

In the field of journalism two of the wisest and most influential of the present race of editorial commentators are women - Dorothy Thompson and Anne O'Hare McCormick.

In the field of business including selling, clerking and clerical work, they have made spectacular increase, planting themselves firmly in finance, management, administration, merchandising, distribution, but it is in the rank and file not at the top that this striking growth has been made. This is true in spite of the fact that women have reached all sorts of advanced posts in the business army in larger numbers probably than in any other field. This is to be expected since they bring to the new system of production a traditional training in executive work. Under the old order the great majority of women managed big or little households, some of them very big indeed. House-keeping was conducted on principles very like those of modern business. An inherited executive quality shows itself frequently when a woman takes hold of a job the public believed only men could handle. The newspapers recently tell of a woman chosen over several male competitors to be a buyer for a big industrial combination. Promptly and without noise she brought in an order running into six figures. This lady said flatly, however, that the opportunity to place big orders was not what she wanted of life, she was willing

to do this only until she had earned enough to get a comfortable house in the country, then she would never have anything more to do with business.

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B ~~In the world of politics there is a still more striking disparity between the gains at the bottom and the top.~~ When the 19th Amendment was declared ratified on August 26th, 1920, a great body of women felt genuinely that they would lead in creating a new world. One of my ardent suffrage friends told _____

me how she went home after a midnight jubilation over the ratification and wakened her husband declaring, "The millennium has come. ¹¹ ~~You'll see what a world we will make.~~"

Today this same woman is completely disillusioned and it is quite useless to argue with her that it takes time to bring a great undertaking to fruition.

This disappointment is not due to lack of interest in the ballot. Women the country over do vote, almost as freely as men do, but rarely does the women's vote change a result. Women have proved conservative and regular. The great mass who decide the issue choose from the candidates in the two major folds. That is, they vote as men do. Nor have women contributed the fresh creative impulse expected. They have proved, too, that woman as a mass are not more righteous than men.

The result is not because they have been kept out of office. Figure that it is only twenty years since the ballot was open and they were admitted into the political machines they have been generously treated in the matter of office. We have them in the United States Senate and House of Representatives; we have them in diplomatic service; we have them in both, if not all the State Legislatures - all sorts of lesser positions. They are represented on every National and State and local council. And finally we have by appointment a woman in the Cabinet - Madam Secretary Frances Perkins;

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six years now in the most difficult cabinet position, as it turned out Mr. Roosevelt had on his list.

It ought to be a satisfaction to women interested in the political side of the movement that Madam Secretary Perkins received her appointment because she was fitted by experience to deal with labor situations. This is much more than can be said for the majority of men who make up a Presidential Cabinet. Skilled as they may be in general affairs they have no special knowledge of the materials in their portfolio, and some of them it must be said never look very thoroughly into that portfolio. They turn that over to assistants and under-secretaries. But Madam Secretary of Labor did know her job.

Moreover, she has kept her head in the bitterest and most widespread organized labor war that has ever ravaged the industrial life of this country. The Department of Labor was geared to arbitration in case of trouble, but the machinery was swept aside by the hasty arrogant hands of rival labor leaders. Unhappily the administration did not, as it had the right, apply a firm disciplinary hand, insisting on negotiation while industry went on, as the only civilized way of dealing with industrial trouble inside a Democratic state. Madam Secretary Perkins' great achievement under these circumstances has been to keep her head, control her tongue. No cabinet head when his Department was under fire has made as few breaks as the Secretary of Labor.

Women have penetrated every department of government service. Of the four million in that service at least a million are women. Mayor La Guardia recently said that as efficient servants as the city had were women and he only wished there were more of them around.

Women may have penetrated everywhere but they are not holding in the second decade since the granting of suffrage the top position they won in the first. Ten years ago according to the National League of Women Voters there were nine women in Congress, today there are five. There is a falling off, too, in the number of women in State Legislatures. Can it be that women themselves are discovering that this is now what they want?

The sorriest disappointment in woman's public life has been her seeming impotence in strangling wars. Go back to 1919 and in all the plans for permanent peace the part women would play stands out. The suffrage was given her in England and in the United States so promptly after the war, largely because she had cooperated so finely with men in carrying it on. Great numbers of men declared, "give woman the tools and she will put an end to war." She complacently thought so herself. And now, twenty years after, see what we have.

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The brilliant numerical showing in the rank and file, the comparatively poor numerical showing at the top, the indifference to the top which great masses of the rank and file show, the failure when they have reached the top in politics particularly, to make a creative contribution is causing not a few women who have proved themselves equal of any man in their various fields to doubt the importance of the emancipation women have achieved, to ask if it is what it was cracked up to be.

A forthright challenge came a few months ago from one of the most distinguished of our women writers, honored not only for her

artistry but for the integrity and the fearlessness of her mind and character - Pearl Buck. It is a challenge which does not down, nor will it. Mrs. Buck sees us with a fresh eye. An American reared in China she had accepted as reality idealistic notions of women's place in the United States. They were educated, free, not subjected to their husbands, led their own lives, did things.

Since her return to America Mrs. Buck has given herself every chance to test our freedom, to measure our advancement. In a recent magazine article under the scornful title, "America's Mediaeval Women" she records her discouragement with what she finds. She contends that our education is getting us nowhere. However good we prove in business or in the arts and professions we are not taken seriously, not respected for our work. Only a shockingly low percentage of us are finding places in spite of all the talk about equality of opportunity, having a man's chance.

Pearl Buck places blame for these results squarely on man. He does not want educated women about, he tolerates them but does not marry them. Like Talleyrand he wants a head on his pillow not concerned with the affairs of Europe and the great majority of women back him up. What they want, Mrs. Buck claims, is not equality, but privilege.

Not only do men prefer not to have women working at their side but it is charged generally that in competitive fields men are unfair in measuring achievement - rewarding merit - opening opportunities.

Again and again I hear women painters complain that in mixed exhibitions a masculine jury will throw out pictures by women, that men art critics ignore women's works or give it the damning qualification "for a woman."

In the academic world it is charged that women cannot advance according to their scholarship and their teaching ability. Rarely are they chosen to head a college department, rarely is a woman placed on the faculty of a man's college. There is no such thing as proportional representation on faculties of co-educational educational institutions. A particularly sore point among the more militant women is that when recently the presidencies of two great woman's colleges were vacant both were filled by men.

Dean Gildersleeve of Barnard College herself a brilliant example of scholarly culture, of ~~the~~ first class executive ability and of tempered judgment and expression, gives as her opinion there are few more women professors in co-education institutions than there were twenty five years ago, and there are actually fewer proportionally in women's colleges. While increasing numbers of women are achieving sound intellectual culture expecting to be able to use it within college walls, the college walls are closing.

The same situation exists in other professions. Everywhere it is common talk among women in trades and professions that the reason they are not getting to the top in larger numbers is man's lack of sympathy, as well as his frequent open opposition to their program.

But is it fair to insist that man is the only or chief cause of the lag ^{at the W. &} in the woman's program? It must not be forgotten how many more persons, men as well as women, are applying. Women are offering themselves in overfilled markets where the competition between men, as well as between men and women, is bitter. One has only to read contemporary literature, so largely now concerned with the material difficulties in which men and women find themselves, to realize what a part competition plays between men and how criminally unfair are many of its practices.

When I hear women artists complaining that men are willfully pushing them out of the art world I recall the men I have heard declaring that it was the jealousy or selfishness of their fellows that had kept them from exhibiting, had hung their pictures badly, had been back of the bad criticisms they had received. That is, there is as much of human nature's established ways of wickedness in the discrimination of which women complain as there is of man's prejudice against women.

And there are other reasons of importance in any serious consideration of the progress of a movement. Not a little of the difficulty in the woman's programs comes from the breaking down of the old divisions of labor. You cannot tear up the way things have been done through many, many generations without unhappy dislocations, long periods of re-adjustment. Woman had a well defined and an important position in the old social and economic world. She had essential duties recognized and respected. She certainly paid her way. But the old ways and creeds and ideals began to give place to new ways, creeds, ideals. She belonged to a world which slowly but surely was taking itself apart. Men were dreaming^{of} a world with the equalities and liberties and enlightments, so far enjoyed only by the few, open to everybody. They sought to rid her as well as themselves of heavy labor, turn it over to machines. ~~Where did women~~^a ~~come in?~~ She saw herself losing her old position and she ~~laid down her demands~~^{and} gradually they were agreed to - all of them. But the program has not quickly given her what she dreamed it would anymore than man's program of a world serviced by machines and devoted to life, liberty and happiness^{has} satisfied him. The machines demanded a service as great as they give and the decrees, fine as they sounded, leave men where they were, still forced to sweat and die for life, liberty and happiness.