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Reformatory.

WOMEN'S CONVENTION IN INDIANA.

DUBLIN, Wayne Co., Ia.,
October 14, 1851.

DEAR GARRISON:

I am in a Woman's Rights Convention, called by men and women of Indiana, to consider the true relations between men and women, and the position and rights of women. It is attended by a goodly number of both sexes. Hannah Hyatt, of Winchester, is President; Amanda Way, of Winchester, Vice-President; Lydia Davis, of Economy, and Henry Hiatt, of Dublin, are Secretaries. A Business Committee was appointed; and they have introduced the following series of Resolutions:

Resolved, That it is a self-evident truth, that all human beings are created equal, and that whatever natural right belongs to one human being, belongs to all.

Resolved, That all usages, customs, laws and institutions, which deprive any person, or class of persons, of the exercise of a natural right, are wrong and ruinous to the order, harmony, and best interests of individuals and of the social state.

Resolved, That the only justifiable end of social institutions and customs, is the true and perfect development of each and every human being on whom they are made to bear; that this end is defeated when any persons, or class of persons, are deprived of the exercise of any natural right; and that it is our duty to labor for the reformation or destruction of all laws, customs or institutions, which prevent the exercise of a natural right.

Resolved, That the interests and destinies of men and women are one and the same; that whatever laws, customs or institutions, for good or evil, on either sex, must bear, equally for good or evil, on the other; that God hath joined together the two sexes, in sympathy, interest and destiny; and all attempts to separate them, in the relations and transactions of life, are unnatural, and must prove alike ruinous to both.

Resolved, That men and women are equally dependant on each other; and whatever precept, law, custom or institution tends to bring woman into an *unequal* dependance on and subjection to man, is unjust and unnatural, and ought to be altered or abolished.

Resolved, That all laws and usages are wrong, and without any binding force, which prevent women from an equal enjoyment with men of the means to acquire wealth and independence; of an equal voice in making and administering the civil laws under which they are to live, and to which they are to be held amenable; and of an equal participation in the privileges of physical, intellectual, social and moral improvement.

Resolved, That while women should take the lead in asserting and maintaining their rights, and removing the disabilities under which they exist, men are equally bound to give their active and efficient co-operation in this work of reform.

There were other resolutions, but I cannot well get at them to copy them. Those I send—the two last—are altered in the wording a little from the copy. In substance, they are the same. An excellent, but short address was made by the President, holding up to view the importance and bearing of the movement, and the inseparable connexion between the interests and destiny of men and women, and the iniquity and ruinous consequences of separating them in the affairs of Church and State, in educational or pecuniary transactions. An address from Mrs. Wilson, and letters, were received by the Convention, and read. One of the letters has been copied by one of the Secretaries, and handed to me with the request to insert it in the Liberator; she also requests that you would insert whatever other proceedings are to be contained in the Bugle, which are not in this letter.

An allusion was made to slavery, and to the condition of the colored women of the land, bond and free, and to the conduct of Robert D. Owen, who, while pretending to go for the rights of *white* women, lends his influence to the enslavement of the *colored* women; *when some one called the speaker to order!!* Then and there was it settled, that so far as this movement is concerned in Indiana, the rights and condition of one and a half million of women in slavery are not to be considered. For myself, my abolition shall go where I go, and I will stand in no condition in the universe where I cannot speak for the slave, men and women, and against all, which, in *my* opinion, enslaves them.

Much was said against woman's taking part in creating and administering governments. It would, it was said, degrade her to hold office or to vote, and diminish her influence over man, as a wife, mother, daughter, and sister. I was replied, that, if voting and holding office would degrade women, the same would equally degrade men; whatever is injurious to the moral nature, delicacy and refinement of women, is ruinous to the moral nature, delicacy and refinement of men; that men are under obligations to be refined, pure, delicate, chaste, as well as women, and to the same extent, and women mayas well say to men, 'keep away from the ballot box, and from office, for it degrades you and unfits you to be our companions,' as men to say this to the women. It was thought, too, that whatever destroyed the influence of women over men, destroyed the influence of men over women. Let the women say to the men, 'voting and office-holding make you coarse, vulgar, brutal, disgusting, and unfit you to be our husbands, and the fathers of our children, and our companions in the home circles, as truly as, you say, they unfit us to be your wives, and your companions.'

One man, DOCTOR CURTIS, a Methodist class leader, came forward and undertook to show that God, in the Bible, had, in all disputes, placed the *final appeal* in men, over women, and that if women refused to submit to the desires of the men, as husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers, it was their right to compel them to submit by *brute force*. This same *Christian* Doctor Curtis, (as he is called,) was the only person in the Convention who appealed to the spirit of Rowdyism, whose language was low, indecent, and unbecoming the subject and the occasion, and appealed to the Bible to justify the subjection of woman to man, by '*holding her*' by brute violence. At the same time, he decided that the Bible authorized woman to influence man *only* by moral suasion. Man is to rule woman by violence; woman, man, by love, kindness, and long-suffering submission. So says the Bible-Doctor Curtis, the Class Leader in Methodism, being witness.

The Convention was called for two days:—the last half day was devoted exclusively to the consideration of woman in slavery as a *chattel*. It was a thrilling meeting. A Committee was appointed to get up another Convention, and to forward the cause. It has been a most important meeting, and will result in great good. HENRY C. WRIGHT.

LETTERS FROM MRS. E. A. LUKENS.

NEW GARDEN, Oct. 2, 1851.

TO THE WOMAN'S CONVENTION IN INDIANA:

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—When the great German, Goethe, was asked if the world would be better if the Golden Age were restored, he answered, 'A synod of good women shall decide.' Now, could his spirit look down upon us, he would see these 'synods,' of which he spoke, perhaps, prophetically, assembling all over the land, not to restore an age of semi-barbarism, but to hasten the advent of a new and far more golden era, when there will be no dangerous pilgrimage, of years in duration, to win back the Holy Sepulchre, but a far more divine and sacred inheritance shall have been sought and found, namely—the free, undisputed exercise and cultivation of every gift, power and capacity with which God has endowed woman.

Speaking thus, I mean, of course, to include all the *rights* which pertain to human beings. If man is 'born with a ballot-box in his hand,' so also is woman; and the plea of 'difference,' 'inferiority,' &c., has just as little meaning, in the mouths of those who make it, as natural pertinence and force. If there *are* any such things as 'rights,' they belong to *all*, by virtue of our *humanity*, and are neither confined nor graduated by superiority of any kind. If the privilege of voting had been limited to those men who are *strong* in mind and morals, the United States would, perchance, never have had Fillmore for a President; Indiana's vast and beautiful prairies would not now be lying under the frown of God, for having cast out his free-born and innocent children.

It is perverse and puerile to raise the cry, that we make war upon domestic life—that we would destroy its natural order and attraction, by taking away its true presiding genius, Woman, to mingle in the coarse and noisy scenes of political strife. Is not the aid of man equally important in this, as in all other departments of human life, and would he not resent the imputation of neglecting, necessarily, his duties at home, in the exercise of his functions as a citizen and member of the great human family? We would give to every man and woman, instead of a home without dignity, trust and understanding, a *temple*, wherein they might worship a God of light, liberty and justice. By worship, I mean the complete fulfilment of the designs of such a God. Long enough has the experiment been tried of a *government* in which woman is not allowed to participate. We see that it must, inevitably, as man himself would, without her influence, sink into utter brutishness. She has, naturally, quick sympathy and strong humanity, which ought to be developed in the glorious light of freedom, poured out over a suffering world. Her nature, her gentleness, love and pity, should blend with the whole economy of society. She is of the nature of volatile salts—to be lost unless closely bottled; so people seem to suppose. Her own little circle would lose nothing by the infinite expansion and rational use of all her gifts. 'Man and woman are only the two halves of one thought,' says Miss Fuller, in a somewhat obscure, but true and expressive phrase. He cannot outlaw her without jeopardizing his own rights, and deeply impairing himself. Cramped, maimed, deformed, as she may be, she still rules his destiny. Woman is outlawed, and man is every where suffering the penalty. She is man's lawful prize, which he is at liberty to seize and use, so long as she ministers to his passions and convenience, and thrown away to perish when she does so no longer. To be sure, society holds out to her a grudging sort of protection, called marriage, which she, also, is at liberty to seize, if she can; but even this protects her only as the property of her husband. A free and dignified independence can be had only by forcibly severing it, and leaving, at all risks, the place society assigns her. Many have had the courage to do this, and found that they had heads and right arms of their own, which served them a far better purpose than those for which so many women are ready to barter their freedom and dignity.

Sisters of Indiana! accept my heartfelt sympathy in the work you have undertaken. It is well for the female pioneers of a new country to call down God's blessings on their equal labors, by an early claim to an *equality of rights*.

Believe me, yours, *sincerely* yours,
E. A. LUKENS.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION,

AT WORCESTER.

The following letter from Mrs. ELIZABETH C. STANTON, of New York, was read by Mrs. COE:—

LETTER FROM MRS. ELIZABETH C. STANTON.

SENECA FALLS, Saturday, Oct. 11, 1851.

DEAR PAULINA:

Many accuse us of being too severe on the fallen Adams of our race; for surely, say they, there is nothing antagonistic in the relation between Man and Woman. We all know that the interests of the whole human family are identical; that no injustice is perpetrated that does not react, in some way, upon the head of the oppressor. But who looks at his true, substantial, permanent interest? Are we not like grown up children, wholly absorbed with the temporary, the transient? To me, there is just as much antagonism in the present position of Man and Woman, as in that of master and slave, capitalist and laborer, teacher and pupil, parent and child. How abusive and oppressive may Man be, in all these relations, and will ever be, so long as physical force and selfish interest take the place of moral appeal and universal benevolence! We are still in the physical force dispensation, when might makes right, and Man is but living out the law of his lower nature, in preying upon the weak and defenceless. But we do not blame him, nor hold him responsible; he is blindly following his interests, and not his reason. It is not in the deliberate counsel of his will, deeming it for our highest good, that he has enacted the unjust laws that disgrace *his* statute books; it is not by direct fiat that he has assigned us the social position we now occupy. No, he has not thought of us, nor made any provision in all his arrangements for us, but as we are incidentally connected with his pleasure or profit. He has merely sought out some strong position, and there entrenched himself. True, prompted by feelings of chivalry, he has occasionally broken a lance, given some flaming Fourth of July toast at the mouth of a cannon, or written a sonnet in favor of the ideal Woman; but the real one he has regarded very much as the wolf does the lamb, or the eagle the hare he carries to his eyrie. And even so with Woman; she in her turn oppresses her children and hirelings. Now, what we want is protection; not for iron, wool, or cotton, but for humanity. We need a righteous civil Government—a Government to protect the weak against the strong—to protect Woman, not from the wild beasts or the devouring elements, but from her self-styled protector, Man. Such a Government can be formed only by the due infusion of the feminine element into our national councils. Man starts up in alarm at the bare mention of Woman's Rights. He seems to think that there is a fixed number of rights for the whole human family, laid down in some great reservoir, and that in proportion as you increase the claimants, you decrease the hoard of those already in possession. Native-born Americans! do you not put your votes into the ballot-box just as fully and certainly now as you did before you admitted foreigners to share in the right to the elective franchise? Do you not enjoy your religious opinions just as well since you have allowed Quakers and Baptists to enjoy theirs? And think you the property you inherit, and the wages you earn, would be less valuable to you, if every woman in the land had the same right to hers?

We have already gone far enough in our reform to see that there are two essential requisites in the condition of those women who are to carry it on, namely, health and wealth.

First, Health. Napoleon said there was no such thing as making a soldier of a sick man.' Neither can we have high-minded, noble, virtuous, brave women, so long as ignorant mothers and Parisian fools are to decide on the size and cut of the frame-work. We have but little to hope from a generation of women, whose vital organs are forced to perform their revolutions in one-half the space required by Nature. Liberal dame! she has been gross enough to make the manifestations of mind and matter harmonize, and notions of freedom cannot be infused into hearts that have no room to beat. A woman with lapped ribs and a diseased liver may make a religious enthusiast, a gloomy misanthrope, or a sentimental voluptuary; but not a reformer of stern virtue—clear in judgment and courageous in action. There is now a demand for a new type of womanhood. We are daily assuming new positions—taking upon us new duties, and claiming the exercise of our civil and political rights. Let us see to it that we fit ourselves for the places of trust we design to fill.

Second, Wealth. Money is power. To bring this question before the people, we must have our conventions, agents and papers; and funds are needful to do this. Many have never heard of this question of Woman's Rights, and many more, from a want of an intelligent understanding of it, have met it with a sneer. From the time of Judas down to our own day, man has been remarkable for carrying the purse, and many a woman, in her hour of need, has been betrayed by its golden charms. Now, man will not, of course, help along a cause that he blindly supposes hostile to his own interests. So, what money we have, we must make; and the question is, how are we to get this last essential requisite?

I answer, by a change of employments. The mass of women in this country support themselves, and although they work a life long, and, as a general thing, sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, but very few have, by their own industry, amassed fortunes. And why? Because the employments they have chosen are unprofitable, slavish and destructive. In the Bill of Rights, in our glorious Declaration of Independence—rights which our fathers decided belonged to all Humanity—we find a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now, if in this pursuit we take possession of all those profitable posts, where the duties are light, which have heretofore been monopolized by man, we shall be only taking what belongs to us. It is time we opened our eyes, and dived sufficiently deep into the abstruse science of surveying to be able to define at least the boundaries of our own sphere, and we shall no doubt find it extends somewhat beyond the kitchen-door or garden-gate. Yes, in proportion as we emerge from the thraldom of ignorance and slavery, we shall find its limits gradually receding. If, in the pursuit of happiness, we take possession of all the post-offices, daguerreotype rooms, telegraph offices, book, china, silk, lace stores, &c. &c., we have an abundant excuse for what seems the beginning of a most aggressive warfare, in the fact that we have heretofore been crowded by these lordly monopolizers almost off the footstep. They have not only taken possession of the earth and the fullness thereof, but they have created a public sentiment, making Woman a kind of connecting link between themselves and the angels, and assigned her a sphere somewhere mid earth and heaven. But we, finding ourselves here, and unfortunately endowed with animal wants, quite like those of man, and having been provided with no chart or compass to find that better land, and in search of it have involved ourselves in more troubles than ever the children of Israel experienced in their forty years' wandering, have at length decided to come to a dead halt, survey the ground, and retake, if possible, some of our lost possessions. On looking round, my eye rests on one of those moving palaces on our Hudson River. Now, what is a captain on one of these steamers called upon to do, that a woman might not do? In case any passengers, for disorderly conduct, are to be put ashore, why, the captain merely gives the orders, and the hands execute. In the discharge of any special duties of this sort, we might with the same propriety avail ourselves of the superior muscular power of hardy men, as we now do of their *superior wisdom* in discharging for us the high duties which belong to the exercise of the right to the elective franchise. Then there is the conductor on the railroad; a most enviable post, plenty of air, exercise, and two dollars a day. Is not that better than starving on sixpence? But, say you, these employments are too public for Women, inconsistent with true delicacy and refinement. Talk of bread and not delicacy to the starving. So long as life, with many, is but one long struggle to keep the soul in its clay tenement, if any woman has the *bad taste* to prefer a pleasant sail on a beautiful river, or a swift trip on a train of cars, to stitching pantaloons in a garret, or cooking good dinners over a hot stove in a cellar, pray allow her, in the pursuit of her happiness, the same freedom of choice you claim for yourselves. Suppose, in return for all Man's disinterested benevolence in bounding our sphere in a nut-shell, we prescribe one for him. We say, Shame on you, with your noble brows, broad shoulders, brawny arms, to stand there behind a counter, selling a yard of tape, a child's dress, a woman's garter, or a baby's shoe! Why do you not shoulder your axe, and go off into the interminable forests of our Western Territories, and lay at your feet the lofty cedars and oaks that have so long waited your coming? There, mid tall trees, vast rivers, and plains, in communion with great Nature, by hardship, honest toil, and a healthy enterprise, learn what it is to be a man. We hear much about the designs of the Creator. I have an idea that we can understand his designs quite as well as man can. They say we were all intended for mothers, 'to sit in the shade,' to be delicate and helpless, and to cheer man with our soft smiles in the hard labors of life. The thirty thousand sewing women in New York city would, no doubt, gladly seek some shady nook, where they might enjoy elegant leisure, perfect peace and rest, and they would smile sweetly, too, upon the band of chivalric men who would supply their every want. But if the Women of our land are to be exempt from incessant toil, the All-Wise must have intended that every man should be a worker, out in the open air, in the broad sunshine, creating wealth, not merely exchanging it, digging it out from the bowels of the earth, and turning the vast plains, mighty rivers, and majestic forests of the new world into living gold.

Yours, truly, E. C. STANTON.

The following is the letter of Hon. HORACE MANN:—

LETTER FROM HORACE MANN.

WEST NEWTON, Thursday, Sept. 18, 1851.

MISS L. STONE:

DEAR MADAM—There are many reasons why I should be glad to accept your invitation, and some which, as it seems to me, make it inexpedient to do so.

Among the first, for accepting, is the fact, that I agree with you in many of your views most cordially. But there are some points where I suppose I dissent: and, of course, the points of difference are always thought most of, as a blot on a sheet of paper attracts more attention than all the rest of its surface, however pure.

I am just completing a Lecture whose subject is 'Woman,' and which is designed as a companion to my 'Thoughts for Young Men.' Should it ever be published, I hope there are some things in it which you would not disapprove.

I shall most cordially labor for the objects you have so much at heart—the elevation of Woman and the improvement of her condition—though for the present, at least, I think it better that I should labor in my sphere, and you in yours.

Yours, very truly,
HORACE MANN.

The following is the letter of HENRY WARD BEECHER, who had been invited to address the Convention:—

LETTER FROM HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 4, 1851.

MY DEAR MADAM:

If I had leisure that I could possibly spare, I should be happy to be present at the Convention of which you speak, as *a learner*; to make myself acquainted more particularly with the aims and the spirit of the objects which you pursue with such unremitting zeal. But I do not feel at all qualified to speak. My own mind is not *settled* on many subjects which engage the attention of many most excellent and highly esteemed persons in public life.

The "Liberator" response to Indiana's convention newspaper clip.

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