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THE LEGISLATURE OF WASHINGTON.

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE WOMAN QUESTION—A SUFFRAGE BILL PASSES THE HOUSE, BUT IS DEFEATED IN THE COUNCIL.

THE SENIOR EDITOR MAKING SPEECHES—HELP FROM GENTLEMEN—HOPE FOR THE FUTURE—RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY FRIENDS OF FREEDOM—EULOGIES AND CRITICISMS.

OLYMPIA, November 7, 1881.

TO THE READERS OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

The all-absorbing topic since our last has been, as before, the omnipresent and irrepressible woman question, which, like Banquo's ghost, will down at nobody's bidding.

Such solons of the aristocracy of sex as have been chosen to represent the great body of voters at the Territorial Capitol during the present session decided last week that they could not permit a member of the unrepresented class to address them while in official order, lest by so doing they should seriously compromise their dignity; but they found a graceful way out of the difficulty by a little adroit maneuvering; which was almost feminine in its cuteness; for they decided to adjourn and let the women's cause be heard on the floor of the representatives' hall while outside of their official environment.

The welcome news of this decision reached the undersigned at nightfall on Tuesday, the 1st inst. No time was to be lost, as the hour for the argument was placed at 3 o'clock P. M. on the day following, and the ladies of Olympia must be apprised of it, in order that they could muster their forces at the appointed season. So we appealed to our good friend Murphy, of the *Standard*, who consented to print and circulate some "doggers" by 10 o'clock on the morning of the day of the hearing, and he did his work well.

A large crowd was assembled promptly at the hour designated, among them the Honorables of both Houses, the Governor, the Territorial Secretary, and a host of other prominent gentlemen, accompanied by wives and daughters and lady friends, the very *creme de la creme* of fashionable society.

The Legislature listened for a little while to a "statement of account" from Rev. P. S. Knight (an "outsider" from Oregon, but a member of the aristocracy of sex), and then adjourned to hear an argument from a woman. We were becomingly thankful for the favor, as well as the honor conferred, and, after a respectful introduction by the Honorable Speaker of the House, we proceeded to address the law-makers, who graciously accorded our humble effort the closest attention.

After briefly explaining the basis of woman's plea for enfranchisement—a plea which is not new to our readers and need not be repeated here—we proceeded to discuss the objections urged by its opponents.

The declaration that women do not wish to vote was answered by the presentation of the following list of names, selected hurriedly, at random, and without previous intention, from the thousands of Washington Territory ladies who have from time to time during the past two years importuned us personally, through friends, or by letter, to represent them in this manner during the present session: Mesdames Brents, Caton, Vawter, Lacy, Mix, Stewart, Gilliam, Hayward, Crawford, Keyes, Painter, Hanaford and Cannon, of Walla Walla county; Eckler, Day, Dayton, Gibson, Belcher, Steen, Hendershott, Burke and Torrence, of Columbia; Wolfard, Smith, Beach, Sullivan, Renshaw, Davenport and James, of Whitman; Still, Mount, Range, Stoughton, Sweitzer, Payne, Bybee, Meacham, Everest, Muzzy, McFerrin and Warner, of Spokane; Whipple, Daniels, Stewart, Brown, DeLay, Adams and Maxon, of Clark; Gilmore, Dunbar, Chappell and Smallwood, of Klickitat; Durgan, Ballard, Vansycle, Thomas, Morgan and Nelson, of Yakima; Rogers, Barlow and Chilberg, of Pierce; Hamilton, Moffett, Jones and Jewett, of Skamania; Loomis, Clark, Wirt, Pike and Woodruff, of Pacific; Sylvester, Brown, Dobbins, Hale, Shelton, Stuart, Smith, Henry, Barnes, Blinn, Munson, Murphy and Manning, of Thurston; and Lewis, George, Weed, Damon, Smith, Yeiser, Hall and Driggs, of King county. These, we explained, were not "toothless old maids," "divorced or discontented wives," or "women who were quarrelling with their Maker because they were not created men," as had been charged. They were in every case women of integrity, intelligence and character. A few were young ladies, but the majority were wives and mothers of good and true men—women who had learned that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." Many of them were heavy tax-payers, and all were as genial and jolly and comfortable looking as their present spokeswoman. They were demanding the ballot for the same reason that Abigail Adams demanded it; for the same reason that General Washington fought for it; not because anybody

is abusing them personally, but because it is their right; because "taxation without representation is tyranny," and "resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." The "neglect the home" argument, the "if they vote they must fight" fallacy, the "men would cease to love 'em" nonsense, the "bad woman" cry, and every other objection put forward by silly voters in hostile array against common sense and simple justice, received attention in its turn. Then came an appeal to the patriotism and pride of the solons. They were urged to place Washington in the lead in this mighty work; to place upon her brow the crown of glory that belongs to her as the namesake of the Father of his Country; to make her the Mother of her Country and the standard-bearer of equal rights for all coming time.

The concluding speech, by Mr. W. H. White, a lawyer from Seattle, who was loudly called for, was one of the happiest outbursts of patriotic oratory we have ever heard in halls of legislation. He was a native of the Pan Handle portion of Virginia, where, prior to the civil war, no man dared to say that slavery was wrong. He had watched the growth of ideas in that part of our common country, where slavery had blighted the otherwise clear perceptions of men until the devastations and carnage of bloody combat had been necessary to convince them that might was not the only right. He was a Democrat, and he appealed to Democrats to take the lead in the Woman Suffrage movement and relieve the mothers of the Anglo-Saxon race from the stigma of negro superiority enforced upon them by Republican rule. His remarks created intense enthusiasm, in the midst of which the meeting adjourned.

The Assembly the next day took up House Bill No. 70, entitled, "An Act to Confer the Right of Suffrage upon Woman Citizens;" and, to the surprise and joy of every lover of justice in the land, it passed without debate. The vote stood 13 to 11. The solons adjourned immediately after, and general congratulations were exchanged on all sides.

But after this came the tug of war. The hosts of rum got frightened, and, emerging from their dens, besieged certain members of the Council and inspired them to *kill the bill*. They button-holed them in dark places, and treated them behind screens. Those of them who did not drink to excess, but were weak in all things else save tyranny, were instructed to "say nothing, but stand by their rights!" And men whom women are taxed to sustain in office clung tenaciously to their masculine prerogative of dogged obstinacy, exemplified in a silent negation, for which they attempted to give no reason except that they were "agin equal rights!" An excuse was made for some of them by their well-meaning apologists, who said that a certain liberty-loving girl had offended them by a little plain truth, when flattery would have succeeded better; but the honorable opponents disclaimed the allegation, and we cheerfully accord them the benefit of their denial.

It was all in vain, when the bill came up for final action, that Hon. Elwood Evans made an appeal which would have electrified an English House of Lords or thrilled a United States Senate. Never have we heard a better speech, and never did true womanhood have greater cause to honor the true friendship of a noble champion of simple justice than on that memorable Saturday morning, when, in the midst of the Autumnal equinox and under the general lamentations of the lowering heavens, Mr. Evans stood up in the Council Chamber and fearlessly bombarded the dead walls of obstinacy and tyranny with the logic that is begotten of comprehension and the eloquence that is born of liberty. He had appreciative allies on that floor, too; noble champions of the right, who like himself were ready and willing to vote with the minority and freedom rather than the majority and oppression.

The opposition did not open its mouth except to say "No" when its time for arbitrary exercise of power came. And yet among the seven opposing members were a majority, at least, who are men of brains and principle, who would gladly have voted for equal rights for women if they had been just a little braver. Their excuse was that their "voting constituents had not instructed them on the question," and their mistake consisted in supposing they were sent there as machines instead of men—a mistake which a little more public experience will doubtless rectify.

The bill was lost by a majority of two, and the friends of justice retreated for a season, to plan new devices for storming the strongholds of prejudice and tyranny and lay new wires for reaching the understanding of every law-maker who is an enemy.

An announcement for a Woman Suffrage meeting in the evening at Columbia Hall brought out a large and intelligent audience through a driving storm. Your correspondent called the meeting to order and briefly stated its objects. It was in keeping with the fitness of things, we said, that the heavens should enshroud themselves in mourn-

ing and make the air resound with lamentations, for the Goddess of Liberty had been enchained anew in the hands of her captors and all the hosts of her oppressors were glad.

Mrs. C. E. Sylvester then came forward with the following resolutions, which were offered amid marked silence and unanimously adopted without debate:

WHEREAS, The liberty-loving women of Washington Territory have been looking with longing eyes and waiting with hopeful hearts for an affirmative vote in the Legislature upon House Bill No. 70, to confer the elective franchise upon them; and,

WHEREAS, We are doomed to a temporary defeat through a tie vote on joint ballot of the two Houses; and,

WHEREAS, We are more than ever convinced that the brains of the voting power are on our side and cannot long remain in a numerical minority; therefore,

Resolved, That we will gird on anew the armor of freedom, and press on with fresh courage in our endeavor to awaken the understanding of our opponents, in the full belief that they will yet be able to comprehend the plain principles of justice that underlie a government that ought to be, but is not, of the people and by the people.

Resolved, That we will be discouraged by no defeat and disheartened by no repulse, for our cause is just, and all the hosts of tyranny shall not prevail against it.

Resolved, That the negative vote of a class of men who have no other reason to offer for so flagrant a violation of the laws of liberty and justice than "because" it takes from woman the stigma of obstinacy and makes man an unreasoning animal in her stead.

Resolved, That we hope the imputation cast upon the House by the current story that its members gave our liberty bill a majority vote on purpose to give the Council a chance to defeat it is not true, as it is an act of moral turpitude unworthy of the sons of women.

Resolved, That our thanks are due to Messrs. Allen, Clarke, Holcomb, Kincaid, Kuhn, O'Neill, Preston, Raymond, Rees, Smith of King, Smith of Whitman, Steen and Taylor, of the House, and to Messrs. Calhoun, Evans, Kerns, Sharpstein and Mr. President, of the Council, for their affirmative votes on the Woman Suffrage bill and their manly defense of our cause upon floors where we are denied representation.

Resolved, That we will watch with interest and hold ourselves ready to acknowledge with gratitude any future legislative action that may hasten our enfranchisement, and will gladly include the names of all the members of both Houses in our next resolutions of thanks if they will join the noble company of those sons of women who are not afraid to entrust their mothers with the sacred boon of liberty.

The adoption of the resolutions evoked the heartiest applause, and was followed by an hour's address from your correspondent.

Then came a thrilling speech from Mr. W. H. White, in which that gentleman proclaimed that the saloon power was behind the solons who were voting against the suffrage bill. He had heard women shamefully slandered by the vendors and drinkers of rum within the past hour; had heard men in the saloons urging members of the Council to stand firm against woman's rights! His exhortation was one of the most spirited outbursts of indignation to which we have ever listened. The sympathy of the audience was with him, and he retired amid prolonged cheers.

Miss Mary Shelton was then called for, and coming forward, proceeded to make her maiden speech. This young lady has a fine physique and commanding presence, and will, with a little experience, make a first-rate speaker. She said she had been told that she had spoken too plainly to members of the Council, and had not used sufficient tact in canvassing her theme before the men who make laws for women. If so, she was sorry. She had not meant to offend anybody. She had said to some of the members that she "knew more than they did." This was a fact, and she was sorry it was true! [Great applause.] All the points in her brief address were logical and well taken. We know of no young man whose first effort could equal hers in public speaking, and shall watch her future growth as a platform worker with great interest.

A little diversion was created at the close of the meeting by a paragraph from the *Transcript*, in which its editor, Mr. Gunn, had alluded to the undersigned as an "advocate of the cause of her down-trodden race." We invited the gentleman, if in the hall, to come forward, and we'd put the question to a vote of the audience as to which looked the more "down-trodden," he or ourself. It was a pity he wasn't there. If he had been, or, rather, if he would go anywhere that "refined and talented" women go, he wouldn't make such blunders. But we charitably pass him by.

The meeting adjourned amid great enthusiasm, and the friends of liberty went to work to frame another Woman Suffrage bill.

This letter is too long to permit of further observations upon current events. Olympia, her society, her business, her hopes and prospects, and the personnel of Legislators and other Honorables, will form a theme for our next letter, for which our readers may look next week.

A. S. D.

The Eugene City Journal, in noticing the return of Mrs. J. C. Hawthorne and children from the Eastern States, mentions the fact that she "is carrying on without any material change the Asylum for the Insane at East Portland, so long under the management of her deceased husband." The Grand Jury of this county speaks in exceedingly complimentary terms of the manner in which the institution is conducted.

THE PENDING AMENDMENT.

ADDRESS OF J. L. COLLINS, OF DALLAS, BEFORE THE OREGON STATE WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen:—I am sorry that I have been called upon to address you this evening, lest what I shall say may in some measure distract your attention from what has been so ably and so well said by the gentlemen who have preceded me; and especially do I hesitate, lest you may lose some part of the excellent and eloquent address of Hon. Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Jr., who has just taken his seat—a gentleman who inherits a name that has long been a watchword of liberty and progress throughout this country. The hour is wearing late, and you are weary; therefore, I must very much abbreviate what I would like to say to you.

At the last session of our State Legislature, a resolution was passed proposing an amendment to the Constitution of this State, to the effect that "the elective franchise in this State shall not hereafter be prohibited to any citizen on account of sex." The question was raised and discussed in the Legislature and elsewhere, as to whether this amendment to the Constitution would itself be constitutional under the Article XVII., on the subject of amendments.

This is not a question for the display of oratory or eloquence, and it is one that will be difficult to treat so as to be attractive to you. I can only give you a few of the broad, general and liberal rules and principles for the construction of constitutions and statutes, with a mere sample of their application to the subject, and leave you to complete the argument at your leisure. The article of our Constitution on the subject of amendments is as follows:

ARTICLE XVII.—AMENDMENTS.

Section 1. Any amendment or amendments to this Constitution may be proposed in either branch of the legislative assembly, and if the same shall be agreed to by a majority of all the members elected to each of the two Houses, such proposed amendment or amendments shall, with the yeas and nays thereon, be entered on their journals, and referred to the legislative assembly to be chosen at the next general election; and if, in the legislative assembly so next chosen, such proposed amendment or amendments shall be agreed to by a majority of all the members elected to each House, then it shall be the duty of the legislative assembly to submit such amendment or amendments to the electors of the State, and cause the same to be published without delay at least four consecutive weeks in several newspapers published in this State; and if a majority of said electors shall ratify the same, such amendment or amendments shall become a part of this Constitution.

Sec. 2. If two or more amendments shall be submitted in such manner that the electors shall vote for or against each of such amendments separately; and while an amendment or amendments which shall have been agreed upon by one legislative assembly, shall be awaiting the action of a legislative assembly, or of the electors, no additional amendment or amendments shall be proposed.

Now, before we can intelligently understand the bearing of these provisions upon the proposed amendment, we must first understand some of the rules by which it should be interpreted. At the request of my friend, Mrs. Duniway, I have looked into the books, from which I have digested a number of principles in relation to interpretation and construction, which I will state.

The obscurities, ambiguities and other defects of expression, which may render the sense of a law dubious, and all the other difficulties of understanding aright and justly applying the law, ought to be resolved by the sense that is most natural, that has the greatest relation to the subject, that is most conformable to the intention of the law-giver, and most agreeable to equity. These are to be discovered by the nature of the law under consideration, its motive, the relation it bears to the other laws, and by every circumstance and sound principle that will cast upon it a sure and steady light, by which its true spirit and sense may be justly reflected.

That we may rightly understand the sense of a law, we ought to consider the words of it, its motives, its objects, and the whole tenor of its prescriptions, and not to limit its sense by anything different from its intention, either in another part of the same law or instrument, or by any defect in its expression. We must prefer that which appears to be evident from the spirit of the whole law.

If the words of a law express clearly the sense and intention of it, we must hold to that. But if the true sense of a law cannot be understood sufficiently by the mere reading of it, we must resort to interpretation and construction to ascertain its true intent and meaning; for the sole object of interpretation is to learn from the very law under consideration, if possible, its true intent and meaning; and the sole object of construction is to ascertain, from the law itself and from other laws, and the surrounding facts, history, and all the conditions and circumstances connected with it, what it really means, and what was intended to be accomplished by it; for the object and intention are the ends to be attained. It is laid down in the books as one of the chief rules for the con-

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