

The proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Worcester, October 23d & 24th, 1850

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THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, HELD AT WORCESTER. 1850.

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PROCEEDINGS.

Pursuant to a call previously issued, a Convention to consider the Rights, Duties, and Relations of Women, met at Brinley Hall, Worcester, Mass., on Wednesday, October 23, at 10 o'clock.

The Convention was called to order by Sarah H. Earle, of Worcester.

On motion of Mary A. W. Johnson, of Ohio, Joseph C. Hathaway, of Western New York, was chosen President, *pro tem*.

On motion of Phebe Goodwin, of Pennsylvania, Eliza J. Kenney, of Massachusetts, was chosen Secretary, *pro tem*.

On motion of Eliza Barney, of Massachusetts, a Nominating Committee was appointed by the Chair, namely:— Eliza Barney, of Massachusetts; C.I.H. Nichols, of Vermont; Asa Foster, of New Hampshire; Charles C. Burleigh, of Connecticut; Lydia Dennett, of Maine; Pliny Sexton, of New York; M.A.W. Johnson, of Ohio; Rebecca Plumley, of Pennsylvania; Susan R. Harris, of Rhode Island.

The Call of the Convention was then read by the President, *pro tem*, as follows:—

A CONVENTION

Will be held at Worcester, Mass., on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of October next, (agreeably to appointment by a preliminary meeting held at Boston, on the thirtieth of May last,) to consider the great question of Woman's Rights, Duties, and Relations; and the Men and Women of our country who feel sufficient interest in the subject, to give an earnest thought and effective effort to its rightful adjustment, are invited to meet each other in free conference, at the time and place appointed.

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The upward tending spirit of the age, busy in a hundred forms of effort for the world's redemption from the sins and sufferings which oppress it, has brought this one, which yields to none in importance and urgency, into distinguished prominence. One half of the race are its immediate objects, and the other half are as deeply involved, by that absolute unity of interest and destiny which nature has established between them.

The neighbor is near enough to involve every human being in a general equality of rights and community of interests; but, Men and Women, in their reciprocities of love and duty are one flesh and one blood—mother, wife, sister, and daughter come so near the heart and mind of every man that they must be either his blessing or his bane. Where there is such mutuality of interests, such an interlinking of life, there can be no real antagonism of position and action. The sexes should not, for any reason or by any chance, take hostile attitudes towards each other, either in the apprehension

or amendment of the wrongs which exist in their necessary relations; but they should harmonize in opinion and co-operate in effort, for the reason that they must unite in the ultimate achievement of the desired reformation.

Of the many points now under discussion and demanding a just settlement, the general question of Woman's Rights and Relations comprehends these:— Her Education, *Literary, Scientific, and Artistic*;— Her Avocations, *Industrial, Commercial, and Professional*;— Her Interests, *Pecuniary, Civil, and Political*; in a word— Her Rights as an *Individual*, and her Functions as a *Citizen*.

No one will pretend that all these interests, embracing, as they do, all that is not merely animal in a human life, are rightly understood or justly provided for in the existing social order. Nor is it any more true that the constitutional differences of the sexes, which should determine, define, and limit the resulting differences of office and duty, are adequately comprehended and practically observed.

Woman has been condemned for her greater delicacy of physical organization, to inferiority of intellectual and moral culture, and to the forfeiture of great social, civil, and religious privileges. In the relation of marriage she has been ideally annihilated, and actually enslaved in all that concerns her personal and pecuniary rights; and even in widowhood and single life, she is oppressed with such limitation and degradation of labor and avocation as clearly and 5 cruelly mark the condition of a disabled caste. But, by the inspiration of the Almighty, the beneficent spirit of reform is roused to the redress of these wrongs. The tyranny which degrades and crushes wives and mothers, sits no longer lightly on the world's conscience; the heart's home-worship feels the stain of stooping at a dishonored altar; Manhood begins to feel the shame of muddying the springs from which it draws its highest life; and Womanhood is everywhere awakening to assert its divinely chartered rights, and to fulfil its noblest duties. It is the spirit of reviving truth and righteousness which has moved upon the great deep of the public heart and aroused its redressing justice; and, through it, the Providence of God is vindicating the order and appointments of his creation.

The signs are encouraging; the time is opportune. Come, then, to this Convention. It is your duty, if you are worthy of your age and country. Give the help of your best thought to separate the light from the darkness. Wisely give the protection of your name and the benefit of your efforts to the great work of settling the principles, devising the method, and achieving the success of this high and holy movement.

The Committee on nominating Officers reported the following list, which was adopted by the Convention:—

PRESIDENT.

PAULINA W. DAVIS, of Rhode Island.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

WILLIAM H. CHANNING, of Massachusetts.

SARAH TYNDALE, of Pennsylvania.

SECRETARIES.

HANNAH M. DARLINGTON, of Pennsylvania.

JOSEPH C. HATHAWAY, of New York.

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The President elect, Paulina W. Davis, took the Chair and offered the following

ADDRESS.

Usage assigns to the Chair of such Conventions as this, the duty of stating the objects of the meeting. But the published call under which we are convened presents such a summary of our objects as may suffice for mere statement; and the subject matters to be submitted, the points to be discussed, and the action contemplated by this Convention, are equally familiar to us all.

This leaves me at liberty to occupy your attention for a few moments with some general reflections upon the attitude and relations of our movement to our times and circumstances, and upon the proper spirit and method of promoting it.

I do not even intend to treat these topics formally, and I do not hope to do it successfully; for nothing less than a complete philosophy of reform could answer such inquiries, and that philosophy, it is very certain, the world has not yet discovered.

Human rights, and the reasons on which they rest, are not difficult of comprehension. The world has never been ignorant of them, nor insensible to them; and human wrongs and their evils are just as familiar to experience and as well understood; but all this is not enough to secure to mankind the possession of the one, or to relieve them from the felt burden and suffering of the other. A creed of abstract truths, or a catechism of general principles, and a completely digested list of grievances,

combined, are not enough to adjust a practical reform to its proper work, else Prophets and Apostles and earnest world-menders in general would have been more successful, and left us less to wish and to do.

It is one thing to issue a declaration of rights or a declaration of wrongs to the world, but quite another thing wisely and happily to commend the subject to the world's acceptance, and so to secure the desired reformation. Every element of success is, in its own place and degree, equally important; but the very starting point is the adjustment of the reformer to his work, and next after that is the adjustment of his work to those conditions of the times which he seeks to influence.

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Those who prefer the end in view to all other things, are not contented with their own zeal and the discharge of their duty to their conscience. They desire the highest good for their follow-beings, and are not satisfied with merely clearing their own skirts; and they esteem martyrdom a failure at least, if not a fault, in the method of their action. It is not the salvation of their own souls they are thinking of, but the salvation of the world; and they will not willingly accept a discharge or a rejection in its stead. It is their business to preach righteousness and rebuke sin, but they have no quarrel with "the world that lieth in wickedness," and their mission is not merely to judge and condemn, but to save alike the oppressor and the oppressed. Right principles and conformable means are the first necessities of a great enterprise, but without right apprehensions and tempers and expedient methods, the most beneficent purposes must utterly fail. Who is sufficient for these things?

Divine Providence has been baffled through all the ages of disorder and suffering for want of fitting agents and adapted means. Reformations of religion have proved but little better than the substitution of a new error for an old one, and civil revolutions have resolved themselves into mere civil insurrections, until history has become but a monument of buried hopes.

The European movement of 1848 was wanting neither in theory nor example for its safe direction, but it has nevertheless almost fallen into contempt.

We may not, therefore, rely upon a good cause and good intentions alone, without danger of deplorable disappointment.

The reformation which we purpose, in its utmost scope, is radical and universal. It is not the mere perfecting of a progress already in motion, a detail of some established plan, but it is an epochal movement—the emancipation of a class, the redemption of half the world, and a conforming re-organization of all social, political, and industrial interests and institutions. Moreover, it is a movement without example among the enterprises of associated reformations, for it has no

purpose of arming the oppressed against the oppressor, or of separating the parties, or of setting up independence, or of severing the relations of either.

Its intended changes are to be wrought in the intimate texture of all societary organizations, without violence, or any form of antagonism. It seeks to replace the worn out with the living and the beautiful, so as to reconstruct without overturning, and to regenerate without destroying; and nothing of the spirit, tone, temper, or method of insurrection, is proper or allowable to us and our work.

Human societies have been long working and fighting their way up from what we scornfully call barbarism, into what we boastfully call modern civilization; but, as yet, the advancement has been chiefly in ordering and methodizing the lower instincts of our nature, and organizing society under their impulses. The intellect of the masses has received immense development, and the gentler affections have been somewhat relieved from the dominion of force; but the institutions among men are not yet modelled after the highest laws of our nature. The masterdom of the strong hand and bold spirit is not yet over, for men have not yet established all those natural claims against each other, which seem to demand physical force and physical courage for their vindication. But the age of war is drawing towards a close, and that of peace (whose methods and end alike are harmony) is dawning, and the uprising of womanhood is its prophecy and foreshadow.

The first principles of human rights have now for a long time been abstractly held and believed, and both in Europe and America whole communities have put them into practical operation in some of their bearings. Equality before the law, and the right of the governed to choose their governors, are established maxims of reformed political science; but in the countries most advanced, these doctrines and their actual benefits are as yet enjoyed exclusively by the sex that in the battle-field and the public forum has wrenched them from the old time tyrannies. They are yet denied to Woman, because she has not yet so asserted or won them for herself; for political justice pivots itself upon the barbarous principle that "Who would be free, *themselves* must strike the blow." Its furthest progress toward magnanimity is to give *arms* to helplessness. It has not yet learned to give *justice*. For this rule of barbarism there is this much justification, that although every human being is naturally entitled to every right of the race, the enjoyment and administration of all rights require such culture and conditions in their subject as usually lead him to claim and struggle for them; and the contented slave is left in slavery, and the ignorant man in darkness, on the inference that he cannot use what he does not desire. This is indeed true of the animal instincts, but it is false of the nobler *soul*; and men must learn that the higher faculties must be first awakened, and then gratified, before they have done their duty to their race. The ministry of *angels* to dependent humanity is the 9 method of Divine Providence, and among men the law of heaven is, that the "elder

shall serve the younger." But let us not complain that the hardier sex overvalue the force which heretofore has figured most in the world's affairs. "They know not what they do," is the apology that crucified womanhood must concede in justice and pity to the wrong doers. In the order of things, the material world was to be first subdued. For this coarse conflict, the larger bones and stronger sinews of manhood are especially adapted, and it is a law of muscles and of all matter that might shall overcome right. This is the law of the vegetable world, and it is the law of the animal world, as well as the law of the animal instincts and of the physical organization of men; but it is not the law of spirit and affection. *They* are of such a nature as to charge themselves with the atonement for all evils, and to burden themselves with all the sufferings which they would remove.

This wisdom is pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and full of mercy and of good fruits.

Besides the feebler frame, which under the dynasty of muscles is degraded, there remains, even after justice has got the upper hand of force in the world's judgments, a mysterious and undefined difference of sex that seriously embarrasses the question of equality; or, if that is granted in terms, of equal fitness for avocations and positions which heretofore have been the monopoly of men. Old ideas and habits of mind survive the facts which produced them, as the shadows of night stretch far into the morning, sheltered in nooks and valleys from the rising light; and it is the work of a whole creation-day to separate the light from the darkness.

The rule of difference between the sexes must be founded on the traits which each estimates most highly in the other; and it is not at all wonderful that some of woman's artificial incapacities and slaveries may seem to be necessary to some of her excellencies; just as the chivalry that makes man a butcher of his kind still glares like a glory in the eyes of admiring womanhood, and all the more because it seems so much above and unlike her own powers and achievements. Nature does not teach that men and women are unequal, but only that they are unlike; an unlikeness so naturally related and dependent that their respective differences by their balance establish, instead of destroying, their equality.

Men are not in fact, and to all intents, equal among themselves, but their theoretical equality for all the purposes of justice is more easily seen and allowed than what we are here to claim for women. Higher views, nicer distinctions, and a deeper philosophy are required to see and feel the truths of woman's rights; and besides, the maxims upon which men distribute justice to each other have been battle-cries for ages, while the doctrine of woman's true relations in life is a new science, the revelation of an advanced age, — perhaps, indeed, the very last grand movement of humanity towards its highest destiny, — too new to be yet fully understood, too grand to grow out of the broad and coarse generalities which the infancy and barbarism of society could comprehend.

The rule of force and fraud must be well nigh overturned, and learning and religion and the fine arts must have cultivated mankind into a state of wisdom and justice tempered by the most beneficent affections, before woman can be fully installed in her highest offices. We must be gentle with the ignorance and patient under the injustice which old evils induce. Long suffering is a quality of the highest wisdom, and charity beareth all things for it hopeth all things. It will be seen that I am assuming the point that the redemption of the inferior, if it comes at all, must come from the superior. The elevation of a favored caste can have no other providential purpose than that, when it is elevated near enough to goodness and truth, it shall draw up its dependents with it.

But, however this may be in the affairs of men as they are involved with each other, it is clearly so in the matter of woman's elevation. The tyrant sex, if such we choose to term it, holds such natural and necessary relations to the victims of injustice, that neither rebellion nor revolution, neither defiance nor resistance, nor any mode of assault or defence incident to party antagonism, is either possible, expedient, or proper. Our claim must rest on its justice, and conquer by its power of truth. We take the ground, that whatever has been achieved for the race belongs to it, and must not be usurped by any class or caste. The rights and liberties of one human being cannot be made the property of another, though they were redeemed for him or her by the life of that other; for rights cannot be forfeited by way of salvage, and they are in their nature unpurchasable and inalienable.

We claim for woman a full and generous investiture of all the blessings which the other sex has solely or by her aid achieved for itself. We appeal from men's injustice and selfishness to their principles and affections.

For some centuries now, the best of them have been asserting, with their lives, the liberties and rights of the race; and it is not for the few endowed with the highest intellect, the largest frame, or even the soundest morals, that the claim has been maintained, but broadly and bravely and nobly it has been held that wherever a faculty is given, its highest activities are chartered by the Creator, and that all objects alike — whether they minister to the necessities of our animal life or to the superior powers of the human soul and so are more imperatively needed, because nobler than the bread that perishes in the use — are, of common right, equally open to ALL; and that all artificial restraints, for whatever reason imposed, are alike culpable for their presumption, their folly, and their cruelty.

It is pitiable ignorance and arrogance for either man or woman now to prescribe and limit the sphere of woman. It remains for the greatest women whom appropriate culture, and happiest influences shall yet develope, to declare and to prove what are woman's capacities and relations in the world.

I will not accept the concession of any equality which means identity or resemblance of faculty and function. I do not base her claims upon any such parallelism of constitution or attainment. I ask only freedom for the natural unfolding of her powers, the conditions most favorable for her possibilities of growth, and the full play of all those incentives which have made man her master, and then, with all her natural impulses and the whole heaven of hope to invite, I ask that she shall fill the place that she can attain to, without settling any unmeaning questions of sex and sphere, which people gossip about for want of principles of truth, or the faculty to reason upon them.

But it is not with the topics of our reform and the discussion of these that I am now concerned. It is of its position in the world's opinion, and the causes of this, that I am thinking; and I seek to derive hints and suggestions as to the method and manner of successful advocacy, from the inquiry. Especially am I solicitous that the good cause may suffer no detriment from the theoretical principles its friends may assume, or the spirit with which they shall maintain them. It is fair to presume that such causes as have obscured these questions in the general judgment of the governing sex, must also more or less darken the counsels of those most anxious for truth and right. If our demand were simply for chartered rights, civil and political, such as get acknowledgment in paper constitutions, there would be no ground of doubt. We could plead our common humanity, and claim an equal justice. We might say that the natural right of self-government is so clearly due to every human being alike, that it needs no argument to prove it; and if some or a majority of women would not exercise this right, this is no ground for taking it from those who would. And the right to the control and enjoyment of her own property and partnership in all that she helps her husband to earn and save, needs only to be stated to command instant assent. Her appropriate avocations might not be so easily settled that a programme could be completed on theoretical principles merely; but we need discuss no such difficulties while we ask only for liberty of choice, and opportunities of adaptation; and the question of her education is solved by the simple principle, that whatever she can receive is her absolute due.

Yet all these points being so easily disposed of, so far as they are mere matters of controversy, the advocates of the right need none the less the wisest and kindest consideration for all the resistance we must encounter, and the most forbearing patience under the injustice and insolence to which we must expose ourselves. And we can help ourselves to much of the prudence and some of the knowledge we shall need, by treating the prejudices of the public as considerately as if they were principles, and the customs of society as if they once had some temporary necessity, and so meet them with the greater force for the claim to respect which we concede to them. For a prejudice is just like any other error of judgment, and a custom has sometimes had some fitness to things more or less necessary, and is not an utter absurdity, even though the reason on which it was based is lost or removed. Who shall say that there is nothing serious, or respectable, or just, in the repugnance

with which our propositions are received? The politician who knows his own corruption may be excused for an earnest wish to save his wife and daughter from the taint, and he must be excused, too, for not knowing that the corruption would be cured by the saving virtue which he dreads to expose to risk.

There may be real though very foolish tenderness in the motive which refuses to open to woman the trades and professions that she could cultivate and practice with equal profit and credit to herself. The chivalry that worships womanhood is not mean, though it at the same time enslaves the objects of its overfond care.

And it is even possible that men may deprive women of their property and liberties, personal and political, with the kindly purpose of accommodating their supposed incapacities for the offices and duties of human life. Harsh judgments and harsh words will neither weaken the opposition, nor strengthen our hands. Our address is to the highest sentiment of the times; and the tone and spirit due to it and becoming in ourselves, are courtesy and respectfulness. Strength and truth of complaint, and eloquence of denunciation, are easy of attainment; but the wisdom of affirmative principles and positive science, and the adjustment of reformatory measures to the exigencies of the times and circumstances, are so much the more useful as they are difficult of attainment. A profound expediency, as true to principle as it is careful of success, is, above all things, rare and necessary. We have to claim liberty without its usually associated independence. We must insist on separate property where the interests are identical, and a division of profits where the very being of the partners is blended. We must demand provisions for differences of policy, where there should be no shadow of controversy; and the free choice of industrial avocations and general education, without respect to the distinctions of sex and natural differences of faculty.

In principle these truths are not doubtful, and it is therefore not impossible to put them in practice, but they need great clearness in system and steadiness of direction to get them allowance and adoption in the actual life of the world. The opposition should be consulted where it can be done without injurious consequences. Truth must not be suppressed, nor principles crippled, yet strong meat should not be given to babes. Nor should the strong use their liberties so as to become a stumbling block to the weak. Above all things, we owe it to the earnest expectation of the age, that stands trembling in mingled hope and fear of the great experiment, to lay its foundations broadly and securely in philosophic truth, and to form and fashion it in practical righteousness. To accomplish this, we cannot be too careful or too brave, too gentle or too firm; and yet with right dispositions and honest efforts, we cannot fail of doing our share of the great work, and thereby advancing the highest interests of humanity.

Lucretia Mott spoke at length upon the condition of women, and the duties devolving upon this Convention, that it may do its part toward her elevation.

On motion of M.A.W. Johnson, the Nominating Committee were appointed to nominate a Business Committee, who reported the following names, which were approved by the Convention:—

M.A.W. Johnson, of Ohio; Wm. Lloyd Garrison, of Massachusetts; Ernestine L. Rose, of New York; Harriet K. Hunt, 14 of Massachusetts; Lucretia Mott, of Pennsylvania; Lucy Stone, of Massachusetts; W.H. Channing, of Massachusetts; E.W. Capron, of Rhode Island; Abby H. Price, of Massachusetts; Wm. Fish, of Massachusetts, Samuel May, Jr., of Massachusetts; Susan Sisson, of Rhode Island; Anna Q.T. Parsons, of Massachusetts; Frederick Douglass, of New York.

On motion of S.S. Foster, all persons present were invited to take part in the discussions, but those only who enrolled their names as members were allowed to vote.

J.C. Hathaway read letters from Elizur Wright, E.A. Lukens, L.A. Hine, and Elizabeth Wilson.

On motion, adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention met at 2 o'clock. The President, P.W. Davis, in the Chair.

The minutes of the morning session were read by H.M. Darlington, and adopted.

Abby H. Price then offered an Address.

The Business Committee reported the following Preamble and Resolutions, offered by E.L. Rose:—

Whereas, The very contracted sphere of action prescribed for woman, — arising from an unjust view of her nature, capacities, and powers, and from the infringement of her just rights as an equal with man, — is highly injurious to her physical, mental, and moral development; therefore,

Resolved, That we will not cease our earnest endeavors to secure for her political, legal, and social equality with man, until her proper sphere is determined, — by what alone should determine it, — her Powers and Capacities, strengthened and refined by an education in accordance with her nature.

The resolutions were discussed by W.H. Channing, E.L. Rose, A.K. Foster, and C.C. Burleigh. On motion adjourned to meet at 7 o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

P.W. Davis in the Chair.

Business of the Convention — the discussion of the preamble and resolution offered at the morning session. Speakers — W.H. Channing and Lucretia Mott.

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Wendell Phillips, on behalf of the Business Committee, reported several resolutions, which were discussed by W. Phillips, E.L. Rose, L. Mott, A.K. Foster, J.N. Buffum, and S.S. Foster. The resolutions were as follows:—

Resolved, That every human being of full age, and resident for a proper length of time on the soil of the nation, who is required to obey law, is entitled to a voice in its enactments; that every such person, whose property or labor is taxed for the support of government, is entitled to a direct share in such government. Therefore,

Resolved, That women are clearly entitled to the right of suffrage, and to be considered eligible to office; the omission to demand which, on her part, is a palpable recreancy to duty; and the denial of which is a gross usurpation, on the part of man, no longer to be endured; and that every party which claims to represent the humanity, civilization, and progress of the age, is bound to inscribe on its banners, Equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color.

Resolved, That political rights acknowledge no sex, and therefore the word "male" should be stricken from every State Constitution.

Resolved, That the laws of property, as affecting married parties, demand a thorough revisal, so that all rights may be equal between them; — that the wife may have, during life, an equal control over the property gained by their mutual toil and sacrifices, be heir to her husband precisely to the extent that he is heir to her, and entitled, at her death, to dispose by will of the same share of the joint property as he is.

On motion, adjourned, to meet to-morrow morning, at half past nine.

MORNING SESSION.

Oct. 24. — The Convention met at half past nine, A.M.

The minutes of yesterday's afternoon and evening sessions were read by J.C. Hathaway, and adopted.

Letters addressed to the Convention were read from Elizabeth C. Stanton and O.S. Fowler, by M.A.W. Johnson, and one from Samuel J. May, by Mr. Hathaway.

W.H. Channing, from the Business Committee, reported a series of resolutions.

Resolved, That as women alone can learn by experience, and prove by works, what is their rightful sphere of duty, we recommend, as *next-steps*, that they should demand and secure — 16

1. *Education* in primary and high schools, universities, medical, legal, and theological institutions, as comprehensive and exact as their abilities prompt them to seek, and their capabilities fit them to receive:

2. *Partnership* in the labors, gains, risks, and remunerations of productive industry, with such limits only as are assigned by taste, intuitive judgment, or their measure of spiritual and physical vigor, as tested by experiment:

3. A *co-equal share* in the formation and administration of law, Municipal, State, and National, through legislative assemblies, courts, and executive offices:

4. Such unions as may become the guardians of pure morals and honorable manners — a high court of appeal in cases of outrage which cannot be and are not touched by civil or ecclesiastical organizations, as at present existing, and a medium for expressing the highest views of justice dictated by human conscience and sanctioned by Holy Inspiration.

Resolved, That a Central Committee be appointed by this Convention, empowered to enlarge their numbers: on (1) Education; (2) Industrial Avocations; (3) Civil and Political Rights and Regulations; (4) Social Relations; who shall correspond with each other and with the Central Committee, hold meetings in their respective neighborhoods, gather statistics, facts, and illustrations, raise funds for purposes of publication; and through the press, tracts, books, and the living agent, guide public

opinion upward and onward in the grand social reform of establishing woman's co-sovereignty with man.

Resolved, That the Central Committee be authorized to call other Conventions, at such times and places as they shall see fit; and that they hold office until the next annual Convention.

Harriet K. Hunt read an able essay upon the medical education of women.

Wendell Phillips reported another series of resolutions, which were discussed by Mrs. Ball, of Worcester, Antoinette Brown, of Ohio, and C.C. Burleigh.

Resolved, That since the prospect of honorable and useful employment, in after life, for the faculties we are laboring to discipline, is the keenest stimulus to fidelity in the use of educational advantages, and since the best education is what we give ourselves in the struggles, employments, and discipline of life; therefore, it is impossible that 17 woman should make full use of the instruction already accorded to her, or that her career should do justice to her faculties, until the avenues to the various civil and professional employments are thrown open to arouse her ambition and call forth all her nature.

Resolved, That every effort to educate woman, until you accord to her her rights, and arouse her conscience by the weight of her responsibilities, is futile, and a waste of labor.

Resolved, That the cause we are met to advocate, — the claim for woman of all her natural and civil rights, — bids us remember the million and a half of slave women at the South, the most grossly wronged and foully outraged of all women; and in every effort for an improvement in our civilization, we will bear in our heart of hearts the memory of the trampled womanhood of the plantation, and omit no effort to raise it to a share in the rights we claim for ourselves.

On motion, adjourned till 2 o'clock, P.M.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The President, P.W. Davis, in the chair.

Business before the Convention — the discussion of the resolutions offered at the morning session. Speakers — W.A. Alcott, E.L. Rose, Sojourner Truth, A. Brown, L. Mott, Frederick Douglass, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, C.C. Burleigh, and A.K. Foster.

Adjourned, to meet at 7 o'clock, P.M.

EVENING SESSION.

Convened at 7 o'clock, P.M. President in the chair.

W.H. Channing read the resolutions presented in the morning meeting, and accompanied the reading with remarks upon the measures proposed for the coming year, and the principles which should govern the movement for establishing woman's co-sovereignty with man.

Sarah Tyndale, of Philadelphia, spoke of the business capacities of women, and the necessity of engaging in active duties to promote their own development.

Martha H. Mowry, physician, of Providence, Lucy Stone, S.S. Foster, L. Mott, and A. Brown, occupied the floor till a late hour.

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The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and, with the other documents of the Convention, referred to the Central Committee for publication.

Proceeds of the contributions, \$ 119,65.

Adjourned, *sine die*.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

PAULINA W. DAVIS, Providence, R.I., *Chairman*.

SARAH H. EARLE, Worcester, Mass., *Secretary*.

WENDELL PHILLIPS, Boston, Mass., *Treasurer*.

MARY A.W. JOHNSON, Salem, Ohio.

WILLIAM H. CHANNING, Boston, Mass.

GERRIT SMITH, Peterboro', N.Y.

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ADDRESS Read to the "Woman's Rights Convention," at Worcester, by Mrs. Abby H. Price, of Hopedale, Mass.

In our account of the work of Creation, when it was so gloriously finished in the garden of Eden, by placing there, in *equal* companionship, man and woman, made in the image of God, alike gifted with intellect, alike endowed with immortality, it is said the Creator looked upon his work, and pronounced it *good* — that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Since that time, through the slow rolling of darkened ages, man has ruled by physical power, and wherever he could gain the ascendancy, there he has felt the right to dictate — even though it degraded his equal companion — the mother who bore him — the playmate of his childhood — the daughter of his love. Thus, in many countries we see woman reduced to the condition of a slave, and compelled to do all the drudgery necessary to her lord's subsistence. In others she is dressed up as a mere plaything, for his amusement; but everywhere he has assumed to be her head and lawgiver, and only where Christianity has dawned, and *right* not *might* been the rule, has woman had anything like her true position. In this country even, republican, so called, and Christian, her rights are but imperfectly recognised, and she suffers under the disability of caste. These are facts that, in the light of the nineteenth century, demand our attention. "Are we always to remain in this position" is a question we have come here to discuss.

The natural rights of woman are *co-equal* with those of man. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female, created he *them*. There is not one particle of difference intimated as existing between them. They were both made in the image of God. Dominion was given to both over every other creature, but not over each other. They were expected to exercise the vicegerency given to them by their Maker in harmony and love.

In contending for this *co-equality* of woman's with man's rights, it is not necessary to argue, either that the sexes are by nature equally and indiscriminately adapted to the *same* positions and duties, or that they are absolutely *equal* in *physical* and *intellectual ability*; but only that ²¹ they are absolutely equal in their rights to *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness* — in their rights to *do*, and to *be, individually and socially*, all they are capable of, and to attain the highest usefulness and happiness, obediently to the *divine moral law*.

These are every *man's* rights, of whatever race or nation, ability or situation, in life. These are equally every *woman's* rights, whatever her comparative *capabilities* may be — whatever her relations may be. These are human rights, equally inherent in male and female. To repress them in *any* degree is in the same degree usurpation, tyranny, and oppression. We hold these to be self-evident truths, and

shall not now discuss them. We shall assume that happiness is the chief end of all human beings; that existence is valuable in proportion as happiness is promoted and secured; and that, on the whole, each of the sexes is equally *necessary* to the common happiness, and in one way or another is equally capable, with fair opportunity, of contributing to it. Therefore each has an equal right to pursue and *enjoy* it. This settled, we contend:—

1. That women ought to have equal opportunities with men for suitable and *well compensated* employment.
2. That women ought to have equal opportunities, privileges, and *securities* with men for rendering themselves *pecuniarily independent*.
3. That women ought to have equal legal and political rights, franchises, and advantages with men.

Let us consider each of these points briefly. Women ought to have equal opportunities with men for suitable and well compensated employment in all departments of human exertion.

Human beings cannot attain true dignity or happiness except by true usefulness. This is true of women as of men. It is their duty, privilege, honor, and bliss to be useful. Therefore give them the opportunity and encouragement. If there are positions, duties, occupations, really unsuitable to females, as *such*, let these be left to males. If there are others unsuitable to men, let these be left to women. Let all the rest be equally open to both sexes. And let the compensation be graduated justly, to the real worth of the services rendered, irrespective of sex.

However just and fair this may seem, it is far from actual experience. Tradition so palsies public sentiment with regard to the comparative privileges and rights of the sexes, that but little even is thought of the oppressions that exist, and woman seems to have made up her mind to 22 an *eternal* inferiority. I say *eternal*, because development constitutes our *greatness* and our *happiness*.

If we do not properly develop our human natures in this sphere of existence, it is a loss that can never be made up. Hence, for the sake of her angel-nature, her immortality, woman should have her inalienable rights. She cannot act freely, be true to her moral nature, or to her intellect; she cannot gratify her charity or her taste, without pecuniary independence, that which is produced by suitable and well compensated employment. Woman, in order to be equally independent with man, must have a fair and equal chance. *He* is in no wise restricted from doing, in every department of human exertion, all he is able to do. If he is bold and ambitious, and desires fame, every avenue is open to him. He may blend science and art, producing a competence for his support, until he chains them to the car of his genius, and, with Fulton and Morse, wins a crown of imperishable gratitude. If he

desires to tread the path of knowledge up to its glorious temple-summit, he can, as he pleases, take either of the learned professions as instruments of pecuniary independence, — while he plumes his wings for a higher and higher ascent. Not so with woman. Her rights are not recognised as *equal*. Her sphere is circumscribed not by her ability, but by her sex. The wings of her genius are clipped, because she is a woman. If perchance her taste leads her to excellence in the way they give her leave to tread, she is worshipped as almost divine; but if she reaches for laurels which they have in view, they scream after her, “*You are a woman.*” She is sneered at for her weakness, while she is allowed little or no chance for development. The number of her industrial avocations are unnecessarily restricted, far more than reason demands. And when she is engaged in the same occupations with men, her remuneration is greatly below what is awarded to her stronger associates. Those women who are married, and have the care of families, have duties and responsibilities that rest peculiarly upon themselves, and which they must find their highest pleasure in performing. But while they have disciplined themselves by faithfulness and attention to all these, say not to them — you have done all you may do, keep your minds and attention within that narrow circle, though your mature and ripened intellects would fain be interested in whatever concerns the larger family of man, and your affections strong in a healthful growth, yearn towards the suffering and the afflicted of every country.

And why not allow to those who have not become “happy wives and mothers,” those who are anxious of leading active and useful lives, of maintaining an honorable independence, a fair chance with men, to do all they can do with propriety?

At present it is well nigh a misfortune to a poor man to have a large family of daughters. Compared with sons their chances for an honest livelihood are few. Though they may have intellect of a high order, yet they must be educated to be *married* as the chief end of their being. They must not forget that they are females in their aspirations for independence, for greatness, for education. Their alternatives are few. The confined factory, the sedentary, blighting life of half-paid seamstresses, perhaps a chance at folding books, or type setting may keep them along until the happy moment arrives, when they have an offer of marriage, and their fears for sustenance end by a union with the more favored sex. This should not be so. Give girls a fair chance to acquaint themselves with any business they can well do. Our daughters should fit themselves equally with our sons, for any post of usefulness and profit that they may choose. What good reason is there why the lighter trades should not open with equal facilities for their support, and why their labor should not be well paid in any useful and profitable department? Is it fair that strong and able men capable of tilling the soil, should be paid high wages for light mechanical labor that is denied woman because she is a woman, and which she could with equal facility execute? The newspaper press, clerkships, and book-keeping, not now to mention different offices in Government, (whose duties are principally writing,) would,

if they were equally open to our daughters, afford them an opportunity of well paid and congenial employment; would relieve them from the necessity of marriage or want, and thereby add dignity and energy to their character. What good reason is there why women should not be educated to mercantile pursuits, to engage in commerce, to invent, to construct, in fine to do anything she can do? Why so separate the avocations of the sexes? I believe it impossible for woman to fulfil the design of God in her creation until her brethren mingle with her more as an equal, as a moral being, and lose in the dignity of her immortal nature the idea of her being a female. Until social intercourse is purified by the forgetfulness of sex we can never derive high benefit from each other's society in the active business of life. Man inflicts injury upon woman, unspeakable injury in placing her intellectual and moral nature in the background, and woman injures herself by submitting to be regarded only as a female.

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She is called upon loudly, by the progressive spirit of the age, to rise from the station where man, not God, has placed her, and to claim her rights as a moral and responsible being, equal with man.

As *such*, both have the same sphere of action, and the same duties devolve on both, though these may vary according to circumstances. Fathers and mothers have sacred duties and obligations devolving upon them which cannot belong to others. These do not attach to them as man and woman, but as parents, husbands, and wives. In all the majesty of moral power, in all the dignity of immortality let woman plant herself side by side with man on the broad platform of equal human rights. By thus claiming privileges, encouragements, and rights with man, she would gain the following results:

1. A fair development of her natural abilities and capabilities, physical, intellectual, economical, and moral.
2. A great increase of self-respect, conscious responsibility, womanly dignity, and influence.
3. Pecuniary competence, or the ready resource for acquiring it in some department of human exertion.
4. A far higher moral character, etc.

Now take a survey of things as they are. The general opinion that woman is inferior to man, bears with terrible and paralyzing effect on those who are dependent upon their labor, mental or physical, for a subsistence. I allude to the disproportionate value set upon the time and labor of men and women. A man engaged in teaching can always, I believe, command a higher price for his services,

than a woman, though he teach the *same* branch, and though he be in *no* respect superior to the woman. It is so in every occupation in which both engage indiscriminately. For example, in tailoring, a man has twice as much for making a coat, or pantaloons, as a woman, although the work done by each may be equally good. In the employments which are peculiar to women, their time is estimated at only half the value of that of men. The washer-woman works as hard in proportion as the wood-sawyer, yet she makes not more than half as much by a day's work. Thus by narrowing the sphere of woman, and reducing her remuneration of labor so unjustly, her resources are few and she finds it *hard* to acquire an honorable independence. *Necessity*, we are compelled to believe, cruel *necessity*, often drives her to vice, especially in our large cities; as the only alternative from starvation! Deplorable and heart sickening as the statement is, I have good authority for saying that more than half of the prostitutes of our towns 25 are driven to that course of life from necessity! M. Duchatelet, in his investigation in Paris, established this fact in the clearest manner. In his work, Vol. I., p. 96, we read the following statement: "Of all causes of prostitution in Paris, and probably in all large towns, there are none more influential than the want of work and indigence resulting from insufficient earnings. What are the earnings of our laundresses, our seamstresses, our milliners? Compare the wages of the most skillful with the more ordinary and moderately able, and we shall see if it be possible for these latter to provide even the strict necessities of life. And if we further compare the prices of their labor with that of others less skillful, we shall cease to wonder that so large a number fall into irregularities, thus made inevitable! This state of things has a natural tendency to increase in the actual state of our affairs, in consequence of the usurpation by men, of a large class of occupations, which it would be more honorable in our sex to resign to the other. Is it not shameful, for example, to see in Paris thousands of men in the prime of their age in shops and warehouses, leading a sedentary and effeminate life, which is only suitable for women?"

M. Duchatelet has other facts, which show that even filial and maternal affection drive many to occasional prostitution as a means, and the only means left them, of earning bread for those depending on them for support. He says, "It is difficult to believe that the trade of prostitution should be embraced by certain women as a means of fulfilling their filial or maternal duties. *Nothing, however, is more true.* It is by no means rare to see married women, widowed, or deserted by their husbands, becoming abandoned, with the sole object of saving their families from dying with hunger. It is still more common to find young females, unable to procure, from honest occupations, adequate provision for their aged and infirm parents, reduced to prostitute themselves in order to eke out their livelihood. I have found," says he, "too many particulars regarding these two classes, not to be convinced that they are far more numerous than is generally imagined." Had I time, I could read you pages from the London "Morning Chronicle," on the Metropolitan Poor, where the most affecting cases are stated of poverty and of destitution, enough to melt the heart of steel, where poor creatures have been driven to vice from absolute *starvation*, — suffering remorse and

self-loathing the most intolerable. Poor outcasts! — miserable lepers! Their touch even, in the very extremity of human suffering, shaken off as if it were a pollution! They 26 seem to be considered far more out of the pale of humanity than negroes on a slave plantation, or felons in a Pasha's dungeon! It is thought to be discreditable to a woman even to know of their existence. You may not mention them in public. You may not allude to them in a book without staining its pages. Our sisters, whose poverty is caused by the oppressions of society, who are driven to sin by want of bread, — then regarded with scorn and turned away from with contempt! I appeal to you in their behalf, my friends. Is it not time to throw open to women, equal resources with men, for obtaining honest employment? If the extremity of human wretchedness — a condition which combines within itself every element of suffering, mental and physical, circumstantial and intrinsic — is a passport to our compassion, every heart should bleed for the position of these poor sufferers. I have the authority of Dr. Ryan, and of Mr. Mayhew, persons of well known integrity, who have investigated most faithfully and patiently the matter, — though it was a difficult and painful task, which they prosecuted with the most unwearied benevolence, sometimes travelling ten miles to ascertain the characters of women who made their statements to them, — and they publicly affirm, that nearly all were driven to dissolute lives because there were no means open to them of obtaining an adequate maintenance. The writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, who presented extracts from the elaborate researches of Duchatelet, in Paris, says, “We *believe*, on our *honor*, that nine out of ten originally modest women who fall from virtue, fall from motives or feelings in which sensuality and self have no share. Aye, we believe that hard necessity, — that grinding poverty, — that actual want, induced by their scanty resources, drive them to vice.” Now let me present his statistics.

Of the 5,183 Parisian prostitutes, his investigations show that:— 2,690 were driven to the profession by parental abandonment, excessive want, and actual destitution; 86 thus earned food for the support of parents or children; 280 were driven by shame from their homes; 2,181 were abandoned by their seducers, and had nothing to turn to for a living! You may say, this may be the case in the old countries, but not in our own cities. Very little difference exists in the state of actual society here. Women are the same proscribed class here as elsewhere. The same difference is made between male and female labor. Public opinion surrounds them with ten thousand restrictions. The law disfranchises them. Christianity, to whose influence alone woman is indebted for all social dignity that she now enjoys, is appealed 27 to, as sustaining the present degree of dominion over her, and tortured to prove her *inferiority*. Thus the *cause* exists, and why may not the *evil* also? It does exist to a fearful degree. And, painful though the contemplation of the sad picture may be, it is nevertheless our duty to investigate and seek its cause — *then* to apply the remedy — and to do *now* what we may to educate a different public sentiment.

I come now to my *second* proposition.

Women *ought* to have *equal* opportunities, privileges, and securities with men for rendering themselves pecuniarily independent. And why not? Can woman be independent, free, and dignified without the *means*? Can she provide for future wants, exercise proper economy, without the means for so doing? Without a certain degree of pecuniary independence, it is impossible for man or woman to rise in usefulness, excellence, and enjoyment to the height of their natural capabilities. Women at present are cramped, dwarfed, and cowed down. Mothers, with large families of girls, though they may see in them intellect and genius, which, were they boys, might open to them in the future the pathway to independence and perhaps to fame, find that to girls nearly all avenues are closed. There are some branches of the fine arts, if they are very remarkably gifted, where they may find brilliant and dazzling success, as in the case of Jenny Lind. They may perhaps excel as poets and as painters. But these are the exceptions. Greatness is rare. Though they may see in their daughters the large reasoning powers that would enable them with much advantage to pursue the study of the law, yet Blackstone and Coke must be shut to them. The bright pinions of their intellect remain unfolded, and they are perhaps permitted to learn the trade of a milliner, already crowded to excess, and miserably paid. For men, too, have monopolized the profits in that business, and hire their milliners at the lowest possible wages. Very few girls can acquire money enough to compete with the aspirants of the other sex, and so they must submit to their destiny. Again, the mother may see largely developed in her daughter qualities that might fit her eminently for a physician. A distinguished doctor once said, "there are no diseases, there are diseased people;" and this fact explains the claim of women to the profession of medicine, for who understand so well as women the peculiarities of individual character? Their marvellous powers of observation, their tenderer sympathies, their greater caution, render them peculiarly qualified for the position; yet whoever heard of a female M. D.? And that mother would run the risk of incurring the world's 28 laugh, who should avow the design of having her daughter prepare herself to be a physician! All the education she is allowed, all the resources opened before her, have for their object *marriage*, that is to say, a husband. "She was made only for man," is the idea, and of what use will this or that be to her, when she is married? To develop all her faculties, as an individual, is not thought of. Does not a woman live for herself, then? Is she not a member of the race, an immortal being, — unless she is married? O yes, for above these titles of wife and mother, which depend upon circumstances, accidental and transitory, are suspended by absence and perhaps broken by death, there is for woman a title, eternal, inalienable, preceding and rising above all, — that of human being, co-existent with man; and with him she can demand the most complete development of heart and mind. In the name of eternity, then, in behalf of the race, we ask her elevation. Do you acknowledge this? Do my sisters here feel that they have relations to the Universe, — capabilities to be developed for immortality? In the name of eternity, we ask our brothers no longer to proscribe our sphere. I say, then, that we are cramped, dwarfed, and cowed down, for the want of pecuniary independence. Is not this a

miserable doctrine, that woman is subject to the man, that she must, if married, ask her husband to dole out her charities for her, to say when she may sign a petition, when she may speak out for the dumb, when she may plead for the poor, when she may visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction? Does it not compel her to take off the crown of her womanhood, and lay it at man's feet? No; give her her right to the disposal of her own property, to the disposal of her own earnings. As a wife, do not compel her to explain all her needs to one who can scarcely apprehend them from his want of attention to her situation and comforts, but let her have an equal right to the disposal of her earnings, equal privileges with man to acquire, hold, and manage property. The rightfulness of this is beginning to be felt and acknowledged. Laws have been recently passed by many of the States, giving to wives the right to control property owned before marriage; and would it not be equally just to give to them also some well protected rights regarding what they may save and acquire by a faithful discharge of their duties as wives and heads of families.

Thus, employment and occupations being opened, as contended for just now under the first head, let all other opportunities, privileges, and securities of law, custom, and usage, follow. Then woman, at every step, becomes greater, in all respects; more free and dignified; less the plaything, and more a fit companion for man, — a truer and better wife and mother, more influential for good everywhere, in all the relations of life. Thus marriage, generation, education, man, the race, — all rise higher and higher. Look again, and see how things are, and the consequences. Woman degenerates, physically and intellectually. By thus narrowing their sphere, and curtailing their rights and resources, women are doomed to an endless routine of domestic drudgery, to an indoor sedentary life, with little or no stimulus to great or noble endeavors. They feel, indeed, with their narrow views and narrow interests, and their weakened bodies, that they are overcrowded and overdone with cares and labors. Dooming women to satisfy their love for excellence in household arrangements only — their love for *beauty* in dress, etc., is a great injury to both soul and body. We are so constituted, that exercise and great exertion, with high and soul-arousing objects, are potent to give us strength and powers of endurance. Witness wives in the times of our Revolution, think of the privations, hardships, and toil our grandmothers endured; compare them with the sickly race of wives and mothers whom modern improvements and labor-saving machinery in cloth-making are relieving from so much exertion, yet reducing their physical strength in proportion!

My remedy for this increasing degeneracy in health and consequent weakness of mind, is:— give woman her rights; acknowledge her equality with man in privileges for the improvement of all her gifts; lift off the incubus weight, that crushes half her rights; allow her to feel that she has other obligations resting upon her than the eternal routine of domestic affairs. The beautiful home duties she will none the more neglect, but with new-springing happiness she will, with new strength, perform them, stimulated and cheered by the new relations she is sustaining. Change is *rest*; and

woman will so find it when she allows her mind to change from the narrow circle of home duties to take a general survey of the vast machinery of affairs, where she too has responsibilities and interests. If married women have too little stimulus and objects, how much less have young girls, whose very dreams of the future are restricted to getting married! Having no encouragement for great endeavors, excluded from the liberal professions by the law, how many poor victims, who are not obliged "to labor" but only "to wait," are yielded up to be the prey of that frightful disease called *ennui*.

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To suffer with pain, and to be exhausted with toil, are evils, doubtless very great afflictions, but from these we do not shrink, for they are the necessary consequences of life; but *ennui*, — that scourge of existence, that living death, that conscious annihilation, that painful, aching nothingness, — that it is which corrodes and destroys the soul. Painful, though true, our country abounds in young ladies whom forced idleness condemns to this torture. I say *forced*, because a false public sentiment restricts and condemns woman to a few crowded avocations, so that she has nothing to stimulate her ambition or to encourage her hopes. Thus she yields to her slavery, her imprisonment. Ah, it is *work*, approved, creditable, well-paid work, that would reanimate these wretched existences. There are hard trials on this earth, but God has appointed *labor*, and all are cured. Work is a pleasure unequalled in itself; it is the preserver of all other pleasures. All may abandon us, — wit, gaiety, love, — but industry may still be ours; and the deep enjoyment which it produces, brings with it life's greatest pleasure, the approval of a good conscience. It is of this good that woman is deprived. She is accused of being too imaginative, and yet she is left a prey to reverie. She is complained of for being easily impressed, and yet society does its utmost to increase that susceptibility. This is cruel, oppressive. Dispute our rights, envy us our claim as mothers, but leave us our privilege to *labor*. Give us our just remuneration. Allow us a fair and equal chance, if you would see the genius of woman rising in its peculiar beauty, its free and natural manifestation.

The soul needs some aliment, if it is not to be left to prey on itself. What is called instruction will not serve the purpose. What is study without an object, knowledge without *practice*? Instruction enlarges the circle of woman's wants, without bringing anything to satisfy them; gives thirst, but supplies no drink; for *to live* is not to learn, but to apply. When so large a share of the public business is writing, why are so many maiden middle-aged ladies restless with *ennui*, having nothing to do? Why are overseerships in female prisons, in manufactories, in asylums, filled so entirely by men? Because women are a proscribed caste, the weaker sex, invidiously called, and men, in their great wisdom, triumph.

I come now to my *third* proposition.

Women ought to have equal legal and political rights, franchises, and advantages with men. Why not? Our laws ought to respect and protect all their *rights*. They ought to have an equal voice in constituting government, in administering it, in making and executing laws. 31 Why not? This follows as the climax of what we have contended for. There may be some offices more suitable to males than females, and let matters be arranged accordingly. These are details of convenience; but for the rest let them be equal. Why not? If a woman may earn property freely, hold and dispose of it freely, etc., should she not have a free and equal voice in the government which regulates and protects her rights? She must, or be a mere ward under guardianship, a serf, a plaything, an appendage. And why should she not? Has she less at stake? Has she less moral sense? Has she less regard to the common good? Would she degrade and brutalize the exhibition at the polls? In the legislature, at the bar, etc., would the State be worse governed than it is by man alone? It is absurd to suppose it.

Is there any sound reason why women should be excluded from all political functions? At present she has no legal existence. Dr. Follen, in his *Essay on Freedom in our own country*, says:— “Woman, though possessed of that rational and moral nature which is the foundation of *all* rights, enjoys among us fewer legal and civil rights than under the law of continental Europe.”

Blackstone, in his chapter entitled *Husband and Wife*, says: “By marriage, the husband and wife are *one* person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, — or at least is consolidated into that of her husband, under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs anything.” So, the very being of a woman, like that of a slave, is absorbed in her master! All contracts made with her, like those made with slaves by their owners, are a mere nullity. Her legal disabilities are too well known to render it necessary to quote many of the laws respecting them. That she sustains the same relation that slaves do to our government is well known. That the laws are unjust towards her is believed by all who candidly give their attention to the subject.

Well, then, why should women be denied the elective franchise? It must be for one of two reasons. The first is that, though they constitute one half of the human race, women have no interest in the government under which they live, and whose laws they are bound to obey. Or, they are incapable of the degree of intelligence or the amount of knowledge presumed to be possessed by those who vote. The first objection, perhaps, few will attempt to maintain. For the answer to the second, let us look around on the first assemblage of independent electors who may happen to meet. Why is there such apathy, such indifference on this subject, manifested by women? Not more than 32 one woman in a thousand feels the slightest interest in the subject. Are we willing forever to be thus disfranchised? The justice of this question was well stated by Condorcet, in a passage quoted by M. Legouve, though his argument was, of course, applied to France, a country that admitted universal suffrage. “In the name of what principle, of what right,” he says, “are women in

a republican state to be deprived of public functions? The words '*national representation*,' signifies representation of the nation. Do women, then, form no part of the nation? This assembly has for its object to constitute and maintain the rights of the French people? Are women, then, not of the French people? The right of election and of being elected, is founded for men, solely on their title as free and intelligent beings. Are women, then, not free and intelligent? The only limits now placed to that right is condemnation to an infamous punishment, or minority. Are women, then, to be regarded as criminals, or are they all minors? Will the argument be taken upon the ground of the corporeal weakness of women? If that case, we ought to make our candidates pass before a medical jury, and reject such as have the gout every winter. Shall we object to women for their want of instruction, their deficiency in political genius? It appears to me that many of our representations manage to do without either!" He proceeds to say, "The more we interrogate common sense and republican principles, the less reason we find for excluding women from political existence. The capital objection which is found in all mouths, and which assumes with it, at first, an appearance of solidity, is that to open to them the career of politics would be to snatch them from their families. This does not apply to women who have never been wives or who have ceased to be such. But all this appears an unreasonable objection. Would the exercise of the elective franchise once or twice in a year be likely to prevent a woman's properly fulfilling her important home duties? Would not the recognition, publicly, of her claims as an intelligent member of society, or any measure that would equally tend to raise the character of women, greatly contribute to the dignity and comfort of many a home, by giving to the wife and mother some better object to fill her vacant hours than unnecessary shopping or idle visiting?"

People echo the cry of "danger to home" without stopping to inquire whether any such danger exists. Our grandfathers saw great danger to home and to the female character in the decline of household spinning. No, no, you do not endanger home by giving woman her true position as equal companion in the affairs of the nation as in the administration of home. So far from these new functions interfering in the least with the sacred and holy duties of wife and mother they would be rather their reward and crown. Plutarch relates that the Gauls called into their councils, on great occasions, the elite of the women of the nation. Lycurgus gave to virtuous women a part in great public celebrations. The festivals of Proserpine and Ceres reserved certain political and religious functions for wives and mothers of spotless reputation. And our imagination looks forward to the time, with pleasure and hope, when experienced and virtuous matrons, who have passed through years of domestic duties with fidelity and care, shall sit in the Councils of the Nation wisely to control and direct their deliberations, to speak from their deep maternal love for the suffering and oppressed, to blend with the sterner element of Government that true affection for the suffering and the erring, which only woman knows, to suppress by their presence that undignified and unworthy ruffianism, which so often disgraces the councils of the nation, and finally to encourage

decision, haste, and despatch of business, as only women can do, who are attracted home by an ever abiding love, that with them would be an influence far stronger than eight dollars a day.

I think you must all feel that women's rights as human beings are greatly encroached upon, that they suffer a degree of tyranny the world over, unworthy the nineteenth century, that in view of their degraded position, women are called upon loudly to remonstrate, that patience has ceased to be a virtue, that it is time we demand our rights. Are we willing to be denied every post of honor and every lucrative employment — to be reckoned as the *inferior sex*, and but half paid for what we do — to feel that we are a proscribed caste, in all our aspirations for excellence and great and noble exertion, and to receive in return the fulsome, and sickening flattery of perverted taste — to be complimented about our shrinking delicacy, our feminine weakness, our beautiful dependence! And shall we with complacency receive and smile on such praise, bought by the sacrifice of our rights, our noblest endowments, while we know that he who thus compliments us for shrinking and dependence, is but a frail mortal like ourselves, and that to cower before man is to be recreant to God, false to our higher angel natures, and basely slaves! Is there a woman here, who is willing to be disfranchised, to be taxed without representation, to feel that she has no part or lot in the Government under which she lives — that she is a mere thing!

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If there is a woman who is willing to be in this position, I do not envy that woman her spirit, and no wonder that such mothers have dough-faced children. I am happy to feel that in the little Commonwealth where I live, all *persons* have equal rights, in public deliberations. Men and women are alike recognised as having a common interest in public officers and public measures. Hence our annual meetings and elections are quiet and orderly, the business is soon despatched, for our women never forget their homes to wrangle and discuss business points of minor importance, and I have never, in the small State of Hopedale, heard of one home being neglected, or one duty less thoroughly attended to by allowing women an equal voice. I could not vote under the present wicked Constitution of the United States, but I ought to have the privilege of coming out from that Government, and of bearing my testimony by a free and voluntary *choice*.

In view of all these oppressions, — this undervaluing our labor, — taking from us our right to choice in our industrial avocations, — infliction of pecuniary *dependence*, — shutting us from the trades, and the learned professions — wresting from us our legal rights, — denying us political equality, — denying us the right of free speech, — chaining us to a prescribed sphere, — we say that these, and other usurpations, demand our speedy remonstrance. "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." No matter if the yoke we wear is soft and cushioned, it is nevertheless a yoke. No matter if the chain is fastened by those we love, it is nevertheless a chain. Let us arise then in all the majesty of renewed womanhood and say, we must be *free*. We will attend to our previous

home duties faithfully, cheerfully, but we must do it voluntarily, in obedience to our Maker, who placed these responsibilities more especially upon us. If the affairs of the nation demand the attention of our fathers, our husbands, and our brothers, allow us to act with them for the right, according to the dictates of our own consciences. Then we will educate our sons and our daughters as equal companions, alike interested in whatever concerns the welfare of the race. Our daughters, equally provided for the serious business of life, shall no longer be dependent upon the chances of marriage; teaching them not to live wholly in their affections, we will provide for them, as for our sons, a refuge from the storms of life, by opening to them the regions of high intellectual culture, of pecuniary independence, and of moral and political responsibilities. Parents, I appeal to you: are you willing to train your daughters with reference 35 only to marriage? Are you willing they should be the prey of that sickly sentimentality, that effeminate weakness, which is produced by making that one idea the focus of life?

Husbands, are you willing to urge the cowering obedience of that being whom you admit is your "better half," especially when you consider your own frailties, and oftentimes misguided judgment? Will you assume to be her lawgiver and ruler? Are you proud to see her bend her soul to man? Brothers, are you willing to see your sisters, whose sympathy and communion in childhood was the sweetest solace of your life, prevented from future companionship, by the threatening scowl of a narrow, and heathenish public sentiment that must blast their highest aspirations — palsy the wings of their genius — dim the crown of their womanhood, and make them slaves? Again, I say — give us an equal chance. Allow us one free choice. Talk not to us of weakness when you have so long broken our spirits by the iron hand of oppression. Lift off that hand — give us our rights inalienable, and then a new era, glorious as the millennial morning, will dawn on earth, an advent only less radiant than that heralded by angels on the plains of Bethlehem.

"What *highest* prize hath woman won In science, or in art? What *mightiest* work by woman done, Boasts city, field, or mart? She hath no Raphael! Painting saith — No Newton! Learning cries; Show us her steamship! her Macbeth! Her thought-won victories.

"Wait, boastful man! Though worthy are Thy deeds, when thou art true, — Things worthier still, and holier far, Our sisters yet will do. For this, the worth of woman shows On every peopled shore, That still as man in wisdom grows He honors her the more.

"O, not for wealth, or fame, or power, Hath man's meek angel striven; But, silent as the growing flower, To make of carth a heaven! 36 Soon in her garden of the sun Heaven's brightest rose shall bloom; For woman's best is unbegun! Her advent yet to come!"

Peterboro', N. Y., Oct. 16, 1850.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison,

My Dear Sir: — I this evening received from my friend, H. H. Van Amringer, of Wisconsin, the accompanying Argument on Woman's Rights. It is written by himself. He is, as you are aware, a highly intellectual man.

Mr. Van Amringe wishes me to present this Argument to the Woman's Convention, which is to be held this month, in Worcester. Permit me to do so through yourself.

Much as I should love to listen to the debates of that Convention, I cannot attend it — nor can my wife. She is in New York, and sick. My excessive business compels me to refuse almost every invitation to attend public meetings, especially if they are not in my own county.

May Heaven's richest blessing be upon the Convention.

Very respectfully, And fraternally yours, GERRIT SMITH.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS IN CHURCH AND STATE. BY H. H. VAN AMRINGE.*

* The Committee of Publication regret that they have been compelled, by the limits of this pamphlet, to omit the first head of Mr. Van Amringe's Argument on the Bible Doctrine.

It is commonly said by those who appeal to Reason against the equality of the rights of woman, that she has a sphere of her own, the sphere of tenderness, modesty, retirement, and usefulness. But the assertion thus made, proves nothing; for what "*woman's sphere*" IS, is the very matter in dispute. In different climates and among different races of men, and conditions of social progress, woman's sphere differs immensely. In a savage state, man assigns to her as her sphere, all hard, laborious, and repugnant work without thanks, extreme sufferings without pity, unremitting drudgery without reward. In China, her sphere is to drag the plough, while her husband sows the seed, and appropriates the crop. In India, her sphere is to be entirely subject to the will of her husband, during his life, and at his death, to be burnt upon his funeral pile. What is *not* the sphere of woman? Anything or everything as the varying caprice of power and of public opinion may determine. One fact, surely, is worthy of remark, — that precisely as a nation advances in intelligence, arts, science, and Christian character, the rights of women approach more nearly to those of men; and hence we may infer, that, when a true state of society shall be reached, their rights will be one and the same. By "*spheres*," however, is properly meant the orbits or circuits of employment and action. These

certainly will vary for the sexes, as they vary for different individuals, male or female, of the human race, according to organizations, relative endowments, or combinations of talent, education, and circumstances. But although each one has thus an individual sphere, our rights are not unequal.

Assuming to argue from reason, some persons also assert that woman is inferior in *intellectual* capacity to man, and therefore is not entitled to a share in government. This is a most absurd argument. It places the right to govern in the highest mental talent, and therefore exalts an Autocrat upon an unlimited throne, and subjects the entire nation, having inferior minds, to political slavery. But who must determine this talent? The strong hand, and talent for destruction? This is Tyranny.

Intellectual talent, however, is but one element in the qualifications for government. The moral and religious powers are even more essential than greatness of intellect. Place any plan of action, having regard to the government of the masses, before two persons, one having medium intellect, with large humanity and piety, and the other having large intellect, with small benevolence, sense of justice and reverence for the good and holy, and large destructive and selfish powers; can you be in doubt concerning their choice of measures, the policy which they would adopt? The selfish, strong mind would seek the advancement of his own power, the accumulation of gain, the aggrandisement of his family, and the destruction of those who might oppose his wishes. The pious, humane person, would pray the spirit of the Lord to help him in doing good, disseminating knowledge, securing freedom to all, and enlarging the happiness of the nation and of the world. Now it is most absurd to challenge for the selfish, carnal mind, a natural, divine right to govern the moral and religious.

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But the intellectual inferiority of woman must not be assumed. How the fact is, I pretend not to say; for there has never been a fair trial of her intellectual strength. In physical strength, and the energies of positive courage and destruction, man unquestionably exceeds her. Faculties are exercised by the actual performance of functions suited to them. The mere repetition of the words of a lesson will train language, but not the reflective powers. As woman has been debarred from the functions of many rights, she has been excluded from the education of the powers engaged in them. In the Patriarchal state, she held life or was consigned to death, at the will of the male head of the family. In the Barbarian age, force governed, and right was unknown. In the renowned chivalrous period, notwithstanding the flattering homage paid to "Ladies bright," the very term applied in law to a married woman, indicated the general violence exercised towards the sex. She was said to be *femme covert*; that is, as Blackstone informs us, a woman under the wing, PROTECTION, and shelter of a husband. Marriage was necessary as a protection; and the very name of the relation of the wife to the husband denoted protection. Women not married were victims of violence. And since the Feudal Ages, the rights of woman have remained so little known, that the *rights of serfs* are almost as tolerable to despotic ears. In fact, it appears not improbable that serfs will gain their rights before

women. The rights of serfs have been won and established by force. Peasants can make themselves terrible to their masters. In this respect, woman is no candidate for equality.

The inferiority of woman is argued from her creation; she was formed, we are told, of a part of man. But I see no force in this view. We know that the Deity proceeded upwards in the scale of reason. Birds succeeded fishes; beasts came after birds; the male man after beasts, and woman last of all. Shall we suppose that the All-wise Creator here *retrograded*? Having proceeded upwards to man, did He then fall downwards below man? Was his last crowning work inferior to that which proceeded it? Was the being, in whose moral and religious endowments is peculiarly stamped the image of the Most High, inferior in dignity and glory to him in whom the carnal energies constitute the principal characteristics? Perhaps there is not poetry only, but philosophy also, in what Burns says about the "*prentice hand*;" but on the question of woman's inferiority or superiority, I express no opinion; — for I deem it not essential. I only say, that the traditional faith that woman was formed of *organized* matter, a part of Adam, and 39 Adam of *inorganized* matter, namely dust, is an argument in favor of the superiority of woman, and not adverse to her.

Again, that woman was the first to transgress, is no proof of her inferiority. For it was not possible for the Deity to create a moral being with *experience*. Experience is the result of our voluntary actions. Adam and Eve, though of full stature, were necessarily without experience. They were mental and moral infants; and it happened to them as it does to infants. In the absence of experience, the very largeness of moral and religious endowments may lead a person astray by the temptation to be wise, to be god-like. The higher in dignity the constitution, probably the longer it is in attaining its proper development. If so, this would be an argument in favor of woman's dignity. I do not urge these considerations as having conclusive force. I am only suggesting them, by way of answers to dogmatic assertions. Of one truth, however, I feel convinced; although woman was the first to fall, — the first to lead the way from Eden, Adam will not return thither, unless Eve, — I will not say, *precede* him, — but at least go by his side.

But, I repeat, this question of intellectual superiority or inferiority in woman is not relevant. On the same principle you might as well argue in favor of despotism, and against the rights of man and self government, in domestic and political life. The real question is this: "Has the Deity formed one half of the human race, created in His image, incapable of self government; or rather so incapable as to be rightfully in subjection to a power independent of themselves?" Is it not most foolish, if not impious, to suppose so? Women, by the right of birth, or by some adventitious circumstance, have succeeded to thrones, as reigning Monarchs. Have the Isabellas, the Elizabeths, the Catherines, the Maria Therasas, displayed less talent than the Ferdinands, the Henrys, the Nicholases, the Francises? Is there a woman worthy the name, who does not feel that she has powers within her high, noble,

which are not called into action by the frivolous pursuits to which women are mostly confined, by their exclusion from the general rights and duties of life? What are the great duties in the legislative branch of government? Are they not to determine what the relations shall be, or are, by nature and the appointment of Deity, between husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, master and servant, creditor and debtor, the state and the citizen? Now, when questions come up for legislation upon these subjects, can a man do anything better than to go home and consult his mother, wife, and 40 sisters, as to what the laws should be on points in which all are so deeply interested? And yet, most wonderful, the laws controlling these relations in society, so near and dear to the heart of woman, and upon which so vitally depend her liberty and happiness, are determined and adjudged by the independent wisdom of man alone, acting as the natural, divine lord and sovereign of the race; a claim not a whit better founded than that of the divine right of kings, who have assumed power over the masses!

If it be answered that there are many questions which arise in legislative bodies, such as questions of Peace and War, Slavery and Abolition, Tariff and Free Trade, etc. — concerning which, women, with their inexperience, would be unable to legislate wisely, I would reply in regard to those subjects, *first*, that the moral sentiments of women are especially demanded for their rightful decision and experience, and knowledge would soon be obtained; and *secondly*, that multitudes of men, in our country, are allowed to vote, and to be eligible to office, who, upon abstruse matters of legislation, are no more competent, from their inexperience, to give a sound opinion, than women.

It may be laid down as an indisputable axiom in government, that no people can safely be permitted to legislate for another people; no nation for another nation; no city for another city; and no employment for a distinct employment: and I will add, neither sex for the other sex. What is Ireland, legislated for by England? What would Boston be, legislated for by New York? What would be the condition of Farmers, legislated for by Manufacturers and Merchants? In respect to women, the fact of man's being related to them by blood and family interests, modifies the iniquity of a partial legislation. But still, it is evident that each phrenological organ should have its representation in the council chamber of freedom; each want should be heard; every affection should be consulted. If man's phrenological constitution is different from that of woman, then man cannot legislate for woman. If their constitutions are the same, but unlike in combinations, then the unlike combinations of the phrenological organization of the sexes should be represented, no less than the unlike combinations of men themselves. In proof of the fact, that man cannot safely be entrusted with legislation for woman, I appeal to the Statutes and Law Books.

Formerly, it was the avowed law that a husband might chastise his wife with a rod; she owed him obedience as a servant. The common law, in these respects, is not altered; but a better feeling

has sprung up, and the law is inoperative. A woman, whose personal property may constitute the sole wealth of her husband, cannot, without his consent, when she is on her death bed, the victim of his severity and unfaithfulness, bequeath the smallest sum to her children, to protect them from the cruel bitterness of a step-dame, although she may anticipate that her husband's guilty associate will fill that station after her own death. Her husband, dying first, may, by his will, leave her and her children penniless. He may, during life, control the custody of her children, and, at his death, appoint testamentary guardians for them, and separate them from their mother. He becomes, under certain circumstances, tenant for life of the whole real estate of the wife, receiving the profits without accountability; but she, by survivorship, is entitled, by dower, to a third only of his. At the death of the wife, the husband surviving her, the family remains together, unbroken, as the law recognizes the man as the sole head of the house. But at the death of a husband, leaving a wife, the law dissolves the family, treating her as a nullity, dividing the estate, and assigning the children to the care of guardians. Yet, not impossibly, during the life of the husband, the woman was the better person of the two, more diligent, more prudent, more intelligent. The fortunes of the family are at the mercy of an improvident husband; and, except in some rare instances, the wife and children may be driven, simply by his act, either directly or indirectly through the intervention of law, from the shelter of Home, the sanctuary of the hearth-stone! But why enlarge upon these inequalities of legislation? If resistance to a nominal tax, without representation, be inscribed on the pages of history as a meritorious instance of a noble, praiseworthy spirit in our fathers, are we so insensible to consistency as to insist on the right of one half of the race, not only to tax the others without representation, not only to determine their rights to property, but to adjudge, as by a sovereign, inherent authority, the nearest and dearest relations of life, to say what relation the woman shall sustain to her husband, what to her child, what to the persons engaged in domestic offices in the house? Talk of freedom, with one half of our people in this subjection! Surely, our eyes are not yet open to the dawn of liberty.

Now listen to the objections urged against the co-equal rights of women.

1. Would you have them, — it is asked, — elected to office? How would a woman look in the office of President, or Governor?

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I answer, such an event would indicate, more than almost any other, the near approach of the reign of peace and righteousness. Women in Europe may fill the throne, as reigning Monarchs. Shall they who are thought worthy of the highest station, in hereditary monarchies, be deemed unworthy of election to office, by the suffrages of a free people? If women, placed in the administration of great and vast national affairs, by the mere accident of birth, have acted wisely, much more might we

expect not wisdom only, but integrity in the government of women, selected by free citizens, with a view to mental and moral fitness.

2. But the men might be unruly, boisterous, and turbulent, at elections!

So then, it seems, the abuse by man of his rights, is to be a cause of forfeiture of the rights of woman! But the remedy is easy. Divide the election districts, and have separate windows for receiving the ballots of women, as at post offices, until men become humanized. Besides, character is an *effect*. Modify circumstances, and you will modify character. Persons having the right to vote, possess influence. Witness the influence of catholics and others, who, from the fact of their having the right of voting, secure an important weight in party politics and in legislation. But a class of people, cut off from the right of voting, cannot bring their grievances, with any effectual power, before the public. If woman's rights were once practically acknowledged, you would immediately experience a happy reformation, in many of the evils which now afflict large portions of the sex, and in the misconduct of men at the polls.

3. If women exercised the elective franchise, their votes would be but duplicates of those of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Besides, many of them are in very dependent conditions and would not vote freely. Should they vote contrary to their male relations, disputes would arise in families. Only think of the party bitterness arising between husband and wife, if one were a Whig and the other a Democrat!

A sufficient reply to this class of objections is, that husbands, fathers, and brothers, would be as likely to vote in accordance with the sentiments of their wives, mothers, and sisters. The influence of knowledge and moral truth, is not a pernicious one in elections; because the avowed and just object of canvassing for elections is to apply an influence of that kind. If mere pecuniary dependence is to disfranchise persons, then we must go through our factories, workshops, and counting-rooms, and deprive all the subordinates of their votes. Members of the same firm, may be some Democrats, others Whigs, without quarrelling; and so it often is among members of the same family. The effect of similar divisions in regard to political subjects, on the females of the same family, would be to purge politics of mere partyism, and to infuse into political agitations more morality, candor, philanthropy, and moderation.

4. It is further insisted, that if women held office, they might be scandalized by the brutal attacks sometimes committed in legislative bodies, with bowie knives and pistols.

The best way to dispel such ruffianly exhibitions, is by the presence of women, as members of such bodies. If men meet together, without women, at a dance, a party, an assembly, they are apt to be

boisterous and unmannered. The presence of woman, not as a spectator or auditor, in a gallery, where her appearance might but excite the love for display of some ostentatious Senator, but as a member of the body, insulted by the violation of decorum, and interested in the preservation of order, would soon change the character of the scenes in our Senate Chambers. In Asia, women are excluded from general society. In Europe, they are admitted. In Europe, general society, refined by the presence of woman, is immensely superior to society in Asia. In the United States, at the meetings of some of the political parties, — the Land Reformers and the Abolitionists, — women are invited to be present and to participate in the proceedings. I have remarked that the proceedings of these meetings are more orderly, and the harangues of the speakers are addressed to nobler sentiments of the human heart, than the proceedings or addresses of the meetings of other parties from which women are excluded. If a disturbance arise, it is, most probably, originated by a person or persons from parties which exclude women. If these remarks are correct, as I believe them to be, then we are taught a useful lesson concerning order and decorum in public meetings. When the rights of woman shall be practically and generally recognized, then public meetings will be to party meetings, of the present day, what a refined and courteous assembly in a parlor is to a rowdy gathering in a bar-room.

5. The last objection which I shall notice is, that if women vote and hold office, they should bear arms also. No one should participate in the elective and official franchises who cannot render service to their country in defence against invasion.

I need not refer to the law, declared by David, in answer to the sons 44 of Belial, who were for excluding the men at Besor, from a share of the spoils taken from the enemy, — “For who,” saith he, “will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.” Military service is by no means the greatest act of patriotism that a man or woman can render to their nation. In fact, military service is often performed by officers and soldiers, from a passion of ambition, a love of glory, a desire for carnage, and as a means of subsistence. So far from the duty to serve in war being the foundation of the rights to vote and to hold office, some persons, as judges, physicians, teachers, and preachers, are exempt from such service, for the very reason that they *do* hold offices or discharge employments in society, of a civil and social character. But whether as nurse, teacher, physician, or priest, who renders more service to the people and to the Commonwealth than woman? She nurses our helpless infancy. She instils the first and most abiding lessons of truth, and moral and religious sentiment. Her aid to health in domestic life, through diet, clothing, cleanliness, and attendance, are even of greater value than those of the medical practitioner. Her consolations and instructions in the hour of sickness frequently sink deeper into the heart than the prayers of the ecclesiastic; and when the spirit wings its flight to the judgment seat, her blessing attends it. If the employments of priests,

teachers, physicians, and judges, are causes of exemption from military service, then this objection, in regard to women, is utterly insignificant; and perhaps, when made, is offered not in earnest.

In conclusion, permit me to say that the world is waiting for the establishment of the entire Free Equal Rights of Woman in Church and State, before it can proceed to its highest destiny. A wise architect adapts his means to the end. In machinery, we frame a governor for equalizing motion and accumulating power. The power thus accumulated is applied to the accomplishment of effects, for which the machine, without this *help*, would be incompetent. Thus the Supreme Architect, created in woman a mighty moral and religious power, as a MEET and necessary HELP for the accomplishment of the great purposes of righteousness, which constitute at once the duty and the privilege of our race. The time, we have some hope, is near at hand, when armies of construction shall go forth to other nations, and not armies of destruction; when we must send not a few, but multitudes of missionaries to the nations and tribes of the world, not to 45 conquer and plunder, but to instruct them in the arts of peace, in husbandry, in education, in the Gospel. Only thus can we obtain the dominion granted and foretold by the Lord. The constitution of man's mind alone, unaided by the *help* created by the Deity, in the phrenological constitution of woman, would be inadequate to this great duty.

The providences of the Most High are awaiting the regeneration, by the Divine Spirit, of that *new man*, male and female, in the image of God, as promised to the seed of the woman. Let us, therefore, no longer retard the operations of the Word of God, but proclaim the entire and Christian doctrines of truth, peace, and liberty. Away with lordship of the strong over the weak, with sovereignty of the HUSBAND, BROTHER, and SON, over the WIFE, MOTHER, and SISTER.

EXTRACTS

From an Address on the Medical Education of Women, Delivered before the Woman's Rights Convention, at Worcester, Mass., by Harriet K. Hunt, of Boston, Mass.

We are living in a struggling age, in a transition age, in an age when, through the leadings of Divine Providence, the minds of the community are asking the why and the wherefore of all things. Old established customs are examined as to their worth, and habits and tendencies are brought to the light, that their soundness may be proved, or that they may vanish like dew before the sun. Noble men and women have been working upon the outer skin, and thus preventing a palsy in the community; but still the *heart*, the central point of circulation has not been reached. Surface remedies have been applied, and irritants and stimulants have performed their uses; but now

we need something internal, and therefore we demand equal freedom of development, equal advantages of education, for both sexes.

To discern the signs of the times, and to seek for remedies to meet existing wants, is the part of wisdom. In asking your attention 46 to the professional sphere of woman, as a PHYSICIAN, I speak from the experience of many years, and bear testimony to duties of vital importance. I have lived in this work, loved it, felt its power, enjoyed its privileges, been sustained in it by kind and intelligent spirits, — and I would here gratefully acknowledge that “the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places and I have had a goodly heritage.” For fourteen years in the City of Boston, the place of my birth and education, my path has been public, as a physician for my own sex and for children; and although at the first, ridicule busied herself about me, and ill nature furnished her weapons, yet the consciousness of right, and the deep enjoyment growing out of that consciousness, opened to the mind a state of religious trust and a dependence upon the Lord as the source of all life, which have amply sustained me. My own experience is my stand-point, in offering the following remarks, which I cannot but think will meet with a response in many minds.

Although society is yet in a confused state, the sphere of the sexes is as confidently defined by some persons, as the boundaries on a map; while, to others, the subject presents a serious and perplexing riddle. This question will be met in as many varied ways, as there are mental or moral qualities engaged in the investigation, until we base our thoughts upon *mind*, and not upon *sex* alone, — and realize that the qualities of mind will ever bear upon them the distinctive character of their innate organization, either masculine or feminine. It is *mind* that must direct, it is *mind* that must be developed. No one, who realizes how strong is the religious element in woman, will for a moment fear for the use she will make of the highest educational advantages, for in drawing largely from the great book of human life, she will reverently look above to its Author. This element in her nature, this dependence upon the Lord, gives to the true woman a consciousness of responsibility which will safely direct her through professional life, business trials, or any other emergencies.

It is to the right and duty of opening for woman a legitimate sphere, around which too many obstacles have been placed, that I ask your particular attention. The medical education of woman is a positive necessity, indicated by the signs of the times. It will fit her — if she become a mother — (for no change can alter the highest law of her nature) not only to understand the delicate organizations committed to her care, but so to guard her own system that she may not become a victim to the thousand wearing, weakening, prostrating, protracted diseases, which so often unfit woman for life and duty. Her affections 47 need truths to guide them; but wan and anxious countenances around us denote ignorance. Woman needs her own sex to guard and guide her, particularly at those times when she is moulding her children for a life of joy or sorrow, and to

impress upon her the importance of guarding herself. When the time comes that physiological knowledge is diffused among our people, and there is a oneness in our medical departments, then and then only will the influence of states of mind and qualities of thought be thoroughly searched out in reference to ourselves and our children. Trace out in your minds the thousand situations in which a mother needs medical knowledge, or the assistance of one of her own sex on whose superior knowledge she can rely!

Then look at the nurse, acting either privately among her family and friends, or in a public capacity. Who requires medical knowledge more than she to whose fidelity life is thus committed? How often physicians have to deplore the ignorance of nurses! How many a death has occurred through neglect during the period of convalescence! Now — since this department is universally admitted to belong to our sex — we demand light to guide woman's quick perceptions, and a thorough and systematic education, instead of a confused and miscellaneous crowd of notions. The community are now awake to the subject of midwifery, and all must acknowledge that woman should be carefully trained for this profession. Those whose perceptions are intuitive, to whom sympathy and propriety are text books, and to whom a consciousness of duty brings attending energy, are especially fitted for this path. But others may be called to a different task; to lead a physician's life may be their great desire, as the means of developing their powers, and meeting the wants of their natures, and I demand for them every medical advantage.

I must utter myself strongly here, for there are dreamers on this subject as well as thinkers. We ask for no *separate medical colleges*, we ask for no appropriation of public money; but we do ask, — in the fear of the Lord, in the trust that our claim is right and proper, in the hope that this question may be thoroughly looked into, involving as it does, such important interests, — we do ask for women EQUAL medical advantages with those enjoyed by men. Read the daily papers carefully, and then you will feel that woman must come into this path with every advantage of co-operation that man can offer, to meet not only physical diseases, but the spasms of fanaticism, the fever of infidelity, the St. Vitus' dance of levity, and the delirium tremens of fashion, — incipient states which are precursors of melancholy and derangement of 48 mind. We ask the philanthropist, the political economist, yes, and even the conservative, to join with the physiologist in investigating this momentous question. Can there be complete integrity in discharging a function like this, when it is open only to man? We ask that the medical colleges may be opened to MIND, not to sex, that the whole of human nature may aid in promoting the well being of humanity. "Male and female created he them and blessed them," are the words of Holy Writ. We ask for the recognition of this great truth in the medical department; we ask for our own sex, and we ask it earnestly, that they should be the healers of their own diseases; we ask for physicians who by nature understand woman's nature, who being organised like us, know directly through sympathy how to treat us, and who have experimental

knowledge which can be applied to meet our wants. We ask for perfect harmony with our brethren in this great work. We ask to investigate social institutions in relation to their influence on health. Cannot woman, by her very nature, best look into the thousand petty physical ills so common among women, and direct others to suitable clothing, proper food, the importance of a cheerful mind, and a quiet spirit? When woman stands side by side with man in the healing art, — then and then only will society, its claims, its pleasures, be examined in their physiological bearings. Will not there be more completeness in our hospitals when physicians of both sexes meet there to perform their duties, and the nurses are their intelligent and educated aids? * * * * *

The great increase of quackery has produced a distrust of physicians, and, *vice versa*, this distrust has but increased quackery, while the confidence formerly felt in the medical faculty has been gradually decreasing for many years. Physicians are conscious of this fact, as their journals testify. I am sorry to say, too, that kind but ignorant women are travelling through the country, advertising to cure all diseases. Woman, longing to consult one of her own sex, encourages them. There is a gap in society here which must be filled. The want and the need cry aloud. Must *separate* institutions arise? Must woman go forth *unprepared* for this work? Or is the truth to be felt, and a response given to the demand for EQUAL privileges?

What duty can be more delicately feminine, more truly womanly, than to take the hand of a sister, afflicted in body and mind, and to show her the cause of her diseases, in the transgression of those eternal laws which know no escape nor evasion, — to lead her by kind sympathy and wise advice not only to health again, but to a desire for perfect obedience? Here is a worthy and elevating vocation for woman; it is a *living* life. No intellectuality will ever impair her true consciousness of the feminine; no profession or business can smother her innate feeling. Many are the hindrances which lie in her path, but we trust in the influence of truth, and in the prayers of earnest spirits that light may be shed on this question. There is already a consciousness in the community that something must be done. We have had physiological lectures, societies have been formed, books have been published, and a sort of spasmodic action has seized the public; but this is a convulsion only which will do no good, unless we have medical knowledge for our sex, which may be appropriated day by day. Action must be founded on the firm basis of thorough, scientific education. * *

We need female physicians to guard the young girl against those influences which, scarcely perceptible in their first approach, will prove her ruin. We need them to impress on young minds the religious nature of their physical duties. Your moral reform societies need such women as lecturers. Your maternal associations need them to awaken mothers to the serious nature of the habits formed in childhood, and to guide their powerful but blind affections. We need them to visit our schools for girls, and to trace those insidious forms of disease, destructive of normal harmony,

those nervous tendencies so rapidly accelerated by unwise study and exciting emulation. The moral character of society depends more upon this reform, than at first appears. It is demanded by the heart of true delicacy and refinement. It is through the presence of woman, as a physician, that many evils now disregarded will be looked upon as sins, and shunned as such, and that the masculine and feminine elements of communities will be brought nearer to a religious co-operation.

* * * * *

Note. — As there was no phonographic reporter present, and the speeches were most of them brought out by the interest of the occasion, we are able to give a very meagre sketch only to our readers. The rich gems of thought and the thrilling eloquence of the extempore speeches are lost to those who were not present to listen.

Many of the speakers are already well and widely known, and it needs no word of ours to prove how eloquently Lucretia Mott, Wm. L. Garrison, Wm. H. Channing, W. Phillips, C. C. Burleigh, S. S. Foster, and A. K. Foster, advocated the right; but there are others less known to the public who were not less eloquent, for they spoke from full hearts, and feeling always burns, and glows, and imparts to others its own rich life.

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Sarah Tyndale, of Philadelphia, spoke with great effect. There was an affecting earnestness combined with real womanly dignity in the narration of her own personal experience that could not fail of producing a deep impression.

Antoinette Brown, a graduate of Oberlin College, and a student of the Theological Seminary, occupied a portion of the time and chained the attention of the audience with her logical statement of the Bible arguments in favor of Woman's Equal Rights.

Ernestine L. Rose, of New York, gave utterance to her clear, strong thoughts in her own peculiarly graceful style of eloquence.

Lucy Stone, of Massachusetts, expressed her lucid views in her usual simple and effective manner. All who listen to her feel that the truths she utters have had their influence in shaping out her life and destiny.

Martha Mowry, M. D., of Providence, gave a neat finished address near the close of the Convention, evincing a fearless and truthful spirit.

Dr. W. A. Alcott introduced his views of the necessity of a better physical education for women, and dwelt on its importance very earnestly.

P. W. D.

51

LETTERS.

From Mrs. Elizabeth C. Stanton. Seneca Falls, Sunday, Oct. 20.

My Dear Friend:— As you have handed over to me the case of those women who have fears in regard to the propriety of woman's exercising her political rights, I would gladly embrace this opportunity to address them through your Convention.

No one denies our right to the elective franchise, unless we except those who go against all human governments, and the non-resistant, who condemns a government of force, though I think the latter might consistently contend for the right, even if she might not herself choose to exercise it. But to those who believe in having a government — to those who believe that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed — to them would I appeal, and of them do I demand some good reason why one half of the citizens of this Republic have no voice in the laws which govern them.

The *right* is one question, and the *propriety* of exercising it quite another. The former is undeniable, and against the latter I have never heard one solid objection that would not apply equally to man and woman.

Some tell us that if woman should interest herself in political affairs, it would destroy all domestic harmony. What, say they, would be the consequence, if husband and wife should not agree in their views of political economy? Because, forsooth, husband and wife may chance to differ in their theological sentiments, shall woman have no religion? Because she may not choose to worship at the same altar with her liege lord, must she of necessity do up all her worshipping in private, in her own closet? Because she might choose to deposit her vote for righteous rulers — such as love justice, mercy, truth, and oppose a husband, father, or brother, who would, by their votes, place political power in the hands of unprincipled men, swearing, fighting, leaders of armies, rumsellers and drunkards, slaveholders and 52 prating northern hypocrites, who would surrender the poor panting fugitive from bondage into the hands of his blood-thirsty pursuers — shall she not vote at

all? It is high time that men learned to tolerate independence of thought and opinion in the women of their household.

It would not make much difference in man's every day life, in his social enjoyments, whether his wife differed with him as to the locality of hell, the personality of the devil, or the comparative altitude of the saintships of Peter and Paul; as to one's right to as much air, water, light, and land as he might need for his necessities; as to the justice of free trade, free schools, the inviolable homestead, and personal freedom — provided the husband had a great head and heart, and did not insist upon doing up all the thinking and talking in the establishment himself, or the wife was not a miserable formalist, like Mrs. Swishelm's Deborah Elmsley. Much of this talk about domestic harmony is the sheerest humbug. Look around among your whole circle of friends, and tell me, you who know what transpires behind the curtain, how many truly harmonious households have we now. Quiet households we may have, but submission and harmony produce very different states of quietness. There is no true happiness where there is subordination — no harmony without freedom.

But, say some, would you have women vote? What, refined, delicate women at the polls, mingling in such scenes of violence and vulgarity! By all means, where there is so much to be feared for the pure, the innocent, the noble, the mother surely should be there to watch and guard her sons who are to encounter such stormy, dangerous scenes at the tender age of twenty-one. Much is said of woman's influence: might not her presence do much toward softening down this violence, refining this vulgarity? Depend upon it, that places which, by their impure atmosphere, are rendered unfit for woman cannot but be dangerous to her sires and sons. But if woman claims all the rights of a citizen, will she buckle on her armor and fight in defence of her country? Has not woman already often shown herself as courageous in the field, as wise and patriotic in counsel, as man? Have you not had the brave Jagello in your midst, and vied with each other to touch but the hem of her garment? But for myself, I believe all war sinful; I believe in Christ; I believe that the command, "Resist not evil," is divine; I would not have man go to war; I can see no glory in fighting with such weapons as guns and swords, while man has in his possession the infinitely superior and more effective ones of righteousness and truth.

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But if woman votes, would you have her hold office? Most certainly would we have woman hold office. We would have man and woman what God intended they should be, companions for each other, always together, in counsel, government, and every department of industry. If they have homes and children, we would have them stay there, educate their children, provide well for their physical wants, and share in each other's daily trials and cares. Children need the watchful care and wise teachings of fathers as well as of mothers. No man should give up a profitable business, leave his wife and children month after month, and year after year, and make his home desolate

for any false ideas of patriotism, for any vain love of display or ambition for fame and distinction. The highest, holiest duty of both father and mother is to their children and each other, and when they can show to the world a well-developed, wisely-governed family, then let the State profit by their experience. Having done their duty at home, let them together sit in our national councils. The violence, rowdyism, and vulgarity which now characterize our Congressional Halls, show us clearly that "it is not good for man to be alone." The purifying, elevating, softening influence of woman is a most healthful restraint on him at all times and in all places. We have many noble women in our land, free from all domestic incumbrances, who might grace a Senate chamber, and for whose services the country might gladly forego all the noise, bluster, and folly of one-half the male dolts who now flourish there and pocket their eight dollars a day. The most casual observer can see that there is some essential element wanting in the political organization of our Republic. The voice of woman has been silenced, but man cannot fulfil his destiny alone — he cannot redeem his race unaided. There must be a great national heart, as well as head; and there are deep and tender chords of sympathy and love that woman can touch more skillfully than man. The earth has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, for woman has never yet stood the equal with man. As with nations, so with families. It is the wise mother who has the wise son, and it requires but little thought to decide, that as long as the women of this nation remain but half developed in mind and body, so long shall we have a succession of men dwarfed in body and soul. So long as your women are mere slaves, you may throw your colleges to the wind — there is no material to work upon. It is in vain to look for silver and gold from mines of copper and brass. How seldom now is the father's pride gratified in the budding genius of his son? The wife is degraded, made the mere 54 creature of his tyranny and caprice, and now the foolish son is heaviness to his heart. Truly are the sins of the father visited upon the children. God, in his wisdom, has so linked together the whole human family, that any violence done at one end of the chain is felt throughout its length. Adieu.

Yours truly, E. C. STANTON.

Paulina Wright Davis.

From Rev. Samuel J. May.

To the Woman's Rights Convention to be held at Worcester, Mass., October 23 and 24.

Syracuse, Tuesday, Oct. 22.

My Dear Friends: — I sincerely regret that I cannot be present at the Convention to-morrow and next day. It is a gathering to which I have looked forward with earnest expectation. But I am ill able, at any time, to afford the expense of long travel; and now all my spare funds are put in requisition to meet

the demands that are almost every day made upon me, to aid the wretched men and women who are fleeing from this *tyrannical* Republic; or in some other way, to withstand the cruel despotism, which glares upon us in the infernal Fugitive Law, recently enacted by our Government, which has become the supple tool of oppression.

For years I have been contending, directly or indirectly, for the great objects your Convention has in view. Never will their rights be accorded to women until the rights of Humanity are appreciated and respected. In the very beginning of the Anti-Slavery enterprise I was lecturing in Providence. The earnest attention of a very intelligent woman of that city, Miss Ruth Olney, continually arrested my eye. So soon as I left the pulpit I went to speak with her. "I have listened to you," said she, "with an interest which only a woman can feel. I suspect that you do not apprehend how much of your description of the helpless dependence of the Slaves applies equally well to the condition of the whole *female sex*." By a few rapid hints she ran the parallel, and then first my eyes were opened to the *Wrongs of Women*. I promised Miss Olney that the subject should not be dismissed from my regard; and it never has been. I have seen, and rejoice to see, that whatever causes the rights of humanity to be respected, will tend more or less to improve the condition of women. But I have felt that their rights ought to be directly and *distinctively* urged, and have accordingly often spoken and preached and published somewhat in their behalf.

Women have natural rights no less than men; and because *natural* they are also inalienable, and can never be set at nought or disregarded with impunity. It will be good for man no less than woman, when her rights are appreciated and secured. Their true welfare is one and inseparable. Humanity is *dual*; and yet when perfected it *is one*. The true relations of life can be established only in the union of both. Marriage is a divine ordination from the beginning; and just so far as the sexes are divorced from each other, by inequalities of condition or culture, do adulterous consequences follow. A perfect character in either a man or a woman is a compound of the virtues and graces of each. The excellences which each sex most needs are objective to it in the other sex. In Jesus, the dearly beloved of God, we see as much of feminine as masculine grace.

Now, what we see to be perfect in the individual would be likewise perfect in the community, that is, the entire union of male and female. The true family is the type of the true State. It is the absence of the feminine from the conduct of the Governments of earth, that makes them more or less savage. If there be any institutions, departments, or customs in the State, in which we see and feel it would be unbecoming for women to participate, then are those institutions, departments, or customs only *half human*. The very acknowledgment we so often hear, that the machinery of the political parties is such that it would defile woman to touch it, is an acknowledgment that men, in the prosecution of their partisan purposes, are continually doing what *they ought to be ashamed of*. This

surely is no reason why women should continue to be excluded from their rightful participation in the management of the State, as well as of the family. It is reason enough why men should repent, be converted, and become more temperate, just, honorable, honest, in their political relations and conduct; that they may no longer be shocked at the idea of having their mothers and wives associated with them. The State now is in the condition of *half orphanage*. There are fathers of the public, but no mothers. Yours truly,

SAMUEL J. MAY.

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From L. A. Hine. Cincinnati, October 15, 1850.

Mrs. P. W. Davis.

Esteemed Friend: — When I received your generous invitation to write some word to the Woman's Rights Convention, about to be held in Boston, I intended to write at length on the various questions of Reform, in which woman is so deeply interested; but being unexpectedly enlisted in the political campaign of this County, which has been waged with great severity, my attention was diverted from your reform; and had not my political opponents endeavored to excite prejudice against me, by speaking of my advocacy of Woman's Rights and Female Suffrage, I might have delayed this letter until too late a day for your Convention.

Begging your pardon for this apology, I will come directly to the question, and very briefly give my views.

In the first place, in order to meet the caviling of those conservators who sneer at the idea of woman's going to the polls with the rabblecitizens, of her shouldering the musket in defence of the country, etc., let me remark, that it is my deliberate opinion that any act wrong in woman is equally wrong in man, — that if it be right for man to fight, it is also right for woman to fight, if it be right for man to tolerate rowdyism at the polls, in Congress, in the coffee-house, it is right for woman to mingle in it and contribute her share to this kind of righteousness. Woman has often assisted in the defence of her country, and no laws of disfranchisement have been able to diminish the ardor of her patriotism, or her well known courage in the hour of danger. But the enemies of progress can be assured of this fact — *to wit*; that when man shall become sufficiently humanized to give woman her true position, then there will be an end of war, and peace will smile through all the walks of life.

Second. Again it is said that woman would be out of her place in the Legislative Hall, while she has a family demanding her attentions. This is but a quibble, and did not quibbles go further with the

thoughtless than truth and sound logic, it would not be worthy of notice. In answer to this, let me remark, that it looks to me as though *man* as well as woman had duties to discharge to his family; that it is no less wrong for him to leave his wife and children, than it is for her to leave her husband and her little ones. The care and solicitude of *both* parents are demanded by the children, and nature forbids 57 either to desert them. But let no one be alarmed; parental affection is stronger in woman than in man, because of these social customs that have established unnatural distinctions between the sexes. There is little danger of any mother deserting her family station for the political arena. Man will do so because he has long been accustomed to impose those duties upon woman, that are obstacles in the path of his ambition. When man as well as woman shall feel his first and highest obligations to be due to his family, he will think it as wrong for *him* to desert them, as he now thinks it wrong for her to do so.

For my part, I heartily wish woman was allowed to vote; I wish she might *exercise* the right too — for by her influence politics would be delivered from the degradation to which they are reduced. Almost every moral man revolts at the corruptions of politics, and very few men who are worthy to represent the People, and able to honor their country by their virtue and talent, can be prevailed upon to engage in political strife.

In the third place, I believe that much of the immorality that now desolates society is due to the exclusion of woman from a free and full companionship with man. Let it be impressed upon all, that she has a right to accompany man wherever he may rightfully go; and I apprehend that the haunts of vice and shame, now sustained by the “sterner sex,” would soon be broken up. Should our ladies insist upon the right to attend their husbands, brothers, and fathers to the coffee-house, the house of shame, the gambling hell, etc., etc.; how promptly would man discontinue his visits to these wicked haunts, and unite with his companion in advancing their mutual improvement in all that is good and true? But the legal distinctions now maintained between the sexes are the basis of all social distinctions which are so unfortunate for the moral welfare of the community; abolish the former and the latter will cease to exist.

In the fourth place, I will announce the propositions on which I advocate your movement. This would probably have been more appropriate at the head of this letter.

I. Under a true system of education — a system in which education will not be distinguished by gender — man and woman will find their respective spheres in life; and that too, by the free direction of their own inclinations. If, then, the conservative is solicitous about the preservation of the male and female *spheres*, let him join with us in establishing a correct system of education for both sexes, and on abolishing all legal distinctions, to the end that nature may be free to 58 maintain her own order. In Educational improvement I suggest, 1. The union of both sexes in all our

Schools. 2. The amalgamation of *male* and *female* Academies. 3. The equal participation of woman in collegiate advantages. 4. The pursuit of the same studies, especially all those branches that tend to mental development. I have not now time to discuss this fruitful theme, but hope you will appoint a committee to report elaborately upon this subject.

II. If the respective spheres of man and woman are different, surely *man* has no right to assume the prerogative of describing *her* sphere by law and of compelling her to walk therein. It looks to me as though the female part of humanity has as much right to prescribe man's sphere, as he has to mark out hers. It seems like the most brazen presumption and egotism in him to assume such authority. And yet, man stands aside and laughs at your attempts to overthrow this egotistic legislation in order that both sexes may enjoy the full freedom of nature, and be permitted to find their own true positions.

III. It is most unpardonable presumption in man, to say nothing of selfishness, for him to assume all authority over woman's person and property. In this he declares woman incapable of taking care of herself, and enacts himself as her gallant and generous guardian. How gallant he is can be seen from a few facts as to the property. 1. When a woman marries, all her personal estate is absolutely the property of her husband, and she loses all control over it; and the possession of all her real estate belongs to him as long as she lives, and if she dies, leaving issue, he holds it for life. 2. If her real estate be sold after marriage and she suffers her husband to handle the proceeds but for an instant, it becomes absolutely his. 3. All property acquired after marriage is his, and she has no legal authority over it until after his death; in this the law tempts the wife to *desire the husband's death*. 4. When real estate is sold by the husband, the wife must sign the deed to convey the interest that would accrue to her on his death. I notice this as an example of the humiliating subjection to which woman is reduced; she must be led before a magistrate and solemnly swear that her seal and signature is her own free act and deed, without any compulsion on the part of her husband! Is not this a proud position for a woman? and is it a wonder that those who have some spirit cry out against the servility that is imposed upon them? Let the wife's authority over all the property of the family be equal to that of the husband.

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With an apology for writing so long a letter, after promising a brief one, I subscribe myself

Yours, for Humanity, L. A. HINE.

From Elizur Wright. Boston, Oct. 22, 1850.

Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis.

Dear Madam: — I am sorry it is not in my power to accept your invitation to be present at the Convention in behalf of Woman's Rights, to be held in Worcester to-day. You are not mistaken in supposing that I regard the subject matter of it with serious intent. I am quite ashamed of that want of manhood — of that palpable puppyhood, in fact — in my own sex, which inclines so many of them to speak with derision of any efforts of yours to share in political rights and responsibilities. These efforts, I am persuaded, you make not so much for your own sakes as for ours. The element of the gentler and more right-feeling sex is sadly needed in the politics of our day. We want a counterpoise of the right-hearted to set off against the preponderance of the wrong-headed. Poorly cultivated as the hearts of either sex are, were both united in politics, it would be impossible for an act so heartless and atrocious as that for the extradition of fugitive slaves to disgrace the National Statute Books. I therefore pray, labor, and even hope for the day, when the vote of woman will contribute to soften, strengthen, and sweeten the laws, in the humanity and rectitude of which she must always be even more deeply interested than the stronger and coarser sex.

While I see no immediate prospect of your attaining these rights, which your sex generally so little values or desires, and which ours is so stupidly bent on monopolizing, I see none the less cause for agitating the subject, but all the more. Your business is to launch new ideas. Not one of them will ever be wrecked or lost. Under the dominion of these ideas, right practice must gradually take the place of wrong, and the first we shall know, we shall find the social swallowing up the political, and the whole governing its parts.

With genuine respect, Your cordial Co-worker, ELIZUR WRIGHT.

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From O. S. Fowler.

To the Officers of the Woman's Convention, Worcester, Mass.:—

Professional appointments at the West will prevent my complying with the invitation of the Committee to be present during the deliberations of your body, and I therefore take this opportunity to express to you a few of my sentiments touching the general subject of your Convention.

To say that I regard the elevation of woman and putting her in her proper position as the most important work — a work more potential on the destinies of man than any other, and more absolutely necessary to the progress of the race—is but to express a truism, uttered a thousand times before, not by myself merely, but by all who take any interest in bettering the condition of man.

As in agriculture, every month brings its particular kind of labor, so every period of the world's destiny, and every age, brings its particular kind of work in order to promote progression; and the work of this age is to perfect woman, and thereby the race. It is a great work, greater than any which has yet claimed the attention of mankind; a more important, aye, a more imperious one—one which must positively and absolutely be accomplished, and by the present generation; and your movement shows that you have appreciated this general fact, and set yourselves at work for its performance.

But by what means can so necessary a work be accomplished? For in proportion to the value and importance of the work, is it necessary that just the right means, and they *alone*, should be employed, and in just the right manner. Far be it from me to dictate to your body touching this head; but pardon me if, from the inexpressibly deep interest I have in this subject, I offer for your consideration the following suggestions.

The two sexes, in their collective capacity, bear precisely the same relations to each other which the individual husbands and wives sustain to one another. This is a fundamental truth, and embodies those landmarks which furnish infallible guides as to the best means of improving the condition of woman. Your Convention is based on the pre-supposition that woman occupies a position inferior to what actually belongs to her, and inquires, by what means can she be elevated to her proper sphere? Suppose, then, a wife occupies a position below that of her husband, by whom and by what instrumentalities can she most effectually be elevated? It is not for her alone to complain of her inferior position, nor is it for her, by her own exertions alone, to make herself what she should be. In this matter, the husband has quite as much interest as the wife, and has more to do. As the improvement of the wife should come more from the husband than from herself, and as the improvement of the husband should be originated and accomplished more by the wife than by the husband; or, more properly, as every husband should consult his wife how he and she together can most effectually improve her condition and character, and as every wife should consult with her husband how she, in conjunction with his own exertions, can most effectually perfect him, so it is not for women to meet together in convention alone, to consult and labor for the elevation of their sex; for it is even more proper for man to meet in convention, and inquire, "How can we elevate the female sex?" and then labor for that end. But the true method is for man and woman to meet together in counsel, each putting the wisdom of the one and the warm aspirations of the other together, in the search after female perfection, at the same time that other conventions may properly be called of both sexes, inquiring how the masculine can be purified, developed, and perfected.

This law passes a slight criticism on your convention's being conducted wholly by females; better even that, than to allow the subject to be wholly neglected. Still, your effort would not stand in the

way of a convention of both sexes, having the same inquiry which now occupies your philanthropic body; and I trust the day is not far distant when such conventions shall be frequent, and their deliberations most effectual in the promotion of the great and glorious end you seek, for I regard no object to be accomplished as at all comparing in importance, or in moral sublimity and beauty, with the perfection of your sex.

The plain fact is this: all conventions of deliberation of woman without man are just as defective as the unmarried woman at fifty; just as all deliberations of men, either political, religious, mechanical, agricultural, or whatever they may be, are exactly like a bachelor at seventy. Or thus, as in the economy of nature, no man can be a man until he has become thoroughly identified and incorporated with a female companion, and no woman can put on either the beauties or glories of the feminine until she has become devoted to and assimilated with one of the opposite sex, so none of the common ends of society, accomplished by either sex individually, without the assistance of the other, can be otherwise than most lame and imperfect. In other words, man has certain qualities which require to be infused into everything appertaining to the public, and the respective qualities of the feminine require also to be infused and incorporated into the same measure.

Nothing emanating from the masculine can be perfect, unless it has superadded to it the qualities of the feminine; and nothing emanating from woman can be perfect, unless incorporated with the masculine. Anything coming from man alone is like a social party of men without women, comparatively destitute of refinement, and all the nicer, more exquisite susceptibilities of humanity; while whatever proceeds from woman alone is like a company of females, requiring that strength and power which it is the province of the masculine to confer.

I need not apply this general law by way of defining what the position of woman should be as regards politics, public speaking, etc. It explains itself. It says, in language not to be mistaken, that politics and government require the participation of woman in some form, as much as of man; and till it has that, to all intents and purposes, will it be marred by all the imperfections of the old bachelor. And so of religion, the pulpit included; and so of the lecture-room, for science recognizes in its development the female mind quite as much as the male; whereas now it has mainly the latter; though, thank Heaven! woman is beginning to study, and will ultimately add to science those female influences just shown to be requisite in everything that concerns humanity. Of course, then, it is not only proper, but absolutely necessary, that we have female lecturers on science, and female speakers on all those subjects which belong to or interest humanity.

This general law, applied to individuals, passes high encomiums on the noble stand taken by Lucretia Mott and some others of her sex, who, nobly breaking away from the trammels of aristocracy, which points the finger of scorn and ridicule at female speakers, have practically exemplified the law in

question, by speaking before large bodies of both sexes. Their doctrines we do not now either commend or disapprove, but congratulate society on the fact that they opened their mouths in public, and with such ability as to have given respectability to a custom before disreputable, and broken the ice so that others can now follow in their noble footsteps.

To run out the great principle here developed in detail, and to apply it to the decisions of thousands of those subjects and questions which come within the consideration of your honorable body, is not necessary, because the general law here developed is too unequivocal and its application too plain to require it.

One single additional application must suffice. That the race is not always to remain what it is and has been, but that the imperfect reality of the past and the present is to be superseded by that almost celestialty "which kings and prophets waited for, and sought, but never found;" that, in short, society is to be regenerated, and a millenium with all its glories is soon to be established, and the race become perfected far beyond what we have seen or heard, or it "hath entered into the heart of man to conceive," is a truth, written, not upon the page of prophecy alone, but upon the nature of man, and as clearly evinced by those throes of society and transitions through which it is so rapidly passing, as the first dawning of the sun evinces the prospective coming of its noon-time glory.

When God made man, He did not trifle. It was his last work, his greatest work. All the power, all the wisdom, all the benevolence, in short, every characteristic of the Deity was brought into the most infinitely intense state of activity and power in the creation of man. To have the race always continue to be what it thus far has been, would be disreputable to its author.

The evils of the past and present will only contrast the more gloriously with the beauties and perfections of the future. But this ordination and perfection of the race is to be accomplished by means; for God always works by instrumentalities, and in this case, human instrumentalities are to be the direct agencies for bringing about this infinitely glorious change.

Now, are those agencies to be put forward by man alone? No, for he is inadequate to the task; nor, for a like reason, can they be put forth by woman alone.

In short, the relations of the masculine and feminine to each other, and those laws which govern this whole subject, show that in the regeneration of the race, female agencies and influences are to be quite as efficacious and efficient as those of man; and if the world, as a whole, cannot be regenerated without both the masculine and feminine efforts combined, then individual societies cannot be changed from bad to good by either sex singly. As children cannot be completely aduated by either the mother alone or the father, so, in training race after race for higher and still higher

achievements, it will require both the masculine influences of all the fathers, husbands, and brothers, of every nation and town under heaven, as well as all the mothers, sisters, and wives; for every generation stands exactly in the same relation to the next generation, which the fathers and mothers stand in to individual families of children.

Do not, however, understand me, as to this general law, to criticise the movements of your body, because they come exclusively from women. Man has not heretofore done what he can do for woman. It is better that woman try to do alone, than that nothing be done; but it is to be hoped that your convention will provoke man to rise in all the interest which man should feel in the perfection of the feminine, and join with woman in devising and executing those ways and means which shall place woman in the position she was originally created to occupy; for, let it be remembered, that woman was created perfect, and that her nature is all that even a God could make it, both for her own happiness and for the happiness of society; and when we ascertain what her natural sphere is, and place her in it, we shall do the very thing exactly for the perfection of not her alone, but of all mankind.

Whilst, therefore, I pray with all my soul for spiritual influences to overshadow and guide the deliberations of your assembly, I remain, as I long have been,

Yours, for the perfection of Woman, O. S. FOWLER. New York, Oct, 14, 1850.

From E. A. Lukens.

New Garden, Ohio, October, 1850.

Dear Friend:—You have kindly invited me to address a letter to the Convention about to assemble at Worcester, for the purpose of discussing the claims and condition of women; and as it is now impossible for me to be there in person, I hasten to comply. Deeply, however, do I regret this alternative, as I belong to that very large class, whose activity is indicated only by excessive pleasure in seeing others labor; and gladly would I, on this occasion, sit at your feet, (if that were not too humble an attitude,) and be taught of the way, instead of writing at this distance from you, and without anything to communicate but simple and heartfelt wishes for the fulfilment, in your case, of the beautiful promise, “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.”

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Perhaps the women of Ohio never astonished themselves more than when they found themselves first in the grandest and boldest progressive movement of the age; the first, at least, to meet in *Convention* to consider a subject which involves the deepest, dearest, and most vital interests of

human life; while Massachusetts, our older, stronger, and more enlightened sister, was listening dreamily to the rising murmur against wrongs which all the ages have heaped upon woman, and *nodding* over it, as she would over a rather dull novel.

We remember that upon your coast lies Plymouth Rock; that upon your soil perished the last remnant of the ancient race of martyrs, and from thence arose again their spirit, to be incarnated anew in the persons of the "*twelve*," and marvel that you did not long ago call upon us, and all other true friends, for aid again to "launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea."

It is useless to exaggerate the amount of difficulty to be encountered, and quite as much so to conceal the fact that mountain waves of opposition must be met, and icebergs of indifference. I may have exaggerated in calling this "the grandest movement of the age;" but what error is older and therefore more formidable than that of classing woman among the mere cares and dependencies of man? what *thought* more thoroughly incorporated into all the laws and arrangements of society? The system of chattel slavery is, of course, fouler and more horrible; therefore will have fewer advocates, and be sooner thrown off as a loathsome excrescence from the rapidly renovating body of society. No poet will wreath the monster's brow with flowers; no sculptor will steal for its chiselled type the grace and spirituality that belong to immortal beauty; while poet, painter, and sculptor, preacher, lawgiver, and man of science, all unite in crowning tyranny and voluptuousness, weakness and ignorance, when they appear masked as *protection* on one side, as religious, graceful, and chaste submission on the other.

Our wrongs as women are few, compared with those of the slave; but well may we claim the right now to speak in his defence, as well as our own, while the treachery to both of great and powerful men stalks abroad and vaunts itself. Well may we pause to reprove those who would strike down the arm upraised to "undo the heavy burdens."

This is peculiarly an age of increasing labor, desperate struggle, and "high endeavor," on the part of reformers. All men are awake, and it is useless to lay weights upon the eyes of women any longer, or give her sleeping potions. It is no time, if any other has been, when she should be restricted, in her hours of respite from household labor, to the ornamenting of her person, and gossip over the tea-table; or, for employment to her mind and pen, to magazine stories, which in general are only refined gossip, while her father, husband, and brother, are sternly engaged in life's high conflicts, always in arms, like the Knights of Branksome, who "Carved at the meal with gloves of steel, And drank the red wine through the helmet barred." There will doubtless be female Don Quixottes and American George Sands—who can imitate her in everything but her transcendent power and genius

—to bring ridicule upon this enterprise; but we should not thereby be deterred from urging forward this movement *now*.

I rejoice that your Convention will not be marked by the unpleasant feature in ours, which gave offence to many — the exclusion of men from your deliberations. I think we should, as far as possible, take a definite position, and especially avoid everything that has the appearance of antagonism to man. Our interests are emphatically one in this matter, and we shall never take a decided step in advance, without moving harmoniously. The “spheres” of man and woman continually intersect each other and blend together, so that it is impossible to move in one without affecting the other.

Once more, dear sister, may all blessed and strengthening influences be upon your Convention! And I pray that words of love and power may go out therefrom, that shall set free the long chained and benumbed soul of woman, (as, in olden time, words of magic were said to,) and give it an impulse toward perfect development that shall be felt through ages yet to come.

Yours, truly, E. A. LUKENS. P. W. Davis.

From Margaret Chappelsmith. New Harmony, Ill., Sept. 20, 1850.

I believe that among the women of this country, there is a much larger number of elevated minds than are to be found among the women of my own country; and I should rejoice in the introductions 67 that you so temptingly offer me, but I must wait some other opportunity.

I have long noticed, with great pleasure, that women here are induced by their education to study all subjects; that they are not frightened from certain topics by the fear of being called “blue stockings,” or “female pedants;” and I have hoped, and still have some hope, that men here, unlike the generality of the men of England, have faith that a woman of cultivated intellect, capable of depending on her own exertions, may make a loving wife, a trusty partner, and a mother worthy to be trusted with the important charge of offspring; but my hope of this being much more general here than in England, is somewhat abated by the observation (limited, I admit) that I have made during my stay here. I have some fear that the principal advance in this respect, in this country, is a universal respect for female talent as a source of national pride; but that men, even men of sound knowledge in other respects, are so miserably deficient in knowledge on this subject, are such bad observers of facts in every way surrounding them, that they prefer taking to their bosoms the pretty creature whose *ignorance* makes her dependent, and whose submission is mistakenly calculated on as being more certain because she cannot reason on her duties, or on how to promote the best happiness of life. In England, it appeared to me to be necessary to convince the men of their folly

and degradation in this respect, before there could be any hope of effecting reforms among the women; for I fear that so long as men prefer timid women, who shrink from having an opinion of their own, so long will the majority of women insensibly mould themselves to what the men desire. Mothers will not have the courage to doom their daughters to an unmarried life, by making them beings that men would be afraid to love; — though, had mothers a firm conviction in the consolations and in the powers of intelligence, they would defy the folly of men, and would educate daughters who would, at last, vanquish men's prejudices, and bestow a happiness that ignorance, however loving and submissive, can never give. I do not, at present, know enough of society here to say that my fears are well-founded. I shall be most happy to find they are not. I care not for that education which gives merely literary talent; I covet that which gives independence of thought, which will fit a woman to examine all subjects before she adopts a belief regarding them, and which will enable her to assert an unpopular opinion, if her convictions lead her to hold that opinion rather than any other. Truth can exist only in such a course; intellect can have a healthy action only in such a course; and it is *only* the women who can do this that will be mothers of independent, honest, and intellectual sons. I earnestly hope to find many such women in the United States.

With much respect for yourself, and for the other ladies engaged in the good cause, I am, my dear madam,

Yours sincerely, MARGARET CHAPPELSMITH.

To Mrs. P. W. Davis.

From Nancy M. Baird. To the Woman's Rights Convention:

Dear Friends: — Though I cannot be present with you in person on this most important and deeply interesting occasion, my spirit will mingle with you in deep sympathy and fervent prayer for the success of the holy enterprise in which you have embarked.

The obscurity of my position, and the few qualifications I possess of rendering any efficient aid in this great work, almost induced me to remain silent, and withhold all expression of feeling; but a further consideration of the subject has led me to change that opinion. I feel persuaded that your Convention, being composed, as it will be, of persons of the highest wisdom and purest feelings, the true "salt of the earth," will not overlook, or regard with indifference, sympathy, even from the most humble source. Your noble, but arduous work, being no less than a war with "principalities and powers, and *wickedness in high places*," a war with profound ignorance and longcherished prejudice, and the fiercest passions of the *selfish*, unsanctified human heart, will need all the sympathy and all the aid of the friends of the cause, *great and small*. I pray that God may prosper and bless this

great and good work, and I believe He will. I believe it is an inspiration from Himself, and that the instruments He has raised up for its accomplishment will receive his constant guidance and direction. To wake up a slumbering world, a "world dead in trespasses and sins," is a great work; but greater is He who is for you than those who are against you; and as Jesus said to the sisters of Lazarus, if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God.

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I trust these few poor words of sympathy may reach you, and that you may be cheered on by expressions of it from many and higher sources.

Yours, very truly, NANCY M. BAIRD. Virginia.

Extracts of a Letter from Jane Cowen. Logansport, Indiana.

Dear Sister: — * * * After studying on woman's position for fifteen years, without divulging my thoughts to any person, taking the Bible for my guide, I have come to the conclusion that this great evil has its original root in the Church of God. I do not mean a particular church, but all the different denominations, (Quakers excepted,) taken as a body. I am of the opinion, that if the Church would allow woman the privileges that God has given her, in both the Old and New Testaments, an education equal with the male sex, and every right that belongs to her, would follow.

Let us go to the Bible, and examine for *ourselves* whether God has forbidden woman from reading the Law, either in public or private. It was Moses's mother who instructed him and formed his character; the law being written in her heart, for the law was not written at that time. We read in Exodus, 15th chapter, 20th verse, of Miriam leading the choir, to celebrate on the banks of the Red Sea, the overthrow of Pharaoh, 1491, B. C.; and in Micah, 6th chapter, 14th verse, God says to the Israelites, by the mouth of the prophet, "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." Their mission was to rule, instruct, and guide the people in piety and virtue. In Judges, 4th chapter, 4th verse, we have recorded the song of a woman, and an account of her judging Israel for years in righteousness, about 1294, B. C. It was woman that defeated the wicked counsels of Haman, and saved the Jews from destruction. In 2 Kings, 22d chapter, 14th verse, we read of Huldah, the Prophetess, who lived contemporaneously with Jeremiah and Zephaniah, 624, B. C. I heard an intelligent, and, I believe, a pious clergyman, say, not long since, that there were instances recorded in the Old Testament of females being chosen to fill the important station of a prophet; Judge G. saying 70 that, in the New Testament dispensation, females were not allowed this privilege, but are commanded to keep silence in the churches, etc. There is a possibility of even good men being mistaken, owing to the prejudice of education.

Let us now go to the New Testament, and see if he be correct. If I mistake not, Joel prophesied, 726 years B. C. — Joel, 2d chapter, 28th and 29th verses — “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my Spirit.” In the Acts of the Apostles, 18th chapter, 18th verse, we have an account of Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, travelling in company with Paul, and most probably they labored with him in the Gospel. In Romans, we have an account of Phebe, who was a *deaconess* of the church at Cenchrea, A. D. 58. 1 Corinthians, 9th chapter, we have an account of Paul reproving the Corinthians for their unbecoming manner of conducting public worship, the men praying or prophesying with their heads covered, and the women with their heads uncovered. It was a custom among the Greeks and Romans, and among the Jews — an express *law* — that no woman should be seen abroad without a veil. The several commentators agree that *prophesying*, in this passage, signifies to *speak to others to edification, exhortation, and comfort*, and this comprises all we understand by exhortation, or even preaching; that whatever may be the meaning of praying or prophesying in respect to the man, they have precisely the same meaning in respect to the woman. This is the kind of *prophesying* that was predicted by Joel, and referred to by Peter — Acts, 2:11. It is evident that had there not been such gifts bestowed upon woman, the prophecy could not have its fulfilment. That gifts are bestowed on females in our day, the same as on men, we do not doubt; but they are suppressed by the wretched laws of both Church and State. Nothing can be more plain than that it was to the foolish and disorderly to whom the apostle addressed himself, and not to those on whom God had poured out his Spirit.

JANE COWEN

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From Sophia L. Little. Pawtucket, Oct. 9, 1850.

Dear Friends: — Though unable to be with you, I sympathize with you in this movement.

Be earnest, be prayerful, and remember, “without Christ ye can do nothing.” May this Convention send forth a pure, unadulterated expression of woman's mind. May every sister be impressed with the importance of the questions to be discussed. Is woman in her true position? If she is not, what are the most direct means of her elevation? These questions require thorough investigation. I believe that the higher moral nature of woman is not merely the result of a retired education, but a native feature of her mind: and that the Almighty designed that men and women should act as one, the deficiencies of each being made up by the other.

I could say much on these subjects if with you; but not believing in the *right* to inflict long letters on a Convention which is to sit so short a time, I will only add my hearty wishes for a prosperous Convention, and am,

Very truly, dear sisters, Yours, for the truth, SOPHIA L. LITTLE.

To the Woman's Convention

Extracts of a Letter from Elizabeth Wilson. Cadiz, Ohio, Sept. 27, 1850.

Dear Friends and Fellow-Laborers: — On the part of woman, the position in society which she occupies has a tendency to paralyze her energies, physical, moral, and intellectual — lower her independence and self-respect, and render her a servile, frivolous, insignificant, useless member of community. What a powerfully deleterious influence these evils of our social system must necessarily produce in society! That many men and women surmount every obstacle, and prove beyond dispute that they are in possession of and exercise every attribute that would adorn and elevate humanity, we gladly admit; but that their position in society has the evil tendencies we have specified, we think there are few, who consider the subject, will deny. ⁷² Hence the question has heavy claims on the Christian philanthropist. The phrase, "Woman's Rights," conveys a very inadequate idea of the magnitude of this question.

A great part of our moral and theological teachings give perverted views of the Bible, on this question, consist of a mere play on words, and are powerful obstacles, together with legal enactments, in the way of woman's elevation.

It has been my earnest desire to use the mental powers God has given me, however feeble, to remove this slander from the book of God. We call on man to produce his testimony from the Bible, showing his authority to govern woman, or to stand before the world as an arrogant usurper. It may be said, the wife's duty to obey implies the husband's right to command. Obey what? He should "nourish and cherish her," as she is his own body, "as the Lord the Church." Her obedience must correspond to his duty; her obedience is passive, not active. He must treat her in the manner he would wish himself to be treated, were she head and he body. Does he suppose it would have any tendency to cheer and gladden his heart for her to rule him? Every human being has an inherent love of liberty, and cannot be happy without its enjoyment; consequently, the husband, in the performance of his duty, as "nourisher and cherisher," cannot deprive the wife of her liberty. There is

not an example or record, in Scripture, of husbands ruling their wives. Wives acted as freely in family government as did husbands.

Supposing it true, that the husband has authority from the Bible to rule his wife, which we utterly deny, how does that constitute men collectively a great hereditary aristocracy, with plenary power to rule all women? Nor will a majority of women's tame submission, and saying they have all the rights they want, (a very convenient way to throw off responsibility,) give men a right to rule. Women cannot alienate their natural rights more than men, and for the same reason, because the duties they impose are unchangeable. As woman is endowed with the power of self-government equal with man, it is an unmistakable indication that she was intended by her Creator to govern herself, and she succeeds equally well with man in the use of this power.

It is a despicable, pitiful thing to hear a woman representing herself as lower in the scale of creation than man, having fewer rights; thus dishonoring her Creator, who "made her in His own image, and crowned her head with glory and honor, and set her *over* the works of 73 his hands," *equally* with man. Women are to be pitied. This low, servile, cringing disposition is the legitimate fruit of a perverted social organization, which has governed them from their birth. But, thanks to our great Creator, a love of liberty in woman, as well as in man, is inherent; it may be paralyzed, but not eradicated, and woman does love liberty as well as man. We believe there are few women who do not think they are unjustly dealt with, though a majority are afraid to say so; they fear the sneers, and sarcasms, and menaces of men, and the sneers and no less bitter sarcasms of a number of their own sex, who *profess* they "have all the rights they want." There is generally little complaining under a despotism, though great suffering may be experienced. Nor is it peculiar to women to become so degraded by bondage that they would prefer to live in *comparative* slavery, rather than encounter the perils and contumely attendant on their emancipation. Nor is this any indication that God designed them for slaves.

The Jews (whose history is a transcript of human nature) preferred the bondage of Egypt, with its flesh-pots and the comparative quiet they enjoyed there, to the turmoil and privations consequent upon the obtaining of their liberty, and proposed to make a captain and return to their bondage, and talked of stoning Moses, their great liberator, for his instrumentality in their emancipation. Notwithstanding their low, servile longings, the sequel of their history demonstrates that they were not designed to be slaves.

The laborers in the promotion of the "Woman's Rights" reform may expect to encounter persecution. Both men and women will appear as antagonists, equipped with their warlike implements. Menace, persecution, detraction, ridicule, opprobrium, and bitter sarcasm will be brought into requisition. And as the cause progresses, it may be found necessary for them to call in the aid of

their faithful ally, the mob, with its heavy artillery, charged with brickbats and rotten eggs. But truth is invulnerable. Woman's education is an up-hill business, and will require all the exertions of its friends for its consummation. But the interest awakened in the community on this question is cheering. Persevere, and your efforts will be crowned with success. The friends of this cause have good reason to report progress.

The emancipation car will roll on to its desired goal. God has work for woman to do, as a free moral agent, in every department of life. She is God's servant, not man's.

Dear brothers and sisters, I bid you adieu.

ELIZABETH WILSON.

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From Maria L. Varney. Norwalk, Conn., Oct. 20, 1850.

Friends: — I have read the call for the Convention at Worcester, "to consider the Rights, Relations, and Duties of Woman," with no common interest. It meets with my warmest approbation and heartiest wishes for its success. Would that I could be with you to hear your words of wisdom. Since this is denied me I cannot refrain from adding my mite of influence and sympathy. Would that I were competent to teach. This subject would surely make me eloquent. If it is treated openly, freely, fearlessly, as we have every reason to suppose it will be, then indeed will it be instructive to listen, and much good will result therefrom. But if it be only an attempt to patch up the things that be, to amputate a few of the prominent excrescences, without treating the malady systematically, it will be found a tangled question, and very little benefit will be realized from this effort. I can but hope that every one who attends this Convention will divest herself as much as possible of the powerful influence of a false public opinion which permeates and discolors all our rights and relations in society. We have no need of hostile weapons. We wish only to divest ourselves of prejudice, and to be open to the truth. Our motto should be, "What is true?"

Woman's rights are the rights of a human being, and must never be reduced below this standard. Any system or theory erected on any other platform must necessarily be false. Then we must begin fundamentally with the question, what are the rights, relations, and duties of a human being? This is well answered in the Declaration of American Independence, when qualified as follows: "A right to life," — including a right to the earth and natural elements, "Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." These are evidently our first great rights, and must be kept inviolate. This, then, seems to be the great object of this Convention, viz., to inquire whether these rights are respected at present? and if not, what change is necessary in society in order that these rights shall be respected?

Have we now the right to live? Is not our occupation, locality, immediate health — in a word, is not our very life in the hands and at the disposal of others! A right to life implies, not only a right to the means of a livelihood, but a right to one's own person and property. Liberty and the pursuit of happiness certainly imply a choice of location, occupation, and self-government. Hence, any law which makes woman a slave, is unjust and oppressive, and ought to be repealed immediately. Any law which deprives woman of the ownership and disposal of her own person and property at all times, is unjust, and should be repealed. Any law which separates representation from taxation, is unjust, and should be repealed. Any law which recognizes a difference between man and woman should be forthwith repealed. All law should be made without regard to sex, either in the governor or the governed.

With these few fundamental propositions, which must be the starting point, I leave the subject, without attempting to point out the offensive laws which do now oppress and degrade us below the standard of human beings. Abler minds will, I trust, follow out the subject in all its bearings, and come to conclusions which will be honorable to themselves and us. Success attend you. Farewell.

MARIA L. VARNEY.

[We print the following letters, which were not acted upon by the Convention, not because we agree with the views presented in them, but because we think the subject discussed — *Woman's Dress* — an all important one. There is neither time nor room to treat it fitly now; no doubt future Conventions will devote to it the thorough consideration which it merits. For ourselves we will simply express the hope, — that in discarding the inconvenient, unhealthy, untidy, graceless attire now conventionally appropriated to women by the fashions of civilized States, reformers will not feel driven to adopt the stiff, awkward, heavy, ill-shaped costumes in which men are encased. We are well convinced, that a Style of Dress can be invented, far more convenient for use, more easily modified to meet changes in circumstances, climate, or duties, and every way more appropriate and beautiful than any now worn by either sex. — Pub. Com.]

From Mildred A. Spafard. New York, Sept. 2, 1850.

My Dear Madam: — I take the liberty of enclosing you an extract from a long epistle I have just received from Helene Marie Weber. It speaks of matters which are interesting to us all, and I ask of you the favor to submit it to the Convention.

Very few of our American women seem to understand Miss Weber; they confound her with the Dudevants and others of that erratic order. This is doing her great injustice. Miss Weber, as a literary character, 76 stands in the front rank of essayists. She has labored zealously in behalf of her sex, as

her numerous tracts on subjects of reform bear testimony. No writer of the present age, perhaps, has done more, with the pen, to exalt woman, than she has by her powerful essays. My personal knowledge of Miss Weber enables me to speak confidently of her private character. It is utterly false that she is a "masculine woman." Her deportment is strictly lady-like, modest, and unassuming; and her name is beyond reproach. She is a protestant of the Lutheran order — exemplary in all her religious duties, and unaffectedly pious and benevolent.

She is, as you are doubtless aware, a practical agriculturist. The entire business of her farm is conducted by herself; and she has been eminently successful. She has proved the capacity of woman for business pursuits. Her success in this vocation is a practical argument, worth a thousand theories.

I find no fault with her because she dresses like a man. Her dress has not changed her nature. Those who censure her for abandoning the female dress, make up their judgment without proper reflection. She has violated no custom of her own country, and has merely acted according to the honest dictates of her mind. "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"

Miss Weber is now about twenty-five years of age. She is a ripe scholar, and has a perfect command of the English language. I am decidedly of opinion that her visit among us will do a vast deal of good to our cause, and we ought to give her a hearty welcome when she comes. I can assure our most rigid friends that they will all be reconciled to her attire on five minutes' acquaintance.

With my best wishes for the success of the cause, and for harmony in the Convention, I remain, dear madam,

Yours sincerely, MILDRED A. SPAFARD.

Extract of a Letter from H. M. Weber. La Pelouse, 3d Aug., 1850.

The delicate state of my dear mother's health requires my constant attendance here, and places it entirely out of my power to visit America during the present season. I feel the disappointment most severely, ⁷⁷ because I had promised myself the pleasure of interchanging greetings with our co-laborers in America, at the proposed Worcester Convention, and, if agreeable to them, to deliver a short lecture on several subjects in which I feel a deep interest. Though I have a horror of speech-making, I deem a public explanation of my motives for exchanging the female for the male garb, to be a necessary preliminary to my favorable reception by your countrywomen. The newspapers, both of America and England, have done me great injustice. While they have described my apparel with the minute accuracy of professional tailors, (to which I have not the slightest objection, so

long as they continue to report it accurately,) they have seen fit to charge me with a disposition to undervalue the female sex and to identify myself with the other. Such vile calumnies are extremely annoying to me. I have never wished to be an Iphis — never, for a moment, affected to be anything but a woman; and I do not think any one ever mistook me for a man, unless it may have been some stranger who slightly glanced at me while passing along the street or the highway. I adopted male apparel as a measure of convenience in my business, and not through any wish to appear eccentric, or to pass for one of the male sex; and it has ever been my rule to dress with the least possible ostentation consistent with due neatness.* I have never had cause to regret my adoption of male attire, and never expect to return to a female toilette. I am fully aware, however, that my dress will probably prejudice the great body of our friends in America against me, while present impressions on that subject exist; and it was with the view of allaying this feeling that I wished to address the assembly at Worcester. By this means I think I could satisfy any liberal-minded person, of either sex, that there is no moral or political principle involved in this question, and that a woman may, if she like, dress in male habiliments without injury to herself or others.

* Miss Weber usually wears a dress-coat and pantaloons of black cloth — on full dress occasions, a dark blue dress-coat with plain, flat, gilt buttons, and drab colored pantaloons. Her waistcoat is of buff cassimere, richly trimmed with plain, flat-surfaced, gold buttons, exquisitely polished; this is an elegant garment, and one which she wears to great advantage. Her clothes are all perfect in their fit, and of Paris make; and her figure is singularly well adapted to male attire. No gentleman makes a finer appearance. — M. A. Spafard.

This question I believe is not mooted in America. In the resolutions of the Ohio Convention, (which you sent me in May,) almost 78 every topic connected with woman's position is touched upon, except that of attire. Possibly it was intended to be embraced in the eighth resolution, under the general head of "social customs and institutions," but the allusion is entirely too vague to arrest attention. It can serve no useful purpose to keep this question in the background; it must come forward eventually. Those who suppose that woman can be "the political, social, pecuniary, and religious equal of man," without conforming to his dress, deceive themselves and mislead others who have no minds of their own. While the infinite superiority of the male dress, for all purposes of business and recreation, is universally conceded, it is absurd to argue that we should not avail ourselves of its advantages.

There are no well-founded objections to women dressing, as we term it, *en cavalier*. The only two I have heard are these: "To do so is contrary to law, both divine and human" — and "the male dress is *outré*, and less graceful than our own." These objections may be answered in a few words. The human statutes on this subject should be repealed, as they surely will be in due time; or be regarded as they now are in European States, as dead letters. The practice is *not* contrary to divine

law. The alleged prohibition, as contained in the fifth book of Moses, had reference to a religious custom of the Amorites; and was limited in its application to the children of Israel, who had, by Divine command, dispossessed that pagan nation of their territory, and destroyed their temples of idolatrous worship. The context will show two other prohibitions on this subject. In the eleventh and twelfth verses of the same chapter, (twenty-second of Deuteronomy,) it is forbidden to "wear garments of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together," and to "wear fringes" on the vesture. These prohibitions are all of the same character, and had an obvious reference to the ceremonies used by the pagans in their worship of idols. If one of these prohibitions be binding upon nations of the present age, the others are not less so. To the second objection, it may be said, that beauty and grace in matters of dress are determined by no rules; and if the fashion of men's clothes be awkward, it can easily be improved. Women who prefer the gown should, of course, consult their own pleasure by continuing to wear it; while those whose preference is a male dress, ought not to be blamed for adopting it.

I close this homily by recording my predication, that in ten years time, male attire will be generally worn by the women of most civilized countries, and that it will precede the consummation of many great measures which are deemed to be of paramount importance.

I hope to have it in my power to visit America next year. Thanks to the invention of steam! a voyage across the ocean is now a mere bagatelle. I have not much of the spirit of travel remaining. My agricultural pursuits confine me at home nearly the whole year; but my captivity is a delightful one.

Affectionately yours, H. M. WEBER.

[Several other letters were received at too late a period to be presented to the Convention, which the limits of this pamphlet compel us to omit. — Pub. Com.]

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