

# VARIOUS

DEBATE ON WOMAN  
SUFFRAGE IN THE  
SENATE OF THE UNITED  
STATES

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the Senate of the United States**

«Public Domain»

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# Various

## Debate on Woman Suffrage in the Senate of the United States, / 2d Session, 49th Congress, December 8, 1886, and January 25, 1887

*Wednesday, December 8, 1886.*

On the joint resolution (S.R. 5) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right of suffrage to women.

Mr. BLAIR said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I ask the Senate to proceed to the consideration of Order of Business 122, being the joint resolution (S.R. 5) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right of suffrage to women.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The joint resolution will be read.

The Chief Clerk read as follows:

Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right of suffrage to women.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States; which, when ratified by three-fourths of the said Legislatures, shall be valid as part of said Constitution, namely:*

ARTICLE—.

SECTION 1. The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

SEC. 2. The Congress shall have power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce the provisions of this article.

Mr. BLAIR. Mr. President, the question before the Senate is this: Shall a joint resolution providing for an amendment of the national Constitution, so that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any State, on account of sex, and that Congress shall have power to enforce the article, be submitted to the Legislatures of the several States for ratification or rejection?

The answer to this question does not depend necessarily upon the reply to that other question, whether women ought to be permitted to exercise the right or privilege of suffrage as do men. The Legislatures of the several States must decide this in ratifying or rejecting the proposed amendment.

Upon solemn occasions concerning grave public affairs, and when large numbers of the citizens of the country desire to test the sentiments of the people upon an amendment of the organic law in the manner provided to be done by the provisions of that law, it may well become the duty of Congress to submit the proposition to the amending power, which is the same as that which created the original instrument itself—the people of the several States.

It can hardly be claimed that two-thirds of each branch of Congress must necessarily be convinced that the Constitution should be amended as proposed in the joint resolution to be submitted before it has discretion to submit the same to the judgment of the States. Any citizen has the right to petition or, through his representative, to bring in his bill for redress of grievances, or to promote the public good by legislation; and it can hardly be maintained that, before any citizen or large body of citizens shall have the privilege of introducing a bill to the great legislative tribunal, which alone

has primary jurisdiction of the organic law and power to amend or change it, the Congress, which under the Constitution is simply the moving or initiating power, must by a two-thirds vote approve the proposition at issue before its discussion shall be permitted in the forum of the States. To hold such a doctrine would be contrary to all our ideas of free discussion, and to lock up the institutions and the interests of a great and progressive people in fetters of brass.

It is only essential that two-thirds of each House of the Congress shall deem it necessary for the public good, that the amendment be proposed to the States for their action. But two-thirds of the Congress will hardly consider it "necessary" to submit a joint resolution proposing an amendment of the National Constitution to the States for consideration, unless the subject matter be of grave importance, with strong reasons in its favor, and a large support already developed among the people themselves.

If there be any principle upon which our form of government is founded, and wherein it is different from aristocracies, monarchies, and despotisms, that principle is this:

Every human being of mature powers, not disqualified by ignorance, vice or crime, is the equal of and is entitled to all the rights and privileges which belong to any other such human being under the law.

The independence, equality, and dignity of all human souls is the fundamental assertion of those who believe in what we call human freedom. This principle will hardly be denied by any one, even by those who oppose the adoption of the resolution. But we are informed that infants, idiots, and women are represented by men. This cannot reasonably be claimed unless it be first shown that the consent of these classes has been given to such representation, or that they lack the capacity to consent. But the exclusion of these classes from participation in the Government deprives them of the power of assent to representation even when they possess the requisite ability; and to say there can be representation which does not presuppose consent or authority on the part of the principal who is represented is to confound all reason and to assert in substance that all actual power, whether despotic or otherwise, is representative, and therefore free. In this sense the Czar represents his whole people, just as voting men represent women who do not vote at all.

True it is that the voting men, by excluding women and other classes from the suffrage, by that act charge themselves with the trust of administering justice to all, even as the monarch whose power is based upon force is bound to rule uprightly. But if it be true that "all just government is founded upon the consent of the governed," then the government of woman by man, without her consent, given in her sovereign capacity, if indeed she be an intelligent creature, and provided she be competent to exercise the power of suffrage, which is the sovereignty, even if that government be wise and just in itself, is a violation of natural right and an enforcement of servitude and slavery against her on the part of man. If woman, like the infant or the defective classes, be incapable of self-government, then republican society may exclude her from all participation in the enactment and enforcement of the laws under which she lives. But in that case, like the infant and the fool and the unconsenting subject of tyrannical forms of government, she is ruled and not represented by man.

Thus much I desire to say in the beginning in reply to the broad assumption of those who deny women the suffrage by saying that they are already represented by their fathers, their husbands, their brothers, and their sons, or to state the proposition in its only proper form, that woman whose assent can only be given by an exercise of sovereignty on her part is represented by man who denies and by virtue of power and possession refuses to her the exercise of the suffrage whereby that representation can be made valid.

The claim, then, of the minority of the committee that woman is represented by the other sex is not well founded, and is based upon the same assumption of power which lies at the base of all government anti-republican in form. It can not be claimed that she is as a free being already represented, for she can only be represented according to her will by the exercise of her will through the suffrage itself.

As already observed, the exclusion of woman from the suffrage under our form of government can be justified upon proof, and only upon proof, that by reason of her sex she is incompetent to exercise that power. This is a question of fact.

The common ground upon which all agree may be stated thus: All males having certain qualifications are in reason and in law entitled to vote. Those qualifications affect either the body or the mind or both.

First, the attainment of a certain age. The age in itself is not material, but maturity of mental and moral development is material, soundness of body in itself not being essential, and want of it alone never working forfeiture of the right, although it may prevent its exercise.

Age as a qualification for suffrage is by no means to be confounded with age as a qualification for service in war. Society has well established the distinction, and that one has no relation whatever to the other; the one having reference to physical prowess, while the other relates only to the mental and moral state. This is shown by the ages fixed by law for these qualifications, that of eighteen years being fixed as the commencement of the term of presumed fitness for military service, and forty-five years as the period of its termination; while the age of presumed fitness for the suffrage, which requires no physical superiority certainly, is set at twenty-one years, when still greater strength of body has been attained than at the period when liability to the dangers and hardships of war commences; and there are at least three millions more male voters in our country than of the population liable by law to the performance of military duty. It is still further to be observed, that the right of suffrage continues as long as the mind lasts, while ordinary liability to military service ceases at a period when the physical powers, though still strong, are beginning to wane. The truth is, that there is no legal or natural connection between the right or liability to fight and the right to vote.

The right to fight may be exercised voluntarily or the liability to fight may be enforced by the community whenever there is an invasion of right, and the extent to which the physical forces of society may be called upon in self-defense or in justifiable revolution is measured not by age or sex, but by necessity, and may go so far as to call into the field old men and women and the last vestige of physical force. It can not be claimed that woman has no right to vote because she is not liable to fight, for she is so liable, and the freest government on the face of the earth has the reserved power under the call of necessity to place her in the forefront of battle itself, and more than this, woman has the right, and often has exercised it, to go there.

If any one could question the existence of this reserved power of society to call the force of woman to the common defense, either in the hospital or the field, it would be woman, who has been deprived of participation in the government and in shaping the public policy which has resulted in dire emergency to the state. But in all times, and under all forms of government and of social existence, woman has given her body and her soul to the common defense.

The qualification of age, then, is imposed for the purpose of securing mental and moral fitness for the suffrage on the part of those who exercise it. It has no relation to the possession of physical powers at all.

All other qualifications imposed upon male citizens, save only that of their sex, as prerequisites to the exercise of suffrage have the same objects in view, and can have no other.

The property qualification is, to my mind, an invasion of natural right, which elevates mere property to an equality with life and personal liberty, and ought never to be imposed upon the suffrage. But, however that may be, its application or removal has no relation to sex, and its only object is to secure the exercise of the suffrage under a stronger sense of obligation and responsibility—a qualification, be it observed, of no consequence save as it influences the mind of the voter in the exercise of his right.

The same is true of the qualifications of sanity, education, and obedience to the laws, which exclude dementia, ignorance, and crime from participation in the sovereignty. Every condition or qualification imposed upon the exercise of the suffrage by the citizen save only sex has for its only

object or possible justification the possession of mental and moral fitness, and has no relation to physical power.

The question then arises why is the qualification of masculinity required at all?

The distinction between human beings by reason of sex is a physical distinction. The soul is of no sex. If there be a distinction of soul by reason of the physical difference, or accompanying that physical difference, woman is the superior of man in mental and moral qualities. In proof of this see the report of the minority and all the eulogiums of woman pronounced by those who, like the serpent of old, would flatter her vanity that they may continue to wield her power.

I repeat it, that the soul is of no sex, and that sex is, so far as the possession and exercise of human rights and powers are concerned, but a physical property, in which the female is just as important as the male, and the possessor thereof under just as great need of power in the organization and management of society and the government of society as man; and if there be a difference, she, by reason of her average physical inferiority, is really protected, and ought to be protected, by a superior mental and moral fitness to give direction to the course of society and the policy of the state. If, then, there be a distinction between the souls of human beings resulting from sex, I claim that, by the report of the minority and the universal testimony of all men, woman is better fitted for the exercise of the suffrage than man.

It is claimed by some that the suffrage is an inherent natural right, and by others that it is merely a privilege extended to the individual by society in its discretion. However this may be, practically any extension of the exercise of the suffrage to individuals or classes not now enjoying it must be by concession of those who already possess it, and such extension without revolution will be through the suffrage itself exercised by those who have it under existing forms.

The appeal by those who have it not must be made to those who are asked to part with a portion of their own power, and it is not strange that human nature, which is an essential element in the male sex, should hesitate and delay to yield one-half its power to those whose cause, however strong in reason and justice, lacks that physical force which so largely has been the means by which the masses of men themselves have wrung their own rights from rulers and kings.

It is not strange that when overwhelmed with argument and half won by appeals to his better nature to concede to woman her equal power in the state, and ashamed to blankly refuse that which he finds no reason for longer withholding, man avoids the dilemma by a pretended elevation of his helpmeet to a higher sphere, where, as an angel, she has certain gauzy ethereal resources and superior functions, occupations, and attributes which render the possession of mere earthly everyday powers and privileges non-essential to woman, however mere mortal men themselves may find them indispensable to their own freedom and happiness.

But to the denial of her right to vote, whether that denial be the blunt refusal of the ignorant or the polished evasion of the refined courtier and politician, woman can oppose only her most solemn and perpetual appeal to the reason of man and to the justice of Almighty God. She must continually point out the nature and object of the suffrage and the necessity that she possess it for her own and the public good.

What, then, is the suffrage, and why is it necessary that woman should possess and exercise this function of freemen? I quote briefly from the report of the committee:

The rights for the maintenance of which human governments are constituted are life, liberty, and property. These rights are common to men and women alike, and whatever citizen or subject exists as a member of any body-politic, under any form of government, is entitled to demand from the sovereign power the full protection of these rights.

This right to the protection of rights appertains to the individual, not to the family alone, or to any form of association, whether social or corporate. Probably not more than five-eighths of the men of legal age, qualified to vote, are heads of

families, and not more than that proportion of adult women are united with men in the legal merger of married life. It is, therefore, quite incorrect to speak of the state as an aggregate of families duly represented at the ballot-box by their male head. The relation between the government and the individual is direct; all rights are individual rights, all duties are individual duties.

Government in its two highest functions is legislative and judicial. By these powers the sovereignty prescribes the law, and directs its application to the vindication of rights and the redress of wrongs. Conscience and intelligence are the only forces which enter into the exercise of this highest and primary function of government. The remaining department is the executive or administrative, and in all forms of government—the republican as well as in tyranny—the primary element of administration is force, and even in this department conscience and intelligence are indispensable to its direction.

If now we are to decide who of our sixty millions of human beings are to constitute the citizenship of this Republic and by virtue of their qualifications to be the law-making power, by what tests shall the selection be determined?

The suffrage which is the sovereignty is this great primary law-making power. It is not the executive power proper at all. It is not founded upon force. Only that degree of physical strength which is essential to a sound body—the home of the healthy mental and moral constitution—the sound soul in the sound body is required in the performance of the function of primary legislation. Never in the history of this or any other genuine republic has the law-making power, whether in general elections or in the framing of laws in legislative assemblies, been vested in individuals who have exercised it by reason of their physical powers. On the contrary, the physically weak have never for that reason been deprived of the suffrage nor of the privilege of service in the public councils so long as they possessed the necessary powers of locomotion and expression, of conscience and intelligence, which are common to all. The aged and the physically weak have, as a rule, by reason of superior wisdom and moral sense, far more than made good any bodily inferiority by which they have differed from the more robust members of the community in the discussion and decisions of the ballot-box and in councils of the state.

The executive power of itself is a mere physical instrumentality—an animal quality—and it is confided from necessity to those individuals who possess that quality, but always with danger, except so far as wisdom and virtue control its exercise. And it is obvious that the greater the mass of higher and spiritual forces, whether found in those to whom the execution of the law is assigned or in the great mass by whom the suffrage is exercised, and who direct the execution of the law, the greater will be the safety and the surer will be the happiness of the state.

It is too late to question the intellectual and moral capacity of woman to understand great political issues (which are always primarily questions of conscience—questions of the intelligent application of the principles of right and of wrong in public and private affairs) and properly decide them at the polls. Indeed, so far as your committee are aware, the pretense is no longer advanced that woman should not vote by reason of her mental or moral unfitness to perform this legislative function; but the suffrage is denied to her because she can not hang criminals, suppress mobs, nor handle the enginery of war. We have already seen the untenable nature of this assumption, because those who make it bestow the suffrage upon very large classes of men who, however well qualified they may be to vote, are physically unable to perform any of the duties which appertain to the execution of the law and the defense

of the state. Scarcely a Senator on this floor is liable by law to perform a military or other administrative duty, yet the rule so many set up against the right of women to vote would disfranchise nearly this whole body.

But it unnecessary to grant that woman can not fight. History is full of examples of her heroism in danger, of her endurance and fortitude in trial, and of her indispensable and supreme service in hospital and field; and in the handling of the deft and horrible machinery and infernal agencies which science and art have prepared and are preparing for human destruction in future wars, woman may perform her whole part in the common assault or the common defense. It is hardly worth while to consider this trivial objection that she is incompetent for purposes of national murder or of bloody self-defense as the basis of the denial of a great fundamental right, when we consider that if that right were given to her she would by its exercise almost certainly abolish this great crime of the nations, which has always inflicted upon her the chief burden of woe.

It will be admitted that the act of voting is operative in government only as a means of deciding upon the adoption or rejection of measures or of the selection of officers to enact, administer, and execute the laws.

In the discharge of these functions it also must be admitted that intelligence and conscience are the faculties requisite to secure their proper performance.

In this day when woman has demonstrated that she is fully the intellectual equal of man in the profound as well as in the politer walks of learning—in art, science, literature, and, considering her opportunities, that she is not his inferior in any of the professions or in the great mass of useful occupations, while she is, in fact, becoming the chief educator of the race and is the acknowledged support of the great ministrations of charity and religion; when in such great organizations as the suffrage associations, missionary societies, the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and even upon the still larger scale of international action, she has exhibited her power by mere moral influences and the inspiration of great purposes, without the aid of legal penalties or even of tangible inconveniences, to mold and direct the discordant thought and action of thousands and millions of people scattered over separate States, and sometimes even living in countries hostile to each other to the accomplishment of great earthly or heavenly ends, it is unreasonable to deny to woman the suffrage in political affairs upon the false allegation that she is wanting in the very qualities most indispensable and requisite for the proper exercise of this great right.

The advocates of universal male suffrage have long since ceased to deny the ballot to woman upon the ground that she is unfit or incompetent to exercise it.

There is a class of high-stepping objectors, like Ouida, who decry the sound judgment and moral excellence of woman as compared with man, but in the same breath these people deny the suffrage to the masses of men and advocate "the just supremacy of the fittest," so that no time need be wasted in refutation of those malignant and libelous aspersions upon our mothers, sisters, and wives, which, when carried to logical conclusions by their own authors, deny the fundamental principles of liberty to man and woman alike, and reassert in its baldest form the dogma that "the existing system of electoral power all over the world is absurd, and will remain so because in no nation is there the courage, perhaps in no nation is there the intellectual power, capable of putting forward and sustaining the logical doctrine of the just supremacy of the fittest."

In fact the minority of the committee, and this is true of all honest, intelligent men who believe in the republican system of government at all, concede that woman has the capacity and moral fitness requisite to exercise the ballot. That class of women represented by the author of "Letters from a Chimney Corner," whose work has been adopted by the minority as the basis of their report, speaking through the "fair authoress," say that "if women were to be considered in their highest and final estate as merely individual beings, and if the right to the ballot were to be conceded to man as an individual,

it might perhaps he logically argued that women also possessed the inherent right to vote." Let me read from the views of the minority on page 1:

The undersigned minority of the Committee of the Senate on Woman Suffrage, to whom was referred Senate Resolution No. 5, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to grant the right to vote to the women of the United States, beg leave to submit the following minority report, consisting of extracts from a little volume entitled, "Letters from a Chimney Corner," written by a highly cultivated lady, Mrs. —, of Chicago, This gifted lady has discussed the question with so much clearness and force that we make no apology to the Senate for substituting quotations from her book in place of anything we might produce. We quote first from chapter 3, which is entitled "The value of suffrage to women much overestimated."

The fair authoress says:

"If women were to be considered in their highest and final estate as merely individual beings, and if the right to the ballot were to be conceded to man as an individual, it might perhaps be logically argued that women also possessed the inherent right to vote. But from the oldest times, and through all the history of the race, has run the glimmer of an idea, more or less distinguishable in different ages and under different circumstances, that neither man nor woman is, as such, individual; that neither being is of itself a whole, a unit, but each requires to be supplemented by the other before its true structural integrity can be achieved. Of this idea, the science of botany furnishes the most perfect illustration. The stamens on the one hand, and the ovary and pistil on the other, may indeed reside in one blossom, which then exists in a married or reproductive state. But equally well, the stamens or male organs may reside in one plant, and the ovary and pistil or female organs may reside in another. In that case, the two plants are required to make one structurally complete organization. Each is but half a plant, an incomplete individual by itself. The life principle of each must be united to that of the other; the twain must be indeed one flesh before the organization is either structurally or functionally complete."

This is a concession of the whole argument, unless the highest and final estate of woman is to be something else than a mere individual. It would also follow that if such be her destiny—that is, to be something else than a mere "individual being"—and if for that reason she is to be denied the suffrage, then man equally should be denied the ballot if his highest and final estate is to be something else than a "mere individual."

Thereupon the minority of the committee, through the "Fair Authoress," proceed to show that both man and woman are designed for a higher final estate—to wit, that of matrimony. It seems to be conceded that man is just as much fitted for matrimony as woman herself, and thereupon the whole subject is illuminated with certain botanical lore about stamens and pistils, which, however relevant to matrimony, does not seem to me to prove that therefore woman should not vote unless at the same time it proves that man should not vote either. And certainly it can not apply to those women any more than to those men whose highest and final estate never is merged in the family relation at all, and even "Ouida" concedes "that the project . . . to give votes only to unmarried women may be dismissed without discussion, as it would be found to be wholly untenable."

There is no escape from it. The discussion has passed so far that among intelligent people who believe in the republican form—that is, free government—all mature men and women have under the same circumstance and conditions the same rights to defend, the same grievances to redress, and, therefore, the same necessity for the exercise of this great fundamental right, of all human beings

in free society. For the right to vote is the great primitive right. It is the right in which all freedom originates and culminates. It is the right from which all others spring, in which they merge, and without which they fall whenever assailed.

This right makes, and is all the difference between government by and with the consent of the governed and government without and against the consent of the governed; and that is the difference between freedom and slavery. If the right to vote be not that difference, what is? No, sir. If either sex as a class can dispense with the right to vote, then take it from the strong, and no longer rob the weak of their defense for the benefit of the strong.

But it is impossible to conceive of the suffrage as a right dependent at all upon such an irrelevant condition as sex. It is an individual, a personal right. It may be withheld by force; but if withheld by reason of sex it is a moral robbery.

But it is said that the duties of maternity disqualify for the performance of the act of voting. It can not be, and I think is not claimed by any one, that the mother who otherwise would be fit to vote is rendered mentally or morally less fit to exercise this high function in the state because of motherhood. On the contrary, if any woman has a motive more than another person, man or woman, to secure the enactment and enforcement of good laws, it is the mother, who, beside her own life, person, and property, to the protection of which the ballot is as essential as to the same rights possessed by man, has her little contingent of immortal beings to conduct safely to the portals of active life through all the snares and pitfalls woven around them by bad men and bad laws which bad men have made, or good laws which bad men, unhindered by the good, have defied or have prostituted, and rightly to prepare, them for the discharge of all the duties of their day and generation, including the exercise of the very right denied to their mother.

Certainly, if but for motherhood she should vote, then ten thousand times more necessary is it that the mother should be guarded and armed with this great social and political power for the sake of all men and women who are yet to be. But it is said that she has not the time. Let us see. By the best deductions I can make from the census and from other sources there are 15,000,000 women of voting age in this country at the present time, of whom not more than 10,000,000 are married and not more than 7,500,000 are still liable to the duties of maternity, for it will be remembered that a large proportion of the mothers of our country at any given time are below the voting age, while of those who are above it another large proportion have passed beyond the point of this objection. Not more than one-half the female population of voting age are liable to this objection. Then why disfranchise the 7,500,000, the other half, as to whom your objection, even if valid as to any, does not apply at all; and these, too, as a class the most mature and therefore the best qualified to vote of any of their sex? But how much is there of this objection of want of time or physical strength to vote, in its application to women who are bearing and training the coming millions? The families of the country average five persons in number. If we assume that this gives an average of three children to every pair, which is probably the full number, or if we assume that every married mother, after she becomes of voting age, bears three children, which is certainly the full allowance, and that twenty-four years are consumed in doing it, there is one child born every eight years whose coming is to interfere with the exercise of a duty of privilege which, in most States, and in all the most important elections, occurs only one day in two years.

That same mother will attend church at least forty times yearly on the average from her cradle to her grave, beside an infinity of other social, religious, and industrial obligations which she performs and assumes to perform because she is a married woman and a mother rather than for any other reason whatever. Yet it is proposed to deprive women—yes, all women alike—of an inestimable privilege and the chief power which can be exercised by any free individual in the state for the reason that on any given day of election not more than one woman in twenty of voting age will probably not be able to reach the polls. It does seem probable that on these interesting occasions if the husband and wife disagree in politics they could arrange a pair, and the probability is, that arrangement failing, one could

be consummated with some other lady in like fortunate circumstances, of opposite political opinions. More men are kept from the polls by drunkenness, or, being at the polls, vote under the influence of strong drink, to the reproach and destruction of our free institutions, and who, if woman could and did vote, would cast the ballot of sobriety, good order, and reform under her holy influences, than all those who would be kept from any given election by the necessary engagements of mothers at home.

When one thinks of the innumerable and trifling causes which keep many of the best of men and strongest opponents of woman suffrage from the polls upon important occasions it is difficult to be tolerant of the objection that woman by reason of motherhood has no time to vote. Why, sir, the greater exposure of man to the casualties of life actually disables him in such way as to make it physically impossible for him to exercise the franchise more frequently than is the case with women, including mothers and all. And if this liability to lose the opportunity to exercise the right once or possibly twice in a lifetime is a reason that women should not be allowed to vote at all, why should men not be disfranchised also by the same rule?

But it is urged that woman does not desire the privilege. If the right exist at all it is an individual right, and not one which belongs to a class or to the sex as such. Yet men tell us that they will vote the suffrage to women whenever the majority of women desire it. Are, then, our rights the property of the majority of a disfranchised class to which we may chance to belong? What would we say if it were seriously proposed to recall the suffrage from all colored or from all white men because a majority of either class should decline or for any cause fail to vote? I know that it is said that the suffrage is a privilege to be extended by those who have it to those who have it not. But the matter of right, of moral right, to the franchise does not depend upon the indifference of those who possess it or of those who do not possess it to the desire of those women who desire to enjoy their right and to discharge their duty. If one or many choose not to claim their right it is no argument for depriving me of mine or one woman of hers. There are many reasons why some women declare themselves opposed to the extension of suffrage to their sex. Some well-fed and pampered, without serious experiences in life, are incapable of comprehending the subject at all. Vast numbers, who secretly and earnestly desire it from the long habit of deference to the wishes of the other sex, upon whom they are so entirely dependent while disfranchised, and knowing the hostility of their "protectors" to the agitation of the subject, conceal their real sentiments, and the "lord" of the family referring this question to his wife, who has heard him sneer or worse than sneer at suffragists for half a lifetime, ought not to expect an answer which she knows will subject her to his censure and ridicule or even his unexpressed disapprobation.

It is like the old appeal of the master to his slave to know if he would be free. Full well did the wise and wary slave know that happiness depended upon declared contentment with his lot. But all the same the world does move. Colored men are free. Colored men vote. Women will vote. A little further on I shall revert to the evidence of a general and growing desire on her part and on the part of just and intelligent men that the suffrage be extended to women.

But we are told that husband and wife will disagree and thus the suffrage will destroy the family and ruin society. If a married couple will quarrel at all, they will find the occasion, and it were fortunate indeed if their contention might concern important affairs. There is no peace in the family save where love is, and the same spirit which enables the husband and wife to enforce the toleration act between themselves in religious matters will keep the peace between them in political discussions. At all events, this argument is unworthy of notice at all unless we are to push it to its logical conclusion, and, for the sake of peace in the family, to prohibit woman absolutely the exercise of freedom of thought and speech. Men live with their countrymen and disagree with them in politics, religion, and ten thousand of the affairs of life, as often the trifling as the important. What harm, then, if woman be allowed her thought and vote upon the tariff, education, temperance, peace and war, and whatsoever else the suffrage decides?

But we are told that no government, of which we have authentic history, ever gave to woman a share in the sovereignty.

This is not true, for the annals of monarchies and despotisms have been rendered illustrious by queens of surpassing brilliance and power. But even if it be true that no republic ever enfranchised woman with the ballot—even so until within one hundred years universal or even general suffrage was unknown among men.

Has the millennium yet dawned? Is all progress at an end? If that which is should therefore remain, why abolish the slavery of men?

But we are informed that woman does not vote when she has the opportunity. Wherever she has the unrestricted right she exercises it. The records of Wyoming and Washington demonstrate the fact.

And in these Territories, too, as well as wherever else she has exercised the suffrage, she has elevated man to her own level, and has made the voting precinct as respectable and decorous as the lecture-room or the assemblies of the devout. All the experience there is refutes the apprehension of those who fear that woman will either neglect the discharge of her great duty, when allowed its fair and equal exercise, or that the rude and baser sort will overwhelm and banish the noble and refined.

But to my mind it seems like trifling with a great subject to dwell upon topics like this. It can only be justified by the continual iteration of the objection by the opponents of woman suffrage, who in the lack of substantial grounds whereupon to base their opposition to the exercise of a great right by one-half the community declare that there is no time in which woman can vote.

I will now read an extract from the report of the majority of the committee, showing to a certain extent the degree of consequence which this movement has assumed, its extent throughout our country, and something of its duration. I have not the latest data, for since this report was compiled there has been action in several States, and a great deal of popular discussion and a vast amount of demonstration from the action of popular assemblies.

The committee say:

This movement for woman suffrage has developed during the last half century into one of great strength. The first petition was presented to the Legislature of New York in 1835. It was repeated in 1846, and since that time the petition has been urged upon nearly every Legislature in the Northern States. Five States have voted upon the question of amending their constitutions by striking out the word "male" from the suffrage clause—Kansas in 1867, Michigan in 1874, Colorado in 1877, Nebraska in 1882, and Oregon in 1884.

The ratio of the popular vote in each case was about one-third for the amendment and two-thirds against it. Three Territories have or have had full suffrage for women. In two, Wyoming since 1869 and Washington since 1883, the experiment (!) is an unqualified success. In Utah Miss Anthony keenly and justly observes that suffrage is as much of a success for the Mormon women as for the men.

In eleven States school suffrage for women exists. In Kansas, from her admission as a State. In Kentucky and Michigan fully as long a time. School suffrage for women also exists in Colorado, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Nebraska, and Oregon.

In all these States, except Minnesota, school suffrage was extended to women by the respective Legislatures, and in Minnesota by the popular vote, in November, 1876. Not only these eleven States, but in nearly all the other Northern and Western States women are elected to the offices of county and city superintendent of public schools and as members of school boards. In Louisiana the constitution of 1879 makes women eligible to school offices.

It may also be observed as indicating a rising and controlling public sentiment in recognition of the right and capacity of woman for public affairs that she is

eligible to such offices as that of county clerk, register of deeds, and the like in many and perhaps in all the States. Kansas and Iowa elected several women to these positions in the election of November, 1885, while President Grant alone appointed more than five thousand women to the office of postmaster; and although many women have been appointed in the Departments and to pension agencies and like important employments and trusts, so far as your committee are aware no charge of incompetency or of malfeasance in office has ever yet been sustained against a woman.

It may be further stated in this connection that nearly every Northern State has had before it from time to time since 1870 a bill for the submission of the question of woman suffrage to the popular vote. In some instances such a resolution has been passed at one session and failed to be ratified at another by from one to three votes; thus Iowa passed it in 1870, killed it in 1872; passed it in 1874, failed to do so in 1876; passed it in 1878, and failed in 1880; passed it again in 1882, and defeated it in 1884; four times over and over, and this winter these heroic and indomitable women are trying it in Iowa again.

If men were to make such a struggle for their rights it would be considered a fine thing, and there would be books and even poetry written about it.

In New York, since 1880, the women have urged this great measure before the Legislature each year. There it takes the form of a bill to prohibit the disfranchisement of women. This bill has several times come within five votes of passing the assembly.

In many States well sustained efforts for municipal suffrage have been made, and, as if in rebuke to the conservatism, or worse, of this great Republic, this right of municipal suffrage is already enjoyed in the province of Ontario, Canada, and throughout the island of Great Britain by unmarried women to the same extent as by men, there being the same property qualification required of each.

The movement for the amendment of the National Constitution began by petitioning Congress December, 1865, and since 1869 there have been consecutive applications to every Congress praying for the submission to the States of a proposition similar to the joint resolution herewith reported to the Senate.

The petitions have come from all parts of the country; more especially from the Northern and Western States, although there is an extensive and increasing desire for the suffrage existing among the women in the Southern States, as we are informed by those whose interest in the subject makes them familiar with the real state of feeling in that part of our country. It is impossible to know just what proportion of the people—men and women—have expressed their desire by petition to the National Legislature during the last twenty years, but we are informed by Miss Anthony that in the year 1871 Senator Sumner collected the petitions from the files of the Senate and House of Representatives, and that there were then an immense number. A far greater number have been presented since that time, and the same lady is our authority for the estimate that in all more than two hundred thousand petitions, by select and representative men and women, have been poured upon Congress in behalf of this prayer of woman to be free. Who is so interested in the framing of the law as woman, whose only defense is the law? There never was a stronger exhibition of popular demand by American citizens to be heard in the court of the people for the vindication of a fundamental right.

Since the submission of the report the attempt has been made to secure action in several of the State Legislatures. One which came very near being successful was made in the State of Vermont.

The suffrage was extended, if I am not incorrectly informed, so far as the action of the house of representatives of that State could give it, and an effort being made to propose some restriction and condition upon the suffrage it was defeated, when, as I am told by the friends of the movement, if it could have reached a vote in the Vermont Legislature on the naked proposition of suffrage to women as suffrage is extended to men, they felt the very greatest confidence that they would have been able to secure favorable action by the Legislature of that State.

Miss Anthony informs me since she came here at the present session (and I am sorry I have not had the opportunity of extended conference with her) that in the State of Kansas, where she spent several weeks in the discussion of the subject before vast masses of people, the largest halls, rinks, and places for the accommodation of popular assemblages in the State were crowded to overflowing to listen to her address. In every instance she has taken a vote of those vast audiences as to whether they were in favor of woman suffrage or against it, and in no single instance has there been a solitary vote against the extension of the right, but affirmative and universal action of those great assemblies demanding that it be extended to women. And like demonstrations of popular approval are developing in all parts of the country, perhaps not to so marked an extent as these which I have just stated; but it is a growing feeling in this country that women should have this right, and above all woman and man demanding that she should have the opportunity to try her case before the American people, that this right of petition should be heeded by Congress and the joint resolution for the submission of the matter for discussion by the States should be passed by the necessary two-thirds vote.

It is sometimes, too, urged against this movement for the submission of a resolution for a national constitutional amendment that women should go to the States and fight it out there. But we did not send the colored man to the States. No other amendment touching the general national interest is left to be fought out by individual action in the individual States. Under the terms of the Constitution itself the people of the United States, having some universal common interest affected by law or by the want of law, are invited to come to this body and try here their question of right, or at all events through the agency of Congress to submit that proposition to the people at large in order that in the general national forum it may receive discussion, and by the action of three-fourths of the States, if favorable, their idea may be incorporated in the fundamental law.

I will not detain the Senate further in the discussion of this subject.

It should be borne in mind that the proposition is to submit to men the question whether woman shall vote. The jury will certainly not be prejudiced in her favor as against the public good. There can be no danger of a verdict in her favor contrary to the evidence in the case.

We ask only for her an opportunity to bring her suit in the great court for the amendment of fundamental law. It is impossible for any right mind to escape the impression of solemn responsibility which attaches to our decision. Ridicule and wit of whatever quality are here as much out of place as in the debates upon the Declaration of Independence. We are affirming or denying the right of petition which by all law belongs as much to women as to men. Millions of women and thousands of men in our own country demand that she at least have the opportunity to be heard. Hear, even if you strike.

The lamented Anthony, so long the object of reverence, affection, and pride in this body, among the last acts of his public life, in signing the favorable report of this resolution, made the following declaration:

The Constitution is wisely conservative in the provision of its own amendment. It is eminently proper that whenever a large number of the people have indicated a desire for an amendment the judgment of the amending power should be consulted. In view of the extensive agitation of the question of woman suffrage, and the numerous and respectable petitions that have been presented to Congress in its

support, I unite with the committee in recommending that the proposed amendment be submitted to the States.

*H.B. ANTHONY.*

Profoundly convinced of the justice of woman's demand for the suffrage, and that the proper method of securing the right is by an amendment of the national Constitution, I urge the adoption of the joint resolution upon the still broader ground so clearly and calmly stated by the great Senator whose words I have just read. I appeal to you, Senators, to grant this petition of woman that she may be heard for her claim of right. How could you reject that petition, even were there but one faint voice beseeching your ear? How can you deny the demand of millions who believe in suffrage for women, and who can not be forever silenced, for they give voice to the innate cry of the human heart that justice be done not alone to man, but to that half of this nation which now is free only by the grace of the other, and that by our action to-day we indorse, if we do not initiate, a movement which, in the development of our race, shall guarantee liberty to all without distinction of sex, even as our glorious Constitution already grants the suffrage to every citizen without distinction of color or race.

Further consideration of the resolution postponed until January 25, 1887, when it was resumed, as follows:

*Tuesday, January 25, 1887.*

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Mr. BLAIR. I now move that the Senate proceed to consider the joint resolution (S.R. 5) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right of suffrage to women.

The motion was agreed to; and the Senate, as in Committee of the Whole, proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution will be read.

The Chief Clerk read the joint resolution, as follows:

*Resolved (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),* That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States: which, when ratified by three-fourths of the said Legislatures, shall be valid as part of said Constitution, namely:

ARTICLE—.

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Sec. 2. The Congress shall have power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce the provisions of this article.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the joint resolution introduced by my friend, the Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. BLAIR], proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, conferring the right to vote upon the women of the United States, is one of paramount importance, as it involves great questions far reaching in their tendency, which seriously affect the very pillars of our social fabric, which involve the peace and harmony of society, the unity of the family, and much of the future success of our Government. The question should therefore be met fairly and discussed with firmness, but with moderation and forbearance.

No one contributes anything valuable to the debate by the use of harsh terms, or by impugning motives, or by disparaging the arguments of the opposition. Where the prosperity of the race and the peace of society are involved, we should, on both sides, meet fairly the arguments of our respective opponents.

This question has been discussed a great deal outside of Congress, sometimes in bad temper and sometimes illogically and unprofitably, but the advocates of the proposed amendment and the opponents of it have each put forth, probably in their strongest form, the reasons and arguments which are considered by each as conclusive in favor of the cause they advocate. I do not expect to contribute much that is new on a subject that has been so often and so ably discussed; but what I have to say will be in the main a reproduction in substance of what I and others have already said on the subject, and which I think important enough to be placed upon the record in the argument of the case.

In connection with my friend, the honorable Senator from Missouri [Mr. COCKRELL], I have in a report set forth substantially the reasons and arguments which to my mind establish the fact that the proposed legislation would be injudicious and unwise, and I shall not hesitate to reiterate here such portions of what was then said as seem to me to be important.

I believe that the Creator intended that the sphere of the males and females of our race should be different, and that their duties and obligations, while they differ materially, are equally important and equally honorable, and that each sex is equally well qualified by natural endowments for the discharge of the important duties which pertain to each, and that each sex is equally competent to discharge those duties.

We find an abundance of evidence, both in the works of nature and in the Divine revelation, to establish the fact that the family properly regulated is the foundation and pillar of society, and is the most important of any other human institution.

In the Divine economy it is provided that the man shall be the head of the family, and shall take upon himself the solemn obligation of providing for and protecting the family.

Man, by reason of his physical strength, and his other endowments and faculties, is qualified for the discharge of those duties that require strength and ability to combat with the sterner realities and difficulties of life. The different classes of outdoor labor which require physical strength and endurance are by nature assigned to man, the head of the family, as part of his task. He discharges such labors as require greater physical endurance and strength than the female sex are usually found to possess.

It is not only his duty to provide for and protect the family, but as a member of the community it is also his duty to discharge the laborious and responsible obligations which the family owe to the State, and which obligations must be discharged by the head of the family, until the male members of the family have grown up to manhood and are able to aid in the discharge of those obligations, when it becomes their duty each in his turn to take charge of and rear a family, for which he is responsible.

Among other duties which the head of the family owes to the State, is military duty in time of war, which he, when able-bodied, is able to discharge, and which the female members of the family are unable to discharge.

He is also under obligation to discharge jury duty, and by himself or his representatives to perform his part of the labor necessary to construct and keep in order roads, bridges, streets, and all grades of public highways. And in this progressive age upon the male sex is devolved the duty of constructing and operating our railroads, and the engines and other rolling-stock with which they are operated; of building, equipping, and launching, shipping and other water craft of every character necessary for the transportation of passengers and freight upon our rivers, our lakes, and upon the high seas.

The labor in our fields, sowing, cultivating, and reaping crops must be discharged mainly by the male sex, as the female sex, for want of physical strength, are generally unable to discharge these duties. As it is the duty of the male sex to perform the obligations to the State, to society, and to the family, already mentioned, with numerous others that might be enumerated, it is also their duty to aid in the government of the State, which is simply a great aggregation of families. Society can not be preserved nor can the people be prosperous without good government. The government of our country is a government of the people, and it becomes necessary that the class of people upon whom the responsibility rests should assemble together and consider and discuss the great questions of governmental policy which from time to time are presented for their decision.

This often requires the assembling of caucuses in the night time, as well as public assemblages in the daytime. It is a laborious task, for which the male sex is infinitely better fitted than the female sex; and after proper consideration and discussion of the measures that may divide the country from time to time, the duty devolves upon those who are responsible for the government, at times and places to be fixed by law, to meet and by ballot to decide the great questions of government upon which the prosperity of the country depends.

These are some of the active and sterner duties of life to which the male sex is by nature better fitted than the female sex. If in carrying out the policy of the State on great measures adjudged vital such policy should lead to war, either foreign or domestic, it would seem to follow very naturally that those who have been responsible for the management of the State should be the parties to take the hazards and hardships of the struggle.

Here, again, man is better fitted by nature for the discharge of the duty—woman is unfit for it. So much for some of the duties imposed upon the male sex, for the discharge of which the Creator has endowed them with proper strength and faculties.

On the other hand, the Creator has assigned to woman very laborious and responsible duties, by no means less important than those imposed upon the male sex, though entirely different in their character. In the family she is a queen. She alone is fitted for the discharge of the sacred trust of wife and the endearing relation of mother.

While the man is contending with the sterner duties of life, the whole time of the noble, affectionate, and true woman is required in the discharge of the delicate and difficult duties assigned her in the family circle, in her church relations, and in the society where her lot is cast. When the husband returns home weary and worn in the discharge of the difficult and laborious task assigned him, he finds in the good wife solace and consolation, which is nowhere else afforded. If he is despondent and distressed, she cheers his heart with words of kindness; if he is sick or languishing, she soothes, comforts, and ministers to him as no one but an affectionate wife can do. If his burdens are onerous, she divides their weight by the exercise of her love and her sympathy.

But a still more important duty devolves upon the mother. After having brought into existence the offspring of the nuptial union, the children are dependent upon the mother as they are not upon any other human being. The trust is a most sacred, most responsible, and most important one. To watch over them in their infancy, and as the mind begins to expand to train, direct, and educate it in the paths of virtue and usefulness is the high trust assigned to the mother. She trains the twig as the tree should be inclined.

She molds the character. She educates the heart as well as the intellect, and she prepares the future man, now the boy, for honor or dishonor. Upon the manner in which she discharges her duty depends the fact whether he shall in future be a useful citizen or a burden to society. She inculcates lessons of patriotism, manliness, religion, and virtue, fitting the man by reason of his training to be an ornament to society, or dooming him by her neglect to a life of dishonor and shame. Society acts unwisely when it imposes upon her the duties that by common consent have always been assigned to the stronger and sterner sex, and the discharge of which causes her to neglect those sacred and all important duties to her children and to the society of which they are members.

In the church, by her piety, her charity, and her Christian purity, she not only aids society by a proper training of her own children, but the children of others, whom she encourages to come to the sacred altar, are taught to walk in the paths of rectitude, honor, and religion. In the Sunday-school room the good woman is a princess, and she exerts an influence which purifies and ennobles society, training the young in the truths of religion, making the Sunday-school the nursery of the church, and elevating society to the higher planes of pure religion, virtue, and patriotism. In the sick room and among the humble, the poor, and the suffering, the good woman, like an angel of light, cheers the hearts and revives the hopes of the poor, the suffering, and the despondent.

It would be a vain attempt to undertake to enumerate the refining, endearing, and ennobling influences exercised by the true woman in her relations to the family and to society when she occupies the sphere assigned to her by the laws of nature and the Divine inspiration, which are our surest guide for the present and the future life. But how can woman be expected to meet these heavy responsibilities, and to discharge these delicate and most important duties of wife, Christian, teacher, minister of mercy, friend of the suffering, and consoler of the despondent and needy, if we impose upon her the grosser, rougher, and harsher duties which nature has assigned to the male sex?

If the wife and the mother is required to leave the sacred precincts of home, and to attempt to do military duty when the state is in peril; or if she is to be required to leave her home from day to day in attendance upon the court as a juror, and to be shut up in the jury room from night to night with men who are strangers while a question of life or property is being discussed; if she is to attend political meetings, take part in political discussions, and mingle with the male sex at political gatherings; if she is to become an active politician; if she is to attend political caucuses at late hours of the night; if she is to take part in all the unsavory work that may be deemed necessary for the triumph of her party; and if on election day she is to leave her home and go upon the streets electioneering

for votes for the candidates who receive her support, and mingling among the crowds of men who gather round the polls, she is to press her way through them to the precinct and deposit her ballot; if she is to take part in the corporate struggles of the city or town in which she resides, attend to the duties of his honor, the mayor, the councilman, or of policeman, to say nothing of the many other like obligations which are disagreeable even to the male sex, how is she, with all these heavy duties of citizen, politician, and officeholder resting upon her shoulders, to attend to the more sacred, delicate, and refining trust to which we have already referred, and for which she is peculiarly fitted by nature? If she is to discharge the duties last mentioned, how is she, in connection with them, to discharge the more refining, elevating, and ennobling duties of wife, mother, Christian, and friend, which are found in the sphere where nature has placed her? Who is to care for and train the children while she is absent in the discharge of these masculine duties?

If it were proper to reverse the order of nature and assign woman to the sterner duties devolved upon the male sex, and to attempt to assign man to the more refining, delicate, and ennobling duties of the woman, man would be found entirely incompetent to the discharge of the obligations which nature has devolved upon the gentler sex, and society must be greatly injured by the attempted change. But if we are told that the object of this movement is not to reverse this order of nature, but only to devolve upon the gentler sex a portion of the more rigorous duties imposed by nature upon the stronger sex, we reply that society must be injured, as the woman would not be able to discharge those duties so well, by reason of her want of physical strength, as the male, upon whom they are devolved, and to the extent that the duties are to be divided, the male would be infinitely less competent to discharge the delicate and sacred trusts which nature has assigned to the female.

But it has been said that the present law is unjust to woman; that she is often required to pay tax on the property she holds without being permitted to take part in framing or administering the laws by which her property is governed, and that she is taxed without representation. That is a great mistake.

It may be very doubtful whether the male or female sex in the present state of things has more influence in the administration of the affairs of the Government and the enactment of the laws by which we are governed.

While the woman does not discharge military duty, nor does she attend courts and serve on juries, nor does she labor on the public streets, bridges, or highways, nor does she engage actively and publicly in the discussion of political affairs, nor does she enter the crowded precincts of the ballot-box to deposit her suffrage, still the intelligent, cultivated, noble woman is a power behind the throne. All her influence is in favor of morality, justice, and fair dealing, all her efforts and her counsel are in favor of good government, wise and wholesome regulations, and a faithful administration of the laws. Such a woman, by her gentleness, kindness, and Christian bearing, impresses her views and her counsels upon her father, her husband, her brothers, her sons, and her other male friends who imperceptibly yield to her influence many times without even being conscious of it. She rules not with a rod of iron, but with the queenly scepter; she binds not with hooks of steel but with silken cords; she governs not by physical efforts, but by moral suasion and feminine purity and delicacy. Her dominion is one of love, not of arbitrary power.

We are satisfied, therefore, that the pure, cultivated, and pious ladies of this country now exercise a very powerful, but quiet, imperceptible influence in popular affairs, much greater than they can ever again exercise if female suffrage should be enacted and they should be compelled actively to take part in the affairs of state and the corruptions of party politics.

It would be a gratification, and we are always glad to see the ladies gratified, to many who have espoused the cause of woman suffrage if they could take active part in political affairs, and go to the polls and cast their votes alongside the male sex; but while this would be a gratification to a large number of very worthy and excellent ladies who take a different view of the question from that which we entertain, we feel that it would be a great cruelty to a much larger number of the cultivated, refined, delicate, and lovely women of this country who seek no such distinction, who would enjoy no

such privilege, who would with woman-like delicacy shrink from the discharge of any such obligation, and who would sincerely regret that, what they consider the folly of the state, had imposed upon them any such unpleasant duties.

But should female suffrage be once established it would become an imperative necessity that the very large class, indeed much the largest class, of the women of this country of the character last described should yield, contrary to their inclinations and wishes, to the necessity which would compel them to engage in political strife. We apprehend no one who has properly considered this question will doubt if female suffrage should be established that the more ignorant and less refined portions of the female population of this country, to say nothing of the baser class of females, laying aside feminine delicacy and disregarding the sacred duties devolving upon them, to which we have already referred, would rush to the polls and take pleasure in the crowded association which the situation would compel, of the two sexes in political meetings, and at the ballot-box.

If all the baser and more ignorant portion of the female sex crowd to the polls and deposit their suffrage this compels the very large class of intelligent, virtuous, and refined females, including wives and mothers, who have much more important duties to perform, to leave their sacred labors at home, relinquishing for a time the God-given important trust which has been placed in their hands, to go contrary to their wishes to the polls and vote, to counteract the suffrage of the less worthy class of our female population. If they fail to do this the best interests of the country must suffer by a preponderance of ignorance and vice at the polls.

It is now a problem which perplexes the brain of the ablest statesmen to determine how we will best preserve our republican system as against the demoralizing influence of the large class of our present citizens and voters who by reason of their illiteracy are unable to read or write the ballot they cast.

Certainly no statesman who has carefully observed the situation would desire to add very largely to this burden of ignorance. But who does not apprehend the fact if universal female suffrage should be established that we will, especially in the Southern States, add a very large number to the voting population whose ignorance utterly disqualifies them for discharging the trust. If our colored population who were so recently slaves that even the males who are voters have had but little opportunity to educate themselves or to be educated, whose ignorance is now exciting the liveliest interest of our statesmen, are causes of serious apprehension, what is to be said in favor of adding to the voting population all the females of that race, who, on account of the situation in which they have been placed, have had much less opportunity to be educated than even the males of their own race.

We do not say it is their fault that they are not educated, but the fact is undeniable that they are grossly ignorant, with very few exceptions, and probably not one in a hundred of them could read and write the ballot that they would be authorized to cast. What says the statesman to the propriety of adding this immense mass of ignorance to the voting population of the Union in its present condition?

It may be said that their votes could be offset by the ballots of the educated and refined ladies of the white race in the same section; but who does not know that the ignorant female voters would be at the polls *en masse*, while the refined and educated, shrinking from public contact on such occasions, would remain at home and attend to their domestic and other important duties, leaving the country too often to the control of those who could afford under the circumstances to take part in the strifes of politics, and to come in contact with the unpleasant surroundings before they could reach the polls. Are we ready to expose the country to the demoralization, and our institutions to the strain, which would be placed upon them for the gratification of a minority of the virtuous and good of our female population at the expense of the mortification of a very large majority of the same sex?

It has been frequently urged with great earnestness by those who advocate woman suffrage that the ballot is necessary to the women to enable them to protect themselves in securing occupations, and to enable them to realize the same compensation for the like labor which is received by men. This argument is plausible, but upon a closer examination it will be found to possess but little real

force. The price of labor is and must continue to be governed by the law of supply and demand, and the person who has the most physical strength to labor, and the most pursuits requiring such strength open for employment, will always command the higher prices.

Ladies make excellent teachers in public schools; many of them are every way the equals of their male competitors, and still they secure less wages than males. The reason is obvious. The number of ladies who offer themselves as teachers is much larger than the number of males who are willing to teach. The larger number of females offer to teach because other occupations are not open to them. The smaller number of males offer to teach because other more profitable occupations are open to most males who are competent to teach. The result is that the competition for positions of teachers to be filled by ladies is so great as to reduce the price: but as males can not be employed at that price, and are necessary in certain places in the schools, those seeking their services have to pay a higher rate for them.

Persons having a larger number of places open to them with fewer competitors command higher wages than those who have a smaller number of places open to them with more competitors. This is the law of society. It is the law of supply and demand, which can not be changed by legislation. Then it follows that the ballot can not enable those who have to compete with the larger number to command the same prices as those who compete with the smaller number in the labor market. As the Legislature has no power to regulate in practice that of which the advocates of woman suffrage complain, the ballot in the hands of females could not aid its regulation.

The ballot can not impart to the female physical strength which she does not possess, nor can it open to her pursuits which she does not have physical ability to engage in; and as long as she lacks the physical strength to compete with men in the different departments of labor, there will be more competition in her department, and she must necessarily receive less wages.

But it is claimed again, that females should have the ballot as a protection against the tyranny of bad husbands. This is also delusive. If the husband is brutal, arbitrary, or tyrannical, and tyrannizes over her at home, the ballot in her hands would be no protection against such injustice, but the husband who compelled her to conform to his wishes in other respects would also compel her to use the ballot, if she possessed it, as he might please to dictate. The ballot would therefore be of no assistance to the wife in such case, nor could it heal family strifes or dissensions. On the contrary, one of the gravest objections to placing the ballot in the hands of the female sex is that it would promote unhappiness and dissensions in the family circle. There should be unity and harmony in the family.

At present the man represents the family in meeting the demands of the law and of society upon the family. So far as the rougher, coarser duties are concerned, the man represents the family, and the individuality of the woman is not brought into prominence; but when the ballot is placed in the hands of woman her individuality is enlarged, and she is expected to answer for herself the demands of the law and of society on her individual account, and not as the weaker member of the family to answer by her husband. This naturally draws her out from the dignified and cultivated refinement of her womanly position, and brings her into a closer contact with the rougher elements of society, which tends to destroy that higher reverence and respect which her refinement and dignity in the relation of wife and mother have always inspired in those who approached her in her honorable and useful retirement.

When she becomes a voter she will be more or less of a politician, and will form political alliances or unite with political parties which will frequently be antagonistic to those to which her husband belongs. This will introduce into the family circle new elements of disagreement and discord which will frequently end in unhappy divisions, if not in separation or divorce. This must frequently occur when she becomes an active politician, identified with a party which is distasteful to her husband. On the other hand, if she unites with her husband in party associations and votes with him on all occasions so as not to disturb the harmony and happiness of the family, then the ballot is of

no service as it simply duplicates the vote of the male on each side of the question and leaves the result the same.

Again, if the family is the unit of society, and the state is composed of an aggregation of families, then it is important to society that there be as many happy families as possible, and it becomes the duty of man and woman alike to unite in the holy relations of matrimony.

As this is the only legal and proper mode of rendering obedience to the early command to multiply and replenish the earth, whatever tends to discourage the holy relation of matrimony is in disobedience of this command, and any change which encourages such disobedience is violative of the Divine law, and can not result in advantage to the state. Before forming this relation it is the duty of young men who have to take upon themselves the responsibilities of providing for and protecting the family to select some profession or pursuit that is most congenial to their tastes, and in which they will be most likely to be successful; but this can not be permitted to the young ladies, or if permitted it can not be practically carried out after matrimony.

As it might frequently happen that the young man had selected one profession or pursuit, and the young lady another, the result would be that after marriage she must drop the profession or pursuit of her choice, and employ herself in the sacred duties of wife and mother at home, and in rearing, educating, and elevating the family, while the husband pursues the profession of his choice.

It may be said, however, that there is a class of young ladies who do not choose to marry, and who select professions or avocations and follow them for a livelihood. This is true, but this class, compared with the number who unite in matrimony with the husbands of their choice, is comparatively very small, and it is the duty of society to encourage the increase of marriages rather than of celibacy. If the larger number of females select pursuits or professions which require them to decline marriage, society to that extent is deprived of the advantage resulting from the increase of population by marriage.

It is said by those who have examined the question closely that the largest number of divorces is now found in the communities where the advocates of female suffrage are most numerous, and where the individuality of woman as related to her husband, which such a doctrine inculcates, is increased to the greatest extent.

If this be true, it is a strong plea in the interests of the family and of society against granting the petition of the advocates of woman suffrage.

After all, this is a local question, which properly belongs to the different States of the Union, each acting for itself, and to the Territories of the Union, when not acting in conflict with the laws of the United States.

The fact that a State adopts the rule of female suffrage neither increases nor diminishes its power in the Union, as the number of Representatives in Congress to which each State is entitled and the number of members in the electoral college appointed by each is determined by its aggregate population and not by the proportion of its voting population, so long as no race or class as defined by the Constitution is excluded from the exercise of the right of suffrage.

Now, Mr. President, I shall make no apology for adding to what I have said some extracts from an able and well-written volume, entitled "Letters from the Chimney Corner," written by a highly cultivated lady of Chicago. This gifted lady has discussed the question with so much clearness and force that I can make no mistake by substituting some of the thoughts taken from her book for anything I might add on this question. While discussing the relations of the sexes, and showing that neither sex is of itself a whole, a unit, and that each requires to be supplemented by the other before its true structural integrity can be achieved, she adds:

Now, everywhere throughout nature, to the male and female ideal, certain distinct powers and properties belong. The lines of demarkation are not always clear, not always straight lines: they are frequently wavering, shadowy, and difficult to follow, yet on the whole whatever physical strength, personal aggressiveness, the intellectual scope and vigor which manage vast material enterprises

are emphasized, there the masculine ideal is present. On the other hand, wherever refinement, tenderness, delicacy, sprightliness, spiritual acumen, and force, are to the fore, there the feminine ideal is represented, and these terms will be found nearly enough for all practical purposes to represent the differing endowments of actual men and women. Different powers suggest different activities, and under the division of labor here indicated the control of the state, legislation, the power of the ballot, would seem to fall to the share of man. Nor does this decision carry with it any injustice, any robbery of just or natural right to woman.

In her hands is placed a moral and spiritual power far greater than the power of the ballot. In her married or reproductive state the forming and shaping of human souls in their most plastic period is her destiny. Nor do her labors or her responsibilities end with infancy or childhood. Throughout his entire course, from the cradle to the grave, man is ever under the moral and spiritual influence and control of woman. With this power goes a tremendous responsibility for its true management and use. If woman shall ever rise to the full height of her power and privileges in this direction, she will have enough of the world's work upon her hands without attempting legislation.

It may be argued that the possession of civil power confers dignity, and is of itself a re-enforcement of whatever natural power an individual may possess; but the dignity of womanhood, when it is fully understood and appreciated, needs no such re-enforcement, nor are the peculiar needs of woman such as the law can reach.

Whenever laws are needed for the protection of her legal status and rights, there has been found to be little difficulty in obtaining them by means of the votes of men; but the deeper and more vital needs of woman and of society are those which are outside altogether of the pale of the law, and which can only be reached by the moral forces lodged in the hands of woman herself, acting in an enlarged and general capacity.

For instance, whenever a man or woman has been wronged in marriage the law may indeed step in with a divorce, but does that divorce give back to either party the dream of love, the happy home, the prattle of children, and the sweet outlook for future years which were destroyed by that wrong? It is not a legal power which is needed in this case; it is a moral power which shall prevent the wrong, or, if committed, shall induce penitence, forgiveness, a purer life, and the healing of the wound.

This power has been lodged by the Creator in the hands of woman herself, and if she has not been rightly trained to use it there is no redress for her at the hands of the law. The law alone can never compel men to respect the chastity of woman. They must first recognize its value in themselves by living up to the high level of their duties as maidens, wives, and mothers; they must impress men with the beauty and sacredness of purity, and then whatever laws are necessary and available for its protection will be easily obtained, with a certainty, also, that they can be enforced, because the moral sentiments of men will be enlisted in their support.

Privileges bring responsibilities, and before women clamor for more work to do, it were better that they should attend more thoughtfully to the duties which lie all about them, in the home and social circle. Until society is cleansed of the moral foulness which infests it, which, as we have seen, lies beyond the reach of civil law, women have no call to go forth into wider fields, claiming to be therein the rightful and natural purifiers. Let them first make the home sweet and pure, and the streams which flow therefrom will sweeten and purify all the rest.

As between the power of the ballot and this moral force exerted by women there can not be an instant's doubt as to the choice. In natural refinement and elevation of character, the ideal woman stands a step above the ideal man. If she descends from this fortunate position to take part in the coarse scramble for material power, what chance will she have as against man's aggressive forces; and what can she possibly gain that she can not win more directly, more effectually, and with far more dignity and glory to herself by the exercise of her own womanly prerogatives? She has, under God, the formation and rearing of men in her own hands.

If they do not turn out in the end to be men who respect woman, who will protect and defend her in the exercise of every one of her God-given rights, it is because she has failed in her duty toward them; has not been taught to comprehend her own power and to use it to its best ends. For women to seek to control men by the power of suffrage is like David essaying the armor of Saul. What woman needs is her own sheepskin sling and her few smooth pebbles from the bed of the brook, and then let her go forth in the name of the Lord God of Hosts, and a victory as sure and decisive as that of the shepherd of Israel awaits her.

Again, in chapter 4, entitled "The Power of the Home," the author says, in substance: It is, perhaps, of minor consequence that women should have felt themselves emancipated from buttons and bread making; but that they should have learned to look in the least degree slightly upon the great duties of women as lovers of husbands, as lovers of children, as the fountain and source of what is highest and purest and holiest, and not less of what is homely and comfortable and satisfying in the home, is a serious misfortune. Women can hardly be said to have lost, perhaps what they have so rarely in any age generally attained, that dignity which knows how to command, united with a sweetness which seems all the while to be complying, the power, supple and strong, which rescues the character of the ideal woman from the charge of weakness, and at the same time exhibits its utmost of grace and fascination.

But that of late years the gift has not been cultivated, has not, in fact, thrown out such natural off-shoots as gave grace and glory to some earlier social epochs, must be evident, it would seem, to any thoughtful observer.

If, instead of trying to grasp more material power, women would pursue those studies and investigations which tend to make them familiar with what science teaches concerning the influence of the mother and the home upon the child; of how completely the Creator in giving the genesis of the human race into the hands of woman has made her not only capable of, but responsible for, the regeneration of the world; if they would reflect that nature by making man the bond slave of his passions has put the lever into the hands of woman by which she can control him, and if they would learn to use these powers, not as bad women do for vile and selfish ends, but as the mothers of the race ought, for pure, holy, and redemptive purposes, then would the sphere of women be enlarged to some purpose; the atmosphere of the home would be purified and vitalized, and the work of redeeming man from his vices would be hopefully begun.

The following thoughts are also from the same source: Is this emancipation of woman, if that is the proper phrase for it, a final end, or only the means to an end? Are women to be as the outcome of it emancipated from their world-old sphere of marriage and motherhood, and control of the moral and spiritual destinies of the race, or are they to be emancipated, in order to the proper fulfillment of these functions? It would seem that most of the advanced women of the day would answer the first of these questions affirmatively. Women, I think it has been authoritatively stated, are to be emancipated in order that they may become fully developed human beings, something broader and stronger, something higher and finer, more delicate, more aesthetic, more generally rarefied and sublimated than the old-fashioned type of womanhood, the wife and the mother.

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