

THE HOUSTON POST

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HOUSTON, TEXAS, THURSDAY.....MAY 15, 1919

Just to Avoid Misunderstanding

In order to prevent misunderstanding, The Post would have its readers remember that its discussions of the suffrage and prohibition amendments are addressed to the male voters, who alone are qualified to vote, and nothing that it says must be understood as involving such organizations of women as may be participating in the campaign work.

The Post knows that there are good women strongly opposed to woman's suffrage—women for whom it entertains sentiments only of respect and kindness. When The Post says that the Liquor Traffic is stealthily doing all in its power to defeat woman's suffrage, The Post does not say, suggest or believe that these good women are identified in any manner whatsoever with the liquor traffic or its chief purpose, which is to save its own life.

The Post knows that many anti-prohibitionists are honestly and conscientiously opposed to woman's suffrage, and that their opposition has nothing whatever to do with the liquor traffic, so when it says that most of the opposition to woman's suffrage is strictly of liquor traffic origin, it does not suggest or believe that these men are allied with the liquor traffic.

The Post knows that there are prohibitionists opposed to woman's suffrage, and that their opposition is based upon honest convictions. It respects the honest opinions of those who do not agree with it.

The Post never has said and does not believe that all who oppose woman's suffrage—men or women—are friends or allies of the liquor traffic.

With this explanation, there will be no reason for any person to be in doubt with respect to the individuals or organization to which The Post may allude in its discussion of pending issues. It discusses the liquor traffic impersonally, and it is concerned with the system and not with individuals.

The Flimsy Arguments Against Suffrage

Some of the rather weakminded attempts of the Liquor Traffic to discredit woman's suffrage without showing its hand may be seen in the so-called Susan B. Anthony literature that is going the rounds, to say nothing of the views of other famous Northern women upon certain phases of the race question.

All of it rot—every bit of it. What Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Catt, or any other woman identified with public activities and movements, past or present, may think about the race question or any other question, has absolutely no relation whatever to the pending proposal to enfranchise the women of Texas.

Even if the most objectionable characters alive favored suffrage, that would constitute no condemnation of it. Miss Anthony believed in the Ten Commandments, also, but that would be no reason for any Southern man or woman to repudiate them.

The only thing that matters—absolutely the only thing—is whether the granting of suffrage to women be right and just. Answer that in the affirmative, and the high obligation of men to grant them suffrage is beyond controversy. Women are entitled to the ballot if they want it, and they are now indicating that they want it.

There are good men concerned about the sociological phases of woman suffrage, but good men are tender-footed and tender-minded about every great forward movement of the human race. They must be listened to, for they are wise in many respects, but their counsel must not be heeded to the point of subverting justice or retarding human progress.

Men must face the question of suffrage with intelligence, with patriotism, with broadmindedness, with chivalry and with candor. It is easy enough to say "politics is too filthy for women to enter." If it is, then men have made it so, and it becomes women's mission to clean up after them in this instance as in so many others.

It is easy enough to say, "It would be a shame to take woman off the pedestal upon which the chivalry of man has placed her." That is the cheapest and most contemptible nonsense uttered. Pedestal, indeed!

Where is the pedestal that millions of farm women of the South, who work in the fields, are standing upon? And where is the chivalry that constructed the pedestal and enthroned them upon it?

Where is the pedestal that tens of millions of women and girls—now earning their pitiful livelihood by nerve-racking toil in all the occupations—are enthroned upon?

There never was such a fabric of nonsense, falsehood and bunk as this talk of the "pedestal" that the chivalry of men have erected.

It doesn't exist for more than half the women and girls of this country. Not only do women work in field, office, shop, factory and in the trades, but they actually work in the mines. And not only are they doing the harder tasks of the world, but in countless instances they are working under outrageous conditions and at less than a living wage.

If this constantly increasing army of women must go on and depend upon the chivalry and the pedestal, God Almighty help them. There are women who have the shelter, the protection and the pedestal, but this army of women out on the battle line of life—in the No-Man's-Land of the struggle for existence—have not, and they need the ballot if for no other reason than to aid them to secure economic and social justice.

Every chivalric impulse that men boast ought to be sympathetic with woman's suffrage appeal, for the very mercy and humanity of it, even if there were no question of justice at stake. But there is a question of justice, and no man should permit either his prejudice or any other consideration to turn a deaf ear to the woman until he has convinced himself that sex has absolutely vacated woman's status as a human being.

And no right-thinking man would go so far as that. No right-thinking man can trace his own existence down from the first faint dawn of memory and reach the conclusion that the woman who bore him, who nurtured him in his helplessness and brought him to manhood's estate, has not the same right before the bar of civilization to declare her preference upon every question affecting the welfare of the human race, which she generates, preserves and perpetuates, as her male progeny possesses.

And no matter how men may discuss this question—whether from its political, social, economic or domestic angle—the stern fact remains that as a human being woman has a right to stand—not apart from, not behind, not upon a pedestal, but—side by side with man and record her will in all matters which have a bearing upon the world which she inhabits, upon the race which she bears and nourishes, upon the home which is the creation of her love and virtue, upon the country which in peace or war she makes every sacrifice to save, and upon the government under which she must live and which as a citizen she must support.

And the chivalry that would annul woman's right as a human being is not of an order to command either admiration or respect, and the pedestal that such chivalry might erect is of the quality that might easily pose her upon it in front of a washtub.