

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Woman and the Right to Vote

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Woman and the Right to Vote

Author: Rafael Palma

Release date: September 24, 2008 [eBook #26699]

Most recently updated: January 4, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Jeroen Hellingman and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net/>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WOMAN AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE \*\*\*

[1]

### **Philippine Senate**

### **Fifth Philippine Legislature**

### **First Session**

## **The Woman and the Right to Vote**

Address Delivered By

**Hon. Rafael Palma**

Senator for the Fourth District

In support of Bill No. 23 of the Senate in the sessions held by said body on the 22d and 25th of November, 1919

Manila

Bureau of Printing

1919

[2]

I have seldom felt so proud of being a representative of the people as now, when it gives me an opportunity to advocate a cause which can not be represented or defended in this chamber by those directly and particularly affected by it, owing to the leaven of prejudice that the beliefs and ideas of the past have left in the mind of modern man. The cause of female suffrage is one sure to strike a sympathetic chord in every unprejudiced man, because it represents the cause of the weak who, deprived of the means to defend themselves, are compelled to throw themselves upon the mercy of the strong.

But it is not on this account alone that this cause has my sympathy and appeals to me. It has, besides, the irresistible attraction of truth and justice, which no open and liberal mind can deny. If our action as legislators must be inspired by the eternal sources of right, if the laws passed here must comply with the divine precept to give everybody his due, then we can not deny woman the right to vote, because to do otherwise would be to prove false to all the precepts and achievements of democracy and liberty which have made this century what may be properly called the century of vindication.

Female suffrage is a reform demanded by the social conditions of our times, by the high culture of woman, and by the aspiration of all classes of society to organize and work for the interests they have in common. We can not detain the celestial bodies in their course; neither can we check any of those moral movements that gravitate with irresistible force towards their center of attraction: Justice. The moral world is governed by the same laws as the physical world, and all the power of man being impotent to suppress a single molecule of the spaces required for the gravitation of the universe, it is still less able to prevent the generation of the ideas that take shape in the mind and strive to attain to fruition in the field of life and reality.

[3]

It is an interesting phenomenon that whenever an attempt is made to introduce a social reform, in accordance with modern ideas and tendencies and in contradiction with old beliefs and prejudices, there is never a lack of opposition, based on the maintenance of the *statu quo*, which it is desired to preserve at any cost. As was to be expected, the eternal calamity howlers and false prophets of evil raise their fatidical voices on this present occasion, in protest against female suffrage, invoking the sanctity of the home and the necessity of perpetuating customs that have been observed for many years.

Frankly speaking, I have no patience with people who voice such objections. If this country had not been one of the few privileged places on our planet where the experiment of a sudden change of institutions and ideals has been carried on most successfully, without paralyzation or retrogression, disorganization or destruction, I would say that the apprehension and fears of those who oppose this innovation might be justified.

However, in less than a generation our country, shaken to its very foundations by the great social upheavals known as revolutions, has seen its old institutions crumble to pieces and other, entirely new institutions rise in their place; it has seen theories, beliefs, and codes of ethics, theretofore looked upon as immovable, give way to different principles and methods based upon democracy and liberty, and despite all those upheavals and changes which have brought about a radical modification in its social and political structure, or rather in consequence of the same, our people has become a people with modern thoughts and modern ideals, with a constitution sufficiently robust and strong to withstand the ravages of the struggle for existence, instead of remaining a sickly and atrophied organism, afraid of everything new and opposed to material struggles from fear of the wrath of Heaven and from a passive desire to live in an ideal state of peace and well-being.

[4]

In view of the fruitful results which those institutions of liberty and democracy have brought to our country; and considering the marked progress made by us, thanks to these same institutions, in all the orders of national life, in spite of a few reactionists and ultra-conservatives, who hold opinions to the contrary and regret the past, I do not and can not, understand how there still are serious people who seriously object to the granting of female suffrage, one of the most vivid aspirations now agitating modern society.

I remember very well that in the past, not so very long ago, the same apprehension and fears were felt with regard to higher education for our women. How ridiculous—the same people argued—is it for woman to study history, mathematics, philosophy, and chemistry, which are not only superior to the assimilating power of her deficient brain, but will make her presumptuous and arrogant and convert her into a hybrid being without grace or strength, intolerable and fatuous, with a beautiful, but empty head and a big, but dry heart! However, we admitted the

women to our high schools and universities and made it possible for them to attain to the degree of bachelor of arts and graduate in law, medicine, and other professions. Can it be said that those women have perverted the homes of their parents or that, when they married, they were a source of disgrace or scandal to their husbands? We are now able to observe the results, and if these results are found to be detrimental to the social and political welfare of the country, it is our duty to undo what we have done and to return to where we were before.

Fortunately, nobody would think of such a thing. From the most cultured centers of population to the remotest villages, public opinion fervently approves and applauds the education of women, and even the most backward peasants send their daughters to the cities and go to the greatest sacrifices imaginable in order to make it possible for them to ascend to the highest pinnacles of knowledge. Though ignorant rustics, they reason in their own rude way that woman and man are made of the same clay, and refuse to believe that because it has been their fate to have daughters instead of sons, they must condemn them to bear the chains of ignorance, incapacitating them from being useful to their families, society, and their country. [5]

Education has not atrophied or impaired any of the fundamental faculties of woman; on the contrary, it has enhanced and enriched them. Far from being a constant charge to the family, the educated woman has often been its sustain and support in times of great need. The educated woman has not become a blue-stocking, that fatuous creature imagined by certain elements, nor has she lost any of her feminine charms by being able to argue and discuss on every subject with the men. On the contrary, it seems to lend her an additional grace and charm, because she understands us better and can make herself better understood. Thank God, people are no longer ready to cast ridicule upon what some used to consider the foolish presumption of women to know as much as the men, and this is doubtless due to the fact that the disastrous results predicted by the calamity howlers, the terrible prophets of failure, have not materialized.

Very well; if you allow the instruction and education of woman in all the branches of science, you must allow woman to take on her place not only in domestic life, but also in social and public life. Instruction and education have a twofold purpose; individually, they redeem the human intellect from the perils of ignorance, and socially they prepare man and woman for the proper performance of their duties of citizenship. A person is not educated exclusively for his or her own good, but principally to be useful and of service to the others. Nothing is more dangerous to society than the educated man who thinks only of himself, because his education enables him to do more harm and to sacrifice everybody else to his convenience or personal ambition. The real object of education is public service, that is, to utilize the knowledge one has acquired for the benefit and improvement of the society in which one is living.

In societies, therefore, where woman is admitted to all the professions and where no source of knowledge is barred to her, woman must necessarily and logically be allowed to take a part in the public life, otherwise, her education would be incomplete or society would commit an injustice towards her, giving her the means to educate herself and then depriving her of the necessary power to use that education for the benefit of society and collective progress. [6]

I can not resist this conclusion. If woman is given equal opportunities with man for educating herself; if she is encouraged to learn and study the knowledge of the world and of life, it is but just that the doors of public life should be thrown open to her in order to allow her to play in it the part to which she is entitled.

In backward societies, woman is taught only such knowledge as she requires for the home; that is, she is unconsciously prepared for that gentle, that charming slavery so pleasing to the masculine sex. The question now before us is what system we shall adopt for our women: whether slavery and ignorance, or liberty and education.

Female suffrage is the consequence of the education of woman; it is also the consequence of her liberty of conscience. The vote is the expression of political faith, just as worship is the expression of religious faith. There is no more reason for keeping woman from the ballot box than there is for preventing her from going to church.

There is no reason why suffrage should be a privilege of sex, considering that the duties of citizenship rest as heavily upon woman as upon man. Is woman under less obligation to strive for the welfare and future of her country because she is a woman? To attempt to curtail the activity of woman in public life is tantamount to declaring that a woman must not love her country and must not dedicate any of her time to her duties of citizenship; that she must not feel the affection and devotion which the idea of native land and community awaken in every well-born

creature.

Physical barrenness is combated and looked upon as a misfortune in woman; but we condemn her to a perpetual political barrenness, to patriotic barrenness, if we keep her away from exercising the right of suffrage which affords the citizen the most effective means to make his influence felt in social questions and in the improvement of the public affairs. How are we to inculcate in our children, that sacred pledge of the future of the nation, the cult and worship of native land and liberty if we do not give their mothers that practical education involved in the exercise of the right of suffrage; if they are taught that government and politics are strange gods at whose shrines they are forbidden to worship; if they feel upon themselves the stigma of inferiority, of being incapacitated from speaking to their children about the public affairs and the interests of the nation and the State?

[7]

All social classes are entitled to representation in the legislative houses and are thus enabled to work for legislation favoring their interests: the merchants, the laborers, the manufacturers, all can choose one of their own number; but the women, who are not merely one group or class, but a collection of groups or classes, who represent one-half of the country and have interests of their own to defend, not only with relation to their sex, but also with relation to their position in the family, are not allowed to vote and are therefore not permitted to have representatives to promote and defend laws and measures necessary for their protection and betterment. Is this just? Is this even moral? Female labor can be exploited in shop and factory; feminine virtue can be made the object of commerce, and yet woman is not allowed to defend directly the interests of her sex, owing to one of those aberrations of the moral sense that spring from the crass egoism and brutal tyranny of man.

If woman were at least exempt from complying with the laws! But no; the law binds the woman as well as the man; the Penal Code menaces man and woman alike with the sword of justice, and the burden of taxation rests upon both the masculine and the feminine wealth. Consequently, before the law, their duties are the same, but their rights are not.

Is it not strange that our laws should contain so much social injustice towards woman, so much exasperating discrimination, all based upon the theory of the servile dependency of woman upon man, resulting from her congenital mental and physical inferiority? Moebius is incarnated in our Codes, governs our policy, and influences all the customs and usages of our social and political life, to such a point that we ought to be ashamed that in the midst of this era of vindication, when all classes have secured their right to liberty and equality, woman has been kept indefinitely upon the same level as in the centuries of subjection and slavery.

[8]

True democracy can not exist with one-half of the people free and the other half in a stage of slavery, with one-half of the people with representation in the public affairs and the other half without it. The people does not consist of men alone, but of women as well, and conditions being equal, woman should have the same political rights as man. She should, at least, have those fundamental rights the exercise of which, like that of the right to vote, requires nothing but intelligence and capacity, in order that she may have some voice in the decision of her own destiny and may herself fight the battles for her honor, her liberty, and other rights neglected or ignored by man on account of the undisputed monopoly exercised by him over the public affairs.

The injustices and social and juridical discriminations contained in our codes will not be eliminated in a radical manner and the condition of woman will not improve while man alone legislates and controls all the spheres of public life, dictating to woman what she must do and what she must not do; and woman will be incompetent to take care of her own interests and shape her own life so long as she does not look higher, so long as she consents to the superiority of man and believes that her lot is simply that of serving and pleasing man in bed and home, instead of being his true helpmate and companion, for the progress and felicity of the human race.

All arguments that are or may be adduced against female suffrage tend invariably towards these two objects: the confinement of woman to the home and the perpetuation of her civil and political slavery.

Woman must busy herself with nothing but her household duties and must live only for her husband and her children; she has her hands full from the rising to the setting sun if she manages the cook, cleans the house, and mends the clothes: this is the great argument of the partisans of the old régime. Another is, that it is not in the nature of things that woman should struggle with man in the battle of public life; that if she enters that struggle, man will cease to look upon her as a being to be worshipped, as a sacred idol at whose feet he must kneel, and will see in her a rival to be combated and overcome, for his own preservation, and woman will not

[9]

only drag the pure flower of her virtue into the mire of political life, but will lose the esteem, respect, and consideration now tributed to her.

I have the most profound respect for all men and women who honestly believe this to be the case. It is not their fault that they believe that what has always been so is the best. They do not realize that life is motion and that the new elements of life and character which are being imperceptibly introduced into society demand changes and innovations. Society can not become stagnant, otherwise it runs the risk of becoming like stagnant water, which generates pestilential miasma. The theory that woman exists for the home alone has been a dead issue for some time past. Woman has quietly taken her place in public life and aids and directs man, even though he may not notice it and may not recognize her right to do so. In modern society, woman participates in the direction of public charity and in the education of the children, she practises law and medicine, engages in literary and journalistic pursuits, occupies many public offices, and takes interest and cooperates in the suppression of social vice and suffering.

Who does not admit that woman has duties towards her home and her husband and children to which she must ordinarily give the preference over all other duties? However, does this exclude the performance of other duties towards God, her neighbor, and the State? Like man, woman has many duties to perform, and the true merit lies in the orderly and complete performance of these duties. Does not the Filipina dedicate part of her time, sometimes a very considerable part, to the church and to her so-called social duties, receiving and making calls and attending celebrations, theaters, and balls?

[10]

Has anybody ever complained against this? Has woman ever been criticised for her assiduous attendance of the religious services and the public performance of her religious duties in crowded churches, in the public streets, filled with tumultuous throngs of people, marching in a procession behind some saint, jostled about and exposed to disagreeable incidents, which she bears with resignation because she suffers them for the cause of the public confession of her faith? Our women go not only to church, but to the theater and to popular entertainments and celebrations, where they may show off their elegant dresses and satisfy their feminine curiosity. In all this we see no pitfalls or dangers to their virtue, though we know that the women who go to those places and exhibit themselves in this manner are mothers, wives or daughters who have duties to attend at home.

Now, what is the difference if woman leaves her home to attend or take part in a political meeting where the public needs or the election of candidates for public office are discussed? In what way is the virtue or purity of woman imperilled by her taking an interest in public questions affecting the welfare of the families, considering that whatever her status may be in life, woman always occupies some position in the family? Why should we fear that woman will leave the flower of her charms on the brambles of politics if she listens to a political speaker, after having listened to sermons all her life, or if she herself makes a speech giving her opinions on some subject of interest to the family, on the necessity of remedying some social evil or of providing a home for abandoned and indigent children?

Let us take the case of one of the most vital questions of the present time, the subject of gambling. Do you not believe that this question has a direct bearing upon the welfare of the families, especially of the feminine part of them? Who suffers the most if the father or husband spends the money of the family in order to satisfy his craving for gambling? The women, of course, the daughters who are often condemned to undergo unnecessary privations and suffering because of the conduct of the head of the family. And you try to deny to woman the right to take a part in political affairs, to enlighten the electorate with regard to the fatal results of gambling or cast her vote for the candidate who promises to secure the passage of measures against it? And why should the opinion of woman on issues like this not have as much weight as that of man? Should it not be given greater weight, it being she who suffers the consequences and results of the evil? There are many questions like this which vitally affect the welfare and happiness of woman.

[11]

I fail to see anything pernicious in the activity of woman in the field of politics: I even believe that her activity in this respect will be highly salutary and beneficent not only for womankind, but for society in general. It will serve to instruct woman and give her a more extensive knowledge of the world and of life. She will not be considered as an outsider where society and government are concerned and will therefore not remain indifferent to their short-comings and progress. Nothing could possibly be more harmful to society than the presence in it of foreign bodies absolutely indifferent to its weal or woe, of useless parts in the machinery of progress.

We are terrified by the idea that the impulsiveness of woman and her fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, according to some, her weakness and lack of character, according to others, and her unpreparedness and deficient culture, according to

still others, will make female suffrage a mere farce and will convert it into a tool for certain elements and interests. My opinion is that all these impulses, sentiments, weaknesses, and imperfections of woman are due to nothing but to the seclusion in which she has been kept. They are the effects of an educational and social system tottering to decay, of a system that does not give the natural faculties of woman that room for expansion and development which is as necessary to life as steam is to electricity and electricity to light. And those defects and imperfections can not be cured by continuing the system under which they have formed and developed, but there must be a radical reform, a regeneration, in order that, as a bird on its first flight stretches its wings and soars forth into space, where there is an abundance of air and light, woman may have an opportunity to develop to their fullest extent her faculties and instincts and to show the graceful essence of her being.

[12]

We must give woman new objectives in life and lofty occupations in which she can test her aptitude, in order that everything defective and ill-developed in her character and education may be eliminated in the atmosphere of liberty and publicity, where all defects can be brought to light without fear or pity and all vices crushed with iron heel. This is why I desire and demand political rights for our women. I am convinced that one of the results of this concession will be to enrich, improve, and develop her aptitude and aspiration to serve the high ideals of life and society. Woman will devote less time to dress, fashions, gossip and all the other petty and trifling things that are generally the subject of their conversation and will endeavor to study and discuss the more serious questions of social betterment and welfare.

Politics is not a permanent occupation that absorbs all the time of a person who has other regular business to attend to. As a matter of fact, not speaking of political officers and a few professional politicians, most of the citizens devote to politics only the time strictly necessary and which they can spare. Any man or woman depending for his or her living or future upon politics will soon come to the conviction that politics bring starvation instead of bread.

Politics are perfectly compatible with the domestic duties and occupations of woman, whether she be mother, wife, or daughter. An educated woman realizes her responsibilities; she knows how to divide her time and will give her domestic duties the preference over any other duties outside of the home. A woman is not liable to engage in political activity if she is very busy at home, and when confined to her bed by the labors and cares of maternity, she will be unable to engage in politics, even if she were willing. Therefore, when I hear the argument that woman will be remiss in her household duties on account of politics and that she will neglect to take care of her husband and children if she is given the right to vote, I frankly confess that I am, perhaps, too dull to see the truth of it.

[13]

You insist that by divine precept the place of woman is in the home and that of man in society, and that this is the true and proper division of labor between the two halves of the human species. If this is really the plan of God, will you tell me then why all religions and all schools of ethics coincide in prescribing duties towards the neighbor and teach us to love our fellow-beings? Did the Lord speak to man alone, and not also to woman when amidst fire and smoke, on the quaking mountain, he gave to the world the tables of the Decalogue and said: "Love thy neighbor as thyself?" And the universal precept contained in every code of morals and in every religion, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,"—does it refer to man alone, or does it include woman also? To me, these precepts indicate that man and woman have duties towards others, that they have duties towards their fellow-beings, and that they must not confine their efforts towards happiness to the home, but extend them beyond it, to society. Will you tell me whether there can be happiness in the homes if society is not happy, seeing that society is nothing but the extension and sum of all the homes, and that all the suffering and evils that afflict society find their echo in the home, just as the happiness of the home exercises an influence upon the happiness of society?

You attempt to do something impossible: You try to divide the human being into halves: one-half that is happy in the home and the other that is happy in society, or vice versa. You can do it if you wish, but then you will either have to consign all your codes which confer upon man the government and administration of the home to the waste basket and make others vesting these powers in woman, or if you do not wish to do that, you will have to give woman a share in the public affairs in order that she may, the same as in the home, assist man in building up and strengthening the happiness of that other big home which we call society.

[14]

You say that woman, upon appearing on the stage of politics, will lose the respect and admiration of man; that instead of gaining any advantages, she will lose all those inherent in her present position, in which she is removed from any direct struggle with man, is adorable and adored everywhere, and reigns supreme in her home with the undisputed authority of the wife or mother, clad in the purple of the

grace and majesty with which Nature has endowed her, pure and undefiled by the mire with which political strife and intrigue always bespatter the reputation and dignity of those who engage in them.

I believe I have stated the position of our adversaries in terms both poetical and precise, and when I speak of our adversaries, I include that numerous legion of women who still hesitate to ask for the right of suffrage, for reasons which, perhaps, deserve being called selfish.

However, the idealistic woman I have depicted will not disappear if our women are educated in politics the same as they are educated in the arts and sciences. A political education, far from being harmful to the natural charms of woman, will in my opinion enhance these, for the same reason that our modern education has given woman charms which the woman of the past did not possess. Unless you argue that education is in itself an evil rather than a blessing, and that it vitiates the character instead of improving it, you can not escape the conclusion that by increasing the knowledge and experience of woman, you give her more vigor, more energy, and a greater personal charm.

Nothing commands greater respect than education. Education elevates a person. From the moment that you show that you possess education, the consideration and respect of the others are yours. Education does not know the bar of race prejudice; through it an individual of a colored race can win the respect and often the admiration of the white man.

Does woman ever inspire man with greater respect than when she is instructed, when a college education has brought her to his own level? Was woman more respected in the past, when she remained ignorant, than she is now? I am willing to concede that she may have been courted more assiduously, but that does not mean that she was more respected. Do you understand by respect and consideration those empty forms of etiquette which make a man bow down to the ground to a woman and regale her with a few hollow compliments, designed to tickle the vanity or turn the head of a credulous and frivolous being? Do you call respect the singular habit of certain men to always find the eyes of the woman to whom they are speaking divine, to compare her mouth to a rosebud, her teeth to a string of beautiful pearls, and her form to the slender willow, and other stupidities of that kind? If that is the sort of respect and consideration that woman will lose if she goes into politics, she ought to be very glad to get rid of it, because all these empty phrases of gallantry are like the crowing of the rooster who wishes to dazzle a silly hen on which he has designs.

[15]

And, tell me, how is it possible for weakness and ignorance to inspire respect? As a matter of fact, when a little cooking, embroidering, and music, and the knowledge of the catechism were deemed sufficient to prepare a girl for married life, which was then the only career open to woman, she was the recipient of great consideration and courtesy from man. These, however, were not inspired by real respect, but rather by a sentiment of chivalry, because man thought woman so weak and ignorant that he deemed it his duty to show her that protection, consideration, and courtesy which are due to weakness and ignorance. Is this the opinion that our women want us to have of them? Respect is a sentiment engendered by the idea of equality, and unless woman is placed on the same level with man in the field of politics, we shall continue to hear ignominious phrases such as "But, woman, what do you know about these things! You go and mind your own business!"

Our women need not worry that if they are allowed to vote, they will necessarily forfeit the consideration and courtesy accorded to them at present, when they do not come into direct collision with man on the field of politics, and that the men will then consider themselves free to attack them as a rival whom they must overcome and destroy for their own preservation. In the first place it is a mistake to conclude that the participation of woman in public life will result in rivalry between the sexes. The attraction and sympathy between man and woman springs precisely from the difference in sex. If there were only men or only women, there might be such a thing as our mutually destroying each other, because there would be no purpose in life and the human race would not reproduce itself. It is in the interest of one sex not to destroy the other. On the other hand, politics is not always a personal struggle. In its proper and loftiest sense it is a struggle of ideas and principles, of theories and methods. Therefore, if a man is pitted against a woman in the arena of politics, they are certainly not compelled to engage in fisticuffs and kill each other, but each will present his own views on the points at issue, with more or less sound arguments in support of them. I do not believe any man has the right to insult a woman because she is his opponent, seeing that he has no such a right where a man is concerned. And if in the heat of political strife such an insult should be passed, has not woman the right to reply or to pay the offender back in his own coin? This is a case where woman will be given an opportunity to learn to be independent in judgment and action, seeing that certain

[16]

persons do not want woman to vote unless she possesses independence of thought and action. I do not want, either, to give voice to the suspicion that many men are against female suffrage because they fear they might be worsted in a public debate, and what would then become of the prestige of the strong sex?

In the second place, if woman wants man to adore and idolize her, she can get him to do it whether she votes or not. Man does not adore woman because she has less rights than he has; but he worships her because woman is woman, the archetype of grace and beauty of creation, and man will forever burn incense at the shrine of that divinity. Remember that it has always been said that christianity elevated the condition of woman and gave her greater rights, and yet it is the Christian countries where woman is accorded the greatest consideration and respect.

[17]

Suffrage will not detract from the beauty of the long tresses of woman, nor will it make her cheeks and lips less rosy and the curves of her body less graceful. On the contrary, it will lend her an additional grace, that of being able to write a ballot in her diminutive handwriting, and man will always feel for her that love, tenderness, and adoration which grace and beauty will always inspire all the world over. Hercules will always bow to Venus because she is Venus, though Venus be a suffragist.

A political education will provide woman with new means for gaining the respect and admiration of man. Woman will realize that her duty does not merely consist in giving sons and daughters to the fatherland, but in educating and training them in such a manner that from their childhood on they will take interest in everything tending to improve social conditions, and in inspiring them with the desire to devote their efforts to a certain cause or party, for the best of their people. Public opinion will become much broader and stronger when it shall reflect the sentiments of our women, who are at present a passive element where the duties of citizenship are concerned; and when in her dark hours the nation shall need assistance, she will receive it not only from her citizens, but also from her citizenesses, who will not be ignorant and inexperienced in the tasks and duties confronting the people, but will be accustomed to the discipline of organization and to the calls of the public service.

There is no doubt, of course, that it is greatly to the advantage of man to maintain woman in ignorance, not only with regard to politics, but also where other matters are concerned. For one thing, it renders it easier for man to satisfy his whims and make of woman a toy which he can use or drop according to his fancy. She is obedient, submissive, and resigned; she never discusses or argues; she obeys and serves in silence, like a beautiful piece of furniture, differing from the rest only in that she is animate; she is a delightful doll because she can speak and has a little sense. I know that this is the ideal of many men, for the only reason that it suits their convenience.

[18]

But that is not woman as she should be; the woman that our century has redeemed from ignorance and slavery; the woman whom God has endowed with an intellect, a will and a heart, hers to cultivate and perfect in order that she may be not the servant of man, but his companion, not the subject of the king, but the queen enthroned by his side, to be his faithful and constant ally from the cradle to the grave, in prosperity and adversity, not only in the intimacy of the home, but also in the wide arena of public life. Man and woman were created to mate and to understand and love each other, to work, suffer, and struggle side by side for all that is good and beautiful in life, to perpetuate the sovereignty of human couple on earth, and to make it a place of happiness, free from tyranny and suffering and fit to be inhabited by peaceful and intelligent beings and not by vultures and wild beasts.

This is the mission of woman and man on earth as I understand and conceive it. Until man and woman are placed on exactly the same footing, until they stand on the same plane, so that there can be an intimate communion of thoughts, ideas, and interests, life will always be ominous and unhappy for one or for the other, and humanity will never overcome the evils with which it is now struggling. God made woman as perfect as man, and it is unjust to deprive her of any of the benefits and advantages which man derives from science, arts, and politics. Politics is a noble occupation, as it is the art or science of making nations happy, and it is but just that woman should contribute her share to the attainment of that happiness.

Is there any doubt that woman has faculties, sentiments, views, and methods of doing things of her own, different from those of man? How often has man, when he did not dare to do a thing, left it to woman to do! She has a personality of her own and should, like man, be given an opportunity to develop it; she should be given a voice where her own interests are concerned, and should on her own account face the risks incidental to life, venturing, experimenting, and discovering things for herself instead of having man establish an invariable rule of conduct for her and

[19]



imposing upon her the methods which she must follow.

Politics is no longer what it should be; it has become too masculine and is brutal, selfish, and altogether too personal, because it lacks the kindness, the self-denial, the altruism, and the spirit of sacrifice which are characteristic qualities of the feminine sex. Why should we not benefit by the energy of woman, by her impulses and her views of things, in order to improve our practices and methods in public life? Perhaps, politics will be chastened and purified to some extent by the intervention and presence of woman, just as her presence at any gathering makes man more careful in language and actions!

Like a number of other institutions that are now a thing of the past, the monopoly exercised by man over the public functions is based on force and violence, and in order to perpetuate this monopoly, its supporters take shelter behind the wall of prejudice erected in the course of the times under the protection of the established order of things, and from there they hurl the shafts of satire and ridicule upon all who demand that this violent condition cease. Ridicule is the most powerful weapon now used against the woman who attempts to obtain justice and the vindication of the rights of her sex, some of which rights, such as that of governing the peoples, were not even withheld from them in many of the primitive states.

The result is that many persons have a very queer idea of the suffragist. She is represented as a woman who dislikes home work and is absent from her home at all hours of the day and night. The most common picture is that in which the wife addresses a gathering of other women, while the husband is busy at home, sweeping the floor and attempting to pacify the squalling baby. This is the idea which has been spread by cinematographs and reviews and which has impressed itself upon the minds of the unthinking masses, who are incapable of rising above a superficial view of things.

[20]

Nothing, however, is farther from representing her as she really is. The suffragist is a true product of our era of liberty. Having received the same education as man, she knows and does not shirk her responsibilities towards her family; but at the same time she is free from prejudice and deems it her duty to coöperate with man in all work concerning social reform and the public welfare of the community in which she lives. She believes that for the very reason that there are duties in the home which are assigned to woman, she has also duties to perform in public life. The distribution of the work between man and woman causes no conflict between them in their home and family life, and there is no reason why there should be any conflict in public life if each sex is assigned the duties adapted to it.

Being a suffragist does not mean being antagonistic to the family duties. On the contrary, the suffragist realizes that the happiness of the family is the foundation of the happiness of society, and she knows that social distress and vices affect the family and that she can and should coöperate with man in the relief of that distress and the suppression of those vices.

No, the general idea people have of the suffragist is altogether a wrong one and it is high time that at least the educated and intelligent correct their views where they are based on prejudices and ideas belonging to the past. We can not prevent the uneducated masses from thinking as they did half a century ago; but the fact that many serious and otherwise progressive persons content themselves with the opinion of the uneducated shows that here we do not go deep into subjects and allow ourselves to be carried away by the impressions of the moment.

Suffragism is a legitimate aspiration, an ideal of our century. It springs from the philosophy and institutions of the modern world and from the growing difficulty of the position of woman in the struggle for existence. It is necessary for her to protect herself and organize, not to create rivalry and make war upon man, but to become an asset in the social progress and protect herself from the exploitation and iniquity of the other social groups, whose victim she would become if she remained indifferent and took no part in the public life.

[21]

As a man of the law and a legislator, I would not think of opposing this aspiration. I consider it as natural as the right to live and the right of self-defence. I do not consider it premature for the Filipino woman to demand this right, as her sisters have done, successfully in some cases, in other parts of the world. To me it makes no difference that the number of those now demanding it is small and insignificant. It would even make no difference to me if the women of our country did not demand or want it at all. Where rights fundamentally in accordance with the spirit of our institutions and with the ideals of our times are to be granted, I would not consult those who are entitled to demand them, but would give them without the asking, because it would be just and God wants justice to prevail at all times and everywhere. I am not a judge, but a legislator, and it is my first duty to provide for justice, not to administer it, nor wait for some one to ask for it and some one to object to it.

It is a source of gratification to me that there is a group of women who, voicing the aspirations of their sex, have dared to approach our Legislature and call attention to a void in our statutes. This indicates to me that the consciousness of that right has been born and has revealed its existence in the Filipino woman, and more than that I need not know. I do not have to count and classify the women who think that way. When Rizal espoused the cause of the political rights of our race, his companions were very few, because in the majority of his compatriots that consciousness was lying dormant. But it would be a falsehood and an error to affirm that even at that time Rizal did not voice the cause of his entire race, and that no attention should be paid to his demands because he and those with him were few in number. He knew that his country was oppressed, that he was defending a just cause, and that he was fighting for the rights of his fellow-citizens, and he did not stop to reflect whether or not those fellow-citizens had the consciousness of their rights.

[22]

We must conclude, therefore, that the few women who now speak to us of the rights of their sex and for suffrage, represent all the Filipino women, unless we wish to insult our women by saying that they have so little common sense as to oppose the concession to them of rights that will broaden the scope of their lives and of their activity in society. It matters but little that the desire for suffrage appears in its initial stage, in the vague form of an indefinite proposition: the fact is that there has been an indication of that desire, and in my judgment the plant has germinated and it is useless to endeavor to smother it, as it will grow again. The more we delay female suffrage, the more shall we suffer by it, because why should we stifle a budding plant instead of allowing it to grow and in due season produce delicious fruit?

We need not imitate the older nations who have been so slow in recognizing women's rights. We have neither their traditions nor their prejudices and our progress need not come by slow revolutions. We must foster all those peaceful revolutions of ideas that will result in social justice. Just as we accept the latest inventions in mechanics, industry, and art, such as the automobile, the dynamo, and the aeroplane, so must we accept the latest improvements in the social and political institutions of the most advanced countries.

Female suffrage spells justice and vindication for the modern woman and we must adopt it forthwith, without unnecessary delay and formalities. The liberty of worship which gave us religious tolerance; the popular suffrage which strengthened our collective conscience; the free public school which emancipated our masses from the tutelage of the *cacique*: in short, all the achievements of democracy of which we are so justly proud would not yet be beautiful realities and we would not be able to enjoy their mature fruits as we now do, if we had been compelled to feel our way and make many tentative steps instead of at once entering fully upon our social and political life. We have to move quickly and anticipate the aspirations of the feminine masses, which are as yet vague, in order to save us the agitation which otherwise is sure to come and the justice of which will have to be recognized.

[23]

When we are told that our social condition is such that we are not ready for female suffrage, and that our women are not sufficiently educated to exercise political rights, I feel like asking whether we said the same thing when we imported and implanted in our country the democratic institutions that are the base and foundation of our present society. Our traditional education was diametrically opposed to a popular system of government, yet we adopted that form of government, because we considered it better than the other, more suited to our interests and to the ideals of the century, and did not worry about whether or not we were sufficiently educated and prepared for it.

It is more than twenty years now that the free public school has opened its doors to the women, and education has extended its benefits to them in the same proportion as to the men. Many of the women educated in these schools are now wives or mothers, and yet you still ask whether the Filipina has attained to the maturity necessary for her investment with political rights. I am sure there is no idea of requiring them all to be doctors or bachelors of art before we grant them the right of suffrage.

A political education can not be acquired except by education, just as you can not learn how to swim except by swimming. The argument that the Filipina is not sufficiently prepared is a justification of the attitude of a country which never finds its colonies sufficiently prepared or educated to exercise the right of sovereignty themselves.

The other day, when I made a flight in a seaplane for the sake of the experience, I felt—I frankly admit it—some apprehension, a certain fear of the unknown, but after the first few moments were happily past, I felt perfectly comfortable and enjoyed the flight through space and the view of the magnificent landscape far

below me. Ah, it is beautiful to cleave the air like a swallow and to ride upon the clouds and the winds of heaven, looking down upon the cities and human dwellings spread like a relief map upon the crystal sheet of the waters, to traverse enormous distances in a few minutes almost without noticing it, and to emulate in everything the bird and like the bird to alight suddenly, without fatigue and physical hardships. When the voyage was over, I realized that my apprehension and fear had been unfounded; that it was not more risky to fly through space on an aeroplane than to speed across country on an automobile, and I then realized the numerous advantages to be derived from the flying machine, that product of our time which is destined to revolutionize not only warfare, but also the pursuits of peace.

The same thing occurs with all new ideas and reforms of a moral and political order. They are adopted with the instinctive fear, the vague apprehension inspired by the new and unknown. There is much talk of their objectional features and dangers for the established order of things. You might think the firmament was going to crumble to pieces or the world was threatening to go out of joint. However, after the innovation has been made, it is found to be quite natural and logical, because things go on in their natural course, the heavenly bodies continue in their orbits as before and the mountain peaks do not slide down into the valleys. Courage and hope are born again in the human breast, the masses get used to the new state of affairs, and soon even the most recalcitrant would be furious if any one should propose to return to the old order of things. This has happened in our country before, and has always been and always will be the way in which progress is worked out.

We must make up our minds to overcome our scruples and fears. If in discussing the aeroplane, we were to speak of nothing but of the number of aviators who have been killed, we would never accept that invention. We must embark in one in order to prove to ourselves that our fears and apprehensions are unfounded. Sight must not be lost of the fact that suffragism is not a new thing in the world, that it is far from being an experiment and is already an established fact in some countries. Exactly the same as the aeroplane: if we desire to become acquainted with the advantages of that apparatus, we do not ask those who have never traveled in it, but those who have experimented with it, and if we wish to know the advantages of suffragism, we must not listen to those who oppose it as a matter of principle and theory, but must consult countries that have made experiments with it and have already had a chance to see its results. We must take note of the fact that suffragism is gaining in strength every day and is becoming a general movement in the countries where it has found acceptance. Exactly like the aeroplane. Would it not be perfectly ridiculous to declaim against the aeroplane on account of the accidents that are liable to occur, and would we not be stupid to refuse to follow the lead of other governments who utilize its advantages for defence or aggression in war and for rapid communication in time of peace? And is it not just as stupid and even senseless to oppose suffragism on speculative or rather hypothetical grounds, instead of being guided by the experience of other countries in this respect and accepting suffragism as part and parcel of our modern customs and institutions?

[25]

In conclusion, permit me to quote a few passages on this subject from an address which I made at an entertainment given at the Opera House in honor of Rizal by various schools for young ladies in 1913:

According to the old idea, woman's sphere of action should not extend beyond the home, beyond her domestic occupations, and she should be nothing but the glory and delight of her husband and her children. This is not right. Like man, woman is born and lives in society, and she can not and must not remain indifferent to social distress and suffering. To think otherwise would be selfishness and aberration and would leave society a prey to much suffering which only the blessed hand of woman can cure or relieve. Let woman be the glory and happiness of the home; but do not forget that she must extend her beneficent action beyond the confines of the household, that she must make the world outside the participant of the wealth of kindness and charity that bountiful Providence has lavished upon her. Just as she shares the duties of life with man within the home, so should she without it, in public life, share with man the responsibility of remedying and alleviating public distress and misfortune.

[26]

---

It is very significant that beneficence, charity, and morality are feminine virtues, it being woman's mission to exercise all these virtues in society. She must take a part, and should, in my opinion, always take the initiative, in all work for the protection of the orphans, the relief of distress, and the elevation of the standard of public morality. She must strive and suffer, in the society in which she is living, for all that is feminine in life, must with a wave of her hand attenuate the fierceness of the struggle for existence, and must brighten the gloomy night of human suffering with her gentle presence. Our country needs not only the strength of her men, but the kindness and charity of her women; she needs not only heroes, but also heroines.

And heroines exist and always have existed in the history of humankind; and there are and always have been heroines in our country, the special privilege of which, according to serious foreign authors, consists in its women being superior to its men.

And the girls who to-day pay homage to Rizal and dedicate their songs and prayers to him, will to-morrow be citizenesses who will not, like unhappy Maria Clara, be made the victims of social injustice, but will help to banish social injustice and strive for justice, virtue, and the glory and greatness of their native land.

Yes; I cherish that hope and have faith in the liberty of woman. It is not possible to keep one-half of humanity in the upper part and the other half in the lower part of the balance without producing disequilibrium, tears, and suffering. Everything tends to reach the same level in life, the same as in death, the great leveller. Humanity has seen a new light which will shine brightly, though error and prejudice may endeavor to shroud it with darkness. Woe to those who refuse to see the light! The world continues to progress and stops for no one. He who wishes to lag behind is free to do so, but he will surely deplore it afterwards.

I can not prophesy what will be the outcome of the efforts which the Filipino women are now making to obtain suffrage; but I know that these efforts must be to them, and are to us, a source of pride and glory, because they show that there is no part of our people which has remained indifferent to the great movements of the century. There are persons who scoff at them and many shrug their shoulders; but this must not discourage our women, because neither scoffing nor shrugging the shoulders are very weighty arguments. The same persons who now laugh at them and shrug their shoulders, probably because they do not know that the world and society are moving and progressing, will some day recognize that these women were in the right, just as the men who scoffed at Rizal lived to deplore their mistake and have since made amends.

What we must do is to diffuse the light and spread the new doctrines, in order to convince those who unwittingly refuse to see justice and truth, the only firm foundations of the stability and prosperity of civilized society.

[27]

[28]

## **Senado de Filipinas**

### **Quinta Legislatura Filipina,**

### **Primer período de sesiones**

## **La mujer y el derecho de votar**

Discurso pronunciado por el

**Hon. Rafael Palma**

Senador por el Cuarto Distrito

En favor del proyecto de Ley No. 23 del Senado en las  
sesiones celebradas por dicho cuerpo en los días 22 y 25  
de noviembre de 1919

Manila

Bureau of Printing

1919

## La mujer y el derecho de votar

Sr. PRESIDENTE Y CABALLEROS DEL SENADO:

Pocas veces me he sentido tan orgulloso de ostentar la representación popular como esta vez que me permite abogar por una causa que no puede ser representada ni defendida en este sitio por la parte a quien directa y particularmente interesa, merced a esa levadura de prejuicios que han dejado en la mente del hombre moderno las creencias e ideas del antiguo. La causa del sufragio femenino es una causa que despierta la simpatía de todo hombre desapasionado, porque representa la causa del débil que, privado del medio de defenderse por sí mismo, pone toda su razón y derecho al arbitrio del fuerte.

Pero no es solamente por esto que atrae mi simpatía y apela a mi defensa. Es además que dicha causa tiene en sí un fondo irresistible de verdad y justicia al cual no puede negarse ninguna inteligencia abierta y libre. Si nuestra conciencia como legisladores debe inspirarse en las eternas fuentes del derecho, si las leyes que aquí formulamos deben llevar el sello divino de dar a cada uno lo suyo, no podemos rehusar a la mujer el derecho del voto como no pretendamos renegar de todas las fórmulas y conquistas de la democracia y de la libertad que han hecho de este siglo el ser llamado con propiedad el siglo de las reivindicaciones.

El sufragio femenino es una reforma exigida por las condiciones sociales de nuestro tiempo, por la elevación de la cultura de la mujer y las aspiraciones de todas las clases o grupos de la sociedad a organizarse para trabajar por los intereses que tienen de común. No podemos parar el movimiento de los astros y no podemos parar igualmente ninguno de esos movimientos morales que gravitan con incontrastable fuerza hacia su centro de atracción: la Justicia. Pues el mundo moral está regido por las mismas leyes que el físico y si el poder del hombre es impotente para suprimir una molécula de los espacios necesaria a la gravitación universal, menos podrá contener la generación de las ideas elaboradas en la conciencia y ansiosas de encarnar en los fecundos senos de la vida y de la realidad.

[30]

Es interesante el fenómeno de que cada vez que se trata de realizar una reforma social en consonancia con las ideas y actividades del siglo y en contradicción con añejas creencias y preocupaciones, no faltan nunca las objeciones fundadas en el mantenimiento del *statu quo* que se quiere a toda costa preservar. Los eternos agoreros del desastre, los falsos profetas de la destrucción, como no puede menos de suceder, alzan sus fatídicas voces en esta ocasión protestando contra el sufragio femenino en nombre de la santidad del hogar y de la insustituibilidad de costumbres que han sido por largo tiempo admitidas.

Francamente, no tengo ninguna paciencia para escuchar semejantes objeciones. Si este país no hubiera sido precisamente uno de los pocos lugares privilegiados del planeta en donde se ha realizado con fortuna el experimento de una brusca transición de sistemas e ideales, sin producir paradas ni retrocesos, sin desarticulaciones ni roturas, yo diría que los sobresaltos y temores de aquellos que se oponen a esta innovación se hallan justificados.

Pero en menos de una generación, este país, sacudido en sus cuatro costados por esos grandes terremotos sociales que por otro nombre se llaman revoluciones, ha visto desmoronarse sus antiguas instituciones para levantarse en su lugar otras enteramente nuevas; ha visto desaparecer teorías, creencias y valores morales que se tenían por incommovibles y eternos para ser sustituidos por diferentes principios y métodos, fundados en la democracia y libertad; y a despecho de esos cambios y trastornos que han modificado radicalmente su estructura social y política y gracias precisamente a ellos, nuestro pueblo se ha convertido en un pueblo con pensamientos e ideales modernos, con una constitución robusta y capaz de afrontar los estragos de la lucha por la existencia, en vez de aquel enfermizo y atrofiado organismo que tenía miedo a todas las novedades y repudiaba las luchas materiales por temor a las iras del cielo y por un pasivo deseo de vivir en paz y bienestar ideales.

[31]

En frente de los provechosos resultados que esas instituciones de libertad y democracia han dado a este país, a la vista de los marcados progresos alcanzados en todos los órdenes de la vida nacional merced a esas mismas instituciones, pese a algunos cuantos reaccionarios y ultraconservadores que opinan lo contrario y añoran el pasado, yo no veo, no puedo ver, como haya gente seria que seriamente sostenga que no debe concederse el sufragio femenino, una de las más vivísimas

aspiraciones que agitan actualmente la conciencia del mundo moderno.

Recuerdo muy bien que en otros tiempos, y no muy lejanos, los mismos temores y sobresaltos se habían abrigado contra la instrucción superior de la mujer. ¡Que ridículo, se decía, qué ridículo que la mujer aprenda Historia, Matemáticas, Filosofía y Química que no sólo no puede digerir su escaso cerebro sino que la llenaría de presunción y soberbia convirtiéndola en una especie de criatura híbrida, sin gracia y sin fuerza, intolerable y fatua, con mollera hermosa pero vacía y corazón grande pero seco! Y, sin embargo, hemos dado entrada a la mujer en las escuelas superiores y en las universidades y, al igual que el hombre, hemos permitido que sus cabezas ostenten las borlas de bachiller en Artes, Leyes, Medicina y otras profesiones. ¿Podemos, ahora, decir que esas mujeres han pervertido el hogar de sus mayores o cuando se han casado han sido para sus maridos motivo de deshonor o escándalo? Es tiempo de observar los resultados porque si estos resultados han sido perjudiciales al cuerpo social y político del país, nuestro deber es deshacer lo hecho y desandar lo andado.

Nadie piensa afortunadamente en esto. Desde los más cultos centros de población hasta las aldeas más desconocidas se arrastra silenciosa y majestuosa una ola de opinión popular que aprueba y aplaude la educación femenina, al punto de que los más rudos sementereros envían a sus hijas a las ciudades a costa de los más imaginables sacrificios para que puedan escalar las cumbres más altas del saber, si a eso pudieran. Esos lugareños ignorantes saben confusamente que la mujer como el hombre está hecha de la misma arcilla y no se avienen a creer que por haberles cabido la suerte de tener niñas en vez de niños necesitan condenarlas a llevar las cadenas de la ignorancia incapacitándolas para ser útiles a sus familias, a su sociedad y a su patria.

[32]

La instrucción no ha atrofiado ni desmejorado ninguna de las facultades fundamentales de la mujer, sino, por el contrario, las ha elevado y enriquecido. Lejos de ser una carga constante para la familia, la mujer instruída ha sido muchas veces su sostén y apoyo en apurados trances. La mujer instruída no se ha transformado en la marisabidilla, la fatua criatura forjada por la imaginación de algunos, ni siquiera ha perdido ninguno de sus encantos femeninos porque razona y discute con el hombre sobre toda clase de materias; antes bien, a causa de ello, parece que encontramos en ella mayor gracia y encanto, porque nos comprende mejor y sabe hacerse comprender mejor. Hoy, gracias a Dios, ha desaparecido ya aquella comezón de ridículo que acometía a muchos al observar lo que consideraban necia presunción de las mujeres de saber tanto como los hombres, y esto se debe, indudablemente, a que los desastrosos resultados que pronosticaron los agoreros de las malas nuevas, las terribles profetas de la destrucción, no se han cumplido.

Pues bien, si admitís la instrucción y educación de la mujer, en todos los terrenos de la ciencia, debéis admitir la intervención de la mujer no sólo en la vida doméstica sino también en la vida social o pública. La instrucción y la educación tienen un doble fin: el individual, que redime la inteligencia humana de los peligros de la ignorancia, y el social, que prepara al hombre y a la mujer a cumplir los deberes de una buena ciudadanía. No se educa uno exclusivamente para su propio bien sino principalmente para ser útil y servir a los demás. El mayor peligro que existe para la sociedad es el hombre instruído que sólo piensa en sí mismo, porque su instrucción misma le da mayor poder para hacer daño y sacrificar a todos a su conveniencia, o su ambición personal. El verdadero objeto de la educación es el servicio al público, el de aplicar los conocimientos que no adquiere, al bien y mejoramiento de la sociedad en que vive.

[33]

Por tanto, en las sociedades donde se admite a la mujer a todas las carreras y profesiones de la vida, donde no se escatima a la mujer ninguna fuente de conocimiento debe admitirse necesaria y lógicamente la intervención de la mujer en la vida pública. De otro modo, su educación sería incompleta o la sociedad sería injusta con ella pues después de suministrarla los medios para su educación la privaría de los poderes necesarios para emplear esa educación en pro del bien social y el progreso colectivo.

No puedo resistirme a esta conclusión. Si se ofrece a la mujer igual oportunidad de educación que al hombre, si se la estimula para aprender y estudiar los conocimientos del mundo y de la vida, deben abrírsela las puertas de la vida pública para que pueda desempeñar en ella el papel que le corresponde.

En las sociedades retrógradas se enseña a la mujer solamente aquella parte de conocimientos que necesita para la vida del hogar, preparándola así inconscientemente para sufrir aquella dulce, aquella encantadora esclavitud que tanto agrada al ser masculino. Es cuestión solamente de escoger nuestro sistema: o esclavitud e ignorancia o libertad y educación para la mujer.

El sufragio femenino es consecuencia de la educación de la mujer; es

consecuencia, también, de su libertad de conciencia. Por el voto se expresa la fé política, como por el culto la fé religiosa. No hay razón para impedirle a la mujer el acceso a las urnas como no la hay para privarla de ir al templo.

No hay razón para que el sufragio sea un privilegio de sexo, puesto que los deberes de ciudadanía pesan tanto sobre el hombre como sobre la mujer. ¿Es que la mujer, por serlo, está menos obligada a velar por los intereses de la Patria, por la felicidad y el porvenir de su país? Querer restringir la actividad de la mujer para las cosas públicas es como decir que la mujer no debe amar a su país ni debe consagrar tiempo a las obligaciones que la corresponden como ciudadana, ni debe sentir el cariño y la devoción que en toda criatura bien nacida despierta la idea de la Patria y de la colectividad.

[34]

La esterilidad física es combatida y se considera como una desgracia en la mujer; pero queremos condenarla a una perpetua esterilidad política—que es lo mismo decir esterilidad patriótica—al impedirla que tome parte en el sufragio que da a los ciudadanos el medio más efectivo para influir en los destinos sociales y en el mejoramiento de los negocios públicos. ¿Cómo inculcar en los niños, esa prenda sagrada del porvenir de una nación, el culto y la fé en la Patria y en la libertad si no se les da a las madres la educación práctica que envuelve en sí el privilegio del voto, si se les enseña que el gobierno y la política son divinidades extrañas, en cuyos templos les está vedado penetrar, si sobre sí mismas sienten el estigma de inferioridad e incapacidad para hablar a sus hijos de los negocios públicos y de los intereses de la nación y del Estado?

Todas las clases o grupos sociales tienen derecho a ser representados en las legislaturas para trabajar por las leyes que afectan a sus intereses; los comerciantes pueden elegir a uno de ellos, lo mismo los agricultores, los obreros y los industriales; pero a las mujeres, que no son meramente un grupo sino un compuesto de grupos, con representar la mitad de un país, con propios intereses que sostener no sólo en relación a su sexo sino también en relación a su situación dentro de la familia, no se les permite votar y por tanto no se les permite tener una representación que sostenga aquellas leyes o medidas necesarias para su protección y mejoramiento. ¿Es esto justo? ¿Es siquiera moral? El trabajo de las mujeres puede ser explotado en fábricas y talleres, la virtud de las mujeres puede ser objeto de tráfico en el mercado, y, sin embargo, la mujer no puede defender directamente los intereses de su sexo por una de esas aberraciones del sentido moral proveniente del grosero egoísmo, de la brutal tiranía del hombre.

¡Si al menos las mujeres estuvieran exentas de cumplir las leyes! Pero la ley obliga tanto a la mujer como al hombre; el Código Penal alcanza con su espada las infracciones cometidas por uno y otro sexo, y el impuesto y la contribución gravan lo mismo la riqueza masculina que la femenina. Es decir, ante la ley, los deberes son los mismos, pero los derechos, no.

[35]

¿Qué extraño que nuestras leyes contengan tantas injusticias sociales para la mujer, tantas irritantes desigualdades, basadas todas ellas en la teoría de la dependencia servil de la mujer al hombre causada por su congénita inferioridad mental y fisiológica? Moebius está encarnado en nuestros códigos, rige nuestra política y preside todas las modalidades de nuestro vivir social y político, en forma tal que hay motivos para avergonzarse que en plena época de reivindicaciones, cuando todas las clases han obtenido sus derechos a la libertad y a la igualdad, la mujer ha permanecido indefinidamente sujeta al mismo nivel como en los siglos de sujeción y esclavitud.

Una democracia verdadera no puede existir mitad libre y mitad esclava, mitad con representación y mitad sin representación en las funciones públicas. El pueblo no es solamente hombre sino también mujer, y, en igualdad de condiciones, la mujer debe tener los mismos derechos políticos que el hombre. Pero lo menos debe tener aquéllos derechos fundamentales que, como el voto, requieren nada más que inteligencia y capacidad para ejercerlo, a fin de que pueda tener alguna voz en la decisión de sus propios destinos y librar por sí misma las batallas que exigen su honor, su libertad y otros tantos intereses que descuidan o ignoran los hombres en virtud del indisputado monopolio ejercido por ellos sobre los negocios públicos.

No desaparecerán radicalmente las injusticias, las desigualdades sociales y jurídicas contenidas en nuestros códigos ni mejorarán las condiciones de la existencia para la mujer mientras sean los hombres los únicos que legislen y dominen todas las esferas de la vida pública, mientras dicten a la mujer lo que debe hacer y lo que no debe hacer; y, a su vez, la mujer será incompetente de cuidar de sus propios intereses y de dirigir sus propios destinos mientras no mire más alto, mientras preste su asentimiento a la superioridad del hombre y crea que su destino es simplemente servir y complacer al hombre para el lecho y el hogar, en vez de ser su verdadera ayuda y compañía para el progreso y felicidad del género humano.

[36]

Todas las objeciones que se aducen o pueden aducirse en contra del sufragio femenino tienden invariablemente a estos dos objetos: a la seclusión doméstica de la mujer y a perpetuar su esclavitud civil y política.

Que la mujer no debe atender más que las ocupaciones del hogar, que no debe vivir más que para su esposo e hijos; que tiene bastante trabajo para todo el día con dirigir al cocinero, limpiar la casa y remendar los vestidos; es la fórmula que sostienen los partidarios del antiguo régimen. O si no, esta otra: que la mujer no está por naturaleza llamada a luchar con el hombre en la vida pública; que el hombre por razón de esa lucha dejará de considerarla como un ser digno de adoración, un sagrado ídolo ante cuyos pies se arrodilla, sino que verá en ella a una rival a quien hay que combatir y anular para la propia conservación, y con ello la mujer no sólo arrastraría la nítida sampaguita de su virtud en el lodo de la vida política, sino perdería, además, la estimación, el respeto y las consideraciones, de los cuales se ve rodeada en la actualidad.

No tengo sino el más profundo respeto para todos aquéllos, hombres y mujeres, que piensan honradamente así. No tienen la culpa de creer que aquello que ha existido siempre de un modo tal, no sea lo mejor. No comprenden que la vida es movimiento e insensiblemente se adhieren a las capas sociales nuevos elementos de vida y carácter que requieren necesariamente el cambio y la renovación. No es posible a la sociedad estancarse en un sitio, porque ocurrirá lo que ocurre a las aguas estancadas, que despiden pestilentes miasmas. La teoría de que la mujer sólo existe para el hogar y por el hogar ha dejado de existir hace tiempo. Ella ha tomado insensiblemente su puesto en la vida pública y ayuda y dirige al hombre aún cuando éste no se percate de ello, y aún cuando no se la reconozca derechos para ello. En las sociedades modernas, la mujer participa en la dirección de la caridad pública y en la educación de los niños; ejerce como médica, abogada, literata; forma parte de la legión de la prensa, de muchos empleos públicos y se interesa y coopera en la supresión de los vicios y miserias sociales.

[37]

¿Quién no admite que la mujer tiene deberes para su hogar, su esposo e hijos que debe cumplir ordinariamente con preferencia a cualesquiera otros deberes? Pero, ¿excluye eso, acaso, el cumplimiento de otros deberes para con Dios, para con el prójimo y para con el Estado? El hombre como la mujer está lleno de deberes: en cumplirlos ordenada y totalmente está el verdadero mérito. ¿No dedica la mujer filipina una parte a veces considerable de su tiempo a la iglesia y a otros deberes llamados de sociedad, a ir de visitas o recibirlas, a concurrir a fiestas, teatros y bailes?

¿Se ha quejado alguien de esto? ¿Se ha criticado al menos a las mujeres porque asistan asiduamente y cumplan públicamente sus deberes religiosos en los templos llenos de bote en bote; en las calles públicas, ahitas de muchedumbres tumultuosas, formando cola a lo largo de las procesiones de los santos, entre empellones y sofocones desagradables que toleran mansamente a causa de la confesión pública de su fé? Ellas no van solamente a las iglesias sino a los espectáculos públicos, a las fiestas populares, allí donde pueden ostentar la elegancia de sus trajes o satisfacer su curiosidad femenina. Y no vemos en todo ello ninguna asechanza o peligro para su virtud, sabiendo que esas mujeres que van a esos puntos y se exhiben de esa manera son madres, esposas, o hijas que tienen deberes que atender en sus casas.

¿Cuál es la diferencia, digo ahora, de que la mujer salga también de su casa para asistir o tomar parte en un miting político donde se trata de las necesidades públicas o de la conveniencia de elegir a éste o a aquél funcionario? ¿Qué peligros puede haber para la virtud o pureza de la mujer en que ella se interese en los asuntos públicos que afectan al bienestar de las familias, puesto que la mujer en cualquier estado de su vida ocupa siempre una posición dentro de la familia? ¿Por qué ha de considerarse que la mujer dejará en las zarzas de la política la flor de sus encantos si oye a un orador político—ella que está acostumbrada a oír sermones—o, si el caso se presenta, pronuncia ella misma un discurso expresando su opinión sobre algún asunto de interés para la familia, sobre la necesidad de remediar ciertos males sociales o sobre la conveniencia de recoger a niños abandonados o desválidos?

[38]

Tomemos el caso de una de las cuestiones de más palpitante interés en este tiempo, la cuestión del incremento de los juegos. ¿Creeis que esta cuestión no es de aquéllas que tienen relación inmediata con el bienestar de las familias especialmente de las mujeres dentro de ellas? ¿Quiénes son los que más sufren de los abusos del padre o del esposo al dedicar gran parte de los ingresos de la familia a los azares e incertidumbres de su pasión? Son las mujeres y las hijas a quienes se condenan a sufrir muchas veces privaciones y sufrimientos innecesarios por causa del vicio y de la falta del hombre en la familia. Y ¿quereis negar a la mujer el derecho de inmiscuirse en la vida política para que pueda ilustrar con su opinión al cuerpo electoral sobre los resultados funestos del juego o para influir con su voto en la elección de funcionarios que se comprometan a llevar a cabo las



deseables medidas? ¿Y por qué no ha de ser la opinión de la mujer en un asunto de esta naturaleza de tanto o mejor peso que la del hombre pues que a ella le alcanzan las consecuencias y resultados del mal? Como este asunto se pueden encontrar otros muchos en que el bien y la felicidad de la mujer se halla de un modo o de otro vitalmente interesados.

No veo en todo cuanto pueda hacer la mujer en política ninguna actividad perniciosa, y si me apurais más, digo que semejante actividad es altamente saludable y beneficiosa para la mujer y para la sociedad entera. En todos esos casos la mujer se instruye y obtiene mejor conocimiento del mundo y de la vida. No se considera como un ser extraño a la sociedad y al gobierno y no se mostrará por tanto ajena e indiferente a sus miserias y progresos. Nada puede hacer mayor daño a una sociedad como el encontrar en su seno cuerpos extraños, absolutamente indiferentes al bien o al mal, piezas inútiles de una maquinaria que está en función.

Nos aterrorizamos ante la idea de que los impulsos de la mujer, su fanatismo, su criterio cerrado, según unos, su debilidad o falta de carácter, según otros, su poca preparación o poca cultura, según otros más, hagan del derecho de sufragio una mera farsa o una comedia ridícula por la que han de entrar a tener predominio elementos o intereses privilegiados. Lo que yo digo es que todos esos impulsos, sentimientos, debilidades e imperfecciones de la mujer se deben precisamente a su estado de seclusión doméstica, efectos de una educación o de un sistema tocado de senil debilidad, que no permite a las facultades naturales de la mujer aquella expansión que es tan necesaria a la vida como el vapor a la electricidad y la electricidad a la luz. Y que para corregir esos defectos e imperfecciones, no es lo más cuerdo mantener el sistema bajo el cual han crecido y prosperado, sino producir un cambio violento, un vuelco regenerador para que ella pudiera, como el ave que ensaya sus alas, volar a los altos espacios, abundantes de aire y luz, libre para derramar allí la graciosa esencia de su ser y ensayar los límites de sus facultades e instintos.

Tenemos que procurar a la mujer nuevos objetivos en la vida, otras ocupaciones elevadas para que pruebe su aptitud y de esta manera todo eso que se señala como defectuoso y deforme en su carácter y educación se eliminará en un ambiente de libertad y publicidad, donde sin miedo ni piedad se puedan sacar a colación los defectos y expurgar al individuo de sus vicios. Y por esto quiero y pretendo para la mujer derechos políticos, porque entiendo que uno de sus resultados será enriquecer, mejorar y favorecer sus aptitudes y aspiraciones para servir a los altos ideales de la vida y de la sociedad. La mujer se ocupará menos de fruslerías y pequeñeces, de cortes de vestidos y modas, de chismes y otros tópicos comunes, que constituyen por lo general, el asunto de sus conversaciones y se esmerará en aprender y tratar de las cosas serias que atañen al mejoramiento y bienestar sociales.

La política no es una ocupación permanente que pueda absorber el tiempo de una persona que tiene otros negocios regulares que atender. De hecho, con excepción de los funcionarios políticos y ciertos profesionales, la mayoría de los ciudadanos no emplea en política más que el tiempo puramente preciso que le permiten sus ocupaciones ordinarias. El hombre o la mujer que haga depender su suerte o sus medios de vida de la política tiene que convencerse de que la política no dá para comer pero sí para tener hambre.

Es perfectamente compatible la política con las ocupaciones y tareas domésticas de la mujer, sea ella madre esposa o hija. La mujer educada sabe sus responsabilidades y conoce la manera de dividir su tiempo y anteponer sus obligaciones domésticas a cualesquiera otras fuera del hogar. Y cuando la mujer está muy atareada en casa, no hará política; o cuando se ve atada al lecho por los dolores y cuidados de la maternidad no podrá hacer política, aunque quiera. Y, por eso, cuando se dice que la mujer va a descuidar el hogar por la política o va a desatender el cuidado del esposo y de los hijos por el mero hecho de obtener el sufragio, realmente confieso que, por mi torpeza quizá, no puedo entenderlo.

Insistís en que la mujer, según el plan divino, es para el hogar y el hombre para la sociedad y en eso consiste la verdadera división del trabajo entre las dos mitades del género humano. ¿Me quereis decir por qué, si eso fuera el plan de Dios, todas las religiones y todas las escuelas de moral coinciden en prescribir el deber al prójimo, el amor a los semejantes? ¿Se ha dirigido el Señor sólo al hombre y no a la mujer también cuando entre temblores de tierra y llamas resplandecientes entregó el mundo las tablas del Decálogo y dijo: "Ama a tu prójimo como a tí mismo"? ¿Se refiere al hombre y no a la mujer inclusive aquel precepto universal, contenido de toda moral y de toda religión, que dice: "Haz a tu prójimo lo que quieras que hagan contigo"? Estos preceptos me indican que el hombre y la mujer tienen deberes para con los demás, tienen deberes para con sus semejantes y que no deben concentrar su felicidad en el hogar sino también, fuera de él, en la sociedad. ¿Me quereis decir si el hogar puede ser feliz entretanto que la sociedad

[39]

[40]

no lo sea, puesto que la sociedad es nada más que la ampliación y la suma de todos los hogares, y todas las miserias y males de la sociedad repercuten en el hogar de la misma manera que la felicidad y el bienestar del hogar influyen en el bienestar y felicidad de la sociedad?

[41]

Quereis hacer una división imposible, dividir al individuo humano en dos mitades: mitad feliz en el hogar y mitad infeliz en la sociedad, o viceversa. Podeis hacer, si quereis, esa división; pero una de dos: o teneis que barrer por inútiles todos vuestros códigos que dan al hombre el gobierno y administración de la casa para arreglar otros que entreguen ambos poderes a la mujer; o tenéis que admitir a la mujer, si no quereis eso, en la participación de los negocios públicos para que ella pueda, como en el hogar, ayudar al hombre a formar y cimentar la felicidad de ese otro hogar grande que se llama sociedad.

Se dice que la mujer al presentarse en el escenario político se enajenará al punto el respeto y la admiración del hombre y, lejos de ganar, perderá las ventajas en que su actual posición le coloca, fuera de toda lucha directa con el hombre, siendo adorable y adorada en todas partes y reinando suprema en el hogar con la autoridad indiscutible de la madre o de la esposa, envuelta en ese espléndido manto de gracia y majestad de que la ha dotado la Naturaleza, pura e impoluta de las manchas que las luchas e intrigas políticas dejan siempre en la reputación y en la dignidad humanas.

No creo que haya dejado de expresar deliberadamente en términos más poéticos y exactos la posición de nuestros adversarios, y al decir “de nuestros adversarios” yo incluyo a la innumerable legión de mujeres que titubean aún en pedir el sufragio por consideraciones que no sé si llamarlas egoístas.

Pero, con todo, digo que ese ideal político de la mujer no puede desaparecer porque ella sea educada en la política a la manera que se educa en las ciencias y en las artes. La educación política, lejos de perjudicar los encantos naturales de la mujer los realzará, a mi juicio, por la misma razón y motivo que la educación actual de la mujer moderna le ha dado otros encantos que no poseía la mujer antigua. A menos que sostengais que la educación es en sí misma un mal más que un bien, que desmejora el carácter en vez de mejorarlo, no podeis eludir la deducción de que ampliando los conocimientos y las experiencias de la mujer, daríais más vigor, más energía y más encanto a la personalidad femenina.

[42]

Nada infunde mayor respeto como la educación; la educación es lo que eleva el nivel de las personas. Desde el momento en que uno muestra ser educado, al punto obtiene la consideración y el respeto de los demás. A pesar de los prejuicios de raza, solamente por su educación el hombre amarillo u oscuro puede conquistar el respeto y a veces la admiración del hombre blanco.

¿Cuando ha inspirado la mujer mayor respeto al hombre sino cuando la ha visto instruida y educada a su altura en los colegios y universidades? ¿Antes, cuando la mujer permanecía en estado de ignorancia era acaso más respetada que ahora? Estoy dispuesto a convenir en que era más asediada, más agasajada quizás, pero no por eso más respetada. ¿Llamais respeto y consideración a aquéllas vanas fórmulas de etiqueta que hacían doblar el espinazo del hombre a la vista de una mujer y le hacían decir cuatro frases vulgares de cumplimiento, para hinchar la vanidad o marear la cabeza de una mujer crédula y fatua? ¿Llamais respeto a ese hábito singular de algunos hombres de calificar siempre de divinos los ojos de la mujer que tiene delante, de comparar sus labios a lindos pétalos de rosa, sus dientes a sarta de diminutas perlas, su cintura a cimbreante tallo de azucena y otras tantas necedades de ese jaez? Si es esa la forma de respeto y consideración que perdería la mujer por dedicarse a la política, ella debe celebrarlo, porque todas esas fórmulas insustanciales de galantería no pasan de ser lo que el cacareo del gallo para sorprender y asaltar repentinamente a la descuidada gallina.

¿Ni como puede, en verdad, inspirar respeto la debilidad y la ignorancia? De hecho cuando la mujer estaba en aquel estado en que se tasaban sus conocimientos, porque se creía que un poco de culinaria, de bordado y de piano, a más de saber el catecismo, eran suficientes para el matrimonio, única carrera que se le permitía, el hombre le dispensaba toda clase de consideraciones y cortesías, pero éstas no estaban inspiradas en un verdadero sentimiento de respeto sino más bien en una especie de caballerosidad, hija de la idea de que la mujer siendo de suyo débil e ignorante, merecía de parte del hombre, aquella protección, consideración y cortesía debidas a la debilidad y a la ignorancia. ¿Es esta acaso la idea que quieren las mujeres que se tenga de sí mismas? El respeto es un sentimiento que nace de la idea de igualdad y a menos que la mujer se coloque al nivel del hombre en las cuestiones políticas, no dejarán de oirse estas o semejantes ignominiosas exclamaciones. ¡Pero, mujer, que entiendes de estas cosas! No te metas en asuntos que no te importan.

[43]

No necesita preocuparse la mujer de que al participar en el sufragio, y como

resultado de él habrá de perder necesariamente las consideraciones y cortesías de que se ve rodeada en la actualidad, fuera de toda lucha directa con el hombre y libre de ser atacada por él como una rival a quién hay que anular y destruir por propia conservación. En primer lugar, es un error el considerar que la intervención de la mujer en la vida pública dará por resultado la rivalidad de los dos sexos. La atracción y simpatía entre el hombre y la mujer nace precisamente de la oposición del sexo: si no hubiera más que puramente hombres o puramente mujeres, acaso sería posible pensar que se destruirían porque no tendría objeto la vida ni la especie humana se reproduciría. De modo que en el interés de un sexo está el no destruir al otro sexo. La política, por otro lado, no es siempre una lucha personal; en su sentido propio y elevado es lucha de ideas y principios, de teorías y procedimientos y suponiendo el caso de que un hombre y una mujer se ponen frente a frente en una lucha política no están obligados seguramente a dar un espectáculo de *boxeo* y de matarse a brazo partido, sino solamente a presentar puntos de vista y opiniones que tienen más o menos fundamento, según sus propios juicios. No creo que ningún hombre tenga derecho a insultar a una mujer por el hecho de ser su oponente, cuando no lo tiene tratándose de un hombre. Y en el caso de que las pasiones políticas dieran lugar a semejante insulto, ¿no tendría la mujer el mismo derecho para contestar o echar otro insulto? He aquí un caso en que la mujer tendrá oportunidad para aprender a ser independiente en sus juicios y en sus acciones, ya que algunos parece que no quieren el sufragio sino a condición de que la mujer tenga independiente manera de pensar y obrar. No quiero tampoco suponer que muchos hombres no quieren el sufragio de la mujer porque temen que pueden resultar vencidos en una discusión pública y el prestigio del sexo quedaría mal parado.

[44]

En segundo lugar, si lo que quiere la mujer es encontrar siempre en el hombre aquella especie de adoración que se tributa a un ídolo, ella puede estar segura de ello con sufragio o sin sufragio. Esa adoración no nace en el hombre por el hecho de que la mujer tenga menos derechos o esté privada de ellos, nace de que la mujer es mujer, arquetipo de gracia y belleza de la creación y el hombre quemará siempre el incienso de su admiración ante el ara de esas divinidades. Recordad que se ha dicho siempre que el Cristianismo elevó la condición de la mujer y la dió más derechos; y sin embargo los pueblos cristianos son los que rodean a la mujer de mayores consideraciones y respetos.

El sufragio no hará menos hermosos los cabellos largos de la mujer, ni empalidecerá la rosa de sus mejillas y de sus labios ni hará menos graciosas las curvas de su talle, por el contrario la imprimirá una gracia adicional—la de saber escribir una balota con su pequeña letra—y mientras sea así, el hombre guardará siempre para ella aquel tesoro de amor, de ternura y de adoración que en todas partes y en todos tiempos y por los siglos de los siglos inspirará la idea de la gracia y de la belleza. Hércules se rendirá siempre a Venus por ser Venus, aunque Venus sea sufragista.

La educación política dará a la mujer nuevas armas para atraerse el respeto y la admiración del hombre. La mujer entenderá que su obligación no consiste solamente en dar hijos a la Patria sino en educar y dirigir sus sentimientos, de modo que desde niños se interesen en las cosas que se puedan hacer para mejorar las condiciones sociales, inspirándoles de este modo el amor o la afición a servir una causa determinada o un partido determinado en pró del interés público. La conciencia pública se dilatará, se robustecerá conteniendo y reflejando los sentimientos de la mujer, elemento pasivo, hoy por hoy, de nuestra ciudadanía, y en horas de crisis, cuando la nación alguna vez se encuentre en peligro, ella se verá servida y ayudada, no sólo por ciudadanos, sino también por ciudadanas, que no van a ser improvisadas ni inexpertas en las tareas y deberes colectivos sino acostumbradas a la disciplina de la organización y a los llamamientos del servicio público.

[45]

Tiene—¿qué duda cabe?—sus infinitas ventajas para el hombre el dejar a la mujer en la ignorancia, no sólo de la política sino también de otras materias. ¿No es más fácil así al hombre satisfacer sus caprichos y hacer de ella un juguete que puede dejar o utilizar cuando quiera? Ella es obediente, sumisa, resignada; no discute ni razona nunca; calla, obedece, sirve, un mueble hermoso que se diferencia de los demás de la casa en que tiene vida; muñeca deliciosa porque habla y tiene un poco de juicio. Yo sé que este es el ideal que muchos hombres quieren, por la sencilla y única razón de que así les conviene.

Pero no es esa la mujer como debe ser; la mujer que nuestro siglo ha redimido de la ignorancia y de la esclavitud; la mujer que ha recibido de Dios una inteligencia, una voluntad y un corazón para que los cultive y perfeccione al objeto de que ella sea, no la sierva del hombre sino su compañera, no la súbdita de un rey sino reina al lado del rey, fieles y constantes aliados desde la cuna hasta el sepulcro, en la hora feliz o en la adversa, no sólo en las intimidades del santuario doméstico, sino también en los abiertos y dilatados espacios de la vida pública. El hombre y la

mujer han sido hechos para unirse, comprenderse y amarse, para estar juntos siempre a trabajar, sufrir y luchar por cuanto hay de bueno y de bello en la vida, para afirmar el reinado de la pareja humana sobre el planeta y hacer de él una habitación digna y feliz, libre de tiranías y sufrimientos y apta para ser vivida por seres pacíficos e inteligentes y no por buitres y otras fieras voraces.

Esta es la misión de la mujer y del hombre sobre la tierra tal como la comprendo y la concibo. Hasta que el hombre y la mujer no se encuentren en un perfecto nivel, en un plano completo de igualdad según sus naturalezas respectivas de modo que pueda haber una comunión íntima de pensamientos, afectos e intereses, la vida será siempre ominosa y miserable para el uno o para la otra, y la Humanidad no triunfará de sus presentes desdichas. La criatura femenina ha salido de la mano de Dios tan perfecta como el hombre y no es justo privarla de ninguna de las satisfacciones y ventajas que al hombre proporcionan las ciencias, las artes y la política. Si la política es una noble ocupación de la vida, ciencia y arte de hacer la felicidad de los pueblos, justo es que la mujer contribuya con cuanto quiera y con cuanto pueda a lograr esa felicidad.

[46]

¿Qué duda cabe que la mujer tiene facultades, sentimientos, puntos de vista y métodos propios para hacer las cosas, diferentes del hombre? ¡Cuántas veces se ha visto que cuando un hombre no se ha atrevido a hacer una cosa se ha dejado obrar a la mujer para conseguirla! Ella tiene su propia personalidad y debe dársela, como al hombre, la libertad necesaria para que pueda desarrollarla, tener voz decisiva en sus intereses y destinos, tomar por su cuenta los riesgos de la vida, hacer sus propias aventuras, experimentos y descubrimientos en vez de que el hombre la fije invariablemente la pauta de conducta y le imponga el molde en que debe trabajar.

La política ha dejado de ser lo que debía, se ha hecho demasiado masculina, se ha vuelto brutal, egoísta, personalísima, porque le ha faltado la bondad, la abnegación, el altruismo y el espíritu de sacrificio, que son cualidades características del ser femenino. ¿Por qué no sacar ventajas de las energías de la mujer, de sus impulsos y modos de ver las cosas para mejorar nuestras prácticas y nuestros procedimientos en la vida pública? ¡Quién sabe si la política se sana y se purifica un poco con la presencia y la intervención de la mujer, de la misma manera que la presencia de ésta en una reunión cohibe en cierto modo la licencia de las palabras y de la acción de los hombres!

El monopolio ejercido por el hombre sobre las funciones públicas, ha sido, como otras tantas instituciones ahora desaparecidas, basado en la fuerza y violencia y con el fin de perpetuarlo se parapeta detrás de la muralla de prejuicios levantada a costa del tiempo y del orden de cosas establecido, lanzando de allí los dardos de la sátira y del ridículo contra aquéllos que demandan la cesación de ese estado de violencia. Así, ridículo es la más fuerte arma que ahora se esgrime contra la mujer que pretende reclamar justicia y obtener la reivindicación de los derechos de su sexo, alguno de los cuales, como el gobierno de los pueblos, no ha sido negado ni aún en muchas de las sociedades primitivas.

[47]

Por ésto, la idea que muchos tienen de la sufragista es muy curiosa. Se la representa como una mujer que odia los quehaceres de la casa y está constantemente fuera de ella, de día y de noche. La pintura más común es aquella en que la mujer arenga en una especie de asamblea a algunas de su sexo, mientras su marido se dedica a barrer la casa y entretener al bebé que llora. Esa es la idea que ha sido vulgarizada por los cines y revistas y la que está fijada en la mente de las muchedumbres que no se paran a reflexionar elevándose por encima de la superficie de las cosas.

Nada hay, sin embargo, más lejos de representar la realidad. La sufragista es una mujer, producto de nuestros tiempos de libertad; instruída como el hombre, conoce y no rehuye las responsabilidades que tiene en la familia; pero a la vez esta libre de preocupaciones y cree sencillamente en el deber de compartir con el hombre los trabajos concernientes al mejoramiento social, al bienestar público de la comunidad en que vive; cree que por lo mismo que en el hogar hay deberes asignados a su sexo, tiene asimismo deberes que desempeñar en la vida pública. En la vida doméstica y familiar no surge ningún conflicto entre los dos seres por estar repartido el trabajo entre ambos; no hay motivo tampoco para temer ningún conflicto en la vida pública si se sabe asignar a cada sexo los deberes que le corresponden según su naturaleza.

La sufragista, por el hecho de serlo, no es antagónica a los deberes de la familia, antes bien comprende que el bienestar de la familia es el fundamento del bienestar de la sociedad, y tiene conciencia de que las miserias y vicios sociales afectan a la familia y ella puede y debe acudir a remediar con el hombre esas miserias y esos vicios.

¡No! la idea que se tiene de la sufragista es errónea; y es hora de que por lo menos

las personas inteligentes y educadas corrijan su propia impresión basada en prejuicios y en una mentalidad atrasada. No podemos impedir que el vulgo piense a la manera que pensaba hace medio siglo atrás, pero el que muchas personas serias y por demás progresivas se contenten con la opinión del vulgo dá idea de que aquí no analizamos bien el fondo de las cosas y nos dejamos llevar simplemente de las impresiones del momento.

El sufragismo es una aspiración legítima, un ideal de nuestro siglo. Tiene su raíz de vida en la filosofía e instituciones del mundo moderno y en las condiciones cada vez más difíciles en que pone a la mujer la lucha por la existencia. Ella necesita protegerse y organizarse no para crear la rivalidad y armarse contra el hombre sino para ser un activo sumando en el progreso social y evitar ser víctima de la explotación y de la iniquidad de los demás grupos sociales por su indiferencia y absentismo en la vida pública.

No seré yo, hombre de ley y legislador, quien me oponga a que esta aspiración fuera satisfecha. La considero tan natural como el derecho a la vida y el derecho a la propia defensa. Y por ser natural no considero prematuro el que la mujer filipina reclame ese derecho, como ya lo han reclamado y obtenido sus congéneres en otras partes del mundo. Me es indiferente que el grupo que ahora lo reclama sea pequeño e insignificante: aún más, me sería completamente indiferente si la mujer de este país no lo pidiera o deseara. Para otorgar, para reconocer derechos fundamentalmente concordantes con el espíritu de nuestras instituciones y con los ideales de nuestra época no consultaría con quién tuviera opción de reclamarlos, los daría, los concedería porque es de justicia y es el plan de Dios que se realice la justicia en el tiempo y en el espacio. No soy juez sino legislador y mi primer deber es dictar la justicia, no administrarla, no esperar que haya quién la pida y quién se oponga a ella.

Me satisface que haya un grupo de mujeres que representando la aspiración de todas las de su sexo, se atrevan a acercarse a las gradas de nuestra Legislatura para llamar la atención sobre una falta en nuestros estatutos. Esto me indica que ha nacido y se ha revelado la conciencia de ese derecho en la mujer filipina y no necesito más; no necesito contar el número y la clase de las que están en esa condición. Rizal en su tiempo al abogar por los derechos políticos de nuestra raza, estaba con muy pocos compañeros; en la mayoría de sus compatriotas, la conciencia de esos derechos estaba dormida. Pero mentiría y erraría quién dijera que aún en aquel tiempo la voz de Rizal no representaba la causa de toda su raza y porque él y los que con él trabajaban eran muy pocos, no debía prestarse atención a sus demandas. El sabía en conciencia que su patria estaba oprimida, que defendía una causa justa, que abogaba por los derechos de sus conciudadanos y no se paraba a reflexionar si sus conciudadanos tenían o no la conciencia de sus derechos.

Estoy satisfecho, por esto, de que las pocas mujeres que ahora hablan de los derechos de su sexo y reclaman el sufragio representan a las demás mujeres filipinas, a no ser que queramos inferir el insulto de decir que las mujeres de este país están privadas de sentido común para oponerse o rehusar la concesión de derechos que pueden ensanchar sus medios de vida y sus actividades dentro de la sociedad. Importa poco que la aspiración al sufragismo aparezca en su estado inicial o tenga la forma vaga de una proposición no definida y concreta: desde el momento en que ha apuntado esa aspiración, para mí es que ha brotado la semilla a flor de tierra y es inútil ahogarla, pues volverá a brotar. Cuanto más retrasemos la concesión del sufragio femenino sería tanto más en nuestro daño, porque es lo mismo que impedir que la semilla de ahora se convierta en planta y dé a su sazón apetitosos frutos.

No, nuestro país no necesita imitar la lentitud con que han procedido las viejas naciones en reconocer los derechos de la mujer. No tenemos sus tradiciones, no tenemos sus preocupaciones para ir por lentas evoluciones y no por súbitas revoluciones. Debemos admitir todas las revoluciones pacíficas de ideas que condensan, como el vapor la gota de lluvia, una fórmula de justicia social. Lo mismo que admitimos los últimos inventos en mecánica, industria y artes, los automóviles, las maquinarias centrales, los aeroplanos, debemos admitir los últimos progresos en instituciones sociales y políticas de las sociedades más avanzadas.

El sufragio femenino encierra un fondo de justicia, de reivindicación para la aptitud de la mujer moderna y debemos enseguida adoptarla sin necesidad de pasar por procesos innecesarios. La libertad de cultos que engendró la tolerancia religiosa, el sufragio popular que vigorizó nuestra conciencia colectiva, la escuela libre que emancipó nuestras masas de la tutela de los caciques, todas las conquistas de la democracia de que nos enorgullecemos no serían realidades hermosas, llenas de sazonados frutos, en estos días, si hubiésemos tenido que hacer tanteos y dar pasos vacilantes antes de incorporarlos súbitamente a nuestra vida social y política. Tenemos que movernos de prisa y anticiparnos a las horas

vagas aspiraciones de las masas femeninas para ahorrarnos de ese modo agitaciones que al fin habrían de sobrevenir y cuya justicia se ha de reconocer más tarde.

Cuando se dice que nuestro estado social no está preparado para el sufragismo, que la mujer no está suficientemente educada para ejercer sus derechos políticos, quiero preguntar si es que hemos necesitado decir lo mismo cuando importamos e implantamos en éste país las instituciones democráticas que son la base y el fundamento de nuestra sociedad actual. Nuestra educación tradicional era enteramente contraria al sistema popular de gobierno y hemos adoptado éste por considerarlo mejor que el otro, más adecuado a nuestros intereses y a los ideales del siglo, sin preguntarnos si estábamos preparados y educados suficientemente para ello.

Hace más de veinte años que la escuela libre ha abierto sus puertas a la mujer del pueblo, la educación se ha extendido entre ellas en la misma proporción que entre los hombres, muchas de las mujeres que han producido nuestras escuelas son ya ahora esposas o madres y todavía estamos preguntándonos si la mujer filipina ha llegado o no a la madurez necesaria para poder ser investida de sus privilegios políticos. No creo que se pretenda exigir que todas ellas sean doctoras y bachilleres antes de concederlas el sufragio.

La educación política no se adquiere más que educándose como no se llega a saber nadar más que nadando. El argumento de la falta de preparación suficiente de la mujer filipina favorece y justifica la posición intelectual de los imperialistas de una metrópoli que no encuentran a una colonia jamás preparada o educada suficientemente para recibir sus derechos soberánicos.

[51]

Cuando el otro día subí a un hidroplano para experimentar la sensación de un viaje por las alturas, tenía—¿cómo no decirlo?—cierta aprensión, algo así como un vago temor a lo desconocido, a lo nuevo, pero pasados los primeros momentos con felicidad me sentí perfectamente confortado y dichoso de sondear los espacios y escudriñar los magníficos paisajes que se presentan a los ojos desde la altura. ¡Oh, que hermosura nadar en la luz, cabalgar sobre las nubes y el viento, divisar el panorama de las ciudades, de las viviendas humanas como un mapa de relieve sobre el fondo de cristal de las aguas, cruzar distancias enormes en minutos, en instantes de un modo imperceptible, emular en todo al pájaro y como el pájaro aterrizar de repente sin fatiga y sin sufrimiento! Una vez terminado el viaje es cuando comprendí que mi aprensión y mi temor carecían de fundamento, que no envolvía más riesgos el volar por los aires en un aeroplano como el correr a campo traviesa en un automovil y me hice cargo de las innumerables ventajas que se pueden sacar de este aparato, producto también de nuestros tiempos, destinado a revolucionar no sólo los medios de guerra sino también las artes de la paz.

Lo mismo pasa con las nuevas fórmulas, con las innovaciones en el orden moral y político. No se las adopta sin ese instintivo temor, esa vaga aprensión que produce lo nuevo y lo desconocido. Se oye hablar mucho de sus peligros e inconvenientes para el orden establecido. Se cree poco menos que se desquiciarían las esferas del firmamento y que el eje del mundo se rompería en pedazos. Luego, después que la innovación se ha admitido, se encuentra que parece lo más natural y lógico porque las cosas siguen su curso normal, las estrellas ruedan y brillan lo mismo que antes en el azul y las montañas altas no se vienen abajo. Se sienten renacer el ánimo y la esperanza, las muchedumbres se avienen con el nuevo estado de cosas y los más recalcitantes se lastimarían si se les propusiera que se volviese el antiguo estado. Así ha ocurrido en nuestro país. Así se ha hecho siempre el progreso y así marchará siempre por nuevos caminos.

[52]

Es preciso que tomemos la resolución de vencer nuestros temores y escrúpulos. Si habláramos del aeroplano solamente por el número de aviadores que han perecido, no admitiríamos nunca esa invención. Es preciso que nos embarquemos en él para probarnos a nosotros mismos que nuestros temores y preocupaciones carecen de fundamento. No hay que perder de vista que el sufragismo no es una cosa nueva en el mundo, ya no es un experimento sino un hecho y ha tomado carta de naturaleza en algunos países. Lo mismo exactamente que el aeroplano. Del mismo modo que para conocer las ventajas de este aparato no vamos a preguntar a los que nunca han viajado con él sino a los que han hecho experiencias con el mismo, así también para conocer las ventajas del sufragismo no debemos dar crédito a los que lo combaten por principios y teorías sino a los países que han hecho experimentos con él y han probado ya sus resultados. El hecho que debemos anotar es que el sufragismo cunde con mayor fuerza cada día y se va generalizando en los países en que se ha admitido. Lo mismo exactamente que el aeroplano. Por consiguiente, así como sería perfectamente ridículo en estos momentos declamar contra el aeroplano, por los riesgos y accidentes que pueden ocurrir y sería estúpido no seguir los pasos de otros gobiernos que utilizan sus ventajas, para la defensa o la agresión en caso de guerra o para abreviar las comunicaciones interiores en tiempos de paz, asimismo me parece ridículo, sino

insensato, combatir el sufragismo en el terreno especulativo o más bien hipotético y no tomar la experiencia de otros países como guía de nuestra conducta haciendo que el sufragismo forme parte de nuestras modernas costumbres e instituciones.

Quisiera, para terminar, citar algunos extractos, pertinentes a este asunto, de un discurso que pronuncié en una velada celebrada en el Opera House y dedicado a Rizal por varios colegios de señoritas en 1913:

Se ha creído que la mujer debe reducir toda su esfera de acción al hogar a la vida doméstica, ser absolutamente la gloria y el encanto de su esposo y de sus hijos; y no es así, pues que la mujer tanto como el hombre, nace en la sociedad y vive dentro de ella, y no puede, no debe ser indiferente a las miserias y las desgracias sociales. Pensar de otro modo sería egoísmo y aberración, y dejaría a la sociedad abandonada a muchos sufrimientos que solo la mano bendita de la mujer puede curar o acallar al menos. Bien haya que la mujer sea en su casa amor y ensueño, gloria y felicidad; pero también más allá de los muros de su hogar debe cumplir su misión divina y hacer llegar a todos el secreto tesoro de bondad y dulzura de que la ha provisto la buena providencia. Así como en el hogar comparte con el hombre los deberes de la vida, así fuera de él, en la vida pública, debe compartir con el hombre la responsabilidad de remediar y de aliviar las desdichas públicas.

[53]

La beneficencia, la caridad, la moral, por algo, tienen nombres femeninos: y es a la mujer a quien corresponde el ejercicio de todas esas virtudes en el seno de la sociedad. Ella debe tomar parte, si es que no debe iniciar en todos los casos, toda propaganda y toda acción que tienda a amparar la orfandad, a socorrer la indigencia, a elevar la idea de la moralidad pública. Ella debe luchar y sufrir, en medio de la sociedad en que vive por cuanto hay de femenino en la vida para calmar con un bello gesto de piedad la furiosa contienda que se libra por la existencia, y durar con el mágico esplendor de su cariñosa mirada la noche eterna del humano dolor. La patria necesita no sólo la fuerza de los hombres, sino también la piedad, la caridad de las mujeres; no sólo requiere héroes, sino también heroínas. Y las hay, y las ha habido siempre en la historia de la humanidad: y las hay y las ha habido en esta nuestra tierra, cuyo especial privilegio consiste, en sentir de graves autores extranjeros, en que sus mujeres son superiores a los hombres.

Y estas niñas de hoy que adoran en Rizal y que le dedican sus cantos y oraciones, mañana se convertirán en las ciudadanas, que no serán, como la infeliz Maria Clara, víctimas de las injusticias sociales, sino reparadoras de ellas, y sublimes propagadoras del bien, de la virtud de la gloria y grandeza de su patria.

Sí; abrigo esa esperanza, tengo fé en la libertad de la mujer. No puede permanecer una mitad de la humanidad en la parte superior y otra mitad en la parte inferior de la escala sin producirse desequilibrios, lágrimas y sufrimientos. Todos tienden a nivelarse en la vida como todos se nivelan en la muerte. La humanidad ha descubierto una nueva luz y su antorcha iluminará aunque los errores y preocupaciones de los hombres se empeñen en cubrirla de tinieblas. ¡Ay de los que resistan la luz! El mundo marcha, no se detiene en su progreso. Los que quieran quedar atrás se quedarán porque es dado a los seres humanos ese albedrío, pero será para lamentar más tarde su culpa y su retraso.

[54]

No me es dado vaticinar la suerte que cabrá a los esfuerzos presentes que hacen las mujeres filipinas para obtener el sufragio; sé sin embargo que sus esfuerzos deben ser para ellas y para nosotros un motivo de orgullo y de honor porque indican que ninguna parte de nuestro pueblo es insensible a los grandes movimientos del siglo. Hay algunos que se mofarán de ellas, muchos que se encogerán de hombros, pero las mujeres no deben desalentarse por eso, porque ni la mofa ni el encogimiento de hombros son razones de peso. Algún día les darán la razón esos mismos que ahora se ríen y se encogen de hombros ignorando probablemente la marcha del mundo y la de su propia sociedad, como aquellos que se burlaron de Rizal en su tiempo han lamentado su error muy tarde y le han completamente justificado y vindicado.

Lo que necesitamos es hacer la luz y propagar las nuevas doctrinas para que las acepten las conciencias que no se niegan voluntariamente a reconocer la justicia y la verdad, únicos e inmovibles fundamentos sobre los que descansan la estabilidad y el bienestar de las sociedades civilizadas.

## Colophon

### Availability

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This eBook is produced by Jeroen Hellingman and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at [www.pgdp.net](http://www.pgdp.net).

## Encoding

## Revision History

2008-02-20 Started.

## External References

This Project Gutenberg eBook contains external references. These links may not work for you.

## Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

Location	Source	Correction
<a href="#">Page 4</a>	mathemathics	mathematics
<a href="#">Page 4</a>	beatiful	beautiful
<a href="#">Page 4</a>	woman	women
<a href="#">Page 6</a>	patrotic	patriotic
<a href="#">Page 10</a>	even	ever
<a href="#">Page 13</a>	and	an
<a href="#">Page 14</a>	woman	women
<a href="#">Page 14</a>	.	,
<a href="#">Page 15</a>	woman	women
<a href="#">Page 15</a>	of	on
<a href="#">Page 15</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	"
<a href="#">Page 16</a>	possess	possesses
<a href="#">Page 16</a>	archtype	archetype
<a href="#">Page 20</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	,
<a href="#">Page 25</a>	government	governments
<a href="#">Page 26</a>	desequilibrium	disequilibrium
<a href="#">Page 33</a>	debe	deben
<a href="#">Page 33</a>	sociedades	sociedades
<a href="#">Page 34</a>	fe	fé
<a href="#">Page 34</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	i
<a href="#">Page 35</a>	congénita	congénita
<a href="#">Page 35</a>	,	[ <i>Deleted</i> ]
<a href="#">Page 36</a>	sér	ser
<a href="#">Page 36</a>	los	las
<a href="#">Page 37</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 37</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 37</a>	religiosas	religiosos
<a href="#">Page 37</a>	Éllas	Ellas
<a href="#">Page 40</a>	táreas	tareas
<a href="#">Page 42</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 42</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 42</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 42</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 43</a>	[ <i>Not in source</i> ]	¿
<a href="#">Page 43</a>	condicción	condición
<a href="#">Page 51</a>	altura	alturas

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WOMAN AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the



Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

**START: FULL LICENSE**  
**THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE**  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever

any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money

paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project**

## **Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

### **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

### **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

### **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in

compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility:  
[www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.