

The New Northwest.

FREE SPEECH, FREE PRESS, FREE PEOPLE.

VOLUME X.—NO. 36.

PORTLAND, OREGON, THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1881.

PER YEAR—\$3.00.

[Written for the New Northwest.] WHO SHOULD VOTE?

A GENTLEMAN OF SOUTHERN OREGON CONTRIBUTES HIS MITE TO THE EQUAL RIGHTS AGITATION.

Now that the subject of Woman Suffrage is before the people of this State, and will become a prominent factor in the next general election, I wish to say a few words by way of adding my mite to the cause. Though an uncompromising friend of this measure, I have hitherto preferred to hear and read the arguments of those better qualified than myself to discuss it—especially of those who feel most keenly the injustice of being denied the right inherent in every citizen in a republican form of government, the laws of which women citizens as well as men citizens are compelled to obey and taxed to support.

It is not possible for those who enjoy a privilege to feel that degree of nettled disquietude or uneasiness that disturbs those who are deprived of it. We may clearly perceive the injustice that is wrought them by such denial, and sympathize with them in their affliction, and do much to assist them in redressing their wrongs, but we lack that energizing inspiration that spurs them on to vigorous action for the attainment of those rights that justly belong to them.

In my daily communication with the "lords of creation" in business affairs, the subject of Woman Suffrage frequently passes under review—is argued *pro* and *con* with much earnestness. It is maintained by some that woman's brains are smaller than man's, and therefore she is naturally incapacitated to perform that degree of mental labor necessary to attend to the affairs of state or the intricacies of business in the great drama of life, and therefore should not be clothed with the elective franchise. To dive into a metaphysical dissertation upon this question would not satisfy or convince the common voter, who walks leisurely to the polls on election day, rolling his quid of tobacco over his tongue with a self-complacent air of lordly importance, and deposits his choice in the ballot-box, with scarcely a thought of the great responsibility resting upon him—aye, perhaps perfectly indifferent of his duty or the consequences of his acts. I will, therefore, answer a fool according to his folly, and say that an elephant has a bigger brain than any man, and hence, if the size of the brain is a measure of one's fitness to vote, the elephant is better entitled to the ballot than any man.

It is my opinion that it is the quality of brain and disposition of the heart and culture that best fit one for the exercise of this inestimable privilege. The truth of the matter is, that the elective franchise is an acquired right, and does not depend upon sex or any other natural condition. It is purely a municipal right that is correlated to our form of government—that the governed are the governors, who express their executive will by the ballot. This is the boasted principle of self-government in a republican form—a principle for which our ancestors struggled eight long years. This principle is axiomatic with Americans. If, then, woman is forced to obey the laws the same as man, it is a logical conclusion that she should have a voice in making the laws she is forced to obey, and in choosing persons to execute them. This seems to be self-evident, and no reasonable person, it appears to me, will try to disprove it.

If it could be made to appear that women as a class would abuse the right of suffrage, if possessed of it, then it would be good policy not to give it to them; but that is begging the question. In civic societies where woman exercises the right, no complaint has ever been made against her for its abuse. Then why withhold it from her as a citizen?

It is also claimed by the opponents of Woman Suffrage that woman, by reason of the maternal relation, would not be able to perform the duties of official life, could not act as sheriff, constable, surveyor, etc., and that therefore she should not be granted the right to vote. The Greeley argument that to the bullet belongs the ballot, though exploded long since, still occasionally finds an advocate. Masculine cripples and men over a certain age are not compelled to shoulder the musket in defense of the state; yet they can vote. Why not women as well?

The only plausible argument that I have ever heard advanced against Woman Suffrage is this: If women are allowed to vote, there will be a corresponding increase of fraudulent and corrupt voting done. This seeming good reason for woman's not voting may be urged against young men and immigrants coming into the State and increasing the population—there would be an increase in fraudulent and corrupt voting. Therefore no immigrant, by a like parity of reasoning, should be allowed to vote.

Again, the unreasonable objector says: "Depraved women would rush to the polls, while virtuous and refined women would keep away."

This is all mere assumption—a hypothetical condition assumed as a fact, without reason or logic to support it. The right of a citizen does not depend upon the possibility of his abuse of it. If he has an inherent right, that right should be guaranteed by law. If he abuses it, he should be punished by law for the abuse, and not denied his right, because, forsooth, he might abuse it. It is also claimed that women would not, as a rule, exercise the right. What nonsense! One moment these senseless objectors will claim that woman would abuse it, and the next that she would not use it at all. To me, such talk is like the dog's baying at the moon—it is sound, but not sound sense.

Many seem to think that the elective franchise belongs to man as naturally as his masculinity—that because he is born a male he is therefore born an elector. Such a line of argument was once used by the advocates of slavery; the negro was born a slave, and had no rights the free-born was bound to respect. Such has been the opposition to the rights of man maintained by tyrants ever since the formation of human society, the rights of women being no exception to the rule.

If women, as citizens, are justly entitled to the elective franchise, it is tyranny to withhold it from them. If no more than one woman in a thousand would avail herself of the privilege, she should have it if it is hers by right.

The elective franchise is not a natural right, like that of defending life by means of physical force, common to all animal life, but is a right that has grown out of the social relation—correlated and inseparably attached by inherent right to every accountable member of society, and, under laws regulating its use and punishing its abuse, belonging alike to all, women as well as men.

The right to vote does not depend upon the inclination or disinclination to exercise it, but upon a higher and more sacred principle—that of self-government. The Indian has been clothed with this right upon condition of adopting the habits of civilized life, and the foreigner upon the oath of adjuration and allegiance, and the negro is now politically equal to the whites, while women are politically classed with untamed savages, criminals, lunatics and fools. Every member of any society, social, civil or political, who is amenable to that society for any violation of its rules or regulations, is justly entitled to an equal voice in determining what those rules and regulations shall be, who shall execute them, and the manner and mode of punishing members for violating them. This is axiomatic, and cannot be successfully disproved.

This equal rights movement must be met and determined upon the principles of truth and right, justice and humanity. The question, "Who shall vote?" is ever knocking at the door of Reason, demanding a solution. Reason will answer: "Governments are instituted to secure the rights of person and property, to maintain inviolate life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and that the governed, under the salutary regulations that experience shall make manifest, are all justly entitled to stand before the law equal; and that no person or class of persons, who are responsible for the proper use or abuse of their inalienable rights, should be denied any of those rights while others are privileged to enjoy them."

Absolute monarchies have no use for the subjects' vote, and limited monarchies care but little for the subjects' wishes in governmental matters, for the simple reason that they, the governing power, are not to any great extent amenable to the laws they make; but when the law-maker is answerable before the laws he writes, he then becomes, through self-interest, concerned about the character of those laws, because his own rights are involved. And hence, in our form of government, the governed being the governors, they are all interested in the laws by which they mutually agree to be governed, and so long as each and every one's rights are recognized by all, they are satisfied and happy; but when any person or class of persons are denied rights they instinctively feel are theirs, they are correspondingly uneasy, fretful, captious and complaining, and, consequently, unhappy.

The answer, then, to the question, "Who shall vote?" is self-apparent—"The governed should vote."

Then the question, in the form of a syllogism, stands:

Major Premise—In a republican form of government, the governed are the governors who express their executive will by means of the ballot;

Minor Premise—Women are governed by the laws the same as men are;

Inference—Therefore, women are justly entitled to the same means of expressing their executive will that men have; namely, the ballot.

W. F. B.

The Dallas Itemizer has been enlarged to a twenty-eight column paper.

YAMHILL COUNTY SUFFRAGISTS.

MINUTES OF THE RECENT CONVENTION AT LAFAYETTE.

The Yamhill County Woman Suffrage Association met in the church at Lafayette on Wednesday evening, May 11th, at 7:30 o'clock.

The Association was called to order by the President, Mrs. Loughary.

Music by the Misses Royal was well received.

Hon. Lee Laughlin was introduced by the President as one of the speakers of the evening. His address was listened to with marked attention by the audience, who seemed to enjoy the sensible talk.

Music was furnished by six little folks.

Recitation by Laura Martin, entitled "The Men."

Mrs. Loughary addressed the meeting for about half an hour on "Liberty," telling many plain truths in her usual interesting manner.

A solo by Miss Willie Harris was well received.

Meeting adjourned to meet in the Court House at half-past nine on Thursday morning.

SECOND DAY.

Called to order by the President.

Minutes of previous meeting read and approved. Remarks were made by Mr. Laughlin.

Suggestions were offered by Mrs. Martin as to the manner of holding future meetings.

Mrs. Loughary delivered a short address.

It was voted that the next meeting should be held at North Yamhill.

On motion, a committee was appointed, consisting of Mrs. Martin, of Lafayette, Mr. Lee Laughlin, of North Yamhill, and Miss Virginia Olds, of McMinnville, to arrange a programme for the next meeting.

Moved that the Recording Secretary furnish a list of the names of members of the Association to prominent members of each precinct, so that the dues can be more readily collected and forwarded to the Treasurer, Miss V. M. Olds.

Dues were collected to the amount of \$3.25.

Moved that the Corresponding Secretary be allowed one dollar for necessary stationery.

Adjourned to meet at North Yamhill on the third Wednesday in November.

MRS. H. A. LOUGHARY,

NAN B. MARTIN,
Secretary.

President.

WOMEN VS. NEGROES.

NORFOLK, Oregon, May 6, 1881.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

In addition to the many favorable press comments on the result of women's voting in Wyoming, the testimony of several prominent men, published in your paper of April 28th, is conclusive evidence to any fair-minded person that the ballot in the hands of women will prove beneficial rather than injurious. When that point is acknowledged, there will no excuse left the opponents of equal rights but the one born of selfishness in the human breast, jealousy, (unless it be that they are afraid the women will all vote the prohibition ticket). There is no man that does not hate to be beaten in the race for an office, and as long as men consider their mothers of minor importance, the defeat would be much more humiliating if the successful candidate were a woman.

If either the Republican or the Democratic party were as sure of the vote of women (with but little competition for fat offices and easy positions) as General Garfield was of the vote of the illiterate negroes, every President's message would be saturated with tears on account of women's political disabilities. It is no more than justice that the negro has the ballot. If he did not, he would be again the equal of women. If the ballot is of such incalculable benefit to the colored men, it will surely do the white women some good. Yours for justice,

EMMA RICKER.

P. S. As my subscription time has again come round, I enclose you three dollars. I can get along without a great many things easier than without the People's Paper. Have sent sample copies to different parties, but find it difficult to get newspaper subscribers in a community where there are none other than working men and women. If the women ever get hold of a dollar, there are so many things the children need, etc. A small portion of the money spent by many men for tobacco, to say nothing of whisky, would make their wives life subscribers to the NEW NORTHWEST.

E. R.

From a Massachusetts exchange: "The two heaviest tax-payers in Brookline are women, Mrs. Elizabeth B. Bowditch paying \$10,314 and Miss Adele G. Thayer \$9490. But at the Brookline town meeting the men voted that women should not vote on levying the taxes, or on the use of taxes when collected, or anything else."

A LADY TO THE DEFENSE.

[From the Independence River Side.]

Editor River Side:—The following may seem rather out of date; nevertheless, as a simple act of justice to parties in this town, I hope you will publish it.

In the first place, I would remark that if a noted man, a leader on any question of importance, a Mason, Odd Fellow, Workman, or any one of note, is traveling in the interest of a cause, some personal friend, or friend of the institution to which he belongs, or of the cause which he advocates, will ask him to accept his hospitality. Not to do so would be a rudeness of which few would be guilty. And yet, if a woman ventures to visit a town in the interest of a "great cause," and a man and his wife meet her at the depot, conduct her to their residence and treat her as a lady should be treated, then some one calling himself "Nat" must insult the lady (the hostess) by calling her "the softest headed of the soft-headed." Why? I suppose it must be because she dares to think for herself and form her own opinions. Now, "Nat" is the last one I would have imagined could be guilty of flinging insults at a woman, and in the public prints at that; yet that is just what he has done, and Mrs. G. feels it so. But that is not all. He goes so far as to say, in effect, that decent people, who have any respect for the morals of their children, refuse to admit the NEW NORTHWEST into their families. Now, "Nat," if I were to tell you that you know better than that, you would probably characterize this article as "slangy," "blackguardism," "belligerence," etc., and characterize the writer as "safron-hued." But I will give you the credit of ignorance—not ignorance in general, by any means, but on this particular subject. You, no doubt, suppose that all the hoodlums of both sexes belong to families who take and read the NEW NORTHWEST, and that all women are "safron-hued." "Nat," is it gentlemanly to call women names? In the papers, too?—women who are the mothers of families, and whom you know are "decent" (your own words again). Now, we all know that "rosy-cheeked" women have more influence over the men than those who are no longer young and healthy and handsome; but we did not know that "rosy-cheeked" women had any more sense. Well, we have learned by experience, Mrs. G. and I, that there isn't much chivalry left for women who have either lost or never had any "rosy cheeks." "Nat," we may be "safron-hued," but we have opinions. In the near future you may have cause to remember that.

Now, Mr. Editor, you will come in for your share, and I want you to take it without flinching. Why do you recommend Blood Purifier to Mrs. D. and not to "Nat"? Isn't he a little "billion" too? If he gets any worse after reading this, recommend him to take bitters, too—won't you? or do men never get "billionous"?

MRS. S. A. MCKUNE

Amity, Oregon, May 4, 1881.

BLUE RIBBON CLUB.

EAST PORTLAND, May 17, 1881.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

The meeting of the Blue Ribbon Club of this city at Neppach's Hall on last Monday evening was the most interesting for some time, the exercises being a complete success, as a large audience could testify, every one seeming to be well satisfied with the evening's entertainment. The musical selections by Dr. and Mrs. O. B. Bird on the flute and piano were highly appreciated. A brief address by Mr. J. F. D'Arcy was very acceptable, although rather too short to suit the ladies, who will be the great lever, he believes, that will move the grand cause of temperance along to a final success. A temperance song by two little girls was well rendered. Mr. C. H. Marvin's reading, descriptive of a little orphan boy, "willing to die for the truth," was so natural as to fill many eyes with tears, showing the presence of sympathy for the good in hearts we little dream of, judging from external appearances. Mrs. Bird next favored the audience with a ballad, which was listened to with pleasure. Next came the reading by Mr. H. McGuire of Maybell's "Willamette Bridge." The audience, most of whom live on the "narrow patch of land," could almost imagine that grim skeleton sitting on the bank, muttering in unearthly tones:

"They're going to build, I feel it yet,
A bridge across the Willamette."

A comic song by Dr. O. B. Bird, which was enjoyed, closed the exercises, and Rev. Mr. Bower of Holladay's Addition was announced as the speaker for next Monday evening.

As long as we have such talented persons to help us work in the temperance cause as we have been favored with of late, we will not despair, but, like the persevering youth sitting upon the bank of the Willamette, we by God's help will have temperance yet.

A. L. H.