

Editorial Note:

The manuscript of an address Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered after the conventions of 1848 was handed down to her daughters, who gave it to SBA, who in turn deposited it in the Library of Congress. Writing to her daughters, Stanton called it her "first speech," one "delivered several times immediately after the first Woman's Rights Convention." She spoke on two occasions, at least: in September at Waterloo and on 6 October to the Congregational Friends at Farmington.

Between 1848 and 1850, Elizabeth Cady Stanton turned to this address as a source for short articles, and then she lost track of the manuscript. Emma Robinson Coe borrowed it, according to Susan B. Anthony's notations on a cover sheet, probably when she visited Stanton in the fall of 1851. It was back in Stanton's possession by 1866, when Theodore Tilton saw the "old and tattered" manuscript while he interviewed Stanton for a biography. He understood this to be "the first 'set speech' which Mrs. Stanton ever delivered," one that she "repeated at several places in the interior of the State of New York, during the first months that followed the first convention."

However, since 1870, on the basis of a title page printed by Robert J. Johnston, the same speech with modifications has been identified as the address Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered to the conventions in Seneca Falls and Rochester. There are obstacles to accepting that identification. First, there is no evidence that Stanton made any speech at the Rochester convention, let alone one of this length. Second, no contemporary report of Seneca Falls noted a major speech by Stanton, though small parts of the address might match her several contributions to the meeting. Finally, Lucretia Mott, present at both conventions, referred to Stanton's speech in September at Waterloo as "thy maiden speech." Johnston's publication is more likely an artifact of 1870 than a document of 1848.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton is no doubt implicated in the publication of the *Address of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Delivered at Seneca Falls & Rochester, N.Y., July 19th & Aug. 2d, 1848* in 1870. Though the title page might reflect a printer's misunderstanding about events, someone carefully adjusted the text to eliminate the scene set in the opening paragraphs and convert to present tense all references to the conventions and their demands. It is unlikely that Robert Johnston issued an unauthorized text; he knew Stanton well, as an officer of the American Equal Rights Association and printer of the *Revolution*. Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Amy Post collaborated on other pamphlets he issued in 1870 to celebrate two decades of woman's rights agitation. But if Stanton created the *Address*, she neither quoted from nor referred readers to it in histories of the conventions that she wrote after 1870.

The text published here is based upon the manuscript. In the numbered endnotes, major differences in the later, published text of 1870 are noted. (Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 3 October 1848, in Ann D. Gordon et al., eds., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* [New Brunswick, N.J., 1997], 1:126; Benjamin F. Gue, *Diary of Benjamin F. Gue in Rural New York and Pioneer Iowa, 1847-1856*, ed. Earle D. Ross [Ames, Ia., 1962], 40; Theodore Tilton, "Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton," in James Parton, et al., *Eminent Women of the Age* [Hartford, Conn., 1868], 332-61; Susan B. Anthony to Mary P. Hallowell, 11 April 1867, P. G. Holland and A. D. Gordon, eds., *Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, microfilm edition, 12:118-21; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage* [New York, 1881], 1:69.)

Footnotes can be found at <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/ecswoman1.html>

Address by Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Woman's Rights September 1848

Ladies and gentlemen, when invited some weeks ago to address you I proposed to a gentleman of this village to review our report of the Seneca Falls convention and give his objections to our Declaration, resolutions and proceedings to serve me as a text on which to found an address for this evening "the gentleman did so, but his review was so laconic that there was the same difficulty in replying to it as we found in replying to a recent sermon preached at Seneca Falls—there was nothing of it.

Should that gentleman be present this evening and feel disposed to give any of his objections to our movement, we will be most happy to answer him.¹

I should feel exceedingly diffident to appear before you wholly unused as I am to public speaking, were I not nerved by a sense of right and duty—did I not feel that the time had fully come for the question of woman's wrongs to be laid before the public—did I not believe that woman herself must do this work—for woman alone can understand the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of her own degradation and woe. Man cannot speak for us—because he has been educated to believe that we differ from him so materially, that he cannot judge of our thoughts, feelings and opinions by his own. Moral beings can only judge of others by themselves—the moment they give a different nature to any of their own kind they utterly fail. The drunkard was hopelessly lost until it was discovered that he was governed by the same laws of mind as the sober man. Then with what magic power, by kindness and love, was he raised from the slough of despond and placed rejoicing on high land. Let a man once settle the question that woman does not think and feel like himself and he may as well undertake to judge of the amount of intellect and sensation of any of the animal creation as of woman's nature. He can know but little with certainty, and that but by observation.

Among the many important questions which have been brought before the public, there is none that more vitally affects the whole human family than that which is technically termed Woman's rights.² Every allusion to the degraded and inferior position occupied by woman all over the world, has ever been met by scorn and abuse. From the man of highest mental cultivation, to the most degraded wretch who staggers in the streets do we hear ridicule and coarse jests, freely bestowed upon those who dare assert that woman stands by the side of man—his equal, placed here by her God to enjoy with him the beautiful earth, which is her home as it is his—having the same sense of right and wrong and looking to the same Being for guidance and support. So long has man exercised a tyranny over her injurious to himself and benumbing to *her* faculties, that but few can nerve themselves against the storm, and so long has the chain been about her that however galling it may be she knows not there is a remedy.

The present social, civil and religious condition of women is a subject too vast to be brought within the limits of one short lecture. Suffice it to say for the present, that wherever we turn the history of woman is sad and drear and dark, without any alleviating circumstances, nothing from which we can draw consolation. As the nations of the earth emerge from a state of barbarism, the sphere of woman gradually becomes wider but not even under what is thought to be the full blaze of the sun of civilization is it what God designed it to be. In every country and clime does man assume the responsibility of marking out the path for her to tread,—in every country does he regard her as a being inferior to himself and one whom he is to guide and

controul. From the Arabian Kerek whose wife is obliged to steal from her Husband to supply the necessities of life,—from the Mahometan who forbids pigs dogs women and other impure animals to enter a mosque, and does not allow a fool, madman or women to proclaim the hour of prayer,—from the German who complacently smokes his meerschaum while his wife, yoked with the ox draws the plough through its furrow,—from the delectable gentleman who thinks an inferior style of conversation adapted to women—to the legislator who considers her incapable of saying what laws shall govern her, is this same feeling manifested.³ In all eastern countries she is a mere slave bought and sold at pleasure. There are many differences in habits, manners, and customs, among the heathen nations of the old world, but there is little change for the better in woman's lot—she is either the drudge of man to perform all the hard labour of the field and the menial duties of the hut, tent, or house, or she is the idol of his lust the mere creature of his ever varying whims and will. Truly has she herself said in her best estate,

I am a slave, a favoured slave
At best to share his pleasure and seem very blest,
When weary of these fleeting charms and me,
There yawns the sack and yonder rolls the sea,
What! am I then a toy for dotards play
To wear but till the gilding frets away?⁴

In christian countries, boasting a more advanced state of civilization and refinement, woman still holds a position infinitely inferior to man. In France the Salic law⁵ tells much although it is said that woman there has ever had great influence in all political revolutions. In England she seems to have advanced a little— There she has a right to the throne, and is allowed to hold some other offices and some women have a right to vote too— But in the United States of America⁶ woman has no right either to hold office, nor to the elective franchise, we stand at this moment, unrepresented in this government—our rights and interests wholly overlooked.

Let us now glance at some of the popular objections to this whole question. There is a class of men who believe in the natural inborn, inbred superiority both in body and mind and their full complete Heaven descended right to lord it over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the beast of the field⁷ and last tho' not least the immortal being called woman. I would recommend this class to the attentive perusal of their Bibles—to historical research, to foreign travel—to a closer observation of the manifestations of mind about them and to an humble comparison of themselves with such women as Catharine of Russia, Elizabeth of England distinguished for their statesmanlike qualities, Harriet Martineau and Madame de Stael for their literary attainments, or Caroline Herschel and Mary Summerville for their scientific researches, or for physical equality to that whole nation of famous women the Amazones.⁸ We seldom find this class of objectors among liberally educated persons, who have had the advantage of observing their race in different countries, climes, and under different

phases, but barbarians tho' they be in entertaining such an opinion—they must be met and fairly vanquished.

Man superior, intellectually, morally and physically.

1st Let us consider his intellectual superiority. ⁹ Man's superiority cannot be a question until we have had a fair trial. When we shall have had ¹⁰ our colleges, our professions, our trades, for a century a comparison may then be justly instituted. When woman instead of being taxed to endow colleges where she is forbidden to enter, instead of forming societies to educate young men shall first educate herself, when she shall be just to herself before she is generous to others—improving the talents God has given her and leaving her neighbour to do the same for himself we shall not then hear so much of this boasted greatness. How often now we see young men carelessly throwing away the intellectual food their sisters crave. A little music that she may while an hour away pleasantly, a little French, a smattering of the sciences and in rare instances some slight classical knowledge and a woman is considered highly educated. She leaves her books and studies just at the time a young man is entering thoroughly into his—then comes the cares and perplexities of married life. ¹¹ Her sphere being confined to her house and children, the burden generally being very unequally divided, she knows nothing beside and whatever yearning her spirit may have felt for a higher existence, whatever may have been the capacity she well knew she possessed for more elevated enjoyments—enjoyments which would not conflict with these but add new lustre to them—it is all buried beneath the weight that presses upon her. Men bless their innocence are fond of representing themselves as beings of reason—of intellect—while women are mere creatures of the affections—There is a self conceit that makes the possessor infinitely happy and one would dislike to dispel the illusion, if it were possible to endure it. But so far as we can observe it is pretty much now-a-days as it was with Adam of old. No doubt you all recollect the account we have given us. A man and a woman were placed in a beautiful garden. Every thing was about them that could contribute to their enjoyment. Trees and shrubs, fruits and flowers, and gently murmuring streams made glad their hearts. Zephyrs freighted with delicious odours fanned their brows and the serene stars looked down upon them with eyes of love.

The Evil One saw their happiness and it troubled him. He set his wits to work to know how he should destroy it. He thought that man could be easily conquered through *his affection for the woman*. But the woman would require more management. She could be reached only through her intellectual nature. So he promised her the knowledge of good and evil. He told her the sphere of her reason should be enlarged, he promised to gratify the desire she felt for intellectual improvement, so he prevailed and she did eat. Did the Evil One judge rightly in regard to man? Eve took an apple went to Adam and said "Dear Adam taste this apple if you love me eat." Adam stopped not so much as to ask if the apple was sweet or sour. He knew he was doing

wrong, but his love for Eve prevailed and he did eat. Which I ask you was the "creature of the affections"?¹²

2nd Let us consider man's claims to superiority as a moral being.¹³ Look now at our theological seminaries, our divinity students—the long line of descendents from our apostolic Fathers and what do we find here? Perfect moral rectitude in every relation of life, a devoted spirit of self sacrifice, a perfect union in thought opinion and feeling among those who profess to worship the one God and whose laws they feel themselves called upon to declare to a fallen race? Far from it. These persons all so thoroughly acquainted with the character of God and of his designs made manifest by his words and works are greatly divided among themselves—every sect has its God, every sect has its own Bible, and there is as much bitterness, envy, hatred and malice between these contending sects yea even more than in our political parties during periods of the greatest excitement. Now the leaders of these sects are the *priesthood* who are supposed to have passed their lives almost in the study of the Bible, in various languages and with various commentaries, in the contemplation of the infinite, the eternal and the glorious future open to the redeemed of earth. Are they distinguished among men for their holy aspirations—their virtue, purity, and chastity? Do they keep themselves unspotted from the world? Is the moral and religious life of this class what we might expect from minds (said to be) continually fixed on such mighty themes? By no means, not a year passes but we hear of some sad soul sickening deed perpetrated by some of this class. If such be the state of the most holy we need not pause now to consider those classes who claim of us less reverence and respect. The lamentable want of principle among our lawyers generally is too well known to need comment—the everlasting bickering and backbiting of our physicians is proverbial— The disgraceful riots at our polls where man in performing so important a duty of a citizen ought surely to be sober minded. The perfect rowdyism that now characterizes the debates in our national congress—all these are great facts which rise up against man's claim to moral superiority.

In my opinion he is infinitely woman's inferior in every moral virtue, not by nature, but made so by a false education. In carrying out his own selfishness, man has greatly improved woman's moral nature, but by an almost total shipwreck of his own. Woman has now the noble virtues of the martyr, she is early schooled to self denial and suffering. But man is not so wholly buried in selfishness that he does not sometimes get a glimpse of the narrowness of his soul, as compared with women. Then he says by way of an excuse for his degradation, God made woman more self denying than us, it is her nature, it does not cost her as much to give up her wishes, her will, her life even as it does us. We are naturally selfish, God made us so. No! think not that he who made the heavens and the earth, the whole planetary world ever moving on in such harmony and order, that he who has so bountifully scattered, through all nature so many objects that delight, enchant and fill us with admiration

and wonder, that he who has made the mighty ocean mountain and cataract, the bright and joyous birds, the tender lovely flowers, that he who made man in his own image, perfect, noble and pure, loving justice, mercy, and truth, think not that He has had any part in the production of that creeping, cringing, crawling, debased selfish monster now extant, claiming for himself the name of man. No God's commands rest upon man as well as woman, and it is as much his duty to be kind, gentle, self denying and full of good works as it is hers, as much his duty to absent himself from scenes of violence as it is hers. A place or a position that would require the sacrifice of delicacy and refinement of woman's nature is unfit for man, for these virtues should be as carefully guarded in him as in her.

The false ideas that prevail with regard to the purity necessary to constitute the perfect character in woman and that requisite for man have done an infinite deal of mischief in the world. We would not have woman less pure, but we would have man more so. We would have the same code of morals for both. Moral delinquencies which exclude women from the society of the true and the good should assign to man the same place. Our partiality towards man has been the fruitful source of dissipation and riot, drunkenness and debauchery and immorality of all kinds. It has not only affected woman injuriously by narrowing her sphere of action, but man himself has suffered from it. It has destroyed the nobleness, the gentleness that should belong to his character, the beauty and transparency of soul the dislike of every thing bordering on coarseness and vulgarity, all those finer qualities of our nature which raise us above the earth and give us a foretaste of the beauty and bliss, the refined enjoyments of the world to come.

3rd Let us now consider man's claims to physical superiority. ¹⁴ Methinks I hear some say, surely you will not contend for equality here. Yes, we must not give an inch lest you claim an ell, we cannot accord to man even this much and he has no right to claim it until the fact be fully demonstrated, until the physical education of the boy and the girl shall have been the same for many years. If you claim the advantage of size merely, why it may be that under any course of training in ever so perfect a developement of the physique in woman, man might still be the larger of the two, tho' we do not grant even this. But the perfection of the physique is great power combined with endurance. Now your strongest men are not always the tallest men, nor the broadest, nor the most corpulent, but very often the small man who is well built, tightly put together and possessed of an indomitable will. Bodily strength depends something on the power of will. The sight of a small boy thoroughly thrashing a big one is not rare. Now would you say the big fat boy whipped was superior to the small active boy who conquered him? You do not say the horse is physically superior to the man—for although he has more muscular power, yet the power of mind in man renders him his superior and he guides him wherever he will.

The power of mind seems to be in no way connected with the size and strength of body. Many men of Herculean powers of mind have been small and weak in body. The late distinguished Dr Channing of Boston was very small and feeble in appearance and voice, yet he has moved the world by the eloquence of his pen. John Quincy Adams was a small man of but little muscular power, yet we know he had more courage than all the northern dough faces ¹⁵ of six feet high and well proportioned that ever represented us at our Capitol. We know that mental power depends much more on the temperament than the size of the head or the size of the body. I have never heard that Daniel Lambert was distinguished for any great mental endowments. ¹⁶ We cannot say what the woman might be physically, if the girl were allowed all the freedom of the boy in romping, climbing, swimming, playing hoop and ball. Among some of the Tarter tribes of the present day the women manage a horse, hurl a javelin, hunt wild animals, and fight an enemy as well as the men. ¹⁷ The Indian women endure fatigue and carry burthens that some of our fair faced, soft handed, mustachoed, young gentlemen would consider it quite impossible for them to sustain. The Croatian, and Wallachian women perform all the agricultural operations, (and we know what physical strength such labours require) in addition to their own domestic concerns; ¹⁸ and it is no uncommon sight in our cities to see the German immigrant *with his hands in his pockets*, walking complacently by the side of his wife, whilst she is bending beneath the weight of some huge package or piece of furniture,—physically as well as intellectually it is use that produces growth and developement. But there is a class of objectors who say they do not claim superiority, they merely assert a difference, but you will find by following them up closely that they make this difference to be vastly in favour of man. The Phrenologist says that woman's head has just as many organs as man's and that they are similarly situated. He says too that the organs that are the most exercised are the most prominent. They do not divide heads according to sex but they call all the fine heads masculine and all the ill shaped feminine, for when a woman presents a remarkably large well developed intellectual region, they say she has a masculine head, as if there could be nothing remarkable of the feminine gender and when a man has a small head very little reasoning power and the affections inordinately developed they say he has a woman's head thus giving all glory to masculinity.

Some say our heads are less.
Some men's are small, not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensates for size;
Beside the brain
is like the hand and grows,
With using——¹⁹

We, the women of this state have met in convention within the last few months both in Rochester and Seneca Falls to discuss our rights and wrongs. ²⁰ We did not as some have supposed assemble to go into the detail of social life alone, we did not

propose to petition the legislature to make our Husbands just, generous and courteous, to seat every man at the head of a cradle and to clothe every woman in male attire, no none of these points however important they may be considered by humble minds, were touched upon in the convention. As to their costume the gentlemen need feel no fear of our imitating that for we think it in violation of every principle of beauty taste and dignity and notwithstanding all the contempt and abuse cast upon our loose flowing garments we still admire their easy graceful folds, and consider our costume as an object of taste much more beautiful than theirs. Many of the nobler sex seem to agree with us in this opinion for all the Bishops, Priests, Judges, Barristers, and Lord Mayors of the first nation on the globe and the Pope of Rome too, when officiating in their highest offices, they all wear the loose flowing robes, thus tacitly acknowledging that the ordinary male attire is neither dignified nor imposing. No! we shall not molest you in your philosophical experiments with stocks, pants,²¹ high heeled boots and Russian belt. Yours be the glory to discover by personal experience how long the knee pan can resist the terrible strapping down which you impose—in how short time the well developed muscles of the throat can be reduced to mere threads by the constant pressure of the stock, how high the heel of the boot must be to make a short man tall and how tight the Russian belt may be drawn and yet have wind enough to sustain life. Our ambition leads us neither to discovery or martyrdom of this sort.

But we did assemble to protest against a form of government existing without the consent of the governed, to declare our right to be free as man is free—to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support—to have such disgraceful laws as give to man the right to chastise and imprison his wife—to take the wages which she earns,—the property which she inherits and in case of separation the children of her love—laws which make her the mere dependent on his bounty—it was to protest against such unjust laws as these and to have them if possible forever erased from our statute books, deeming them a standing shame and disgrace to a professedly republican, christian people in the nineteenth century. We met

To uplift woman's fallen divinity

Upon an even pedestal with man²²

And strange as it may seem to many we then and there declared our right to vote according to the Declaration of the government under which we live. This right no one pretends to deny. We need not prove ourselves equal to Daniel Webster to enjoy this privilege for the most ignorant Irishman in the ditch has all the civil rights he has, we need not prove our muscular power equal to this same Irishman to enjoy this privilege for the most tiny, weak, ill shaped, imbecile stripling of 21 has all the civil rights of the Irishman. We have no objection to discuss the question of equality, for we feel that the weight of argument lies wholly with us, but we wish the question of equality kept distinct from the question of rights, for the proof of the one does not determine the truth of the other. All men²³ in this country have the same rights

however they may differ in mind, body, or estate. The right is ours. The question now is, how shall we get possession of what rightfully belongs to us. We should not feel so sorely grieved if no man who had not attained the full stature of a Webster, Van Buren, Clay²⁴ or Gerrit Smith could claim the right of the elective franchise, but to have the rights of drunkards, idiots, horse-racing, rum selling rowdies, ignorant foreigners, and silly boys fully recognised, whilst we ourselves are thrust out from all the rights that belong to citizens—it is too grossly insulting to the dignity of woman to be longer quietly submitted to. The right is ours, have it we must—use it we will. The pens, the tongues, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many women are already pledged to secure this right. The great truth that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed, we shall echo and re-echo in the ears of the unjust judge until by continual coming we shall weary him.

But say some would you have woman vote? What refined delicate woman at the polls, mingling in such scenes of violence and vulgarity—most certainly—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 must encounter such stormy dangerous scenes at the tender age of 21. Much is said of woman's influence, might not her presence do much towards softening down this violence—refining this vulgarity? Depend upon it that places that 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 armour 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? But for myself—I think all war sinful. I believe in Christ—I believe that command Resist not evil to be divine. Vengeance is mine and I will repay saith the Lord—²⁵ Let frail man, who cannot foresee the consequences of an action walk humbly with his God—loving his enemies, blessing those who curse him and always returning good for evil. This is the highest kind of courage that mortal man can attain to and this moral warfare with ones own bad passions requires no physical power to achieve. I would not have man go to war. I can see no glory in fighting with such weapons as guns and swords whilst man has in his possession the infinitely superior and more effective ones of righteousness and truth.

But what would you gain by voting. Man must know the advantages of voting for they all seem very tenacious about the right. Think you if woman had a voice in this government, that all those laws affecting her interests would so entirely violate every principle of right and justice?²⁶ Had we a vote to give might not the office holders and seekers propose some change in woman's condition? Might not "woman's rights" come to be as great a question as "free soil"? But are you not already sufficiently represented by your Fathers, Husbands, Brothers and Sons. Let your statute books answer the question. We have had enough of such representation. In nothing is woman's true happiness consulted, men like to call her an angel—to feed her with what they think sweet food nourishing her vanity, to induce her to believe her

organization is so much finer more delicate than theirs, that she is not fitted to struggle with the tempests of public life but needs their care and protection.²⁷ Care and protection? such as the wolf gives the lamb—such as the eagle the hare he carries to his eyrie. Most cunningly he entraps her and then takes from her all those rights which are dearer to him than life itself, rights which have been baptized in blood and the maintenance of which is even now rocking to their foundations the kingdoms of the old world. The most discouraging, the most lamentable aspect our cause wears is the indifference indeed the contempt with which women themselves regard our movement. When the subject is introduced among our young ladies among those even who claim to be intelligent and educated it is met by the scornful curl of the lip and by expressions of disgust and ridicule. But we shall hope better things of them when they are enlightened in regard to their present position, to the laws under which they live—they will not then publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied nor their ignorance by declaring they have all the rights they want.

They are not the only class of beings who glory in their bondage. In the Turkish Harem where woman is little above the brute of the field, where immortal mind is crushed and the soul itself is as it were blotted out, where beings God has endowed with a spirit capable of enjoying the beauties which he has scattered over the broad earth—a spirit whose cultivation would fit them for a never ending existence, in those Seraglios where intellect and soul are buried beneath the sensualism and brutality which are the inevitable result of the belief in woman's inferiority, even here she is not only satisfied with her position but glories in it.²⁸ Miss Martineau in her travels in the East recently published says referring to the inmates of the Harems: Every where they pitied us European women heartily, that we had to go about travelling and appearing in the streets without being properly taken care of, that is watched. They think us strangely neglected in being left so free and boast of their spy system and imprisonment as tokens of the value in which they are held.²⁹ Can women here, although her spiritual and intellectual nature is recognized to a somewhat greater degree than among the Turks, and she is allowed the privilege of being in her nursery and kitchen, and although the Christian promises her the ascendancy in Heaven as man has it here, while the Mahomedan closes the golden gates of the Celestial city tight against her—can she be content notwithstanding these good things to remain debarred from an equal share with man in the pure enjoyments arising from the full cultivation of her mind and her admission into the rights and privileges which are hers. She must and will ere long, when her spirit awakens and she learns to care less for the

Barren verbiage current among men
Light coin the tinsel clink of compliment³⁰

She must and will demand

Every where
Two heads in counsel, two beside the hearth
Two in the tangled business of the world
Two in the liberal offices of life
Two plummets dropped to sound the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind.³¹

Let woman live as she should, let her feel her accountability to her Maker— Let her know that her spirit is fitted for as high a sphere as man's and that her soul requires food as pure as refreshing as his—let her live *first* for God and she will not make imperfect man an object of reverence and idolatry— Teach her her responsibility as a being of conscience and of reason—that she will find any earthly support unstable and weak, that her only safe dependence is on the arm of omnipotence.³² Teach her there is no sex in mind, that true happiness springs from duty accomplished and she will feel the desire to bathe her brow heated from the struggles of an earthly existence in the cool stream that flows fresh and sparkling from the Divine fountain. She will become conscious that each human being is morally accountable for himself that no one can throw upon another his burden of responsibility, that neither Father, Husband, Brother nor son, however willing they may be, can relieve woman from this weight, can stand in her stead when called into the presence of the searcher of spirits.

Methinks I hear some woman say, We must obey our Husbands!!³³ Who says so. Why the Bible. No you have not rightly read your Bible. In the opening of the Bible at the creation of our first parents, God called their name Adam and gave them dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and the beast of the field, but he says nothing to them about obedience to each other. After the fall after Noah came out of the ark he addresses them in like manner.³⁴ The chief support that man finds in the Bible for this authority over woman he gets from the injunctions of Paul. It needs but little attention to see how exceedingly limited that command of St Paul must be even if you give it all the weight which is usually claimed for it. Wives obey your Husbands in the Lord.³⁵ Now as the command is given to *me*, I am of course to be the judge of what is in the Lord and this opens a wide field of escape from any troublesome commands. There can be no subordination where the one to whom the command is given is allowed to sit in judgement on the character of the command. The Bible argument on this subject would afford of itself sufficient material for an entire lecture. I shall not therefore attempt to go into it at this time, enough now to say that that best of Books is ever on the side of freedom and we shrink not from pleading our cause on its principles of universal justice and love.

Let me here notice one of the greatest humbugs of the day, which has long found for itself a most valuable tool in woman. The education society.³⁶ The idea to me is monstrous and absurd of woman in her present condition of degradation and ignorance, forming a society for the education of young men—an order of beings

above themselves—claiming to be gifted with superior powers of mind and body—having all the avenues to learning, wealth, and distinction thrown freely open to them and if they have but the energy to avail themselves of all these advantages—they can easily secure an education. Whilst woman poor and friendless robbed of all her rights, oppressed on all sides, civilly, religiously, and socially, must needs go ignorant herself—the idea of such a being working day and night with her needle stitch, stitch, stitch, (for the poor widow always throws in her mite for she is taught to believe that all she gives for the decoration of churches and their black coated gentry is unto the Lord) to educate a great strong lug of man.

I think a man who under the present state of things has the moral hardihood to take an education at the hands of woman and at such an expense to her, ought as soon as he graduates with all his honours thick upon him take the first ship for Turkey and there pass his days in earnest efforts to rouse the inmates of the Harems to a true sense of their present debasement and not as is his custom immediately enter our pulpits to tell us of his superiority to us "weaker vessels"³⁷ his prerogative to command, ours to obey—his duty to preach, ours to keep silence. Oh! for the generous promptings of the days of chivalry—oh! for the poetry of romantic gallantry,—may they shine on us once more—then may we hope that these pious young men who profess to believe in the golden rule, will clothe and educate themselves and encourage poor weak woman to do the same for herself—or perchance they might conceive the happy thought of reciprocating the benefits so long enjoyed by them and form societies for the education of young women of genius whose talents ought to be rescued from the oblivion of ignorance. There is something painfully affecting in the self sacrifice and generosity of women who can neither read or write their own language with correctness going about begging money for the education of men. The last time an appeal of this kind was made to me I told the young lady I would send her to school a year if she would go, but I would never again give one red cent to the education society, and I do hope every christian woman who has the least regard for her sex will make the same resolve. We have worked long enough for man and at a most unjust, unwarrantable sacrifice of self, yet he gives no evidence of gratitude but has thus far treated his benefactors with settled scorn ridicule and contempt. But say they you do not need an education as we do. We expect to shine in the great world, our education is our living. What let me ask is the real object of all education? Just in proportion as the faculties which God has given us are harmoniously developed, do we attain our highest happiness and has not woman an equal right with man to happiness here as well as hereafter and ought she not to have equal facilities with him for making an honest living whilst on this footstool?

One common objection to this movement is that if the principles of freedom and equality which we advocate were put to practise, it would destroy all harmony in the domestic circle. Here let me ask how many truly harmonious households have we

now? Take any village circle you know of and on the one hand you will find the meek, sad looking, thoroughly subdued wife who knows no freedom of thought or action—who passes her days in the dull routine of household cares and her nights half perchance in making the tattered garments whole and the other half in slumbers oft disturbed by sick and restless children— She knows nothing of the great world without she has no time for reading and her Husband finds more pleasure in discussing politics with men in groceries, taverns or Depots than he could in reading or telling his wife the news whilst she sits mending his stockings and shirts through many a lonely evening, nor thinks he selfish being that he owes any duty to that perishing soul, beyond providing a house to cover her head, food to sustain life and raiment to put on and plenty of wood to [burn?].

As to her little world within she finds not much comfort there. Her wishes should she have any must be in subjection to those of her tyrant—her will must be in perfect subordination, the comfort of the wife, children, servants one and all must be given up wholly disregarded until the great head of the house be first attended to. No matter what the case may be he must have his hot dinner. If wife or children are sick—they must look elsewhere for care, he cannot be disturbed at night, it does not agree with him to have his slumbers broken it gives him the headache—renders him unfit for business and worse than all her very soul is tortured every day and hour by his harsh and cruel treatment of her children. What mother cannot bear me witness to anguish of this sort? Oh! women how sadly you have learned your duty to your children, to your own heart, to the God that gave you that holy love for them when you stand silent witnesses to the cruel infliction of blows and strips from angry Fathers on the trembling forms of helpless infancy— It is a mothers sacred duty to shield her children from violence from whatever source it may come, it is her duty to resist oppression wherever she may find it at home or abroad,³⁸ by every moral power within her reach. Many men who are well known for their philanthropy, who hate oppression on a southern plantation, can play the tyrant right well at home. It is a much easier matter to denounce all the crying sins of the day most eloquently too, than to endure for one hour the peevish moanings of a sick child. To know whether a man is truly great and good, you must not judge by his appearance in the great world, but follow him to his home—where all restraints are laid aside—there we see the true man his virtues and his vices too.

On the other hand we find the so called Hen-pecked Husband, oftimes a kind generous noble minded man who hates contention and is willing to do anything for peace. He having unwarily caught a Tarter tries to make the best of her. He can think his own thoughts and tell them too when he feels quite sure that she is not at hand, he can absent himself from home as much as possible, but he does not feel like a free man. The detail of his sufferings I can neither describe nor imagine never having been the confident of one of these unfortunate beings.³⁹ Now in such households as these there may be no open ruptures—they may seemingly glide on without a ripple upon

the surface—the aggrieved may have patiently resigned themselves to suffer all things with christian fortitude—with stern philosophy—but can there be harmony or happiness there? oh! no far from it. The only happy households we now see are those in which Husband and wife share equally in counsel and government. There can be no true dignity or independence where there is subordination, no happiness without freedom.⁴⁰

Is it not strange that man is so slow to admit the intellectual power the moral heroism of woman. How can he with the page of history spread out before him doubt her identity with himself. That there have been comparatively a greater proportion of good queens than of good kings is a fact stated by several historians.⁴¹ "Zenobia the celebrated queen of the East, is not exceeded by any king on record, for talent, courage, and daring ambition. The Emperor Aurelian while besieging her beautiful city of Palms, writes thus: The Roman people speak with contempt of the war I am waging with a woman. They are ignorant both of the character and the power of Zenobia." She was possessed of intellectual attainments very unusual in that age and was a liberal patron of literature and science. No contemporary sovereign is represented as capable of such high pursuits.⁴²

Margaret Queen of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, justly called the Semiramis of the north, by her talent energy, firmness and foresight raised herself to a degree of power and grandeur then unequalled in Europe.⁴³ No monarch has ever rivalled Isabella of Spain in bravery sagacity political wisdom and a proud sense of honour. Yet these characteristics were united with the purest modesty and the warmest feminine affections. Ferdinand, her husband, was her inferior in mind, heart and nobility of character; but as a wife and a mother she seems to have been a more perfect model than of a queen.⁴⁴ Her treaty with the queen of Portugal when they met on the frontiers of the two kingdoms is probably the only one of which it could be truly said: "The fair negotiators experienced none of the embarrassments usually incident to such deliberations, growing out of jealousy, distrust and a mutual desire to over reach. They were conducted in perfect good faith and a sincere desire on both sides to establish a cordial reconciliation."⁴⁵ Austria has produced no wiser or better sovereign than Maria Theresa to whose strength of character her nobles paid involuntary homage when they unanimously exclaimed "We will die for our King Maria Theresa." She too was the most affectionate of wives and most devoted of mothers.⁴⁶ "In England it was common to hear the people talk of King Elizabeth and Queen James. Catharine of Russia bears honourable comparison with Peter the Great. The annals of Africa furnish no example of a monarch equal to the brave intelligent and proud hearted Zinga, the negro Queen of Angola. Blanche of Castile evinced great ability in administering the government of France, during the minority of her son, and similar praise is due to Caroline of England, during the absence of her Husband."⁴⁷ What did woman not do what did she not suffer in our revolutionary struggle. In all great national difficulties her heart has always been found to beat in the

right place. She has ever been loyal to her country and her tyrants. He has said it and it must be right was the remark of Josephine in her happy days, when her own judgement suggested a change of course from the one marked out to her by Napoleon, but she lived long enough to learn that her tyrant might both do and say much that was not right.⁴⁸

It has happened more than once that in a great crisis of national affairs, woman has been appealed to for her aid. Hannah More one of the great minds of her day, at a time when French revolutionary and atheistical opinions were spreading—was earnestly besought by many eminent men to write something to counteract these destructive influences—⁴⁹ Her style was so popular and she had shown so intimate a knowledge of human nature that they hoped much from her influence. Her village politics by Will Chip, written in a few hours showed that she merited the opinion entertained of her power upon all classes of mind. It had as was expected great effect. The tact and intelligence of this woman completely turned the tide of opinion and many say prevented a revolution, whether she did old Englands poor any essential service by thus warding off what must surely come is a question—however she did it and the wise ones of her day gloried in her success. Strange that surrounded by such a galaxy of great minds, that so great a work should have been given with one accord to a woman to do.

Where was the spirit found to sustain that mighty discoverer Christopher Columbus in his dark hours of despair? Isabella of Arragon may be truly said to be the mother of this western world. It was she who continued the constant friend and protector of Columbus during her life, although assailed on all sides yet she steadily and firmly rejected the advice of narrow-minded, timid counsellors and generously bestowed her patronage upon that heroic adventurer. In all those things in which the priests had no interest and consequently did not influence her mind, she was ever the noble woman loving justice—the christian loving mercy. The persecution of the Jews and the establishment of the Inquisition cannot be said to have been countenanced by her, they were the result of priestly impudence. Torquemada the confessor of the Queen did not more fatally mislead her than do the priests of our day mislead us, the cry of heretic was not more potent in her day than that of Infidel in ours.⁵⁰ They burned the bodies of all those who differed from them we consign their souls to Hell fire.⁵¹

The feeling we so often hear expressed of dislike to seeing woman in places of publicity and trust is merely the effect of custom very like that prejudice against colour that has been proved to be so truly American.⁵² What man or woman of you has a feeling of disapproval or disgust in reading the history of Joan of Arc. The sympathies of every heart are at once enlisted in the success of that extraordinary girl.⁵³ Her historian tells us that when all human power seemed unavailing, the French no longer despised the supernatural aid of the damsel of Dom Remy. The last stronghold of the Dauphin Charles was besieged, the discouraged French were about

to abandon it when the coming of this simple girl paralyzed the English and inspired the followers of Charles with the utmost courage. Her success was philosophical in accordance with the laws of mind. She had full faith in herself and inspired all those who saw her with the same. Let us cultivate like faith, like enthusiasm and we too shall impress all who see and hear us with the same confidence which we ourselves feel in our final success.

There seems now to be a kind of moral stagnation in our midst. (Philanthropists have pulled every string. War, slavery, drunkenness, licentiousness and gluttony have been dragged naked before the people and all their abominations fully brought to light. Yet with idiotic laugh we hug these monsters to our arms and rush on. Our churches are multiplying on all sides, our Sunday schools and prayer meetings are still kept up, our missionary and tract societies have long laboured and now the labourers begin to faint—they feel they cannot resist this rushing tide of vice, they feel that the battlements of righteousness are weak against the mighty wicked, most are ready to raise the siege.⁵⁴ And how shall we account for this state of things? Depend upon it the degradation of woman is the secret of all this woe,—the inactivity of her head and heart. The voice of woman has been silenced, but man cannot fulfill his destiny alone—he cannot redeem his race unaided, there are deep and tender chords of sympathy and love in the breasts of the down fallen the crushed 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.⁵⁵ (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 decrepit 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 Fathers pride gratified, his fond hopes realized in the budding genius of the son—the wife is degraded—made the mere creature of his caprice and now the foolish son is heaviness to his heart. Truly are the sins of the Fathers 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.)

Now is the time, now emphatically, for the women of this country to buckle on the armour that can best resist the weapons of the enemy, ridicule and holy horror. "Voices" were the visitors and advisers of Joan of Arc, "voices" have come to us, oftentimes from the depths of sorrow degradation and despair,—they have been too long unheeded. The same religious enthusiasm that nerved her to what she deemed her work now nerves us to ours, her work was prophesied of, ours too is the fulfilling of what has long since been foretold. In the better days your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.⁵⁶ Her struggle and triumph were alike short, our struggle shall be hard and long but our triumph shall be complete and forever. We do not expect that our

path will be strewn with the flowers of popular favour—that our banner which we have flung to the wind will be fanned by the breath of popular applause, no we know that over the nettles of prejudice and bigotry will be our way, that upon our banner will beat the dark stormcloud of opposition from those who have entrenched themselves behind the strong bulwark of might, of force and who have fortified their position by every means holy and unholy, but we steadfastly abide the result. Unmoved we will bear it aloft—undaunted we will unfurl it to the gale,—we know the storm cannot rend from it a shred, that the electric flash will but more clearly show to us the glorious words inscribed upon it, "Equality of rights" and the rolling thunder will be sweet music in our ears, telling us of the light [*rest of line torn away*] of the purer clearer atmosphere [*rest of line torn away*]

A new era is dawn<ing upon the world,> when old might to right <must yield the battle blade> to clerkly pen, when the m<illions> now under the iron heel of <the tyrant will assert> their manhood, when woman <yielding to the> voice of the spirit within her will <demand the> recognition of her humanity, when <her soul, grown> too large for her chains, will burst th<e bands> around her set and stand redeemed regenerated and disenthralled.⁵⁷

The slumber is broken and the sleeper has risen

The day of the Goth and the Vandal is o'er

And old earth feels the tread of freedom once more

While the globe resounds with the tramping of legions who roused from their lethargy are resolved to be free or perish—while old earth reels under the crashing <of> thrones and the destruction of despotisms, hoary with age, while the flashing sunlight that breaks over us <makes> dark so much that men have before revered <and> shows that to be good that had scarcely been dreamed of—while mind is investigating anxiously so much in politics, in science, in morals, while even the Indian rejoices in the bright light and throws from him his chieftainship shall we the women of this age be content to remain inactive and to move in but a narrow and circumscribed sphere, <a> sphere which man shall assign us?⁵⁸ Shall we forget that God has given <us the same powers and faculties> that he has conferred <on him—the same desires,> the same hopes—the same trust in immortality—that the same voice called us into being, that the same spark which kindled us into life is from the Divine and ever burning Fire—that we are responsible to Him alone for the right cultivation and employment of our minds and hearts and that it is not for man to say "Thus far shalt thou go and no far<ther>." Poor fallible man [*rest of line torn away*] up to him a [*rest of line torn away*] before him—as [*word torn away*]juror? while the spirit within constantly whispers, Fools! will ye look to that that cannot satisfy you. Will you waste your time and strength on lowering buckets into empty wells. Will you reverence that, that is of like nature with yourselves?

Then fear not thou to wind thy horn,

Though elf and gnome thy courage scorn.

Ask for the castles King and Queen,
Though rabble rout may rush between,
Beat thee senseless to the ground,
In the dark beset thee round,
Persist to ask and it will come,
Seek not for rest in humbler home
So shalt thou see what few have seen
The palace home of King and Queen.

Autograph Manuscript, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

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