

except the Parliamentary one; and what have they done? On boards of guardians and in Scots school boards they take a humdrum part in the routine work of administration; but no notable new proposal has emanated from a woman, or all the country would have heard of it. Their colleagues treat them with chivalrous courtesy and consideration. Mrs. Garrett Anderson has been mayor of her little township, to no particular purpose so far as we know. Miss Margaret Ashton at Manchester and Miss Siddon in Huddersfield are intelligent and much-honoured members of local boards. If they had anything brilliant to propose it would have an extra chance of being carried; for the one or two women in any assembly of men are indulged and flattered with to a quite notorious extent. Women never forget their sex, nor do men forget it; and what a woman says or does is not considered on its merits, but always with reference to considerations of her sex. Men are so glad to find a few women interested in public questions, and are so delighted to find them forming an opinion which seems dispassionate and on the merits, that one such woman exercises more power than belongs to one personality and one vote in an assembly. If with all this deference and disproportionate "pull" they have won so few seats and done so little when seats have been won, it is rather strong proof that woman has no specific mission or call for political life.

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Women in Public Affairs.

Even the best of them are, to put it mildly, unreliable in public affairs. One of the most notable women of the nineteenth, as now of the twentieth century, has been Mrs. Annie Besant. Brilliant as a speaker, capable as a writer and administrator, with a splendid faculty of mastering one subject after another, she has gone the whole gamut of opinion from Anglicanism to Atheism, from Socialism to sheer Obscurantist Theosophy and the belief in a Second Coming. And all the time there has been a man in the background—Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Stead, Mr. Hyndman, Mr. Herbert Burrows, and I know not who now. The fact is, Mrs. Besant is the type of the clever woman—a great assimilator, a great worker, but never independent, practically incapable of standing alone for any length of time.

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The cleverest and most attractive women have usually most of this cataleptic dependence on a man. Let the most strenuous and masculine of the Suffragettes be married, and immediately her temper and attitude change. She not only gives up the militancy in which there was none so hardy and aggressive as she, but she turns her guns against the militants, offering reasons that are laughably inconclusive when we know all the time that the real explanation is that, woman-like, she has merged her individuality in that of a man—not a strong-minded man, masterfully opposed to votes for women, but just a man who has developed the interests of his mate in the momentous affairs of the small kingdom called Home. While Dr. Pankhurst lived, his wife was a quiet, motherly, pleasant gentlewoman. It is only the widow who is fierce. During the past twenty-five years we have known one strenuous woman's-righter after another drop out of the ranks, and the