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THE HERALD ANGELS OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS

Peter Lyon

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On a mild May morning in 1851, in the pleasant Finger Lakes town of Seneca Falls in central New York, two young women—genteel females, in the phrase then current—met on a street corner, were introduced, nodded affably, smiled, and went each on her way. It was a momentous encounter. In irrelevant ways the two females differed: one was matron, the other maiden; one was plump and soft, the other lean and bony; one was merry, the other grave, even grim at times. But on the essential point they were so like as to be one: each was a born reformer, and each, as she looked about her, saw much to reform. The matron was Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the maiden was Miss Susan B. Anthony; and the two made a team that was destined, in the next half-century, to shake the orthodox of both sexes by the scruff of their customs until their faith rattled.

Back to this first brief meeting have been traced such portents of national doom as the emergence of Mom and Momism, the decline of the American male, the growth of the servant problem, the appearance of the ranch-type house, the decay of the double standard, the rise in cigarette smoking, and the marked sag of morals generally. Viewed through other, rosier spectacles, Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony were heroines of immense water who conjointly freed their sisters from male bondage, thereby enabling them to vote, get divorced, wear sensible clothes, own their own property, and even occasionally go Dutch treat with their male escorts. All of these phenomena, fair or foul, real or imagined, might well have come to pass in any event, as part of what is commonly referred to as Progress; but that they were hastened along by the persistent agitation of Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony there can be no doubt.

At the time they met, Mrs. Stanton was thirty-five years old, Miss Anthony was thirty-one. But each had since her childhood felt the itch to change the world, and each was by 1851 a veteran gadfly.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the daughter of a well-to-do lawyer of Johnstown, New York, who after serving a term in Congress had been elected a judge. She was one of six children, five girls and a boy, but when Elizabeth was eleven her brother died. Her father was inconsolable. She went into the darkened parlor where he mourned, climbed on his knee, and wondered what she might do to comfort him. They sat in silence. At length, as she recalled later in her reminiscences, he sighed and said: "Oh, my daughter would that you were a boy!"

Little Elizabeth at once determined to do what she could to remedy this defect. To be learned and to be courageous: that was what was needed. She undertook to study Greek, Latin, and mathematics with a class of boys in the town's academy. Most of them were much older than she, yet after three years she took a prize in Greek. Never had she been so proud. She raced home to show her prize to her father. He seemed pleased. There was an awkward pause while she waited for the word that would show he agreed a daughter could be as good as a son. At last he kissed her forehead. "Ah," he said, "you should have been a boy!"

But even had Judge Cady more nearly approached a child psychologist's ideal of parenthood, his daughter would have found plenty of reason to rebel. There was the law, which made a wife her husband's serf. There was custom, which forbade her to enter college. Moreover, when Elizabeth and some others of the Presbyterian Girls' Club raised money to send a student to a theological seminary and, on his graduation, presented him with a new black broadcloth suit, what did he select as text for his maiden sermon? A verse from the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Miss Cady walked out on him.

As it happened, there was a channel at hand for her defiance. Her cousin, Gerrit Smith, was a prominent abolitionist; his house in Peterboro was a station on the Underground Railroad. Events, then, followed on each other with uniform predictability. Naturally at Cousin Gerrit's house she met an impecunious but mettlesome young radical, Henry Stanton, already well-known as an antislavery orator; naturally Judge Cady forbade their engagement; naturally she married the young man anyway. (Naturally she instructed the clergyman to remove the word "obey" from the ceremony.)

Their wedding trip was to London, where Stanton was a delegate to a world antislavery convention. The young bride was dismayed to find that females, though elected as delegates, were barred from participation, were barred even from fighting against slavery. Wendell Phillips, of the American delegation, argued that Lucretia Mott and the others be permitted to share in the convention's business—but to no avail: the Word of God was invoked against them, and they were obliged

to sit in the gallery, William Lloyd Garrison joining them in pointed protest against their exclusion. After that it was only a question of time before Mrs. Stanton would agree with Lucretia Mott and some other Quaker women to call the first woman's rights convention, in Seneca Falls.

Since Mrs. Stanton could write fluently, to her fell the task of drafting a Declaration of Sentiments and a clutch of appropriate resolutions. Over much opposition, she insisted on including a resolution that women should fight for the vote. And so it all began.

News of the convention seeped out to the nation. Newspaper editors and preachers were stupended. What was all this? A joke? or a monstrous calamity? They decided it was both; ridicule and anathema alike were hurled at the one hundred men and women who had signed the declaration. One by one names were withdrawn. Too late; the damage had been done. That was in July, 1848, and so by the time she met Miss Anthony three years later, Mrs. Stanton was already a notorious woman. So far was she steeped in feminism that she was caparisoned in the celebrated ultrafeminist short dress and trousers, the costume called bloomers after Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, editor of that dauntless journal of temperance, *The Lily.* It was, indeed, Mrs. Bloomer who introduced Mrs. Stanton to Miss Anthony, a function that seems in retrospect as superfluous as introducing Mutt to Jeff.

Susan B. Anthony had come to this street corner in Seneca Falls by a different route. She was also one of several children, but her father admired and petted her quite as much as he did his other daughters and his two sons. In fact it was he who fostered in young Susan a dedication to reform; he was a reformer himself: a Quaker, an advocate of temperance, an opponent of slavery, and an interested friend in the earliest struggles for woman's rights. Susan, in consequence, early raised the banner of purity. By 1849 Miss Anthony was an official of the Daughters of Temperance and fairly launched on her long career as Miss Fix-it for the commonweal.

"Reform," she wrote to her father, "needs to be the watchword! And someone must preach it who does not depend on the popular nod for his dinner." Her father agreed most heartily; he was, after all, one of the hundred who had signed Mrs. Stanton's Declaration of Sentiments some time before. For *her* dinner, Miss Anthony worked as a schoolmarm, but inevitably this vocation gave way to the avocation of reform. To organize conventions, engage the right speakers, supervise committees, draft the right resolutions, raise money, elect the right officers—my, but all this took time! And especially when no one else could be trusted, not even men. Perhaps, as she was coming to suspect, least of all men.

Men; Miss Anthony was increasingly mistrustful of them. She was not, as a young woman, notably attractive, and she had keen misgivings about her physical appearance, which was marred, she fancied, by a slight strabismus of one eye, a condition that was more noticeable when she was tired; but on the other hand she

had never lacked for escorts on moonlit evenings, nor even for proposals of marriage. Clearly she could have made some man a capable, if not remarkably romantic, helpmeet; but as she passed into her fourth decade she resolutely thrust from her all sentimental thoughts. It was not easy. For years her diary would receive her wintry confidences: "Mr. Blank walked home with me; marvellously attentive. What a pity such powers of intellect should lack the moral spine." Had poor Mr. Blank interrupted a talk on committee business to essay a good-night kiss? The diary was not told. At all events, when she first met Mrs. Stanton, Miss Anthony was already a determined spinster, and so she would ever remain.

Almost at once the two went to work on each other. First Miss Anthony got Mrs. Stanton elected president of her Women's State Temperance Society, then Mrs. Stanton prevailed on Miss Anthony to clamber into the bloomer costume and join the struggle for woman's rights. For the next ten years the two campaigned together shoulder to shoulder on one convention platform after another.

And what did they achieve? As to woman's rights, the truth is: not much; at least, not much that can be measured. None came to their conventions save those who were already convinced or those who strenuously desired to shut them up. And yet they were strikingly successful in one way: gradually they transformed a national climate of opinion. Prudent conservatives and thoughtful liberals alike were painfully shoved into an awareness that *some*thing had to be done. Not much, surely, the conservatives insisted; perhaps more than we realized, the liberals admitted; but *some*thing.

And so, like all radical reformers, Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony subsisted on hope. No matter how often their hope was dashed, it blithely rose again, a phoenix, to spur them to their next call, appeal, convention, petition, or rally. During this decade Mrs. Stanton bore four children, increasing her tribe to seven. Miss Anthony, on the other hand, protested ever more sharply against what she called "the mighty matrimonial maelstrom." But whatever the problems posed in their personal lives, both Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony still held high their hopes for the future.

The Civil war dashed them again. While the men were fighting, clearly they would ignore the rights of women. To Miss Anthony, at least, it almost seemed as if the war had been deliberately concocted as an excuse to avoid facing the paramount issue. Mrs. Stanton's husband, Henry, had been one of the founders of the Republican party, and Miss Anthony's brother Daniel was an early adherent; but the two women were more radical. Leery of Lincoln, they stuck with the abolitionists. Only after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, partially freeing the slaves, did they decide to support the war fully: they wrote another Appeal, another Call; they formed another organization, the Women's National Loyal League, of which (naturally) Mrs. Stanton was president and Miss Anthony secretary; they held another convention; they printed more petitions and got more

signatures, almost four hundred thousand of them, praying for the unconditional abolition of slavery.

After the war, reform was at a low ebb. Miss Anthony retired to Kansas, where brother Daniel was editor of a Leavenworth newspaper that he aimed to transform into "the most radical mouthpiece" in the state. But at that moment an event occurred that was like battle smoke to an old war horse, and Miss Anthony's nostrils flared. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution had just been proposed, and as her eye ran over the suggested formulation it was suddenly arrested by one phrase: ". . . But when the right to vote . . . is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of . . . "

Male! The word stiffened her. It was the first time that males had ever dared to introduce the word into their precious Constitution. At once Miss Anthony set in motion plans for her journey home. What was the trouble back east? Where were Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Antoinette Blackwell? Now Miss Anthony was sure there should have been woman's rights conventions right through the war: the last had taken place in 1860 but now it was 1865, and the country had patently gone to sleep. Clanging the tocsin, she headed east, giving speeches all along the way. In Boston she cornered two old friends, Henry Ward Beecher and Theodore Tilton. What was wrong, she asked, with merging the Anti-Slavery Society and the Woman's Rights Society into one grand new organization, the National Equal Rights Association, to fight from one platform for one cause—universal suffrage? Beecher nodded. Tilton nodded. Since Beecher, the pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church, was already a national figure, his consent was significant. That of Tilton, an influential journalist, was perhaps even more important.

But Wendell Phillips dragged his feet. It would, he announced, require three months' notice for the Anti-Slavery Society to change its name. Miss Anthony sent out a similar notice to the members of the Woman's Rights Society. As usual, the two groups planned concurrent conventions in New York; there the job would be done.

Miss Anthony had taken into account everything except the perfidy of the male. For when the motion to merge was proposed at the Anti-Slavery convention, Wendell Phillips blandly ruled it out of order. He was, he declared, opposed to coalition. And at the woman's rights meeting, Phillips spoke of woman suffrage as a goal so far in the future as to be barely discernible. Treachery!

Next day Miss Anthony stalked into the office of the abolitionist journal, *The Anti-Slavery Standard.* Phillips was there; so were Theodore Tilton and Mrs. Stanton. Phillips waxed warmly eloquent: now was the time to win the vote for the black race, he urged, but the issue should not be clouded by simultaneously proposing the vote for women. Tilton nodded. Mrs. Stanton nodded. But Miss Anthony most emphatically did not nod. She would, she stated coldly, sooner cut off her right hand than ask for black suffrage and not woman suffrage.

Whereupon she stalked out. "What does ail Susan?" asked Tilton plaintively. "I can not imagine," Mrs. Stanton answered; "I never before saw her so unreasonable and absolutely rude."

And so there was a little rift within the reformers' lute, but it did not make the music mute and slowly silence all. On the contrary, all voices were raised, and ever more loudly. Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton patched up their differences that same night. "Do tell me what is the matter with me," wailed Mrs. Stanton, as soon as Miss Anthony walked in upon her. "I feel as if I had been scourged from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet!" But the split between them and their quondam male allies grew wider. One of the most staunch, Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*, told them: "Your turn will come next. I conjure you to remember that this is the Negro's hour and your first duty now is to go through the State and plead his claims." And when the women objected, Greeley said bluntly: "If you persevere in your present plan, you need depend on no further help from me or the *Tribune*."

Nor did he support Mrs. Stanton when, quixotically claiming that while the law forbade women to vote it did not exclude them from office, she ran for Congress in 1866. (The voters of the Eighth New York District gave her twenty-four votes.)

Deliberately she and Miss Anthony widened the split still further. The following spring there was a state constitutional convention in New York, and Greeley was chairman of the committee on suffrage. It was their big chance to be politic. "Miss Anthony," said Greeley, "you know the bullet and the ballot go together. If you vote, are you ready to fight?" "Yes, Mr. Greeley," she answered, "just as you fought in the late war—at the point of a goose quill." The unfortunate man was so ill-advised as to put his same question to Mrs. Stanton. "Yes, we are ready to fight, sir," Mrs. Stanton answered in her turn, "just as you did in the last war, by sending out substitutes." By now Greeley was mincemeat, but still they were not through with him. They knew he was preparing to file a committee report against woman suffrage; they knew his chief argument would be that women did not really want the vote. And so, with exquisite timing, they caused to be presented a petition for woman suffrage on which the first name was that of Mrs. Horace Greeley. They had the satisfaction of hearing the audience in the committee room roar with laughter—but they had forever lost an ally.

Malice gratified is not worth friendship lost. Obduracy had stripped the ladies, one by one, of nearly all their influential comrades. Where now were they to turn? Back to Kansas, where the citizens had been given the opportunity, by referendum, to enfranchise women and blacks. Lucy Stone was already stumping the state on behalf of women, and now Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony went west to join her. Their mission was fruitless (only nine thousand of some thirty thousand votes were cast for woman suffrage), but before they came home again

they had found a new ally, surely the oddest ever recruited to their cause. His name was George Francis Train.

Train was rich, eccentric, and quite possibly the most self-satisfied human being of the entire nineteenth century. A jaunty, dapper man with a penchant for exotic toilet waters, Train had helped organize the Crédit Mobilier, the malodorous construction company that built the eastern half of the Union Pacific Railroad. He had withdrawn from this connection, however, in time to avoid being tarred by the scandals that would later blacken the company's name, choosing instead to concentrate on speculation in real estate along the railroad's right of way. By 1867 he was sufficiently wealthy to indulge in the care and feeding of his whims, which were to range from supporting the Greenbackers to nominating himself for President of the United States.

The cause of woman's rights was made to order for Train. Three weeks before election day he appeared in Kansas, manic as a rubber ball, and took charge. On a platform he sparkled, spouting jokes to charm the electorate a dozen to the minute. Indeed, Miss Anthony's biographer, Katharine Anthony, credits to his efforts most of the nine thousand Kansas votes cast for woman suffrage. "Where is Wendell Phillips today?" Train demanded:

> Where is William Lloyd Garrison? . . . Where is Henry Ward Beecher? . . . Where is Theodore Tilton? . . . Not one of [the] old army generals at hand; nobody but the rank and file of the Democatic party, and that wonderful, eccentric, independent, extraordinary genius and political reformer of America, who is sweeping off all the politicians before him like a hurricane, your modest, diffident, unassuming friend, the future President of America—George Francis Train!

An irresistible force; and so, when he asked Miss Anthony why she did not publish a journal, he swept away her obvious answer—that she had no money—and calmly announced, "I will give you the money." She was staggered. He not only repeated his offer but invited her and Mrs. Stanton to join him ("Be my guests") on a month-long lecture tour from Omaha to New York.

For the newspaper he planned for them Train already had a name: *The Revolution;* and a slogan: "Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less." He also had a staff in mind: proprietor, Susan B. Anthony; editors, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Parker Pillsbury. How did it all seem to them? Like a dream compounded of hashish. They inhaled deeply.

But the dream came true. Less than a month after their return to New York, Train had opened offices for them on Park Row, Pillsbury had been hired away from the *Anti-Slavery Standard,* and the first issue of *The Revolution* was on the

newsstands, datelined January 8, 1868. Their triumph, however, was freighted with woe. For their partnership with Train afforded their erstwhile allies a splendid excuse for rejecting them utterly. Garrison washed his hands of them, calling Train "that crack-brained harlequin and semi-lunatic." And Wendell Phillips, approached by Mrs. Stanton at a reception in Boston, stonily folded his hands behind his back, withdrew a step, and refused to acknowledge her. Lucy Stone, too, denounced them, complaining of "the spectacle Miss Anthony is making of woman's cause by parading through the country with such a man as Train." Had the two suffragist heroines isolated themselves completely? So for a time it seemed.

Antagonisms boiled over at the woman's rights convention in 1869. Miss Anthony had labored above and beyond the call of duty to help make the convention a success. She had even gone to the office of Jay Gould and Jim Fisk to ask if they would not permit delegates to travel on the Erie Railroad at half fare. Here was an unlikely interview: the queen of the strong-minded females confronting Prince Erie himself, whose reputation for dalliance with fancy ladies was already a hissing and a byword, and would before long get him shot to death. What would a Jim Fisk think of a Susan B. Anthony? According to an account of her visit printed in *The Revolution,* she made her request of Gould and, while she was doing so, Fisk got up, came over, stared at her in silent wonder for fourteen long seconds, and then strode back to his desk. But she got her delegates to New York for half fare.

And for her trouble, she was greeted with a demand that she and Mrs. Stanton forthwith resign from the Equal Rights Association. This demand was, moreover, backed up by what appeared to be a majority. Faced with defeat, the two moved swiftly, and in the classic pattern of the American radical. Bearing a banner with the familiar device "Principle!" they galloped off at the head of a tiny splinter of the loyal and likeminded and, in a matter of hours, formed an entirely new organization, the National Woman Suffrage Association, of which Mrs. Stanton was of course the president. They were almost alone, but they were in complete command.

Have we here the stuff of heroines? Miss Anthony, for her part, was condemned on all sides. Ordinary folk rejected her because she was an unabashed and stubborn rebel. Radical folk rejected her because she was brusque, tactless, domineering, and incorrigibly cocksure—or, what was worse, hen-sure. As for Mrs. Stanton, her chief fault seemed to be that she would not dissociate herself from Miss Anthony; but in the circumstances that was enough. The list of charges against Miss Anthony grew steadily, leading Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and the other respectable suffragists to form their own group, the American Woman Suffrage Association. But what her critics within the suffrage movement found least excusable was her naïve acceptance of Victoria Woodhull.

Chapter 2. The Herald Angels Of Woman's Rights

Accompanied by her equally bewitching sister, Tennessee Claflin, Mrs. Woodhull had burst upon New York City in 1868 and, in a trice, had wangled an introduction to the richest man in the country, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, and won his backing in an enterprise—Woodhull, Claflin & Co., Brokers—that stunned Wall Street numb. Victoria was just past thirty, "Tennie" was in her early twenties; no more alluring brokers ever operated. In three years they would gross seven hundred thousand dollars. More important, as soon as Victoria had begun to accumulate capital, she had preened herself and proclaimed her candidacy for President of the United States. In May, 1870, she published the first issue of a periodical unique in the annals of American journalism, *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly,* in which she was to stump fearlessly for free love, short skirts, easier divorce laws, vegetarianism, world government, magnetic healing, birth control, abortion, abolition of the death penalty, an excess profits tax, legalized prostitution, public housing, and socialism. Such a greedy golloping of every highly spiced reform on the menu impressed the more unbalanced liberals of her time. When she appeared to survive the diet with no blatantly carminative effects, they made her welcome in their circles. Victoria, a willful woman, promptly ensnared some of the more susceptible males.

Henry Ward Beecher, for example, the eminent divine of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, who had served briefly as president of the respectable American Woman Suffrage Association, was a susceptible male. Victoria had fixed her large brown eyes on Beecher warmly enough to make tongues wag.

For another example there was the journalist Theodore Tilton, a Beecher protégé who had served briefly as president of the radical National Woman Suffrage Association. As to his susceptibility there could be no doubt: he and Victoria had carried on a tempestuous affair for several months, during which they were constant, devoted companions.

Most of the women, however, were notably unsusceptible. When the question was put, "Who is Victoria? what is she, that all our swains commend her?" the women answered coldly, "She is a hussy," and as one they slammed their door in the fair Victoria's face.

All but Miss Anthony. When she heard that Victoria was to deliver a memorial in favor of woman suffrage before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, Miss Anthony impulsively joined her before the committee and later invited her to a seat of honor on the platform at her society's national convention. This led to what was promptly called the Woodhull Convention by all the newspapers, the reporters joyfully asserting that the purpose of the meeting was not suffrage but free love. (The respectable suffragists, meeting in New York at the same time, sniffed audibly and passed a resolution condemning free love.)

Nor was Mrs. Stanton a model of discretion and political acumen during this period. In April, 1872, ensnared by Mrs. Woodhull's plausible wiles, she signed her own name as well as Miss Anthony's to a proposal to transform the National Woman Suffrage Association into a new People's party that would nominate candidates for the coming presidential election. When she got wind of this demented scheme, Miss Anthony exploded. She demanded that Mrs. Stanton retract; but her old partner merely called her meddlesome and autocratic, and went into retreat, refusing to stand again for president of the association. Faced with the task of protecting the cause of woman suffrage from Mrs. Woodhull, whom she had tardily recognized as perhaps a wee bit opportunistic, Miss Anthony showed how autocratic she could be.

When Mrs. Woodhull (with Mrs. Stanton's backing) asked if her People's party might share the Suffrage Association's convention hall, Miss Anthony refused. When Mrs. Woodhull showed up anyway and moved to have the suffragists join her People's party at *her* convention hall, Miss Anthony banged her gavel fiercely and, when a majority voted against her, declared the entire proceeding out of order and the association's convention adjourned. When Mrs. Woodhull nevertheless continued speaking, to the evident relish of most of those present, Miss Anthony summarily instructed the janitor to put out the lights. No Woodhull was going to capture *her* splinter.

Having routed Mrs. Woodhull, Miss Anthony had time to muse on a friend's folly: "Never did Mrs. Stanton do so foolish a thing," Miss Anthony told her diary; and again: "I never was so hurt with folly of Mrs. Stanton."

But Mrs. Stanton's folly was far greater than even Miss Anthony had reckoned. It is written, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion," and Mrs. Stanton was so indiscreet as to confide to Mrs. Woodhull the juiciest bit of scandalous gossip of the age. Mrs. Woodhull filed the gossip away for future reference; who knew when it might not come in handy? Just now, however, she had more urgent matters on her mind. In the campaign of 1872 her People's (now Equal Rights) party was not creating sufficient stir to suit her. The suffragists had not, as expected, forwarded her fortunes. Could she perhaps blackmail some of them? She tried, but to no avail. She then clamped her pretty lips together and lighted a slow-burning fuse. She would show them; she would show them all. She would print in her *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* the story she had heard from Mrs. Stanton.

On November 2, 1872, three days before election, *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* hit the streets with a long, vivid, detailed story so zippy that by evening, copies were changing hands at forty dollars apiece. This was the article that alleged adulterous physical intimacies between Henry Ward Beecher, the country's most renowned clergyman, and Elizabeth Tilton, wife of his close friend and associate, Theodore Tilton. Naturally it rocked the nation.

Had the adulteries actually taken place? The question was never satisfactorily answered, even by a jury impaneled for the purpose. At all events, Mrs. Tilton was convinced that the Seventh Commandment had been, if not broken, at least severely bent. She confessed her frailties first to her husband and then, obsessed with guilt, to a few of her friends. One night when Miss Anthony was her guest, Mrs. Tilton had climbed into Miss Anthony's bed and given her a full account. As it happened, Tilton had himself told the same story to Mrs. Stanton earlier that same day. When presently Miss Anthony fed it back to Mrs. Stanton, everything checked.

And still it might have stayed where it was, in the realm of gossip, except that Mrs. Stanton retailed it all to Victoria Woodhull. Did she do so deliberately, guessing what Mrs. Woodhull might do with it? It is not impossible; for Mrs. Stanton had never been fond of clergymen and their sturdily obstructive role where woman's rights were concerned. Nor had she ever forgiven Beecher for accepting the presidency of the respectable American Woman Suffrage Association.

In any case, as soon as the story was in print, various celebrated American eccentrics eagerly clamored to get into the act. Anthony Comstock, that zealous protector of the public morals, was the first to move: he had Mrs. Woodhull and her sister jailed for printing obscenity. And now here came George Francis Train again, all elbows, crying out that there was nothing obscene in what the sisters had published and, to prove his point, printing some carefully culled verses from the Old Testament that were, he insisted, far more obscene. He was jugged too—in, he later claimed, Cell Number 56 of the Tombs, just across the corridor from Edward S. Stokes, who had killed Jim Fisk over Josie Mansfield, and one cell removed from Richard Croker, who would before long be the Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall.

At the least, all this foofaraw distracted public attention from the campaign for woman suffrage, and upstate in Rochester Miss Anthony had reason to be hot with rage. For on the day before the scandalous story had been printed, she had planned "a fine agitation"; at the head of a group of sixteen women, she had marched into the registration office of the Eighth Ward in Rochester and, invoking her rights under the Fourteenth Amendment, had demanded to be registered as a voter. All sixteen women had been duly registered; on election day all sixteen voted, and, sure enough, all sixteen were subsequently arrested. But their contumacy had not got the space in the papers for which Miss Anthony had hoped.

She came to trial in June, 1873. It was clear that the poor timorous males were gravely affrighted by her gesture: a justice of the United States Supreme Court, Ward Hunt, was on hand to preside, and his sympathies were evident from the outset. Although it was a criminal case, Hunt directed the jury to find Miss Anthony guilty, refused permission to poll the jurors, and dismissed them before they could blink. A smooth, if highhanded, procedure, and marked by only one

error. That was when Hunt inquired: "Has the prisoner anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced?"

But of course she had; a great many things; and she got in a solid five minutes' worth of agitprop while Hunt feebly protested, interrupted, tried to hush her up, gaveled, colored beet-red, and ordered her seated. He then fined her one hundred dollars and costs, to which she retorted that she would "never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty." Hunt was shrewd enough not to impose a prison term until the fine had been paid; if he had, she would have been able to appeal and win a reversal because she had been denied proper trial by jury.

And now a curious change came about. Perhaps it was because of the obvious unfairness of her trial, perhaps because of a belated recognition of her dogged persistence, perhaps only because she was now well along in her fifties—but imperceptibly her public image had mellowed. Respect crept into the editorial comment about her, displacing the derisive contempt. "No longer in the bloom of youth," said one St. Louis newspaper, "—if she ever had any bloom—hard-featured, guileless, cold as an icicle, fluent and philosophical, she wields today tenfold more influence than all the beautiful and brilliant female lecturers that ever flaunted upon the platform as preachers of social impossibilities."

Something of the same sort was happening to the public concept of her cause. It was no longer radical. It was a long, long way from being achieved but, having become familiar, it was now grown respectable. Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton both recognized it: they sat down together to write the history of their efforts, a tacit admission that the old war horses were beginning to think of oats in the stable. Miss Anthony found time for a trip to Europe; for the first time in her life she took her breakfast in bed. "A purposeless life," she wrote acidly, and bestirred herself to form yet another organization, the International Council of Women. Mrs. Stanton, too, had slowed down; Miss Anthony was obliged to harass her into attending annual conventions.

A new generation was coming along, dissatisfied with the meager results achieved by the old. For one thing, the youngsters demanded that the two suffrage associations combine; the overlapping of effort was silly. For another, they looked on Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton and Lucy Stone as embarrassing symbols of the past, best fitted for such ceremonial functions as the celebration of seventieth or eightieth birthdays, to serve the sweet purposes of publicity.

Mrs. Stanton was ready for such serenity, but not Miss Anthony. Still incorrigibly meddlesome, she resisted all efforts to nudge her into retirement, seeking to keep an iron grip on such procedural matters as the nomination and election of new officers. But it was manifest that her grip on the woman's rights movement was being prized open.

In 1899 Miss Anthony retired. She was eighty; but she had only banked her fires, there was still much to do—the history of her long fight to finish, her

memoirs to write; and so much to think back on. What, after all, had she and Mrs. Stanton accomplished? Yes, they had created a climate of opinion, perhaps; but what of a specific, concrete nature? Where could women vote? Only in Wyoming, in Colorado, in Idaho, in Utah. To be sure, a few laws had been passed and a few customs altered: women could own their own property now, and could go to college; there was increasing agitation to control the evil of drink, and women were taking a leading part; all this was worth reflecting on. But women still had no vote.

In 1902 Mrs. Stanton died. Miss Anthony traveled from Rochester to New York for the funeral. "Oh, this awful hush!" she exclaimed, on entering the empty house. "It seems impossible that voice is stilled which I have loved to hear for fifty years. . . . The papers, I believe, had good editorials—I have read them but I do not know, I can think of nothing. . . . "

And still Miss Anthony persisted, a steady convention delegate, an indefatigable puller of strings, an untiring committeewoman. At eighty-four she traveled to Germany for a convention of the International Council of Women, hailed as the "grand old woman of America"; at eighty-five she journeyed across the continent for a suffragist convention in Oregon; at eighty-six, sick and very feeble, she appeared at her last convention, in Baltimore. She was given a ten minute ovation. But when she spoke she showed that her reflection had been bitter. "I have looked on many such audiences," she said, "and in my life time I have listened to many such speakers, all testifying to the righteousness, the justice, and the worthiness of the cause of woman suffrage. . . . The fight must not cease; you must see that it does not stop."

At her birthday celebration a few days later a congratulatory telegram was handed her; it came from President Theodore Roosevelt. "When will men do something besides extend congratulations?" she cried. "I would rather have President Roosevelt say one word to Congress in favor of amending the Constitution to give women the suffrage than to praise me endlessly!" And once again the applause broke out.

Back home in Rochester she was put to bed. Anna Shaw came to visit early in March, 1906. She stayed a week. One day, when Dr. Shaw was sitting beside her bed, Miss Anthony held up her hand and measured a little space on one finger. "Just think of it," she whispered, "I have been striving for over sixty years for a little bit of justice no bigger than that, and yet I must die without obtaining it. Oh, it seems so cruel!" Two days later she was dead.

For each woman, Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony, a long, hard life; for each, more than eighty-six years; for each, more than a half-century of struggle and self-sacrifice, of insult and sneers and derision, of belated respect and honor; for each, death before her hopes could be realized. It is the common fate of the radical reformer. They have, of course, their lasting monument—the Nineteenth

Amendment, granting suffrage to women. But Mrs. Stanton had, in a letter to Miss Anthony years before, written their joint and fitting epitaph. "Such pine knots as you and I," Mrs. Stanton wrote, "are no standard for judging ordinary women."

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