatly increased. The double translation which some of the essays have undergone may have occasioned a few misconstructions. Without counting the English, the contributions to this volume came to the editor in six different languages, viz., German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Polish and modern Greek. But, as has already been said, the English text has been examined more than once by the authors, who—a fact worthy of note, by the way—are, with but two exceptions, conversant with the English tongue.

My work has not been simply that of a translator, but the more difficult one of an editor. The principal object of this volume was, as has just been stated, to furnish

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facts. The style in which these facts were to be presented was to be free from extravagance of every kind. I did not wish to take as my guide Diderot, who says: "When woman is the theme, the pen must be dipped in the rainbow and the pages must be dried with the dust of the butterfly's wing." Nor was the "vile-wretchman" spirit to prevail. But rather Horace's golden mean was to be observed. In order to stick to facts and the *juste milieu*, the editor greatly increased his labors. With the exception of the biographical notices, and of the English essays, to which I have added a few notes, no chapter appears in its original form. Each has been subjected to severe pruning, some having been abridged one-half. In several chapters the order of the matter has been changed, paragraphs have been remodeled, and new sentences introduced. But in every case the English arrangement has received the final approval of the author. And I hasten to add that in every instance this approval was cheerfully given, my collaborators readily perceiving that in this way only could we hope to produce a work which would be homogeneous and, at the same time, acceptable to a public three thousand miles away, of whose character all foreign writers are more or less ignorant.

Besides other matter, the editor is responsible for most of the foot-notes. With the exception of those in the chapter on France, all the foot-notes are signed with the initials of their respective authors. In this chapter, those not signed belong to the editor. It will be thought, perhaps, that many foot-notes would more properly appear in the body of the text than at the bottom of the page. But as the text was the composition of a particular author, additional matter could be added only in the form of

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notes. Although continuity is thus often sacrificed, no better plan suggested itself.

I have been considerably puzzled as to what titles of address to use before names of persons. It would not do to adopt a different method in each chapter as a new country was taken up. The following rule has, therefore, been observed: Except in the chapter on France, the ordinary English forms have been employed in all cases. It would have been more uniform to have done the same throughout the whole volume, but such an expression as "*Mrs. de Staël*," for example, shocked the ear too much to admit of such a practice.

I cannot close this preface without returning thanks to a few at least of the many persons who have aided me in the preparation of this volume. Mention is not made of the various collaborators whose names appear at the head of the chapters or in the notes thereto. Suffice it to say, that without their generous aid this preface would have no *raison d'être*,—this volume would not exist.

The list is as follows: England—The Rev. W. H. Channing, Mrs. Peter A. Taylor, wife of the member for Leicester; Mrs. Katharine L. Thomasson, wife of the member for Bolton; Miss Emily Faithfull, Mrs. Laura McLaren, wife of the member for Stafford; Mrs. Fanny Hertz, Miss Caroline A. Biggs, Editor of the *English-woman's Review*; Miss Agnes Blatch, and Mrs. Stanton-Blatch, B.A., who has read the larger part of the proofs. France—Mme. Jules Favre, M. Gréard, Vice-Rector of the Academy of Paris; M. Molinier, Professor at the Toulouse Law School; Dr. Nicholas Joly, corresponding member of the Institute; Mme. Caroline de Barrau; M. Joseph Fabre, deputy; Mlle. Verneuil, M.D.; M. Alphonse Rodière, Mme. Olympe Audouard, Mlle.

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Hubertine Auclert, M. Desmoulins, of the Paris Municipal Council; Mme. Griess-Traut and M. Paul Dubuisson. Germany—Mrs. Louis Otto-Peters. Italy—Mrs. Christine Lazzati-Rossi, Mrs. Ernesta Napollon, and Mr. Charles François Gabba, Professor at the University of Pisa. Spain—Mr. Fernando G. Arenal and Miss Thérès Roaldès. Portugal—Mr. Antonio da Costa. Belgium—Mr. Jules Pagny. Switzerland—Mr., Mrs., and Miss Z. Milkowski. Denmark—The Baroness Astrid Stampe-Feddersen and Mr. Fredrick Bajer, member of the Danish Parliament. Norway—Mr. H. E. Berner, member of the Norwegian Parliament, and Miss Charlotte Jacobsen. Holland—Mr. R. C. Nieuwenhuys, of Deventer. Poland—Mrs. M. Abdank-Abakanowicz. Russia—the late Ivan Tourguéneff and Mr. Pierre Lavroff. Bohemia—Mrs. Charlotte Garrigue Masaryk. Greece—Mr. A. R. Rangabé, Greek Minister at Berlin and Dr. X. Zographos. United States—Mr. Theodore Tilton, Mrs. Laura Curtis Bullard and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

THEODORE STANTON.

59, RUE DE CHAILLOT, PARIS,

*December, 1883.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

BY FRANCES POWER COBBE.

[Miss Frances Power Cobbe, daughter of Charles Cobbe, D.L., of Newbridge House, Co. Dublin, was born in 1822, and is the author of the following works : "An Essay on Intuitive Morals," "Religious Duty," "Broken Lights," "Darwinism in Morals," "The Hopes of the Human Race," "The Duties of Women," "The Peak in Darien," etc. Of late Miss Cobbe has devoted herself almost exclusively to the work of the Victoria Street Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection, of which she is the foundress and Honorary Secretary.]

THERE have been many movements in the world—some of them recorded in history as portentous events, others forgotten within a few years of their occurrence—which may each be compared to a wave on the surface of the Mediterranean. From the insignificant ripple to the wave-high billow flecked with foam and breaking in cataracts, they have arisen only to subside to their original level, leaving the boundaries of land and sea where they have stood for a thousand years. There are other movements, on the contrary, which resemble the tides of the Ocean, wherein each wave obeys one uniform impetus, and carries the waters onward and upward along the shore.

Of all the movements, political, social and religious, of past ages there is, I think, not one so unmistakably tide-like in its extension and the uniformity of its impulse, as that which has taken place within living memory among the women of almost every race on the globe. Other agi-

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tations, reforms and revolutions have pervaded and lifted up classes, tribes, nations, churches. But this movement has stirred an entire sex, even half the human race. Like the incoming tide, also, it has rolled in separate waves, and each one has obeyed the same law, and has done its part in carrying forward all the rest. The waves of the Higher Education of Women all over the world; the waves which lifted women over the sand-bars of the medical and (in America) of the legal and clerical professions; the waves which seated them on the School Boards and Boards of Guardians of the Poor; the wave which gave them the English Municipal Vote; the wave which restored to Married Women a right to their own property; every one of these waves, great and small, has been rolled forward by the same advancing tide.

But the crown and completion of the progress must be the attainment of the Political Franchise in every country wherein representative government prevails, and till that point be reached, there can be no final satisfaction in any thing which has been achieved. It has been repeated till it has become a commonplace, that "the Suffrage is the key of woman's position." Obtaining it, every privilege she can reasonably desire must follow. Failing to obtain it, nothing,—not even such installments of her rights as she has hitherto enjoyed,—is secure. An easily-raised storm of prejudice and selfishness, whether of trade or party or sect, passing over the masculine population, might sweep away her few privileges, while she remained helpless and unable to protect them by a single vote. On a small scale such confiscations of the rights of women in trades and other matters have occurred again and again. The sufferers had no appeal from injustice, and, because they were unrepresented, their wrongs were overlooked.

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The most difficult problem in that great branch of Ethics which we call Politics regards the place which ought to be assigned under each constitutional government to alien races of men. The system of Representation itself, with Trial by Jury and the whole scheme of civil and political liberty, as we, in our day, understand it, has grown up through a thousand years of

“ Freedom slowly broadening down  
From precedent to precedent,”

among our law-abiding Anglo-Saxon race ; and either the hasty adoption of it by other nations with different tendencies and untrained to self-government, or else the sudden admission of aliens in large numbers to a share in the working of our own machinery, are experiments fraught with difficulty and danger. In the Greek, Italian, French and Spanish Chambers we see examples of the first ; and, in the Irish Parliamentary “ Obstruction ” and misuse of the jury system to defeat justice, of the second. Noble and righteous as was the act by which the government of the United States extended the suffrage to the emancipated negroes, the perils of such a step could scarcely have been encountered by any sane statesman had the lately freed slaves borne a much larger proportion to the whole white population of the Republic ; and not even American democracy will contemplate for many a year to come following up this heroic act by enfranchising Chinese immigrants ; nor English radicalism ask for the admission of Hindoos to a share in the Legislative,—scarcely even in the Executive,—government of India.

Statesmen, even of the broadest views, may not only be pardoned, but praised, for hesitating and taking time for deep consideration, when it is proposed to introduce a

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new element into the constitution of their country. In my humble judgment, as a Conservative, there has been culpable recklessness on the part of those who, to serve party interests, have, in England, thrown open the gates of our sacred "*polis*" to a rabble of "illiterates," and in America have admitted hordes of immigrants to the ballot-box, before it was possible for them to acquaint themselves with American politics, or to imbibe American principles.

These considerations should induce women, and their generous advocates, to regard without impatience all opposition to their claims to the suffrage which they believe to be honestly intended and grounded on patriotic anxiety lest the introduction of a new force should disturb the working of the machine of State. They should teach them also to frame their arguments with the paramount object of allaying the fears and encouraging the confidence of such worthy opponents, who, when once convinced that the enfranchisement of women will tend to the stability and prosperity of the State, and to the maintenance of social order and religion, will become the most earnest advocates of the measure. The difference—nay, rather the contrast—should likewise be insisted on between proposals to admit the dregs of a population to the franchise, and those to admit the mothers, daughters and sisters of the men who already exercise it; and again, between proposals to admit aliens of another race, and those to admit women who have the same hereditary tendencies, attachments, creeds and interests; and who are the inevitable partakers of the nation's prosperity, and the deepest sufferers by its disasters, or misrule. In short, it ought to be the care of the advocates of women to point out that not a single one of the reasons for caution

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in the case of the admission of aliens affect their claims; while there exist a multitude of valid reasons, why, being by nature part of the nation, they should also be, by law, citizens of the State; bringing with them, not an element of weakness and disintegration, but a completer union, and a contribution to the nation's counsels of something more than "mother-wit," even of mother-wisdom.

The man is not to be envied who can view the struggle of women for political rights with contempt or indifference. That those struggles may not always have been guided by infallible taste and wisdom, and that they have often been met—for lack of sensible argument—with silly derision, need not blind us to the fact that they constitute one of the bravest battles, one of the most pathetic movements, the world has ever seen. Other strifes have been carried on between rival races, rival classes, rival sects; but here we have only the patient, persistent appeal of daughters to fathers; of sisters to brothers; of wives to husbands; of the women, who make the charm of society, to the men who call them friends. There are no "garments rolled in blood" in the battle of these warriors. The combatants command neither cannon nor bayonets. They cannot even break down iron palings, like the populace of London, when the rights they demanded were withheld; or threaten dynamite and petroleum like Nihilists and Fenians. They have not the minutest political influence at their disposal wherewith to coerce their opponents. Never was there a case of such pure and simple Moral Pressure,—of an appeal to justice, to reason, to men's sense of what is due, and right, and expedient for all. When the time comes to look back on the slow, universal awakening of women all over the globe, on their gradual entrance into one privileged profession after

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another, on the attainment by them of rights of person and property, and, at last, on their admission to the full privileges of citizenship, it will be acknowledged that of all the "Decisive Battles of History," this has been, to the moralist and philosopher, the most interesting; even as it will be (I cannot doubt) the one followed by the happiest Peace which the world has ever seen.

I feel myself honored in being called on to introduce a worthy and adequate record of this great contest to the public of England and America.