

To the Officers and Members of the Oregon State Woman Suffrage Association, Greeting: Six years ago this morning—I have good reason to remember the occasion well—an earnest and devoted band of human rights advocates braved the then popular storms of ridicule and all the shafts of ignorance and prejudice, and met in this city, pursuant to a call from your present executive and many others, and formed the nucleus of this State Association, which has grown from that undaunted beginning into a well-organized and successful society that engages the respectful attention of all the prominent citizens of this commonwealth.

On this, the sixth anniversary and seventh annual gathering of ourselves together, I am proud to welcome these veterans in our ranks who have been with us from the beginning. The idea of woman's political enfranchisement, which six years ago was so new and strange and consequently obnoxious to the unthinking masses, is no longer opposed by any save the extremely timid or naturally tyrannical. Among the learned and philanthropic we count our friends in the State by thousands; and of the few who yet oppose us, a majority will doubtless be convinced of the correctness of our claims before the labors of this Association shall close.

Of course there is always a class, numerically large, of the ignorant and vicious who yet array themselves against the idea of woman's freedom. These will only yield to the irrepressible current of human destiny. Our object in holding these meetings is to awaken agitation and thereby continue the work of educating public sentiment through consequent investigation. Our labors are no longer ignored, burlesqued or ridiculed. The best men in the State are among our outspoken allies, and but for the opposing vote in the unthinking and ignorant, to whose flat we are compelled to remain in subjection yet a little longer, through power of the one-sided ballot, there would be no need of this convention.

Since the Association began its organized existence, we have held, besides the six annual meetings previous to this one, four special or "called" meetings, three in Salem during the different biennial legislative sessions, and one, last summer, in Astoria. These meetings have always been held with a view to influencing legislation on behalf of the best interests of women, and through her, the best interests of our common humanity. As a society, we have never been advocates of *only* woman's rights. Our mission has been broader than this; and our platform has known no sex and acknowledges no principle save the inherent and priceless one of individual liberty.

As an association, we have had some sort of a hearing before each session of the legislature which has convened since our organized work began. Never, until last September, were we honored with other than a brief, spasmodic and strongly-contested hearing, which was in its results unsatisfactory. True, we had prevailed upon our legislators, prior to that time, to give us the "woman's sole trader bill," and the "married women's property bill," both of which, however, must remain comparatively null until we can be empowered with the political freedom necessary to make such bills available to any class. Never, until the last session, has woman's right to a place in the government received a tacit indorsement from a vast majority of its legislators as a body. During that session, every bill for the promotion of woman's interests, which was brought up for consideration, was passed almost without objection. Women were made voters on all school questions and road interests; and their individual property rights were just as nearly secured to them by law as legislative action can secure them to any class which is denied personal representation.

But, though I remained at the capital as your executive, during two-thirds of the entire session, I failed to get a bill before either House for amending the Constitution by striking out the word "male" from its code of rights, the failure resulting from the desire of our friends to pass the other bills above mentioned before reaching this one. Col. P. H. Gates, of Wasco, who had charge of this bill, purposely held it back until the others should be passed; and then, through some unlooked-for parliamentary technicality about the time for introducing new bills, this one affecting the political rights of women was tabled for the term, in company with many others. I was disappointed, but I could not help myself or this Association. We are therefore compelled to possess our souls in what patience we can command till another biennial session, in the meantime, never halting in our arduous work of educating the people to a higher sense of justice and equity.

The cause has made rapid progress throughout the nation during the past twelve-month. The recent national convention in Washington was both successful and popular.

Newspapers, always an exponent of public sentiment, are devoted to the work, and are multiplying and being well sustained. The *Woman's Journal*, of Boston, Massachusetts, the *National Citizen* of Syracuse, New York, the *Mirror*, of Denver, Colorado, and our own *NEW NORTHWEST* are circulated weekly among hundreds of thousands of intelligent readers. Conventions are held yearly in every State in the union, and subordinate societies abound in different counties in every State. The leaders are women with characters and reputations above reproach. They have outlived calumny and trampled down suspicions. Their names are legion. Lucretia Mott and Mary Green, Lucy Stone and Mary A. Livermore, Dr. Clemence Lozier and Lillie Devereux

Blake, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Belva Lockwood and Phoebe Couzens, Clara S. Eoltz, Laura DeForce Gordon, Mary A. Collins and Sarah L. Knox, are only a very few of the more prominent ladies engaged in the work outside of Oregon, whose devotion to duty has already rendered their names immortal.

A mighty army of workers, conspicuous among them being many grand and noble men, crowd our rank and file, whose steady progress, like the march of a great army, is slowly and surely bearing our banners on to victory.

Every woman who wields a pen or elevates her voice in public, whether her mission be that of teacher, preacher, actress, doctor, clerk, artist, architect, editor, or orator, is, may be unconsciously to herself, but none the less surely, occupying her place in the great phalanx of figures that demonstrate mighty problems of what women can do. Some of these may be apathetic, and others even may sneer at the pioneers who are hewing the way to their success, but ignorance or injustice will make no difference in the final result. Every thinker knows but for this woman movement, not one of these would maintain her place; and but for it not one of them would have even secured aught. This work will go on till the victory is completed. And, to the end that liberty and justice may everywhere triumph over every species of tyranny and wrong, let us work together with a hearty good will to remove from the hands of women every shackle of oppression, and when this is done, the beginning of a new era shall dawn upon a government that is then to become, as it of right ought to be, of the people and by the people.