

Women to the Front.

“**I** PEG to be allowed to make through the columns of your paper an appeal. I appeal to the invisible host of mighty dead who spent their lives in quest of truth and in defence of right.”

I appeal to the mighty men of old, the product of whose minds has travelled down the ages, lodging in many hearts and influencing many lives.

I appeal to the testimony of the greatest, the wisest, the noblest, the purest-hearted of all ages, to settle this impending problem, “The Naturalization of Woman.” Would that I could echo with the combined force of all the universe: “Arise ye women who are at ease in Zion, hear my voice ye careless daughters!”

“I appeal to you one and all to rise and stand in the defence of sacred rights.”

“I ask you to strive to regain what injustice has basely exacted and demanded from you,”—an injustice fitted to make angels weep. “You ask why this outburst of strong feeling? It is the long-pent-up rivers of fear and righteous indignation bursting all barriers. Its occasion was an essay in your last issue on ‘Men to the Front.’ Listen to this—“the most unkindest cut of all”—against her whose fragile form but dauntless spirit has withstood the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” * * *

“Can nothing short of all things satisfy their cupidity? Where is their boasted pity that they should take from us slaves the last appearance of freedom? * *

For them we have contended with the hostile outside world, our hands soiled and our brains weary. * * * Woman is the centre round which swings things terrestrial, her dominion is the world and her sway well-nigh absolute. Yet is she content? No! She would be man and woman too, etc.”

Were wilder words ever spoken, or more vain imagination ever permitted! The essayist is a poet indeed, but writes

that kind of poetry that will not withstand the logic of stern fact.

We emphatically deny the statement that woman is endeavoring to obtain what does not properly belong to her. With justice she bravely cries out for a reform in the denaturalizing methods of a civilization that expects woman to be only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless obedience and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude. We dislike that burlesque phrase, “Woman’s Rights,” but we do believe in the right of woman.

We believe in the civil and political equality of the sexes, and that a ballot in the hands of women is her right for protection and would prove a powerful ally for the abolition of the liquor traffic, the execution of the law, the promotion of reform in civil affairs and the removal of corruption in public life. We know that in every instance the women would vote for home and fireside, for freeing the community from those demoralizing influences and temptations from which every good woman would deliver those of her own household.

Man’s work for his own home is, as has been said, to secure its maintenance, progress and defence; the woman’s to secure its order, comfort and loveliness. Expand both these functions. What a man is at his own gate, defending it, if need be, against insult and spoil, but in a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home, if need be, to do his more incumbent work there. In like manner, what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty; that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare.

Hear the testimony of Shakespeare respecting the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.