

Mrs. H. B. Wood 34
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SUFFRAGE FOR WOMAN.

A PLEA IN ITS BEHALF.

ADDRESSED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS, IN THE
ASSEMBLY CHAMBER OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN,

AT

MADISON, MARCH 2, 1880,

BY

Mrs MARION V. DUDLEY. *Leavitt*

DAVID ATWOOD, State Journal, Printer and Stereotyper.



ADDRESS
OF
MARION V. DUDLEY.

When the newspapers brought word that forty-seven brave gentlemen in the assembly chamber of Wisconsin had voted to make the wives and mothers of our commonwealth co-equal with themselves in all that constitutes a citizen of the state or nation, there went up from many hearts who have long and faithfully studied the question, a pean of joy and thanksgiving and pride. Not many Wisconsin women have yet assayed the difficult art of oratory, and the few who have done so, still in the novitiate of their experience, hesitate, in an hour like the present, when the most important of all the important questions of the day hangs trembling in the balance, to make any appeal in its behalf, lest an untoward or unskillful word prove fatal to our cause. There are times of suspense when even the lip of prayer is hushed; stressful moments when the great clock of Eternity ticks its alternating "Forever, Never; — Never, Forever," so passionately into the air of time that all other sound seems sacrilege.

The dreadful deep seas, they are loudest when still.

Knowing this, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee whom I have the honor to address, you must also be aware that it is with deep humility and much trepidation that I attempt to say a few words in this honorable presence, in behalf of the resolution now in your hands, — a resolution which gives a woman civil and political equality; a resolution which in elevating the mothers, elevates the race; whose defeat means a continuance of disaster; whose triumph is the dawn of an era of gladness and

grandeur such as no present prophecy can foreshadow. Let this resolution move on to triumph, and our fair young state will inevitably lead the van of all the thirty-eight in this noble, just and needed reform.

The gradual but positive recognition which woman has gained during the past ten years, cannot have escaped the observation of the gentlemen to whom I speak. In Massachusetts she is already voting on school questions; in New York she has now the same privilege. Only a year ago the supreme court of the United States threw open its judicial doors and invited her to practice law within that conservative enclosure, hitherto sacred to men, and in Wisconsin she has also the same privileges; while in educational matters, even rigorous and prejudicial Harvard has opened a side wicket for her entrance, though still stoutly denying her right to the broad front doorway. She has pushed her way successfully into many new avenues of business, and in the professions is an earnest and dignified competitor with her brothers. Her queens are on the platform in person of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mrs. Livermore, and Anna Dickinson; she has consecrated the stage with Charlotte Cushman, conquered literature with Mrs. Browning and George Eliot; saved a thousand girls from infamy in Matilda Goddard, and ruled a magnificent empire in Queen Victoria.

All these triumphs are but the prelude to triumphs that await her. Not until there are "no more worlds to conquer" will she fold her wings; not until every college door shall have yielded to the imperative of her knock; not until every voice shall proudly tell of her liberty and equality; not until she is eligible to the "highest office in the gift of the American people;" and even then her effort shall not cease.

Till the war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled,
In the parliament of man; the federation of the world.

Now the right of suffrage is what makes the American citizen; give woman this right and she becomes a citizen. That she is not such now is a matter of knowledge to even the urchins along the village streets. Walking in a country town, a few years since, I observed a milliner's advertisement on the side of a building, in

which she addressed her patrons as "lady citizens." A small boy who noted it, had scrawled underneath this conundrum :

If a woman is a citizen,
Pray can a rooster be a hen ?

Weak and cheap as it was, it taught me the fact of my own non-entity. I had read "A Man Without a Country," and pitied his woes; but not until that moment did I realize that *no woman* has a country. She toils and prays and loves and suffers; gives her sons by the thousands to die for the land that denies her the right to any voice in its administration; she is taxed by laws that were made without her consent; she pines in prison and swings on gallows by the decrees of man; the laws of men marry her and the laws of men bury her. Her position of dependency, like that of the minor, the idiot and the criminal, weakens her intellect, destroys her courage and dwarfs her womanhood.

The fact that she is often mistress of intrigue, resorting to artifice and strategy, and in some instances to her personal charm, in order to win her point, is but the result of her position. With no power to carry by argument, no weapon in the ballot, she turns to such resources as she does possess, and if ambitious, cultivates and uses them to the fullest extent. Knowing that man holds the reins of power, she resorts to such methods to obtain her desires as she finds of avail with him.

It is a fact that man is often kinder to her than she is to herself. In the laws he has made for his own and her government, are found both wisdom and kind forethought; many of them speak the tenderness and care of husband and father. But, gentlemen, kind as you are, gallant as you are in all your after-dinner toasts "to the ladies," highly as you compliment us in your Fourth of July orations, and chivalrous as you are in admitting us to be the "better half" of the world, would you think it just for us women to come up here to these legislative halls and enact laws to hang you, to imprison you, to divorce you, to tax you, to endow you with property or to disendow you, and to control your children, giving you no voice in the matter, but we all the time sweetly smiling and telling you that you are our "better halves," altogether too good and pure and noble to take any part in these

movements which affect the eternal weal or woe of humanity? Would you consider yourselves honored so much if we should give you our seats in the crowded street-cars, that you would quietly and gladly relinquish to us your seats in the senate? And would you be willing to allow your one duty of paternity to exempt your whole life from all other duty? Because you are *fathers*, would you smile assent when we told you of your high office in this capacity, while we monopolized all the other and more lucrative offices?

It is argued by many sensible men, that woman should not vote because in some way it will interfere with her duties as a mother. To drop her ballot in the box will require no longer than to put a letter in the post office; to make herself as intelligent a voter as the average man, will require only a portion of the time she now spends over crochet work, or in cutting up bits of cloth and sewing them together again as patchwork. Most of our public school teachers are competent voters already, trained from early youth, from necessity, to habits of practical thought on all living topics, politics included; nearly every mother knows how she wants her son to vote, and why; and when we come down to our foreign element of population and question the expediency of bringing Bridget to the polls, why all I can say is, Patrick is there already, no better qualified than she is, and armed with a cruel power against her in the ballot he carries. It is well known that among the lower classes there exists much cruelty to wives. The lower we descend in the scale of humanity the less is the regard in which woman is held; the less enlightened the manhood, the more he exults in degrading womanhood. Ignorance is ever the parent of tyranny.

The savage yokes his wife to the plow by the side of the ox; but Huxley says: "Let women become merchants, barristers, politicians; let them have fair fields, but let them understand, as the necessary correlative, that they are to have no favor. Let Nature alone sit high above the lists; rain influence and judge the prize." And this is what we want. It is the favor of gentlemen that is so disastrous. Higginson also says: "Give her the alphabet, if you dare, then summon her to her career, and though men, ignorant and prejudiced, may oppose its beginnings, there is

no danger but at last they will fling around her footsteps more lavish praise than ever greeted the Opera's idol — more perfumed flowers than ever wooed the fairest butterfly of the ball-room." And Emerson, of whom Whittier says that his will be the "only American name known a thousand years hence" — Emerson, now and always, has advocated the ballot for woman. Joseph Cook also is one of our champions, as is his antithesis, Robert Ingersoll. Ingersoll, while he would give us the ballot, comes forward also with his native poetry, and says, "Woman has the right to be protected."

In this latter all gentlemen agree with him, but not all have yet come to see that the ballot will be her greatest protection. Theodore Parker, when he hurried the fugitive slave from his door to freedom, gave him a Bible and a musket, and bade him take care of himself. Gentlemen, you cannot personally protect every woman of this land, if you would; but you can give every woman the power to protect herself. We have the Bible; now give us, not bullets, but the ballot. You let Patrick vote the rum shop open — now let Bridget vote it shut; and if that breeds a domestic jar, it is their own business. I will trust her to hold her own, and come out ahead, so long as Pat is sober; she isn't much of a woman if she can't. But so long as you keep her hands tied, as now, while he draws the tap of the whisky barrel at will, so long we shall have wives and children beaten and murdered by drunken husbands; and worse than this, so long we shall have children born into the world with diseased arteries flowing with the blood of inherited drunkenness, insanity and crime.

If only this one question, which is not so much temperance as heredity, were at stake, I could plead until the morning star climbs to the zenith and the pale old moon hides her horns under the horizon. Give the ballot to woman! Give the mothers of this state the power to protect themselves, their sons, their daughters, and the unborn generations from this luring fiend of drink, whose sinister laugh mocks your anguish as you lay your son in a drunkard's grave; whose cloven foot, swift and noiseless, stalks to the bridal banquet of your cherished daughter, turns the blush on her soft, young cheek to the pallor of a drunkard's wife, the

mother of a drunkard's child; this fiend, that lays its skinny, fleshless finger in the dimple of the babe in your cradle, and dooms and damns it and its descendants forever and forever; this fiend that fills the prisons, lures young girls to halls of infamy, dabbles in the reeking blood spilled to glut the gallows' greed, and mocks High Heaven with a yearly holocaust of human souls. Give us the ballot, and let us go solemnly, earnestly up to the polls and say, with the white resoluteness of a determination that cannot be shaken: This baleful power shall fall! Give us the ballot, gentlemen, and we will bless you as we march to our consecrated duty, we and our children's children, forever and forever.

Ingersoll says: "Woman has a right to be protected." So has man; and a few of us women begin to think it is our duty to do it. All these years he has escorted us to opera and balls, and been our most devoted cavalier on the street after nightfall; indeed, so much has he sacrificed himself for us in these respects, that it has come to be almost as much as a woman's reputation is worth to be seen at such places without him. Now it has occurred to some of us that, agreeable as his society is, it is not altogether necessary, as a protection, and that probably we do as much for him in that line as he does for us. If all the woman of Madison went alone to the next theatre, I don't believe there would be any going out between the acts to visit saloons; but you may say how it would be if the men went alone. The fact is, man needs woman's restraint and protection wherever he is, as much as she needs his. Adam of old didn't know good from evil till Eve put him in the way of finding it out. And so it has been ever since. I never accepted the common idea about the effect of eating that apple. If it had not been eaten, the race wouldn't know right from wrong till this day.

"God created man—i. e., mankind—in His own image; male and female created He them." He put them *together* in the garden; He banished them, *together*, from the garden, and so long as He was about managing mundane affairs He kept them *together*. But since He withdrew to let man run the estate, there has been a partial separation. Let us note a few of the effects of this: Man, striding on into politics, tells woman it is "too corrupt for her." This is his own confession; but he is always "busy" when

you ask him "Who made it corrupt?" Left out here, woman takes to running the churches and the ministers — most of them. Well, they are not absolutely perfect, nowadays, still never anything quite so bad has come out of them, according to general belief, as has resulted from some political affairs. Woman is sole and supreme in the sewing society — the lowest form of human organization, probably, but innocent and guileless compared with primary political meetings.

Samantha Allen says it is easy enough to avoid being slandered at the sewing society by always going early, before anybody else gets there. Gentlemen know better than I whether this would remedy the ills we hear of the caucus. Most drinking saloons and gambling dens are run and patronized by men. The tea-party falls to women, — Heaven help some of us if we were obliged to go often, — but after all, it is not wicked, and if it is weak, I don't see the remedy under present arrangements. Give us something noble to strive for, and allow us to do it in an open, straightforward manner, and we shall soon tire of tea. Let us come up here to the senate with you, not as inferiors, or as sophists to persuade you to our whims against your better judgment, but as equals, with only such dignity, respect and honor as we deserve and earn. Do not let us cajole with a smile or conquer with a tear — these things, beautiful and right when spontaneous and natural, have no place on the scales of justice — but do let us speak and work, side by side with you as befits the mothers of men. You will be better, we shall be stronger, and humanity grander, when this artificial separation of men and women in schools and in state affairs no longer exists.

Do you still urge that mothers cannot attend to legislative duties? There are many women who are not mothers; many who are not and never will be married. Let such come here, if they are able to secure election. And, after her sons and daughters have grown to maturity, I know no reason why a mother should not be allowed to go to congress; before that time, neither she nor a man is really old enough to go. No political career is going to tempt a woman from her child. But, if it should, would it be worse than the fashionable career that now entices her to leave it in the care of she knows not whom? Or would it be so bad for

a few women to leave children at home while they went to congress, as is the great crying wrong upon our civilization which compels multitudes of mothers to leave their children in absolute neglect, while they go out to toil all day for the pitiful sum that is to keep their wretched souls and bodies together?

But the office holding and political work generally, which the ballot is to open to woman, is insignificant in comparison with the greater privileges it is to open to her in opportunities for earning her daily bread. Comparatively few of all the male voters ever hold or seek office, but from the prominence given to this objection to female suffrage, one would imagine that every woman, so soon as the polls were open to her, would rush for official position. In reality, it would be only the few who would have the ability, taste or inclination to do so. The great world of women would then, as now, move steadily on about their duties, availing themselves sedately of their new advantages, in their regular lines of life. The working women, that great, uncounted army, toiling from sun to sun, for themselves or their children, will be the greatest gainers from the ballot in their hands. Now in competition with men they have no chance save in the cheapness of their labor. A majority of the women would be turned out of the positions they hold to-day, and men substituted in their places, were it not that they work cheaper. Probably no employer could say that they do not work as well, but there is an advantage in employing and controlling voters. Let woman vote, and she can then compete with man simply on the merits of her work, in some instances surpassing, in others falling below him.

A business gentleman who now employs a woman as book-keeper in his establishment at \$1,000 per year, told me that he formerly paid a man \$2,000, and that he did not do the work so well. Very few women receive so high as \$1,000 salary, but, gentlemen, will you tell me why they should not receive exactly the same that men do when they do the same work? And do you not believe they would if, walking forth with the ballot in their hands, free and equal citizens of the land, they competed, not as serf with freeholder, but as human being with human being, on a basis of merit alone? Do you urge that men should receive more because on them falls the burden of family? I cannot ac-

cept that as a reason, since you do not pay a man with a large family more than one with a small one; but you do employ him who will best serve you for the least money, irrespective of family. Let the voting employees of an establishment demand an increase of pay and they are much more likely to secure it than are the non-voting, female employees in the same establishment. For the simple reason that *votes* command public sentiment, the press and the politicians. Every man who wants an office next election, gives attention to the cry of voters; but he has no ear for the poor women in the same factory, toiling the same number of hours for still less than the men already receive.

And now shall we pass for a moment to the consideration of the physical basis of the subject? I presume no gentleman here will even urge physical inferiority as a reason why woman should not vote. If he does, he must establish by law how much avoirdupois, how much sinew, bone and muscle, height and breadth of shoulder is necessary to constitute a voter, and then rigorously disfranchise every man who does not come up to the standard. Many years ago, when suffrage conventions were not so common as now, that bright galaxy of women, whose names have since become world-famous, were on a Milwaukee platform advocating the elective franchise as woman's right. When they invited any one in the audience to offer objections to the movement, a very frail, diminutive brother arose and said he "did not think woman physically equal to the situation; to the duties of war," etc. There sat Madam Anneke on the platform weighing, proximately, two hundred pounds; Mrs. Stanton, short but substantial; Miss Anthony, tall and muscular, and Mrs. Livermore, who is by no means infantile. When the little man had concluded, the latter lady arose, walked with the tread of a Juno to the front of the platform, a fine sarcasm of humor playing about her eye, as she said: "The physical disability argument against the ballot for woman seems singularly inappropriate on the present occasion, inasmuch as any one of the ladies on this platform is capable of taking the gentleman who has advanced it, in her arms and bearing him away to his everlasting repose."

Not until you require all men who vote to be equal to military service, can woman's unfitness for that be urged against her right

of franchise. But woman does not come to the field with a sword. She hopes and believes that her power will be such, ere long, as to banish war to the realms of cannibals and other savages, where it belongs. Too long already has she borne sons to die in battle; too long sat in sorrow and silence while the passions of men devastated the green earth and watered its soil with the heart's blood which her own pain thrilled into life. When the mothers vote, there will be less carnage, for to them life is more sacred by all which mother-hood means, than it can ever be to man; to them every human being, however rudely jostled along the world's rough way, is one for whom some mother went down through the valley of the shadow of death; to them every human body is a shrine, consecrated with a mother's prayers and tears from the Holy of Holies of her being. Oh, no! The mothers will not vote for war, though they can bear it, how bravely you all know, when it is thought inevitable.

At a convention a few years ago one of the honorable senators, now present, read an exhaustive paper, arguing woman's right to the ballot. At its close, a good English dominie arose and said: "When these things prevailed, which the gentleman urged, he didn't see who was to be the *head of the family*." I have always suspected the dear man must have been in doubt as to who held the supremacy in his own household, but drew consolation from the fact that legally, at any rate, *he* was at the helm. Now take from him his legal bolster, and where would he be? After all, gentlemen, it wouldn't make any difference. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness. If you are not the head, no law can make you so really; and if you are, no law can affect your status. Take the world over, the headship is about equally divided: A tiny woman with determination will have her own way in spite of you now; enlarge her aims and purposes, and you will have a better time, for then her tyranny will not, at least, be so petty.

But do gentlemen say that the ballot in woman's hand will rob her of poetry and sentiment? Ah, that is a mistake. No power you can give her will ever make home less dear or love less sweet. The holy flame forever burning on the sacred altars of the human heart, and forever fed by hands immortal and unseen, cannot be dimmed by any human power. If a few Amazonian women have

been necessary to lead in this reform—the brave pioneers, who, earnest and defiant, have hewn the forests and cleared the soil for more dainty feet to tread—that does not argue that all voting women will be Amazons. If a few exult in the ability, as one said to me the other day, to “knock a man down when he deserves it,” there are countless others who cherish as their ideal that mightier power which compels him to kneel of his own accord; and this he can never fail to do when his hour has come, for such an all-wise Providence foreordained to be a necessity of his being. The reason why so many wives are “swallowed up,” lost in their husbands, and then neglected, is because there is so little of them to swallow. The strong man lifts the tiny chalice to his lips and the first sip drains it dry. There is then nothing left for him but to wander in forbidden pastures or go through life forever athirst. Instead of a stale drop in the conventional chalice, let woman become a perennial, life-giving fountain, and she will never be “swallowed;” never cease to blossom and sing.

But even were it true that poetry must pay the price of justice in this respect, do you think it would be right to withhold it? How much poetry is there now in the lives of the great, toiling masses of women—those who must work or starve. It is only the few of us who are cared for by good men in honored homes of comfort and luxury. Dare we longer turn deaf ears to those mighty multitudes of toilers, whose hollow eyes already begin, even in our land, to glow with the fires of desperation? Whose hard and bony hands, lifted in unavailing prayer for relief, threaten to descend in that retribution which ignorance and penury alone is capable of. These masses of hard-worked and half-fed mothers, untaught and unloved, will not stop to listen to poetry, though the muses should hurl an Olympus of it among them. It is bread for which they cry—bread for themselves and their ill-starred children. Give them the ballot, gentlemen, even though your own guarded darlings do not need and will not use it.

There is no compulsory voting among men; there will be none among women. Those who feel that their moral character is not strong enough to stand proof against the demoralizations of the polls, can stay away, then as now. But I can't understand why there is so much more danger of contamination from meeting you

gentlemen there, than in receiving you in our homes. If you are so bad and corrupting in politics, how is it that you are so noble and elevating in society?

If you are too vile to vote with, how are you good enough to waltz with? If it is improper for us to be your companions in the formal business of legislation, how in the world is it proper for us to follow you so willingly into the closer relations of marriage? If you are so debasing as politicians, how dare we trust you as husbands? It is not true. Take them the world over, man is as good as woman; woman is as good as man, and she was designed to be, not only her own, but her "brother's keeper" from evil. The majority of women who argue the perils of business association between the sexes, would seem, at a superficial glance, to be entirely beyond danger themselves, and most effective and salutary safeguards to their brothers. Not every one needs to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." The crater of an extinct volcano is hardly the prophet of a resurrection morn.

Gentlemen, on the hilltop yonder the young men and maidens walk side by side up the hill of knowledge. Side by side, strong men and women are at work guarding and guiding their footsteps. It is a beautiful picture; one of which our commonwealth is justly proud. Innocent and profitable emulation stirs the hearts of the aspirants, regardless of sex. "Sweet-girl graduates" vie with your strong sons in receiving the honors of the noble institution. No one thinks of mischief; none exists amid this reciprocity and equality. But it was not always thus. Many years passed before the girls of our state were received into our university at all; and when they were gradually and grudgingly admitted, at first only to a normal department, which gave them no instruction from the regular faculty. I remember well how the prejudiced and lordly young men, until then sole monarchs of the realm, received them with glances and epithets of contempt. "Allen's Squal" was the elegant and complimentary *sobriquet* they bestowed upon the invading, and as they felt, plebeian females. Not until the regents threw open to us the entire institution, seated woman queen as man is king in the realm of learning, did prejudice pass away. Now I imagine the young gentle-

men are too busy keeping pace with the young ladies to spend much time inventing names of derision.

All we ask in any department of life, as in the university, is fair, open fields. Give us this, and your responsibility ceases. If we fail, the fault is ours, and so is the chagrin. But, though woman is in our university, as teacher and pupil; and though we laugh now at the forebodings and chimeras and hobgoblins dire that were conjured by the timid, and advocated as reasons why she should not be admitted there; still, in looking about, we see that she is not yet on the Board of Regents. Is this right? Ought not the mother to have a recognized voice in directing the education of her sons and daughters? Ought she not to be represented on every school board in the land? A majority of all our public school teachers are women; but they are hired, dismissed and paid by men alone—good, competent men, generally; but do you not think woman, if allowed a place here, would give more time and thought to this subject of education than the majority of busy men can give? Has she not as much at stake in the matter as man has, and by her unquestioned triumph as a teacher, has she not demonstrated her capability?

In England, we know that woman has the right to vote on all municipal matters the same as man, but so little stir has been made about it there that we scarcely recognize the fact. Doubtless the work of John Stuart Mill and his noble wife there, had much to do toward consummating this result. We are accustomed to call England "conservative;" but in this reform she surpasses America. One of your senators told me yesterday that he had no doubt that woman's influence at the polls in municipal matters would be beneficent. I tell you "gentlemen may cry 'Peace, Peace,' but there is no peace" until woman is justified.

A common objection to suffrage is, that it will debase and coarsen woman. This is as impossible, gentlemen, as to make a coarse thread out of a fine one. There are plenty of rough, unsensitive women already, but they never voted; and you can never, by any power, make a delicately organized human being, man or woman, indelicate. Such may shrink and retire from rough contact, may forego politics, rather than accept its inevitable work—many men do so now—but they can never make them-

selves coarse if God made them fine in the beginning. On the contrary, a beautiful, self-poised, symmetrical character, alive in every nerve to the finer intuitions, will walk through fire and flood, only to greater purity; will, instead of falling herself, lift others up. An ideal womanhood, such as the Catholic worships in the Virgin Mary, is not wholly impossible, and I believe we shall more nearly approach it when larger hopes and nobler aims teach us the dignity and power of saintliness.

Those of us who are said to be "clamoring" for more rights, simply want the right to do our duty, for a duty is as much more than a right as God than man. We do not want to develop into simply the strong, female homo, but into that grace and beauty and strength of character, which shall assure to the future a better race of men. No strong, noble man ever had a weak mother, and the degeneracy of woman means a degenerate humanity. Note it where you will, the great men of all times are their mothers' sons, while the brilliant women have inherited from the father. It is through motherhood that the race is to be redeemed, physically and morally. The saving *blood* is that which courses pure and healthful through the living arteries; and it is woman, licensed by her own inspiration, and ordained priestess by none lower than the Most High, who is to preach and practice the new gospel of glad tidings. Will not her strong brothers loose the bonds that have fettered her so long, and give her the civilian's liberty to do her work? Who, if not woman, is to come to the solution of the great questions of pauperism and dependency? She is the mother of tramps, of idiots and of criminals as well as of poets, heroes and statesmen. She, ignorant and debased, replenishes the prisons with her children; as enlightened and strong, she crowns our legislature with her sons. In the evil houses of our cities she breeds the riots that terrify the land.

A voice high in scientific lore says: "It is the children of fallen womanhood who tramp and commit crimes that necessitate the penitentiary." Which is better, gentlemen, to go on building costly edifices of charity, reform and punishment, or to lay the axe at the root of the evil and give woman the power to ennoble, sustain and redeem herself, and through her the world? It is pre-natal murder in the heart of ignorant mothers that swings the

gibbet; the desire for human blood if stamped upon the criminal soul before its day of life has dawned; it is desecrated motherhood that is the woe of the world. It is against the profanation of the human body, this "house not made with hands" in which we dwell, that woman must preach and protest. Do you not know that everywhere the Master's temple is dishonored by the money changers? Who, to-day, if not woman, shall take the whip of small cords, drive out the profane and restore every human power to its consecrated niche in the natural temple, and over each inscribe "Holy, Holy, Holy unto the Lord."

Do you further urge that "ladies do not want to vote?" Well, gentlemen, then it is high time they did. The negro slaves did not care to be free, at least not those who were comfortably cared for; but all the same, it was right and needful that they should be. If not for themselves, for the sake of all that fair portion of our land which slavery had cursed. Slavery was another form of degradation of motherhood, and it cursed not only the offspring; on whose brow the mark of Cain is white enough to read, but it cursed also, and more deeply, the slave-holder, his family and his estate. It cursed the north, that so long looked on in apathy, with a cruel war, with enormous taxes not yet paid, and with widows, orphans and disconsolate homes. This fatal mark, whitening over with the succeeding generations, at last in such as Frederick Douglass could rise to the defense of the dusky mothers, and thus sin avenged itself upon the sinners. Not *want* to vote! That is of no consequence. A woman who will put her finger in one corner of her mouth and say: "I don't want to vote," don't know what she does want. She has not studied, has not thought, has not felt, and is as incapable of deciding for herself as a child. Suppose Queen Victoria, when some important state question calls for her decision, should put *her* finger in her mouth, ^{but} *her* head over to one side, and say to Lord Beaconsfield, "I don't want to vote."

But if there are a few American women who talk in that way, that is no reason why the rest of us, who do want to, should be hindered. But I am sure there are not so many of them in any class of society as you may imagine. Why, three years ago, Mrs.

Stanton came to Milwaukee and was entertained by one of our well known ladies, who invited more than a hundred of her fashionable friends to meet her guest. They all came. Diamonds flashed, costly laces and velvet enriched the occasion, rare flowers lent their perfume, and amid it all, dear Mrs. Stanton moved in her own queenly simplicity, her silver hair shining like the gate of the Celestial City. The next day a woman's suffrage petition was circulated and many of those ladies signed it. They were the wives of men whose names are known to you all. Now when you honorable gentlemen go to a lady and say to her, "Of course, Madame, you do not believe in this short-haired and short calico dress suffrage movement!" she instantly exclaims, "Oh, no, I wouldn't vote for the world." And she isn't any worse nor any better, than old Gallileo was when he swore on bended knee that he believed the earth stood still. But as soon as he got erect upon his feet again, he exclaimed *sotto voce*, "but it moves nevertheless."

A kneeling posture always did take the courage out of a man; not until he stands upright, can he tell the truth. Let me go to this same woman, in her own chamber, and shut the door, and say to her: "Now don't you think it a shame that we women have the same political status as children, idiots and criminals, and don't you think it would be good policy for us to vote rather than stand it longer?" She will say in a voice, all the more emphatic because it is low, "Indeed I do!" It makes all the difference in the world how a thing is put; and as for your argument, voting will never make one hair longer or shorter. If it has anything to do with it, the inference is fair that her non-voting status is what makes woman so destitute now in this respect.

It has been my good fortune to spend the past two winters in the old, puritanical, reformatory, strong-minded city of Boston, — and that word suggests that many ladies object to being called "strong-minded." Very well. Let them be called weak-minded or feeble-minded, if that pleases better. There is another alternative, save in a mongrel sort of affair for which there is no name. In Boston I watched the suffrage movement with keen interest. Every winter those tireless, long-suffering women go up to the

legislature and argue their cause before the senate committee, which hears them in the green room of the old state house.

Every winter, for many years, the same arguments have been repeated; one set of legislators getting comfortably converted just in time to go home and have their places filled with a new and prejudiced company. Thus, little was accomplished, visibly, until last winter, when woman was given her right in school matters. Nevertheless, a great silent work was being done by those women in educating the men of Massachusetts on this question. Every winter these men went home wiser—if not sadder—and carried, unconsciously, perhaps, but still carried, to their friends and neighbors the new ideas they had received. I told one of the leaders of the movement there that I believed the women of Wisconsin would have the right of suffrage before the women of Massachusetts. "Why?" she asked in amazement. "Because our men move faster out west. When Gabriel blows his trumpet, they know the day of judgment has come, and they march to the music, bare-headed and in their shirt-sleeves. In Massachusetts, they stop to get their umbrellas, and have wife muffle their throats, after the door of the pit is open and the hot flame singing their whiskers."

No Wisconsin legislature would ever hear that story told so powerfully as it is told there, for so many years. It would get wearied, like the Lord, with woman's importunity, and grant her prayer for peace's sake, if nothing more. But you can't tire out the Massachusetts men. They are excellent listeners. And as I looked into their faces and saw how aged they were, even before they are fifty; how the fire had gone out on the hearthstone, I said to myself, the youth and the energy has gone west and left New England a sort of old folks' home for the land.

Gentlemen, are you going to keep my word for me? Are you going to let the Massachusetts women gain the battle first? They are there again this winter, in the state house on Beacon Hill, under the same glittering dome that has crowned so many reforms in the past; where Webster and Choate and Sumner and Phillips have walked and talked, and won victories for humanity. There, in their footsteps, the women walk and plead to-day; and they will conquer; they are conquering now.

There are many of them ; preachers, doctors, lecturers, writers — not a fool among them — praying for justice. Only one has dared to come to you, with fear and trembling, to beg you to let Wisconsin lead even the grand old Bay State in this one reform. I am told that four more votes must be added to the forty-seven of the other day, before the resolution shall pass the assembly. Are there not four more gentlemen of the chivalry of Wisconsin, who will put lance in rest and come up to the help of woman against the mighty ? And then, gentlemen of the senate committee, will you not pledge us "your lives, your fortunes and your sacred honor ?" Will you not give the women of your own state the same dignities that those of Massachusetts are to have ? Give them now, and let us go to our work. Why, when the Boston women were here last fall, in a three days session in this chamber, they said "Boston" at least nine hundred times. It is characteristic of them.

Every word a western woman said was answered with "Boston." One of our leaders came and said "Industrial School," which you have so handsomely remembered, and they answered "Boston." Somebody ventured "University and co-education," and they talked as though it were not, but told us of some toy tubs and dish pans they have gotten into the public schools of "Boston." Somebody else timidly said "Minnesota University," but the only requiem as that daring woman was laid to rest, was a hoarse, sepulchral echo, ringing among these corridors and dying away in yonder dome — "Boston." Then by and by, they told us that all over the land the women were rejoicing in the spread of the great "Boston movement." That is true, it is great movement, and those women are grand ; but I don't know whether "wisdom will die with them" or not. Lucretia Mott don't live there ; Mrs. Stanton don't ; Susan B. Anthony don't, and Queen Victoria don't.

But they have the right principles of success : *Stand for your own.* Now let us have the right to say Wisconsin ; to say Madison ; to say Milwaukee, as early and as often as they say "Boston." Give us the right to boast of our institutions, of our reforms, of our women, and of our legislature. Give us the same unquestionable freedom that Boston already gives to her women ; free-

dom to go from one part of the city to another, alone, at any hour when street cars run, in safety and self-respect; freedom from foolish, conventional restraints that dwarf and fetter. Any street in any city, unsafe after nightfall for woman, is unsafe for the community, and should be regulated. Working girls cannot often have an escort, and they must be protected in their walks after the day's labor is done. Any place of amusement unfit or unsafe for a respectable woman to attend alone, is demoralizing to society and should be shut up at once. Will you not see to it, gentlemen, that these things are accomplished? You who, when women is strong enough and true enough and wise enough, covet no higher honor than that of worshipper at her shrine; you who are so ready to summon to battle array your sterner forces and storm a throne to crown your wife and kiss your child, will you not believe that the *more* we are, the *greater* we are, the more we can be to you, the *finer* and *grander* we can make the home?

Is not a disciplined, cultivated woman better capable of bearing trial than an undisciplined one? Has she not greater patience, balance of character and variety of resources? Is she not more attractive to man and more competent to train her child? It is home that is and ever must be the basis of society, of church and of state; it is home that underlies the nation's prosperity; it is the clasped hands of wedded love that link time with eternity; and do you fear that woman will be less loving when she becomes stronger? Are *you*, then, less loving because you are strong? No! it is the strong heart that beats the fondest and truest, and bows most implicitly at the shrine of its worship. Weakness wavers; strength is true as the stars that hold their circling tryst in the boreal heavens; weakness loves its flavor; the passion of strength deepens with the years; weakness tyrannizes; strength attracts, irresistibly; weakness tortures with jealousy; strength, secure on her throne, lifts her fadeless brow to the heavens and holds, without effort, all that is her own.

GENTLEMEN — I thank you for listening to me, and I pray you to "Let my people go" — to the polls.