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The Temperance Movement and Women's Suffrage

William Kennedy Brown

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Mrs. Brown, as Chief of Good Templary, hoped to enlist the women more generally in that organization. I endeavored to point out the greater value of open organization, especially for women and suggested to Mrs. Brown that since she had long been associated with good Templary, she would understand how to draft a plan. Mrs. Brown finally agreed to prepare a plan for a National and International organization, which she perfected about July 1874. ^{Now to} project the movement was a very serious question. The women had been advised ^{in rebellion} to beware of Mrs. Brown, since she was one of the founders of the Prohibition Party, a Woman Suffragist and Chief of a great Secret Order.

The women and Clergy realized the inconsistency of claiming themselves the apostles of a new ^{divine} dispensation and at the same time accrediting leadership to a woman who for years had been a Leader in the cause of Temperance; on the platform in America and Great Britain, and generally well known in the State.

We decided that since ^{Mrs.} Mr. Lewis Miller of Akron, had invited Mrs. Brown ^{to their} guest at Chatauqua Assembly, she would be able to project the movement for general organization while there. Mrs. Brown found Rev. Dr. Vincent, now Bishop Vincent, was not favorable to women holding Temperance Meetings on the grounds; but through Mr. Miller and Mrs. Bishop Simpson, his consent was given for a meeting, Mrs. Brown having said nothing about her purpose of effecting an organization. The first intimation anyone had of Mrs. Brown's purpose was disclosed while she led in prayer. This she followed by an impromptu address which she closed by asking for a Committee on the question. When the Committee was organized she presented her plan, item by item; including the manner of fixing delegates and securing a revenue. The plan was accepted with one exception, made by Mrs. Mary A. Ingham, of Cleveland, Ohio, that no delegate should be of the male sex. Mrs. Brown's plan allowed the electors to choose either a woman or a man. The Committee accepted an invitation to hold their first Convention during the Fall in the city of Cleveland, Ohio. Mrs. Brown, having more general knowledge of Temperance workers and being fixed as the Ohio member of the Committee, became chiefly responsible for the attendance at the Cleveland Convention, and Mrs. Ingham arranged for its local comfort.

The fear of Prohibitionists and of Woman Suffragists and Secret Orders, was only equaled by the fear of the ladies that any man should have any part in their Convention. They did not seem to understand that their ^{bears} served to keep out Prohibitionists and leaders of pronounced views and experience. Possibly this is what the women then desired. *It was certainly what the clergy generally advised and the ^{Republican} politicians approved.*

For preparing a plan for the contemplated organization a Committee was raised by ^{Cleveland} the Convention with Mother Stewart as Chairman. This Committee recommended the perfecting of the plan to Mrs. Brown, and the Secretary of the Committee, Miss Francis Willard, of Illinois. Mrs. Brown now had all in her own hands again, ^{she} assigned the formulation of the original plan with what additional features it had pleased the women to recommend, to Miss Willard for final preparation. ^{Then} Mrs. Brown devoted herself to the preparation of an appeal to the women of the world.

McLellan

This appeal registered the thought of Mrs. Brown, but was too radical and comprehensive for the women of the Convention, and it was voted down although having the endorsement of the Committee. The Appeal opened as follows:

"Women, Sisters, Mothers in all lands, give your attention to the facts herein stated and let them awaken in your hearts all the instincts of your twofold nature."

Here follows a very full recital and arraignment of the Liquor Traffic. Then the Appeal argues: For this criminality there is not the shadow of an excuse. The almost universal demand for stimuli is abnormal and not essential.

It is the result of the stimulants themselves. The drinking always precedes the crying demand for drink, either remotely or immediately. Supply this abnormal demand, as has been the rule and it increases ad infinitum. The whisky market was never glutted. But in the interests of the whole human race, remove, ABOLISH the drink system and the demand is gone.

By a wonderful dispensation from the Divine Ruler, attended by unmistakable signs of power and approval, the women of this Nation have been set apart as apostles of the Temperance Reform. The pondrous truth of this gospel is: The Liquor Traffic is DEPRESSIVE, RUINOUS, CRIMINAL and ought to engage the best energies of the people for its abolition.

Women, whose keen perception takes in all the terrors of the curse; women, whose earnest sympathies, intensified by love, both human and Divine, penetrate to the depths of human wretchedness; women, whose hope through faith in the Master's Leader spans the chasm of human possibilities; Women, who respect neither "times", "seasons" "policies", "expediencies", nor "financial practicabilities"; but only justice and right, because it is right; Women, love inspired, God empowered, may throw themselves into the breach between humanity and its curse, may stand in the vanguard of this great movement, until the whole ruling public is borne across the abyssmal transition from the superstitious notions that "alcohol is food," to the scientific fact that "Alcohol is poison"; From the pusillanimous concession that "intemperance is a great evil", to the responsible conviction that the liquor Traffic is a crime.

Filled only with aspirations for the ennoblement of our falling humanity, to its native kingship and the heritage of princes of peace, prosperity and purity—Women, Sisters, Mothers of all lands, let us arise and go forward, doing

whatsoever the hand findeth, claiming the omnipotent promises, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end." It was about the o'clock in the morning when these women completed the appeal and plan of work.

When Mrs. M. McClellan Brown stood before the women of the Christian Temperance Union, Convention in ^{November} 1874 and read this appeal to the women of all lands, she had served over ten years in the Temperance Cause and was then the third ^{High Grand Vice Templar of Good-Templars and so} member of an executive of five, representing an organization having supreme

jurisdiction of a Temperance Army of over six hundred thousand contributing members upon whose stations the sun never ceased to shine. But what do we behold today? A similar energy in the forces of women enlisted and numerous organizations ^{of women engaged in} philanthropic and Christian Mission ^{work} and all stand ^{emphatically} for the Christian Bible and a pure social life. ^{Moreover,} the

Woman's Christian Temperance Union, organized ten years after the incident recited in the opening of this article ^{and so narrow and unprogressive} unfolds over all lands its unqualified endorsement of the Holy Scriptures, ^{for almost ten years; now boldly} Social Purity, Woman Suffrage and Prohibition. Therefore, what shall it effect, although Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton fumigates a narrow circle of progressive women with the vaporings of a scepticism born of a misapprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ and ^{maintained} through the misconception of Holy Scripture.

The ^{few women} of the woman suffragists who adopt Mrs. Stanton's infidelity to Holy Scripture, have scarcely perceptibly increased in a quarter of a century. But ^{since the war} then organized Christian Women have variously organized until such women are a great host. These christian women have, moreover, contributed a distinctive christian contingent, which often rules in the original organization against the scepticism ^{of certain women of} of the primary woman suffragists. Wherefore,

we assert that Woman Suffrage of today is not to be judged by the non-progressive ideas of a leader ^{who long ago embraced the sceptical thought} but rather by the activities into which ^{the movement} it has helped women themselves.

The history ^{and development} of the Woman Suffrage movement is another most powerful argument and protest against the value of scepticism as a factor of human emancipation and human civilization. ^{in the suffrage movement} To ignore the evangelical Christian women would be almost equal to ignoring woman suffrage.

In conclusion: The book of Mrs. Stanton is in no general or true sense the Bible of progressive women: nor is it the Bible of the by far greater Army of Woman Suffragists.

M. M. Brown

Cincinnati, O.