

I ever heard of their giving advice to women as to the proper use of the important political power they already possess in the sphere of local government. I remember how amused some of us were when a famous suffragette, coming down to help Victor Grayson in the Colne Valley, wanted to know why Victor was running against a good Liberal !

The possible mischief which woman rule would do, the actual mischief which it perpetuates in local government, is dismissed by our correspondent with the extraordinary plea that that is the argument used by those who opposed the extension of the suffrage to working men. As if that were an answer ! There are, to put it mildly, several material differences between the one plea and the other. The Tories of '32 and the Whigs of '68 had no experience of how working men generally would vote, because up to 1835 (when the Municipal Corporations Act was passed) the workmen mostly had no votes of any kind, and till '68 they had no Parliamentary vote. Whereas we know how reactionary the women vote in the local elections, in which their infatuated influence is perfectly clear. Anyhow, there was a class antagonism between the wealthy man who lived on rent or interest and the man who lived by his labour ; for rent and interest are deducted from the wages of the worker, and the more the idlers take the less he gets. But there is no such antagonism between the sexes ; for, as already urged, both good times and bad are felt by a man's wife, mother, and daughters as well as, or even more than, by himself. A man does not grow rich with his master ; but a wife does grow rich with her husband. There is a necessary class antagonism, but there is no necessary sex antagonism.

The Only Test.

After all, there is no test of the desirability or otherwise of any change except that of results, either actual or probable, and in this case we have experience to guide us. Justice is not an abstract thing which must be done irrespective of consequences—though the heavens should fall. If the heavens fell there would be an end of humanity and all justice with it. When we find women who live in slums voting for the slum owner and perpetuator, and against the slum abolisher who would supply decent municipal houses let at cost of construction and maintenance, we can only say that we have enough male blockheadism of that sort to contend with already without adding the women's folly to it in the sphere of Parliamentary politics. On what ground of reason should those who believe in public control and communal efficiency forge a weapon to help to perpetuate private greed and callousness to human suffering ? On what compulsion of logic or humanity or even justice must we give more political power to those who so abuse the power they already possess ? What could be more reasonable than to say to the handful of Suffragists (for a handful they are !), "Show us that you are fit for political power by using, and using in your own best interests, the suffrages you have, and then come and ask us for more." The Faithful Servant in the parable was made master over many things because he had proved faithful over a few things. Is it not a very fair and a very sensible test ?