

Keep Woman in Her Sphere

(Auld Lang Syne)
by D. Estabrook

This song is found in numerous suffrage songbooks, and was widely sung at rallies.

I have a neighbor, one of those
Not very hard to find
Who know it all without debate
And never change their mind
I asked him "What of woman's rights?"
He said in tones severe--
"My mind on that is all made up,
Keep woman in her sphere."

I saw a man in tattered garb
Forth from the grog-shop come
He squandered all his cash for drink
and starved his wife at home
I asked him "Should not woman vote?"
He answered with a sneer--
"I've taught my wife to know her place,
Keep woman in her sphere."

I met an earnest, thoughtful man
Not many days ago
Who pondered deep all human law
The honest truth to know
I asked him "What of woman's cause?"
The answer came sincere --
"Her rights are just the same as mine,
Let woman choose her sphere."

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These songs and thirteen more are available on
Songs of the Suffragettes, 1958 Folkways Records #FH5281
c/o Smithsonian-Folkways Records <http://www.si.edu/folkways/>
414 Hungerford, Suite 444 Rockford, MD 20850 (301)443-2324

For more information about traditional women's music, visit Gerri Gribi's website
A Musical Romp Through Women's History <http://creativefolk.com>

The New America

(America)

Sung at the National-American Woman's Suffrage Convention, 1891, this song reflects a common suffrage argument — that giving women the vote simply fulfilled the promise of 1776.

Our country, now from thee
Claim we our liberty
In freedom's name
Guarding home's altar fires
Daughters of patriot sires
Their zeal our own inspires
Justice to claim

Women in every age
For this great heritage
Tribute have paid
Our birth-right claim we now
Longer refuse to bow
On freedom's altar now
Our hand is laid

Sons, will you longer see
Mothers on bended knee
For justice pray?
Rise now, in manhood's might
With earth's great souls unite
To speed the dawning light
Of freedom's day

Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be?

(Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be?)
by L. May Wheeler

Set to a popular parlour tune, this song addresses an argument made against woman's suffrage: that women already had everything they needed — male protection, a sphere of their own — and didn't need to vote as well.

Oh Dear, what can the matter be
Dear dear what can the matter be
Oh dear, what can the matter be
Women are wanting to vote

Women have husbands, they are protected
Women have sons by whom they're directed
Women have fathers, they're not neglected
Why are they wanting to vote?

Women have homes, there they should labor
Women have children whom they should favor
Women have time to learn of each neighbor
Why are they wanting to vote?

Women can dress, they love society
Women have cash with all its variety
Women can pray with sweetest piety
Why are they wanting to vote?

Women have reared all the sons of the brave
Women have shared n the burdens they gave
Women have labored this country to save
And that's why we're going to vote

Oh Dear, what can the matter be
Dear dear what can the matter be
Oh dear, what can the matter be
Why should men get every vote?