

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE INVOLVED IN THE DECLARATION OF INDE- PENDENCE.

A Portion of an Address on "The Suffrage for Women," by Chaplain John K. Lewis, U. S. N. (Retired), as Printed in the Morning Press of Santa Barbara, Cal., of August 6, 1911.

No trumpet ever gave grander call to humanity than the immortal words of the Declaration of Independence, where it asserts—"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Where it so speaks it is as though a voice from the throne of the universe. The soul of the Declaration is indicated in that one word, "Rights." Mark it—"Rights!" Men! all men! Created! Created equal! endowed! endowed by their Creator, with rights! Rights that are inalienable! Every development of the mighty document gets its splendid force from the one assertion of the self-evidence of humanity's rights.

The far sweep of the majestic mind that conceived and formulated that Declaration of Independence, took into its unbounded purview, the universal human race. The 64 signers of that Magna Charta fully understood the sublime force of its meaning. Their names shine in the firmament of our political life, as do stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of heaven. We do well to ponder their words. We do wisely to do so. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights. No man, no legislation makes them equal, they are created equal. Their rights are not given them by any earthly power, nor can be given; their rights are an endowment from their Creator, and as inalienable as their personality.

There are triflers, a sordid, pigmy race, that would stand up and contradict with their falsetto voices, and gossamer argument, this declaration. They are too small, and too little-eyed to see the plain on-coming of the day of the full realization of this irresistible truth, in concrete political social life. We need not delay to notice them. We scorn to think the truth of the very corner stone of our great national existence, needs proof and approval at this late day. We speak of rights natural, and Creator-given, rights inalienable; rights to life, to liberty, to the pursuit of happiness; rights that are the equal rights of all men. When I have been asked what constitutes rights, any one's rights, I have simply directed the inquirer's attention to this passage of the great Declaration

of Independence. Man's rights are an endowment of God. Man does not bring himself into this world, but is born into it, he is the creature, the creation of nature. He has, therefore, a right to be here. No sane person can deny the right of nature to do what she will, and as man's sight and hearing are gifts to him, endowments of his nature, so his whole self is a wondrous body of endowments. Among these endowments are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Man is here, he has, therefore, a right to be here, that is, he has a right to his life. It is impossible to think of it as at the will of any other power than that of God. Liberty is man's right. So-called laws, and provisions of men must not attempt to take away man's liberty. All sentient life is at liberty. Every bird, beast and fish is a parable of liberty. As such, they realize their God-imposed mission in the world. So with man; he must be free, he must be independent. He is here in the midst of the world's various attractions and necessities. He must have right to seek his happiness as may seem best to him. If he prizes his life, he must be free to use such measures as appear best to him in order to maintain his life, and promote his happiness. To deny man that liberty is, so far, to destroy his life. There is but one limit to the rights of man, and that is the equal rights of each individual man. The right of a man to his life goes with the same right of every other man. The right of a man to his liberty is only limited by the same right of every other man. The only limit upon a man's right of seeking happiness is the right of every other man to the like search.

If I were addressing my words to the barbarian dwellers in Central Africa I might well look for no approving response. But down deep fixed in the hearts of those to whom they are addressed is the inescapable conviction that these words of the great Declaration of Independence are self-evident truths. What men do in contradiction of these truths is one thing, but they know in their souls they are God-truths. They may claim rights they disallow to others, but somehow, as though it were a great black cloud overshadowing them, and threatening storm, they feel they have no such rights any more than the highwayman to his booty.

Now, to the end that the God-endowed equal rights of men may be secured to them, it is that governments are instituted among men. The fundamental, the only one reason for the existence of government, is that it shall secure to men the sacred, equal rights of all. There is no second reason. Government, so-called, that does not aim at this object, even the sacred equal rights of each and thereby the rights of the community, is, in fact, a travesty of government, is no government, is but the survival of brute force. To govern it must have power, and its power must stand in moral right. Without such right it will, in due

time, be found powerless, for evolution will bring revolution, and revolution, as any other storm will clear the political atmosphere. For truth is mighty and will prevail. There is no government ultimately, yes, and immediately, but that of nature, and of nature's God. When, therefore, men get together and assume to make laws and govern by them, and yet contravene what is God's law of human rights, they but provide for their own unhappiness and the state's destruction. As well might men legislate against gravitation. There can be no less certainty in a God's world, in the operation of laws moral, than of laws physical. All history is the illustration of this truth. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind very fine.

Now, all I have been saying is in the interest of the question of the suffrage, in government, of womankind. The suffrage has come most gradually, and yet most surely, to be accounted an effective means of government. The wit of man has not been able to devise any other as likely efficient means. As a means, it has grown in approval with significant speed. It verily appears to have been inspired, however faintly for the time, by the conviction that government must be by the consent of the governed. To this end the people, the governed, must speak as a solidarity, as though with one voice. The suffrage has been that voice. It has grown in its volume. It has increased in its insistency. It has given its warrant to the saying—"The voice of the people is the voice of God." And now in the widening of the suffrage, there has come the question of the suffrage for women.

At the mere mention of the question one has to wonder why the question has waited so long for an answer. Even when the Declaration was proclaimed, and the famous bell in Philadelphia's State House tower, with its marvelous inscription upon it—"Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land, and to All the Inhabitants 'Thereof," rang out its great message, there were men and women whose rights of life, liberty or pursuit of happiness had no recognition. But these rights were theirs, and it took nearly a hundred years, and then in sorrow and blood, for the nation to realize the wrong of which it had been guilty in refusing these people their rights.

Why! Why such delay? And then, too, the equal rights of women had no recognition. For fifty years and more the claim for the recognition of their rights has been made by the noblest of women. There was no denial of their rights in the Declaration, as there was no denial of the rights of the men then held as slaves. To insert such a denial for either of them in the Declaration would be to make of it an intolerable monstrosity. Why the delay, then? Why is the ideal of Christianity so slow of realization? The reasons all sadly tell of man's selfish fear to commit himself

to the right. But now the question has come into the bright light, and must have its answer according to right. Government must be of all, by all, for all.

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### "THE WOMEN THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION."

Oh, God! to think of the women,  
The women who are at ease,  
Whose food falls down like manna,  
Who do just what they please!

Whose pantry is never empty,  
Whose clothes are always new.  
To think of those sick with hunger,  
To think of the pampered few!

And these are the womanly women  
Whose axioms the grand-dames quote,  
For they (so the Cabinets tell us)  
Deny their wish for the vote.

Yet this dainty womanly woman,  
Her hands, alas! are red;  
The bleeding heron's love-plume  
Waves o'er her lovely head!

She cries, "Tally-ho," with the loudest  
Over the heath and broom,  
And follows, this womanly woman,  
The agonized stag to his doom.

Her sweated sister's slavery  
To meet her rent's arrears,  
Leaves her unmoved; yet her blouses  
Are sewn with that sister's tears.

Come out from your magic circle,  
Oh, women who are at ease!  
Turn from your own loved children  
And deign a glance on these.

Where dirt, disease, and hunger,  
Wait for the babies' breath;  
And the only hope of rescue  
Is hid in the hand of Death.

Stretch out your hands to help us  
And make our burden light;  
Clasp with your weary sisters,  
Now struggling for the right!

We do not want your money,  
We ask the better part;  
As you are womanly women,  
We pray you for your heart!

—"Women's Franchise."

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## BOOKS

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### Commission Government.

John J. Hamilton's book in explanation of the commission form of government, published by Funk & Wagnalls originally as "The Dethronement of the City Boss," is now published by them