

SHALL MEN HAVE THE BALLOT?

Mrs. Catharine Waugh McCulloch, Evanston's Justice of the Peace, at a dinner of the Forty Club when that organization of literary lights gave its annual ladies' night banquet at the Blackstone Hotel, Chicago, Tuesday evening, responded to the toast, "Shall Men Have the Ballot?"

She said:

"For many years we women have patiently beseeched legislators to let us vote. Now to have the tables turned so that we women may decide whether men shall be allowed to vote, is a great responsibility. We will see how you like it to have your requests for the ballot treated as ours have been. In the first place, we women will assure you that in due course of time and when the matter is reached on our calendars we will give the question of man suffrage our most respectful consideration

"I suppose you men want a little further extension of your present limited school suffrage privileges. What! Not the whole suffrage? Not the suffrage for *all* men. Why not take things more gradually. This is so sudden! Be satisfied to take small steps at the beginning of your suffrage career.

"Really Mr. Chairman, I have my doubts whether you sex as a whole has the intellectual strength necessary for voting. I once saw a man idiot. That, however, is not a universal condition. But taking your sex as a whole you never produced a Frances E. Willard, a Susan B. Anthony, a Jane Addams, an Ellen Terry, a Carrie Nation, a Madam Qui Vive or a Hetty Green. When you do this, it will be time for you to be begging the ballot.

"Do you object to being taxed without representation? Why, we women represent you. When I vote, I represent my brother, my father-in-law, my four brothers-in-law, my three sons and my one husband. Do you claim that men's interests will be neglected if women alone vote? Just trust us to legislate better for you than you could for yourselves. Think how we let you vote now, for trustee of the state university. That is nice.

"Then you gentlemen of the Forty club must remember that you are not authorized to speak for all your sex. There is only a mere handful of you here demanding the ballot. Wait until all men everywhere unitedly and constantly, day and night, clamor for it. We should not forcibly enfranchise the whole male sex while many are indifferent. Not indifferent, do you say? Let me prove it to you.

Where the ballot has been granted to men they do not appreciate it and do not unanimously use it. In the far-famed city of Chicago at an ordinary election only about one-half of the men entitled to register and vote do so, and this in spite of the fact that the newspapers patriotically sandwich all their articles with brief reminders, the fervid orator begs the voter to go to the polls, the billboards notify him with gay posters, my old schoolmate, Mr. Campbell, carries him many an exhorting letter from anxious candidates and the brass band tries to charm him. But most of this is thrown away. One-half the men generally stay at home. At the time of judicial elections it is even worse, when three-fourths of the men neglect to vote.

"In the other famous city of the world, the home of Mr. Nesbit, Mr. Kiser, Mr. Mahin, Mr. J. C. Shaffer, Mr. J. Mack Glenn of your club, and various persons who are in Who's Who, in that world-renowned city of literature and education, where 4,500 men are entitled to vote, at the high school election two weeks ago the total vote was only 129. Do those residents deserve to vote? Should we not punish all men, even those who do vote, because of the neglect of the indifferent?

"Then, Mr. Chairman, a really great obstacle to men voting is that they are too emotional. I have observed it at football games and political conventions. I have seen men of otherwise good character forget it all at a Democratic state convention. Just because they were unseated by the Hopkins, Sullivan, O'Mally crowd they howled like demons. Then remember how, at the last national Republican convention, men cheered for 53 3/5 minutes at the name of a famous man of letters, an editorial writer on the Outlook.

"The Democrats, to go them one-better, kept their lungs at work whooping, cheering and howling for the 'Peerless Leader' 1 hour, 21 minutes, 5 2/5 seconds or thereabouts.

"No woman's convention ever acted thus and I have just returned from looking in at the D. A. Rs., and they are earnest, and I was several days in session with the N. A. W. S. A. and they are not meek. But neither crowd of women was as emotional as men.

When men can control their enthusiasm and their disgusts and act like perfect ladies then let them ask to vote.

"To let men vote would more than double the ignorant vote, for fewer men than women in Illinois can read and write. It would treble the foreign vote, for twice as many men as women come here from other lands and it would quadruple the criminal vote, yes, quintuple, sextuple and decuple it, for there are more criminals among men than among women.

"Here is a sad objection. Man suffrage might make family trouble and cause divorces if a husband would not vote for his wife's party. Better let the women do all the voting and stop the strife. Or it would double the vote with double expense and no change in results, for every husband would vote as his wife directed. What would be the use? You say that this is inconsistent with the last objection, about spouses voting different tickets?

"Oh, well, who cares for consistency when opposing extensions of suffrage?

"There are a great many pairs of objections to man suffrage utterly inconsistent; but they are so time-honored in the case of women we must not neglect them.

"For example, men would pass blue laws and interfere with women's pet vices—gum chewing and hat pin wearing, and men would let women go their own evil way unmolested.

"Here is another pair: Men now, without the ballot, have the greatest power over women through their sweet influence on us women, and men deserve no power, because the order of creation was in the ascending scale and the last created creatures were the most perfect and should rule over those first created. Woman was created last.

"Here is another pair: Men are now so absorbed in business and family cares they would have no time to vote and its opposite—men would become so frantic about voting and so crazy for office they would forget their families and race suicide would result.

"Then we fear for men's health if they undertake the heavy labor of voting. 106 boy babies are born to 100 girl babies, but so few of the boys survive, that of centenarians there are only 70 men to 100 women. The sex which does all the heavy housework of the world and the bearing and rearing of children can do this serious labor of voting for you. Be content in your man's sphere with your newspapers, banks, etc., and do not bother your handsome heads about voting. You are sweeter and

dearer as you are. We women could not respect and love you if you tried to vote and to be womanly. Nature or we women have fixed your God-given sphere just outside of politics.

"Well, I must yield somewhat, and say that if all men were like you who are here tonight—intelligent, refined, law-abiding, and, above all, so handsome—(yes, we women are often flattered about our looks to make us forget our rights)—if other men were as well dressed as you and as attractive to us women who decide this question, we women would let you vote. But we dread the vote of the ignorant man, the Hinky Dink and Bathhouse John crowd, the bad man, and, most horrible, the vote of the man who has no tact and who lacks that indefinable thing the highest earthly attribute of man that is called charm.

"What are books, clothes, intelligence, morality, manners, family? Nothing to us, if a man lacks charm! So as you men, or rather the other men, do not all have charm, they should not vote. Better think how you can be charming to us than to fritter your time away voting.

"Do you affirm that all these arguments against men voting are bosh? Well, that's what I have suspected for many years when they were used against me and my sister women. But if they are good enough to disfranchise women, why not to disfranchise men?

"But now, I will be serious. Do not feel so deeply grieved, dear men; I was only teasing you. Come now, let us reason together. Men can not be legislated for as wisely by women alone, as by men and women together. If only a few public-spirited men want to vote, those few ought to have the chance. You should not be reproached with having produced no Harriet Beecher Stowe or Florence Nightingale. You have had a Shakespeare, a John L. Sullivan and a Rockefeller, each eminent in his line. Even if you cannot be identical with woman and perform her every duty, you can at least be made politically equal. Identity and equality are not the same thing.

"You should not be governed without your consent, you should have a jury of your peers, not all women, and you should be represented if you are taxed. Then, when you men can vote as well as we women, we will have a government 'of the people, for the people and by the people.'

"So in spite of all my foolish objections at first, I shall answer your question, 'Shall men vote?' by saying emphatically, 'Yes!'"