

The object of our meeting, as you are aware, is to so take counsel together that we may be enabled to devise ways and means to carry on the work of woman's enfranchisement to its complete fulfillment. Never have our prospects been so favorable and the outlook so hopeful as now. Our movement has risen from the ridicule and misrepresentations of former times to a position of acknowledged merit. We are heard in the Senate of the United States, in State legislatures, and in constitutional conventions. There is not a village or hamlet in all America where the voice of our pleading is not respectfully considered. The iron grip of prejudice is fast loosening his hold, and his twin brother, ignorance, will speedily follow in his wake.

The present dissatisfaction throughout the nation concerning the existing order of things in the political world shows plainly to the analytical thinker that this government of the United States, which men call a republic, but which is, in reality, an aristocracy of sex, this government of one-half of the people by the other half of the people, is on the eve of an important change. We nowhere see the old party lines so rigidly drawn as formerly. Women are not the only class who are being imbued with a higher sense of freedom. Men are proving that the leaven of freedom is working with them, as well. They are rising in their individual selfhood as never before, to rid themselves of party shackles and proclaim their determination to do their own thinking; and the needed efforts to accomplish results for which they are now striving will awaken new necessities in political tactics. The times are ripe for a radical change in the governmental idea. The removal of old land-marks, to carry them forward to greater heights, under the inevitable law of human progression, will naturally break away the dykes that have for a hundred years walled in the citadels of government from the equal possession of all the people; and men, scarcely knowing what they have done, will very soon awake to find that their forward movements have, all unintended by themselves, irresistibly carried ours along with it.

In the deliberations that are to come up before this body, the expediency and inexpediency, the right and wrong of woman's demand for equality before the law, will be duly considered. I shall not discuss them in this brief address. I would only speak a word of encouragement, by pointing out to you the hopeful indications of the political zodiac. We are here not so much for the purpose of securing our right to equality before the law—for that, under the mutations of progress, will ultimately come anyhow—as we are here to hasten the work, and to assist in preparing the masculine and feminine minds to receive it. There is a work to do before the coming State legislature. You are to devise the ways and means to accomplish that work. There is a field of immediate and important action now open in Washington Territory, where the equal rights of women are to be voted up or down by their male children. Your attention is respectfully called to that field.

There is need of harmonious action upon the part of all of us, and there is urgent need of funds to sustain our paper and provide for labor in the field. Let no short-sighted selfishness, no side issue, nor spirit of avarice be allowed to actuate any of us. Let us come up to this missionary work divested of mercenary spirit; and in honor preferring one another, let each of us prove our inalienable right to "liberty and the pursuit of happiness" by making of ourselves a personal example of the liberty we seek for all.