

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE O. S. W. S. A.

[The following is the opening address of the president at the recent called meeting of the association. It was omitted last week for want of space.]

Once more, my fellow-workers, have the changing seasons brought us to the biennial session of the Oregon legislature, a convocation of men, assembled for the purpose not only of passing laws for the promotion of their benefit, and repealing such as may not suit their interests of the aristocracy of sex, but convened also for the additional purpose, which we declare to be unconstitutional, as well as unjust to us, of continuing to hold that unwarrantable jurisdiction over women which is described in the Declaration of Independence to be "declaring himself invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever." Many of the members of this honorable body of which I speak have outgrown the theory of class or sex legislation. In my associations with them from day to day in the character of correspondent for our journal, I find the old hostility to the idea of woman's individuality, and right of representation has lost its terror. Many, even among those who, a half dozen years ago, were bitterly opposed to our freedom, are to-day our declared allies. Already certain members have taken initial steps for breaking down some of the battlements of tyranny which, under the name of law, were reared in the long ago to debar women from the free and full exercise of her inalienable right to life, liberty and happiness.

The word *male* has been expunged from a Senate bill proposing to amend the election laws pertaining to school districts, with only one dissenting vote.

Another Senate bill provides for the complete personal control of the property of married women, including the conveying of deeds, mortgages, the right to sue and be sued, etc., etc.

These are hopeful signs of the times. They augur that the light is breaking. They foretell the speedily coming noon of human liberty. But, hopeful as are these signs of the times, they do not yet reach the root of the evils of which we complain. We are demanding *rights*, not *privileges*. We hold that *rights* are justly ours, and *privileges*, no matter how far they go, are but the heritages of *serfs*. Our demand is for personal representation; for that equality before the law that gives us, in common with our son and brother, man, the full possession of our inalienable right to represent ourselves. We are here to consider all these questions. Let no side issues divide us. The right for which we are seeking supplements all other rights, moral, domestic, civil and religious. We demand the ballot because it is ours, and has been unlawfully withheld from us. We make no attack upon individuals. Men have inherited their usurpation of our rights, just as they in days gone by inherited slavery; just as they inherit anything else that does not rightfully belong to them. Magnanimous indeed will they become when they restore unto us our own.

The tocsin of our speedy triumph is resounding through the land from Maine to Oregon. The slogan of victory is heard in the remotest wilds of the coming State of Washington. Be of good cheer, and let us at once proceed to business.