

furnished by the necessity of submitting all constitutional amendments to the popular vote. The people are not trembling for their re-election; they are not afraid of making an enemy in advance of any possible "vote" of the future; nor can they be personally interviewed, wheedled, and bullied as the members of a legislature are.

In the last session of Congress, however, a committee of the Senate, of which Mr. Blair was chairman, reported favorably the resolution for a constitutional amendment enacting that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." The resolution assumes the existence of a right, thereby begging the whole question, as the committee seem partly aware. If there is a right, the denial or abridgment of it is, as a matter of course, a wrong.

According to one theory, the right has already been recognized by the fourteenth constitutional amendment; but, as the committee say, "the great misfortune of those who thus believe is that the Supreme Court holds just the contrary opinion." For holding the contrary opinion, the Supreme Court has had vials of wrath poured upon it; but surely it had common sense upon its side. Nobody could imagine that the nation, in passing the fourteenth amendment, meant to introduce woman suffrage; and a court must be the slave of verbal technicalities indeed, if it can hold that, by the mere use of an unguarded phrase, a community has entrapped itself into a transfer of half the sovereign power, and a revolution in the relations between the sexes at the same time. English courts, upon an analogous appeal, decided in the same way, though in England the appellants were able, not only to show that the words of the law, as construed by them, were in their favor, but to cite the historical precedent of queens who in the Saxon times had sat in the Witenagemote.

The other ground on which the claim is made, and which, as the committee say, is not inconsistent with the legal ground, is that of natural right:

"The suffrage is a natural right inherent in all who are capable of exercising the political functions of citizenship; that is to say, who are capable of becoming component parts of the aggregate body of sovereigns in all governments which are republican in form."