

A

# HISTORY

OF THE  
NATIONAL WORKMAN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT  
National Workman's Rights Movement,

FOR

## TWENTY YEARS,

With the Proceedings of the Decade Meeting held at

Apollo Hall, October 20, 1870,

FROM 1850 TO 1870,

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT DURING THE  
WINTER OF 1871, IN THE NATIONAL CAPITOL,

COMPILED BY

PAULINA W. DAVIS.

NEW YORK:

JOURNEMEN PRINTERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION,  
No. 30 Beekman Street,

1871.

---

MRS. ELIZABETH CADY STANTON'S  
ADDRESS

AT THE  
DECADE MEETING,  
ON  
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

---



At the close of Mrs. Hazlett's address Mrs. ELIZABETH C. STRAYTON was introduced. As her speech is very voluminous we are compelled to abridge it by omitting the bible argument and the attack on the marriage and divorce laws of the State of New York, and comments thereon. She commenced by saying:

I am invited this evening to speak on the important question "Marriage and Divorce."

The political phase of the woman's rights movement has been thoroughly discussed in England and this country, and has already realized so many practical results that it looks as if the suffrage had been nearly fought and won. It has long been the opinion of the constitutional lawyers that women have the right to vote under the same conditions as men. Women have already voted in Wyoming, Utah, and places under this verdict; there remains no question but that of the future for the usage to become general. Hence those who feel a deeper interest in the more vital questions of this reform—the social problems—should now give their earnest thought and speech in such directions.

We are in the midst of a social revolution, greater than any political or religious revolution that the world has ever seen, because it is deep down to the very foundations of society.

We are not called on in republican America to-day to determine whether the Pope is infallible, or whether the King can do no wrong, for Italy has settled one and France the other for this generation.

• But a question of greater magnitude presses on our consideration whether man and woman are equal, joint heirs to all the richness and joy of earth and heaven, or whether one was eternally ordained to be the subject of the other. The political and religious status of the Pope and King are easily decided as compared with this, for those unite in opinions of the many against the one, but here is a question with respect to the human family, and that the strongest half, on one side, who are in possession of the citadel, hold the key of the treasury, and make laws and public sentiment to suit their own purposes. Can all this be made to change base without prolonged discussion, upheavings, burnings, violence and war? Will man yield what he conceives to be his legitimate authority over woman with less struggle than have Pope and Kings their supposed rights over their subjects, or slave-holders over their slaves? No, no. John Stuart Mill says the generality of the male sex cannot yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal at their fireside, and here is the secret of the opposition to woman's equality in the State and the Church; men are not ready to recognize it in their home. This is the real danger apprehended in giving woman the ballot for as long as man makes, interprets and executes the laws for him-

As whole matter pretty much in his own power under any circumstances. Hence when he expresses the fear that liberty to woman would destroy the family relation, he acknowledges that her present condition of subjection is not of her own choosing, and that if she had the power to bring about a transition period, from slavery to freedom, and all the social changes necessary incidents in her progress to equality.

Conservatism cries out we are going to destroy the family. Timid reformers answer, the political equality of woman will not change it. They are both wrong. It will entirely revolutionize it. When woman's equal the marriage relation cannot stand on the basis it is on to-day. But this change will not destroy it. As human statutes and state institutions did not create conjugal and maternal love, they cannot destroy them. We can trust the laws of the universe, even if the speeches and resolutions of a woman's rights convention seem to conflict with them. Is family life with the mass of mankind to-day so happy and satisfactory that it needs no improvement? Change is not death, neither a progress destruction. We have shifted governments from despotisms and monarchies to republics without giving up the idea of national life, and we Americans firmly believe that more peace and prosperity can be realized in a true republic than under any other form of government. True, such changes from the lower to the higher have involved debates, dissensions, violence, war; but the free institutions of our country and I enjoy to-day more than compensate for the sufferings of our fathers in the little May Flower, on that wintry sea, the dreary landing on Plymouth rock, the rigors of a New England winter and the hardships of a seven-years' war.

We have changed the foundations of the Church, too, without upsetting the religious sentiment in the human soul. The discussions and dissensions in the Church filled the world with despair for ages, and changed nations in blood, but the Protestant right of individual conscience and judgment is the result, and though the cardinal points of our faith have been changed and changed again, yet we have a Church still. So we shall have the family after the present idea of man's headship is repudiated and woman set free.

To establish a republican form of government the right of individual judgment in the family must of necessity involve discussion, discussion, division; but the purer, higher, holier marriage will be evolved by the very evils we now see and deplore.

This same law of equality that has revolutionized the State and the



Church is now knocking at the door of our homes, and sooner or later there too it must do its work.

Let us one and all wisely bring ourselves into line with this law, for man will gain as much as woman by an equal companionship in the nearest and holiest relations of life.

How to marry is the primal question to what justifies divorce. To know how to do the first wisely would, in most cases, obviate the necessity of the other at all. It is not my mission to patch up evil; my mind always gravitates to the foundation causes of the disorder on the surface. I would rather be instrumental in placing new round in the ladder of progress by which all humanity might rise a little higher, than with moral anodynes to soothe the sufferings of a generation in their false relations.

We are doing two things to-day in the Western States to improve married life. In opening all high-schools and colleges to girls, we are giving young men and women better opportunities of studying together's tastes, sentiments, capacities, characters, in the normal conditions of everyday life, in the recitation-room and on the playground. In ever-day life, in the recreation-room and on the playground, real character reveals itself, and more congenial marriages will be the result of these early and free acquaintanceships, far different from those under the artificial stimulus of fashionable society. Thus, too, in removing a girl's ambition to go through a collegiate course, marriage will be postponed to later years, when her character and physical powers will be matured and perfected. This of itself will end much of the weakness and disability that so greatly mar the happiness of married life to-day.

Whatever can be done to give women health and happiness, and freedom of body and mind, will bring solace and sunshine to home-life. Napoleon once said, "You cannot make a soldier out of a sick man." You cannot make happy mothers out of sick women, so long as our homes are hospitals, dark shadows hang over the best part of our lives. Still another great result will flow from this new system of education. Boys and girls studying side by side, contented for the same prizes, will learn to regard each other as equals, which will do much to change the man's overbearing self-conceit into profound respect for woman; and again, when both, in the cultivation of their spiritual and intellectual powers, shall learn the higher pleasure of a mutual flow and overflow of brain forces, galvanizing both into grander thoughts and nobler aspirations, the mere sensuous will take its subordinate place and marriage will have new attractions, based not on the physical alone but the deeper sentiments, and thus be purified and exalted.

Moreover girls are beginning to have the idea of pecuniary independence, of the dignity of self-support; hence, with their minds occu-

ing their hands in profitable work, marriage will cease to be the goal of their ambition, it will be an incident in their lives, not the means of it.

When womanhood is as dignified and independent as manhood, in itself, and labor equally honorable for both, women will not try to escape the odium of being called old maids, or to live by the charity of another.

Let us remember that womanhood is the great fact, wifehood and manhood its incidents. A place in the world of work in the trades and professions will enable women to marry from the highest motives, from their necessities; it will teach them, too, the value of money—to wit, that they spend will be the best possible check to extravagance, and that much of the domestic contention over the almighty dollar—and that place she is slowly conquering to-day. Let every wise father educate his daughter to self-support, if he would make her life happy and independent.

If girls had occupation, kind fathers and mothers would not be so often called to deplore the unfortunate marriages so many of their daughters make. If they were kept in colleges as their brothers are, and twenty-five, studying science and philosophy, they would not come to the study of man at sixteen.

Let the intellect and ambition have full play, and the sentiments and affections will not be so easily roused. Alas! what wrecks we see on every side of girls married in their teens to young men who drink and smoke and chew and gamble, spending their days in idleness and their nights in vice, propagating discord, disease and crime in all our homes. We meet these victims of unhappy marriages everywhere.

Traveling, not long since, I noticed in the seat near me a sweet, girlish looking woman, dressed in deep black. She looked so sad and lonely that I went to her and proposed a walk on the platform while the cars were stopping. We were soon friends, and she gave me her sorrowful experiences. Married at sixteen to a young man of wealth, education and good family, but of intemperate habits, which she thought the affection for her would enable her to control; the mother of three was before she was twenty, all sickly, nervous, restless; her own health broken down with anxiety, and watching not only the children, night after night, but the father; friends, thinking it best to get him out of New York from the many temptations of a city, with active business in the country, sent him to the oil regions in Pennsylvania, and there this delicate, pure, refined young child spent six years of her life trying to win a besotted man to the paths of virtue and peace. Night after night, when the babies were asleep, she would go alone through street,



and rain, and snow, all round one of those rough pioneer settlements into every den of vice, looking for the father of her children she might get him home. "One thing," said she, "he would always lay down his cards and glass and follow me, but on our way home would say: 'Mary, such places are not fit for you.' 'Then,' I would say, 'a man who frequents such places is not a fit companion for me.' These," said she "were six long years of useless struggle. He was cross and irritable, loathsome, bloated, disgusting; turned my love to and after a fearful attack of delirium tremens, the grave covered shame and misfortunes, and my three children lie by his side when, with aching heart, I buried them all there, you may well hear me say so, but it was with a sorrowful thankfulness, for I feared that warning in the second commandment, given mid the elders of Sinai: 'The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children.' Now, said I, I shall be saved the unspeakable sorrow of ever seeing my own sons come reeling home to me with that silly, sensual leer worse than abuse and profanity." What a chapter of experience a girl not twenty-five! And multitudes are following in her wake!

When women are scientifically educated, when they understand the responsibilities that parenthood involves, and the long train of that flow from blunders in these primal relations, drunkards, gamblers, tobacco chewers and debauchees will be at a discount. Let us marry a sensual man to reclaim him; there are stains on such a soul no love can wash away. Science has vindicated the right to divorce freely whether our ancestors were apes; let it be as free to ask what our posterity shall be idiots, dwarfs, knaves and lunatics; and if not what change, if any, in our social institutions, such wretched results be avoided.

So long as people marry from considerations of policy—from possible motive but the true one—discord and division must be the result. So long as the State provides no education for youth on questions, and throws no safeguards around the formation of marriages, it is in honor bound to open wide the door of escape. From a woman's stand-point I see that marriage, as an individual tie, is a woman's law, because law, religion and public sentiment all combine for woman, to hold her true to this relation, whatever it may be. There is no other human slavery that knows such depths of degradation as a wife chained to a man whom she neither loves nor respects no slavery so disastrous in its consequence on the race, or to individual respect, growth and development.

The question to-day with the Protestant world is not whether marriage is an indissoluble tie, a holy sacrament, but, as a civil contract,

and what reasons it may be dissolved. In the beginning and profane history alike show that this relation had not even the dignity of a contract; the whole matter rested in the hand of the individual man, who took or put away his wife at his pleasure, where he remained, for centuries alike under the Mosaic and Christian dispensation, until by a Papal act of encroachment, the power and arbitrament were wrested from the master of the family, and marriage became a sacrament of the Church. "The Popes of Rome," says John Fox, "perceiving the great revenue and high authority it would give them, even over princes, to have the judging and deciding of such a main consequence in the life of a man as divorce, wrought so upon the superstitions of those ages, as to divest them of that right which God gave the beginning had intrusted to the husband, by which means they expected that ancient and naturally domestic prerogative to an external and unbefitting judicature."

The State, too, for certain civil reasons, claiming the regulation of property by inheritance, and the ownership of children, began in time to regulate marriage and divorce by legislation, differing, however, in all matters in many provisions, but invariably with reference to the universal selfish interest of man; polygamy being the universal rule. We find no record of monogamic marriage as a system until it was established in pagan Rome 700 years before Christ, when it was more strictly guarded than it has ever been since. At that early period civil law did not attempt to regulate marriage, as this was done by family custom, and this may account for the equivocal assertion we so often hear that there were no divorces in Rome the first five centuries of her national history. As divorce was unknown to their civil law, of course there could be none. Then for the first time the nuptial ceremonies were solemnized by the infusion of the religious element and the presence of the priests.

It was not considered a duty to employ priests at marriages until about 170 years after Christ. When Jesus and his disciples attended the marriage at Cana of Galilee neither he nor his disciples took any part in the ceremonies. The next step in connecting religion with marriage was the custom of performing the ceremony at the church door. This custom continued in England to the time of Edward VI. Edward I was married at the door of Canterbury Cathedral to the sister of the king of France.

Marriage was first celebrated in the churches in the thirteenth century by the decree of Pope Innocent III. Thus a custom originating in paganism became a sacrament in the Church, designed specially to bestow to impress woman with the sanctity of the marriage relation so far



as she was concerned, and to secure, on her part at least, fidelity to marriage vow.

Thus has the religious element in woman, as in all oppressed classes, been invariably played upon for her more complete subjugation. But for these false teachings of the church, multitudes of women through the centuries, would have risen up in their native purity and dignity and sundered with their own hands the unholy ties that bound them; divorced, vice and crime, in unclean marriage relations; and those as Christian canons, long since obrudred upon the church of Rome, have not yet been scourged off by the Reformation.

But it was a maxim of Roman law, long after the Emperors became Christian, that no obstacle should be put in the way of divorce by mutual consent or agreement of the parties, and that the parties should not be forced for fear of penalty to remain together when agreed to separate, any more than they should be forced into marriage at the Paulus Emelius, the greatest and worthiest Roman of his time, being asked why he put away his wife for no visible reason, replied, "I show," holding out his foot, "is a neat shoe, a new shoe, and seeming fits me well, yet none of you know where it wrings me; much less can you discern the private differences of husband and wife, neither she nor you."

Without pursuing the history of marriage in different ages and in different, under different religions and forms of government, let us see how it is viewed by Protestants in our own country, judging from the colots and canons. A new feature in the constitution of marriage in our day is the growing recognition of woman as a party to the contract, having an equal right with man to take and put away. Governor Jewell, Connecticut, told me that when he was Governor, in one year there was a third as many divorces in that State as marriages, and that the majority of the applications were made by women. It is this new element that embitters the discussion, for what is considered a legitimate bond of freedom, in man, is rank rebellion in woman; and yet the tender in both church and state is to secure to her greater latitude than she ever enjoyed before. The Methodist Church, by an ecclesiastical convention has taken the word "obey" from her marriage ceremony, and the leading clergymen in all denominations except the Episcopalian omit it in pleasure, thus taking one step toward recognizing the equality of relation. The Presbyterian Church, in its confession of faith, grants divorce for two causes—adultery and desertion—thus making marriage dissoluble *in*.

By the laws of the several States, in this Republic, made by Christian representatives of the people, divorces are granted to-day for

seventeen following reasons: "Bigamy," "Adultery," "Voluntary desertion from one to five years," "Continual absence for five years," "Insanity or mental alienation," "A state of vagrancy," "Cruelty or abuse," "Refusing conjugal benevolence," "Habitual drunkenness and excessive use of opium," "Imprisonment for crimes decided by local statute," "Temptance of either party," "For not furnishing the wife with sufficient means of support," "Immorality of either party," the wife's refusal to allow her husband when he removes his home," "When either one belongs to the sect of Shakers," "Union with a negro, mulatto or Indian." Kentucky has gone so far as to make a law that when a husband announces in the papers his intention of not paying the debts of his wife, she has a sufficient cause for divorce, and all these causes are for divorce *a vinculo*, or absolute, not simple separation, or divorce *a mensa et thoro*. In regard to "cruelty and abuse," the Supreme Court Judges of both Michigan and Illinois have decided that this comprehends more than simply physical cruelty, such as kicking, pummelling, pinching; it includes those humiliations of the spirit occasioned by indifference, contempt and aversion. None of the Christian gentlemen who made these laws, or the learned judges who have given their decisions, would admit that they had done ought to impair the sacredness of the marriage relation, but everything to protect it. Marital obligations, are nowhere so fully regulated as in those countries where marriage is held to be a religious ordinance, and divorce wholly forbidden. Not to go out of our own country, contrast the condition of society in Indiana, where liberal divorce laws prevail, with South Carolina, where divorce is impossible, and this the latter boasts of her virtue in this respect, she directs by special legislative enactment what proportion of a man's property he may give to a concubine. "Forced virtue," says Milton, "is like a bolt overshot, it goes neither forward nor back, and does no good where it stands."

In the legislatures of New York and Missouri, where the divorce laws are most stringent, propositions have been under consideration to increase prostitution by the State. In England, where they are equally strict, a contagious disease act has just been passed by the British Parliament. By this kind of legislation in the several States, we have practically decided two important points.

First, That marriage is not an indissoluble tie, but may be sundered by a decree of the courts—

Second, That marriage is not a sacrament of the church, but a civil contract between the parties. And the one involves the other.

Our laws are based on the old common law of England, which so regards it. Hence, as the State cannot take cognizance of the ideal or sacred marriage, she deals with it simply as a question of public policy—



other contracts, carefully made, the parties of age, and all agreements faithfully observed; but if the immoral acts of either party, or innumerable differences of organization essentially annul the contract, let the State declare it so. We need a national law or no law on this question. It is all-important for many reasons that our legislation in several States should be homogeneous, that the civil status of the citizen may be the same in Connecticut and New York. By the laws of the latter States to day, a man or woman who could be legally married in Connecticut might be convicted of bigamy in New York.

This dodging from one State to another, so common to-day, to cure freedom, is educating our people into contempt for all law. The idea of true reform is not to coquet with unjust law, thrust it one side or try to get beyond its reach, but to fight it where it is and fight it to the death; for so long as the right of divorce is denied in a single State in this Union, it is made disreputable in all. The result of this elementary vacillating legislation is three kinds of polygamy in the midst.

*First* There is the Mohammedan or Mormon form of polygamy, many wives known to each, living in daily contact.

*Second* There is the form known to our laws as bigamy, where a man has two or more wives living in different places, each supporting herself the legal wife.

*Third* There is the form well known to society, which our legislators now propose to license, where a man lives with one wife, whose children are his legal heirs, but who has many mistresses. This is everywhere practiced in the United States, and yet, under our social, religious and political institutions, the best type of civilization is realized that the race has attained.

To sum up the dark facts of our social life gives one a gloomy picture. The social vice, with its festering, wide-spread corruption, its ease and death of soul and body alike, filling our asylums with the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the maimed, the halt, the idiot, the lunatic, incest in high places, seduction, rape, infanticide, lily hands strangling the moral monstrosities of an unwilling maternity, wives running to Louisiana and Connecticut like slaves to their Canada, from marriage worse than plantation slavery; paramours shot in broad day light in courts of justice and leading journals made the hunting-ground of Christian women who dare to sound the tocsin of alarm, who dare to call public thought to the social relation of the sexes, relations that under all religion and government.

Before these awful facts of life we stand hardened or appalled. The recent act, in the British Parliament licensing houses of prostitution

and the indignation of the entire womanhood of England, while similar propositions in this country scarce create a ripple on the surface. It is, however, a sign of awakening to these all-important questions that so large an audience has gathered here to-night.

Let us now glance at a few of the popular objections to liberal divorce laws.

*First* "It is said that to make divorce respectable by law, gospel and public sentiment, is to break up all family relations;" which is to say that human affections are the result and not the foundation of the laws of the Church and statutes of the State. The love of men and women for their children and one another existed long before human governments were established. Crippled, perverted and enslaved, it has survived despotisms, monarchies and republics, and will no doubt survive when all forms of government have passed away, for love is immortal. I had never supposed that the regret I felt in leaving home, my husband and children, and the joy in returning, were the result of the stringent divorce laws in the State of New York, and that but for them, I should have been a wanderer on the face of the earth. To open the door of escape to those who dwell in continual antagonism, to the unhappy wives of drunkards, libertines, knaves and tyrants, need not necessarily embitter the relations of those who are contented and happy; but on the contrary, the very fact of freedom strengthens and purifies the bond of union. When husbands and wives do not own each other as property, but are bound together only by affection, marriage will be a life-long friendship, and not a heavy yoke from which both may sometimes long for deliverance.

The freer the relations between human beings, the happier. Look, for example, at the servants in our households; with how much more ease and consideration we treat them, knowing that they can leave us when they choose, than we should if they were our slaves absolutely in our power, that if they left us, gospel and public sentiment would drive them back. The necessity on our part of greater kindness and gentleness to hold them, while it ensures greater happiness to them, is the most desirable discipline for ourselves. Many a man who is tyrannical to-day, if he knew public sentiment would protect his wife in leaving him, would become kind and considerate; and many a wife who is peevish and fretful, a continual torment and annoyance, if she knew her husband could sunder the tie honorably and respectably, would soon change her manners.

*Second* "It is said that the 10,000 libel-fines, leeches and egotists would take a new wife every Christmas if they could legally and respectably rid themselves in season of the old one." This is one of



Honore Greeley's objections. This objection is based on the idea that every man she meets, that she is to-day. But in the new regime, she holds her place in the world of work, educated to self-support and land under her feet and a shelter over her head, the results of her toil, the social, civil, political equal of the man by her side, she will clutch at every offer of marriage, like the drowning man at the first straw. Though men should remain just what they are to-day, the entire revolution in woman's position, now inaugurated, forces a moral code in social life. Again, the class of men who would do things under liberal divorce laws, do them now, and they are enabled to tyrannize over the legal wives, the innocent victims who respect and public sentiment, as they could not, if women were educated higher ideas of duty, purity and virtue, as in time they would be under just and liberal laws.

Third. It is objected that under liberal divorce laws, the fickle and restless would separate for trifling causes, and the sensuous for mere love of change.

As the centrifetal forces in the material world are strong enough to hold matter to a common centre, against all other laws and attractions, so in the moral world, the love of change is subordinated to stronger love of the familiar objects and conditions about us. Experience proves the truth of the historical maxim, that mankind is more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they have been accustomed. The restless, the fickle, the sensuous, are not the classes that respect and obey law, they are the moral comets and meteors that mark their own courses through life. What are the marriage and divorce laws of New York to the 20,000 prostitutes in her metropolis, and to the married men who visit these haunts of vice, disease and death, or to those who can readily sever these ties in Indiana and Connecticut? It is only the virtuous and law-abiding that are interested in wise and sane legislation. As Moses permitted the children of Israel, so the State seems to permit the vicious classes, because of the hardness of their hearts, to be a law unto themselves. Why not permit the pur minded, the educated, the refined to be a law unto themselves?

Fourth. People say though it may be better for unhappy husbands and wives to part, the best interests of the children require an indissoluble union.

The best interests of the children, the parents, the State all require that such ties should be religiously dissolved. It is a great thing to be well born, and no amount of love, care or education can ever compare

to a child for the moral and physical weaknesses and deformities, the happy morbid conditions that result in its organization from coldness, aversion or disgust in the parents for one another. Next to the misfortune of such a birth is the demoralizing influence on children when trained in an atmosphere of discord and dissatisfaction, such a false marriage relation inevitably creates. Moreover, a wife who would be able to train her children far better alone, than subjected to the abuse and interference of a vicious, besotted man; or the worse; for where the moral and intellectual natures of men and women are subject to the sensual, the caprices of temper or appetite outweigh all love for their children. It is sometimes the case, that two people, really well organized, desire divorce, who, like oil and water never seem to move in the same currents; if such separate, who shall have the children? In such cases a pleasant friendship would or might ensue, where conjugal love was impossible, and they could agree, themselves, on some satisfactory disposition of their children. Those who believe in liberal divorce laws may, in turn, ask what becomes of the children of to-day. Let your jails, prisons, asylums, houses of refuge, answer the question. If the world cared more for the kind of children thrown out as charity and less for the statistics of numbers, our records of poverty, misery and crime would be far less appalling. One of the strongest reasons for demanding the release of unhappy wives and husbands from discordant marriages, is the evil results of such relations on children.

Fourth. It is objected that men and women would not exercise the deliberation and discrimination they now do, if to marry ill were not considered a crime and the parties not doomed to suffer a life-long penalty.

As I have already shown, nothing could be more reckless than our present system, when merely to be seen walking together may be taken as evidence of intent to marry and going through the ceremony a feat may seal the contract.

"Of all requirements," says Robert Dale Owen, "the most arduous and onerous when even mature thought has brought wisdom and where we has conferred experience—is the decision whether a being loved now is the one of all others, intellectually, morally, physically, to whom in a true home we can impart happiness and from whom we are capable of receiving it. Mortal eyes, even the wisest, never fully penetrate the veil; there may be that beyond which no foresight could anticipate, and if such be the case with wisdom and experience to guide, that shall we expect from unsuspecting youth just entering a false world, serenely ignorant of its treacheries, an utter stranger to its guile?"



Will its goodness be its protection? The reverse. In such a trial the noblest who are the most exposed. The better the nature, the more imminent the danger it encounters. The cold, the heartless, calculating have fair chance of escape, it is the warm, the trusting generous who are the usual sufferers. What so easily cheated fresh and faithful innocent heart, and by what right, according to principle, I pray you, do we decide that there is one mistake never to be corrected, one error, the most fatal of all, which once committed, we shall never be permitted to repair?"

Sixth. It is objected that the bible is opposed to divorce. As I says every great truth must go through three stages. 1st. It is opposed to the bible. 2d. It was discovered before. 3d. They always believe.

Multitudes of passages can be quoted from the old testament showing that men took and put away wives at their pleasure. Polygamy and divorce were universally recognized as right among the Hebrews and when Jesus was questioned on this subject he said he did not to abrogate the laws of Moses, but to fulfill them. As he never ascended in his teachings to the plane of policy, expediency or expediency he gave his questioners on this as on every subject, the highest view. With him the mere outward tie did not constitute marriage a soul-centred, constant love, that knew no change or abatement wandering of thought even, from the one cherished, chosen object affection. How many who quote Jesus on this subject are ready to accept his doctrine of the true marriage?

That Jesus' disciples did not understand him as forbidding divorce is seen in the words of the apostles. Paul permitted it for deserting Luther, Melancthon and Calvin, all advocated divorces. In the case of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, they granted divorce, and he tried again by their permission, while the first wife still lived.

Such has been the position of the Protestant Church in all ages, such is its position to-day. The bible argument on this question, properly treated, would be a lecture in itself; for those who wish to purchase this point I recommend John Milton's unanswerable argument this as on every other question, the bible is quoted on both sides.

While John Milton makes an unanswerable argument to prove that the highest, purest spiritual marriage of love, sympathy and companionship is taught there, and divorce right for all relations of antagonism and dissatisfaction, Moncure D. Conway takes the opposite view.

He says:

"By adopting the Hebrew idea of indissoluble marriage, with a single exception, we force thousands to remain under the yoke of a relation that mutilates the affections and ruins the soul.

The ascetic law of marriage, ascribed to Jesus in Matthew, as the means of killing more wives and husbands, the cause of more poverty and the training of more children amid daily examples of misery and meanness, than all other causes put together. The marriage superstition is one of the most cruel the world has ever seen. There is none without knowledge of the hecatombs slowly consumed in the properly called "altar," and it rests upon the bible. It was considered extravagant when Anacharsis Clutz said in the French Assembly, "The democratic principle is so sacred that it would be cheaply purchased by the destruction of the entire human race from the face of the earth," but his claim was not wilder than that of the monastic inheritance "the sacrament of marriage," which fills society with crimes, which school homes, starved affections, and, alas! with malformations of heart and brain.

The relation that should be the most beautiful, one which must make every home, where it really exists, a temple and a school as well as sacrificed to a book which demands that we shall on that point throw away the experience of thousands of years, and compress ourselves to a law of barbarism.

All this talk about the indissoluble tie and the sacredness of marriage, irrespective of the character and habits of the husband, is for its sake on woman. She never could have been held the piant tool she is today but for the subjugation of her religious nature to the idea of whatever condition she found herself as man's subject, that condition was ordained of Heaven; whether burning on the funeral pile of a husband in India, or suffering the slower torture of bearing children every year in America to drunkards, diseased, licentious men, at the expense of her own life and health and the enfeebling of both the mind and body of her progeny. Women would not live as they now do in this enlightened age in violation of every law of their being, giving the very key of their existence to the exercise of one animal function, if subordination to man had not been made through the ages the cardinal point of their religious faith and daily life. It requires but little thought to see that the indissoluble tie was one of the necessary steps in this obligation. Human nature will bear anything so long as ills seem variable but when a door of escape opens, the inborn love of life and freedom in the human soul fires the whole being to seek liberty at all risks, throwing old authorities and dogmas to the winds, and trampling the chains of a long and weary bondage beneath their proud, impatient feet. The indissoluble tie was found to be necessary in order to establish man's authority over woman. The argument runs thus:

Men all admit that if two cannot be agreed they must part. This



may apply to partners in business, pastor and people, physician and patient, master and servant, and many other relations in life; but in case of parent and child, husband and wife, as their relations cannot be dissolved, there must be some alternate authority to decide all in which they cannot agree, hence man's headship. These cases should be distinguished, however; the child is free to act on his own opinion by law, at a certain age, and the tie is practically dissolved between him and the parent so soon as he earns his own bread. The child is under the parent's control only during its minority; but the wife's condition is perpetual minority, life-long subjection to authority, with appeal, no hope on the indissoluble tie theory. The practical effect of this is to make tyrants of men and fools of women. There never was a human being yet on this footstool godlike enough to be trusted with the absolute control of any living thing. Men abuse each other in your prisons, jails, asylums, battle-fields and camps, they abuse horses, dogs, cats, as Mr. Bergh can testify. They abuse their children, and of course they will abuse their wives, taught by and gospel that they own them as property, especially as a wife vex and thwart a man, as no other living thing can.

It is sheer folly at this age of the world to waste ink or words in marriage as an indissoluble tie and on the husband's divinely ordained authority, for woman's growing self-respect and keen perception of drift of these dogmas enable her at last to see that the long weary bondage her sex has endured through the centuries was but in the beginning on these twin heresies.

If science, philosophy, religion and law combined shall finally settle this question on the basis of the indissoluble tie and male authority, my advice to my sex would be, beware of putting your head into that noose. In fact I should consider a woman of virtue, independence and education, who would marry on such conditions, as to all true sense of Christian dignity and human freedom.

What should we have thought of Frederick Douglass, if after being escaped from slavery and become an educated, worthy, respected citizen in the Empire State, he had voluntarily gone back to Maryland to live under the slave code, where his person, his property, his power of locomotion, his opinions were all subjected to a master? We should have said that he was either a fool or ignorant of the laws of a State. If marriage cannot be dissolved and man's authority, according to God's law, is absolute in that relation, women who enter it are either fools or ignorant of the laws that govern it. Verily, under such circumstances, it is better, as the apostle says, not to marry. In reading the learned writers on this question, I have been amused to see

how they differ so widely among themselves as to the different systems of marriage, they all agree on one point, man's absolute authority over woman. Religion and common sense alike teach that the gods of marriage are solace, help, the spiritual growth of both parties and intellectual and moral companionship.

The best interests of the individual, the family, the nation, cry against these legalized marriages of discord and disgust. We may divide those who marry, says a recent writer, into three

classes: First, The low order of unfortunates who obey no principle of conduct or attraction of either the flesh or the spirit. These are drawn together by mere proximity, a gravitation like inert masses, without thought or impassioned impulse, and held there by the tyranny of circumstances. Of this large class I shall say nothing, because they are as it were, in moral lazar houses, and there is too much to be done for them in all directions to philosophize on any special reform in their condition. These are the hotbeds of disease, vice, crime, violence and war. They have violated every law, human and divine, blindly and willfully; nevertheless they must pay the penalty in that physical and mental death that knows no resurrection.

The second class to come up one step higher are drawn together by the attraction of physical difference. The world moves by the combination of opposing forces. In the magnetism of love one party is positive, the other negative, and they mutually attract, the grave to the sunny to the severe, the fair to the dark, the tall to the short, the plump to the lean, &c. Such unions have no element of the permanent, but they are for time alone, unless the inner natures are commended also.

In the third and highest class we find the few, who, obeying the noble attraction of spiritual as well as physical difference, love each other for time and eternity. There is love terrestrial and love celestial. There is one beauty of the earth, another of the stars, a beauty of faded lines and fresh colors, and a subjective beauty which fades away. Blessed are they who love for that alone, who, in a true spiritual union, find an element of the permanent, that like myrrh and saffron, sweetens and glorifies life, makes gods of men and women and paradise on earth. One of these unions has given the world a John Stuart Mill, who in his writings unites the consciousness and strength of the man with the tenderness and inspiration of the woman; and whether speaking of trade, science, philosophy or law, a deep abiding love for humanity breathes in every line. He and his glorified wife were one in all their studies, interests and ambitions. Whatever came



from the pen of one was the united thought of both. She first brought him to the question of woman's enfranchisement, and as he says of her to him a whole new world of thought. And now that she has passed into the better land, he watches beside her new-made grave, in the communion still, for in his last great work every page glows with man's thought and feeling. When the thin veil that parts them is withdrawn he will find her, no doubt, still lingering on the threshold of time that together they may begin the work of eternity. And this marriage, a true union of soul and intellect, which leads, exalts and sanctifies the physical consummation.

Sometimes we catch a strain of music that makes all discordant, that fills the soul with tenderness and love, and yet with courage and heroism that one could do and dare and suffer all for. This is the soul of sex in music joined, and when fairy fingers can interpret to the world the melancholy compositions of the Beethovens and Mendelssohns the sad strains will be turned to joy, to triumph and gladness. Man waits to-day for woman's soul to meet him on the heights of science, philosophy, poetry and art, where he has so long dwelt in just as the sacred fabulist tells us he did for her coming at dawn. His isolation in the soul and intellect is the sad wail in the heart that cannot be satisfied with simply a union of the flesh. The good and good in all ages have felt these yearnings for the higher marriage. Men have philosophized and poetized about it, legislated it, but never touched the kernel of the question, because it is a religion that concerns man and woman equally, and its cornerstone must be laid in the freedom and equality of both parties. Many noble men and women who have suffered in their marriage relations have called in vain for its dissolution.

Alex. Humboldt, who died not long since, said: "Marriage, having this peculiarity, that its objects are frustrated when the feelings of the parties are not in harmony with it, should require nothing but the declared will of either party to dissolve it."

John Milton said: "Those who marry intend as little to compare their own sin as those who swear allegiance, and as a whole people a bad government, so is one man or woman to an ill marriage."

Jeremy Bentham said: "A condition requiring a continuance of marriage, notwithstanding a change of feeling in the parties, is altogether shocking and contrary to humanity."

Ritchee said: "He considered that every marriage in which purest love failed on either side, was no better than a work of adultery." Charlotte Brontë said: "When a wife's nature loathes that of her man she is wedded to, marriage must be slavery; against slavery

thinkers revolt, and though torture be the price of resistance, torture must be dared; though the only road to freedom be through the gates of death, these gates must be passed, for freedom is indispensable." John Stuart Mill says: "The subject of marriage is usually discussed as if the interests of children were everything, those of grown persons nothing."

Charles Dickens says: "I read in the papers at every session of the Court how the impossibility of ever getting unchained from one blood upon the land."

But suppose the tie dissolved, what then? Nothing but to form a new and equally unsatisfactory; for so long as woman remains man's subject in the valley of humiliation, while he enjoys the purer atmosphere on the mountain tops, and in hours of ease comes down to her, and next only in their grosser natures—he is bereft of half his power, and the sad and dissatisfied—because she knows she is cheated of her right, to rise to the same sublime heights where in his highest moments he walks with the gods knowing good and evil. It is sad to look over the record of all those who have been wrecked in this dream of happiness, and to know that hundreds are groaning in such bondage to-day, and that the young, the gay, the brave, the beautiful, are all launching their barks for the same island of enchantment. From the days of Socrates to Charles Dickens, there has been a long succession of unfortunate examples—Poet and Painter, Doctor and Novelist, Philosopher and Linguist. The Molieres, the Miltons, the Byrons, the Bulwers, the Deurers, the Sheridans, the Shakespeares, will all marry and quarrel in the future as they have in the past, and will, without exception, will, in the future as the past, blame their fate, without their several successive catastrophes. And yet what a record for their several successive catastrophes. And yet what a record for their several successive catastrophes. And yet what a record for their several successive catastrophes. And yet what a record for their several successive catastrophes.

Dr. Franklin, that old utilitarian kite-flyer, went to Europe, leaving his wife behind, and never saw her face for eleven years. She had learned his poverty, practiced his poor Richard maxims, pinched and starved, patched and darned, worked early and late, bred children and nursed them through sprue, jaundice, red gum, whooping cough, scarlet fever and fits, while Benjamin enjoyed the splendors of velvet, velvet couches, good dinners and choice society. Of course, when he came back the poor drudge was no match for the philosopher; and he was a great gulf between them. Like too many women, she expected all her powers on the animal wants of her household, without allowing one hour in the twenty-four sacred to herself for her own culture and improvement. That her heart rebelled in her solitude and



neglect is manifest in the headstrong acts of their children. He reled with his sons and disinherited one of them; thus were the er's wrongs revenged. A just retribution for every injustice to is sure to come in the vice and crime of her children, to the thir fourth generation. The less said of Benjamin Franklin's priva actor the better. William Franklin, Governor of New Jersey, natural son, and how many more of the same sort he had Franklin himself never knew. This son was a Tory, and disagree lently with his father in politics. Undazzled by the glories of F stoves and lightning rods, one sees much to disapprove in the life great philosopher.

Henry Clay, too, thought he could safely leave his wife at to bear children and make butter for the Lexington market, made laws for the nation and love to lovely women in Washi There his heart stood always open as any boarding-house doer shut against her who was playing Solomon's wise woman on a Kentucky, cutting out linsey and jeane for the negroes. His ambition over, sick and sad he went back to Ashland to find him domestic drudge, called by the holy name of wife, had reared him a race of degenerate children. He was filled with disappointment but his sorrow measured the depths of the mother's humiliation. angels of incidence and retaliation were but equal. Was it the happy mother that made one son crazy with hopeless love; another, discontented man, overcome through life with a sense of inferior and jockeys and gamblers of the rest?

Truly wisdom is justified of her children; we do not gather of thorns, nor figs from thistles. We cannot quench our thirst at and pleasant streams whose fountains we have poisoned. Great cator! shallow protectionist! how could he with his narrow p creed ever fathom the causes of our social wrongs? He might the wife who ministered to him in carnal things, but just and was her revenge.

Henry Clay is dead, his compromise measures are scattered winds, but his misdeeds live long after him. His son Theodore in the insane asylum at Lexington fifty years, and died but a few since—a long, weary life of hopeless despondency.

Oliver Ellsworth, chief justice of the Supreme Court of the States, and successor to Ben. Franklin, at the court of France, the grand-daughter of the Gov. of Connecticut, Roger Wolcott. She well educated, saw the best company of the time, was a woman of natural sense, and inherited great talent. After marriage she books, society, travel, and devoted herself to raising a large farm

ing a large farm, and to both departments she brought such high that her labors were entirely successful. All her children health, sense and sound moral principle, while she so pr-ly managed their financial affairs that wealth also was their portio. son was an influential member of Congress, Governor of Connecticut and Judge of the Supreme Court; another was one of the largest farmers in the West, and Commissioner of Patents in Washington. daughter married the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Con-ent, &c., all taking the first rank in society. Late in life, in review-her course and its results, she used to say she had made one grave She thought it her constant duty to stay with her family on the and best help her husband in that way. He went to Washington without her, to France without her, and through their affection and lost their knowledge of each other became unsatisfactory. She to say to her daughters, keep with your husbands; go for a few or months every winter to Washington; never mind the long, muddly stage ride; keep with them at any sacrifice; read, think, pace with them in knowledge and attainment. My husband grew from me, not in affection wholly but attainment. We started to- equals, capable of spiritual and intellectual companionship, but I up everything, lived with children and servants, took no note of the without, no interest in national questions, in the subjects that ab- his mind. With good society, foreign travel, reading, thought, grew broader daily, too broad to meet me in the narrow world all my thoughts were dwarfed and centered in family selfishness. nothing of the people, books and subjects that engrossed his life. We bore the same name, my solitude was respectable, but heart yearned for something more.

"The household," says Emerson, "is the home of man as well as child. The events that occur therein are more near and affecting to than those which are sought in senates and academies. Domestic are certainly our affairs. What are called public events may or not be ours. If a man wishes to acquaint himself with the real y of the world, with the spirit of the age, he must not go first to the house or the court-room. The subtle spirit of life must be it in facts nearer. It is what is done and suffered in the home, in contribution, in the temperament, in the personal history, that has profoundest interest for us."

head of leaving everything in the home to chance, as now, we apply science and philosophy to our daily life. I should feel I had not lived in vain, if faith of mine could roll off the soul



of woman that dark cloud, that nightmare, that false belief, that all weaknesses and disabilities are natural, that her sufferings in marriage are a punishment for the sins of Adam and Eve, and teach her the gospel, that by obedience to natural law she might secure uninterfered health and happiness for herself, and mould future generations to her will. When we consider all a mother's influences over her child—natal as well as educational—we see her power is only second to that of God himself. There is no such sacredness and responsibility in human relation as in that of the mother. Every passion, sentiment, pulse of her being is daguerrotyped in her child. As thought no matter, the ideas that occupy her mind shape the cranium of the infant. Just as the sculptor carves his statue, and under his skillful hand day by day, the rough block of marble is transformed into an angel of light, so will educated and enlightened mothers, in the new civilization now dawning upon us, make the sons and daughters of coming generations like gods, knowing good and evil. To this end we must learn how to live and how to marry, how to educate ourselves and children for reproduction not only of the mortal but immortal part of our nature. There is, a good deal said, rather deplorably, to-day, about the families of the Americans. When people begin to weigh the momentary consequences of bringing badly organized children into the world, there will be fewer still.

To simply propagate our kind is a mere animal function that we share in common with the beasts of the field, but when in self-interest, pure, chaste, beautiful life, obedient to every law of soul and body, mother can give the world, one noble, healthy, happy man or woman, a perpetual blessing in the home, the Church and the State, she will do a better work for humanity than in adding numbers alone, with little regard for quality. What should we think of an artist who should occupy the heyday of his life, straining every nerve to fill miles of galleries with humpbacked, crooked-legged statuary, huge, gloomy landscapes, with prin foliage, lakes and clouds like geometrical figures, men and women like trees walking? We should say he might have passed his time in Italy, studying the old masters, cultivating taste and then have produced one beautiful painting or marble statue that would have made him immortal. If thought and preparation for such results is so desirable, how much more in the creation of beings that the penalties of all our violations of law; and yet here, where the consequences of ignorance and thoughtlessness are so terrible and far-reaching, wise men and women leave everything to chance, and in the name of vice, poverty, sorrow and disappointment, make Providence a scape-goat for their follies and misfortunes. It is far easier to

order of men and women, than to reform what surrounds us now. Life to-day, to the best of us, has its shadows and sorrows, and the cause of our ignorance this must needs be. Husbands and wives full of imperfections, children weak, vicious and deformed, gather round our mistakes, reflecting our discords and telling the world the heart-strings and disappointments we would fain conceal. The good, the bright, the beautiful, the promising, are offset in nearly all our households, with the deformed, the imbecile, the depraved; and, alas! our failure here shadows all our lives.

Together we suffer, together let us work for the new civilization dawning upon us.

The day is breaking! It is something to know that life's ills are showered upon us by the Great Father from a kind of Pandora's box, but are the results of causes that we have the power to control, but are the results of causes that we have the power to control. Knowledge and observance of law, the road to health and happiness opens before us: a joy and peace that passeth all understanding shall yet be ours and Paradise regained on earth. When marriage reveals from a true union of intellect and spirit—when mothers and fathers give to their holy offices even the preparation of soul and body that the law gives to the conception of his poem, statue or landscape, then will marriage, maternity and paternity acquire a new sacredness and dignity, and a nobler type of manhood and womanhood will glorify the race.

After Mrs. Stanton's address, Rev. Olympia Brown made a few impressive remarks, and the Convention adjourned *sine die*.