

WILL IT COME TO THIS?

An Extract From the Congressional Record of February 14, 1895.

Mistress Portia Stone—Mistress Speaker.

The Speaker—The lady from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mistress Portia Stone—As chairwoman of the committee on the judiciary I present a favorable report on the proposed twentieth amendment to the constitution, which provides that on and after March 4, 1895, male suffrage shall be entirely abolished within the United States. I ask unanimous consent to submit a few remarks on the same.

The Speaker—The Chair hears no objection.

Miss Portia Stone—It is not my intention at this time to make more than a few brief explanatory remarks, as the proposed amendment will be called up for consideration in a few days, when I will more fully discuss the conclusions of the committee.

It is not necessary for me to say to a body composed exclusively of women, as this is, that the nineteenth amendment to the constitution, adopted a few years ago, has been a great advance. That amendment provided that the franchise should only be exercised by males in the election of school trustees. The result has been that our husbands, brothers, fathers and sons have been protected to a large extent from the contaminating influences of corrupt electioneering and machine politics, and have been able to devote themselves more fully to the domestic duties and cares of home life, for which they are by nature intended.

What is now proposed is the complete emancipation of the male sex from political duties of all kinds. As I have said, the limitation of male suffrage to the election of school officers has been a great step forward. We see the benefits of it in the fact that all the offices of the government, legislative, executive and judicial, are now occupied by women. Let us complete the work thus so successfully advanced by abolishing male suffrage altogether.

Mistress Jezebel Strong—Do I understand the lady from Massachusetts to contend that the present limited franchise is in any way an interference with the family duties of the male sex?

Mistress Portia Stone—In reply to the lady from Quebec I will state that I most assuredly so think. The dominion of Canada has been only so recently annexed that I am not surprised that a member from that section should make inquiries regarding our suffrage laws. To illustrate the position I have taken on this amendment I will relate an incident occurring near my own home and within my personal knowledge.

There were two young men, John and James, who grew up as companions, with a brotherly affection for each other which was sustained after both had married. They were good housekeepers—domestic in their tastes, and what might be called model husbands. They lived in adjoining houses, which enabled them to keep up the friendship of early youth. The wife of one was a locomotive engineer and the wife of the other was forewoman of one of the city hose companies. Naturally the heads of these two families were absent much of the time.

It so happened that when it was John's wash day James would come over, rinse and dry the dishes, help wring the heavy pieces,

and assist about the house generally. When it was ironing day for James, John would reciprocate by taking care of James's children, answering the door bell, preparing lunch and otherwise lightening the household duties.

There was no reason why this happy arrangement might not have continued indefinitely. But one day these two friends were baking cakes together for an approaching church festival at which John was to appear at a table as "Prudence" and James as "Humility." By the merest chance the subject of electing school trustees was broached. They had selected different candidates. Neither one knew personally any of the parties running for the position, but their discussion grew acrimonious. Angry words followed, the cakes were left to burn in the oven, and they parted the bitterest of enemies. When the two wives returned each found no meal prepared and the husband in tears.

I could go on and recite numerous instances of this kind—

[Cries of "Regular order."]

The Speaker—The regular order is demanded, and the Speaker lays before the House the unfinished business of yesterday, which is Senate Bill No. 1611. The question is on the third reading and passage. The clerk will read the title.

The Clerk—Senate Bill No. 1611: "A bill providing that hereafter no male person shall appear on the stage of any theatre or public place of amusement in any ballett, march, or divertissement unless such male performer shall wear a skirt reaching six inches below the knee, and that the neck shall not be exposed below the collar bone," with sundry amendments.

The bill, with amendments, passed without division.

UNREST.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

O, that she would deign to speak—
That her soft lips would touch my cheek,
And still this wild unrest
That surges in my breast.

O that her bright eyes would chance
To stray on me in one swift glance,
And still this wild unrest
That surges in my breast.

O that her soft hand would press
My own, in one warm, fond caress,
And still this wild unrest
That surges in my breast.

O it were worth both life and death
To feel upon my cheek her breath,
'Twould still this wild unrest
That surges in my breast.

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