

On this, the occasion of the eighth annual and seventh anniversary meeting of this organization we are convened under more than ordinarily favorable circumstances. A retrospect of seven years ago recalls a doubting, trembling hoping, few of us who met and organized for the purpose of promoting the cause of liberty, while all the rest of the state and city looked on in the spirit of ridicule and opposition. Now our association numbers among its gentlemen friends and co-workers clergymen, editors, authors, lawyers, physicians, judges, transportation monopolists, bankers, senators, representatives, professors of colleges, state legislators, artists and artisans of every class; while among the women who are openly allied to the cause are physicians, teachers, artists and laborers of every order, and last, but by no means least, the great army of workers without wages who dwell in the homes of high and low degree; the reading, thinking, reasoning mass of women, who have learned to appreciate the value of a personal voice in making and directing the laws and usages of the government which they are personally taxed to sustain, and to the power of which they are held amenable if they break a law which they are denied a voice in making. Protected and sustained by this association, we have, through our officers and member, repeatedly held conventions, addressed legislatures, and regularly presented petitions and memorials for both state and federal consideration, which have in all cases been favorably received. While our demands have not yet secured for us political equality, they have secured larger opportunities for women in educational, industrial and professional pursuits. We have achieved in many instances all we have asked in regard to the social and civil rights of wife, mother and widow; and we especially congratulate ourselves upon the increasing respect there is everywhere expressed for the final recognition of the one right that includes all others—the right to vote. The right to vote on school questions has already been granted, and women are actually voting thereon. Married women's "sole trader bills" and married women's "property bills" have been passed by the legislature. Gentlemen of distinction in law, theology and letters now consider it an honor to advocate our equal claims with themselves to the inalienable rights of "life, liberty and happiness."

Glancing from our own state over the other portions of this vast union, we recognize with pride the fact that when opportunity was granted them by their legislatures, 40,000 men voted for woman suffrage in Michigan, 9070 in Kansas, 6666 in Colorado; 26,468 in Minnesota in favor of women's voting on temperance; and women are not only voting on the school question in Oregon, but in Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado, California, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The Minnesota legislature, at its last session, passed a resolution urging congress to submit a sixteenth amendment for woman suffrage. Such a bill is now pending in the Iowa legislature, and has already passed the Iowa house.

In the United States senate petitions for a sixteenth amendment, declaring suffrage based upon citizenship without distinction of sex, and memorials praying for the removal of individual women's political disabilities, have been lately presented by Wm. Wheeler, vice president of the United States; Mr. Beck and Mr. Williams, of Kentucky; Mr. Allison and Mr. Kirkwood, of Iowa; Mr. Dawes, of Massachusetts; Mr. Ferry, of Michigan; Mr. Kernan, of New York; Mr. Pendleton, of Ohio; Mr. Conkling, of New York; Mr. Davis, of Illinois; Mr. Anthony, of Rhode Island; Mr. Baldwin, of Michigan; Mr. Voornees, of Indiana; Mr. Saunders, of Nebraska; Mr. Farley, of California; Mr. Vest and Mr. Cockrell, of Missouri; Mr. Paddock, of Nebraska; Mr. Booth, of California; Mr. Burnside, of Rhode Island; Mr. Wallace, of Pennsylvania; Mr. McPherson, of New Jersey; Mr. Cameron, of Pennsylvania; Mr. Hoar, of Massachusetts; Mr. Plumb of Kansas; Mr. McDonald, of Indiana; Mr. Hamlin, of Maine and Mr. Thurman, of Ohio. We live in hope that our own Senator Slater will soon follow the example of his illustrious predecessors. (Women are as fully enfranchised as men in Wyoming, and as nearly so as any man in Utah who is not a Mormon.)

Congress has passed a bill in both houses, by overwhelming majorities, admitting woman to practice law before the supreme court of the United States, and it is manifestly absurd to admit them to plead cases involving important interests between man and man before the highest tribunal in the land, and yet deny them the right to a voice in closing a dram shop or erecting a town pump. Appeals for the enfranchisement of women were heard during the forty-fifth congress by the committee on privileges and elections, and the arguments thus presented were printed in the *Congressional Record*. The forty-sixth congress contains an unusually large proportion of new representatives, fresh from the people, ready for the discussion of new issues, who have, as you have seen already manifested a just spirit toward the repeated appeals of women citizens for political recognition. From the very birth of our nation, gifted women like Abigail Adams and Lucretia Mott, inspired by the grand principles of a free government as expressed in the declaration of independence, have been asking that the rights of women as citizens of the republic be granted. The history of the nation during the past twenty years has educated women into broader ideas of individual citizenship and personal liberty, and taught them the way to attain political equality by national legislation. The African race was enfranchised by a constitutional amendment, and placed in political supremacy over the teachers, trainers, wives and mothers of statesmen. Women now demand a 16th amendment that shall place them on terms of equality as law-makers, with the men of every class, color and degree, to whose power they are held in abeyance, and whose rule they are taxed to sustain. Our worst stumbling block hitherto has been the timidity of women, mistaken for apathy by husbands and other opponents of public agitation—a timidity that has kept many of them aloof from the work in which they are so much needed. These conventions will go far towards breaking through the trammels of custom and placing such women in the front of the ranks—women whose duty, gauged by their talents and inclinations, would long ere this have placed them in the lead but for the social and domestic trammels that have held them back. A realization of individual liberty, of complete equality with those around us, and a consciousness of perfect freedom to act according to our highest conception of duty, alone can give the highest impulses for the development of a noble character. I would by no means underrate the important duties of wifehood and motherhood. But I fain would see all men and women learn to understand that a woman who does her duty only as a wife and mother, fails also in that duty quite as much as any man would correspondingly fail in all things, if he only did his duty as a husband and father, forgetful of other obligations (equally important, because including these) that he owes to society and the commonwealth. Our demand for personal and political liberty and responsibility, involves the same principle that underlies the foundation of a free government for men. Every woman should bear in mind that injustice to one woman is injustice to all. Instead of forming clubs for the study of Greek art, heathen mythology and microscopic investigations, women should form liberty clubs, and devote their spare time to investigating the service of government and the general good of the whole people. This is the primal object of these conventions. Let our sessions be earnest, harmonious and spirited. I am happy to announce that we have the material in readers for a grand intellectual, logical and musical treat; and I shall place the same in the hands of the committee on programme, with a confident feeling that they will do their duty. So shall a report go out from this convention that, by the aid of the public press, shall awaken thought in every community where the influence of types is felt. Women in lonely farm houses will read of our work and take courage. Men in the market places will pause and read and commend. School children will discuss the question, and everywhere it will gain added impetus through your deliberations.