The reaction on the women of the world of the growing realization of the powers of human beings and the possibilities of human life has been stupendous.

What does it mean to them? What but they like the mass of men can be trusted with the tools of civilization, with knowledge, with freedom of speech and of relations? It is only in this last lap of the social race that it has been conceded that any great number of human beings could be safely trusted to share in running the world. There are men and women enough left still to doubt the idea; but they are not the dominating group. The new human faith is revolutionizing this idea of control by the sex. It is demanding full co-operation in power and responsibility for all human beings.

Under the quickening power of this great vision women are casting off all the hundred old forms of restraint which the belief that the mass of human beings could not be trusted to look out for themselves had spun. They are putting their hands to new tasks, their heads to new thoughts. That they may give time to new things which are not worth saving, may doubt the significance of old things which are essential in all life—far the human way in periods of change. But this is only incidental in the struggle. It may delay the new day, but then again it may seem only to delay it. The powers of women are expanding as are the powers of man.
The most striking present exhibit of this changed attitude of women lies in their attack on public life. They ask for direct responsibility for and participation in it. Last November the women of six of our forty-nine states voted for President. In these six states according to the census of 1910 there are 2,277,056 females. The statistics of age are not yet ready but probably there are of voting age—that is about . Probably 60% of them did vote—that is the proportion was quite as great as that of men. It has always been so in the states where there was full suffrage:—in Wyoming where the women have been voting for forty-four years—in Utah and Idaho where they have had the right for eighteen years and in Colorado where they have had it for sixteen years. Why should we expect anything else? The interest of women in public questions has always been keen in the United States. To go back no further than the Lincoln and Douglas Debate—they formed then, if not a half at least a goodly percentage of all the great audiences which gathered to hear the discussions. I heard Goree Folk of Missouri say once that he was always able to gauge the real interest in his speech by the proportion of women in his audiences.

I have never been able to see any weakness in the argument that women would not vote if they had the right. They will vote in proportion to their interest in the question at issue and their interest will be in proportion to the agitation of the question. They do not vote on school affairs in the New England States where they have the right because there is very rarely anything but routine matter at issue. Let the community be stirred over a question of school discipline or policy and you will find them out.
They will vote on the whole as faithfully as men when there is something definite at issue. But that is not the question. What is to be the result of the voting? Will it produce the mauvais quart d'hure which George Meredith in those wonderful letters of his just published predicts, "the horrible time" he believes much better than present rights? Not in this country judging from the experiments already made. Perhaps the soundest view of the benefits that lie in suffrage for women is that put admirably by Professor Henry E. Mussey of Columbia College:

"The ballot for women is important fundamentally, not because of what they will accomplish with it, but because of what it will do for them, and what it will do, not immediately and directly, but in the long course of generations and as an indirect result of the demands it will make on them. The indirect educational results constitute the one irresistible argument for women suffrage, and by comparison all others are of third-rate importance. The idea that women's voting would purify politics has well-nigh disappeared into the little of discarded notions, where it belongs. Such an idea never had any reason behind it, but unshaken optimism. No, now that the industrial consequences are emphasized - the raising of wages, shortening of hours and improvements in work for women that may be expected from their obtaining the ballot. These expectations will probably in large part be disappointed. Industrial conditions are determined chiefly outside the political sphere. High wages, short hours and good conditions of work do not hang primarily on acts of Legislature. To enfranchise women will not remove their economic handicap, though help a little. Any class of people, given the ballot, use it for their economic advantage as opportunity offers. But estimate the industrial advantage of suffrage at its full value - and there is no question that they are in general grossly exaggerated - the chief point to come from it is its steady educational pressure on women."

And this is Meredith's view: "After some taste of active life, their minds would enlarge - that is all we want: their hearts are generally sound." But it not around this the chief reason for universal suffrage - the enlargement of the common man's mind? That it needs enlarging quite as much as that of the common woman has always seemed clear to me. Women's minds are turned in different directions naturally:

"If three quarters of you was killed we could replace you with the help of the other quarter. If three quarters of us was killed, how many people would there be in England in another generation? What would you do if we was all "kilt"? Would you go to bed and
One thing that can be depended upon from a percentage—not all—of the women who do throw themselves into public life is an energetic attack on obvious things to be done. Concrete results are essential to the active woman's happiness. She has since the beginning of society been occupied in doing that which was immediately useful and necessary. She has no patience with discussion of uncertain terms, with scheming and working which does not lead promptly to definite ends. George Meredith in one of his letters says of his Diana of the Crossways something which applies to most women in action:—"She was capable of utmost devotion to an object. She was uncertain where it was presented as an abstract idea."
The grave disappointment that awaits women who want a share in public life that they may "get things done" lies in this Diana characteristic. Ideas rule. They must make their way before action is possible. The eager women sure of her method is going to find herself hampered often by the slowness with which abstract ideas march. Moreover she is going to find out how difficult direct action is in the tangle of party interests and party policies. That she will often disentangle herself - cut her way out with feminine cleverness there is no doubt. That she often will too, put life into comous masculine organizations there will be no doubt. We have had in the last five years a lively illustration of what energetic women may do to imposing organizations occupied mainly with good intentions and talk. The National Civic Federation admitted to its inner councils a few new women, not finding things sufficiently interesting the women sought new work. They went at it so energetically that dismay spread through the distinguished body. It seems to have had no seriously deterring effect on the women for they have put into motion some excellent enterprises and given what is called Welfare work in the shops and factories of New York City - an immense impulse.
History is full of these daring attacks by women on misery and disorganization. One which, if not of the first order of the heroic, always stirred my sincerest admiration, is told in Mrs. John Adams' letters. In 1784 Mrs. Adams sailed for England in the vessel, Alert, to join Mr. Adams, then representing us in Europe. For the first ten days out she was desperately ill and no wonder. The little ship pitched and rolled so that it was impossible to walk unaided in the cabin. The deck was out of the question if you were not lashed to a chair which in turn had been lashed to the deck. The cargo was oil and potash! "The oil leaks and the potash smokes," groans the lady in her journal of the trip. When finally she had recovered sufficiently to get out of her bed Mrs. Adams was horrified to find all sorts of unnecessary discomforts coming from disorder and dirt. She did not hesitate before the "obvious need". She demanded "scrubbers, mops, brushes, infusions of vinegar etc., and marshalling all available help went through that ship like the splendid executive she had proved herself to be in the trying years she had been living. The place was transformed and from that day to the end of the twenty-nine day trip, Mrs. Adams reigned mistress."

It takes a gallant soul to conquer seasickness and rise to an emergency in the way Mrs. Adams did. It is doubtful if many women travelling in the comfort which even the most modest of present day steamers offer, rally sufficiently from the inertia and malaise of a voyage to even sense the great human needs which are there at their very elbow. The steerage of a vessel is a very harvest of human wants. Over-crowded as it almost invariably is; uncomfortable as it must be in foul weather; there are always those who are ill; there are always little children; there are always the homesick and the frightened. First-class passengers rarely show any sign of human feelings towards the steerage. To them they are merely the most picturesque feature of the boat. If from illness and crowding the sights become painful they simply cease to look. Life on an ocean liner is a fair abridged edition of society in general, the hand full at the top occasionally gazing
curiously over at the crowded mass and only spasmodically and sporadically mingling with it on terms of equal brotherhood.