

**WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND
NATIONAL
DANGER: A PLEA FOR THE
ASCENDENCY OF MEN**

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Women's suffrage and national danger: a plea for the ascendancy of men by Heber L. Hart

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HEBER L. HART

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A PLEA FOR THE ASCENDENCY OF MAN.

DAUGHTER OF
CALIFORNIA
BY

HEBER L. HART, LL.B.,
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

"Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making."—MILTON.

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P R E F A C E.

POSSIBLY it is now rather late in the history of the Women's Suffrage movement for the appearance of a treatise upon the subject. Yet I cannot but think that, great as is the bulk of the literature wherein the arguments of those who favour the movement are set forth, the comprehensive exposition of those reasons which may be fairly suggested as justifying opposition has been comparatively neglected. Notwithstanding the brilliant speeches which have been delivered by some of those who have in Parliament resisted the claims on behalf of women, so complete has been the omission to systematise and aggressively circulate the leading outlines of their case, that I very much doubt whether the majority of judicially-minded citizens are sufficiently in possession of them. I am, therefore, constrained to think it well to submit the following

pages to the consideration of readers who may still be inclined to the study of the question. That my views are those of the side which not only lacks organisation, but which is apathetic to the last degree—that, indeed, they seem likely to become positively unpopular—may suggest that their statement is impolitic. I conceive, however, that the almost unparalleled importance of the subject, when regarded in connection with what it necessarily involves, in comparison with which the other questions which are now agitated among politicians should seem of limited concern, and the consequently peculiar desirability in this instance of adequate discussion before legislative change, render it manifestly the duty of all whose conscientious convictions with regard to the matter are the result of careful deliberation to proclaim them with respectful temperateness, but undisguised through fear of disapproval.

H. L. H.

3, BRICK COURT, TEMPLE.

March, 1889.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

THE subject of the rights of the female sex has now been before the country for several years. The advocates of the most advanced claims on behalf of women have met with a success which cannot be described as other than extraordinary, and which we may well be disposed to think must have exceeded their most sanguine anticipations. For not only have the numbers of those who support such claims, and particularly that for the political franchise, increased with remarkable rapidity, but there is observable on the part of those who really adhere to the old ideas a singular disposition to smother their opinions, and to practically give up their case as if hopelessly doomed to a not far-distant failure. The revolutionary claims of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* seem to be regarded as merely the crest of a tremendous wave of opinion, against which it would be vain to strive to stand, since it must soon bear

away every vestige of opposition and submerge the unhappy wights who have been too slow in shaping their course so as to take advantage of the irresistible, or even to escape into a position of comparatively safe neutrality. If anyone doubts that this is so, let me point him to the occasions when these claims are the subject of debate, either in a deliberative assembly or in the columns of a journal. Does not the opposition too frequently degenerate either into dogmatic sentimentalism or unseemly pleasantry, and is not a feeble attempt to ridicule the movement very generally substituted for serious and painstaking argument, supported by the honest statement of well-considered evidence? As a consequence, we find that the most extravagantly sophistical arguments and the most hollow assertions of the other side are confidently swallowed by the unsuspecting Briton, as if he were imbibing the very nectar of unadulterated philosophy.

On the side of the leaders of the attacking force, however, there has been comparatively little disposition to treat the matter as one of pure sentiment, or which may be decided by natural intuition, albeit they may show a tendency to demand for their propositions the character of fundamental principles, whose self-evident excellence is only to be supported by arguments in the nature of an unnecessary and entirely voluntary concession. Their case has, at least once, been stated with all the calmness of the experienced sage, the power of a masterly logician, and the confident temperateness of a veteran certain of success. Whether we read essays or listen to speeches on the subject, we may well arrive at the conclusion that, allowing for imperfections necessarily incident to human effort, the treatise of Mr.