

'Twas Ever Thus.

Some Conservative Women Have Always Fought Reforms.

They Opposed the Higher Education and Ridiculed Vassar College – Would Not Speak to the First Woman Physician – They Objected Even to Property Rights.

At the recent Congressional hearing in Washington upon woman suffrage, Miss Emily P. Bissell read a paper in opposition, in which the following argument was made:

“The suffrage movement must be against the opinions of most of our sex, since it has been pushed for fifty years and still remains a minority movement. In these fifty years every other woman’s movement really desired by women has succeeded. The educational movement is a magnificent success. The movement for property rights is so successful that even married women now have more rights than married men. The entrance of women into all occupations and professions has been so great that now out of possible 360 occupations have been conquered for our sex.”

I wonder if the “Antis” ever stop to think that they have fought against every one of these steps in the progress of women, from learning to read and write and to casting a ballot? It is a matter of history with what ridicule Mary Lyon’s first attempts to secure the education of women were received, not only by the mass of men but by the mass of women as well.

When Vassar College was founded, Mrs. Lucinda H. Stone, of Kalamazoo, Mich., tells of hearing the “Antis” women of intelligence and cultivation, who voiced the general feeling, say: “The mere fact of its being called a ‘college for women’ is enough to condemn it. We may be sure that no refined Christian mother will ever send her daughter to Vassar College.”

When a man in Saco, Maine, first employed a saleswoman, the “Antis” remonstrated earnestly with him on the sin of which he was guilty in placing a young woman in a position of such “publicity.”

When Lucy Stone sought to secure for married women the right to their own property, the “Antis” asked with scorn: “Do you think I would give myself where I would not give my property?”

When Susan B. Anthony went from door to door with petition praying the Legislature to enact laws which would permit women to own property and to control the wages they earned, and would take from fathers the power to will away their children. It was the “Antis” who slammed the door in her face, telling her they had all rights they wanted.

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I wonder if the “Antis” ever stop to think that they have fought against every one of these steps in the progress of women, from learning to read and write to casting a ballot? It is a matter of history with what ridicule Mary Lyon’s first attempts to secure the education of women were received, not only by the mass of men, but by the mass of women as well.

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When Elizabeth Blackwell began to study medicine, the “Antis” at her boarding-house refused to speak to her, and when passing her on the streets would hold their skirts aside so as not to touch her.

No great reform was ever asked for by the masses. The more progressive few have seen the need and obtained the change, and the masses have grown to the improved conditions, and the reason why the ballot was not obtained for women long ago is because we must go to the masses in order to obtain the right of suffrage.

In entering all these other lines of activity, all that was necessary was to find some woman brave enough to withstand the ridicule and some man brave enough to employ her, or some college brave enough to open its doors, which furnished the entering wedge. It is very manifest to any thinking person why the ballot is the last right to be obtained for women. Had it been necessary to obtain the consent of the masses, we should not to-day have women lawyers, ministers and doctors, or the present improved property rights for women.

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