

## Judge Clark on Equal Suffrage

[Address of Chief Justice Walter Clark, of the North Carolina Supreme Court, before the Equal Suffrage League, Greensboro, N. C., February 22, 1915.]

Ladies and Fellow Citizens:

It will not be long before it shall be sufficient in North Carolina, as well as elsewhere, to say simply, "fellow citizens." It is a pleasure, always, to come to Greensboro. Your people are progressive and open-minded. You are willing to hear both sides of any proposition and then give your voice to the side that seems to be the better cause. You stand for the betterment of conditions, and form your opinions only after hearing what can be said for and against any measure. In short, this town is not fossilized. Its people belong to the twentieth century. One of the leaders down at Raleigh in the fight to confer equal suffrage and just rights upon women is a distinguished son of your town—Senator Hobgood. He had the courage to stand for the right, and will be heard from, in the years to come, as a leader.

We have heard much of the "submerged tenth." I am here to say a word for justice to the "disfranchised half." When our constitution was formed at Halifax in 1776 and at Philadelphia in 1787 representative government was new. For thousands of years, down to that time, the people had not governed themselves, but they had been governed by whatever power held the sword. Only a partial experiment had been made in a few cities like Athens and Rome, where corruption and military violence had dominated, and for three or four centuries the landed interests in

### FRESH AT NIGHT

If One Uses the Right Kind of Food

If by proper selection of food one can feel strong and fresh at the end of a day's work, it is worth while to know the kind of food that will produce this result.

A school teacher out in Kans. says in this connection:

"At the time I commenced the use of Grape-Nuts my health was so poor that I thought I would have to give up my work altogether. I was rapidly losing in weight, had little appetite, was nervous and sleepless, and experienced, almost constantly, a feeling of exhaustion.

"I tried various remedies without good results; then I determined to give particular attention to my food, and have learned something of the properties of Grape-Nuts for rebuilding body, brain and nerves.

"Since using Grape-Nuts I have made a constant and rapid improvement in health, in spite of the fact that all this time I have been engaged in strenuous and exacting work.

"I have gained twelve pounds in weight and have a good appetite, my nerves are steady and I sleep sound. I have such strength and reserve force that I feel almost as strong and fresh at the close of a day's work as at the beginning.

"Before using Grape-Nuts I was troubled much with weak eyes but as my vitality increased the eyes became stronger.

"I never heard of another food as nutritious and economical as Grape-Nuts."

"There's a Reason."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Great Britain had some voice in the government — checked, however, by corruption and intrigue.

They are poor students of history who think that in 1776 we reached a democratic form of government, as we now understand popular government. Our state constitution at Halifax allowed the manhood of the state to vote only for the lower house of the legislature. The senate was chosen only by voters who owned 50 acres of land or more. The judges were elected by the legislature for life, and the governor and the other state officers were also elected by the general assembly, which body chose the magistrates, who in turn chose the sheriff and other county officers except the clerk of the court, who was appointed by the judges for life. Property was evidently afraid of manhood suffrage, and checked it on all sides so as to make it merely a delusion. It was 60 years before the people were allowed to vote for governor; nearly 80 years passed before they were allowed to vote for state senators, and 92 years before they were allowed to vote for judges.

In the federal constitution formed at Philadelphia there was the same discrimination. The people were entrusted with the election of only one-sixth of the government, i. e., with one-half of the legislative department—the lower house of congress—while the senate was made elective at second hand through state legislatures, and it took us 115 years to acquire for the people the right to elect United States senators. Last year was the first time the people of North Carolina ever had that privilege. The president was made elective at third hand by electors to be chosen by the state legislature. But after the lapse of 40 or 50 years the people, without any constitutional amendment, forced the choice of electors to be made at the ballot box, with the result that they became mere figureheads, and we thus achieved practically the election of the president by the people—contrary to the evident intention of the constitution. The third department of the government—the judges—were made appointive at fourth hand by the president, who was intended to be chosen at third hand by the electors selected by the legislatures and subject to confirmation by a senate chosen at second hand, and they were given life tenures, to be beyond any consideration of the popular will. The last matter still remains in that archaic state. The United States judges are not yet made elective by the people, and still hold for life, though Mr. Jefferson one hundred years ago contended that they should be made elective and serve for a term of years.

I have thus instanced the growth of manhood suffrage, first to point out to you that this movement for suffrage to the women is the logical outgrowth of this great democratic movement to place the government in the hands of the people, and, secondly, to point out that while men have been slow in achieving their own emancipation, and that manhood suffrage is still denied as to one-third of the federal government—the choice of the judiciary—this movement for the enfranchisement of the women has progressed far more rapidly. Beginning some 40 years ago and practically becoming active only in the last 15 years, it has already become a part of the constitution in twelve great states of this country and one territory, and covers 49 per cent of the area of the continental United States. Already one-fourth of the United States senators, one-sixth of the house of representatives, and

one-fifth of the presidential electors are chosen by states in which women have equal suffrage with the men.

### MOVEMENT ACQUIRES SPEED

In the last thirty days the movement has acquired accelerated speed. A constitutional amendment to confer equal suffrage has passed the New York legislature by a unanimous vote in both houses. One man spoke against it, but there his obstinacy failed and he voted for the measure. The equal suffrage amendment has passed also by overwhelming majorities in the legislatures of Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Iowa, South Dakota, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas. It passed one house in Maine, but lacked one vote of the necessary two-thirds in the other house, and in Texas. It is pending in several other states. All this has happened in the last thirty days. North Carolina's is the only legislature this year that so far has refused to allow the people to vote upon the question.

Besides the above progress, there are some twenty other states in the union, in addition to the twelve that have full suffrage, in which the women have municipal suffrage or vote for school officers and on local tax assessments.

The movement, too, is world-wide. The women have equal suffrage with the men in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland in the north of Europe, and in the Union of Australia and in all its states and in New Zealand. In addition, the women have municipal suffrage in all the provinces of Canada (a country territorially as large as the United States) and in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Indeed, in the British Isles the women vote for everything, and are eligible for every office, except member of parliament, and they are sure to get that at the first parliament held after the war closes. This is practically agreed upon.

### NO MERE FAD

A movement that is thus world-wide in its scope and which is moving onward with accelerated speed is no mere fad, but has its foundation in the justice of the demand and in the need for the suffrage based on economic causes. It has been proven beneficial in the countries and states which have adopted it.

Though formerly suffrage was based upon property and other considerations, the present constitution of North Carolina recognizes that all adults, native born or naturalized, are entitled to it except those who are mentally or morally deficient. Let us examine the clause in our constitution on suffrage. It admits to the ballot all adults who are native born or naturalized, except four classes. What are these classes that are disqualified? They are: (1) Idiots and lunatics—because they are mentally defective. (2) Convicts—because they are moral defectives. (3) Illiterates—unless their grandfathers could vote—because, as a class, negroes are deemed mentally and morally unfit; and (4) Women.

Are the mothers, the wives, sisters, and daughters of the white men of North Carolina disfranchised because they are morally defective or because they are mentally defective? Unless they are, they have as much right to vote as the men, and are as competent to exercise the right of suffrage. They can not be deemed morally defective, for the records of our courts, our jails, and state prisons show that there are some twenty or thirty times as many men tried and convicted of crime as women. Are they mentally defective? That is the only remaining ground which can be urged. Judging by the evasive and often illogical objections urged against equal suffrage by speakers

who bestow exaggerated compliments while denying the women their rights, this must be the belief of many of the opponents. I have never heard but one man who stated the objection squarely. I was passing through Caswell county in an automobile and stopped at a country store one Saturday afternoon, where there were several men, some of whom knew me, and the subject of equal suffrage was mentioned. A rather dilapidated specimen of a man, who was whittling a dry-goods box, spoke up and said: "Weemen ain't fitten to vote. They ain't got no sinse. I knows 'em." I told him he was entitled to the credit of having the courage of his convictions, and if his statement was correct, the women ought not to vote; that he was the only man I had ever heard give a reason for opposing equal suffrage; but that when he said women had no sense he reminded me of a man from the "dark corner of Wake" (as we call it), who came down to Raleigh to see Ringling's circus. It was the first one he had seen, and with round-eyed wonder he looked at the camels, elephants, lions, and tigers. But he did not notice one animal lying down in the corner chewing some hay. Presently the giraffe began to get up and unfold himself until his head touched the tent pole. The countryman staggered back and said: "They ain't no sich animal!" And I told him that when a man said that the women did not have at least as much sense as the men, I would say to him, "They ain't no sich animal!"

### THE ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION

The elements that really oppose woman's suffrage are: (1) The liquor interests, who know that women are in earnest in opposing their business. Votes of the women at the last election carried the only four states that voted for prohibition, and every one knows that in all the other states that have prohibition their indirect influence has been the great motive power for prohibition. If they had the ballot they would have voted liquor out of all the states long since. (2) The political machines are opposed to equal suffrage, for where they have the men rounded up they fear to lose their control, for they know that they can not fool the women as readily. Then there is the vice trust and those who make their profit by handling child labor and by oppressing the women in sweat shops, and all those who are opposed to a cleaning up of the community morally and physically.

I do not mean to say, by any means, that those who are opposed to woman's suffrage belong to one or more of these classes. This would be untrue and unjust. The largest number of those who oppose the suffrage do not belong to these classes; but the classes I name are those peculiarly interested in opposing the admission of women to the suffrage.

### SOME OF THE OBJECTIONS

I will mention briefly some of the objections that are made to this movement:

First. It is said that it is a fad and a mere temporary delusion. The sketch I have given of what equal suffrage has achieved in the last fifteen years throughout the world and the marvelous progress that has been made in the last thirty days is a sufficient answer to this. No movement unless based upon the fundamental economic needs of the age could make such world-wide and irresistible progress. If it were a fad, it would be repealed when experience had demonstrated that it was injurious or needless. But it has not been repealed anywhere, and, on the contrary, wherever it has been tried it has spread to the adjoining states.

Second. It is said that women are