"Viewing the situation from the side lines, as an ordinary citizen, I should say women have exceeded in the comparatively short period that they have been admitted to full citizenship, even the wildest expectations of those who promised that their activity would be beneficial to public life."

This judgment of an "ordinary citizen" deserves more than ordinary attention. It comes from a man who has spent eight of the nine years since women have been admitted to full citizenship on the front line as Governor of the State which contains a larger number of women of voting age than any other in the Union—also it comes from a Governor who, throughout this long period of service, has done his best to meet women half way in their efforts to fit into public life.

It is doubtful, indeed, if any man in office in the country has gauged more accurately the contributions women are fitted to give in government, or had a profounder instinctive sense of their natural interests or of their capacity for direct and disinterested service when those interests are aroused than Governor Smith, for Alfred E. Smith of New York is the "ordinary citizen" quoted above.

Luckily for them and for him his idea of the chief aim
of government fits in with their natural interests. The welfare of all the people - their health, safety, education, steady employment, care when ill, support when broken in mind and body - this is a State's chief business, according to Gov. Smith.

There is no doubt of the genuineness of his sympathy with these ends, his joy in every step which leads toward their realization. To appreciate just how deeply he feels about it all you should hear him explaining what he calls his picture books, to one unfamiliar with what New York State, under his prodding, is doing to make life more tolerable for those dependent upon her care - the crippled, the feeble-minded, the criminal, the insane, the shattered veterans of the Great War - as well as to serve the convenience, the safety, the opportunity, the health of her active citizens.

"Figures and talk aren't enough these days," he will tell you. "People have to have pictures to understand, so I decided to make picture books where they could see what we are doing with their money."
It's something worth while to look over these books with the responsible author. Opening them on his big desk he will go over the illustrations one by one, explaining each with an enthusiasm which would almost convince you that he had never seen it before.

"Look at that," he says, pointing to a long, open, two-storied West structure at the Haverstraw Hospital for Crippled Children. "That's what they call a Solaria. They can wheel the kids out where they can sit all day in the sun and air. I don't know how many beds are in the picture, but they can put fifty or more on that roof. Never had anything like that before in New York State."

"And see here. You wouldn't believe it, that at Matteawan, patients they were so crowded they had to sleep on the floor. Think of a rich State standing that! Well, we're going to stop it. There are more than 1200 new beds in those wings.

"Then look at what was happening up at Rome, in the State School for Mental Dignitives - beds in a cellar! You wouldn't believe it. Look at the fine place that we are building there."

And so it goes - not missing a picture - giving you the impression of a man who is actually gloating over what he is showing. As a matter of fact he is.

"Governor Smith," says Mary Hun, the head of the State Commission for the Blind, "has imagination coupled with a genuine interest in human beings. To him an insane man is a man whose mind has gone wrong, a blind man one who cannot see - a cripple a man who
cannot walk. We must cure the man if we can; if not, he must be
taken care of. He never thinks or talks of him as a mere defective."

However, you do not have to be afflicted to arouse interest
and sympathy in Governor Smith. He is just as keen for those who
are happy - that is why a bridegroom who takes in Albany on his honey-
moon is always able to introduce his bride to the Governor. No mat-
ter how crowded the schedule the secretaries know they must make a
place for the newly weds. "It's the greatest day in a man's life,"
the Governor will say soberly. "Of course I'll see them."

This warm genuine feeling for human beings makes the
Governor the natural ally of the women working in the State for human
welfare. They found this out long before he was elected governor,
however, just as he found out their persistency and disinterestedness
when after legislation which they believed to be for the good of
men, women and children. It was a discovery on both sides. They
discovered that a "Tammany politician" as all the reform element
considered Al Smith back in 1903 when he first was "tidied up" for
the Assembly at the direction of the chief of his district, Big Tim
Foley, could be as sincerely and disinterestedly concerned over workmen’s compensation, an eight-hour day for women, widow’s pensions, better housing, as they were. He discovered two things—that these various measures which he was hearing about, most of them, for the first time, struck at handicaps that he was only too familiar with in the lower East Side world of New York City where he had been born and always lived. He was for them from the start—that was something worth while, and he backed the women who so valiantly and in season and out of season returned to their attack; served with them on commissions; conferred with them, learned to know their temper, their calibre, their dependability.

When finally, after sixteen years of active service in the Assembly he was made governor, he knew he wanted Frances Perkins on the State Industrial Commission for he had served with her eight years before on a famous factory commission and been in more or less touch ever since. She was given the one vacancy, has remained one of his first lieutenants in labor matters and is now chairman of his Labor Board; he knew he wanted to retain Mary V. Hun on the Commission for the Blind. He did, and Miss Hun now heads that Commission. He knew he wanted Mrs. Henry Moskowitz as an unofficial adviser. She had aided in his campaign, he knew of her long unselfish social service, she is now the Director of Publicity for the Democratic State Committee, and one of his most trusted counselors.
In his first year as Governor, Smith named over thirty women to positions he believed them fitted to fill; in the eight years since the number has risen to over 140. One interesting early appointment was to a place hitherto sacred to the male. There was a vacancy on the State Civil Service Commission, naturally coveted by more than one man; but the Governor warned, "Hands Off" - he was going to give it to a woman. And this he did - gave it to a woman he had never met, who never was a candidate but of whose fitness and ability he had convinced himself by inquiries not only from Democrats who knew her but from his Republican friends and counsellors in her town - he has them in every port! This woman, Mrs. Charles Bennett Smith of Buffalo is now the head of the Commission.

But Governor Smith has done more than fill offices with women - he counsels with his appointees, keeps track of their work, helps them by suggestion, listens to their ideas. He does this, too, with women, whatever their party, who come to him with their causes.

Presenting your case to Governor Smith is not the fearsome business that it is with too many public men. Your reception is cordial, from the orderly at the outside door through the succession of experienced attendants and secretaries who sift the applicants, and if you reach the Governor's office - you may get what you want en route - you do not find it the usual frigid and
impersonal office of the powerful. It has all their fittings - the standardized mahogany and the walls lined with yellow sheep-bound records, but the formality is broken by pleasant personal objects - family photographs on the mantel - the chief a familiar one of his smiling self with his adored grand daughter "six months old on the 25th of January and weighs 19 pounds," - photographs of Mrs. Smith on his desk - a little bronze G.O.P. elephant, a Democratic donkey, a funny peanut man, handsome note books - gifts no doubt - all carefully placed where he can enjoy them but where they will not be in the way of his pad, his heavy pencils, his big ash tray, his glass of water, the space which may be needed for records, documents.

Everything shines and everything is in order; his idea of their order. Apparently he couldn't live with them if they were off the angle which satisfies him. No attendant, however careful, ever quite gets it. The first thing he does when he enters that office in the morning is to line up the elephant, the donkey, Mrs. Smith, the ash tray, and all the rest to please himself - "Now we're all set," he will exclaim, and plunge into his work!

Personally, the Governor of New York is as orderly and shining as his office. He dresses immaculately - likes modish, well fitting suits and all the nice accessories which go with them and wears them naturally; and, when off duty, with just a touch of swagger - but not when on duty. A man could not be more of a governor and a gentleman than the one who greets a strange woman, admitted because he believes her to have a case to which he should listen. His face is a surprise. The newspapers have insisted for years in giving us but one
Governor Smith — the happy-go-lucky, laughing, frequently guffawing Al Smith. That is not the man who receives one on a first visit to his office to discuss something to which he has been persuaded he should listen. This is a grave man with clear, unwavering gray eyes and a firm but fine and flexible, narrow-lipped mouth, who greets you, soberly, impersonally — listens attentively and decides promptly whether he should or should not give you more time.

As he listens he wheels his chair around facing the big window through which you look over the tree tops on the city of Albany. As he stares ahead he chews hard on a fat, usually unlighted cigar — a cigar which serves him in his thinking process as fumbling with a watch chain or a paper knife, folding and tearing up sheets of paper, serve other men — a kind of nervous outlet. You can almost see his mind seizing your point, if you have any — deciding what he can do about it, if anything. "Is this what you mean?" "Is this what you want?" he asks abruptly — and then in vigorous, correct, precise English he will state your case, give his opinion, make his decision. If he has a doubt of your not understanding what he means, if he wants to clinch the facts back of his answer, he is apt to wheel back to his desk and seizing a pad of paper, with a fat, soft-leaded pencil, draw a diagram, make an outline, of what he wishes you to see clearly.

The question of women on juries has recently been up at Albany. "Here's how I see it," says the Governor, picking up his pad and tearing off the top sheet on which he had been illustrating to
a preceding caller by something which looked like a geometric
diagram. "Here's the law now. There are certain disqualified," and he
scratches the word following it with a sign of equality, and tells
you who they are. "Women like men would be disqualified for those
reasons. Then there are the liable (writing the words) and the exempt.
Men are exempt who have profession or duties from which they cannot
be excused without detriment to society, - lawyers, doctors, ministers
of the Gospel - all on account of work," he writes under "Exempt."

"I would add women," and he writes (and women)

"How could a woman who has children and no help (he knows
all about that situation) be expected to sit on a jury for a month."
Then there are the young women - good women. I don't want my daughters
to sit in a New York criminal court listening to the endless stories
of wickedness and filth. It isn't right.

"But give women the right to serve if they want to. Of
course there are women who don't have much to do and might like to
serve. Let 'em do it."

Governor Smith has not only taken women into camp as far
as the law permitted but he has wished steadily to remove their
political handicap. When he came into office in 1919 there were
79 positions under the state civil service commission for which a
woman was not allowed to take examinations. She could not be an
inspector on a State Hospital Commission, she could not be a water
analyst in the Department of Health, or a chemist in the public
service, she could not be a bank examiner or an elevator operator,
a bacteriologist, a specialist in English in the Education Department.
In less than a year after Governor Smith was inaugurated, the law
was amended so as to open these examinations to them. They have used
their opportunities — standing up well in the tests. Instead of no
women as bacteriologists in the Health Department there are now nine;
instead of no women physicians in state institutions there are now ten.

There are, to be sure, Civil Service positions for which
women are not fitted. "You could not make a woman head of Sing Sing
prison," the Governor says. "And then you could not put a man in many
of the positions in the Bedford Infirmary. You have got to have
sense about these things."

Year after year his annual message has recommended that
any unjust discrimination against women should be removed from the
statute books. He has utterly refused, however, again and again
in his messages to interfere in the slightest degree with any
statute that protected the health or well being of a woman whether
in her home or in her industry. Once, when a delegation from the
opponents of the 8-hour law came to him, pleading that it was an
infringement on equality, he made a famous answer:

"Equality! I can't nurse a baby!"

"This bill," he said of one pensioning widows with children,
"ought to be called 'A Bill for the protection of the American home.'"
He knew what it meant for a woman single-handed to keep her children together. At thirteen, he, the oldest child, had seen his mother come home from the funeral of his father, with only a few cents in her pocket, give the children their supper and go out and get a job as an umbrella maker, bringing back her bundle of sticks when she came. And he, now her chief supporter, had gone out next morning and begun his career as a newsboy. If his mother had had a pension!

Governor Smith's greatest service to the women of the State has been to awaken many of them to the higher meaning of political parties. It is hardly their fault if they have pretty generally regarded victory at the poles as the chief end of a party. They inherited that notion and have not yet emancipated themselves in any great number. Now, loyal a party man as Gov. Smith has
always been - past master of organization as he unquestionably is, party to him is only a tool not an end.

"The reason for the epidemic of political parties," he told the Constitutional Convention thirteen years ago is to bring about "what goest the farthest to do the greatest good for the greatest number."

And again, when advanced labor laws were being fought on the ground that the State should not enact class of privileged legislation, "What is the State?" he cried. "Green fields and rivers and lakes and mountains and cities? Why, not at all. It is the people, all the people of the State; and anything that tends to make the members of the State strong and vigorous in turn helps to make the State so; and every one of these enactments has been for the general good and could in no way be described as privilege." No party has a right to live he will tell you hotly that doesn't make the welfare of the people its first business.

But can one be a successful politician and realize on that theory? Governor Smith insists that he is a politician - that he does not care for any other title. It is a long time since we have had a better object lesson in what a politician might be than he has given. Possibly the most conspicuous way in which he differs from the ordinary run of the class is in knowing what he is talking about. Tim Foley said of him once "He is too smart to be a morning glory. The secret of his success is that he never mingles in anything he doesn't know all about."
He deals with the business of the State — his ambition is that it be done promptly, efficiently and for the benefit of the men, women and children whom he regards as the State. He must have seen early that his chief obstacle in getting things done was his own ignorance — ignorance of conditions, of laws, of practices, and he set himself at learning about everything that came his way, at figuring why things happened and didn’t happen. He was born with an extraordinary memory. Apparently he never forgot anything he heard and he soon got into a habit of checking up what he heard. He discovered the almost universal inaccuracy of his colleagues — whether for a purpose or stupidly because they had not taken the trouble to be sure. He became soon a terror to those who misquoted or muddled their facts and figures just as he became disconcerting to those of his own crowd when they discovered him to be hob-nobbing with the reformers at whom they had always sneered.

Thirteen years ago, the State of New York held a great Constitutional Convention. It was headed by Elihu Root, and it included in its ranks many distinguished men of both parties. One of its members was Al Smith. That Convention sat from April until October, and when it was over there was a unanimous judgment from the ablest men in it, from Mr’ Root down, that nobody had contributed so much of solid information about the laws of the State
or the practical working of those laws as this man whom they began then to speak of respectfully as Alfred E. Smith. His speeches distributed through the four big volumes of records of that Convention are as good reading as can be found in any political records in the country.

One quite surprising thing about them is the historic sense. Whenever in that Convention he took up a subject, he began by telling how the thing started, how it had progressed, how it got to be what it was today. He had a mind naturally so just and so large that he understood that you cannot explain or remedy anything by beginning where it is today, you have to have some sense of how it came there. Moreover, you cannot avoid the pitfalls of today unless you know something about the thing in the past.

Then there was his English - clear, flexible, precise, showing you that he had so thoroughly absorbed that of which he talked, that he could put it into plain, natural words, without a trace of what he calls "the language of the Court of Appeals."

He has continued to know what he is talking about, and to tell it in terms that anybody can understand. Alfred E. Smith, Author, is not so well known to the reading public of the United States as he deserves to be - Alfred E. Smith, Governor, has overshadowed him. However, the future will take care of that. There is more than one page in the series of fat volumes bearing the title "Public Papers of Governor Alfred E. Smith," that cannot escape history.
And he has continued to be unafraid to say what he thought - for a startling revelation of the man at the Convention of 1915 was his frankness - his joyous habit of letting the "cat out of the bag." He still does it. Last December the State Convention of that admirable organization, the Women's Non-Partisan League, met in Albany and invited the Governor to speak to them. What did they want him to talk about? "We would like law enforcement, but of course he would not dare do that." With all their opportunities, they did not know their Governor. He came, looked over their "Whereases" as he calls resolutions, and at once plunged into law enforcement. "I see you have a 'Whereas' here that 'the enforcement of law is vital to the preservation of any form of government.' Nobody who knows anything could possibly differ.

"There is another 'Whereas' - 'the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act are being openly attacked by organized opposition.' What is wrong about that? Is there any reason the opposition to the Volstead Act and to the Eighteenth Amendment shouldn't organize? Is there any question about the solidity, the force and the effectiveness of the forces on the other side of the question?

"The next part of the 'Whereas' is, - 'And nullification is being preached by those in authority.' That is news to me. I have no record of any public expression of anybody in authority
in this State who is preaching any doctrine of nullifying the
Constitution. If it has taken place, I would like to have the
specifications. I never preached it. In fact, I took the direct-
ly opposite view of it.

"Now, let's face the facts. Let's see what you really want.
You want to duplicate upon the statute books of the State that which
is already a law of the State.

"The question of enforcement of the law is a business
proposition. That is something that you pay for and you get the de-
gree of enforcement for every statute that you are willing to pay for.
You won't get any more, and it is your business to see that you don't
get any less.

"It is a local question. You have all the law you need.
You have a statute with as much force and effect as though it were
written into the statute law of the State, but every conviction must
begin with arrest, and the strangest thing to me in the world is that
people will come from the counties that border either on Canada or
on the Atlantic Ocean, where all this stuff must come through in
order that anybody in Albany can get any of it, and they seem to
give no attention at all as to what the local authorities are doing
about enforcement, although they have the law."

The blunt and forcible talk sketched here is typical
of his handling not only of the question of enforcement but of all
other subjects under discussion. He has not been afraid to say
what he thinks, but he does not say it without honest labor.

Governor Smith's greatest achievement has been the re-
organization of the State. His really amazing success here
should serve as a convincing demonstration of the political wisdom
of his methods, quixotic as they may seem to many. To be sure,
as he himself is reported to have said, the Lord has been good to
him. A dramatist could not have devised more effective back-grounds
for his kind of politics than his opponents have provided. What could
better have set off his thorough knowledge of State affairs than
uninformed, hearsay attacks? No one could really touch Governor
Smith but someone with an equal knowledge who could combat him on
the ground of principle and policy.

The State Assembly has frequently furnished an effective
background for a governor interested in obtaining results which
everybody, even its own leaders, had acknowledged to be for the good
of the State, by stopping short in its tracks, sullen and obstinate
as so many balky mules, its own answer to his pleas to do this thing,
so patently right and needed, "We won't."

And there is the attack Senator Heflin of Alabama has made
on the religion of Governor Smith. It looks almost as if Senator
Heflin in his bitter and fanatical arraignment of the Governor and the
Catholic Church, had driven the religious issue largely from the com-
ing campaign.
Knowledge and frankness have been the back-bone unquestionably of his counter-attacks, but he has oiled them with a good-humored raillery, most captivating and never malicious. The truth is that Al Smith has a well of friendliness for everybody that is in any way decent, and while he may be mischievous, even devastating in his fun, he is never mean. He understands his mulish Republican Assemblymen - they are playing politics. He likes them all - and, as a matter of fact, they all like him. And he is not too hard on the loquacious Republican youth that has been set up to oppose him. He can laugh him out of court, but it is a good-natured laugh.

This is not saying that the man cannot be angry, even fiercely and contemptuously angry. One of the most interesting periods in Albany is the thirty days after the Assembly adjourns, when the bills passed are receiving the approval or veto of Governor Smith. He apparently never lets any bill to which he puts his name go without stating his reasons for what he does. At the hearings on the bills he frequently flares. "Who said anything about votes?" he thundered one day when he was about to veto a bill, and a supporter warned him that he would lose votes if he did so. To have politics in the lower sense thrown in his teeth when he was struggling to decide what was right made him turn red in the face, and made his naturally hoarse voice, harsh and raucous.
There have been dramatic displays of the tremendous anger of which he is capable, in the last five years. The most memorable perhaps came in connection with Mr. William Randolph Hearst's outrageous accusation in 1919, that the children of New York City were dying for lack of milk, because of Smith's inaction. It stirred the man Smith to uncontrolled anger, less because of the accusation than from the fact that his mother, then very ill, was heart-broken over the story and murmured in her delirium, "My boy didn't kill the babies." Governor Smith made his answer to Hearst before a great audience in Carnegie Hall. All official dignity, of which he has so much and which he wears so naturally, was thrown aside. Voilent, gesticulating, perspiring, his language the language of the East Side, he gave an expression of genuine righteous indignation such as New York has not been treated to for many years.

And he never cooled off. One of the most extraordinary political episodes in the State's history was the lone fight which he made against his organization in its effort in 1922 to make him run for Governor on a ticket which named Hearst as United States Senator. Smith won out against forces that the State believed impregnable. It should be said that so far as known, the only encouragement he had in his terrific battle came from his old
political teacher, Big Tim Foley, who, in the middle of the affray, is said to have put his head in the door and uttered the one word, "stick!"

These outbursts are genuine expressions of the depth of feeling in the man when it comes to a question of what is right or wrong or decent. Naturally and by training Al Smith is a man who believes in and prefers the right and decent, hates their opposite.

"He must have had gracious surroundings as a boy," I heard a woman of high breeding and cultivation who has worked near him in one of the great humanitarian undertakings of the State, say. "He could not be always so unembarrassed, natural, hospitable with people if he had not been accustomed in youth to an atmosphere of affection, sympathy, courage and faith in goodness and contempt for meanness." She was right.
The tenement house home of Gov. Smith was built on these qualities. The mother he so loved and adored to the end of her life, was a woman brave and courageous in spirit. The Church, too, played a big part in his education. Father Kean of St. James' parish, was a wise, stern priest, who knew what went on in the minds and lives of the boys and girls growing up in his parish and when the moment for counsel and for discipline had come. His influence in the development of Al Smith was steady and strong. It made religion a very real thing to the boy. There is nothing more genuine about the man today than the religion he learned in St. James' parish. It is that which makes him thunder sometimes when what he considers a tricky proposition is put before him: "it's wrong. I won't do it. And I won't let you do it." And then, without a trace of self-righteousness, after his burst of righteous indignation, "That's settled. Now let's get down to business."

His political education was carried on in the back room of Big Tim Foley's neighborhood saloon. It is certain that whatever was taught in other saloons, Tim Foley never included lying or grafting in his curriculum. His parting instruction to Alfred E. Smith when through his influence, he went up to Albany in 1903, was "If you make a promise keep it - and if you tell anything, tell the truth."

One weighty fact about Gov. Smith, is that he has never lost the capacity to grow. He has outstripped all but a few of his contemporaries in those things which make the higher type of politician. There has been a steady lopping off of partisanship, a
steady deepening and broadening of his conception of what makes a strong and useful State. He works better than he ever did with men of different types and points of view. He never was so effective as a practical politician, and at the same time so genuine a reformer. Nobody in this country has made for many years so great a contribution to the science of government as he has in the reorganization of the State, for which he has been fighting since the Constitutional Convention of 1915.

Take it all in all, the emergence of Governor Smith from the lower East Side of New York City to his present position of power and usefulness is the most significant exhibit of pure Americanism the United States has had for many years. If there is anything rooted in that gospel it is faith in the power of the boy of parts to raise himself in public life, no matter how poor, how cut off from conventional opportunities. Certainly Alfred E. Smith is a most heartening proof that this is still true. His rise attacks that religious intolerance which has been growing in the country; an unexpressed but widespread conviction that the United States was made for Protestants and therefore should be run by Protestants. The Constitution doesn't agree. A great chance we may have next fall to show how deep our religious tolerance is, not necessarily by voting for Governor Smith if he should be nominated, but by rigorously refusing to aid in an anti-Catholic campaign.

But there is another interesting point about the rise of this man which contradicts an almost universal national conviction,
and that is that if we are to get freshness of view, originality of personality, healthy and continuous growth, we must go to the farm for it, that the country not the city furnishes all the material for great Americans. The city is surprising us in many ways, and in no particular has it surprised us more than in furnishing us, out of that element of the population which struggles hardest to live at all, as good presidential timber as we have had for many years. It is a conclusive answer to our fears that the city necessarily stunts the growth of manhood; another proof the world of men has repeatedly given that genuine manliness is stronger than circumstances.