146 Madison Avenue
Jan. 12 - 1912

C 1/16/12

The Editors of the American Magazine,

Dear Sirs:

In voicing this protest against the thesis expounded in the article entitled "The Uneasy Woman", appearing in the January number of the "American", I think it only right to explain, by way of preface, that I regard myself as a most loyal member of the group of "progressives" in my State, California, and that I regard your magazine as one of our most valuable assets.

The point of view taken by the author in the article above referred to, is, in the light of my recent experience in working to obtain woman suffrage in California, as much a part of the errors of the dim past as, for instance, is infant damnation. Thirty years ago, or more, I remember hearing the emancipation

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of woman advocated, by great stress being laid upon the "tyranny of man", upon the duty of woman to obtain her "rights" by "defying and denouncing the male", and upon the "slavery" of woman as a wife. But it is a surprise to hear these outworn arguments used in this age.

The discussion of woman suffrage in the West was freely entered into by men and women in much the same spirit as might have been the plans for an educational institution or a social center. To my knowledge there were no militant methods employed. While the challenge to discuss the subject on the ground of equity was often made, it was upon the ground of betterment of conditions that the franchise was given. And the means that made it possible were the progressive measures: the initiative, the referendum, the recall, and the railroad commissioners' measure.

The intelligent and conscientious citizenship of the States of Washington

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and California was awakened to the need of these measures, and also to the need of the help of a large body of citizens whose usefulness was almost nil because it was deprived of the only effective weapon: the ballot.

In California the measures were voted upon at the same election, and woman suffrage was regarded in the same light and voted for upon the same ground, — that of progress — equally with the progressive measures. Why? Because woman suffrage had the same friends and the same enemies as had the other measures designed to place the power of government in the hands of the people. It seems a paradox that the advocate of one should not be an advocate, — or at least an impartial expounder, — of the other.

Either conditions in the West are not understood in the East, or else the great body of women all over this country, who earnestly desire this power because of its values to humanity,

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have been judged by the flotsam and jetsam to be found upon the surface of every great movement.

With the hope that recognition of the inevitable union of these forces may be accorded in the columns of your magazine,

I remain
Very truly yours
Elizabeth A. Gerberding.

Formerly President of the Womens Suffrage Party of California, and President of the Women's Civic Club of San Francisco.

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