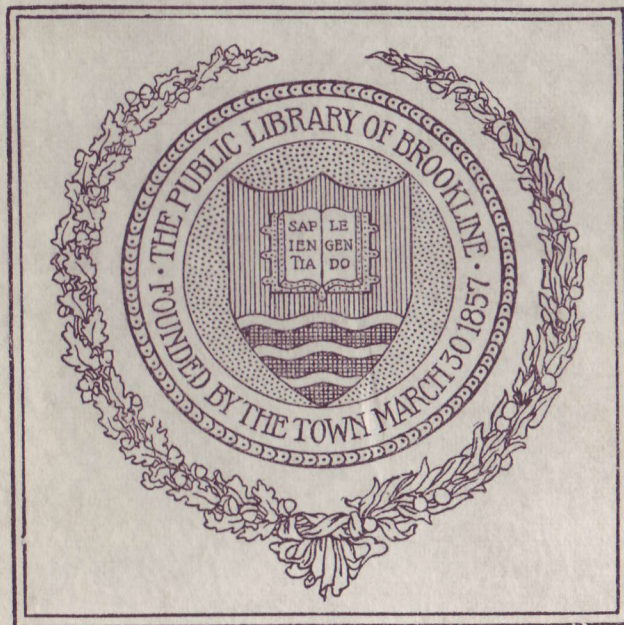


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Letter From Gail Hamilton

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LETTER FROM GAIL HAMILTON.
BROOKLINE, MASS.

REPLY TO THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT FROM THE
"WOMAN'S JOURNAL."

"Yet on some accounts we must regret that the leading re-monstrants did not appear this year. Their arguments against woman suffrage would have been published widely in the papers; and the oftener we can get these objections stated and reiterated by the press, the more clearly their weakness appears, and the better it is for woman suffrage." As Gail Hamilton says:—

"A remarkable feature of the discussion is the scarcity of reasons brought against female suffrage. There seems to be a sort of instinct against it, but no reason. This instinct may in itself be the best of reasons, and if opponents would only plant themselves there, they would hold a strong position. But the things brought forward as arguments are so flimsy that argument and instinct are blown away together."

AUGUSTA, MAINE, *February 9, 1886.*

MY DEAR MADAM,—If any "woman's journal" or man's journal has done me the honor to consider my opinion worthy of misquotation or misrepresentation, I accept the compliment while repudiating the testimony.

The paragraph to which you refer is not a misquotation, but, appearing without its context, may mislead those who have not read the classics of their country as they ought. It is an extract from "Woman's Wrongs," a little book of which the first part—72 pages—was devoted to tearing in pieces some of the flimsiest of these anti-female-suffrage arguments; the second part—20 pages—was intended to set in their strongest light the arguments for female suffrage; the third part—112 pages—attempted to show that these arguments also availed nothing, and that female suffrage would not mend matters.

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If I were to do the work over again, I hope I should do it better; but I should react even more confidently, to the same conclusions.

Without in the least degree impugning the motives or decrying the character of woman suffragists, I sincerely hope that their cause will be unsuccessful, in so far as it would impose the ballot upon women.

In their desire for the better education of women they have my warmest sympathy, though we might not always agree as to what the better education is, or how it is to be effected. But my earliest instinct and my latest judgment combine in maintaining that women have a right to claim exemption from political duty and responsibility, and that men have no right to lay the burden upon them.

If the public work is ill done by men, the remedy is to do it better, not to shift the weight to shoulders already heavily laden, and whose task they do not propose in any respect to lighten.

I regret to see women engaged in the movement, because it indicates a failure to discern the natural place of woman in the order of creation—the place of eternal superiority and supremacy. It is a movement backward towards men and mastodons, the miocene hipparion and eocene anchitherium—instead of forward, in the direction of woman, and the spiritual universe, and everlasting light—and there is not a man in the Massachusetts Legislature who would not tell you so if he were only woman enough to know what I am talking about!

I beg you to believe me very sincerely yours,

GAIL HAMILTON.

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