

meaning in giving it, whereupon she wrote as follows—

"Dec. 30, 1870, midnight.

"My Dear Husband—

"I desire to leave with you, before going to bed, a statement that Henry Ward Beecher called upon me this evening, and asked me if I would befriend him against any accusation in a council of ministers, and I replied solemnly that I would in case the accuser was any other person than my husband. He, H. W. B., dictated a letter, which I copied as my own, to be used by him as against any other accuser except my husband. This letter was designed to vindicate Mr. Beecher against all other persons save only yourself. I was ready to give him the letter, because he said, with pain, that my letter in your hands addressed to him, dated Dec. 19, had struck him dead, and ended his sinfulness. You and I are pledged to do our best to avoid publicity. God grant a speedy end to all further anxieties.

"Affectionately,

"ELIZABETH.

"On the next day, namely, Dec. 31st, 1870, Moulton, on being informed by Tilton of the above named transaction by Beecher, called on him, Beecher, at his residence, and told him that a reconciliation seemed suddenly made impossible by Beecher's nefarious act in procuring the letter which Mrs. Tilton had thus been improperly persuaded to write falsely, Beecher prompting her. Thereupon Beecher returned the letter to Moulton, with an expression of shame and sorrow for having procured it in the manner he did.

"The letter was as follows—

"Dec. 30, 1870.

"Wearied with importunity, and weakened by sickness, I gave a letter implicating my friend, Henry Ward Beecher, under assurances that that would remove all difficulties between me and my husband. That letter I now revoke. I was persuaded to it, almost forced, when I was in a weakened state of mind, and I regret and recall its statements.

"E. R. TILTON.

"I desire to say, explicitly, that Mr. Beecher has never offered any improper solicitation, but has always treated me in a manner becoming a Christian and a gentleman.

"ELIZABETH R. TILTON.

"At the time Beecher returned the above document to Moulton, Moulton requested Beecher to call at his residence in Columbia Street, on the next day, which he did, in the evening of January 1st, 1871, and a long interview there ensued, in which Beecher expressed to Moulton great contrition and remorse for his previous criminality with Mrs. Tilton, taking to himself shame for having misused his sacred offices as a clergyman to corrupt her mind, expressing a determination to kill himself in case of exposure, and begging Moulton to take a pen and write from his, Beecher's, lips an apology to be conveyed to Tilton, in hope that such an appeal would secure Tilton's forgiveness.

"The apology which Beecher dictated to Moulton was as follows:

"Interview with F. D. Moulton. My dear friend Moulton, I ask, through you, Theodore Tilton's forgiveness, and I humble myself before him as I do before my God. He would have been a better man in my circumstances than I have been. I can ask nothing except that he will remember all the other breasts that would ache. I will not plead for myself, I even wish that I were dead; but others must live to suffer. I will die before any one but myself should be inculpated. All my thoughts are running out toward my friends, and toward the poor child lying there and praying with her folded hands. She is guiltless, sinned against and bearing the transgression of another. I have humbly prayed to God to put it into the heart of her husband to forgive me. I have trusted this to Moulton in confidence.

"H. W. BEECHER.

In the above document the last sentence and signature are in the hand writing of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

"Eleventh—That Mrs. Tilton wrote the following letter to a friend at 174 Livingston St., Brooklyn, January 7th, 1871—

"Dear Friend—

"A cruel conspiracy has been formed against my husband, in which my mother and Mrs. Beecher have been the chief actors.

"Your's truly,

"ELIZABETH R. TILTON.

"Twelfth—That in the following month Moulton, wishing to bind Tilton and Beecher by mutual expressions of a good spirit, elicited from them the following correspondence:

"BROOKLYN,

February 7th, 1871.

"My Dear Friend—In several conversations with you, you have asked about my feelings towards Beecher, and yesterday you said that the time had come when you would like to receive from me an expression of this kind in writing. I say, therefore, very cheerfully, that notwithstanding the great suffering which he has caused to Elizabeth and myself, I bear him no malice and shall do him no wrong shall discountenance every project, by whomsoever proposed, for any exposure of his secret to the public, and if I know myself at all shall endeavor to act towards Mr. Beecher as I would have him, in similar circumstances, towards me. I wish to add that your own good offices in this case have led me to a higher moral feeling than I might otherwise have reached.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"THEODORE TILTON.

"To Frank Moulton.

"On the same day Beecher wrote Moulton the following:

"February 7th, 1871.

"My Dear Friend Moulton,—I am glad to send you a book, &c.

"Many, many friends has God raised up to me, but to no one of them has he ever given an opportunity and wisdom so to love me as you have. You have also proved Theodore's friend and Elizabeth's. Does God look down from heaven on three unhappier creatures, and on three that more need a friend than these? Is it not an intimation of God's intent and mercy to all, that each one of these has in you a tried and proven friend? But only in you are we thus united. Would to God, who orders all hearts, that by his mediation, Theodore, Elizabeth and I could be made friends again. Theodore will have the hardest task in such a case, but has he not proved himself capable of the noblest things? I wonder if Elizabeth knows how generously he has carried himself toward me? Of course, I can never speak with her again without her permission, and I do not know that even then it would be best."

"Mr. Moulton, on the same day, asked Tilton if he would permit Beecher to address a letter to Mrs. Tilton, and Tilton replied in the affirmative, whereupon Beecher wrote as follows:

"BROOKLYN, February 7th, 1871.

"My Dear Mrs. Tilton—

"When I saw you last I did not expect ever to see you again, or to be alive many days. God was kinder to me than were my own thoughts. The friend whom God sent to me, Moulton, has proved, above all friends that I ever had, able and willing to help me in this terrible emergency. My life is in his hand. It was that that tied up the storm that was ready to burst on our heads. There is no friend, Theodore excepted, who has it in his power to serve you so vitally, and who will do it with such delicacy and honor. It does my sore heart good to see in Moulton an unfeigned respect and honor for you; it would kill me if I thought otherwise. He will be as true a friend to your honor and happiness as a brother could be to a sister. In him we have a common friend. You and I may feel in time that the past is ended. But is there no future? May not this friend stand as a priest in the new sanctuary of reconciliation and mediation? Bless Theodore and my most unhappy self. Do not let my earnestness fail of its end. You believe in my judgment. I have put myself wholly and gladly in Moulton's hands, and there I must meet you. This is sent with Theodore's consent, but he has not read it. Will you return it to me by his own hand? I am very earnest in this wish for all our sakes, as such a letter ought not to be subject to even a chance of miscarriage.

"Your unhappy Friend,

"H. W. BEECHER.

"Thirteenth—That about a year after Mrs. Tilton's confession her mind remained in the fixed opinion that her criminal relations with Beecher had not been morally wrong, so strongly had he impressed

her to the contrary; but at length a change took place in her convictions on this subject, as noted in the following letter, addressed by her to her husband:

"SCHENECTADY, June 29th, 1871.

"My Dear Theodore—To-day, through the ministry of Catherine Gaunt, a character of fiction, my eyes have been opened for the first time in my experience, so that I see clearly my sin. It was, when I knew that I was loved, to suffer it to grow to a passion. A virtuous woman should check instantly an all-absorbing love, but it appeared to me in such a false light that I thought the love I felt and received could harm no one, not even you. I have believed this unflinchingly until four o'clock this afternoon, when a heavenly vision dawned upon me, and I see now as I never saw before the wrong I have done you, and hasten immediately to ask your pardon, with penitence so sincere that henceforth, if reason remains, you may trust me implicitly. Oh, my dear Theodore, though your opinions are not restful or congenial to my soul, yet my own integrity and purity are sacred and holy things. Bless God with me for Catherine Gaunt, for all sure leadings of an allwise and loving Providence. Yes, now I feel quite prepared to renew my marriage vow with you, and to keep it as the Savior requireth, who looketh at the eye and heart. Never before could I say this. When you yearn toward me with a true feeling, be assured of the tried, purified and restored love of

"Mrs. Tilton follows the above letter with these—

"July 4th, 1871.

"Oh, my dear husband, may you never need the discipline of being misled by a good woman, as I was by a good man."

"No date.

"I would mourn greatly if my life was to be made known to father; his head would be bowed indeed to the grave."

"And others in a similar tone.

"Fourteenth—That about one year after Mrs. Tilton's confession, and about half a year after Mr. Beecher's confession of the same, Mrs. V. C. Woodhull, then a total stranger to Tilton, save that he had been presented to her in company, wrote in the *World* of Monday, May 22, 1871, the following statements, namely:

"I know a man, a public teacher of eminence, who lives in concubinage with the wife of another public teacher of almost equal eminence, and all three concur in denouncing offences against morality. I shall make it my business to analyze some of these lives."

"(Signed)

"VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

"NEW YORK, May 20, 1871."

"On the day of the publication of the above card in the *World*, Tilton received from Mrs. Woodhull a request to call on imperative business at her office, and going thither a copy of the above card was put in his hand by Mrs. Woodhull, who said that the parties referred to therein were the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and the wife of Theodore Tilton. Following this announcement Mrs. Woodhull detailed to Tilton, with a vehement speech, the wicked and injurious story which she published in the year following. In the meanwhile Tilton, desiring to guard against any temptation to Mrs. Woodhull to publish the grossly distorted version which she gave to Tilton, and which she afterwards attributed to him, he sought by many personal services and kindly attentions to influence her to such good will towards himself and family as would remove all disposition or desire in her to afflict him with such publications. Tilton's efforts and associations with Mrs. Woodhull ceased in April, 1872, and six months afterwards, namely Nov. 2d, 1872, she published the scandal which he had labored to suppress.

"Fifteenth—That on the third day thereafter, the Rev. Thomas K. Beecher, of Elmira, N. Y., wrote as follows:

"ELMIRA, Nov. 5th, 1872.

"Mrs. Woodhull only carries out Henry's philosophy, against which I recorded my protest twenty years ago."

"Sixteenth—That in May, 1873, the publication by one of Beecher's partners of the tripartite covenant, between H. C. Bowen, H. W.

Beecher, and Theodore Tilton, led the press of the country to charge that Tilton had committed, against Beecher, some heinous wrong, which Beecher had pardoned, whereas it was the reverse. To remedy this false public impression, Mr. Moulton requested Beecher to prepare a suitable card, releasing Tilton from this injustice. In answer to this request Beecher pleaded his embarrassments, which prevented his saying anything without bringing himself under suspicion. Tilton then proposed to prepare a card of his own, containing a few lines from the recently quoted apology, for the purpose of showing that Beecher, instead of having had occasion to forgive Tilton, had had occasion to be forgiven by him.

"Beecher then wrote a letter to Moulton, which, on being shown to Tilton, was successful in appealing to Tilton's feelings. Beecher said under date of Sunday morning, June 1st 1873—

"My dear Frank—

"I am determined to make no more resistance. Theodore's temperament is such that the future, even if temporarily saved, would be absolutely worthless, and render me liable at any day to be obliged to stultify all the devices by which we have saved ourselves. It is only fair that he should know that the publication of the card which he proposed would leave him worse off than before the agreement, viz., the tripartite covenant, which was made after my letter through you to him, viz., the apology, was written. He had had it a year, he had condoned his wife's fault, he had enjoined upon me, with the utmost earnestness and solemnity, not to betray his wife nor leave his children to blight. With such a man as this there is no possible salvation for any that depend upon him. With a strong nature, he does not know how to govern it. There is no use trying further. I have a strong feeling upon me, and it brings me great peace, that I am spending my last Sunday, and preaching my last sermon."

"The hopelessness of spirit which the foregoing letter portrayed on the part of its writer, led Tilton to re-consider the position of defending himself at the cost of producing misery to Beecher, which determination, by Tilton, to allow the prevailing calumnies against himself to go unanswered, was further strengthened by the following note, received by him two days thereafter, from the office of the editor of Beecher's *Journal*:

"June 4th, 1873.

"My Dear Theodore—May I tell you frankly, that, when I saw you last, you did not seem to me to be the noble young man who inspired my warm affections so many years ago; you were yielding to an act which I could not help thinking would be dishonorable and perfidious; and although it is easy for me to make every allowance for the circumstance that had wrought you to such a frenzy, I was dreadfully shocked. My dear Theodore, let me, as an old friend, whose heart is wrung by your terrible suffering and sorrow, tell you that you were then acting ignobly, and that you can never have true peace of mind till you conquer yourself, and dismiss all purpose and thought of injuring the man who has wronged you. Of all promises our lips can frame, none are so sacred as those we make to those who have injured us, and whom we have professed to forgive; and they are sacred just in proportion as their violation would work injury to those to whom they are made. You cannot paint too black the wrongs you have suffered; on that point I make no plea in abatement, but I beg you to remember that nothing can change the law which makes forgiveness noble and God-like. I have prayed for you night and day, with strong crying and tears, beseeching God to restrain you from wronging yourself by violating your solemn engagements. Tonight I am happy in the thought that you have been preserved from committing an act which I so much dreaded."

"In a letter written by Beecher, in order to be shown to Tilton, Beecher spoke as follows:

"No man can see the difficulties that environ me unless he stands where I do. To say that I have a church on my hands is simple enough, but to have hundreds and thousands of men pressing me, each one with his keen suspicion

or anxiety or zeal; to see the tendencies, which, if not stopped, would break out into rumors, and to stop them without seeming to do it; to prevent any one questioning me; to meet and allay prejudices against Tilton, which had their beginnings years before; to keep serene as if not alarmed or disturbed; to be cheerful at home and among friends when I am suffering the torments of the damned; to pass sleepless nights often, and yet come fresh and prepared for Sunday—all this may be talked about but the real thing cannot be understood from the outside, for it is wearing and grinding on the nervous system."

"In still another letter written for the same purpose as the above, Mr. Beecher said:

"If my destruction would please him, Mr. Tilton, all right; that shall not stand in the way. I am willing to step down and out. No one can offer more than that, and I offer the sacrifice without hesitation if you can clearly see your way to his safety and happiness thereby. In one point of view, I could desire the sacrifice on my part; but nothing can possibly be so bad as the power of the great darkness in which I spend much of my time. I look upon death as sweeter far than any friend I have in the world. Life would be pleasant if I could see that rebuilt which is shattered. But to live on the sharp and ragged edge of anxiety, remorse, fear and despair, and yet to put on the appearance of serenity and happiness cannot be endured much longer. I am well nigh discouraged. If you cease to trust me and to love me, I am alone, I do not know any person in the world to whom I could go."

Tilton yielded to the above quoted and other similar letters, and made no self defence against the public odium which attached to him unjustly.

"Seventeenth—That the marriage union between Mr. and Mrs. Tilton, until broken by Beecher, was of more than common harmony, affection and mutual respect. Their house and household were regarded for years by all their guests as an ideal house. As an evidence of the feeling and spirit which this wife entertained for her husband up to the time of her corruption by Beecher, the following letter by Mrs. Tilton, written only a few months before her loss of honor, will testify—

"Tuesday Morning,

"Jan. 28th, 1868.

"My Beloved—Don't you know that the peculiar phase of Christ's character as a lover is so precious to me, because in my consecration and devotion to you I learn to love you from my love to him, and I have learned to love him from loving you. I couple you with him, nor do I feel it one whit irreverent. And as every day I adorn myself consciously as a bride to meet her bridegroom, so in like manner, I lift imploring hands that my soul's love may be prepared. I, with the little girls, after you left us, with overflowing eyes and hearts, consecrated ourselves to our work, and to you. My waking thoughts last night were of you; my rising thoughts this morning were of you. I bless you, and I honor and love you. God sustain us and help us, both to keep our vows."

"A number of other letters, all professing the greatest love and devotion of Mrs. Tilton to her husband, are appended. They show that a Christian wife, loving her husband to the extreme degree above set forth, could only have been severed from the path of rectitude by artful and powerful persuasion, clothed in phrases of religion and enforced by strong appeals from her chief Christian teacher and guide.

"Eighteenth—That the story purporting to explain Beecher's apology as having been written because he had offered Mr. Tilton by engaging his wife in a project of separation from her husband, is false, as will be seen by the following letter, written only three days after the date of the apology—

"January, 4th, 1871.

"Mr. Francis D. Moulton—

"My Dear Friend—In regard to your question, whether I have ever sought a separation from my husband, I indignantly deny that such was ever the fact, as I have denied it a hundred times before. The story that I wanted a separation was a deliberate falsehood coined by my poor mother, who said she