

**ECCE FEMINA: AN ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE
WOMAN QUESTION, BEING AN
EXAMINATION OF ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF
FEMALE SUFFRAGE BY JOHN STUART MILL
AND OTHERS, AND A PRESENTATION OF
ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSED
CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION OF SOCIETY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649291717

Ecce Femina: an attempt to solve the woman question, being an examination of arguments in favor of female suffrage by John Stuart Mill and others, and a presentation of arguments against the proposed change in the constitution of society by Carlos White

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CARLOS WHITE

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By CARLOS WHITE.



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2/6/11

HANOVER, N.H.:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
BOSTON: LEE & SHEPARD.
1870.

Wn of the "softer" sex, though not by any means really so soft as we are complimented and coaxed into appearing, have no call, and mostly no desire, to force ourselves into the province of men. We feel that we are not fitted for it. Female doctors (though all honor be to those heroic, self-sacrificing women who are capable of undertaking such a profession), female missionaries, travellers, and life-long devotees to science, art, or philanthropy, are, and always will be, rare and peculiar cases, not to be judged by ordinary rules. The average number of us are content to leave to men their own proper place; but none the less resolutely ought we to keep our own, one of the first "rights" of which is, the supreme rule of all domestic concerns. — *Miss Mulock*.

Equally blasphemous, and perhaps even more harmful, is the outcry about "the equality of the sexes," — the frantic attempt to force women, many of whom are either ignorant of, or unequal for, their own duties, into the position and duties of men. — *The same*.

The difference between man's vocation and woman's seems naturally to be this, — one is abroad, the other at home; one external, the other internal; one active, the other passive. He has to go and seek out his path; hers usually lies close under her feet. Yet each is as distinct, as honorable, as difficult; and, whatever custom may urge to the contrary, if the life is meant to be a worthy or a happy one, each must resolutely and unshrinkingly be trod. — *The same*.

As for the evil you complain of, impute it to that imperfect education which at once cultivates and enslaves the intellect, and loads the memory while it fetters the judgment. Women, however well read in history, never generalize in politics; never argue on any broad or general principle; never reason, from a consideration of past events, their causes and consequences. But they are always political through their affections, their prejudices, their personal *liaisons*, their hopes, their fears. . . . Hence it is that we make such blind partizans, such violent party-women, and such wretched politicians. I never heard a woman *talk* politics, as it is termed, that I could not discern at once the motive, the affection, the secret bias, which awayed her opinions and inspired her arguments. If it appeared to the Grecian sage so "difficult for a man not to love himself, nor the things that belong to him, but justice only," how much more for a woman! — *Mrs. Jameson.*

It is an unfortunate feature of some, who, with the best of motives, are laboring to relieve the burdens of their sex, that they assume that the fault rests with men, as if they were in antagonism with woman's interests and rights. But, in all Christian countries, men are trained to a tender care of wives, mothers, and sisters; and a chivalrous impulse to protect and provide for helpless womanhood is often stronger in men than in most women who have had no such training. . . . It is certain that all just and benevolent men feel the wrongs and disabilities of womanhood as much as most women do, and have been as much perplexed in seeking the most effective remedy. — *Catherine E. Beecher.*

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ECCE FEMINA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE world moves. No one can doubt it, who lives in the United States. But it is neither strange nor wonderful that a nation which came into existence in defiance of the customs and regulations which have ruled the rest of the world, should be teeming with new ideas of government, and agitated by theories that have never been thought of before. Yet England, though staid and sober, has been obliged to yield to the demands for innovation; and her hereditary aristocracy seem to fear lest the very foundations of society may be destroyed. France, the nursery of enthusiasm, burst the bonds which had held her for centuries, but lost a great part of the truth she contended for,

because she coupled it with error and falsehood. The French people rashly thought that liberty meant the destruction of all that had previously existed. They imagined that the laws of God were to be repealed, and supposed that every man might do what seemed desirable in his own eyes. But the French are again aroused. They will not quietly submit to absolute monarchy. The Prussian government has recognized the rights of the people. Even Austria has felt the influence of the age. Russia has accomplished wonders in the way of reform, although there is much left undone. China feels the influence of the great changes in the rest of the world. Italy, Spain, and, in fact, nearly all the nations of the globe, have undergone some remarkable political or intellectual change during the nineteenth century. The spread of Christianity, through the efforts of missionaries, and the consequent advancement of knowledge and civilization among the barbarous nations and tribes, are most important features of the times. Wars have been frequent; and, in short, the changes throughout the known world, within the last hundred years, have been greater than those of any other century since the flood. Old institutions have been swept away, and no custom is likely to be spared,