

Why Not Woman's Suffrage?

(An address given recently at the Y. M. C. A. hall in Portland by Clarence True Wilson, D. D.)

When two armies face each other in battle the army of aggression, before it can engage the main body, must drive to the extreme lines of the enemy. The woman's suffrage propagandists have thrown out certain skirmish lines in the public thought and these must be driven in before we can come to the main argument. First, then, those who claim that the ballot is women's right quote from the declaration of independence that taxation without representation is tyranny. But the quotation is not in point, for that sentiment was uttered with no possible reference to individual voters, male or female. It was a declaration of the representatives of the 13 colonies that unless these colonies could have a representative in the parliament and in the cabinet to protect their interests King George should not ask us to pay duty. It had no reference to the casting of ballots, for men voted in every colony, but it was a declaration that one government ought not to tax another without due representation.

Protection for Women.
In order to make it refer to woman's suffrage it would have to be proven that women are not how the privilege is protected by their husbands, fathers or brothers; that the government does not protect them in their property, taxes, and that they do not get value received for their money.

The question of voting has no reference to the paying of taxes. We pay our taxes in return for the protection to life and property, by the laws of a civilized nation. Some men who have no property vote and many who have no vote pay large taxes. Numerous young men and women, holders of large estates, pay immense sums to the government, but have no vote. Corporations pay intricate taxes in every state, but have no vote. Persons residing in foreign lands or who have lived in this country only a few years, pay taxes, but have no vote. In fact voting has no reference whatever to taxes.

It is claimed that voting is a natural right and men have no right to deprive women of their rights. I deny that any one has a natural right to vote; more in his that he has to purely an individual until he settles and forms a family. The family then becomes the unit of society. When the representatives of various families get together and form themselves into a church or state, they are subject to his right, either by revolution or by grant. The power to vote is, therefore, delegated power, not a natural right, and not a natural right in any case.

Our sisters who are clamoring for the ballot as their right have a strange idea of voting. As if it were all a slight of privilege; those of us who have it look upon it rather as a stern duty imposed upon us by society. The honor we have not discovered.

No Women on Juries.
Distance lends enchantment to the view, if our sisters have a right to voting promises to thrill with delight. Indeed where women have been given the ballot, they have had to be exempted from the duties that accompany it. Colorado women are not required to sit on juries, nor pay the poll tax, to serve in the militia or respond to the sheriff's call to act on police committees nor even on the police force. In all these departments shows that government is not her forte. Of course some men are disqualified, but that is an exception. It would be an exceptional woman who should be qualified to quell a riot.

Some people base the supposed right of women to vote on the ground of the equality of the sexes. But what do you mean by equality? Women are not similar to men; they differ physically, mentally, morally, and emotionally and temperamentally. These differences are as marked as the Almighty could make them, and they indicate his will that they should work together, not as competitors, but that each should be supreme in a different sphere.

What is this natural division of labor and responsibility? Why, God has made man strong and combative, that he might fight the battles and conquer nature by felling trees and tilling the soil, battle with the elements and when need is, fight his fellow-man. Woman is differently constituted and fitted for a different sphere. It is here to refine and elevate by the subtle and more quiet influence of her finer nature. She is as much out of place in the cornfield as the battle ship, the jury box, the army or the police force as a man is patching crazy quilts, making doll dresses or giving pink tea. But seriously, the problem is whether "voting" is of the nature of man's work or woman's, or of both. Government is for both.

When Law's a Mockery.
The ballot that is not backed by fighting force is no vote at all. A law with no police force is a mockery. There is a difference between an election and a discussion. A debate is a clash of opinions, an election is a clash of wills, with an agreement beforehand that the majority rule. But it is always implied that that majority will enforce its decision. That principle was acted on in the election of Lincoln, and it may have to be again. Suppose, for instance, in this city or state the women and men jointly voted on the same question and prohibition should be enacted, but it became known that the women voted for it and the men against it. Who would enforce the law? Will the women ask the men to enforce their will against their own judgments?

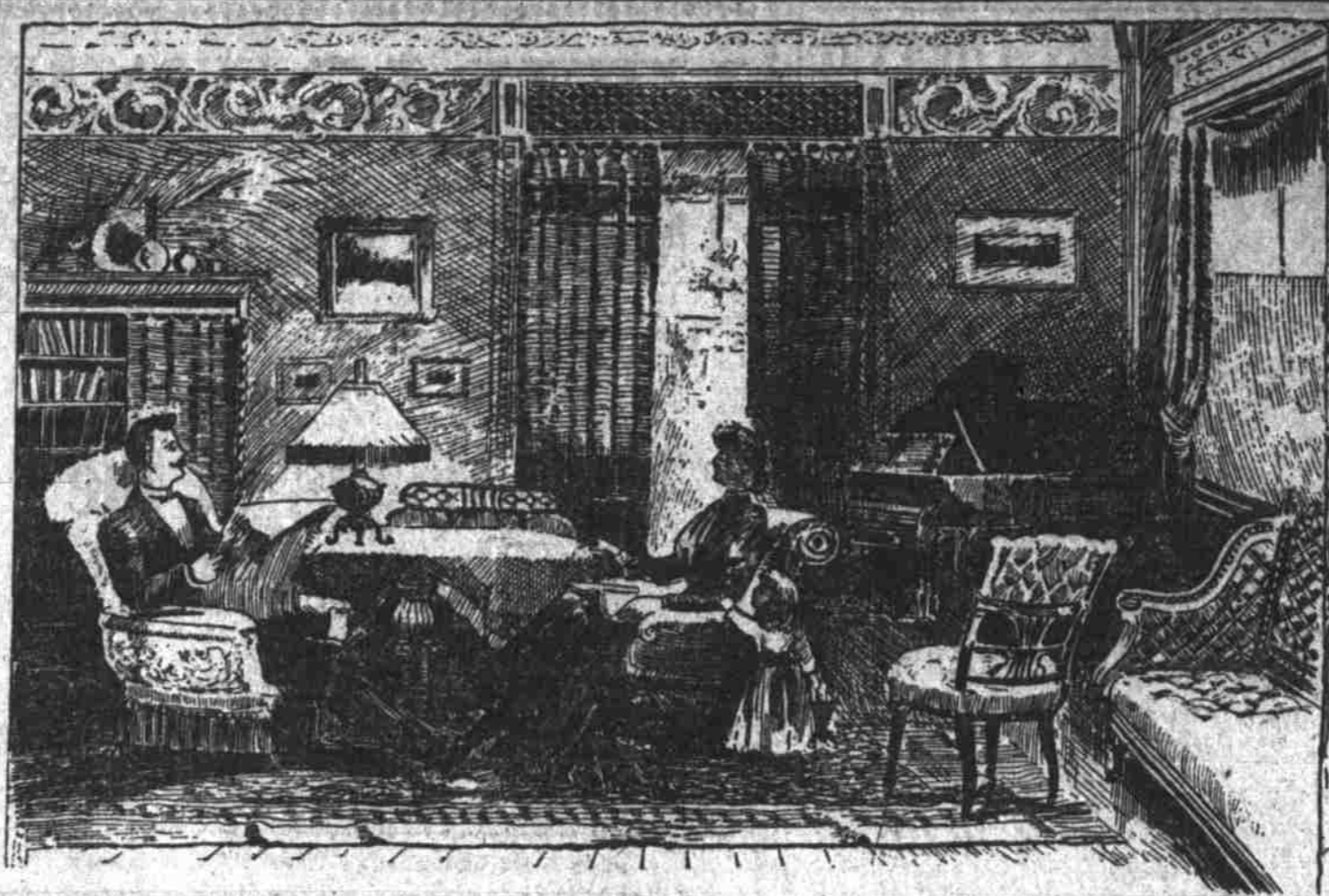
Will the men enforce the ordinance in which they do not believe though outvoted by women? The power that decrees is the power to enforce decrees. Government that cannot back up its own laws by police, militia, and if needed the whole army is no government at all. Its law is only advice. Its stability a chain of sand. And because government implies force, I believe these woman's suffrage propagandists have a rival—queen of the home, and that men ought to rule without a rival in political government.

Another claim is that the right to govern depends upon the consent of the governed. But who is able to speak for the women of our land and state that they are dissatisfied with the laws under which they live, and can prove that they are in rebellion against the rule, which makes a man the exponent of his home in the political arena?

The question is not whether the women have a right to vote, but it is whether we have a right to compel them all to vote at the dictation of a very small minority of their own number. It is certain the vast majority of women consent to the front as politicians and workers and fill our offices, or will the worse? Which is the better element of women? The quiet and unassuming queens of our homes, our mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts, or will politics be controlled by clubwomen? This is not an untried experiment. Four states have given the ballot to women, unconditionally and after 20 years of women's voting, politics has not arrived at the moral standard of our own state. In Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho or Utah, you say, "there are not as many women as men in Wyoming." Yes, but in Utah women are so plentiful that they have formed a club together and keep one husband between them, and with this numerous company they have no time for schools, or closed the brothels, or prevented gambling dens, or purified politics. There are four states where women vote. It is a sad picture where a man, for the sake of office, sells his integrity, but it is a sadder, and a common sight, in the states where women vote, to see women sell their virtue for office.

Can Give Specific Incidents.
I can give specific incidents with names, places and dates, where women, desiring to be assistant county clerks, etc., are sent from the candidates' office to the political boss to there offer her, but for politics, would not be allowed to enter her home. In every woman's suffrage state, the proverb has had a double emphasis that "Politics make strange companions."

It is expedient in this day when so many influences disintegrate home life, to drag women out of that protected shrine, to compete with men in the wild scramble for office? You know that the darkest pages of the world's history have been written with the names of those women who have sought by any possible means to dictate political policies. It has been the presence of women using their charms upon the men in oriental courts and European thrones, from Cleopatra and Herodius to the present, which has caused more debauchery and vice and prostitution and emmental powers than all other sources combined. Whenever women are driven from the sacred precincts of the home into business or politics, social conditions are abnormal. There are 6,000,000 working women outside of homes. There is a man unemployed for every woman at work. Women are doing for \$5 a week what men used to get \$15 to \$25 for. The two greatest evils of our day grow out of this evil condition. The employer who saves \$15 on every man he hires and charges and woman he employs, gets rich by that amount every week. Here is the most fruitful cause of the widening breach between capital and labor. Those young men, thus discharged, are compelled to work for a woman's wage and cannot marry and support a wife, and the girl away from home on inadequate wages, cannot live. Here you have the cause of the social evil, as it exists and grows alarmingly in all our cities. This abnormal condition of things ought to stop, but woman's suffrage gives it a long push still further in the wrong direction. I am old fashioned enough still to believe that the family is the unit of society; the safeguard of the nation and church. That the ideal woman still presides a queen of the sacred precincts of her home; inspires by her fine sentiments her husband to do his best in the outward world and influence felt far and wide, while she lives and to inspire them after she is gone, and that this kind of woman are not clamoring for the ballot and making walking ring with "I want my sphere." They are not telling, they cannot respect the laws because they are not respectable, but they are quietly saying to the men, "Give us such laws and we will give you good homes." It is this class of women that I propose to vote for at the June election by stamping "No." 317 X no on the official ballot.



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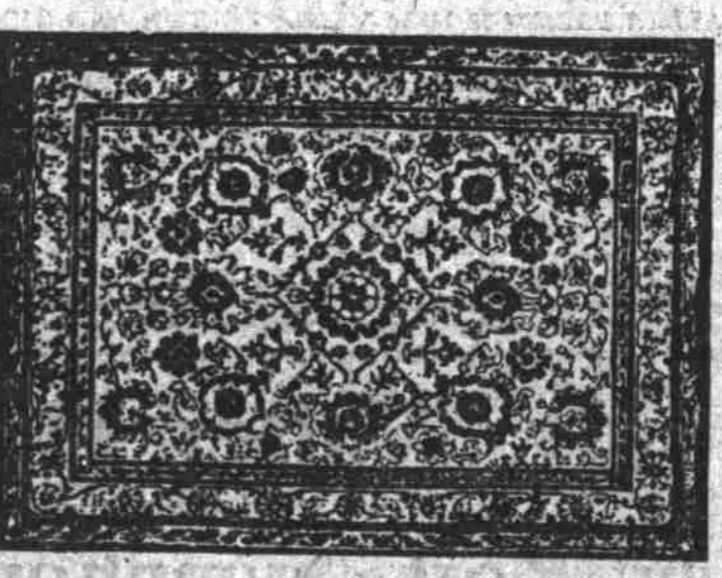
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