

Handwritten scribbles, possibly "2004" or similar, in the upper left corner.

ADDRESS ON ANTI-SUFFRAGE

BY

IDA M. TARBELL

Buffalo, Nov. 20, 1905.

As I understand my invitation for this afternoon, it is to give you an informal talk on my personal reasons for not believing in the ballot for women. As it is the reasons for my own faith that I am to talk on, you will bear with me if I seem a little ^{academic} ~~academic~~ in beginning if ^{and} I make certain statements which although obvious are fundamental.

To begin with then, I take it that you will all agree with me that the business of society is to work out the greatest good of the greatest number, and that in order to do this, society has a right to demand from each individual and each class of individuals comprising it and accepting its benefits whatever service he or she can best perform. These duties which society assigns to different individuals are not an arbitrary matter. They are the result of centuries of experience, of many mistakes. They are simply the best that society has been able to determine upon through the ages in which it has been trying to solve this problem of the greatest good to the greatest number. For those who accept society and its benefits -- and all of us do, of course -- (except the anarchist and the openly vicious and defiant) the great question is, "What is the duty that society demands of me?" Do I see it, and am I performing it?" Obviously, if all the members of society see and discharge their duties fully, in time the rights of all will be secured. That is, it is by doing our duties,

not by demanding our rights that we get most out of society. And it is right here that women make their first mistake in the matter of suffrage. They talk about women's rights when they should be talking about women's duties. If they will find their duties and do them, their rights will follow as the day the night.

My first point then in this discussion is that the important thing for all women is to be considering their duty as citizens. Now, I know that many women will come out and ^{after all} say that we are not citizens, that we have no rights in public life. That, as a matter of fact, we are a downtrodden ^{unrecognized} and ^{unnecessary} element in society. Such talk as this is ^{childish} essentially shallow. It has no whole ^{view} perspective at all. Anyone who has studied the world's progress, has studied the development of the various classes of society, cannot but realize that woman has always held a serious place in the public life of every country; that this place has been recognized by philosophers and statesmen, and that if it has been insisted that she limit her activities to certain duties, it ^{was} ~~is~~ because the wisest thought of each particular country has believed that the best good of that country was served by women fulfilling such and such duties. It is true that sometimes the place accorded woman has been very low, but this is because the ideas of the country itself has been low, it is not from any premeditated effort to make a slave of the woman. Again, her place has steadily risen as society has risen. If

you will trace the growth of universal manhood suffrage, ^{for example} you will find, I believe, that it has been even less rapid than the growth of the idea of the intellectual and industrial freedom of women. The clearly defined place which different countries have assigned to women and the gradual development of their duties can be best grasped by a very brief historical survey. For instance, consider ancient Egypt. Women were accorded a very high place in that civilization. They were equal before the law. ^{like} They had the same education as the boys. They were recognized as civil persons apart from their husbands or fathers. That is, they had the right of contract, they could bring suit and they could present their own defense. Women in ancient Egypt carried on commerce in the marketplace; they practiced medicine; they had the right to govern. Indeed the last sovereign of Egypt was a woman, Cleopatra.

Now, in contrast to this high place which women occupied in Egypt, we have them occupying a very low place in the Orient, both in ancient and modern times. In the Orient the woman is allowed no education. Mohammedanism gives her no place in Paradise, she is chiefly a slave and a concubine. But her place is as high as such a system can conceive. Her place has never advanced because the system has never advanced. It is intolerable because the system is intolerable. We talk about the unspeakable ignominy of women in Turkey, for instance, but this is because the Turk himself is an unspeak-

able creature. If he does nothing for women, it is simply because he does nothing for himself.

In ancient Greece the Spartan mother was obliged to sacrifice all her maternal instincts. Children were taken from her and were brought up in order that they might be more rigorously trained. This was her civic duty. Women accepted this. They accepted it as an honorable duty. Just as when people have a high conception of duty they become high minded, so woman became a high minded creature. A number of women in those days attained great intellectual development.

If you go to Roman history you will find that the same idea of maternity as ^{the} a great civic duty prevailed among the Romans. The Romans, however, had a new idea -- that is, they thought more of the family while the Greeks thought very little of the family. The Romans brought up their children in the family. The boys and girls were brought up together in Rome, many of the girls receiving as high an education as the boys. The Roman idea gave a new civic importance to women. Rome said to her women, "The best thing you can do is to go out and nurse the sick and care for the needy."

In the Middle Ages this idea of service was developed. The deaconesses and abbesses of the Middle Ages were wonderful women. Woman then was almost deified. She was the inspiration that urged men on to higher achievement. These two things -- the duty of maternity and service -- combined, and we have before the end of the Middle Ages an ideal

conception of woman such as the world had never seen before.

The 18th Century added still another duty. That was the duty of woman as a social force. Women ceased to be kept in their narrow environment. The French women had an enormous political, social and literary influence. Great numbers of brilliant women gathered in a certain salon and there brilliant men gathered around them and they became great forces. In the 17th and 18th centuries woman had extraordinary power.

adopted by our present:
 Now all these ideas have been gathered up and ~~to~~ *only done as a part of a woman's civic duty - Now*
~~we~~ *we* have all of them included in the work of a woman. *seriously - the woman is a mother; she must look after the fam-*
~~That is, the woman is a mother; she must look after the fam-~~
 ily; she must look after the sick, the poor, the needy. She must be the moral force, she must be the social force, that England, France and Germany made her in the 17th and 18th Centuries. That is our business. With a great many women I think there is a tendency not to regard that as a work of the citizen. As a matter of fact, this was worked out for woman as a civic duty. It was a duty to society. You were not to do it for your own pleasure. You were not to do it for your husband's pleasure. You were to do it for the good of society. You were to bear children because society demanded it. You were to take care of the poor, the sick, the needy because society needed that done. You were to be the moral influence and impulse because the moral impulses of women were supposed to be kept purer and higher than those of

men out in the world. You were to be of social influence.

It is a great regret to me that women do not look on these things in this way. They are not inspired as they ought to be with these, our duties as citizens. ~~If you are convinced that this is what society calls for, then the question comes, "Do we need the ballot to discharge these duties?"~~

second
Then, Are we discharging these duties so well that we can also discharge the other duties that the ballot brings -- that is, holding office, etc. Are we discharging these duties so well that we need to add other duties?"

What is the ballot? *we sometimes seem to*
Some look on the ballot as
something like air and water that people could not really do
without. The ballot is purely an artificial arrangement.

It is a device for getting the just, right and best estimate of public opinion. At one time the ballot was assigned to a few men. It was gradually enlarged. It took on one class after another until ~~it has come to the time when we have got~~
~~the kind of a ballot we have in America to-day -- that is~~ *minimal*
manhood suffrage. *we* ~~you~~ people in the North know what ~~it is~~ *minimal*

we ~~you know that~~ manhood suffrage means -- that every ignorant Italian, every ignorant Pole, every ignorant citizen who has not been in the penitentiary or committed some crime against the law, shall have his vote. *we* ~~you~~ know that all over the country there are great bodies of men who do not know why they are voting as they are. There are other great bodies of men who are selling their votes for what they can get.

the right to sell his vote. There are a great many women who have that point of view.

There is another thing ~~that would be~~ very dangerous in a woman's ballot -- that is, we would have a large indifferent vote. We know that the worst phase of our unrestricted ballot is the fact that a large number of intelligent men are indifferent. During this last election in New York, ^{in my immediate} ~~one man~~ ^{circle of friends} ~~but his wife~~ ^{was} ~~because he~~ ^{was on a Western trip, another was on his summer holiday} ~~trip and neither came home to vote.~~ ^{There are a larger number} ~~These two men are~~ ^{of women who are indifferent.} ~~The result would be a~~ ^{great number naturally could be manipulated.} ~~There would be~~ ^{a larger number among the intelligent women who would be in-} ~~different and we would thus increase the danger.~~ ^{Supposing} ~~the ballot was given us and we were called upon to vote, I~~ ^{think a great many women -- and I hope all the women in this} ~~audience -- if they knew the ballot was given to us would say,~~ ^{in spite of our position many} ~~this has been assigned to me as a public duty and I am going~~ ^{to do it.} ~~Supposing we did; there would be a little coterie~~ ^{in every community that would feel that way and they might} ~~possibly put some influence into the ballot -- but would what~~ ^{they put in be of sufficient value to offset the danger?} ~~I~~ ^{confess the fact that women might contribute some great in-} ~~fluence to the ballot had a great influence on me -- such great~~ ^{influence that I determined to study the question from an} ~~historical standpoint.~~ ^{The group of women that I took to} ~~study was the women of the French Revolution.~~ ^{These studies}

study was the women of the French Revolution. These studies

the right to sell his vote. There are a great many women who have that point of view.

There is another thing ~~that would be~~ very dangerous in a woman's ballot -- that is, we would have a large indifferent vote. We know that the worst phase of our unrestricted ballot is the fact that a large number of intelligent men

are indifferent. During this last election in New York, ^{in my immediate} ~~one~~ man was on a Western trip, another was on his summer holiday

trip and neither came home to vote. ~~There are a larger number of women who are indifferent. The result would be a~~

~~great number naturally could be manipulated. There would be~~

~~a larger number among the intelligent women who would be indifferent and we would thus increase the danger.~~ ^{no doubt} ~~Supposing~~

~~the ballot was given us and we were called upon to vote, I think a great many women -- and I hope all the women in this~~

~~audience -- if they knew the ballot was given to us would say~~ ^{in spite of our opposition many} ~~this has been assigned to me as a public duty and I am going to do it. Supposing we did; there would be a little coterie~~

~~in every community that would feel that way and they might possibly put some influence into the ballot -- but would what~~

~~they put in be of sufficient value to offset the danger? I confess the fact that women might contribute some great in-~~ ^{practical quality}

~~fluence to the ballot had a great influence on me -- such great influence that I determined to study the question from an~~ ^{at one time}

~~historical standpoint. The group of women that I took to study was the women of the French Revolution. These studies~~

~~have been the regeneration of France. France today was not~~

were not exactly desultory, but they were not carried out to any great extent, except in the case of Madam Roland. ~~I~~

~~also studied a little of Marie Antoinette and Madam De Staël.~~

Considers her political influence
~~Take for example Madam Roland who was for eight~~

months a tremendous power in the French Republic. Her friends were in the French Cabinet. She was their inspiration. ~~She~~

~~was a woman of enormous power at that time.~~ She had been

educated beyond what most women are -- that is, she ^{had} educated

herself beyond most women for the work she had to do. ~~She~~

~~was a woman brought up in the good circles of that time.~~ Out

of her keen curiosity ^{concerning public affairs} she began to read. ^{ascribed} She read all that

literature which the 18th century produced. There were very

few people in France who had the political knowledge that

Madam Roland had. She carried this on from the time she was

twelve years of age. She not only knew French history and

French literature but she knew English history and English

literature. Now this girl married a very able man who was

what they called an Inspector of Manufacturies. This brought

her into contact with all of the industrial conditions of

France which at that time were so very bad. French industry

was suffering from all the abuses of the old regime, and Madam

Roland saw in her own family just what these abuses were. When

the revolution bubbled up she naturally joined herself with

the revolutionists. ^{Gironde party - a party of idealistic-radical re-} ~~They did all they could, not being in~~

^{publicans} ~~public life themselves.~~ It is certain that they were in-

strumental in bringing many reforms to France. But the prob-

lem was the regeneration of France. Madam Roland was not

satisfied. She immediately began to work for a second re-
volution. One really might have said, "These results are
good; to work any more means great disaster." But Madam Rol-
and had not got ^{all} what she wanted. She insisted that they must
overthrow the king. She brought no wisdom to bear on her ef-
forts. She was influenced by the men with whom she associat-
ed. Not only that, but she had their sublime confidence.
She says in her Memoirs that she feels ^{it} she ^{was} born to be the
providence of France. Now all these men thought they were
born to be the providence of France. They all went about
with copies of ^{new} the Constitution in their pockets saying, "here
I know, I know". Madam Roland was just like these men. They
finally did force a second revolution and she and her friends
lost their heads. When it came to a point when anarchy pre-
vailed Madam Roland with her friends had become so thoroughly
partisan that she allowed that partisanship to swamp her moral
sense. Now there is the danger -- that ^{we would} you might let that
partisan spirit swamp the moral. She was a great, noble woman
but she had this weakness. If we could ^{only} always be sure that
the moral spirit would be stronger than the ^{with us} partisan we might
do well to have the ballot, but never have I known it to be
true that among women the ^{new} moral spirit was ^{greater} than the
partisan. We are ^{by nature} partisans and the thing which we want to do
seems to be the right thing. Our wisdom is lost in wanting to
see our cause victorious. Once in a while you will find a
man who will say, "This is right; I am going to work for this

cause. If my party does not want to follow me let it go. *but rarely*
you find that kind of a woman
 one of the greatest reasons against woman suffrage -- in fact
 with me it *is* the principal reason -- *is* was the fact that women
 are ~~too greatly~~ *so strongly* partisan.

There is another thing, and that is, I do not see why we need the ballot. I think all of us know in our hearts that we can get everything that we want out of the men. Is it not true that if women go to Albany and present their case in a proper way they generally get what they want? I believe it is true that any body of women working for a good cause can get anything at Albany they want if they present it properly. For instance, take this matter of the higher education of women. The agitation for the higher education of women began in the early forties. A few women said "Here, we want a chance for a better education." Oberlin College opened its doors. One after another of the men's colleges opened their doors. I went to a men's college. I think there were but five women there; and I had a chance to see what effect it had. *when I entered*
 The entrance of women into a ~~men's~~ college makes another kind of institution -- I think it makes a good kind -- but it takes off a certain reserve, a certain seclusion, a certain scholastic atmosphere which is a very precious thing. To be entirely cut off from the world as a young man is, *in a man's institution* and to be surrounded by a scholastic atmosphere is a very precious thing to my mind. A great deal of the reserve, of the scholastic atmosphere *is* *by co-education* spoiled. I do not say it was a bad thing.

But it was a great deal for the men, who knew what it would mean, to open the doors of their colleges to women.

Take the matter of professions. For many years I have worked in journalism, associated with men. I know all about women in journalistic work. I know how hard it is for them. And I know this, that a woman can go into journalism in any part of this country and if she does her part she can get on. Women can go into law, into medicine, into almost any profession, and if they do their part they can get on. I do not say there are not ~~little~~ ^{I suppose} jealousies; but that is the fault of human nature. Women are ^{sometimes} often not nice to women.

^{as a rule one doesn't let women compete with them}
^{they say} "We will give them a chance; they may fail, they may be a nuisance." ^{but they should have the choice,}
 And, frankly, ^{in business} ~~they~~ ^{women} often are a nuisance. A man in one of the Washington departments years ago had some hundred women under him and I said, "How do you

get on with these women?" "They do their work very well" ^{to me when I asked} ~~he~~ said, "but do you know, there is something very curious about it; the same number of women are so much more numerous than the same number of men." I did not quite understand then what he meant. I have worked in a number of offices since

and I know exactly what he meant now. ~~But that is necessarily no reason for not giving us the ballot.~~ However, the point which I ^{would} ~~shall~~ try to make is that we can get all the legislature we want without the ballot. The very fact that we have no axe to grind at all when we go to Albany is in our favor. We have come on a disinterested cause; we say we want these things done because of such and such reasons. They

respect our motive because they see it is right. If we have
the ballot and ^{we} ^{as} ~~we immediately go to our Democratic~~
~~or Republican representatives and we become political factors~~
and never in the world is a political factor going to get what
a disinterested man who has a good cause will get.

What is our work? We have outlined it. It is the
first work, society has assigned us. How many women regard
this as a civic duty. I do not know how it is with you, but
I frequently hear women sneering because they have to bear
children. Until women look upon bearing strong, beautiful
children as the highest civic duty they can perform, they
have no business with the ballot. Besides, the family is in
our charge. It is through the family that the finest quali-
ties of Christian citizenship are fostered. They are foster-
ed as they cannot be in any other way. Society has never de-
vised -- I do not want to say it never will devise -- a greater
civic force than your fireside and your reading circle. There
is great danger in the present order of things that the re-
finements, the quickening of the taste, the quickening of the
intelligence, the quickening of the moral atmosphere around
the family circle will be lost. We are always doing things.
We are going to have no time to be at home, and there we are
neglecting our greatest blessing. The family as a civic
force is the greatest force on earth. The family has grown
up as the experimenting of centuries in different countries.
We are losing the art of conversation; we are losing the art

of reading, largely because we are not doing the same thing in our society as women did years ago in France and in England.

As for philanthropy, we do consider that I think as we never did before. Certainly, anyone who goes around this beautiful city as I have been doing to-day and hears, "Such a woman did this; such a woman did that" cannot help but be impressed to see how you women are interested in hospitals, in schools and in charitable enterprises and to believe that you do regard your civic duty very high indeed. But are you doing all you can? Are all the sick in this city provided for? Is there nothing more for you to do in the way of furnishing food and homes and schools for the needy and uneducated people of this city? Until we care better for these duties that society has thrown upon us we should think very little of the ballot.

As for the moral force. Education has been turned over to the women very largely -- so largely that a man who came over from England to examine our school system went back and said that if the men in the United States were not careful they were going to be "effeminized" for our school system was being run by women. Now do you think that if in the last twenty or thirty years our boys and girls had been properly educated and trained to think honestly and to fit their conduct to their thought that we would have the system of graft that prevails in politics, the system of dishonesty that prevails in business? Do you think we would have had the frightful revelations that we have had recently? Do you think that if we as women had done our best to educate our boys and girls, had

talked to them as we should of the natural results of dishonesty of every kind, that these things would have occurred? We are not doing work as educators that society has the right to demand from us and until we do this we have no right to ask for the ballot. Our work is to ask ourselves morning, noon and night, "Am I doing my duty as a citizen; these are my duties, am I discharging them? Are the women of my circle performing them?" Then we will have the right to the ballot. Until then we better attend to the work which is right at our doors.

As I understand my invitation for this afternoon, it is to give you an informal talk on my personal reasons for not believing in the ballot for women. As it is the reasons for my own faith that I am to talk on, you will bear with me if I ^{am} seem a little ^{academic} acrimatic in beginning if ^{and} I make certain statements which although obvious are fundamental. ^{if}

To begin with then, I take it that you will all agree with me that the business of society is to work out the greatest good of the greatest number, and that in order to do this, society has a right to demand from each individual and each class of individuals comprising it and accepting its benefits whatever service he or she can best perform. These duties which society assigns to different individuals are not an arbitrary matter. They are the result of centuries of experience, of many mistakes. They are simply the best that society has been able to determine upon through the ages in which it has been trying to solve this problem of the greatest good to the greatest number. For those who accept society and its benefits -- and all of us do, of course -- (except the anarchist and the openly vicious and defiant) the great question is, "What is the duty that society demands of me?" Do I see it, and am I performing it?" Obviously, if all the members of society see and discharge their duties fully, in time the rights of all will be secured. That is, it is by doing our duties,

not by demanding our rights that we get most out of society. And it is right here that women make their first mistake in the matter of suffrage. They talk about women's rights when they should be talking about women's duties. If they will find their duties and do them, their rights will follow as the day the night.

My first point then in this discussion is that the important thing for all women is to be considering their duty as citizens. Now, I know that many women will ~~come out and~~ ^{at the start they} say that we are not citizens, that we have no rights in public life. That, as a matter of fact, we are a downtrodden and ~~unnecessary~~ ^{unrecognized} element in society. Such talk ~~as this is~~ ^{seems to me} essentially shallow. ~~It has no whole soul perspective at~~ ^{for it is utterly material and trivial} all. Anyone who has studied the world's progress, has studied the development of the various classes of society, cannot but realize that woman has always held a serious place in the public life of every country; that this place has been recognized by philosophers and statesmen, and that if it has been insisted that she limit her activities to certain duties, it is because the wisest thought of each particular country has believed that the best good of that country was served by ^{at that time} women fulfilling such and such duties. It is true that sometimes the place accorded woman has been very low, but this is because the ideas of the country itself has been low, it is not from any premeditated effort to make a slave of the woman. Again, her place has steadily risen as society has risen. If

able creature. If he does nothing for women, it is simply because he does nothing for himself.

In ancient Greece the Spartan mother was obliged to sacrifice all her maternal instincts. Children were taken from her and were brought up in order that they might be more rigorously trained. This was her civic duty. Women accepted this. They accepted it as an honorable duty. Just as when people have a high conception of duty they become high minded, so woman became a high minded creature. A number of women in those days attained great intellectual development.

If you go to Roman history you will find that the same idea of maternity as a great civic duty prevailed among the Romans. The Romans, however, had a new idea -- that is, ~~the family idea~~ ^{placed great stress on} ~~they thought more of the family~~ ^{the family idea in distinctly} while the Greeks, thought very little of the family. ~~The Romans brought up their children in the family.~~ The boys and girls were brought up together in Rome, many of the girls receiving as high an education as the boys. The Roman idea gave a new civic importance to women. Rome said to her women, "The best thing you can do is to go out and nurse the sick and care for the needy."

In the Middle Ages this idea of service was developed. The deaconesses and abbesses of the Middle Ages were wonderful women. Woman then was almost deified. She was the inspiration that urged men on to higher achievement. These two things -- the duty of maternity and service -- combined, and we have before the end of the Middle Ages an ideal

4
The greatest
woman the world recognizes

not forget that this civilization produced with Sparta
We must