

thousand times no! So long as the God of heaven gives us breath and power of speech we will maintain our rights as citizens of the United States, and protest against women being subjected to such indignities as have been offered the women of our community by Federal officials, who should be our protectors against everything of such a nature.

And also protest against the disfranchisement of law-abiding, honorable American citizens because of religious belief.

We also wish to join with our sisters in thanking the honorable Senator Call and other able Senators, also the National Woman's Suffrage Association, who have so bravely defended our cause in the National Congress. May Heaven reward them according to their works. For our Savior has said, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

Mrs. E. F. Mouch, of Ogden, then read a written address, which we failed to get in time to publish to-day. The next address was by

DR. ROMANIA B. PRATT.

Mrs. President and Ladies:

It is our best policy, as it is our duty, and in accordance with our religion and the counsels of our leaders, to meet all afflictions with patience, and to "suffer wrong rather than do wrong." "Defense should be our motto," and it is the motive power of this meeting to-day. The mountain of evil that has been and is in prospect of being heaped upon our people, the real brunt and heft of which falls on the devoted heads of women and innocent children, has put it into the hearts of the women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to protest against such unjust and unnecessary proceedings, and if possible to make a plain statement of our principles and opinions; for be it known to all the world we most assuredly possess both, and are neither slow nor weak in making them known and felt as far as we can, in a righteous way. One of the most irreparable evils with which we are endangered, and against which we most solemnly and earnestly protest is the ruthless and inhuman invasion of the sanctity of the marriage relation and the destruction of the home circle. It has been said by a prominent Federal official that "The American idea of government is founded on the Christian idea of home, where one father and one mother, each the equal of the other, happy in the consciousness of mutual and eternal affection rear about the hearth-stone an intelligent and God-fearing family. Patriotism springs from love of country, which is born of love for home; virtue and morality are the flowers which adorn the hearth-stone of the true family."

This word picture is as true as it is beautiful. We wish to deal with stern facts to-day, and we therefore ask if the majority of monogamous families of the United States, or even the world are very profusely adorned with the flowers of virtue and morality. The above quotation, in point of actual fact, we unhesitatingly assert, and with a profound feeling of positive knowledge, to be the very ideal and inspiration of the majority of "Mormon" plural families. Can a true and veritable marriage which receives the divine sanction be immoral or the issue illegitimate? Certainly at this point the bone of contention is made bare and the question is asked "Is it of divine origin?" Who but the individual can decide this for himself? The things of God are only understood by the spirit of God, and when you rob the individual of his right of conscience by legislation, the greatly to be mourned nuptials of church and state are celebrated and the worm of destruction has entered the heart of the constitution of our beloved home of liberty. All honor be given by the Latter-day Saints to Senators Morgan, Call, Teller and others for the unanswerable resolutions and arguments they have laid before the Senate in our behalf. And also to Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood, who has had the moral courage to speak the truth as she found it when with us, and in a most able manner has raised her voice to stay the flood of prejudice which is surging over our people.

Chancellor Kent, who has been quoted as an authority on law, says: "It is within the legitimate scope of the power of every civil government to determine whether plural marriage or monogamy shall be the law of social life under its dominion." Now who is the higher authority—Chancellor Kent or any earthly law-maker, or the God of the universe who created all things and has the right to command in the affairs of earth? Give both systems a fair and patient trial, and let the results be proved by the "survival of the fittest."

A true marriage cannot be productive of evil, for it is the perfect union of heart and soul, sanctified by mutual consent and sealed by God's holy ordinance. The "Mormon" marriage covenant is as binding on the man as the woman, for any departure from the marriage law is a deadly sin and is punished with us by excommunication from the Church, which we regard as spiritual death. And it is dependent upon the covenants the sinner has made whether he can ever be re-admitted as a member again. The Latter-day Saints regard plural marriage as an extension of all the privileges and good results arising from single marriage. Has not every woman the undeniable right to be an honorable wife and mother—of fulfilling the end of her creation, and do not the circumstances of life and statistics

prove this to be impossible under the monogamic system? And were this the acknowledged law of the land, would it not lay the ax at the root of the greatest evil that has ever cursed the earth? If the same ceremony seals each wife to her husband, may not each family be a realization of the beautiful picture of one father and one mother, each the equal of the other in that family, happy in the consciousness of mutual and eternal affection, rearing about the hearthstone an intelligent and God-fearing family? The raising of an intelligent and God-fearing family is the very essence of the reason for the revelation of Celestial marriage for God has said "He will raise up unto himself a righteous seed." Can the children of men who daily pollute themselves in the society of abandoned women be a righteous seed? Can wives love, honor and be faithful to husbands they absolutely know are faithless to them? Thank God that in virtue of woman's inherent goodness, wives in the monogamy of the world are more faithful a thousand to one than the husbands!

And a pertinent question arises in speaking of abandoned women. If it had been possible for them to become loving and beloved wives, would there be so many abandoned? The fidelity—the hallowed sacredness and dignity of each wife's family hearthstone can be abundantly verified among this people. The marriage covenant is eternal, and is equal to each wife in all its blessings, powers and privileges, as each is equally faithful and worthy. The union for all eternity is the keystone sentence of the ceremony. The bonds, then, of these plural families are true, virtuous, eternal; welded by power given of heaven, and what "God hath joined together let no man put asunder." It has been offered to this people to permit without further molestation all those plural family relations which had been formed up to a certain date if valid promises would be given that all further relations of this kind would cease. This is generous from one standpoint, but the grounded and fixed faith in the divinity of the origin of the commandment—the blessings and powers expected as results in future eternal existence, are of such a nature that every mother who is willing to grant the privilege to her husband will be anxious for the same blessings to descend to her sons and daughters. Our faith and confidence in the chastity and pure motives of our husbands, fathers, brothers and sons are such that we challenge the production of a better system of marriage and the records of more moral or purer lives. Haud in hand with celestial marriage is the elevation of woman. In church she votes equally with men, and politically she has the suffrage, raising her from the old common law, in monogamic serfdom to political equality with men. Rights of property are given her so that she, as a married woman, can hold property in her own individual right. Women are not thrown off in old age as has been most untruthfully and shamefully asserted. There is nothing in our plural marriage system that countenances any such thing. The very nature of the covenant forbids it. It is binding through all time and lasts throughout eternity. If any woman at an advanced period of her life wishes in a measure to retire from her husband's society with his consent, this is her own individual privilege with which no one has the right to interfere. Instances of wrong-doing may be found in families of plural household, but the exceptions are not the rule; the weight of good results of the majority should be the standard of judgment. It cannot be true as asserted, that plural marriage is entered into as a rule from sensual motives. It is self-evident that it is not the case with the women, and it is unreasonable to suppose that men would bring upon themselves the responsibilities, cares and expenses of a plural family, when they could avoid all this, yet revel in sin, and, in the language of a distinguished man of the world, "be like the rest of us."

The Supreme Court in the Cannon case declared that the Edmunds law was not designed to pry into the secrets of the marriage chamber. What exhibition of despotism can be more absolute than the compelling of the legal wife to testify without her husband's consent against him. In Utah courts the construction of the law is of such a chameleon nature that the people are fain to believe they live in a world of chaos. It is changed with every different case. It has also been shamefully perverted. Chaste and honorable women have been taken alone into a room with fifteen men and been baited and badgered by prosecuting officers and forced, on pain of imprisonment, to answer the most insulting and indecent questions concerning their personal condition, their expected maternity, and their private relations with their husbands. Children of tender years have been snatched from the pure home circle and plied with questions concerning their father's marital relations quite beyond their years, until they tremble with open-eyed wonder. Thus the sanctity of home is desecrated and the secrets of the marriage chamber are dragged into publicity by those who pretend they wish to preserve the home and promote the integrity of the family relation. Some noble women, rather than reply to these improper questions, have submitted to imprisonment under the most trying circumstances. One became a mother within a few days after leaving the penitentiary; another was imprisoned

with a babe in her arms; another with a babe at the breast, passing months under the same roof with the most degraded felons.

We do not believe that with all the prejudice, mostly formed by misrepresentations of enemies, that the interpretations and administration of the laws as carried on in Utah would, if understood, be approved or sustained, except by a small minority of the fifty millions of people of this Republic. We will not yet believe that justice and equity for want of a resting place have forsaken this glorious land. Therefore, we, the women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, once more make a plain confession of our faith and principles—of convictions formed by the unflinching conversion of conscience, that we do firmly believe in the divine origin and the eternal benefits of celestial marriage—that this system conduces to the elevation and independence of women—that the men of this faith who are guided by the spirit of the Gospel have the highest regard for virtue and morality—are the most to be trusted and the most loyal citizens of any men who live upon the earth. We believe the interest and welfare of this nation demands a fair test of this principle of marriage if sufficient proofs are not already on record before the people. Therefore, in the name of justice, equity and conscience we protest against special legislation which inhibits the conduct of our lives according to our best judgment for this life and most especially for the future, when our domestic relations do no injury to those who do not agree with our system. We appeal to the honest-hearted of this nation, from President Cleveland to the least one who will raise a voice against oppression to use their influence as the constituents of Congressmen and demand a stay in the proceedings against this people and suggest that the time would be better employed by the legislators of the nation in making laws for the purifying of their own environment. And also suggest that Utah has attained her majority and is capable and willing to do her own work, earning her own living and paying her own bills, and ready to assume the dignity of Statehood and take her place in the galaxy upon our noble flag of stars and stripes.

Miss Nellie Colebrook read the following by

MRS. REBA PRATT.

ADDRESS,

WRITTEN FOR THE LADIES' MASS MEETING, MARCH 6, 1896.

Dear Sisters: I cannot meet with you to-day.

But some thoughts of my mind you shall hear; Though, if I should write all I'm prompted to say, The cry would be treason I fear; For the feelings that fill me, at this trying hour, Are like storm clouds that long have been gathering power.

There's a limit beyond which 'tis hard to forbear, When by injustice we are oppressed, We to-day seek relief by remonstrance and prayer, And against our oppressions protest; And although every ruler may turn a deaf ear, There is One who our humblest petitions will hear.

'Tis said that the Lord is now trying His own, That true Saints from false we can tell, That even may be, but quite plainly 'tis shown, He is testing the nation as well; Proving whether law-makers and those who fulfill Will use the power o'er us for good or for ill.

Alas! the intent of some has been shown Who hold brief authority here, And most bitter proof of their object is known, By the scenes which now daily appear; In which Justice and Liberty no part can claim, Where a trial is mockery and law but a name.

Oh! who shall find blame if each true woman's voice In the heat of resentment shall call For justice—for those o'er whom tyrants rejoice— Now confined by the prison's dark wall, When the victims are husbands and friends we love best, 'Tis time that the sisters should strongly protest.

How unjust is the law by which they compel A wife 'gainst her husband to speak, And such things divulge to the Jury and Court, As were asked in the court room last week! Can you wonder my feelings resentment have shown, When the sister insulted was truly my own!

We firmly against wicked laws shall protest, Which take away every dear right, That will sever home ties of those we love best, And force those we love from our sight Would that the voices which respond to this call Could be heard by the Senate in National hall.

We appeal to the Nation—to you who make laws, The course of our Church to review, Read the fate of our enemies—then as you pause, Think of what you are trying to do, For as sure as you follow the way they have trod, So surely you fall 'neath the vengeance of God!

The choir sang a piece composed by Bishop O. F. Whitney.

ELLIS R. SHILP, M. D.

spoke as follows:

Sisters and Friends:

We consider that in our case patience and endurance have ceased to be a virtue, and we cannot longer restrain our feelings of wounded dignity and subdued indignation, when all that is held dear to us is trampled upon and our most sacred rights and privileges withheld from us. Our fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, and, indeed, many of our honored and respected ladies are exiled from their homes and forced to flee from the minions of the law.

Those whom we love and honor and who respect and honor us are imprisoned, obliged to share the cells of vile and wicked men, and even to wear the badges of shame and infamy. And for what? Are we an unchaste or an immoral people? Do we sanction wickedness and crimes? Or is it because those who are bound to us by holy and tender ties have committed any heinous offense that such indignities should be imposed? No; but, regardless of consequences, we have dared to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences.

And this is our grievous offense. A certain tenet of our religious faith our opponents cannot countenance, because so contrary to their own sinful practices. The evil results of these practices we have personally observed, particularly in the hospitals of the world, where fallen women seek the shelter they cannot obtain from those who should have protected them instead of throwing them and their offspring upon the mercies of a cold, unfeeling world. By consulting the national statistics we find New York with 30,000 women leading lives of prostitution, Chicago 20,000, Boston and Cincinnati each 10,000 and other cities with a like ratio according to the number of inhabitants. Unfortunately, a record of the opposite sex is not kept.

We are accused of being down-trodden and oppressed. We deny the charge for we know there cannot be found a class of women upon the earth, who occupy a more elevated position in the hearts of their husbands, or whose most delicate and refined feelings are so respected as here in Utah.

True, we practice plural marriage, not, however, because we are compelled to, but because we are convinced that it is a divine revelation, and we find in this principle satisfaction, contentment and more happiness than we can obtain in any other relationship.

Let our works speak for us. We are a temperate, God-fearing, law-abiding people. We consider virtue and chastity the crowning ornament of woman's character. Our ladies are educated and refined, and their lives are constantly characterized by acts of nobility, fortitude and usefulness.

We protest and must insist, that should the bills now pending in Congress become law it will be as unjust as it is uncalled-for. How strange that the rulers of this nation should overlook the glaring and palpable evils that so thickly beset themselves and traverse thousands of miles in order to stigmatize a small handful of inoffensive people called "Mormons," who have already been driven to a desert land where it was supposed they would soon perish and die from starvation and exposure!

For a few years we were unmolested; our oppressors were almost oblivious of our existence until we had surrounded ourselves with comfortable and beautiful homes, redeemed the soil and made this barren region to bloom as a vast and fertile garden. And then again they wage this persecution with relentless hand, when all we desire is to be left alone, to live in peace, and to worship our God as seemeth to us best; and willingly do we accord the same unbounded privileges to all creeds and nations.

"To err is human to forgive divine." We forgive and pity our enemies, realizing that God and one man are a great majority; and that the Latter-day Saints will ultimately prevail and triumph over the opposition of the whole world.

The next address was by LAURA HYDE MINER.

We have met to protest against the indignities and insults that are heaped upon the women of Utah at the present time, and to insist on our right to arrange our domestic affairs according to our own conscience.

The great head of the nation has said, the welfare of a country was centered in the homes of the land, where the husband and the pure monogamous wife ruled their children in love. Can he lay claim to such a home, a wife and children, heirs to a father's fame and a mother's virtue? Are the priests and sisterhoods of the Roman Catholic church, bound to celibacy by the strictest vows, doing their duty to their country according to that standpoint?

Yet who would dream of Congress legislating away the bachelor's freedom or forcing priest or nun to a sacrilegious marriage.

Another illogical point in our treatment is, all women are disfranchised who are living with a polygamist: the legal wife as well as the others, for our law-makers hold that if she lives with him, to whom she was married for better or for worse, she is equally guilty. Yet a learned judge has lately dragged a legal wife into court to testify in a case against her husband,

holding that the wrong was against her, so she was a competent witness and must testify, or be adjudged guilty of contempt. The law-making branch has taken from us the right of suffrage, whereby we might have asserted ourselves at the ballot and righted our wrongs, if we had any, and now the law-enforcing side has taken us in hand and robbed us of sweet and marital confidence. We must be traitors to ourselves (for we are one with the men whose names we bear) or be lodged in prison and be subjected to insult.

The law now pending in Congress proposes to disorganize our institutions and apply the surplus means to other purposes than the people intended. Are the religious bodies of these United States prepared for such a precedent?

We are not only pleading, protesting and suffering for our own liberty, but for the future freedom of every citizen of this country.

What laws are made for the benefit of the whole nation, we are willing to abide by or bear the penalty of their infringement without complaint, for we know that God is able and willing to reward His servants.

Now we wish to bear our testimony to those that are arraying wives and children against their husbands and fathers that, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

DR. E. S. BARNEY.

was the next speaker. She said:

It is said we live in a free country, for which our fathers fought and bled, where is enjoyed free speech, a free press, and a right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Not so: rumor has falsely spoken. Utah is the exception. Her history has not been read; it has lain a closed book to the mass of the world, and to the fifty-five millions of people of the United States. Not a title of that number has ever known of the peaceable, industrious, moral and God-fearing people that live in the little Territory of Utah, called Latter-day Saints. Yet some few politicians, eager for pelf, stigmatize us as a people, and say we are a "blot" on the body politic, and that fifty-five million people are opposed to us. That is a fallacy. There are some who are like the story of a Quaker with the dog. He says, "I would not hurt thee, but I'll give thee a bad name." So he turned him loose, and cried "Mad dog! Mad dog!" Oh that my voice could reach the ears of those uninformed and misinformed of the United States, I would ask them to listen to the testimony of the ten thousand wives and mothers of Utah, with large intelligent, loving families of beautiful, pure children, free from blemish, and ask them to take the statistics of their own cities, filled with vice, and their children tainted with loathsome disease from their birth, and then they may be able to see the "blot," and in whose eyes is the beam, and in whose the mote. Say they, "But you have a bad name." That may be. So did Jesus who was crucified between two thieves, and He was, and is still the Son of God, and it is Christ crucified that we worship; and the pattern we set we follow; the Gospel He taught; that the Latter-day Saint Elder teach; and for which they are martyred, and their people oppressed, and that Holy Book the world call the Bible, the Latter-day Saints believe in, practice and preach from Genesis to Revelation. Now for this the wise men of the law are like Haman, are building a gallows for Mordecai, and like him, so they will meet their doom, for we know that God has spoken in these last days; his voice has been heard, and we have several witnesses to this and living testimonies unimpeachable. But, says the infidel, "I don't believe in God or the Bible;" a pitiable condition. I look upon such as unfinished material.

Should a nation fold her arms and sleep, or a mother heed the cries of her child that appeals to her in distress, or can we say we have a father when he turns a deaf ear to our call? Have we not appealed and protested against oppression to the higher courts of the land, and asked them to investigate our cause and see if we were disobedient children? What was the response? The waste basket received the protest unanswered.

Our lessons we have well learned; Utah stands at the head of her class, although Uncle Sam is not there to call the roll and give her credit due. She is, under the patriarchal order, rearing her sons and daughters, that are tall, and will be the tallest of the class; like unto Saul, "head and shoulders above the rest of the people" both physically, morally and mentally. Future years will echo these truths.

Does it matter if the Lord sees fit for His people to build an ark, or to pass through the Red Sea, or to place a Jesus among the Jews, for them to crucify, or a Latter-day Saint to be nicknamed "Mormon," called bad names, vilified, men and women insulted before the courts, their children called bastards? Men are imprisoned because they will not disown their wives, and if they dare say they believe in God, and intend to carry out his law, they must go sent to the penitentiary. Dare I say I believe? Yes I will say more. I know that God has spoken from the heavens, and that he has called and chosen his sons, and daughters, to carry out his law. Suppose it be at the

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