

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1919.

THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR WOMEN VOTERS

The opening at the State college at Durham of the first school of citizenship for women ever held in New England marks a new era, politically, of transcendent importance. The school to teach women the duties and responsibilities of their new estate as voting citizens of the republic discloses on the part of the women who are responsible for the adoption of the plan a recognition that these duties and responsibilities cannot be properly discharged without adequate and intelligent preparation. In this the women begin what we anticipate will be a series of innovations in politics which men generally will acknowledge might well have been undertaken on behalf of men voters long ago.

Apparently it has been the easy going male conception of the functions of citizenship that any man, having attained the age of twenty-one, or having lived five years in the country and having conformed with certain legal requirements, was equipped to exercise, without specific training, or instruction, the right to participate in government. On second thought, of course, this is undubitably wrong. No one will deny that a very large percentage of the male vote cast is unintelligent and influenced by prejudice and considerations foreign to any desire to simply promote the common good.

This readiness to invest all male residents, regardless of their fitness for the high privilege of suffrage, with a vote is directly responsible for most of the disgraceful features which have characterized city, state and national politics.

Obviously the women who are preparing for the participation of their sex in public affairs have a very different conception of what lies before them. They propose to go about the task of getting ready for citizenship as a very serious matter—as it is.

As one result of this gathering at the State college we hope to see both the great political parties in this state reorganize their committees so as to take into the party councils representatives of New Hampshire women, who, in the very near future, will share with New Hampshire men, responsibility for the election of all public officials, city, state and national, and will contribute a full half of the public whose will should be expressed in the laws of the municipalities, the state and the nation.

It is none too soon for the leaders of public opinion in this state to accustom themselves to the condition soon to come into being when women, no less than men, will enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.