

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FH 5537 VOLUME ONE

What If I Am A Woman?

Black Women's Speeches Narrated By Ruby Dee
With An Introduction By Ossie Davis

MARIA W. STEWART

SOJOURNER TRUTH

SARAH PARKER REMOND

MARY CHURCH TERRELL



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Produced by Mical Whitaker
Producer: Ossie Davis and
Ruby Dee—Story Hour

Text of the speeches furnished by Philip S. Foner who also
edited the speeches and provided the introductory material.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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COVER ENGRAVING: SOJOURNER TRUTH

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What If I Am A Woman?

By Maria W. Stewart

RUBY DEE

Ruby Dee has been an actress for many years. In film, she perhaps is best remembered for *Gone Are The Days*, written from her husband, Ossie Davis' play *Purlie Victorious*; *A Raisin In The Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry; for Buck and the Preacher with Poitier and Belafonte; and for *The Jackie Robinson Story*.

Some television films include *Wedding Band* by Alice Childress, first produced at the New York Shakespeare Festival under the aegis of Joe Papp; *It's Good To Be Alive*, the Roy Campanella story; and *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, from writings by Lorraine Hansberry.

She has been in such plays as *Anna Lucasta*; *A Raisin In The Sun*; *Boesman and Lena*, by Athol Fugard, which won her an Obie; *Purlie Victorious*; and *Wedding Band*, for which she won the Drama Desk Award.

She is currently heard on 65 stations throughout the Country on the Kraft Foods sponsored Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Story Hour, over the National Black Network. She and her husband recently filmed "Countdown at Kusini" in Nigeria, under the sponsorship of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She has recorded poems and stories for Caedmon, Educa.-Audio-Visual; Columbia and others. She and her husband have also co-produced a television special for young folks, *Today Is Ours*, based on her book *Glowchild*. They give concert readings based primarily on the work of minority group writers. She has edited an anthology of poetry called *Glowchild*, is co-author with Jules Dassin and Julian Mayfield of the film *Uptight*.

She is a product of Harlem's American Negro Theatre, of the teachers Paul Mann, Lloyd Richards and Morris Carnovsky and of the New York Public School system, where she graduated from Hunter College with a B.A. She is the mother of three grown children - Nora, Guy and LaVerne.

ADDENDUM:

Ms. Dee is also the author of a soon to be produced work, *Take It From The Top*.

The noted black historian, Benjamin Quarles, calls Maria W. Stewart "the first native-born American woman to speak in public and leave extant texts of her addresses." Mrs. Maria Stewart who spoke several times in Boston between 1831 and 1833, was uneducated, impelled by strong religious beliefs, an abolitionist, and was one of the pioneers in the struggle for women's rights. She developed arguments that according to Eleanor Flexner, the Grimcurs would be using a few years later.

In her farewell address, delivered on September 21, 1833, to her friends in Boston, she acknowledges her failure to improve opportunities for her people in the city. What is significant about her speech is that not only does she plead for the slave and call upon her people to live in greater righteousness, but she firmly defended her right as a woman to do so.

To begin my subject. "Ye have heard that it hath been said whoso is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoso shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." For several years my heart was in continual sorrow. Then I cried unto the Lord my troubles. And thus for wise and holy purposes best known to himself, he has raised me in the midst of my enemies to vindicate my wrongs before this people, and to reprove them for sin as I have reasoned to them of righteousness

and judgment to come. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. I believe, that for wise and holy purposes best known to himself, he hath unloosed my tongue and put his word into my mouth in order to confound and put all those to shame that have rose up against me. For he hath clothed my face with steel and lined my forehead with brass. He hath put his testimony within me and engraven his seal on my forehead. And with these weapons I have indeed set the fiends of earth and hell at defiance."

What if I am a woman; is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah to be a mother and a judge in Israel? Did not Queen Esther save the lives of the Jews? And Mary Magdalene first declare the resurrection of Christ from the dead?

Again: Holy women ministered unto Christ and the apostles; and women of refinement in all ages, more or less, have had a voice in moral, religious, and political subjects. Again: Why the Almighty hath imparted unto me the power of speaking thus I cannot tell.

But to convince you of the high opinion that was formed of the capacity and ability of woman by the ancients, I would refer you to "Sketches of the Fair Sex." Read to the fifty-first page, and you will find that several of the northern nations imagined that women could look into futurity, and that they had about them an inconceivable something approaching to divinity. A belief, that the Deity more readily communicates himself to women, has at one time or other prevailed in every quarter of the earth: not only among the Germans and the Britons, but all the people of Scandinavia were possessed of it. Among the Greeks, women delivered the oracles. The respect the Romans paid to the Sybils is well known. The Jews had their prophetesses. The prediction of the Egyptian women obtained much credit at Rome, even unto the emperors. And in most barbarous nations all things that have the appearance of being supernatural, the mysteries of religion, the secrets of physic, and the rights of magic, were in the possession of women.

If such women as are here described have once existed, be no longer astonished, then, my brethren and friends, that God at this eventful period should raise up your own females to strive by their example, both in public and private, to assist those who are endeavoring to stop the strong current of prejudice that flows so profusely against us at present. No longer ridicule their efforts, it will be counted for sin. For God makes use of feeble means sometimes to bring about his most exalted purposes.

In the fifteenth century, the general spirit of this period is worthy of observation. We might then have seen women preaching and mixing themselves in controversies. Women occupying the chairs of Philosophy and Justice; women haranging in Latin before the Pope; women writing in Greek and studying in Hebrew; nuns were poetesses and women of quality divines. Women in those days devoted their leisure hours to contemplation and study. The religious spirit which has animated women in all ages showed itself at this time. It has made them, by turns, martyrs, apostles, warriors, and concluded in making them divines and scholars.

Why cannot a religious spirit animate us now? Why cannot we become divines and scholars? Although learning is somewhat requisite, yet recollect that those great apostles, Peter and James, were ignorant and unlearned. They were taken from the fishing-boat, and made fishers of men.

In the thirteenth century, a young lady of Bologne devoted herself to the study of the Latin language and of the laws. At the age of twenty-three she pronounced a funeral oration in Latin in the great church of Bologne; and to be admitted as an orator, she had neither need of indulgence on account of her youth or of her sex. At the age of twenty-six she took the degree of doctor of laws, and began publicly to expound the Institutes of Justinian. At the age of thirty-four, her great reputation raised her to a chain (where she taught the law to a prodigious concourse of scholars from all nations.)

She joined the charms and accomplishments of a woman to all the knowledge of a man. And such was the power of her eloquence, that her beauty was only admired when her tongue was silent.

What if such women as are here described should rise among our sable race? And it is not impossible, for it is not the color of the skin that makes the man or the woman, but the principle formed in the soul. Brilliant wit will shine, come from whence it will; and genius and talent will not hide the brightness of its lustre.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS

By Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth (c. 1797-1883) was born a slave in New York and freed in 1827 when the state liberated its slaves. She did domestic work, and, after a period of religious revivalism, became an active Abolitionist, exchanging her name Isabella for the name Sojourner Truth. Although she remained illiterate all her life, she did valiant service in the antislavery and woman's-rights cause. When she died in November, 1883, the *New York Globe*, a black weekly, declared (December 1): "Sojourner Truth stands preeminently as the only colored woman who gained a National reputation on the lecture platform in the days before the war."

The speech you're about to hear was made at the Woman's Rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. Some of the delegates to the convention urged that she not be allowed to speak, fearing that the Abolitionists would harm their cause. But Francis Dana Gage, who was presiding, invited her to speak. Sojourner Truth directed her remarks against the previous speaker, a clergyman who had ridiculed the weakness and helplessness of women, who should, therefore, not be entrusted with the vote.

Wall, chilern, whar dar is so much racket dar must be somethin' out o' kilter. I tink dat 'twixt de niggers of de Souf and de womin at de Norf, all talkin' 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout?

Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud puddles, or gibs me any best place! And a'n't I a woman? Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And a'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear de lash as well! And a'n't I a woman? Now I have borne thirteen chilern, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And a'n't I a woman?

Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head; what dis dey call it? ("Intellect," whispered some one near.) Dat's it, honey. What dat got to do wid womin's rights or nigger's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and youn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?

Den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wan't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from? Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do wid Him!

If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all alone, dese women togedder (and she glanced her eye over the platform) ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now dey is asking to do it, de men better let 'em.

Side 1 Band 3

WHY SLAVERY IS STILL RAMPANT

By Sarah Parker Remond

Until the rise of Frederick Douglass, Charles Lenox Remond was the best-known black abolitionist, and he continued to be important in the movement down to the Civil War. Less well known is Remond's sister, Sarah Parker Remond. She was born about 1815 in Salem, Massachusetts, of John and Nancy Remond. Her father, a native of the island of Curacao, came to America at an early age.

He later became a well-known hairdresser in Salem, and his daughter and son, Charles Lenox, were well educated. Miss Remond joined the anti-slavery movement and by 1857 was speaking with her brother at meetings in upstate New York. She also shared the platform with Susan B. Anthony at anti-slavery conventions. But she gained some fame as an anti-slavery speaker during the course of a lecture tour of Ireland and England in 1859. As one of the few black women anti-slavery orators from the United States to address audiences in these countries, her presence was fairly widely reported in the British press.

Miss Remond continued to lecture in Europe after the Civil War, but in 1871 she received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from a leading medical school in Florence, Italy, and remained in Italy practicing medicine.

On September 17, 1859, the *Manchester Times* carried an account of Miss Remond's speech at the Athenaeum in Manchester, England. Introduced by the mayor of Manchester, Miss Remond began by informing the audience that she appeared as the agent of no society and was speaking simply on her own responsibility, but that in feeling and in principle she was identified "with the ultra-Abolitionists of America." This is a part of her speech, *Why Slavery Is Still Rampant*.

Although the anti-slavery enterprise was begun some thirty years ago, the evil is still rampant in the land. As there are some young people present—and I am glad to see them here, for it is important that they should understand this subject—I shall briefly explain that there are thirty-two States, sixteen of which are free and sixteen slave States. The free States are in the North. The political feelings in the North and South are essentially different, so is the social life. In the North, democracy, not what the Americans call democracy, but the true principle of equal rights, prevails—I speak of the white population, mind—which is abundant; the country, in every material sense, flourishes. In the South, aristocratic feelings prevail, labor is dishonorable, and five millions of poor whites live in the most degrading ignorance and destitution. I might dwell long on the miserable condition of these poor whites, the indirect victims of slavery; but I must go on to speak of the four millions of slaves. The slaves are essentially things, with no rights, political, social, domestic, or religious; the absolute victims of all but irresponsible power. For the slave there is no home, no love, no hope, no help; and what is life without hope? No writer can describe the slave's life; it cannot be told; the fullest description ever given to the world does but skim over the surface of this subject. You may infer something of the state of society in the Southern States when I tell you there are eight hundred thousand mulattoes, nine-tenths of whom are the children of white fathers, and these are constantly sold by their parents, for the slave follows the condition of the mother. Hence we see every shade of complexion amongst the slaves. To describe to you the miserable poor whites of the South, I need only quote the words of Mr. Helper, a Southerner, in his important work on slavery, and the testimony also of a Virginian gentleman of my acquaintance. The five millions poor whites are most of them in as gross a state of ignorance as Mrs. Stowe's "Topsey," in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The free colored people of the Northern States are, for no crime but merely the fact of complexion, deprived of all political and social rights. Whatever wealth or eminence in intellect and refinement they may attain to, they are treated as outcasts and white men and women who identify themselves with them are sure to be insulted in the grossest manner. I do not ask your political interference in any way. This is a moral question. Even in America the Abolitionists generally disclaim every other ground but the moral and religious one on which this matter is based. You send missionaries to the heathen; I tell you of professing Christians practising what is worse than any heathenism on record. How is it that we have come to this state of thing, you ask. I reply, the whole power of the country is in the hands of the slaveholders. For more than thirty years we have had a slaveholding President, and the Slave Power has been dominant. The consequence has been a series of encroachments, until now at last the slave trade is reopened and all but legitimised in America. It was a sad

backward step when England last year fell into the trap laid by America and surrendered the right of search. Now slavers ply on the seas which were previously guarded by your ships. We have, besides, an international slave trade. We have States where, I am ashamed to say, men and women are reared, like cattle, for the market. When I walk through the streets of Manchester and meet load after load of cotton, I think of those eighty thousand cotton plantations on which was grown the one hundred and twenty-five millions of dollars' worth of cotton which supply your market, and I remember that not one cent of that money every reaches the hands of the laborers. Here is an incident of slave life for you—an incident of common occurrence in the South. In March, 1859, a slave auction took place in the city of Savannah. Three hundred and forty-three slaves, the property of Pierce Butler—the husband of your own Fanny Kemble—were sold, regardless of every tie of flesh and blood; old men and maidens, young men, and babes of fifteen months—there was but one question about them, and that was decided at the auction-block. Pierce Butler, the owner, resides in Philadelphia, and is a highly-respected citizen and a member of a Church. He was reputed a kind master, who rarely separated the families of his slaves. The financial crisis took place, and I have given you the result to his human property. But Mr. Butler has in no wise lost caste among his friends; he still moves in the most respectable society, and his influence in his Church is so great that, with other members, he has procured the removal from the pulpit of the Rev. Dudley Tyng, who had uttered a testimony against slavery; and in that pulpit, the man who now preaches, Mr. Prentice by name, is the owner of a hundred slaves. Such is the state of public opinion in America, and you find the poison running through everything. With the exception of the Abolitionists, you will find people of all classes thus contaminated. The whole army and navy of the United States are pledged to pursue and shoot down the poor fugitives, who panting for liberty, fly to Canada, to seek the security of the British flag. All denominations of professing Christians are guilty of sustaining or defending slavery. Even the Quakers must be included in this rule. Now I ask for your sympathy and your influence, and whoever asked English men and women in vain? Give us the power of your public opinion, it has great weight in America. Words spoken here are read there as no words written in America are read. Lord Brougham's testimony on the first of August resounded through America; your Clarkson and your Wilberforce are names of strength to us! I ask you, raise the moral public opinion until its voice reaches the American shores. Aid us thus until the shackles of the American slave melt like dew before the morning sun. I ask for especial help from the women of England. Women are the worst victims of the Slave Power. I am met on every hand by the cry "Cotton!" "Cotton!" I cannot stop to speak of cotton while men and women are being brutalized. But there is an answer for the cotton cry too, and the argument is an unanswerable one. Before concluding I shall give you a few passages from the laws of the slave States. By some of these laws, free colored people may be arrested in the discharge of their lawful business; and, if no papers attesting their freedom be found on them, they are committed to jail; and, if not claimed within a limited time, they may be sold to pay the jail fees. By another law, any person who speaks at the bar, bench, on the stage, or in private, to the slaves, so as to excite insurrection, or brings any paper or pamphlet of such nature into the State, shall be imprisoned for not less than three nor more than twenty-one years; or shall suffer death as the judge decides. I could read such laws for hours, but I shall only add that in Maryland there is at present a gentleman in prison, condemned for ten years, because a copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin was found in his possession.* The laws are equally severe against teaching a slave to read—against teaching even the name of the good God.

WHEN WOMAN GETS HER RIGHTS MAN WILL BE RIGHT By Sojourner Truth

Although she was already over eighty years of age, the great black fighter for human freedom, Sojourner Truth, was still en-

gaged in the cause. A pioneer in the struggle for woman's rights as well as for the freedom of her people from slavery, Sojourner Truth made the rights of women a special feature of all her talks in the years following emancipation. She spoke twice at the first annual meeting of the American Equal Rights Association held in New York City on May 9 and 10, 1867. She closed her first speech by singing, "We are going home," and that evening again addressed the delegates of women engaged in the battle for equality with men and a few progressive men who also attended the session. Here is the major portion of Sojourner Truth's *When Woman Gets Her Rights Man Will Be Right*.

My friends, I am rejoiced that you are glad, but I don't know how you will feel when I get through. I come from another field—the country of the slave. They have got their rights—so much good luck. Now what is to be done about it? I feel that I have got as much responsibility as anybody else. I have as good rights as anybody. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women get theirs, there will be a bad time about it. So I am for keeping the thing going while things is still stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again. White women are a great deal smarter, and know more than colored women, while colored women do not know scarcely anything. They go out washing, which is about as high as a colored woman gets, and their men go about idle, strutting up and down; and when the women come home, they ask for their money and take it all, and then scold because there is no food. I want you to consider on that, chil'n. I want women to have their rights. In the courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them. I wish women to have her voice there among the pettifoggers. If it is not a fit place for women, it is unfit for men to be there. I am above eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. But I suppose I am kept here because something remains for me to do; I suppose I am yet to help break the chain. I have done a great deal of work—as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping up with the cradler; but men never doing no more, got twice as much pay. So with the German women. They work in the field and do as much work, but do not get the pay. We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much. I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of the colored woman, I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is broken. What we want is a little money! You men know that you get as much again as women when you write, or for what you do. When we get our rights, we shall not have to come to you for money, for then we shall have money enough of our own. It is a good consolation to know that when we have got this we shall not be coming to you any more. You have been having our right so long, that you think, like a slaveholder, that you own us. I know that it is hard for one who has held the reins for so long to give up; it cuts like a knife. It will feel all better when it closes up again. I have been in Washington about three years, seeing about those colored people. Now colored men have a right to vote; and what I want is to have colored women have the right to vote. There ought to be equal rights more than ever, since colored people have got their freedom....

I know that it is hard for men to give up entirely. They must run in the old track. I was amused how men speak up for one another. They cannot bear that a woman should say anything about the man, but they will stand here and take up the time in man's cause. Now some men are trying to help us. I know that, but they cannot help us much until some of the spirit is taken out of them that belongs among the women. Men have got their rights, and women has not got their rights. That is the trouble. When woman gets her rights man will be right. How beautiful that will be. Then it will be peace on earth and good will to men. But it cannot be until it be right.... It will come.... Yes, it will come quickly. It must come. And now when the waters is troubled, and now is the time to step into the pool. There is a great deal now with the minds, and now is the time to start forth.... The great fight was to keep the rights of the poor colored people. That made a great battle. And now I hope that this

will be the last battle that will be in the world. Let us finish up so that there be no more fighting. I have faith in God and there is truth in humanity. Be strong women! Blush not! Tremble not! I want you to keep a good faith and good courage. And I am going round after I get my business settled and get more equality. People in the North, I am going round to lecture on human rights. I will shake every place I go to.

Side 2 Band 1

THE PROGRESS OF COLORED WOMEN

By Mary Church Terrell

In her autobiography, *A Colored Woman in a White World*, published in 1940, Mary Church Terrell wrote: "I was invited to speak to the Congregational Association of Maryland and the District of Columbia, which was holding a meeting in the First Congregational Church.... Contrary to a custom observed all my life when speaking in public, I used a manuscript and spoke on 'The Progress of Colored Women.'" This speech, the only one of many delivered by Mrs. Terrell that was preserved, was fortunately published in *The Voice of the Negro* in July, 1904 (pp. 292-94).

Mary Church Terrell was born in Memphis at the end of the Civil War. Her mother had been educated in slavery and her father, Robert R. Church, Sr., was the son of a pro-Union slaveowner, who made a fortune in real estate. Mary was sent to the North for schooling at six. After being graduated from Oberlin College, she taught at Wilberforce University and at a colored high school in Washington, D.C. She married Robert J. Terrell, a black graduate of Harvard University, who became a municipal judge in Washington, a position he occupied for twenty years. Active in work among Negro women, Mrs. Terrell was elected the first president of the National Association of Colored Women. Mrs. Terrell was still actively fighting Jim Crow in Washington at the age of eighty-nine.

In its issue of November 25, 1890, *The Colored American*, of Washington, D.C., said of Mary Church Terrell: "As a platform orator and champion of the rights and privileges of the race, she has no superior among her sex in all the land."

...When one considers the obstacles encountered by colored women in their effort to educate and cultivate themselves, since they became free, the work they have accomplished and the progress they have made will bear favorable comparison, at least with that of their more fortunate sisters, from whom the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and the means of self-culture have never been entirely withheld. Not only are colored women with ambition and aspiration handicapped on account of their sex, but they are almost everywhere baffled and mocked because of their race. Not only because they are women, but because they are colored women are discouragement and disappointment meeting them at every turn. But in spite of the obstacles encountered, the progress made by colored women along many lines appears like a veritable miracle of modern times. Forty years ago for the great masses of colored women there was no such thing as home. Today in each and every section of the country there are hundreds of homes among colored people, the mental and moral tone of which is as high and as pure as can be found among the best people of any land.

To the women of the race may be attributed in large measure the refinement and purity of the colored home. The immorality of colored women is a theme upon which those who know little about them or those who maliciously misrepresent them love to descant. Foul aspersions upon the character of colored women are assiduously circulated by the press of certain sections and especially by the direct descendants of those who in years past were responsible for the moral degradation of their female slaves. And yet, in spite of the fateful heritage of slavery, even though the safeguards usually thrown around maidenly youth and innocence are in some sections entirely withheld from colored girls, statistics compiled by men not inclined to falsify in favor of my race show that immorality among

the colored women of the United States is not so great as among women with similar environment and temptations in Italy, Germany, Sweden and France.

Scandals in the best colored society are exceedingly rare, while the progressive game of divorce and remarriage is practically unknown.

The intellectual progress of colored women has been marvelous. So great has been their thirst for knowledge and so Herculean their efforts to acquire it that there are few colleges, universities, high and normal schools in the North, East and West from which colored girls have not graduated with honor. In Wellesley, Vassar, Ann Arbor, Cornell and in Oberlin, my dear alma mater, whose name will always be loved and whose praise will always be sung as the first college in the country broad, just and generous enough to extend a cordial welcome to the Negro and to open its doors to women on an equal footing with the men, colored girls by their splendid records have forever settled the question of their capacity and worth. The instructors in these and other institutions cheerfully bear testimony to their intelligence, their diligence and their success.

As the brains of colored women expanded, their hearts began to grow. No sooner had the heads of a favored few been filled with knowledge than their hearts yearned to dispense blessings to the less fortunate of their race. With tireless energy and eager zeal, colored women have worked in every conceivable way to elevate their race. Of the colored teachers engaged in instructing our youth it is probably no exaggeration to say that fully eighty percent are women. In the backwoods, remote from the civilization and comforts of the city and town colored women may be found courageously battling with those evils which such conditions always entail. Many a heroine of whom the world will never hear has thus sacrificed her life to her race amid surroundings and in the face of privations which only martyrs can bear.

Through the medium of their societies in the church, beneficial organizations out of it and clubs of various kinds, colored women are doing a vast amount of good. It is almost impossible to ascertain exactly what the Negro is doing in any field, for the records are so poorly kept. This is particularly true in the case of the women of the race. During the past forty years there is no doubt that colored women in their poverty have contributed large sums of money to charitable and educational institutions as well as to the foreign and home missionary work. Within the twenty-five years in which the educational work of the African Methodist Episcopal Church has been systematized, the women of that organization have contributed at least five hundred thousand dollars to the cause of education. Dotted all over the country are charitable institutions for the aged, orphaned and poor which have been established by colored women. Just how many it is difficult to state, owing to the lack of statistics bearing on the progress, possessions and prowess of colored women.

Among the charitable institutions either founded, conducted or supported by colored women, may be mentioned the Hale Infirmary of Montgomery, Alabama, the Carrie Steel Orphanage of Atlanta, the Reed Orphan Home of Covington, and the Hains Industrial School of Augusta, all three in the state of Georgia; a home for the aged of both races in New Bedford, and St. Monica's Home of Boston, in Massachusetts, Old Folks Home of Memphis, Tennessee, and the Colored Orphan's Home of Lexington, Kentucky, together with others which lack of space forbids me to mention. Mt. Meigs Institute is an excellent example of a work originated and carried into successful execution by a colored woman. The school was established for the benefit of colored people on the plantations in the black belt of Alabama. In the township of Mt. Meigs the population is practically all colored. Instruction given in this school is of the kind best suited to the needs of the people for whom it was established. Along with some scholastic training, girls are taught everything pertaining to the management of the home, while boys are taught practical farming, wheelwrighting, blacksmithing and have some military training. Having started with almost nothing, at the end of eight years the trustees of the school owned nine acres

of land and five buildings in which several thousand pupils had received instructions, all through the energy, the courage and the sacrifice of one little woman.

Up to date, politics have been religiously eschewed by colored women, although questions affecting our legal status as a race is sometimes agitated by the most progressive class. In Louisiana and Tennessee colored women have several times petitioned the legislatures of their respective states to repel the obnoxious Jim-Crow-car laws. Against the convict-lease system, whose atrocities have been so frequently exposed of late, colored women here and there in the South are waging a ceaseless war. So long as hundreds of their brothers and sisters, many of whom have committed no crime or misdemeanor whatever, are thrown into cells whose cubic contents are less than those of a good-size grave, to be overworked, underfed and only partially covered with vermin-infested rags, and so long as children are born to the women in these camps who breathe the polluted atmosphere of these dens of horror and vice from the time they utter their first cry in the world till they are released from their suffering by death, colored women who are working for the emancipation and elevation of their race know where their duty lies. By constant agitation of this painful and hideous subject they hope to touch the conscience of the country, so that this stain shall be forever wiped away.

Alarmed at the rapidity with which the Negro is losing ground in the world of trade, some of the farsighted women are trying to solve the labor question, so far as it concerns the women at least, by urging the establishment of schools of domestic science wherever means therefor can be secured. Those who are interested in this particular work hope and believe that if colored women and girls are thoroughly trained in domestic service, the boycott which has undoubtedly been placed upon them in many sections of the country will be removed. With so few vocations open to the Negro and with the labor organizations increasingly hostile to him, the future of the boys and girls of the race appears to some of our women very foreboding and dark.

The cause of temperance has been eloquently espoused by two women, each of whom has been appointed national superintendent of work among colored people by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In business, colored women have had signal success. There is in Alabama a large milling and cotton business belonging to and controlled by a colored woman, who has sometimes as many as seventy-five men in her employ. Until a few years ago the principal ice plant of Nova Scotia was owned and managed by a colored woman, who sold it for a large amount. In the professions there are dentists and doctors whose practice is lucrative and large. Ever since a book was published in 1773 entitled "Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral" by Phillis Wheatley, Negro Servant of Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston, colored women have given abundant evidence of literary ability. In sculpture we are represented by a woman upon whose chisel Italy has set her seal of approval; in painting by one of Bouguereau's pupils and in music by young women holding diplomas from the best conservatories in the land.

In short, to use a thought of the illustrious Frederick Douglass, if judged by the depths from which they have come, rather than by the heights to which those blessed with centuries of opportunities have attained, colored women need not hang their heads in shame. They are slowly but surely making their way up to the heights, wherever they can be scaled. In spite of handicaps and discouragements they are not losing heart. In a variety of ways they are rendering valiant service to their race. Lifting as they climb, onward and upward they go struggling and striving and hoping that the buds and blossoms of their desires may burst into glorious fruition ere long. Seeking no favors because of their color nor charity because of their needs they knock at the door of Justice and ask for an equal chance.

Side 2 Band 2

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

By Mary Church Terrell

Active in work among Negro women, Mrs. Terrell was elected the first president of the National Association of Colored Women in which position she actively fought Jim-Crow and joined forces with white women in the Woman Suffrage cause. In 1908, at the celebration marking the sixtieth anniversary of the first Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, Mrs. Terrell delivered an address lauding the role of Frederick Douglass in the struggle for the right of women to vote.

There are two reasons why I look back upon the meeting of which this is the sixtieth anniversary with genuine pleasure and glowing pride. In the first place, I am a woman like Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In the second place, I belong to the race of which Frederick Douglass was such a magnificent representative. Perhaps I should be too modest to proclaim from the housetops that I think I have a decided advantage over everybody else who participates in this anniversary today. Perhaps I should be too courteous and generous to call attention to the fact that I have one more reason for being proud of that record-breaking history making meeting, which was held in this city 60 years ago, than anybody else who takes part in these exercises today. But I simply cannot resist the temptation to show that this is one occasion on which a colored woman really has good and sufficient reasons for feeling several inches taller than her sisters of the more favored race. It so rarely happens that a colored woman in the United States can prove by convincing, indisputable facts that she has good reasons for being proud of the race with which she is identified that you will pardon me for the pride I feel on this occasion, I am sure.

The incomparable Frederick Douglass did many things of which I as a member of that race which he served so faithfully and well am proud. But there is nothing he ever did in his long and brilliant career in which I take keener pleasure and greater pride than I do in his ardent advocacy of equal political rights for women and the effective service he rendered the cause of woman suffrage sixty years ago. Even though some of us have passed that period in our lives, when we take much pleasure in those old romances which describe in such deliciously thrilling details those days of old, when knights were bold and had a chronic habit of rescuing fair ladies in high towers in distress, still I am sure there is nobody here today with soul so dead and heart so cold who does not admire a man who, in the everyday affairs of this prosaic world, rushes gallantly to the assistance of a woman fighting to the death for a principal as dear to her as life and actually succeeds in helping her establish and maintain it, in spite of the opposition of even her faithful coadjutors and her most faithful friends. This is precisely the service which Frederick Douglass rendered Elizabeth Cady Stanton at that Seneca Falls meeting sixty years ago.

When the defeat of that resolution which demanded equal political rights for women seemed imminent, because some of the most ardent advocates of woman suffrage deemed it untimely and unwise, when even dear, broad, brave Lucretia Mott tried to dissuade Mrs. Stanton, to whom it was the very heart and soul of the movement, from insisting upon it by declaring "Lizzie, thee will make us all ridiculous," I am glad that it was to a large extent due to Frederick Douglass' masterful arguments and matchless eloquence that it was carried in spite of the opposition of its equally conscientious and worthy foes. And I am as proud of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as a woman, as I am of Frederick Douglass, the Negro. Try as hard as we may, it is difficult for women of the present day to imagine what courage and strength of mind it required for Elizabeth Cady Stanton to demand equal political rights for her sex at that time.

It is safe to assert that there is not a single woman here today who would not have uttered the same words of warning and caution as did Lucretia Mott if she had been present, when a sister made demands

which seemed so utterly impossible and rashly extravagant as were those urged by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a meeting in which for the first time in the history of the world it was openly, boldly proclaimed without any qualifications and reservations whatsoever, that women on general principles had as much right to choose the rulers and make laws as had men, and that it was the duty of American women in particular to do everything in their power to secure the elective franchise for themselves. And this little episode with which we are all so familiar should not cause us to love those who opposed the resolution demanding equal political rights for women the less but should cause us to praise and admire those who insisted upon its adoption, the more.

It is difficult for us to exaggerate the importance of the bold step taken by the advocates of this resolution, when they dared to array themselves against their friends who they knew were as interested in woman suffrage as themselves and as willing to make sacrifices to effect it as were they themselves. And for that reason there are no words of praise too strong to bestow on that great woman and that illustrious man who finally succeeded in convincing their friends in that meeting that the course they advised was the wisest and the best. How glad we all are today that Martha C. Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton dared to offend the tender, delicate sensibilities and shock the proprieties of this staid, inconsistently proper and hypocritical old world.

But if Elizabeth Cady Stanton manifested sublime courage and audacious contempt for the ridicule and denunciation she knew would be heaped upon her as a woman, how much more were such qualities displayed by Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave. It is doubtful if Frederick Douglass' independence of spirit and sense of justice were ever put to a severer test than they were on that day, when for the first time in his life, he publicly committed himself to the cause of woman suffrage. I have always extracted great pleasure from the thought not only that Frederick Douglass, and he alone of all men present at the Seneca Falls meeting, was conspicuous for his enthusiastic advocacy of equal political rights for women, but that he found it in his heart to advocate it ever afterward with such ardor and zeal.

In no half-hearted way did he lay hold of the newly-proclaimed doctrine, nor did he ever try to conceal his views. When nearly all the newspapers, big and little, good, bad and indifferent were hurling jibes and jeers at the women and the men who participated in the Seneca Falls meeting, there was one newspaper, which was published in Rochester, N.Y., which not only heartily commended the leaders, in the new movement, but warmly espoused their cause. This was Frederick Douglass' *North Star*. In the leading editorial July 28, 1848, after declaring, "we could not do justice to our own convictions nor to the excellent persons connected with the infant movement, if we did not in this connection offer a few remarks on the general subject which the convention met to consider and the objects it seeks to attain." As editor of the *North Star*, Mr. Douglass expresses his views as follows: "A discussion of the rights of animals would be regarded with far more complacency by many of what are called the wise and good of the land than would be a discussion of the rights of women. Many who have at last made the discovery that Negroes have some rights as well as other members of the human family have yet to be convinced that women have any. Standing as we do upon the watch tower of human freedom, we cannot be deterred from an expression of our approbation of any movement, however humble, to improve and elevate any member of the human family."

In his autobiography which was published in 1882 Mr. Douglass thus explains how he first became interested in the cause of woman suffrage: "Observing woman's agency, devotion and efficiency in pleading the cause of the slave, gratitude for this high service early moved me to give favorable attention to the subject of what is called 'Woman's Rights' and caused me to be denominated a woman's rights man." "I am glad to say," he adds, "that I have never been ashamed to be thus designated." To Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Mr. Douglass always attributed his first conversion to the cause of woman suffrage. And so eager was he that Mrs. Stanton should know that he

had referred to this in his book that he wrote her a letter February 6, 1882, calling her attention to that fact. "You will observe," he said, "that I don't forget my walk with you from the house of Mr. Joseph Southwick, where you quietly brought to my notice your arguments for womanhood suffrage. That is forty years ago. You had just returned from your European tour. From that conversation with you I have been convinced of the wisdom of woman suffrage and I have never denied the faith."

If at any time Mr. Douglass seemed to waver in his allegiance to the cause of political enfranchisement of women, it was because he realized as no white person, no matter how broad and sympathetic he may be, has ever been able to feel or can possibly feel today just what it means to belong to my despised, handicapped and persecuted race. I am woman and I know what it means to be circumscribed, deprived, handicapped and fettered on account of my sex. But I assure you that nowhere in the United States have my feelings been so lacerated, my spirit so crushed, my heart so wounded, nowhere have I been so humiliated and handicapped on account of my sex as I have been on account of my race. I can readily understand, therefore, what feelings must have surged through Frederick Douglass' heart, and I can almost feel the intensity of the following words he uttered, when he tried to explain why he honestly thought it was more necessary and humane to give the ballot to the Negro than to women, for the law makers of this country were too narrow and ungenerous to deal justly both by the oppressed race and the handicapped, disfranchised sex at one and the same time. "I must say," declared Mr. Douglass, "that I cannot see how anyone can pretend that there is the same urgency in giving the ballot to woman as to the Negro. With us," he said, "the matter is a question of life and death at best in fifteen states of the union. When women, because they are women, are hunted down through the streets of New York and New Orleans; their children torn from their arms and their brains dashed out on the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their houses burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter school; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to our own." "Is that not also true about black women?" somebody in the audience inquired. "Yes, yes, yes," replied Mr. Douglass, "but not because they are women, but because they are black."

Now I am not trying to minimize in the slightest degree the crime against American women, particularly intelligent women, perpetrated by the law-makers of this country, who for years have refused to allow women to exercise the rights and privileges already guaranteed them in the constitution of the United States. For I have placed myself in that glorious company of eminent American jurists who insist that the 14th amendment extends its privileges and benefactions to women as well as to colored men. As a woman I can readily understand the keen disappointment experienced by those women who had worked so indefatigably, so conscientiously and so long to secure equal political rights for their sex. I can understand their bitterness of spirit, too, when the right of citizenship was coldly withheld from them and conferred upon a race just emerging from bondage, the masses of whose men were densely ignorant—could neither read nor write. But I know that along with such staunch and sterling advocates of woman suffrage as was Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith and others, Mr. Douglass was as firmly and honestly convinced that his position was scrupulous, wise and just as were the opponents of his view. Those who knew Frederick Douglass best know that he was neither a truckler nor a time-server and that he was incapable of doing a mean, dishonest act. They know also that he was genuinely interested in the cause of woman suffrage.

When the National American Woman Suffrage Association held its meetings in Washington, or when the National Council of Women met here, if Mr. Douglass were well and at his home, Cedar Hill, I should just as much have expected to see the presidents of those organizations absent from all the meetings as to see Frederick Douglass present at none. If no good thing had come into my life after I went to Washington except the privilege of meeting Frederick

Douglass, becoming well-acquainted with him, visiting him in his home and being visited by him in turn—in short the privilege of being included in his list of friends—I should consider that this honor alone would have made my residence in the national capital worthwhile.

It seems but yesterday when I was present at a meeting of the National Council of Women, Feb. 20th, 1895, and heard when the president remarked that she saw Frederick Douglass in the room and would appoint a committee of two to escort him to the stage. I can see the flutter of white handkerchiefs waved by enthusiastic, admiring women, as the towering, majestic form of Frederick Douglass between the committee of two approached the stage of what is now Columbia Theatre, but what was then called Metzgerott Hall. I can see the handsome, kindly, brown face, surmounted by a shock of snow white hair, as with the grace and courtesy of a Chesterfield he bowed his pleased acknowledgment to the royal Chautauqua salute and the other hearty demonstration which the women made. At the close of the meeting, when Mr. Douglass descended from the stage, he motioned me to wait for him, while he stopped to talk with some of his friends—a request with which I cheerfully complied on that occasion, as on all others, when he honored me by preferring it. As we walked from the hall about two o'clock, Mr. Douglass invited me to lunch with him. Alas, that we cannot know on rare occasions what a day will bring forth. If such knowledge were vouchsafed us, how often would we sacrifice our own feelings and comfort to please a well-beloved friend. Having been indisposed for a long time, I felt obliged to decline Mr. Douglass' invitation. How often since that memorable day have I regretted that I did not

remain in that inspiring, kingly, kindly presence another short hour. With a courtly sweep of a large, light hat which Mr. Douglass happened to wear, he bade me good-bye, saying as he did so that he was sorry I would not come to see him appease his own hunger, if I didn't care for lunch myself. About nine o'clock that night a friend called at my house to tell me that Mr. Douglass had expired at seven o'clock at his residence just as he was telling Mrs. Douglass the cordial reception accorded him by the National Council of Women.

It has always seemed fitting that a large portion of Frederick Douglass' last day on earth should have been spent at a meeting of an organization founded for the purpose of advancing the interests and promoting the welfare of women—a subject in which he had been interested and a cause for which he had worked so enthusiastically for many years.

If Frederick Douglass were here in the flesh today, I am sure he would urge us to buckle on the armor and go forth with fresh courage and renewed zeal to throttle the giants of prejudice, proscription and persecution on account of either sex or race. In Mr. Douglass' own fight from the degradation, the blight and the curse of slavery to freedom, he has set us an example of determination, energy, resolution, faith and hope which we should do well to imitate today. Catching the spirit of that great and good man, let us resolve here and now that neither principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come shall separate us from our beloved cause and deter us from discharging the obligations and duties to it which rest upon us today.

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