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INHERENT RIGHTS.

A LADY DEMOLISHES THE ASSERTION THAT "SUFFRAGE IS NOT AS INHERENT TO WOMAN AS TO MAN."

OLYMPIA, W. T., November 24, 1881.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

I saw this item in the *Western Woman's Journal* for September:

Suffrage is not as inherent to woman as to man, but will be to her, as it has been to him, a means of elevation.

It hardly seems possible that anyone in his senses, or who had given the least thought to the subject of the rights of the citizen under our government, could have penned that paragraph. Neither can I see how a paper advocating the equal rights of citizenship could promulgate through its columns such an absurdity. "Suffrage is not as inherent to woman as to man." Can any one give the reason why? Let us see what are the inherent rights of humanity, and in what they differ in man and woman, if any difference there is.

God created the human race "male and female," and "male and female" the race still continues to be. In their creation, He also endowed them with certain inherent rights. These rights were a part of their nature, and therefore inalienable. These inherent, inalienable rights are: A right to life; a right to liberty; a right to pursue that which most conduces to our individual happiness (so that it does not interfere with the exercise of these same inherent rights by others). The recognition of these inherent, inalienable rights has existed among all nations and peoples from the earliest ages, and encroachment upon them by might has sooner or later met with such resistance as to deluge the earth with blood. The framers of the Declaration of Independence recognized these inherent rights when they said: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It then adds that "to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The Declaration of Independence says: "All men are created equal," etc. If by the word "men" is meant only the masculine portion of the race, then there has been a great mistake made in supposing that woman was at all included in the beneficent designs of the Creator, and only those of the masculine gender were created with the inherent right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. If this is the definition of the word "men" as used in the Declaration of Independence, then we have nothing more to say, but will at once admit that to the male citizen only is suffrage at all inherent, and that, according to that definition of the word, woman has no lot or parcel in any of the rights, privileges and immunities pertaining to human existence. She has no right to life; man has; he may kill her, and it is not a crime. She has no right to liberty; man has; he may enslave her, and it is no sin. She has no right to the pursuit of happiness; man has; and if it conduces to his happiness to degrade her domestically, socially and politically, his inherent right to the "pursuit of happiness" gives him a perfect right to thus crush her, and she has no cause for complaint. If, then, woman has no natural rights, she needs no governmental rights to secure to her the exercise of rights she never possessed. Governments were never instituted for her benefit, and it is right to govern her without her consent (the same as is being done by our government at the present time).

But if, as every one will admit, the word "men" is used here in its generic sense as including the whole human family, then it is plain that the inherent rights of both men and women are the same in every respect, and that it is just as necessary that she have governmental rights to secure to her the exercise of her inherent natural rights as her brother man, and that these governmental rights must necessarily be the same.

That the word "men" is used here in its generic sense, no one will deny; nor will anyone deny that woman by virtue of her creation inherits the same inalienable right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness; and as these inherent natural rights can only be secured to each individual by the institution of civil governments "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," and as the suffrage is the mode by which that consent is given, it is plain that suffrage must necessarily be as inherent to woman as to man.

Let us look at this a little further, and see if in our government the right to vote is not the same in woman as in man, and as inherent to her as to him. We have already shown that her natural rights inhere in her by virtue of her creation the same as his, that the natural rights of both are identical in every respect, and that civil governments are necessary for the protection of these

natural rights—"deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Before the formation of our government, the principle of equal rights had developed in the minds of the people of the Colonies through the tyranny and oppressions of the English government toward them. They had been forced to submit to unjust and tyrannical laws; to pay taxes to support a government in which they were not allowed representation; in short, were governed without their consent. They were in precisely the same condition politically that the women of our nation are to-day. These oppressions, as I have said, developed in the minds of the people of the Colonies the idea of freedom and equality. They began to see the injustice of a coercive government; that no individual or combination of individuals had a right to exercise authority over others endowed with the same inherent rights as themselves; that on no other basis than that of equality could a free and just government be established. Hence, in their Declaration to the world of their reasons for their act in establishing an independent nation, they set forth these self-evident truths: That human beings are created on an equality; that they are endowed by their Creator with the same inherent natural rights; that these rights are inalienable; that the deprivation of the exercise of these inherent natural rights is a usurpation of power by the strong against the weak; that to prevent this usurpation of power, and to secure to all persons the protection of their inherent natural rights, governments were instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. These self-evident truths then being the basic and fundamental principles of our government, and suffrage being the only way by which the consent of the governed is given in all our national transactions, and woman being then, as she still is, a component part of the human family, endowed with the same inherent, inalienable natural rights as the masculine portion of humanity, necessarily requires the same governmental rights to protect her in the exercise of those rights. Hence, suffrage to woman is as natural and inherent a right as it is to man; and her right to vote should not be denied her.

MARY OLNEY BROWN.

RIGHT IS EXPEDIENCE.

[From the Evening Telegram.]

The time should be past when argument is necessary to convince men of the natural or moral right of woman to a voice in making the laws which she is compelled to obey under the same penalties for violation that are imposed upon the other sex. That her right naturally and morally is coequal with that of man, but few now deny, and the only question with those who are unwilling to give her her own is that of expediency. Will it mend matters if this thing is done? Will the government move on more smoothly? Will the safety of the people in their inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness be enhanced? Will just laws be more generally enforced? Will crime be more surely prevented or more certainly punished? Will there be more honesty practiced among officials? Will there be less of boss rule? or will the machine grind out politics for the people, and demagogues and party tricksters, styled by their sycophantic followers as statesmen, continue to bring reproach upon our republican form of government, and tinge with the blush of shame the cheek of every one who has labored for the success of right principles, good laws and honest administration?

This state of things the women will find to surround them when they are once fairly in political life. To remove the evils, to bring about reforms which they are anxious for, and which many excellent women have long labored to induce men to institute, will be a part of the work before them, and none who have carefully weighed the matter will consider the task imposed upon them a light or trifling one. Many evils for which the men are held entirely responsible because they only have the authority and power to remove them will try the patience, vex the souls and weary the hands of the better women of the land when they once hold the ballot.

But admitting all this, no sufficient reason exists why women should be debarred from the privilege. Their property is taxed, their crimes are punished, the rights they have are protected or left defenseless, by the same laws which compel men to pay taxes, punish men's crimes and protect men's rights. Let the governed say who shall be their governors, or strike out the clause in the platform of republican institutions which has been vaunted as their very corner-stone.

Wealthy and well-to-do ladies of Melbourne have so successfully agitated the question of seats for shop-girls that nearly all the establishments employing saleswomen have provided these humane conveniences. Some New York firms have also furnished seats for their girl assistants.

LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA.

OREGON'S BUSINESS LIFE ADMITTED—SAN JOSE'S ELECTRIC TOWER—A WRONGED SCHOOL-GIRL—THE SUNDAY LIQUOR LAW.

SAN JOSE, Cal., November 15, 1881.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

I am at home once more, after a five months' trip through Oregon and Eastern Washington. Next year I hope to make the trip from here by land through Southern Oregon to Baker City and other points in Eastern Oregon. My conviction is stronger than ever that Oregon is a great country, rich and varied in its products, and destined to rank A 1 in the great sisterhood of States. I congratulate you on your railroad boom, which is everywhere on the move like a great wave, carrying on its crest new life and business activity throughout your State. Of all the cities on the coast, aside from San Francisco, for business life, Portland wears the bell; and for many other charms which wealth and intelligence can give she is equal to any city on the coast.

I am highly gratified in reading of the Woman Suffrage convention recently held in Portland, and must conclude that Oregon is on the high road to success in the near future, not only in the emancipation of woman from some of the evils inflicted by the injustice of our laws, but the complete and full-rounded emancipation which the ballot alone can give. To my mind, it's a silly thing to make two bites of one little cherry, and thus temporize with a matter of simple justice. Accord to woman the ballot as her natural right, and you place in her hand an instrument of power by which she will protect herself, as men do, from all the evils which can be alleviated or abrogated by an intelligent use of the ballot. I am particularly pleased with Mrs. Dr. B. A. Owens' essay, so replete in logic, scope and fact. I wish I were not so poor; I would do good by the publication of several thousand copies for free distribution among the people; but alas! how many of us, like Paul, can say: "When I would do good, evil is present with me."

In San Jose we've got a tower, not a shot tower nor a leaning tower, but a tower two hundred feet in height, constructed of iron pipe, and when completed will be a thing of beauty as well as use, from which will be dispensed Brush's electric light of forty thousand candle power. It is called Owen's tower. For this great undertaking we are indebted to J. J. Owen, of the San Jose *Mercury*, for invention and successful consummation. And then we have a people's temperance meeting, organized about two years ago, which leaves all gospel temperance meetings in the shade. The beauty of it will be seen at a glance when I state that it is not controlled by ministers, nor are talks on religious subjects permitted on its platform; but any other topics, as morality, goodness, virtue, science, temperance—anything which relates to the development of true character in old and young—are proper. This society has an audience from eight to twelve hundred and has become very popular, and deservedly so, as it meets the wants of a large element found in every city, who do not feel at home in a gospel temperance meeting. A gospel temperance enterprise seems to me an anomaly; for if I read correctly, Jesus and Paul were not total abstinence men, and the worthies of the Old Testament were far from being abstainers from that which kills both body and mind. So it seems to me that a temperance meeting, to do the most good and elicit the support of all good people of every religious and non-religious faith, should hang out the banner of temperance alone. There is but one temperance, but there are many gospels, according to various ways of thinking. I love the cause of temperance, and am always ready to speak a good word in its behalf; but of late almost everywhere I go the temperance movement has fallen into the hands of the church, and I am made to feel that I have no part in the matter simply because I do not endorse the orthodox religion which they have managed to infuse into all their methods of temperance work.

San Jose is now in high clover over the trial of Professor Allen, principal of our State Normal School, for the slander of Miss Dixon, a pupil recently dismissed from the school on the most childish and trivial charges—such as running up and down stairs, and the unlady-like conduct of sneezing out loud, and the fearful crime of propounding that old conundrum about a locomotive's not being able to sit down on account of the wood-box carried behind, called the tender. The whole business on the part of these school people is too silly for anything. To my mind, there ought to be a premium given to every girl in the State who is in possession of sufficient health and vital force to admit of running and jumping like a tom-boy. And when such silly charges as the above are brought into court to justify the dismissal and slander of a poor young girl with a widowed mother, you may guess at once the sym-

pathy of the people favors the girl, and no tears would be shed if this affair should result in the conviction of Allen and his dismissal, as well as two or three other teachers, from the school.

The people of California have another cause of excitement, which bids fair to sweep over the entire State, and that is the enforcement of a Sunday law against saloons and other business kept open on the Christian Sabbath, and a batch of fifteen have been arrested here for the infringement of the law, which is held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of the State. Now, while I am not in sympathy with the saloon business, I am quite as much opposed to any Sunday laws predicated upon religious ground; and while I admit the propriety of a non-legal holiday, its observance should be optional, as on all other holidays; for the authority which can prescribe what I shall not do on that day may go a step further and prescribe what I shall do, even to the style of my coat and my attendance at church service on that day, and as soon as Sunday worshippers succeed in closing all business upon Sunday, they will lay their heavy hand upon all pleasures such as picnics, pleasure gardens, etc. Once open the door for religious legislation, and there will be no limit for religious superstition. To my mind, all days are God's days, not for Christ's sake, but for human uses. A prohibition to sell rum on Sunday implies a license to do so on all other days. If liquor is a good thing to drink on any day, Sunday, a day of leisure and rest, is pre-eminently the best of all the days to guzzle and enjoy it. But if its use is always attended with disease, poverty and misery untold, why not stop it on other days? Religious legislation is dangerous ground, as viewed in the light and experience of past history, and to no purpose when measured by the scope of our Federal Constitution.

Yours for equal rights, DR. J. L. YORK.

WOMAN AS A WORKER.

[From the Toledo Blade.]

No one phase of American life has undergone a greater change than that regarding society in its connection with woman's work, and perhaps there is nothing which better shows general progress. Time was when to be employed in any duties outside of those of home was social death to her. If it was necessity that compelled it, there was simply the ostracism that poverty is apt to receive from competency and wealth. If inclination prompted the stepping aside from the path that tradition had made for womanhood, she was set down as peculiar and "strong-minded," the latter a term of reproach which was and is as much dreaded by the majority as if it implied personal degradation. These things were hard to bear, and operated strongly to prevent independence in action. Gradually, however, has arisen the feeling that "honest labor bears a lovely face," and that "tis no sin for a man to labor in his vocation," neither is it for woman. Accordingly many are now found, even if possessed of a competence, or with friends able and willing to give them a comfortable support, who have stated employment in some business, trade or profession, and who are now contented and happy in it. Not only that, but they have the respect of society, although through lack of leisure they do not seek society's suffrages.

That this state of things is becoming more and more fixed and permanent, is evident from such paragraphs as the following, and these are but a few of the many:

Miss Canfield, of Manistee, Mich., a Vassar graduate, finding society life irksome, begged some regular employment, and was put in the office of her father, who is the owner of the largest tug line on the lakes.

Miss Margaret Hicks, a recent graduate of Cornell, has adopted the architect's profession.

There are few who cannot think of girls and women among their acquaintances that have grown restive under the demands of society, to answer which requires a large investment of strength, energy and good nature—an investment which returns at best little interest, often none at all, and sometimes leaves the investor bankrupt. They are looking anxiously around for something to do which shall occupy both hands and brains, willing to give up the chance of social triumphs if only they may feel that they are really living.

And society is growing better and purer for this change in woman's ambitions. Enough are left yet whose duties preclude any steady outside employment, who do not desire it, but who have the leisure and the wish to be in society and of society. They can keep alive the social genialities and dispense the graceful hospitalities that are necessary in order to throw a beauty and poetry around earnest, practical life. The world could no more do without the womanly society leader, with her beauty and accomplishments, than it could without the artist and the poet. But the tendency of the past has been for every girl and woman to struggle for social supremacy, and failing in that, to become a nonentity. Occupation and independence have brought a healthier way of thinking, a truer appreciation of life and its possibilities, and a higher moral tone, which will do much toward solving some of the social problems of the day.