

RAYMOND HEBARD,
LARAMIE, WYOMING

Chapman (W842su)
Aug 21, 1919

Liberty, Freedom, Equality.

It is indeed an unusual opportunity for one to be able to take part in the unveiling of this substantial piece of brass bearing on its side an inscription indicative of a freedom which not only spells democracy but commemorates an event from which arose a new meaning of the words, "Liberty, freedom and equality". Not for Wyoming only was this freedom to come, not for the United States, not for a few nations, but for the world. In the years to come this spot to-day dedicated, nay, may I say reverently consecrated, will be the shrine for many a pilgrimage, not because the women of Wyoming were set free on the tenth day of December back in the days of 1869, but for the greater basic reason that that act was the embryo of a great democracy, from which was to spring ^{more democracy} ~~and from which has in truth~~ ^{spread} ~~spread~~ ^{spread} to the lands East of us and to our South, North, and West.

The extension of suffrage for women has during the past five years grown by leaps and bounds radiating with the sun on its journey around the world. In nineteen of our States women are exercising the right of franchise, in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, North Dakota, Ohio, Indiana, Arkansas, Rhode Island, Michigan, Nebraska, Alaska, thus granting to over ^{eight} ~~one~~ and ^{one} ~~one~~ half million women the right to vote. It is true that in some of these states the franchise is limited, but enough equality at the polls has been given the women to demonstrate that the waves of light and liberty are being extended over these our United States.

Since the signing of that Suffrage Legislative Act, known in history as Chapter 31 of the Laws of Wyoming, on that eventful day of December tenth, 1869, women have gradually and cautiously extended their sphere of influence until today in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred ten and seven, they have helped to make State laws in Washington, Montana, Utah,

--2--

Arizona, and Oregon. (You will notice without comment that Wyoming was not so represented in this legislative list). ^{during 1917}

During the past year women have ^{also} been at the head of city governments in several localities; have served as city council members; have been State Superintendents of public instruction. In passing it is to be noted in Portland Oregon last week at the great gathering known as the National Teachers' Association where thousands of our leading educators of our Americanized public school system as well as instructors of higher education were present, no man candidate was presented for the head of this important organization. The Association elected for president the superintendent of Public Instruction from our sister State of Colorado, Mrs. Mary C. Bradford.

From a national standpoint the greatest achievement made by women in a legislative, I will not say political, way was the election of ^{Jeannette} Jeannette Rankin, "the lady from Montana", to our United States Congress, the first of women in our national legislature.

We are limited by state rights in our commonwealths as to the extension of suffrage, yet we pride ourselves as being the first nation extending to its citizens a true and enlightened democracy. Abraham Lincoln truthfully said that a democracy could not be half free and half slave. This nation can never be a complete democracy until all the women, as all of the men, are given the right to help make our laws, - a nation of, by and for the people.

Liberty, equality and freedom ^{are} ~~is~~ not a matter of sex, ^{they are} ~~it is~~ essentially the right of subjects of a democracy. Since the event enacted as indicated on the tablet just unveiled not only has the right of suffrage been extended to women in the state of Wyoming, but Australia and New Zealand have had full suffrage on equal terms with men for many years. The marvelous record of social ~~mk~~ legislation in these two countries for con-

--3--

structive work makes a tremendously effective argument for universal suffrage; Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and in a very limited way in Mexico, have in the last twelve months recognized the spirit of equality by granting to their women most extended suffrage; Norway and Denmark have universal suffrage and their sister nation, Sweden, gives her women the right to vote except for members of her parliament. But what of Finland that little far away portion of Russia, Finland today contesting for a separation from the new Russia? Her women are not only permitted to vote on all questions, but she repeatedly has had women in her national law making body. Most wonderful of all of course is the almost unknown far away frozen, snow-bound Iceland, to^o which country in 1915 came the freedom for her women, who are now not only assisting in^{formulating} Iceland's laws but have in one city at least a woman as Chief Magistrate. Russia, stretching her arms in a troubled sleep has in one night broken her chains of despotism, tyranny and Siberian rule, declaring for democracy and universal suffrage. When the new history of Russia is written the pages will be filled with appreciation^{and} and gratitude to the "Little Grandmother of the Revolution" who has made this freedom a reality and not a nightmare. For over thirty years in the frozen and icebound regions of Siberia in the hatred, disease breeding prisons has been confined a woman who ^{though} through of noble birth dared to cry for liberty, freedom and ~~and~~ equality for Russia's subjects. During all of these long days and endless nights of her one third of a century of captivity she was untiring in her prayers, work and writings of her hope for democracy, - not that she might be freed but for her suffering people. To her, a woman, more than to any one other person, or to any one set of people may be ascribed the success

--4--

of the most wonderful and the least bloody Revolution in the world's history. No wonder when the shackles of tyranny were knocked from the wrists of Russia's 180,000,000 of people and the musty iron doors of Siberia were battered down that this frail, aged, unbroken in spirit, glorified woman when liberated a few days just past was triumphantly carried through the streets of Petrograd on the shoulders of the newly freed men, grateful subjects of our newest democracy. I speak, of course, of Madame Breshkovsky.

Ponder over it, think of it, of these millions of women of many lands who have been liberated, the seed of life starting right here on this sacred spot on which we are congregated. Women have done a glorious work in this movement for liberty, freedom and equality, but we must not forget those ~~many~~ broad minded and far sighted men who have ever stood at our sides and by our guns and fought as valiantly for us as ^{our} brave boys now fighting and striving to retain democracy in that far away land of France. We have no contention with the genus homo, our petition and prayer being for more who have had dreams and who have ~~had~~ ^{seen} visions.

What does this ~~my~~ struggle for freedom mean; what does it demonstrate; what of its significance; what does it symbolize? Nothing more or less than that woman has proved beyond a question of doubt that she is equal to the responsibilities of nation building. Never in the world's history, and God grant that never again may a similar brutal occasion arise, has such a responsibility fallen upon the shoulders of women as during the dark days of our present world war. Whereever the fertile fields of nations have been saturated with the blood of their noble soldiers, women have dried their tears, have reorganized their energies, have assumed new duties and have taken over arduous tasks competently and uncomplainingly.

--5--

Not only has woman taken the place of man in munition plants, but she has gone into the agricultural fields with sickle and rake, with traction plow and highly patented reaper; she has entered the store houses and the schools; assumed executive, administrative and managerial positions until there is no place once occupied by man that is not filled by woman be it in the air, on the land and sea or under the water. These days of strife have proved to be woman's opportunity to demonstrate to the world nation her loyalty, ability and willingness to not only help to make a nation but to preserve that nation. War is an abhorrent process to woman but she has not entered into her work in any halfhearted way, for she is ever loyal, gives her service, donates her money and offers the supreme sacrifice, her life. American is asking more of her women for war serving and nation saving than any nation in the world.. Redinked headlines of our daily press call for help from our women. The Navy, the Army and Labor departments of our government have issued "a cry from Macedonia come and help us". "Women must save the nation". The women will not fail this nation, women will not fail any nation, for to women also has come a vision, they also have had dreams. President Wilson in his war declaration sounded the tocsin when he said, - "We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts - ~~dx~~ for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments". Yes, yes it is for this democracy that we all are fighting. We of the United States must fight, fight hard and long, for in this day of electricity, mechanical contrivances and commerce there is no longer a position of isolation for any nation. The control of the air, land and seas has obliterated every trace of imaginary national boundary lines.

---6---

A marvelous and lasting internationalism must be, will be, one of the results of this struggle, national isolation will cease and a wide world unity of common interest must spring from the smoke and blood of combat, otherwise this terrible struggle will have been in vain. Reverently we teach patriotism, enthusiastically we expound the doctrine of nationalism, but greater than these, glorious as they may be, is that new movement which can be the only thing coupled with democracy that makes this conflict tolerable, which with its great world wide unity of purpose, ideals and standards we call internationalism.

Let us not in the flush of the morning's success of freedom for women forget those who planted the seed of democracy in the ground which we are dedicating today. The remembrance of those two individuals who more than any other were responsible for this suffrage victory should be enshrined in our memory and engraven as lastingly on our hearts as are the words on this tablet, sacredly remembering those who started the fire of true democracy on this spot, the cradle of universal liberty. Forget not the Honorable William ^{H.} Bright ^{of South Pass City} who introduced the suffrage bill in our territorial legislature on November 9th, 1869 and her who was ever an inspiration and help to him in this new field of legislation. It was she who was the first woman Justice of the Peace in the world, she who was for a long time an honored and respected citizen of this city and this state, she a mother of ^{Sons} ~~sons~~ who helped to write success in the history of Wyoming, citizen Esther Morris.

GRACE RAYMOND HEBARD.

July 21, 1917

3