

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION,

HELD AT THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

AUGUST 2, 1848,

*TO CONSIDER THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN, POLITICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY
AND INDUSTRIALLY.*

REVISED BY MRS. AMY POST.

NEW YORK:
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1870.

REPORT.

At an early hour the church was well filled.

AMY POST called the meeting to order and stated that at a preliminary meeting, held the previous evening at Protection Hall, herself, Sarah D. Fish and Rhoda De Garmo, were appointed a Committee to Nominate Officers for this Convention, and that they had concluded to propose the following names: *President*—Abigail Bush; *Vice-President*—Laura Murray; *Secretaries*—Elizabeth McClintock, Sarah L. Hallowell and Catharine A. F. Stebbins.

The report of the committee was unanimously adopted by the Convention, excepting the case of Elizabeth McClintock, who declined accepting the office, on the ground of being unprepared to have a woman the presiding officer, therefore, she proposed the name of Mary H. Hallowell in her place, which being seconded by Mary Ann McClintock, she was duly appointed. To our great surprise, two or three other women—glorious reformers, well deserving the name—coming from a distance to attend the meeting, at first refused to take their seats upon the platform, or otherwise co-operate with the Convention, for the same cause. But as the meeting proceeded, and they had listened to some opening remarks from our gentle but heroic President, their fears for the honor of the Convention subsided, after which they worked nobly for the cause that had called us together, and the meeting proceeded harmoniously to the end.

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## EVENING SESSION.

PRESIDENT in the Chair. A large and crowded audience still in attendance.

On motion, the Declaration of Sentiments was again read, and one hundred and seven signatures obtained, when another discussion ensued upon the dangerous doctrines.

Mr. SULLEY wished to ask fathers, if they had duly considered this subject, which the women had called a Convention to discuss? Did they understand what effect this equality would have upon families? If the husband and wife should differ in politics, or the education of children, how deplorable must be the consequences?

LUCRETIA MOTT replied by asking the question which is preferable, ignorant or intelligent differences?



Mr. SULLEY further asked, when the two heads disagree, who must decide ? There is no Lord Chancellor to whom to apply, and does not St. Paul strictly enjoin obedience to husbands, and that man shall be head of the woman ?

Our ever-able LUCRETIA MOTT replied that in an extensive acquaintance in the Society of Friends, she had never known any difficulty to arise on account of the wife's not having promised *obedience* in the marriage contract. She had never known any other mode of decision, except a resort to argument, and an appeal to reason ; and although in some of the meetings of this Society, women are placed on an equality, none of the results so much dreaded had occurred. She said that many of the opposers of Woman's Rights, who bid us to obey the bachelor, St. Paul, themselves reject his counsel—he advised them not to marry. In general answer, she would quote, “One is your master, even Christ.” Although Paul enjoins silence on women in the church, yet he gives directions how they should appear when publicly speaking, and we have scriptural accounts of honorable women not a few, who were religious teachers : *viz.*; Phebe, Priscilla, Tryphena, Triphosa, and the four daughters of Phillip, and various others.

Mrs. STANTON thought the gentleman might be easily answered ; saying that the strongest will, or the superior intellect, now governs the household, as it will in the new order ; she knew many a woman who, to all intents and purposes, is at the head of her family.

Mr. PICKARD asked who, after marriage, should hold the property, and whose name should be retained ? He thought an umpire necessary. He did not see but all business must cease until the consent of both parties be obtained. He saw an impossibility of introducing such rules into society. The gospel had established the unity and oneness of the married pair, etc., etc.

Mrs. STANTON said she thought the gospel, rightly understood, pointed to a oneness of equality, not subordination, and that property should be jointly held. She could see no reason why marriage by false creeds should be made a degradation to woman ; and as to the name ; the custom of taking the husband's name is not universal. When a man has a bad name, in any sense, he might be the gainer by burying himself under the good name of his wife. This last Winter a Mr. Cruikshanks applied to our legislature to have his name changed. Now if he had taken his wife's name in the beginning, he might have saved the legislature the trouble of considering the propriety of releasing the man from such a burthen, to be entailed on the third and fourth generation.

The following resolutions, which had been separately discussed,

were again read. AMY POST moved their adoption by the meeting, which was carried with but two or three dissenting voices :

1. Resolved, That we petition our State Legislature for our right to the elective franchise, every year, until our prayer be granted.

2. Resolved, That it is an admitted principle of the American Republic, that the only just power of the Government is derived from the consent of the governed ; and that taxation and representation are inseparable ; and therefore, woman being taxed equally with man, ought not to be deprived of an equal representation in the government.

3. Resolved, That we deplore the apathy and indifference of woman in regard to her rights, thus restricting her to an inferior position in social, religious, and political life, and we urge her to claim an equal right to act on all subjects that interest the human family.

4. Resolved, That the assumption of law to settle estates of men who die without wills, having widows, is an insult to woman, and ought to be regarded as such by every lover of right and equality.

5. Whereas, The husband has the legal right to hire out his wife to service, collect her wages and appropriate it to his own exclusive and independent benefit ; and, whereas, this has contributed to establish that hideous custom, the promise of obedience in the marriage contract, effectually, though insidiously, reducing her almost to the condition of a *slave*, whatever freedom she may have in these respects, being granted as a privilege, not as a right, therefore,

Resolved, That we will seek the overthrow of this barbarous and unrighteous law ; and conjure women no longer to promise obedience in the marriage covenant.

Resolved, That the universal doctrine of the inferiority of woman has ever caused her to distrust her own powers, and paralyzed her energies, and placed her in that degraded position from which the most strenuous and unremitting effort can alone redeem her. Only by faithful perseverance in the practical exercise of those talents, so long "wrapped in a napkin and buried under the earth," she will regain her long-lost equality with man.

Resolved, That in the persevering and independent course of Miss Blackwell, who recently attended a series of medical lectures in Geneva, and has now gone to Europe to graduate as a physician, we see a harbinger of the day when woman shall stand forth "redeemed and disenthralled," and perform those important duties which are so truly within her sphere.

Resolved, That those who believe the laboring classes of women are oppressed ought to do all in their power to raise their wages, beginning with their own household servants.

Resolved, That it is the duty of woman, whatever her complexion, to assume, as soon as possible, her true position of equality in the social circle, the church, and the state.

Resolved, That we tender our grateful acknowledgment to the Trustees of the Unitarian Church, who have kindly opened their doors for the use of this Convention.

Resolved, That we, the friends who are interested in this cause, gratefully accept the kind offer from the Trustees of the use of Protection Hall, to hold our meetings whenever we wish.



With hearts overflowing with grateful joy, the meeting adjourned  
*sine die*.

ABIGAIL BUSH, President.

LAURA MURRAY, Vice-Pres.

SARAH L. HALLOWELL,  
CATHARINE A. F. STEBBINS, } Secretaries,  
MARY H. HALLOWELL,