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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

A LECTURE

ON

WOMAN'S RIGHTS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PEOPLE'S SUNDAY MEETING,

IN COCHITUATE HALL, BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19TH, 1851.

BY

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BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY J. P. MENDUM, INVESTIGATOR OFFICE.

1886.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

MY FRIENDS:—The observing and reflecting mind that casts its vision far beyond the panoramic scenes of every day life, must perceive that our present age is fast ripening for the most important changes in the affairs of man. The desire for freedom has shaken Europe to its very centre. The love of Liberty has convulsed the nations like the mighty throes of an earthquake. The oppressed are struggling against the oppressors. Kings and priests are called upon to give an account of their stewardship, for man no longer believes in the divine right of force and fraud.

Yet great as these signs of the times are, they are not new. From the time of absolute despotism to the present hour of comparative freedom, the weak had ever to struggle against the strong, right against might. But a new sign has appeared in our social zodiac, prophetic of the most important changes, pregnant with the most beneficial results that have ever taken place in the annals of human history. And to him who can trace the various epochs in human life, it is as cheering as it is interesting to mark the onward movement of the race towards a higher state of human progression—that while nations strive against nations, people against people, to attain the same amount of freedom already possessed in this country, WOMAN is rising in the full dignity of her being to claim the recognition of *her* rights. And though the first public demonstration has been here, already has the voice of Woman in behalf of her sex been

carried, as it were, on the wings of lightning to all parts of Europe, whose echo has brought back the warmest and most heartfelt responses from our sisters there.

Among the many encouraging letters received at the recent Woman's Convention at Worcester, there was one exceeding all the rest in the soul-stirring interest it created. It spoke, through the dungeon walls, the cheering and encouraging words of sympathy from two incarcerated women of Paris, to the hearts of their sisters in America. The cause of their imprisonment was their practically claiming the fulfillment of that glorious motto, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," destined to shake the thrones, break the sceptres, and bow down the mitres of Europe. One of them presented herself as candidate for Mayor of an Arrondissement, the other (to the honor of the genuine Republicans of Paris, be it said,) was nominated by the Industrial Union, consisting of two hundred and twenty Societies, as a member of the Assembly. For these offences they were cast into prison. Oh! France, where is the glory of thy revolutions? Is the blood thy children poured out on the altar of freedom so effaced, that thy daughters dare not lift their voices in behalf of their rights? But so long as might constitutes right, every good cause must have its martyrs. Why, then, should woman not be a martyr to *her* cause?

But how can we wonder that France, governed as she is by Russian and Austrian despotism, does not recognize the higher laws of humanity in the recognition of the rights of woman, when even here, in this far-famed land of freedom and of knowledge, under a republic that has inscribed on its banner the great truth that all men are created free and equal, and are endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,—a Declaration wafted like the voice of Hope on the breezes of heaven to the remotest parts of earth, to whisper freedom and equality to the oppressed and down trodden children of men,—a Declaration that lies

at the very foundation of human freedom and happiness, yet in the very face of that eternal truth, woman, the mockingly so called "better half of man," has yet to plead for her rights, nay, for her life. For what is life without liberty? and what is liberty without equality of rights; and as for the pursuit of happiness, she is not allowed to pursue any line of life that might promote it; she has only thankfully to accept what man, in the plenitude of his wisdom and generosity, decides as proper for her to do, and that is, what he does not choose to do himself.

Is woman, then, not included in that Declaration? Answer, ye wise men of the nation, and answer truly; add not hypocrisy to your other sins. Say she is not created free and equal, and therefore, (for the sequence follows on the premises,) she is not entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But you dare not answer this simple question. With all the audacity arising from an assumed superiority, you cannot so libel and insult humanity as to say she is not; and if she is, then what right has man, except that of might, to deprive her of the same rights and privileges he claims for himself?

And why, in the name of reason and justice, I ask, why should she not have the same rights as man? Because she is woman? Humanity recognizes no sex—mind recognizes no sex—virtue recognizes no sex—life and death, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, recognize no sex. Like him she comes involuntarily into existence; like him she possesses physical, mental, and moral powers, on the proper cultivation of which depends her happiness; like him she is subject to all the vicissitudes of life; like him she has to pay the penalty for disobeying Nature's laws, and far greater penalties has she to suffer from ignorance of her far more complicated nature than he; like him she enjoys or suffers with her country. Yet she is not recognized as his

equal. In the laws of the land she has no rights; in government she has no voice, and in spite of another principle recognized in this Republic, namely, that taxation without representation is tyranny, woman is taxed without being represented; her property may be consumed by heavy taxes, to defray the expenses of that unholy and unrighteous thing called war, yet she cannot give her veto against it. From the cradle to the grave, she is subject to the power and control of man,—father, guardian, and husband. One conveys her like some piece of merchandize over to the other.

At marriage she loses her entire identity. Her being is said to be merged in her husband. Has Nature there merged it? Has she ceased to exist or feel pleasure and pain? When she violates the laws of her being, does he pay the penalty? When she breaks the laws of the land, does he suffer the punishment? When his wants are supplied, is it sufficient to satisfy the wants of her nature? Or when, at his nightly orgies, in the grog-shop, the oyster cellar, or the gaming table, he spends the means she helped by her co-operation and economy to accumulate, and she awakens to penury and destitution, will it supply the wants of her children to tell them that owing to the superiority of man she has no redress by law, and that as her being was merged in him, so also ought theirs to be?

But it will be said that the husband provides for the wife, or, in other words, he is bound to feed, clothe, and shelter her. Oh! the degradation of that idea! Yes, he keeps her; so he does his horse. By law both are considered his property; both can, when the cruelty of the owner compels them to run away, be brought back by the strong arm of the law; and, according to a still extant law of England, both may be led by the halter to the market place and sold. This is humiliating, indeed, but nevertheless true, and the sooner these things are known and understood, the better for humanity. It is

no fancy sketch. I know that some endeavor to throw the mantle of romance over the subject, and treat woman like some ideal existence not subject to the ills of life. Let 'hose deal [in fancy that have nothing better to deal in. We have to do with sober, sad realities, with stubborn facts.

But again, it will be said, the law presumes the husband would be kind, affectionate, and that he would provide for and protect the wife; but I ask, what right has the law to presume at all on the subject? What right has the law to intrust the interest and happiness of one being to the power of another? And if this merging of interests is so indispensable, then why should woman always be on the losing side? Turn the tables; let the identity and interest of the husband be merged in the wife, think you she would act less generous towards him than he towards her?—that she would be incapable of as much justice, disinterested devotion, and abiding affection, as him?

Oh! how grossly you misunderstand and wrong her nature. But we desire no such undue power over man. It would be as wrong in her as it now is in him; all we claim is our own rights. We have nothing to do with individual man, be he good or bad, but with the laws that oppress woman. Bad and unjust laws must in the nature of things make man so too. If he acts better, if he is kind, affectionate, and consistent, it is because the kindlier feelings instilled by a mother, kept warm by a sister, and cherished by a wife, will not allow him to carry out the barbarous laws against woman; but the estimation she is generally held in, is as degrading as it is unjust.

Not long ago, I saw an account of two offenders brought before a Justice in New York; one, for stealing a pair of boots, for which offence he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment; the other, for an assault and battery on his wife, for which offence he was let off with a reprimand from the Judge! With my principles

I am entirely opposed to punishment. I hold to reforming the erring, and removing the causes, as being much more efficient, as well as just, than punishing; but the Judge showed the comparative value he set on these two kinds of property. But you must remember that the boots were taken by a stranger, while the wife was insulted by her legal owner. Yet it will be said that such degrading cases are few. For the sake of humanity I hope they are, but as long as woman is wronged by unequal laws, so long will she be degraded by man.

We can hardly have an adequate idea how all-powerful law is in forming public opinion, in giving tone and character to the mass of society. To illustrate this point, look at that inhuman, detestable law, written in human blood, signed and sealed with life and liberty, that eternal stain on the statute books of this country, the Fugitive Slave Law. Think you that before its passage you could have found any in the free States, except a few politicians in the market, base enough to desire such a law? No, no! Even those that took no interest in the subject would have shrunk from so barbarous a thing; but no sooner is it passed, than the ignorant mass, the rabble of the self-styled Union Safety Committee, found out we were a law-loving and law-abiding people. Such is the magic power of law; hence the necessity to guard against bad ones, and hence also the reason why we call on the nation to remove the legal shackles from woman.

Set her politically and civilly free, and it will have a more beneficial effect on that still greater tyrant she has to contend with, public opinion. Carry out the Republican principle of universal suffrage, or strike it from your banner, and substitute freedom and power to one half of society, and submission and slavery to the other. Give women, then, the elective franchise. Let married women have the same right to property that man has; for whatever the difference in their respective occupa-

tions, the duties of the wife are as indispensable and far more arduous than the husband's. Why, then, should the wife, at the death of her husband, not be his heir to the same extent that he is to her?

In this legal inequality there is involved another wrong. When the wife dies, the husband is left in the undisturbed possession of all, and the children are left with him. No change is made, no stranger intrudes on his home and his affliction; but when the husband dies, not only is she, as is too often the case, deprived of all or at best receives but a mere pittance, but strangers assume authority denied to the wife and mother. The sanctuary of affliction must be desecrated by executors, everything must be ransacked and assessed, lest she should steal something out of her own house, and, to cap the climax, the children are taken from her and placed under guardians. When he dies poor, no guardian is required; the children are left with the mother to care and toil for them as best she may; but when anything is left for the maintenance and education of the children, then it must be placed in the hands of strangers for safe keeping, lest the mother might defraud them. The whole care and bringing up of the children are left with the mother, and safe they are in her hands; but a few hundred or thousand dollars cannot be intrusted with her.

But it will be said, that in case of a second marriage, the children must be protected in their possession. Does that reason not hold as good in his case? Oh! no! for when he marries again he still retains his identity and power to act, but she becomes merged once more into a mere non-entity, and therefore the first husband must rob her to prevent the second from doing it. But we say, make the laws regulating marriage, if *any* are required at all, equal for both, and all these difficulties would be obviated. According to a late act, the wife has a right to the property she brings at marriage, or received in any way after marriage. Here is some pro-

vision for the favored few, but for the laboring many there is none. The mass of the people commence life with no other capital than the head, heart, and hand. To the result of this best of all capital, the wife has no right. If they are unsuccessful in married life, who suffers more the bitter consequences of poverty than the wife? But if successful, she cannot call a dollar her own. He may will every dollar (of his personal property) and leave her destitute and penniless, and she has no redress by law; and even when real estate is left, she receives but a life interest in a third part of it, and at her death she cannot leave it to any of her relations; it falls back even to the remotest of his relations.

This is law, but where is the justice of it? Well might we say, that laws were made to prevent, but not promote, the ends of justice. Or, in case of separation, why should the children be taken from the protecting care of the mother? Who has a better right to them than she? How much do fathers generally do towards the bringing them up? When he comes home from business, and the child is in good humor and handsome trim, he takes the little darling on his knee and plays with it; but when the wife, with the care of the whole household on her shoulders, with little or no help, was not able to put them in the best order and trim, how much does the father do towards it? Oh! no? Fathers like to have children good-natured, well-behaved, and comfortable; but how to put them in that desirable condition is out of their philosophy. Children always depend more on the tender, watchful care of the mother, than the father. Whether from nature, or habit, or both, the mother is more capable of administering to their health and comfort than the father, and therefore she has the best right to them; and where there is property, it ought to be divided equally between them with an additional provision from the father towards the maintenance and education of the children.

Much is said about the burdens and responsibilities of

married men. Responsibilities there are, if they only felt them; but as to burdens, what are they? The sole province of man seems to be centred in that one thing, attending to some business. I grant that owing to the present unequal and unjust reward for labor, some have to work too hard for a subsistence; but whatever his vocation, he has to attend to it as much before as after marriage. Look at your bachelors, and see if they do not strive as much for wealth, and attend as steadily to business as married men. No; the husband has little or no increase of burden, and every increase of comfort after marriage, while all the burdens, cares, pains, and penalties of married life fall entirely on the wife. How unjust and cruel, then, to have all the laws in his favor! If any difference ought to be made by law between husband and wife, reason, justice, and humanity, if their voices were heard, would dictate it in her favor.

It is high time, then, to denounce such gross injustice, to compel man by the might of right to give woman her political, legal, and social rights. Open to her all the avenues of emolument, distinction, and greatness; give her an object for which to cultivate her powers, and a fair chance to do so, and there will be no need to speculate as to her proper sphere. She will find her own sphere in accordance with her capacities, powers, and tastes; and yet she will be woman still. Her rights will not change, but strengthen, develope, and elevate her nature. Away with that folly that her rights would be detrimental to her character—that if she is recognized as the equal to man, she would cease to be woman!—Have *his* rights as a citizen of a republic, the elective franchise with all its advantages, so changed his nature that he has ceased to be a man? Oh! no! But woman could not bear such a degree of power; what has benefited him would injure her; what has strengthened him would weaken her; what prompted him to the performance of his duties would make her neglect hers!

Such is the superficial mode of reasoning, if it deserves that name, that is brought against the subject. It reminds me of two reasons given by a minister of Milton, on the North River. Having heard I had spoken on the rights of woman, he took the subject up the following Sunday, to prove that woman ought not to have equal rights with man,—first, because Adam was created before Eve; and secondly, man was compared to the fore wheel, and woman to the hind wheel of a wagon! These reasons are about as philosophical as any that can be brought on the subject. Man forgets, or he never knew, that our duties spring from our rights, and in proportion to the rights we enjoy are the duties we owe, and he that enjoys the most rights owes in return the most duties; though until now, while man enjoys the rights, he preaches all the duties to woman.

But, say some, in point of principle we grant it is right enough, but would you expose woman to the contact of rough, rude, drinking, swearing, fighting men, at the ballot-box? What a humiliating confession lies in this plea for keeping women in the back-ground! Is the brutality of some men, then, a reason why woman should be kept from her rights? If man, in his superior wisdom, cannot devise means to enable woman to deposit her vote without having her finer sensibilities shocked by such disgraceful conduct, then there is an additional reason, as well as necessity, why she should be there to civilize, refine, and purify him, even at the ballot-box. Yes, in addition to the principle of right, this is one of the reasons why women should participate in all the important duties of life; for, with all due respect to the other sex, she is the true civilizer of man. Without her, he is at best but a semi-barbarian. From my very heart do I pity the man who has grown up and lives without the benign influence of woman!

Even now, in spite of being considered the inferior, she has a most beneficial effect on man. Look at your

annual festivities where woman is excluded, and you will find more or less drunkenness, disorder, vulgarity, and excess, to be the order of the day. Compare them with such where woman is the equal participant with man, and you will find rational social enjoyment and decorum prevail; and if this is the case now,—and who can deny it?—how much more beneficial would be her influence, if, as the equal to man, she would take her stand by his side, to cheer, counsel, and aid him in the drama of life, in the Legislative Halls, in the Senate Chamber, in the Judge's chair, in the Jury box, on the Forum, in the Laboratory of the Arts and Sciences, and wherever duty would call her for the benefit of herself, her country, her race? In every step she would carry a humanizing influence.

And why, I would ask, should she not occupy all these stations? Why should one half of the race legislate for the other? In this country it is considered wrong for one nation to enact laws and enforce them against another. Does the same wrong not hold good of the sexes? Is she a being like him? Then she is entitled to the same rights, is she not? Then how can he legislate rightfully against a being whose nature he cannot understand, whose motives he cannot appreciate, and whose feelings he cannot realize? How can he sit in judgment and pronounce a verdict against a being so entirely different? No, there are no reasons for it, but there are deep-rooted, hoary-headed prejudices against her.

The main cause of them is, that pernicious falsehood propagated against her being, viz.: that she is inferior by her nature. Inferior in what? What has man ever done, that woman, under the same advantages, could not be made to do? In morals, bad as she is, she is generally considered his superior. In intellect, give her a fair chance before you pronounce a verdict against her. Cultivate that portion of the brain as much as

that of man's, and she will stand his equal, at least. Even now, where her mind has been called out at all, her intellect is as bright, as capacious, and as powerful as his.

Will you tell me, we have no Newtons, Shakespeares, and Byrons? Greater natural powers than even these possessed, have been destroyed in woman for want of proper culture—a just appreciation and reward for merit, as an incentive to exertion and freedom of action, without which, mind becomes cramped and stifled. It cannot expand under bolts and bars; and yet, under all these blighting, crushing circumstances, confined within the narrowest possible limit, trampled upon by prejudice and injustice, from her education and position forced to occupy herself almost exclusively with the most trivial affairs—in spite of all these difficulties, her intellect is as good as man's.

The few bright meteors in man's intellectual horizon could well be matched by woman, were she allowed to occupy the same elevated position. There is no need of naming the De Staels, the Rolands, the Somervilles, the Wollstonecrafts, the Wrights, the Fullers, the Martineaus, the Hemanses, the Sigourneys, the Jagiellos, and the many more of modern as well as ancient times, to prove her mental powers, her patriotism, her heroism, her self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of humanity—the eloquence that gushes from her pen or from her tongue. These things are too well known to require repetition. And do you ask for fortitude of mind, energy, and perseverance? Then look at woman under suffering, reverse of fortune, and affliction, when the strength and power of man has sunk to the lowest ebb, when his mind is overwhelmed by the dark waters of despair. She, like the tender plant, bent but not broken by the storms of life, not only upholds her own hopeful courage, but, like the tender shoots of the ivy, clings around the tempest-fallen oak, to bind up the

wounds, speak hope to his faltering spirit, and shelter him from the returning blast of the storm.

Wherein, then, is man so much superior that he must forever remain her master? In physical strength? Then allow me to say that the ox and the elephant is his superior! But, even on this point, why is she the feeble, sickly, suffering being we behold her? Look at her most defective, irrational education, and you will find the solution of the problem. Is the girl allowed to expand her limbs and chest in healthful exercise in the fresh breezes of heaven? Is she allowed to inflate her lungs and make the welkin ring with her cheerful expanded voice, like the boy? Whoever heard a girl committing such improprieties? Strongly developed limbs in a girl is unfashionable—a healthy, sound voice is vulgar—a ruddy glow on the cheek is coarse; and when life within her is so strong as to show itself in spite of bolts and bars, then she has to undergo a bleaching process, eat lemons and slate pencils—drink vinegar, and keep in the shade!

And do you know why these irrationalities are practiced? Because man wishes them so, and whatever he mostly admires in woman will she possess. That is the influence man has over woman, for she has been made to believe that she was created for his benefit only.—“It was not well for man to be alone,” therefore she was made as a plaything to pass away an idle hour, or a drudge to do his bidding; and until this falsehood is eradicated from her mind—until she feels that the necessities, services, and obligations of the sexes are mutual—that she is as independent of him as he is of her; that she is formed for the same aims and ends in life that he is;—until, in fact, she has all her rights equal with man, there will be no other object in her education except to get married, and what will best promote that desirable end will be cultivated in her.

When a boy arrives at the age of twelve or so, the

parents consult as to the kind of education that shall best fit him for all the purposes of life, to enable him to become a useful, respectable, independent member of society; and in accordance with the knowledge and means of the parents, and the capacities of the boy, so do they direct his education to make him a farmer, mechanic, merchant, lawyer, doctor; or, if the boy is not bright enough for any of these callings or professions, then he is destined for the ministry. But for what purpose is the girl educated? Do parents ever direct the education of a daughter for any such purposes? Oh! no! The rich man's daughter is taught to dance, to play on the piano, to draw and paint, (which she sometimes practices on her own face,) to speak a little bad French, &c., &c., not for the intrinsic value and beauty of these accomplishments, but to attract, and ultimately catch a beau and get married; for no sooner is she married, than these things are all laid aside as some idle things to be thought of no more. How many ladies past the age of fifty use these accomplishments from a pure love of them, and the gratification of the family around them? Among the musical nations of Europe you may find some, but here these accomplishments are acquired as a means to an end;—that end once obtained, there is no further use for them.

The working classes educate their daughters in accordance with what would now be required of them—namely, to cook a dinner good enough for a poor man, darn his stockings, sew on buttons, &c. Now these things are all very good in themselves; every girl ought to know them, and know them well, yet it is not enough for a healthy, happy, rational, intellectual life, but then it is all man now requires of woman. When he will look for higher and nobler mental accomplishments and powers, she will possess them.

Do you not yet understand what has made woman what she is? Then see what the sickly taste and perverted judgment of man now desires in woman. Not

health and strength of body and mind, but a pale, delicate face; hands too small to grasp a broom, for that were treason in a lady; a voice so sickly, sentimental, and depressed, as to hear what she says only by the moving of her half-parted lips; and, above all, that nervous sensibility that sees a ghost in every passing shadow—that beautiful diffidence that dare not take a step without the arm of a man to support her tender frame, and that shrinking (mock) modesty that faints at the mention of the leg of a table! I know there are many noble exceptions that see and deplore these irrationalities, but as a general thing it is so, or else why set up the hue-and-cry of “manish,” “unfeminine,” “out of her sphere,” &c., whenever she evinces any strength of body or mind, and takes part in anything deserving a rational being?

Oh! the crying injustice towards woman! She is crushed in every step she takes, and then insulted for being what a most pernicious education and corrupt public sentiment has made her. But there is no confidence in her powers nor principles. After last year's Convention of women, I saw an article in a Unitarian paper edited by the Rev. Mr. Bellows of New York, where, in reply to a correspondent upon the subject of woman's rights, in which he strenuously opposed her taking part in anything in public, he said, “Place woman unbonneted and unshawled before the public gaze, and what becomes of her modesty and her virtue?” In his benighted mind, the modesty and virtue of woman is but shawl deep, and, when in contact with the atmosphere, evaporates like chloroform. But I refrain to comment on the subject; it carries its own condemnation with it. When I read the article, I earnestly wished I had the ladies of his congregation before me to see whether they could realize the estimation their pastor held them in; yet I hardly know which sentiment was strongest in me, contempt for such foolish opinions, or pity for the writer; for a man that has such a degrading

opinion of woman, of the being that gave him life and sustenance—that sustained his helpless infancy with her ever-watchful care, and laid the very foundation for the little mind he may possess—of the being he took to his bosom as the partner of his joys and sorrows—the one whom, when he strove to win her affections, he courted as all such men court woman, like some divinity—such a man deserves our pity, for I cannot realize that man purposely and willingly degrades his mother, sister, wife, and daughter.

No! my better nature, my best knowledge and convictions forbid me to believe it. It is from ignorance, not malice, man acts as he does. In ignorance of her nature, and the interest and happiness of both, he conceived ideas, laid down rules, and enacted laws concerning her destiny and her rights. The same ignorance, strengthened by age, sanctified by superstition, ingrafted into his being by habit, makes him still carry them out to the detriment of his own as well as her happiness; for is he not the loser by it? Oh! how severely he suffers! Who can fathom the depth of suffering and misery to society from the subjugation and injury inflicted on woman? The race is elevated in excellence and power, or kept back in progression, in accordance with the scale of woman's position in society. The attainment of woman's co-equality with man, is, in itself, not the end, but the means towards a still higher elevation of the race, without which, it never can attain. But so firmly has prejudice closed the eyes of man to the light of truth, that though he feels the evils, he knows not the cause. Those that have their eyes already open to these facts, earnestly desire the restoration of her rights, to enable her to take her proper position in the scale of humanity. If all could see it, all would desire it as they desire their own happiness, for the interest and happiness of the sexes cannot be divided. Nature has too closely united them to permit one to

oppress the other with impunity, and therefore I can cast no more blame or reproach on man than on woman; for she, from habit based on the same errors, is as much opposed to her interest and happiness as he is. Yes, I will do man the justice to say, that I never mentioned the subject to any man capable of reflection, but he acknowledged the justice of it; and how long is it since any of us have advocated this righteous cause?—how long since any of us have come out of the darkness into the light of day? The longest period is but as it were since yesterday, and why? From the same reason that so many of both sexes are opposed to it yet—ignorance. Both have to be aroused from that deathly lethargy in which they slumber. The worse than Egyptian darkness must be dispelled from their minds before the pure rays of the sun can penetrate them.

And therefore, while I feel it my duty—aye, a painful duty, to point out the wrong done to woman and its evil consequences, and would do all in my power to aid in her deliverance, I can have no more ill feelings towards him than for the same errors towards her. Both are the victims of error and ignorance, and both suffer; and hence the necessity for active, earnest endeavors to enlighten their minds; hence the necessity to protest against the wrong and claim our rights, and in doing our duty we must not heed the taunts, ridicule, and stigma cast upon us. We must remember we have a crusade before us far holier and more righteous than led warrior to Palestine—a crusade not to deprive any one of his rights, but to claim our own; and as our cause is a better one, so also must be the means to achieve it. We therefore must put on the armor of charity, carry before us the banner of truth, and defend ourselves with the shield of right against the invaders of our liberty. And yet, like the knights of old, we must enlist in this holy cause with a disinterested devotion, energy, and determination never to turn back until we have conquered, not indeed to drive the Turk

from his possession, but to claim our rightful inheritance for his benefit as well as our own.

To achieve this great victory of right over might, woman has much to do. She must not sit idle and wait till man inspired by justice and humanity will work out her redemption. It has well been said, "He that would be free, himself must strike the blow." It is with nations as with individuals, if they do not strive to help themselves no one will help them. Man may, and in the nature of things will, remove the legal, political, and civil disabilities from woman, and recognize her as his equal with himself, and it will do much towards her elevation; but the laws cannot compel her to cultivate her physical and mental powers, and take a stand as a free and independent being. All that, *she* has to do. She must investigate and take an interest in everything on which the welfare of society depends, for the interest and happiness of every member of society is connected with that of society. She must at once claim and exercise those rights and privileges with which the laws do not interfere, and it will aid her to obtain all the rest. She must, therefore, throw off that heavy yoke that like a nightmare weighs down her best energies, viz., the fear of public opinion.

It has been said, that "The voice of the People is the voice of God." If that voice is on the side of justice and humanity, then it is true, if the term God means the principle of Truth and of Right. But if the public voice is oppressive and unjust, then it ought to be spurned like the voice of falsehood and corruption; and woman, instead of implicitly and blindly following the dictates of public opinion, must investigate for herself what is right or wrong—act in accordance with her best convictions and let the rest take care of itself, for obedience to wrong is wrong itself, and opposition to it is virtue alike in woman as in man, even though she should incur the ill will of bigotry, superstition, and

priestcraft, for the approval of our fellow-being is valuable only when it does not clash with our own sense of right, and no farther.

The priests well know the influence and value of women when warmly engaged in any cause, and therefore as long as they can keep them steeped in superstitious darkness, so long are they safe; and hence the horror and anathema against every woman that has intelligence, spirit, and moral courage to cast off the dark and oppressive yoke of superstition. But she must do it, or she will ever remain a slave, for of all tyranny that of superstition is the greatest, and he is the most abject slave who tamely submits to its yoke. Woman, then, must cast it off as her greatest enemy; and the time I trust will come when she will aid man to remove the political, civil, and religious evils that have swept over the earth like some malignant scourge to lay waste and destroy so much of the beauty, harmony, and happiness of man; and the old fable of the fall of man through a woman will be superseded by the glorious fact that she was instrumental in the elevation of the race towards a higher, nobler, and happier destiny.