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8th Annual Meeting

9th Convention

Convention in Unity Hall, June 13, & 14, 1881.

There were no meetings or conventions in 1878-79-80. This one was given under the auspices of the National Woman Suffrage Association, in connection with our State Association. It was one of a series held by Miss Anthony in different parts of the country.

The meeting was opened by Mrs. Hooker, who gave her reasons for demanding the ballot.

Miss Rachel Foster of Philadelphia gave an account of the series of meetings that have been held, & are being held, under the auspices of the National Woman Suffrage Association. She spoke of the need of equalizing school teachers' salaries--the average pay per annum for women teachers, being \$700, & that for men, being \$2,100. She claimed that voting on school matters only would not remedy the difficulty, & gave her reasons for extending the suffrage beyond school matters.

Mrs. Matilda Joslyn Gage gave some of the details in the case of the arrest of Susan B. Anthony some years ago for attempting to vote. She was arrested, imprisoned, & then fined \$100. Miss Anthony struck her hand down on the table & told Judge Hunt that in the name of the God of Justice she would never pay the fine. It was afterwards remitted. Mrs. Gage claimed the same right to self-development that men have. She scouted(?) the doctrine that women must be submissive & self-sacrificing--a doctrine that has ever been instilled into their minds as constituting one of their chief virtues. The rights of individuality & personality are founded on the teachings of Christ himself. Women do not want to be men. Such talk is simply ridiculous, for a woman is a woman throughout soul & spirit.

Mrs. Elizabeth A. Merriwether of Memphis, Tenn[asee]. announced herself as a rebel from the South, & referred to Mrs. Gage as a rebel from the North, & added that all women are rebels against a government that gives them no voice in it. She said that men cannot see this question as women do from the fact that the master can never appreciate the wants of the slave from the slave's stand-point. She spoke against the power of centralization, & urged women not to depend upon the general gov[ernment] for the success of their cause.

Tuesday's Session, June 14.

Mrs. Merriwether said the negro women of the South were in as bad condition as ever. They had simply changed masters. The black woman now had her husband for a master, & she (Mrs. M.) related a case in her own family. A black woman fled to Mrs. M.'s room for protection from her brutal husband. Mrs. Merriwether remonstrated with the husband, & said: "Why, don't you know this woman is free? President Lincoln's proclamation has freed black women as well as black men." The negro replied: "Massa[Master] Lincum [Lincoln] neber[never] issued no proclamation for freeing 'omans [women] from their husbands!" That was a settler; & he took the woman down to the kitchen & gave her an unmerciful beating.

A lady in the audience: He would never have done that if I had been there.

Mrs. Merriwether: I didn't care to risk my life to save hers, as I knew of a woman who was killed under the same circumstances.

An animated discussion on this case followed.

The Rev[erend]. Olympia Brown spoke of the oft-repeated argument that woman suffrage would cause a disturbance in the family, & claimed that the perfect home would never be obtained till women are enfranchised.

Miss Anthony said the women who did not dare do anything in opposition to their husbands' wishes were to blame for continuing in such a state of slavery.

The Rev. Phebe<sup>1</sup> Hanaford said she believed in human rights--rights for both men & women. She said there was no antagonism between men & women, & she spoke of the home of Lucretia<sup>2</sup> Mott, the woman whom every one revered, & who, she felt, still ministered to us in spirit. Her modesty was her chief characteristic. Her last words were: "Lord, let this little standard-bearer go home." Showing, even in death, her native modesty, which would not let her assume to be the Lord's standard-bearer, but she simply said, "This little standard-bearer."

Mrs. Elizabeth Saxon of New Orleans told of the case of a woman in her city who fled to a washerwoman's house for refuge from an abusive husband. And a policeman, at her husband's request, compelled the woman to go back to him.

A voice in the audience: Would not the law compel a man to go back to his wife?

Mrs. Saxon: No, never! They who assert that the laws bear equally on men & women are terribly mistaken. There is no comparison to be made between the two cases. The inequality & injustice are glaring. In a trial in Ohio, the Judge held that a woman is the property of the man, &

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced - Fee' Bee

<sup>2</sup> Pronounced - Loo Kre Shuh

that the man has a perfect right to use force if necessary to assert his ownership. The wife has no such ownership of the husband. At the Chicago Convention last summer (1880) I read this inscription over the stage: "Government for the people & by the people shall never perish from the face of the earth." I say that a government of the people by only half of the people, shall perish from the earth. [Applause]

Tuesday Evening

Miss Anthony made the address of the evening on "Women want Bread, not the ballot," being a reply to a common objection.

F.E. Burr read an address, followed by Miss Rachel Foster, who read a humorous poem entitled "The Oak & Vine Theory."

Mrs. Caroline Gilkey Rogers, a young bride from Albany--as Mrs. Hooker introduced her--spoke some pleasant words for woman suffrage. Miss Anthony replied to an article in the Hartford Times which criticised [sic] her for what she said about Congress conferring suffrage. She said she had been misunderstood. She did not intend to say that Congress can confer suffrage. She simply wanted Congress to submit the proposition to the vote of the people.

The Convention adjourned to meet next day in New Haven.

Frances Ellen Burr

Secretary.