

in our schools. As a spiritual force she will continue to be the chief reliance of the church. As a member of society she will become more and more the determining factor in the betterments of social and industrial conditions. As a citizen she will exert an abiding and a salutary influence upon the political life of a people.

Her nature readily responds to the humanitarian calls of the times. What the masculine character refuses to heed, she, more sensitive to duty, will answer with less hesitancy and without becoming any less a woman. No man, no woman, ever lowered a standard by performing a duty.

Woman, God's noblest creation, man's better counterpart, humanity's perennial hope, the world's object most to be admired and loved! The past has not been kind to her. Much of the world's woe is recorded in her prayers and her tears; much of humanity's burdens has been borne on her frail shoulders; much of history's tragedies, which we all would fain forget, is written in the agonies of womankind throughout the world.

But a better day has dawned. She who was first to reach and last to leave the sepulcher of Him who brought a new life has generations ago come into a new inheritance step by step until to-day she marches by the side of her brother almost his equal in the rivalry of life. America, the first great Republic, the most powerful representative democracy of all history, is now about to decide whether by our organic law, the Constitution, we shall remove the last barrier which denies her equality with her brother. From whatever angle the issue may be viewed, my duty, as I see it, is clear. I will not assume a superior intelligence over her who has in a thousand ways proved her equal with her brother. I will not, simply because I have the power, withhold from her a right which she can claim with equal force that I may monopolize it. I will not deny her a privilege which I demand for myself. I will not refuse her entrance to a field of duty in which her abilities peculiarly qualify her to exert an ever-widening influence against prevalent evils and on behalf of the good of humanity. I shall, so far as in me lies, remove every barrier against her right and privilege, and shall open wide the door of opportunity to her performance of public duty by placing in her hands America's most effective weapon, the ballot, democracy's instrument of command. [Applause.]

Mr. MEEKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield five minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. RAMSEY].

Mr. RAMSEY. Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House, without in any way giving expression to whether I favor or do not favor the right of women to vote, I desire at this time to give my reasons briefly why I shall vote against this proposed constitutional amendment. The reasons are, first, because each State has, under the Constitution, the right to regulate the qualifications of its electors, and I do not believe that a matter of this character should be disturbed by a constitutional provision. Many States have justly exercised the right accorded them by the Federal Constitution and have given to women the right to vote, against which I have no objection. Second, the State which I have the honor, as a Member in Congress, to represent, in 1915, by a legislative enactment, permitted the people of that State to vote upon this question. There was no organized opposition to it, but it was defeated by more than 51,000 majority. Third, I believe this to be a very inopportune time to present this matter before the people. We are engaged in a great war and I do not think the great political agitation which would necessarily result from the adoption of this resolution should be carried on throughout the various States at this time. Fourth, of all the letters and requests and demands made by the people of our State, at least by 20 to 1 the representative women of the State of New Jersey are opposed to this proposed constitutional amendment. Among the letters from people who are opposed to it are one from Mrs. Preston, who was formerly the wife of ex-President Cleveland, and Mrs. Garrett A. Hobart, widow of former Vice President Hobart.

With the permission of the House I shall insert the following letter from J. Gresham Machin, a professor in Princeton Seminary, who writes to me as follows, and whose thoughts and expressions have my approval:

PRINCETON SEMINARY,
Princeton, N. J., January 8, 1918.

HON. JOHN R. RAMSEY,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR: In urging you to vote against the Susan B. Anthony amendment I am not animated chiefly by a spirit of opposition to woman suffrage in general, though personally I am not yet convinced that it is just or wise. Even if I were an ardent advocate of woman suffrage I should still be strongly opposed to the present amendment, which seems to me to run directly contrary to the manner in which important constitutional changes ought to be made. The step once taken can scarcely be reversed. Is a time like this the time to give careful consideration to such irrevocable and far-reaching changes? If the suffrage leaders had the slightest inkling of what true patriotism means, they would cease all divisive agitation until the present war is over.

Furthermore, I can not for the life of me see why the suffrage issue should not be left to the individual States. The chief argument for Federal action in many concerns of government as against State action is that often Federal action alone is effective. Such an argument might plausibly be urged, for example, in the case of the prohibition amendment. But it does not apply at all to the suffrage issue. Every State can choose the kind of suffrage it desires and make its choice effective, quite independent of the choice of any other State. And conditions in the various States differ so widely that the forcing of suffrage upon the women of some States may be an offensive piece of tyranny.

Do the people of New Jersey want woman suffrage? The vote of 1915 was a sufficient answer. Do the voters of the United States want woman suffrage? No one can doubt for a moment that a referendum on the subject in the whole country would give an overwhelming majority for the negative. Do the women of the country want woman suffrage? There is no clear evidence of it as yet, and if the present amendment is passed there never will be evidence.

In short, the present amendment represents an attempt to avoid a popular vote (which could be overwhelmingly negative) on an exceedingly important question. The suffrage leaders are absolutely unscrupulous in their choice of means. All fairness, all true democracy, all united effort in the present war are abandoned ruthlessly in the interest of an ill-timed and unintelligent feminism. Do such leaders really represent the women of this country? For my part I do not believe it for a moment.

Sincerely, yours,

J. GRESHAM MACHIN.

Mr. MEEKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield four minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. MANSFIELD].

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the proposition before the House is not one for amending an existing article in the Constitution of the United States but to add an entirely new article upon a subject that, to my mind, is entirely unnecessary. Under the Constitution of the United States no amendment is necessary to grant the right of suffrage to women. They have that right under the existing Constitution, the same as the men have that right. Then the only purpose of this amendment, the only purpose it can possibly serve, will be to compel or coerce some State to do that which it does not want to do. Now, there has been a time in this country when that word "coercion" did not sound very sweetly upon the ears of a large number of our people and, to my mind, the word is just as obnoxious today as it ever was to anyone. I do not believe that any State should be coerced or compelled to do that which its people do not want upon a question pertaining exclusively to its own affairs. Of course, I can not speak for all of the States, but in my State, by the way, one of the largest States of the Union, the women had the right to vote there for many years and never exercised it. Not until the adoption of what is known as the "Terrell election law" were the women of Texas excluded from the right, and yet not a woman of that State ever went to the ballot box to cast her vote. Why should Texas be compelled to force this question of suffrage upon them when perhaps a very large majority of the women of that State do not want to exercise it?

But we hear it urged as a war measure. Some gentlemen have referred to the action taken by some of the countries of Europe engaged in the war, claiming that those countries have granted the right of suffrage as a war measure, yet they do not tell us that under the laws of those countries they have no general elections until after the war closes. Now, we have no such provision as that in our law. Our elections will go on whether the war does or not. My judgment is that this amendment can not serve any purpose to assist this country in winning the war. In all probability the war will have been brought to a successful termination long before the amendment could possibly be acted upon by the several States.

Mr. Speaker, the claim that is being made for this as a measure for winning the war is far-fetched, indeed; but I desire to add that the patriotic women of this country are already doing a great and noble work, indeed, to help us win this terrible war, and if we now force this question of suffrage upon them in all the States it will be to detract from instead of adding to their efficiency in this respect. The great work they are now doing for the Red Cross and various other channels is worth a thousand times more from a war standpoint than the political agitation that will follow the adoption of this resolution. Political agitation by either men or women at this time can not be made to serve a good purpose from a war standpoint. What we most need is a country united in our purpose, and to give its entire time and attention to those matters that are necessary in placing and equipping an efficient army in the field, and to furnish the necessary supplies and munitions for ourselves and our allies.

But the claim has been made that the women elected the President, and because the President received the electoral votes of a number of the States where the women exercised the franchise the proposition is that all the States shall now be compelled by Federal command to grant the right or privilege of voting to the women of all the States. Whether this claim that the women elected the President be true or not, I can not say, nor can anyone else speak with authority upon that question. The ballots, I presume, were cast and counted secretly, as the law