

AC/447

MAX GATE,  
DORCHESTER.

Dec. 22. 1908

Dear Madam:

I regret to reply to your letter concerning the prospective "Coming Citizen" paper by saying that I feel unable to let my name appear as one of the possible contributors.

Though I hold, as you may know, that women are entitled to the vote as a matter of justice if they want it, I think the action of men therein should be permissive only - not cooperative. I feel by no means sure that the majority of those who clamour for it realize what it may bring in its train: if they did three-fourths of them would be silent. I refer to such



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results as the probable break-up of the present marriage-system, the present social rules of other sorts, religious codes, legal arrangements or property, <sup>(through men's self-protective counter-moves...)</sup> &c. I do not myself consider that this would be necessarily a bad thing (I should not have written "Jude the Obscure" if I did), but I deem it better that women should take the step unstimulated from outside. So, if they should be terrified at consequences, they will not be able to say to men: "You ought not to have helped bring upon us what we did not foresee."

Hence, considering also that I have as many interests in hand as I can cope with at my time of life, I am not disposed to be active in the cause.

Yours very truly  
Thomas Hardy.

Miss A. Helen Wau,  
National Union of Women's Suffrage Soc<sup>s</sup>.