

**THE BALLOT AND THE
BULLET. VOL. III.
DECEMBER, 1897. NO.3**

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The Ballot and the Bullet. Vol. III. December, 1897. No.3 by Carrie Chapman Catt

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CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT

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DECEMBER, 1897. NO.3**

THE BALLOT AND THE BULLET

COMPILED BY
CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT.

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PREFACE.

The struggle for individual political liberty has extended over a period of seven hundred years, and even in the most highly civilized nations it is not yet closed. It dates its inception from the period when nations bowed in helpless and unquestioning obedience to royal edicts, and when all political power was concentrated in the hands of one man. The first victory won for individual freedom was when Magna Charta struck its fatal blow at the Divine right of kings. Since that time, class after class has either forced a recognition of its claims to a share in governmental authority, or it has been gratuitously extended through the liberality and justice of the ruling power.

It is a curious fact, that throughout this long period each movement to extend political privilege (which in the latter part of this period has been synonymous with the ballot), whether in this or foreign countries, has been resisted along the same lines and with precisely the same arguments. Each class, in turn, which it has been proposed to empower with political authority, has

been forced to prove its patriotism, its loyalty, its intelligence and its virtue. Each class has met the charges that the voting privilege would prove demoralizing to its members, a serious injury to those already enjoying the use of the ballot, and a menace to the safety of the state. Each class has even counted among its members advocates of its own liberty and remonstrants against it. History has constantly repeated itself, and the evolution of each movement to extend the suffrage has been but the rehearsal of the last.

It is a long distance between the conditions of 1215, when King John was forced to share his power with the Barons, and present institutions. In the United States, Democracy is established with the exception of one remaining disenfranchised class—women. Even this class has received full suffrage privileges in four states and fractional suffrage in twenty-three states and two territories, additional, and the last scenes in the struggle for individual political liberty are evidently near at hand. Yet in this modern movement, arguments and objections of ancient times are repeated with the freshness and vigor of originality and without a suspicion that they have been repeated, answered, and abandoned again and again in the last seven hundred years. If, for instance, one unacquainted with the question should de-

sire to learn the arguments for and against woman suffrage, he could find them all in the written history of the enfranchisement of the non-taxpayers in the United States, the small rate-payers in England, or the workmen of Belgium.

One argument only has the merit of genuine originality. It is the claim that the ballot is a privilege which must be paid for by military service ; and since, as they say, women cannot and will not fight, they must renounce all claim to the ballot. No opponent of woman suffrage has yet appeared who has not made much of this argument. At the close of a century of democracy, in no period of which has the willingness or ability to bear arms ever been made a qualification for the ballot, an effort is being made to discover in remote customs an origin wherein to establish a military basis for modern American citizenship. Utterly oblivious to inconsistencies, the new philosophy of bullets for ballots is promulgated with vigor and seriousness by ministers and editors, whose occupation exempts them from military duty ; and by book worms, lawyers and clerks, whose physical incompetence would dismiss them from the muster. Indifferent, likewise, are they to the fact, that women of physical strength and courage, under the influence of ardent devotion to their respective causes,

braved both the dangers of war and discovery, and served with honor in the ranks of soldiers, North and South, while it was no uncommon incident for men to hide or even maim themselves in order to protect themselves from the draft.

The disgust experienced by persons of refinement at thought of the settlement of grave questions of human liberty and justice, or even mere technicalities of opinion, by the arbitrament of a brutal physical contest, has never penetrated the conception of the advocates of the military philosophy. The rapid evolution of sentiment in all civilized countries toward peaceful settlements of difficulties, and the appeal of disputes instead, to trained and steady brains, has passed unnoticed. Forgetting that ideal conditions of society demand votes which stand for brains, not muscles for consciences, not bullets, the argument gains ground only with those who sympathize with past conditions and who are blinded to present possibilities.

This little pamphlet is compiled in reply to this argument. The paper "Woman Warriors" appeared several years ago and was prepared by D. R. Livermore, whose wife's name, Mary A. Livermore, is better known than that of any other woman in connection with the service of women to the loyal armies of the United States in the