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TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1910

The Balance of Power.

In a community where the voting strength of two political parties is pretty nearly equal, the balance of power is in the "floating vote,"—in those voters who have no strictly partisan feeling and are subject to every tide, or changing wind of sentiment, and subject even to the market of vote selling. In a boat at sea the balance of power is in the boxes of ballast, which in time of storm are rolled from side to side to aid in preserving the buoyancy of the vessel. In an individual life, the balance of power is in prejudice. The reason we are not capized by a storm of superior argument is that we throw the weight of our prejudice at the point where most needed to prevent our overthrow. But prejudice, like ballast, may be the means of sinking us in time of a gale, if not skillfully handled.

Now, in college life, one finds a miniature republic, and the balance of power there, with reference to the standard of scholarship, the social life, the moral life, and the general trend of affairs, is not in the faculty nor in the leaders among the students, but it is in the listless, wavering, unstable, part of the student body. Some men in college are to college life what the "floating voter" is to political parties, or the boxes of ballast are to the boat. Such students cannot be neglected with impunity to the student body nor to the institution itself. Their weight has to be reckoned with, although that weight may be esteemed as only avoirdupois. They are human beings and count mightily in reckoning public sentiment. It is with these listless, opinionless students that the alert leader in the college community has his greatest opportunity of impressing himself upon the college life at large. No man liveth to himself, and certainly not in the college. Hence the natural leaders in college life should feel and should accept the responsibility that

this question, "balance of power," thrusts upon them. Watch the "floating votes" and keep the "boxes of ballast" in the right place all through the gale.

"The American Woman to the Front."

[An Essay read by Miss Sadie Virginia Fonville, at the Annual Entertainment of the Psephelian Society, College Auditorium, March 25, 1910.—Ed.]

Just what the social rank of woman was a hundred years ago none of us know exactly, but we know enough from the books and periodicals of the time to be able to contrast the relative rank of American womanhood then and now.

In making this contrast we may profitably keep in mind these two general facts: first, that a person improves in personal acquirements in accordance with the opportunities that come to him and the use that he makes of these opportunities; and the second truth is, that a person, as a rule, rises in his general social standing in proportion to the development and refinement of his being. This is illustrated in the life of a young woman named Margaret Burns, who, although of humble birth and limited opportunities, went to college and worked her way through. While there she came in contact with girls of a higher social standing, and under the influence and the culture and refinement of her surroundings, she became a highly cultured and noble woman. She started to school with the purpose in view of one day being on a social level with her classmates, and when she left college she had so risen in influence as to be thought of as a highly cultured woman.

What is true of Margaret Burns is true also of mankind generally. American women for the past century, like Margaret Burns during her college course, have been striving for higher rank in the social order, and now with the beginning of the twentieth century, we find them standing almost on a social level with men.

The American woman has made rapid progress along almost all professional lines, such as law, medicine, journalism, music, art and authorship. She has shown that she possesses remarkable talent. She is the queen of her sex. She is looked upon by her sisters across the sea as a leader in all that tends to lift woman up from the lowest depths of slavery to the loftiest heights of attainment.

She possesses some qualities that the European women do not have and which make her envied by them, for she is independent, business like, and possessed with an abundance of energy and perseverance, so that when she undertakes anything, she does not give up until she has accomplished her purpose.

Thus, by many hard struggles, the American woman, having raised herself to the equal of her brothers, she has to put forth greater effort than ever, in order to hold her exalted place.

She has the advantage, however, of being in a country where, not royalty nor aristocracy, but where freedom is the basis of social life. Her European sisters, on the other hand, have to follow, in a greater or less degree, the beaten paths of their ancestors, for the traditions and social customs are not easily broken down

in a country where they have been in existence for centuries.

Education is the basis of social development. It is the medium by which woman has been lifted up to a higher plane of social distinction. A hundred years ago there were no colleges for women, and all the education she received was in her own home under a private tutor, which only the wealthy or well-to-do could afford. There was no place for the woman in the business world. But now not only the avenues of business are open to her, but, as we have already said, she ranks well with her brothers in the professions, also. This wonderful improvement in woman's position in the general social order is due, perhaps, more to increased educational advantages than to any other one thing. Instead of no college doors open to her, as a hundred years ago, there are now in the United States one hundred and thirty-nine colleges for the women alone and there are five hundred and fifteen co-educational and male colleges and universities, nearly all of the last named being open to women.

The president of the University of Virginia is reported to have said recently in an address in Norfolk, that he was glad the University of Virginia, the only one of the larger and more important universities, had not yielded to the fad of co-education. President Alderman is, perhaps, justly regarded as one of the leading educational spirits in American academic life today, and his opinions usually carry weight, but in this opinion he has pitted his own mind against the well-nigh universal success of the co-education of men and women, and against a true prophecy of England's most charming and popular poet of the nineteenth century, Alfred Tennyson, in his world famous poem, "The Princess," wherein he hints the coming age of woman's collegiate training.

Dr. Alderman, however, may yet have an experience similar to that of Andrew D. White, the builder, and for twenty years the president of Cornell University, one of the largest and most influential co-educational universities of America. Mr. White, in an address at a dinner of the women graduates of this university, at the Hotel Manhattan, in New York City, March 3, 1906, expressed gratification over the "preternatural foresight of Ezra Cornell, which led him to found a co-educational institution." "Much of Cornell's success," continued President White, "has been due to its women students. The presence of women in a university benefits it vastly in many ways. In the beginning," he continues, "I was not so sanguine as Mr. Cornell concerning the advisability of establishing a co-educational institution. Opponents of the

idea said that it would make the men effeminate. I went down to Oberlin to note the effects there. The moment I learned that Oberlin had sent a greater proportion of its students to the Civil War than had any other college, I was in favor of co-education.

"I believe that the women are partly responsible for the growth of the university and am heartily glad that Mr. Cornell and I got together on co-education. I shall always stand firm in the belief that the ideal college is one that admits both men and women."

According to Mr. White, the opening of colleges to women has been beneficial, not only to women, but to men as well.

There are other sources than education that have aided in the bettering of woman's social place, but I shall not take time to discuss them here. The superior intelligence that general educational advantages have given to American women, has put them more nearly on a level intellectually with their brothers, and, so far as we can learn, this superior intelligence has emphasized rather than detracted from the force of character in women.

Thus in this democratic America, where intelligence and character take the place of caste and heredity, in the Orient, the influence of education on woman's social position during the last hundred years has been to raise her from a place of servile effeminacy, weak in her influence on the general currents of social life, to an exalted place of intelligence, intellectual power and moral influence, and now she wields a tremendous combined influence on the moral and social life of a great and free country.

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