

great women, prominent in this cause; that there never was a body of reformers more free from reproach. Go to their homes, and you will find that they did not become reformers, until they had shown themselves good house-keepers and good wives, above all, perhaps, good mothers. They know, most of them, that he who ruleth his own soul is greater than he who taketh a city, and it is because they have made themselves helps *meet* for man, at his fireside, that they have a claim to your confidence assembled here, or in the wide valleys of the West. No occasional exceptions can invalidate this rule. I would not stand here, if I believed that any of us came, to the neglect of higher duties. I do not believe that man is a Christian, who feeds some distant, starving Ireland, before he has provided for the hunger of his own household. As I encounter often my conservative friends, they ask me, How do you grow, and what does your cause gain? It seems as if their world waited, expecting some sudden and striking result. Let us tell them here, once for all, that *we* have never been deluded into looking for any such thing. From its nature this will be the slowest movement ever undertaken by man. We shall gain surely, but imperceptibly. I am frightened when obvious results crowd upon us, because I feel that they are not granted wisely, nor with a full knowledge of all that they involve. All noble souls must help us, whether they will or not, yet I would have men realize beforehand, so far as they can, the full consequences of every step we take. Every well-educated woman who leads an independent life, refusing to marry for bread, or managing her family interests as a widow, from wise and noble motives, helps us more than all speech-making. Speech-