

Solidarity of Sex.

[A letter by Elizabeth Robins, reacting to the coverage of the Democratic Party Convention in its June 17, 1916 edition and its brief editorial of June 18, page 36. ER's Diary is the source for information that her letter, printed as by "Elizabeth Tobin," is a misprint for her name. Also note that ER's response mis-dates the editorial she quotes. In their extended article of June 17, the *Times* coverage of the discussion of the Women's Suffrage plank in the party platform highlighted the lock held upon the electoral college that those states which had passed women's suffrage legislation had upon the presidential voting. The galleries and floor were filled with women very vocally advocating suffrage (and hissing loudly at positions they disagreed with, especially that of Governor James Ferguson of Texas who presumed that voting rights be left to the states and whose minority plank to that effect was defeated). ER's response is to the brief editorial on the next day which ridiculed the position of the Woman's Party's claim that the states who already allowed the franchise could sway the electoral college. In addition to the phrase that Robins quotes, the editorial declares that such a threat was absurd, and that "The hollow and confessedly hypocritical convention approval doesn't help the Cause a straw."]

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In today's editorial on suffrage in the conventions you quote the woman's party as saying: "Favor suffrage, or we will throw the woman's vote against you in twelve suffrage States."

Your comment is: "Of course the threat was absurd. There is no such thing as a woman's vote, no solidarity of sex."

Our comment on that is: There wouldn't be a distinctively woman's vote if there wasn't a distinctively man's vote. Woman's inclination is to

work with, not against, man. But when man as a sex acts against woman as a sex, then it may become the duty of woman as a sex to prove:

- 1. Her power of acting in concert with women to make clear the woman's point of view.**
- 2. Her power—having established that view—to lay aside sex distinction in regions where it is irrelevant and to show that public work may be done on the broader human ground of our common need and our united aspiration.**

The women of America are in sight of their greatest victory.

To win it—if men will have it so—women must prove their power to make use of a woman's political solidarity for the instructing and chastening of a man's political solidarity.

ELIZABETH TOBIN.

Greenwich, Conn., June 17, 1916.

[Transcribed for the Robins Web at JSU. Evidence of the misprinting of ER's name as Elizabeth Robins is recorded in her diary and documented in my dissertation and biography. This is confirmed by Sue Thomas in her listing of the Bibliography item, Number 237. When she saw the article in print, Robins noted the typo and declared to her diary of 20 June 1916, "So much for my writing!" Yet further investigation reveals how earnestly Suffrage advocates were during the 1916 campaign. Furthermore, Robins' own brother Raymond was a key figure in nominating Teddy Roosevelt as the Progressive Party standard bearer. Later, TR would withdraw from the campaign, hoping that move would help defeat Wilson. --JEG]

The New York Times.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 1916.—TWENTY-TWO PAGES.

Page 10, Column 6

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