

What the Women Want

“Whatever do the women want?” we hear the scornful cry.
To you, O “Christian Commonwealth!” we women make reply.
We *want* a “Christian Commonwealth,” where just and equal laws
Shall make a needless mission ours, who plead the woman’s cause.

It is a wholesome lesson we were taught as girls at school
That our vaunted Constitution has a fundamental rule.
That whosoever hath no voice on voting or debate
Is free from obligation to contribute to the State.

When we women claim the Franchise, men have one answering note,
“By reason of your womanhood, we do refuse the vote.”
But when the tax collector calls, ’tis not enough to say,
“By reason of our womanhood we do refuse to pay.”

O wise and prudent Rulers ! we are women it is true,
But we are fellow citizens and fellow subjects too.
We have hearts and brains and voices, have we no right to say,
By what laws we will be governed – whose Sceptre we obey?

There are wrongs that must be righted – bitter woes that seek redress.
We can hear our sisters calling in their weakness and distress.
We need the power to lift them from their sad and evil plight.
’Tis for *this* we want the franchise – and we claim it as our right.

F. E. S.