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EDITORIAL

WOMAN SUFFRAGE FIGHT IN CALIFORNIA.

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THE fate of the proposed amendment No. 4 to the constitution of California, granting the suffrage to woman, is trembling in the scales.

While the result remains doubtful some of the details thereof are not—and they are well worth considering.

The State was virtually divided into two camps—“the city,” with San Francisco and Los Angeles leading, and “the country.” “The city,” where the proletarian character of the majority of women is outlined on the social canvas with lines vastly more clear than in “the country,” voted the amendment down with so decisive a majority as to threaten the majority given the amendment in “the country.”

Another detail of significance is found in the circumstance, reported in the despatches, that the bitterest opponents of the amendment came, not from among men, but from among women.

Thus the issue of woman suffrage, much to the dislike of its leading advocates, attests in the social climate of California its intimate kinship with that broader, all-embracing issue—the Social Question of to-day.

Luminous is the fact that “the city”—San Francisco and Los Angeles leading—furnished a preponderance of votes against the amendment.

It is in “the city” that the proletariat are gathered in larger numbers. There it is that the individual proletarian incurs the errors of his earlier beginnings, before he develops the capabilities of his species, and reaches the maturity of class-consciousness. In his early stage of Error, the proletarians struggle for existence confuses his mind’s sight. His foe appears to him, not in that foe’s actual shape, the employer, the Capitalist Class, but in the shape of the competitor for his job, in his fellow proletarian. Utterly class-unconscious, the proletarian turns his efforts against his own fellows. Whatever may promote the increase of his numbers in the

Labor Market he opposes. Hence we see him in California—Los Angeles and 'Frisco leading—fight “Asiatic Immigration,” instead of coalescing with his Asiatic fellow proletarian and making a common front with him against the actual foe of both, the capitalist of all nationalities; hence, also, do we see him now, in that same California,—'Frisco and Los Angeles again leading—thunderously voting down the political enfranchisement of his fellow proletarians of the female sex, whom, in the blindness of his class-{un}consciousness, he looks down upon as a competitor instead of recognizing in her the flesh of his class-flesh and the bone of his class-bone.

Luminous also is the fact of woman anti-suffrage agitational bitterness having outstripped the agitational intensity of the male anti-suffragists. The light of this fact falls from another angle of the social compass.

'Tis not upon its own ranks only that a Ruling Class leans. A Ruling Class can ever count upon support from among the elements that it enslaves. As Eugene Sue so frequently exhibits in the course of his monumental work *The History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*, serfs of the glebe were found among the bitterest adversaries of the moves to curtail the powers of the feudal lord; as was witnessed in England, victims of the feudal tenure were among the intensest opponents of Pym and Hampden in the efforts of these in behalf of the oncoming bourgeois; as was sadly experienced by the Union Army during our Civil War, more than once did Negroes interfere with the Army's effectiveness against the “Massah”;—and, as witnessed now in California, it was from the ranks of Woman that the intensest opposition was manifested to her political emancipation. Habit turns chains sweet to the taste of many a victim of the social chain-gang.

The two flashes of light cast by the California campaign for Woman Suffrage merge into and supplement each other:—

The so-called Woman Question is not a Sex Question. It is a part of the Social Question of the day, that Question being the economic emancipation of mankind—Socialism—the Social Revolution.

The proper promotion of Woman Suffrage pre-demands the class-conscious enlightenment of the proletariat, their class-conscious organization, their class-conscious, hence, united action.

In short, the path of Woman Suffrage is blazoned by the Socialist banner, and

the Socialist bugle call to the Proletariat to unite.

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