

# WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY.

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*BREAKING THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.*

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PRICE TEN CENTS.

## THE MONSTER SCANDAL IN PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

Edward H. G. Clark and Theodore Tilton's  
**THUNDERBOLT,**  
EXPLODED BY VICTORIA C. WOODHULL  
IN  
**THIS NUMBER OF THE WEEKLY,**

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#### THE NEW SOCIAL DISPENSATION;

and the only paper in the country that dare defy the combined power of Church and State, under the administration of the infamous Agent of the

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—the man with a dozen names and a pliable conscience.

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Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly,

48 Broad Street, New York City.



NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1873.

## VALEDICTORY.

It is with the keenest pain and the deepest regret that I am compelled just at this time to sunder my connection with the WEEKLY. For three years I have lived, as it were, in the life of the WEEKLY. Its success, its troubles, its reverses, its suppression, have been mine; but my robust constitution was unequal to the terrible pressure that has been made against it, and my health is shattered. I must withdraw from the terrific contest that still wages against it, and give some attention to regain my strength, and thus save myself, if possible, from sinking into a condition of chronic invalidity.

I therefore resign the cares, duties and responsibilities of the WEEKLY wholly into the hands of my sister, and bid its many readers an affectionate adieu.

TENNIE C. CLAFLIN.

## NOTICE.

The firm of Woodhull & Claflin, proprietors and publishers of WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY, is hereby dissolved by the retirement of Tennie C. Claflin, who has transferred all her right, title and interest in the WEEKLY to Victoria C. Woodhull. The paper will still continue to be published under its original title of WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.  
TENNIE C. CLAFLIN.

## SEND IN THE ORDERS.

This NUMBER of the Weekly will be furnished to fill all cash orders at the rate of seven dollars per hundred copies.

## NOTICE.

Section 12 of International Workingmen's Association will hold its regular meeting at the rooms of Dr. Newberry, northeast corner of Third avenue and Thirty-fourth street, on Monday evening, May 12, at 8 o'clock. The members are respectfully solicited to be present.

## CORRECTION.

In the publication of the Industrial Public in the number of May 3, the wrong address was given. All communication on the subject should be addressed to S. T. Fowler, 280 Fourteenth street, Brooklyn, N. Y., instead of 280 Fourteenth street, N. Y.

## SPECIAL AND IMMEDIATE TO EVERY READER.

To every reader of the WEEKLY who is interested in the great questions regarding social reform, that have been launched upon the public for discussion by the various phases of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal, and the several side issues that have grown out of it, we desire to say, that the present indications make it almost certain that the culminating point in this great social drama is rapidly approaching; indeed what we have been able to present in this and the last issue make it evident that it is just at the door, liable to fall any day.

It therefore behooves everybody who is interested in the decision of this question to do their utmost to spread the WEEKLY before every radically-inclined mind of which he or she knows. We expect, indeed, that the very next issue of the WEEKLY will alone be worth the price of the entire year's subscription, as was the number of November 2d. Let every reader then decide to send us at least one new subscriber for the WEEKLY to begin with the next issue; and let every one who has made up a club resolve to double it, for the same number.

Let every friend to social freedom devote one day of the coming week to obtaining new subscribers to the WEEKLY. Do this as a duty that you owe to yourself as well as to the cause, and thus put us in a way to fire a double broadside, which we shall be ready to do very soon.

We tell you that no person who has any sympathy with reform can afford to do without the WEEKLY for the re-

mainder of this year, and you who have read it since we came out of jail can readily imagine why.

More than all this, it is necessary that you give us this aid at this time when renewed efforts are being put forth to crush us and the WEEKLY. We need your assistance more than at any previous time. It may be absolutely necessary that we procure a printing office of our own, in order to insure the regular issue of the WEEKLY, and this we cannot do unless all our friends remember our weakened condition from the various persecutions through which we have passed, and come immediately to our relief. You have all done well, done nobly; but none of you have done as well as you may yet do. Remember that every dollar that comes in to the WEEKLY is used in the WEEKLY, and that we give all our time to it without price; and that we have not only given all our time, but all our means, and that we are now compelled to depend upon our friends to maintain what we have builded up for them.

A few more well-directed efforts, a few more clubs, a few more renewals, a few more payments of past dues, until the great social bubble, compounded of hypocrisy and cowardice, shall have been bursted, and the WEEKLY will be on the high road to independence. As yet it is not quite independent. It requires the assistance of its friends, and they will be measured by that which they afford it. Then let your responses be immediate and ample, so that you may say, *I have done my duty*. We mean this in deepest earnestness, and we hope it may not be passed lightly over by a single person who does not desire to see social reform go backward a hundred years.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

In writing to us the following rules should be observed:

1st. Every letter should be plainly dated—town, county and State.

2d. When the letter is to contain a remittance, which, if a check or money order, should be made payable to Woodhull & Claflin, the necessary explanations should be introduced at the head of the letter; a failure to observe this rule subjects the person in charge of that department to much needless reading to find out what it is all about.

3d. After definitely stating all business matters, and especially if it be a renewal or a new subscriber, then should follow any friendly words, which we are always happy to receive from all.

4th. We request those who send either articles or personal letters intended for publication to write graphically and tersely. The necessity for this will be apparent when we say that we have already in "our drawer" enough personal communications, full of words of hope, cheer and comfort to fill a dozen papers. Many of them we shall be obliged to pass over.

5th. All letters should close with the signature of the writer in full; and it should be plainly written. Many letters that we receive are so badly signed that we are obliged to guess at what the writer's name may be.

## TO NEWSMEN AND FRIENDS.

We are glad to be able to inform our friends that the American News Co. is now prepared to fill all orders from its customers, as formerly, for the WEEKLY. The inquisition which the authorities, located in this city, attempted to establish over the freedom of the press, by their arrest of ourselves and Mr. Train upon the charge of obscenity; and, perhaps, the fear that we had libelled Mr. Beecher have, until now, prevented the Company from supplying its customers. Hundreds of newsmen have, in the meantime, received notice that the Company does not furnish the WEEKLY, and they will now be obliged to renew their orders before they will be filled. Will our friends everywhere take the trouble to inform their newsmen of this change in the relation of the Company to the WEEKLY.

## TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Bills for subscriptions that have expired are now being sent in the papers weekly. We specially request that all who receive them will reply to them at once. The bills are made to show what is due up to date, and also a renewal for another year. Those who do not wish to renew will please remit what is now due and order the paper discontinued. Those who wish to renew may either send both these amounts or simply a renewal for one year, or three dollars, upon receiving which a receipt for same will be returned. Again permit us to say, Do not delay doing one or the other of these things immediately.

## THE THUNDERBOLT.

A paper bearing the above name has been issued from the press, simultaneously in New York, Albany and Troy, which purports to have been written principally by Edward H. G. Clark, of the latter city, and published by some unknown parties, who, however, are understood to be men of the first rank in social and political circles. Notice of this paper has been given in the WEEKLY, whose readers are undoubtedly expecting it, therefore I do not need to apologize for copying it entire.

It will be remembered that Mr. Clark has written several criticisms upon the various phases of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal, which have been copied into the WEEKLY, not excluding his severe allusion to myself, without comment,

But I shall remain silent no longer and permit this conspiracy to proceed, apparently to whitewash somebody, but really to blackwash me, to pass as current stuff without showing its true character and bringing it home to its real source. I shall, therefore, analyze this thunderbolt as severely as my crucible will admit of, notwithstanding he has been led to convey the impression that I am too ignorant to attempt any such thing, and attempting, could only expect to write myself down an ass; however, the public shall have the opportunity to judge between us as to which of us is the greater. But I shall borrow no adjectives with which to do this, as he has felt it necessary to do to accomplish the purposes of the *Thunderbolt*.

The paper is called the *Thunderbolt*. After a careful and candid reading, however, I do not think the name it bears is justified by its contents, unless, indeed, a thunderbolt may be a general concentration of many lesser bolts which have already been expended, and are gathered together to be hurled anew and *en masse* at a given point for a certain purpose. This paper contains no new facts; indeed, no new arguments regarding existing facts. The several features of the Scandal are concentrated, and—as every one who reads it can well surmise—with a well-defined purpose in view, which I denominate the double one of whitewashing and blackwashing.

This will become evident when other things which do not appear upon the face of the paper itself are shown. It will be remembered that I recently published a letter from Mr. Clark to George Francis Train, in which he said he had stolen Theodore Tilton's "true story." How the stealing of such a document was done, if what I surmise be true, is not hard to conjecture. Some three months ago a strange paper made its appearance entitled the *Rainbow*. The moment I saw it I said, that is the *Golden Age* print, its types, rules, head-lines and all; and so it turned out to be. The moment I saw the *Thunderbolt* I said, that is the *Golden Age* print, its types, rules, head-lines and all; and I believe it will so turn out to be. It bears the marks of Theodore Tilton too conspicuously to permit one to whom he has so often, as he has to me, pointed out the characteristic points of the *Golden Age* to doubt this. I, therefore, have no hesitation in expressing my belief, and resting upon it, that this paper was not only written by the knowledge and consent of Mr. Tilton, but that it was published by him, or at least composed and electrotyped by him. If any doubt this let him or her compare the *Thunderbolt* with the *Rainbow*, and both with the *Golden Age*.

This at first blush may seem improbable, since the *Thunderbolt* is severe upon Mr. Tilton. Evidently, however, he realizes the futility of escape; indeed, that he deserves it all and more, and therefore makes a virtue of necessity and aids in the publication, perhaps even connived to bring it about.

But what, upon its face, are the purposes of the *Thunderbolt*? Ostensibly they are to show the danger by which the Republic is threatened by the overt acts of the Federal authorities, acting under the inspiration of the Y. M. C. A. in prosecuting Woodhull, Claflin and Blood for obscenity, to protect the reputation of Mr. Beecher, and to relieve Mrs. Tilton from the position into which she was thrown by the publication of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal; but this will scarcely be held to be its real objects by the careful, analytic reader. The reasons to such will appear to be—

1. To white-wash Mr. Tilton for the part of informer which he has played in exposing Mrs. Tilton's love for and liason with Mr. Beecher, which it performs in a rather dubious manner.

2. To black-wash me for having giving publicity to the Beecher-Tilton Scandal, which had previously only been talked about behind the doors, which it does not do with colors that will wash.

3. To fix irremediably upon Mr. Beecher the fact of his private devotion to the principles of social freedom, and to brand him to the world as one of the most consummate and hypocritical villains living, which, I fear, is done only too mercilessly.

These, I say, are undoubtedly the motives that led to the publication of the *Thunderbolt*. But all of them could not have existed in the mind of Mr. Clark; nor were they all apparent in any of his previous articles written by him and copied into the WEEKLY. But Mr. Clark himself informed me that he was in receipt of letters in which I was severely denounced, and I am informed by another, that Mr. Clark has been "advised to treat Mrs. Woodhull in the most contemptuous manner." Here, then, we find the source of the animus which pervades the *Thunderbolt*, and it is the same as that from which I believe the paper really issues.

Mr. Clark, I have good reasons for believing, had no inconsiderable regard for me personally; but that has been more than overbalanced by the influence that has been brought to bear upon him since he began to write about this matter. When he informed me that he was receiving very bitter letters regarding me, I at once, and frankly replied, asking their source, and saying: Give these letters to me to publish in the WEEKLY for the benefit of the public. I denounced as dishonest and cowardly those who would stab me behind my back when they have the opportunity to meet me squarely and openly; and to those terms I now add vicious and malicious, and hurl them all in the faces of any one who has busied him or herself in writing letters about me all over the country, endeavoring to vitiate the truth of my statement of November 2, by falsehood and malice, but failing to submit them for publication in the WEEKLY.



Therefore, when I find emanating from the pen of a gentleman, who previously held me in esteem, the contemptuous words and the still more contemptible insinuations with which I am described in the *Thunderbolt*, I am forced to the conclusion that the real motives for them lie outside of the person over whose name they stand.

Another conclusive reason that Mr. Clark is not the real source of the *Thunderbolt*, the responsibility of which he, however, assumes, is that of his own knowledge he would not have laid himself open to the terrible repulse he must now sustain. The *Thunderbolt* is vulnerable at every point.

Moreover, had the statements been entirely the work of Mr. Clark, I have a sufficiently good opinion of his ability to believe it would not have been so faulty in its construction as to make it certain that, when only one of its chief corner-stones is removed, as it will be, the whole thing will tumble in an insignificant mass of ruins. Besides, it is contradictory and unreasonable in its positions, and resorts to falsehoods and unwarrantable insinuations to sustain them. I have said to the readers of the WEEKLY that Mr. Clark is a gentleman. I fear they may not be able to agree with me when they shall come to realize the true character of the *Thunderbolt*, which is supposed to represent the character of its writer, but which I hope only represents the terrible pressure to which he has been subjected by those whom he at least has honored in the past. I freely confess that the course taken by Mr. Clark in his previous articles, excepting only a few of what I thought unnecessary epithets used about me, won for him a high place in my esteem; but I also freely confess that the *Thunderbolt* has staggered me. I expected great and good things of it. I did not think it would stoop to pander either to prejudice, position or passion; but that it would be just what ought to be expected from a gentleman who is every inch a man. But if the *Thunderbolt* is found, when subjected to the crucible of stern analysis, to be based upon other than purely and highly moral motives, and to be elaborated for other purposes than the vindication of truth and the establishment of justice, and that these are promoted by falsifications and the use of unjustifiable methods, what must the conclusion be, except that the *Thunderbolt* does not sustain the reputation of Mr. Clark. If it do not, neither he nor his friends ought to censure me for showing it, since neither he nor they can possibly be more disappointed than I shall be.

And at the very outset, before proceeding to the argument, I am compelled to call attention to a fact which I fear will cast doubt even over other portions of the *Thunderbolt* which ought to stand unchallenged. It is of little consequence to me how it may please critics to treat me personally, if their efforts carry forward the glorious cause to which I am devoted; hence, personally, I might consistently permit the *Thunderbolt* to stand unscathed; but its defects are too apparent to justify me in passing what I refer to without comment, or, when comment is begun, from pressing it persistently to the end. Moreover the glory of the cause of freedom and justice will not allow me to stand publicly convicted by silence, of endeavoring to promote it by fraud. Therefore, observe the following quotation from the *Thunderbolt*, and if, as I said, it vitiate the whole affair, let those who resorted to a subterfuge so vulgar, bear the odium, and not me:

"SUSPICIOUS POETRY BY T. T." [MEANING THEODORE TILTON.]

Published in the *Golden Age*, November 12, 1872 (just after the Woodhull account of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal).

"I clasped a woman's breast  
As if her heart I knew,  
Or fancied would be true,  
Who proved—alas! she too—  
False like the rest."

Now why was this quotation made in the *Thunderbolt*—special care being taken to state the date, and to italicize the parenthetical explanation? Evidently to convey the idea that my publication of the Scandal had proved me, "too—false like the rest." I ask again, Can there be any other construction put upon this remarkable quotation? and I answer, No other can be imagined.

But what are the facts about this poem which I now copy entire from the WOODHULL & CLAFLIN WEEKLY of date December 23, 1871, where it was copied from the *Golden Age* of November 12, 1871:

SIR MARMADUKE'S MUSINGS.

BY THEODORE TILTON.

I won a noble fame;  
But, with a sudden frown,  
The people snatched my crown,  
And in the mire trod down  
My lofty name.

I bore a bounteous purse,  
And beggars by the way  
Then blessed me day by day;  
But I, grown poor as they,  
Have now their curse.

I gained what men call friends;  
But now their love is hate,  
And I have learned too late  
How mated minds unmate  
And friendship ends.

I clasped a woman's breast,  
As if her heart I knew  
Or fancied, would be true,

Who proved—alas, she too!—  
False, like the rest.

I now am all bereft—  
As when some tower doth fall,  
With battlement, and wall,  
And gate, and bridge and all—  
And nothing left.

But I account it worth  
All pangs of fair hopes crossed,  
All loves and honors lost,  
To gain the heavens at cost  
Of losing earth.

So, lest I be inclined  
To render ill for ill,  
Henceforth in me instill,  
Oh God, a sweet good will  
To all mankind.

SLEEPY HOLLOW, November 1, 1871.

Mr. Clark is one of the editors of the *Thunderbolt*, and although the poem stood in it, below the article to which his name gives personal responsibility, he is not relieved from the general editorial responsibility. And I can therefore do no less than hold Mr. Clark responsible for this fraud, since a fraud of the most malicious and vicious kind I must show it to be.

It will be seen that the poem, instead of having been published in the *Golden Age*, November 12, 1872, was really published a year before, in 1871; therefore the explanation (just after the Woodhull account of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal) bears the stamp of a vicious and malicious lie, invented to cast a reflection upon me, and to question the character of the intimacy between Mr. Tilton and me. If Mr. Clark is responsible for this, or even if he has permitted this to be done by others—he being the only one known in the *Thunderbolt*—I say he must have been insane to thus tamper with figures and dates and records, and expect it to pass the scrutiny of the world. It might, perhaps, be expected to pass the "Dampfools" of whom Mr. Train treats, but even Mr. Clark's "ignoramus," of 48 Broad street, ought not to be counted among so dull a crew as that. As if, however, to court the responsibility of the intentions of this falsehood, Mr. Clark apparently proceeds upon its theory, dragging them conspicuously into another portion of the *Thunderbolt*, for which he cannot escape responsibility. Therefore I see no escape for him from either, and fear he has unwittingly been betrayed into something that a calmer survey of the field, and less reliance upon the honor of those who write bitter letters about me would have saved him.

Since, however, the inspiration of this poem has been called up and falsely stated, I may, with consistency, give the truth regarding it.

This poem was written by Mr. Tilton, so he informed me, in Young's Hotel, Boston, where he had gone to lecture in Tremont Temple, on "Home, Sweet Home," with a revolver lying beside him, with which he intended to end his misery, leaving the poem behind as an explanation of his suicide. Returning, however, to his better sense, he desisted and returned home, called at my residence, 15 East Thirty-Eighth street, read me the poem in manuscript, and gave me this history of it. It was immediately published in the *Golden Age*, whereupon Mr. Tilton's friends complained bitterly that he had told the whole story of his wife's infidelity by that poem, which ought never to have been written, much less published.

I therefore hurl the lie and the insinuation in the face of the manufacturer, whoever he may be, and there they shall stick as an everlasting mark of infamy. I do not do this because I would shrink from the insinuation. I have the honor of informing Mr. Tilton, Mr. Clark and the world, that I shall ever be only happy and proud to acknowledge all the service rendered me by Mr. Tilton; and, moreover, that I never receive or accept service of whatever kind, or contract alliances of any sort, of which I am ashamed to accept the responsibility. And I wish it to be distinctly understood if pretensions have been put forward which any one thinks an honor to himself but a disgrace to me, I shall not hesitate to correct the error into which men usually fall; or, if it requires it, to show that whatever is to their credit is also to the credit of women. I believe that the world shall come not only to know, but also to recognize that any associations between men and women, cannot at the same time be honorable to the former and disgraceful to the latter; and I have permitted many a lie to go unheeded to teach the world just this fact. It is simply nobody's business what my social relations are, or what they have been, unless I am found advocating publicly one thing while living privately quite a different one.

But since, as I believe, through the conspiracy of Mr. Tilton, this insinuation has been publicly made in reference to himself, I think I have the right to call upon him to publish a certain letter of mine to him, written on four pages of wrapping paper, which contains a statement that will either prove or disprove what he has thus wantonly thrust before the public. Further on I shall have reason to refer more fully to this matter and of what he has denominated the breach between us, but for which he has assigned a lie as the cause.

I have thus shown the character of one portion of the *Thunderbolt* which has special reference to me, in order that all other like portions may be critically considered by the reader; and now further, in order that both statements, the "false" and the "true," may stand side by side, I proceed to republish the original one of November 2, 1872:

## THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL CASE.

THE DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE WHOLE MATTER BY MRS. WOODHULL.

I propose, as the commencement of a series of aggressive moral warfare on the social question, to begin in this article with ventilating one of the most stupendous scandals, which has ever occurred in any community. I refer to that which has been whispered broad-cast for the last two or three years through the cities of New York and Brooklyn, touching the character and conduct of the Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER in his relations with the family of THEODORE TILTON. I intend that this article shall burst like a bomb-shell into the ranks of the moralistic social camp.

I am engaged in officering, and in some sense conducting, a social revolution on the marriage question. I have strong convictions to the effect that this institution, as a bond or promise to love another to the end of life, and forego all other loves or passion gratifications, has outlived its day of usefulness; that the most intelligent and really virtuous of our citizens, especially in the large cities of Christendom, have outgrown it; are constantly and systematically unfaithful to it; despise and revolt against it, as a slavery, in their hearts; and only submit to the semblance of fidelity to it from the dread of a sham public opinion, based on the ideas of the past, and which no longer really represent the convictions of any body. The doctrines of scientific socialism have profoundly penetrated and permeated public opinion. No thought has so rapidly and completely carried the convictions of the thinking portions of the community as stirpiculture. The absurdity is too palpable, when it is pointed out, that we give a hundred times more attention to the laws of breeding as applied to horses and cattle and pigs, and even to our barn-yard fowls, than we do to the same laws as applied to human beings. It is equally obvious, on a little reflection, that stirpiculture, or the scientific propagation and cultivation of the human animal, demands free love or freedom of the varied union of the sexes under the dictates of the highest and best knowledge on the subject, as an essential and precedent condition. These considerations are too palpable to be ignored, and they look to the complete and early supercure of the old and traditional institution of marriage, by the substitution of some better system for the maintenance of women as mothers, and of children as progeny. All intelligent people know these facts and look for the coming of some wiser and better system of social life. The supercure of marriage in the near future, by some kind of socialistic arrangement, is as much a foregone conclusion with all the best thinkers of to-day as was the approaching dissolution of slavery no more than five or ten years before its actual abolition in the late war.

But, in the meantime, men and women tremble on the brink of the revolution and hesitate to avow their convictions, while yet partly aware of their rights, and urged by the legitimate impulses of nature, they act upon the new doctrines while they profess obedience to the old. In this manner an organized hypocrisy has become the tone of our modern society. Poltroony, cowardice and deception rule the hour. The continuance, for generations, of such utter falsity, touching one of the most sacred interests of humanity, will almost eradicate the sense of honesty from the human soul. Every consideration of sound expediency demands that these days be shortened; that somebody lead the van in announcement of the higher order of life.

Impelled by such views, I entered the combat with old errors, as I believe them to be, and brought forward, in addition to the wise and powerful words which others have uttered on the subject, the arguments which my own inspiration and reflections suggested. No sooner had I done so than the howl of persecution sounded in my ears. Instead of replying to my arguments, I was assaulted with shameful abuse. I was young and inexperienced in the business of reform, and astounded to find what, as I have since learned from the veterans in the cause, is the usual fact, that the most persistent and slanderous and foul-mouthed accusations came from precisely those who, as I often happened to know, stood nearest to me in their convictions, and whose lives, privately, were a protest against the very repression which I denounce. It was a paradox which I could not understand, that I was denounced as utterly bad for affirming the right of others, to do as they did; denounced by the very persons whom my doctrines could alone justify, and who claimed, at the same time, to be conscientious and good men. My position led, nevertheless, to continuous confidences relating to people's own opinions and lives and the opinions and lives of others. My mind became charged with a whole literature of astonishing disclosures. The lives of almost the whole army of spiritualistic and social reformers, of all the schools, were laid open before me. But the matter did not stop there. I found that, to a great extent, the social revolution was as far advanced among leading lights of the business and wealthy circles, and of the various professions, not excluding the clergy and the churches, as among technical reformers.

It was, nevertheless, from these very quarters that I was most severely assailed. It was vexatious and trying, I confess, for one of my temper, to stand under the galling fire of personalities from parties who should have been my warmest advocates, or who should, else, have reformed their lives in accordance with a morality which they wished the public to understand they professed. I was sorely and repeatedly tempted to retort, in personalities, to these attacks. But simply as personality or personal defense, or spiteful retort, I have almost wholly abstained during these years of sharp conflict from making any use of the rich resources at my command for that kind of attack.

But, in the meantime, the question came to press itself upon my consideration: Had I any right, having assumed the championship of social freedom, to forego the use of half the weapons which the facts no less than the philosophy of the subject placed at my command for conducting the war—through any mere tenderness to those who were virtual traitors to the truth which they knew and were surreptitiously acting upon? Had not the sacred cause of human rights and



human well-being a paramount claim over my own conduct? Was I not, in withholding the facts and conniving at a putrid mass of seething falsehood and hypocrisy, in some sense a partaker in these crimes; and was I not, in fact, shrinking from the responsibility of making the exposure more through regard for my own sensitiveness and dislike to be hurt than from any true sympathy with those who would be called upon to suffer?

These questions once before my mind would never be disposed of until they were fairly settled upon their own merits, and apart, so far as I could separate them, from my own feelings or the feelings of those who were more directly involved. I have come slowly, deliberately, and I may add reluctantly, to my conclusions. I went back to and studied the history of other reforms. I found that GARRISON not only denounced slavery in the abstract, but that he attacked it in the concrete. It was not only "the sum of all villainies," but it was the particular villainy of this and that and the other great and influential man, North and South, in the community. Reputations had to suffer. He bravely and persistently called things by their right names. He pointed out and depicted the individual instances of cruelty. He dragged to the light and scathed and stigmatized the individual offenders. He made them a hissing and a by-word, so far as in him lay. He shocked the public sensibilities by actual and vivid pictures of slaveholding atrocities, and sent spies into the enemies' camp to search out the instances. The world cried shame! and said it was scandalous, and stopped their ears and blinded their eyes, that their own sensibilities might not be hurt by these horrid revelations. They cast the blanket of their charities and sympathies around the real offenders for their misfortune in being brought to the light, and denounced the informer as a malignant and cruel wretch for not covering up scenes too dreadful to be thought upon; as if it were not a thousand times more dreadful that they should be enacted. But the brave old cyclops ignored alike their criticisms, their protests, and their real and their mock sensibilities, and hammered away at his anvil, forging thunderbolts of the gods; and nobody now says he was wrong. A new public opinion had to be created, and he knew that people had to be shocked, and that individual personal feelings had to be hurt. As Bismarck is reported to have said: "If an omelet has to be made some eggs have to be broken." Every revolution has its terrific cost, if not in blood and treasure, then still in the less tangible but alike real sentimental injury of thousands of sufferers. The preliminary and paramount question is: Ought the revolution to be made, cost what it may? Is the cost to humanity greater of permitting the standing evil to exist? and if so, then let the cost be incurred, fall where it must. If justice to humanity demand the given expenditure, then accepting the particular enterprise of reform, we accept all its necessary consequences, and enter upon our work, fraught, it may be, with repugnance to ourselves as it is necessarily with repugnance to others.

I have said that I came slowly, deliberately and reluctantly to the adoption of this method of warfare. I was also hindered and delayed by the fact that if I entered upon it at all I saw no way to avoid making the first onslaught in the most distinguished quarters. It would be cowardice in me to unearth the peccadilloes of little men, and to leave untouched the derelictions and offences of the magnates of social and intellectual power and position. How slowly I have moved in this matter, and how reluctantly it may be inferred, will appear from these little points of history.

More than two years ago these two cities—New York and Brooklyn—were rife with rumors of an awful scandal in Plymouth Church. These rumors were whispered and covertly alluded to in almost every circle. But the very enormity of the facts, as the world views such matters, hushed the agitation and prevented exposure. The press, warned by the laws of libel, and by a tacit and in the main honorable consensus to ignore all such rumors until they enter the courts, or become otherwise matters of irrepressible notoriety, abstained from any direct notice of the subject, and the rumors themselves were finally stifled or forgotten. A few persons only knew something directly of the facts, but among them, situated as I was, I happened to be one. Already the question pressed on me whether I ought not to use the event to forward the cause of social freedom, but I only saw clear in the matter to the limited extent of throwing out some feelers to the public on the subject. It was often a matter of long and anxious consultation between me and my cabinet of confidential advisers.

In June, 1870, WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY published an article in reply to HENRY C. BOWEN's attack on myself in the columns of the *Independent*, the editorship of which had just been vacated by THEODORE TILTON. In this article the following paragraph occurred: "At this very moment awful and herculean efforts are being made in a neighboring city to suppress the most terrific scandal which has ever astonished and convulsed any community. Clergy, congregation and community will be alike hurled into more than all the consternation which the great explosion in Paris carried to that unfortunate city, if this effort at suppression fail."

Subsequently I published a letter in both *World* and *Times*, in which was the following sentence: "I know a clergyman of eminence in Brooklyn who lives in concubinage with the wife of another clergyman of equal eminence."

It was generally and well understood among the people of the press especially, that both of these references were to this case of Mr. BEECHER's, and it came to be generally suspected that I was better informed regarding the facts of the case than others, and was reserving publicity of my knowledge for a more convenient season. This suspicion was heightened nearly into conviction when it transpired that THEODORE TILTON was an earnest and apparently conscientious advocate of many of my radical theories, as appeared in his far-famed biography of me, and in numerous other publications in the *Golden Age* and elsewhere. Mr. TILTON's warmest friends were shocked at his course, and when he added to his remarkable proceedings, his brilliant advocacy of my Fourteenth Amendment theory, in his letters to HORACE GREELEY, CHAS. SUMNER and MAY CARPENTER, they considered him irrema-

diably committed to the most radical of all radicals. Assurance was made doubly sure when he presided at Steinway Hall, when I, for the first time, fully and boldly advanced my free-love doctrines. It was noted, however, that this man who stood before the world so fully committed to the broadest principles of liberty, made it convenient to be conspicuously absent from the convention of the Women Suffragists at Washington last January. All sorts of rumors were thereupon rife. Some said he had "gone back" on his advocacy of free-love; some said that a rupture had taken place between him and the leaders of the suffrage movement, and many were the theories brought forward to explain the facts. But the real cause did not transpire until Mr. TILTON was found at Cincinnati urging as a candidate the very man whom he had recently so severely castigated with his most caustic pen. It was then wisely surmised that political ambition, and the editorial chair of the *Tribune*, and his life-long personal devotion to Mr. GREELEY, were the inducements which had sufficed to turn his head and heart away, temporarily at least, from our movement.

About this time rumors floated out that Mrs. WOODHULL, disgusted at the recent conduct of Mr. TILTON and the advice given him by certain of his friends, was animadverting in not very measured terms upon their conduct. An article specifying matters involving several of these persons, obtained considerable circulation, and with other circumstances, such as the definite statement of facts, with names and places, indicated that the time was at hand, nigh even unto the door, when the things that had remained hidden should be brought to light, and the whole affair be made public.

Some time in August last there appeared in the *Evening Telegram* a paragraph which hinted broadly at the nature of the impending exposure. About this time, a gentleman from abroad, to whom I had related some of the facts in my possession, repeated them to a member of Mr. BEECHER's church, who denounced the whole story as an infamous libel; but some days later he acknowledged both to his friend and me that he had inquired into the matter and had learned that it was "a damning fact." This gentleman occupies a responsible position, and his word is good for all that he utters. Such was the facility with which confirmations were obtained when sought for. When, therefore, those who were conversant with the case, saw in the *Boston Herald* and other papers that I had made a public statement regarding the whole matter, they were not in the least surprised. It shows that the press had concluded that it was time to recognize the sensation which, whether they would or not, was destined soon to shake the social structure from its foundation.

A reporter was then specially detailed to interview me in order, as he said, that the matter might be published in certain of the New York papers. Why that interview has been suppressed is not possible to affirm with certainty, but it is easy to guess. An impudicious reporter can be bought off with a few hundred dollars. And there are those who would readily pay thousands to shut the columns of the press against this exposure. Fortunately I have a nearly verbatim copy of the report, as the interviewer prepared it, and in this shape I shall now present it to the public.

But before proceeding to the main matter, let me relate, more in detail, the facts which finally determined me to enter upon this adventurous and responsible method of agitation.

In September, 1871, I was elected, at the annual convention at Troy, President of the National Association of Spiritualists. I had never consociated with the Spiritualists, although for many years both a Spiritualist and a medium myself, with rare and wonderful experiences of my own from my childhood up. I went to this convention merely as a spectator, with no previous concert or machinery of any kind, and was myself as absolutely taken by surprise by my nomination and election as could have been any one present. It was said editorially in our paper, September 30, 1871, and said truly: "Her surprise at her reception, and her nomination to the Presidency of the Society was equaled only by the gratitude which she felt, and will ever feel, at the unexpected and tumultuous kindness with which she was then and there honored beyond her desert."

In WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY, of Nov. 11, 1871, I addressed a President's message to the American Association of Spiritualists. In that document I made use of these words: "A new and mightier power than all the rings and caucuses, than all the venal legislatures and congresses, has already entered the arena. Not only are all the reform parties coalescent in the reform plane, but they have already coalesced in spirit, under the new lead, and 'a nation will be born in a day.' They have already taken possession of the public conviction. Somewhat unconsciously, but really, all the people look to the coming of a new era; but all of them are not so well aware as we are that the spirit world has always exerted a great and diversified influence over this, while it is not till quite recently that the spiritual development of this world has made it possible for the other to maintain real and continuous relations with it.

"Your enthusiastic acceptance of me, and your election of me as your President, was, in a sense, hardly your act. It was an event prepared for you, and to which you were impelled by the superior powers to which both you and I are subject. It was only one step in a series of rapid and astounding events, which will, in a marvellously short time, change the entire face of the social world."

This and similar to this was the complete avowal which I then made of my faith, in the spiritual ordering of human events, and especially of a grand series of events, now in actual and rapid progress, and tending to culminate in the complete dissolution of the old social order, and in the institution of a new and celestial order of humanity in the world. And let me now take occasion to affirm, that all the, otherwise viewed, terrible events which I am about to recite as having occurred in Plymouth Church, are merely parts of the same drama which have been cautiously and laboriously prepared to astound men into the consciousness of the possibilities of a better life; and that I believe that all the parties to this embroglio have been, throughout, the unconscious agents of the

higher powers. It is this belief, more than anything else, which finally reconciles me to enact my part in the matter, which is that of the mere *nuncia* to the world of the facts which have happened, and so of the new step in the dissolution of the Old and in the inauguration of the New.

At a large and enthusiastic National Convention of the reformers of all schools, held in Apollo Hall, New York, the 11th and 12th of May, 1872, I was put in nomination as the candidate of the Equal Rights Party for the presidency of the United States. Despite the brilliant promise of appearances at the inception of this movement, a counter current of fatality seemed from that time to attend both it and me. The press, suddenly divided between the other two great parties, refused all notice of the new reformatory movement; a series of pecuniary disasters stripped us, for the time being, of the means of continuing our own weekly publication, and forced us into a desperate struggle for mere existence. I had not even the means of communicating my condition to my own circle of friends. At the same time my health failed from mere exhaustion. The inauguration of the new party, and my nomination, seemed to fall dead upon the country; and, to cap the climax, a new batch of slanders and injurious innuendoes permeated the community in respect to my condition and character.

Circumstances being in this state, the year rolled round, and the next annual convention of the National Association of Spiritualists occurred in Sept., 1872, at Boston. I went there—dragged by the sense of duty—tired, sick and discouraged as to my own future, to surrender my charge as President of the Association, feeling as if I were distrusted and unpopular, and with no consolation but the consciousness of having striven to do right, and my abiding faith in the wisdom and help of the spirit world.

Arrived at the great assemblage, I felt around me everywhere, not indeed a positive hostility, not even a fixed spirit of unfriendliness, but one of painful uncertainty and doubt. I listened to the speeches of others and tried to gather the sentiment of the great meeting. I rose finally to my feet to render an account of my stewardship, to surrender the charge, and retire. Standing there before that audience, I was seized by one of those overwhelming gusts of inspiration which sometimes come upon me, from I know not where; taken out of myself; hurried away from the immediate question of discussion, and made, by some power stronger than I, to pour out into the ears of that assembly, and, as I was told subsequently, in a rhapsody of indignant eloquence, with circumstantial detail, the whole history of the BEECHER and TILTON scandal in Plymouth Church, and to announce in prophetic terms something of the bearing of those events upon the future of Spiritualism. I know perhaps less than any of those present, all that I did actually say. They tell me that I used some naughty words upon that occasion. All that I know is, that if I swore, I did not swear profanely. Some said, with the tears streaming from their eyes, that I swore divinely. That I could not have shocked or horrified the audience was shown by the fact that in the immense hall, packed to the ceiling, and as absolutely to my own surprise as at my first election at Troy, I was re-elected President of the Association. Still impressed by my own previous convictions, that my labors in that connection were ended, I promptly declined the office. The convention, however, refused to accept my declination.

The public press of Boston professed holy horror at the freedom of my speech, and restricted their reports to the narrowest limits, carefully suppressing what I had said of the conduct of the great clergyman. The report went forward, however, through various channels, in a muffled and mutilated form, the general conclusion being, probably, with the uninformed, simply that Mrs. Woodhull had publicly slandered Mr. Beecher.

Added, therefore, to all other considerations, I am now placed in the situation that I must either endure unjustly the imputation of being a slanderer, or I must resume my previously formed purpose, and relate in formal terms, for the whole public, the simple facts of the case as they have come to my knowledge, and so justify, in cool deliberation, the words I uttered, almost unintentionally, and by a sudden impulse, at Boston.

I accept the situation, and enter advisedly upon the task I have undertaken, knowing the responsibilities of the act and its possible consequences. I am impelled by no hostility whatever to Mr. BEECHER, nor by any personal pique toward him or any other person. I recognize in the facts a fixed determination in the Spirit world to bring this subject to the light of day for high and important uses to the world. They demand of me my co-operation, and they shall have it, no matter what the consequences may be to me personally.

The following is the re-statement from notes, aided by my recollection, of the interviewing upon this subject by the press reporter already alluded to:

Reporter.—"Mrs. WOODHULL, I have called to ask if you are prepared and willing to furnish a full statement of the BEECHER-TILTON scandal for publication in the city papers?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I do not know that I ought to object to repeating whatever I know in relation to it. You understand, of course, that I take a different view of such matters from those usually avowed by other people. Still I have good reason to think that far more people entertain views corresponding to mine than dare to assert them or openly live up to them."

Reporter.—"How, Mrs. WOODHULL, would you state in the most condensed way your opinions on this subject, as they differ from those avowed and ostensibly lived by the public at large?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I believe that the marriage institution, like slavery and monarchy, and many other things which have been good or necessary in their day, is now effete, and in a general sense injurious, instead of being beneficial to the community, although of course it must continue to linger until better institutions can be formed. I mean by marriage, in this connection, any forced or obligatory tie between the sexes, any legal intervention or constraint to prevent people from adjusting their love relations precisely as they do their



religious affairs in this country, in complete personal freedom; changing and improving them from time to time, and according to circumstances."

Reporter.—"I confess, then, I cannot understand why you of all persons should have any fault to find with Mr. BEECHER, even assuming everything to be true of him which I have hitherto heard only vaguely hinted at."

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I have no fault to find with him in any such sense as you mean, nor in any such sense as that in which the world will condemn him. I have no doubt that he has done the very best which he could do under all the circumstances—with his demanding physical nature, and with the terrible restrictions upon a clergyman's life, imposed by that ignorant public opinion about physiological laws, which they, nevertheless, more, perhaps, than any other class, do their best to perpetuate. The fault I find with Mr. BEECHER is of a wholly different character, as I have told him repeatedly and frankly, and as he knows very well. It is, indeed, the exact opposite to that for which the world will condemn him. I condemn him because I know, and have had every opportunity to know, that he entertains, on conviction, substantially the same views which I entertain on the social question; that, under the influence of these convictions, he has lived for many years, perhaps for his whole adult life, in a manner which the religious and moralistic public ostensibly, and to some extent really, condemn; that he has permitted himself, nevertheless, to be over-awed by public opinion, to profess to believe otherwise than as he does believe, to have helped to maintain for these many years that very social slavery under which he was chafing, and against which he was secretly revolting both in thought and practice; and that he has, in a word, consented, and still consents to be a hypocrite. The fault with which I, therefore, charge him, is not infidelity to the old ideas, but unfaithfulness to the new. He is in heart, in conviction and in life, an ultra socialist reformer; while in seeming and pretension he is the upholder of the old social slavery, and, therefore, does what he can to crush out and oppose me and those who act and believe with me in forwarding the great social revolution. I know, myself, so little of the sentiment of fear, I have so little respect for an ignorant and prejudiced public opinion, I am so accustomed to say the thing that I think and do the thing that I believe to be right, that I doubt not I am in danger of having far too little sympathy with the real difficulties of a man situated as Mr. BEECHER has been, and is, when he contemplates the idea of facing social opprobrium. Speaking from my feelings, I am prone to denounce him as a poltroon, a coward and a sneak; not, as I tell you, for anything that he has done, and for which the world would condemn him, but for failing to do what it seems to me so clear he ought to do; for failing, in a word, to stand shoulder to shoulder with me and others who are endeavoring to hasten a social regeneration which he believes in."

Reporter.—"You speak very confidently, Mrs. WOODHULL, of Mr. BEECHER's opinions and life. Will you now please to resume that subject, and tell me exactly what you know of both?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I had vaguely heard rumors of some scandal in regard to Mr. BEECHER, which I put aside as mere rumor and idle gossip of the hour, and gave to them no attention whatever. The first serious intimation I had that there was something more than mere gossip in the matter came to me in the committee room at Washington, where the suffrage women congregated during the winter of 1870, when I was there to urge my views on the Fourteenth Amendment. It was hinted in the room that some of the women, Mrs. ISABELLA BEECHER HOOKER, a sister of Mr. BEECHER, among the number, would snub Mrs. WOODHULL on account of her social opinions and antecedents. Instantly a gentleman, a stranger to me, stepped forward and said: 'It would ill become these women, and especially a BEECHER, to talk of antecedents or to cast any smirch upon Mrs. WOODHULL, for I am reliably assured that HENRY WARD BEECHER preaches to at least twenty of his mistresses every Sunday.'

"I paid no special attention to the remark at the time, as I was very intensely engaged in the business which had called me there; but it afterward forcibly recurred to me, with the thought also that it was strange that such a remark, made in such a presence, had seemed to have a subduing effect instead of arousing indignation. The women who were there could not have treated me better than they did. Whether this strange remark had any influence in overcoming their objections to me I do not know; but it is certain they were not set against me by it; and, all of them, Mrs. HOOKER included, subsequently professed the warmest friendship for me."

Reporter.—"After this, I presume you sought for the solution of the gentleman's remark."

Mrs. Woodhull.—"No, I did not. It was brought up subsequently, in an intimate conversation between her and me, by Mrs. PAULINE WRIGHT DAVIS, without any seeking on my part, and to my very great surprise. Mrs. DAVIS had been, it seems, a frequent visitor at Mr. TILTON's house in Brooklyn—they having long been associated in the Woman's Rights movement—and she stood upon certain terms of intimacy in the family. Almost at the same time to which I have referred, when I was in Washington, she called, as she told me, at Mr. TILTON's. Mrs. TILTON met her at the door and burst into tears, exclaiming: 'Oh, Mrs. DAVIS! have you come to see me? For six months I have been shut up from the world, and I thought no one ever would come again to visit me.' In the interview that followed, Mrs. TILTON spoke freely of a long series of intimate, and so-called criminal relations, on her part, with the Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER; of the discovery of the facts by Mr. TILTON; of the abuse she had suffered from him in consequence, and of her heart-broken condition. She seemed to allude to the whole thing as to something already generally known, or known in a considerable circle, and impossible to be concealed; and attributed the long absence of Mrs. DAVIS from the house to her knowledge of the facts. She was, as she stated at the time, recovering from the effects of a miscarriage of a child of six months. The miscarriage was induced by the ill-treatment of Mr. TILTON in his rage at the discovery of her criminal intimacy with

Mr. BEECHER, and, as he believed, the great probability, that she was *enclente* by Mr. BEECHER instead of himself. Mrs. TILTON confessed to Mrs. DAVIS the intimacy with Mr. BEECHER, and that it had been of years' standing. She also said that she had loved Mr. BEECHER before she married Mr. TILTON, and that now the burden of her sorrow was greatly augmented by the knowledge that Mr. BEECHER was untrue to her. She had not only to endure the rupture with her husband, but also the certainty that, notwithstanding his repeated assurance of his faithfulness to her, he had recently had illicit intercourse, under most extraordinary circumstances, with another person. Said Mrs. DAVIS: 'I came away from that house, my soul bowed down with grief at the heart-broken condition of that poor woman, and I felt that I ought not to leave Brooklyn until I had stripped the mask from that infamous, hypocritical scoundrel, BEECHER.' In May, after returning home, Mrs. DAVIS wrote me a letter, from which I will read a paragraph to show that we conversed on this subject.

"EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

"DEAR VICTORIA: I thought of you half of last night, dreamed of you and prayed for you.

"I believe you are raised up of God to do a wonderful work, and I believe that you will unmask the hypocrisy of a class that none others dare touch. God help you and save you. The more I think of that mass of Beecher corruption the more I desire its opening.

"Ever yours, lovingly, PAULINA WRIGHT DAVIS.  
"PROVIDENCE, R. I., May, 1871."

Reporter.—"Did you inform Mrs. DAVIS of your intention to expose this matter, as she intimates in the letter?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I said in effect to her, that the matter would become public, and that I felt that I should be instrumental in making it so. But I was not decided about the course I should pursue. I next heard the whole story from Mrs. ELIZABETH CADY STANTON."

Reporter.—"Indeed! Is Mrs. STANTON also mixed up in this affair? Does she know the facts? How could the matter have been kept so long quiet when so many people are cognizant of it?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"The existence of the skeleton in the closet may be very widely known, and many people may have the key to the terrible secret, but still hesitate to open the door for the great outside world to gaze in upon it. This grand woman did indeed know the same facts, and from Mr. TILTON himself. I shall never forget the occasion of her first rehearsal of it to me at my residence, 15 East Thirty-eighth street, in a visit made to me during the Apollo Hall Convention in May, 1871. It seems that Mr. TILTON, in agony at the discovery of what he deemed his wife's perfidy and his pastor's treachery, retreated to Mrs. STANTON's residence at Tenafly, where he detailed to her the entire story. Said Mrs. STANTON, 'I never saw such a manifestation of mental agony. He raved and tore his hair, and seemed upon the very verge of insanity.' 'Oh!' said he, 'that that damned lecherous scoundrel should have defiled my bed for ten years, and at the same time have professed to be my best friend! Had he come like a man to me and confessed his guilt, I could perhaps have endured it, but to have him creep like a snake into my house leaving his pollution behind him, and I so blind as not to see, and esteeming him all the while as a saint—oh! it is too much. And when I think how for years she, upon whom I had bestowed all my heart's love, could have lied and deceived me so, I lose all faith in humanity. I do not believe there is any honor, any truth left in anybody in the world.' Mrs. STANTON continued and repeated to me the sad story, which it is unnecessary to recite, as I prefer giving it as Mr. TILTON himself told it me, subsequently, with his own lips."

Reporter.—"Is it possible that Mr. TILTON confided this story to you? It seems too monstrous to be believed!"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"He certainly did. And what is more, I am persuaded that in his inmost mind he will not be otherwise than glad when the skeleton in his closet is revealed to the world, if thereby the abuses which lurk like vipers under the cloak of social conservatism may be exposed and the causes removed. Mr. TILTON looks deeper into the soul of things than most men, and is braver than most."

Reporter.—"How did your acquaintance with Mr. TILTON begin?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"Upon the information received from Mrs. DAVIS and Mrs. STANTON I based what I said in the WEEKLY, and in the letters in the *Times* and *World*, referring to the matter, I was nearly determined—though still not quite so—that what I, equally with those who gave me the information, believed, but for wholly other reasons, to be a most important social circumstance, should be exposed, my reasons being, as I have explained to you, not those of the world, and I took that method to cause inquiry and create agitation regarding it. The day that the letter appeared in the *World* Mr. TILTON came to my office, No. 44 Broad street, and, showing me the letter, asked: 'Whom do you mean by that?' 'Mr. TILTON,' said I, 'I mean you and Mr. BEECHER.' I then told him what I knew, what I thought of it, and that I felt that I had a mission to bring it to the knowledge of the world, and that I had nearly determined to do so. I said to him much else on the subject; and he said: 'Mrs. WOODHULL, you are the first person I have ever met who has dared to, or else who could, tell me the truth.' He acknowledged that the facts, as I had heard them, were true, but declared that I did not yet know the extent of the depravity of that man—meaning Mr. BEECHER. 'But,' said he, 'do not take any steps now. I have carried my heart as a stone in my breast for months, for the sake of ELIZABETH, my wife, who is broken-hearted as I am. I have had courage to endure rather than to add more to her weight of sorrow. For her sake I have allowed that rascal to go unscathed. I have curbed my feelings when every impulse urged me to throttle and strangle him. Let me take you over to ELIZABETH, and you will find her in no condition to be dragged before the public; and I know you will have compassion on her.' And I went and saw her, and I agreed with him on the propriety of delay."

Reporter.—"Was it during this interview that Mr. TILTON explained to you all that you now know of the matter?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"Oh, no. His revelations were made subsequently at sundry times, and during months of friendly intercourse, as occasion brought the subject up. I will, however, condense his statements to me, and state the facts as he related them, as consecutively as possible. I kept notes of the conversations as they occurred from time to time, but the matter is so much impressed on my mind that I have no hesitation in relating them from memory."

Reporter.—"Do you not fear that by taking the responsibility of this *expose* you may involve yourself in trouble? Even if all you relate should be true, may not those involved deny it *in toto*, even the fact of their having made the statements?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I do not fear anything of the sort. I know this thing must come out, and the statement of the plain unvarnished truth will outweigh all the perjuries that can be invented, if it come to that pass. I have been charged with attempts at blackmailing, but I tell you, sir, there is not money enough in these two cities to purchase my silence in this matter. I believe it is my duty and my mission to carry the torch to light up and destroy the heap of rottenness, which, in the name of religion, marital sanctity, and social purity, now passes as the social system. I know there are other churches just as false, other pastors just as recreant to their professed ideas of morality—by their immorality you know I mean their hypocrisy. I am glad that just this one case comes to me to be exposed. This is a great congregation. He is a most eminent man. When a beacon is fired on the mountain the little hills are lighted up. This exposition will send inquisition through all the churches and what is termed conservative society."

Reporter.—"You speak like some weird prophetess, madam."

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I am a prophetess—I am an evangel—I am a Saviour, if you would but see it; but I too come not to bring peace, but a sword."

Mrs. WOODHULL then resumed, saying: "Mr. TILTON first began to have suspicions of Mr. BEECHER on his own return from a long lecturing tour through the West. He questioned his little daughter, privately, in his study regarding what had transpired in his absence. 'The tale of iniquitous horror that was revealed to me was,' he said, 'enough to turn the heart of a stranger to stone, to say nothing of a husband and father.' It was not the fact of the intimacy alone, but in addition to that, the terrible orgies—so he said—of which his house had been made the scene, and the boldness with which matters had been carried on in the presence of his children—'These things drove me mad,' said he, 'and I went to ELIZABETH and confronted her with the child and the damning tale she had told me. My wife did not deny the charge nor attempt any palliation. She was then *enclente*, and I felt sure that the child would not be my child. I stripped the wedding ring from her finger. I tore the picture of Mr. BEECHER from my wall and stamped it in pieces. Indeed, I do not know what I did not do. I only look back to it as a time too horrible to retain any exact remembrance of. She miscarried the child and it was buried. For two weeks, night and day, I might have been found walking to and from that grave, in a state bordering on distraction. I could not realize the fact that I was what I was. I stamped the ring with which we had plighted our troth deep into the soil that covered the fruit of my wife's infidelity. I had friends, many and firm and good, but I could not go to them with this grief, and I suppose I should have remained silent through life had not an occasion arisen which demanded that I should seek counsel. Mr. BEECHER learned that I had discovered the fact, and what had transpired between ELIZABETH and myself, and when I was absent he called at my house and compelled or induced his victim to sign a statement he had prepared, declaring that so far as he, Mr. BEECHER, was concerned, there was no truth in my charges, and that there had never been any criminal intimacy between them. Upon learning this, as I did, I felt, of course, again outraged and could endure secrecy no longer. I had one friend who was like a brother, Mr. FRANK MOULTON. I went to him and stated the case fully. We were both members of Plymouth Church. My friend took a pistol, went to Mr. BEECHER and demanded the letter of Mrs. TILTON, under penalty of instant death."

Mrs. WOODHULL here remarked that Mr. MOULTON had himself, also since, described to her this interview, with all the piteous and abject beseeching of Mr. BEECHER not to be exposed to the public.

"Mr. MOULTON obtained the letter," said Mrs. W., "and told me that he had it in his safe, where he should keep it until required for further use. After this, Mr. TILTON's house was no house for him, and he seldom slept or eat there, but frequented the house of his friend MOULTON, who sympathized deeply with him. Mrs. TILTON was absent days at a time, and, as Mr. TILTON informed me, seemed bent on destroying her life. I went as I have said to see her and found her, indeed, a wretched wreck of a woman, whose troubles were greater than she could bear. She made no secret of the facts before me. Mr. BEECHER's selfish, cowardly cruelty in endeavoring to shield himself and create public opinion against Mr. TILTON, added poignancy to her anxieties. She seemed indifferent as to what should become of herself, but labored under fear that murder might be done on her account."

"This was the condition of affairs at the time that Mr. TILTON came to me. I attempted to show him the true solution of the imbroglia, and the folly that it was for a man like him, a representative man of the ideas of the future, to stand whining over inevitable events connected with this transition age and the social revolution of which we are in the midst. I told him that the fault and the wrong were neither in Mr. BEECHER, nor in Mrs. TILTON, nor in himself; but that it was in the false social institutions under which we still live, while the more advanced men and women of the world have outgrown them in spirit; and that, practically, everybody is living a false life, by professing a conformity which they do not feel and do not live, and which they cannot feel and live



any more than the grown boy can re-enter the clothes of his early childhood. I recalled to his attention splendid passages of his own rhetoric, in which he had unconsciously justified all the freedom that he was now condemning, when it came home to his own door, and endeavoring, in the spirit of a tyrant, to repress.

"I ridiculed the *maudlin sentiment* and *mock heroics* and *'dreadful suzz'* he was exhibiting over an event the most natural in the world, and the most intrinsically innocent; having in it not a bit more of real criminality than the awful wickedness of 'negro-stealing' formerly charged, in perfect good faith, by the slaveholders, on every one who helped the escape of a slave. I assumed at once, and got a sufficient admission, as I always do in such cases, that he was not exactly a vestal virgin himself; that his real life was something very different from the awful 'virtue' he was preaching, especially for women, as if women could 'sin' in this matter without men, and men without women, and which, he pretended, even to himself, to believe in the face and eyes of his own life, and the lives of nearly all the greatest and best men and women that he knew; that the 'dreadful suzz' was merely a *bogus sentimentality*, pumped in his imagination, because our sickly religious literature, and Sunday-school morality, and pulpit phariseism had humbugged him all his life into the belief that he ought to feel and act in this harlequin and absurd way on such an occasion—that, in a word, neither Mr. BEECHER nor Mrs. TILTON had done any wrong, but that it was he who was playing the part of a fool and a tyrant; that it was he and the factitious or manufactured public opinion back of him, that was wrong; that this babyish whining and stage-acting were the real absurdity and disgrace—the unmanly part of the whole transaction, and that we only needed another Cervantes to satirize such stuff as it deserves to squelch it instantly and forever. I tried to show him that a true manliness would protect and love to protect; would glory in protecting the absolute freedom of the woman who was loved, whether called wife, mistress, or by any other name, and that the true sense of honor in the future will be, *not to know even* what relations our lovers have with any and all other persons than ourselves—as true courtesy never seeks to spy over or to pry into other people's private affairs.

"I believe I succeeded in pointing out to him that his own life was essentially no better than Mr. BEECHER's, and that he stood in no position to throw the first stone at Mrs. TILTON or at her reverend paramour. I showed him again and again that the wrong point, and the radically wrong thing, if not, indeed, quite the only wrong thing in the matter, was the *idea of ownership in human beings, which was essentially the same in the two institutions of slavery and marriage*. Mrs. TILTON had in turn grown increasingly unhappy when she found that Mr. BEECHER had turned some part of his exuberant affections upon some other object. There was in her, therefore, the same sentiment of the real slaveholder. Let it be once understood that *whosoever is true to himself or herself is thereby, and necessarily, true to all others*, and the whole social question will be solved. *The barter and sale of wives stands on the same moral footing as the barter and sale of slaves*. The god-implanted human affections cannot, and will not, be any longer subordinated to these external, legal restrictions and conventional engagements. *Every human being belongs to himself or herself by a higher title than any which, by surrenders or arrangements or promises, he or she can confer upon any other human being*. Self-ownership is *inalienable*. These truths are the latest and greatest discoveries in true science.

"Perhaps Mr. BEECHER knows and feels all this, and if so, in that knowledge consists his sole and his real justification, only the world around him has not yet grown to it; institutions are not yet adapted to it; and he is not brave enough to bear his open testimony to the truth he knows.

"All this I said to Mr. TILTON; and I urged upon him to make this providential circumstance in his life the occasion upon which he should, himself, come forward to the front and stand with the true champions of social freedom."

Reporter.—"Then Mr. TILTON became, as it were, your pupil, and you instructed him in your theories."

Mrs. Woodhull.—"Yes, I suppose that is a correct statement; and the verification of my views, springing up before my eyes upon this occasion, out of the very midst of religious and moral prejudices, was, I assure you, an interesting study for me, and a profound corroboration of the righteousness of what you call 'my Theories.' Mr. TILTON's conduct toward Mr. BEECHER and toward his wife began from that time to be so magnanimous and grand—by which I mean simply just and right—so unlike that which most other men's would have been, that it stamped him, in my mind, as one of the noblest souls that lived, and one capable of playing a great role in the social revolution, which is now so rapidly progressing.

"I never could, however, induce him to stand wholly, and unreservedly, and on principle, upon the free-love platform; and I always, therefore, feared that he might for a time vacillate or go backward. But he opened his house to Mr. BEECHER, saying to him, in the presence of Mrs. TILTON: 'You love each other. Mr. BEECHER, this is a distressed woman; if it be in your power to alleviate her condition and make her life less a burden than it now is, be yours the part to do it. You have nothing to fear from me.' From that time Mr. BEECHER was, so to speak, the slave of Mr. TILTON and Mr. MOULTON. He consulted them in every matter of any importance. It was at this time that Mr. TILTON introduced Mr. BEECHER to me, and I met him frequently both at Mr. TILTON's and at Mr. MOULTON's. We discussed the social problem freely in all its varied bearings, and I found that Mr. BEECHER agreed with nearly all my views upon the question."

Reporter.—"Do you mean to say that Mr. BEECHER disapproves of the present marriage system?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I mean to say just this—that Mr. BEECHER told me that marriage is the grave of love, and that he never married a couple that he did not feel condemned."

Reporter.—"What excuse did Mr. BEECHER give for not avowing these sentiments publicly?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"Oh, the moral coward's inevitable excuse—that of inexpediency. He said he was twenty years ahead of his church; that he preached the truth just as fast as he thought his people could bear it. I said to him, 'Then, Mr. BEECHER, you are defrauding your people. You confess that you do not preach the truth as you know it, while they pay for and persuade themselves you are giving them your best thought.' He replied: 'I know that our whole social system is corrupt. I know that marriage, as it exists to-day, is the curse of society. We shall never have a better state until children are begotten and bred on the scientific plan. Stirpiculture is what we need.' 'Then,' said I, 'Mr. BEECHER, why do you not go into your pulpit and preach that science?' He replied: 'If I were to do so I should preach to empty seats. It would be the ruin of my church.' 'Then,' said I, 'you are as big a fraud as any time-serving preacher, and I now believe you are all frauds. I gave you credit for ignorant honesty, but I find you all alike—all trying to hide, or afraid to speak the truth. A sorry pass has this Christian country come to, paying 40,000 ministers to lie to it from Sunday to Sunday, to hide from them the truth that has been given them to promulgate.'"

Reporter.—"It seems you took a good deal of pains to draw Mr. BEECHER out."

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I did. I thought him a man who would dare a good deal for the truth, and that, having lived the life he had, and entertaining the private convictions he did, I could perhaps persuade him that it was his true policy to come out and openly avow his principals, and be a thorough consistent radical, and thus justify his life in some measure, if not wholly, to the public."

Reporter.—"Was Mr. BEECHER aware that you knew of his relations to Mrs. TILTON?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"Of course he was. It was because that I knew of them that he first consented to meet me. He could never receive me until he knew that I was aware of the real character he wore under the mask of his reputation. Is it not remarkable how a little knowledge of this sort brings down the most top-lofty from the stilts on which they lift themselves above the common level?"

Reporter.—"Do you still regard Mr. BEECHER as a moral coward?"

Mrs. Woodhull.—"I have found him destitute of moral courage enough to meet this tremendous demand upon him. In minor things, I know that he has manifested courage. He could not be induced to take the bold step I demanded of him, simply for the sake of truth and righteousness. I did not entirely despair of him until about a year ago. I was then contemplating my Steinway Hall speech on Social Freedom, and prepared it in the hope of being able to persuade Mr. BEECHER to preside for me, and thus make a way for himself into a consistent life on the radical platform. I made my speech as soft as I conscientiously could. I toned it down in order that it might not frighten him. When it was in type, I went to his study and gave him a copy and asked him to read it carefully and give me his candid opinion concerning it. Meantime, I had told Mr. TILTON and Mr. MOULTON that I was going to ask Mr. BEECHER to preside, and they agreed to press the matter with him. I explained to them that the only safety he had was in coming out as soon as possible an advocate of social freedom, and thus palliate, if he could not completely justify, his practices by founding them at least on principle. I told them that this introduction of me would bridge the way. Both the gentlemen agreed with me in this view, and I was for a time almost sure that my desire would be accomplished. A few days before the lecture, I sent a note to Mr. BEECHER asking him to preside for me. This alarmed him. He went with it to Messrs. TILTON and MOULTON asking advice. They gave it in the affirmative, telling him they considered it eminently fitting that he should pursue the course indicated by me as his only safety; but it was not urged in such a way as to indicate that they had known the request was to have been made. Matters remained undecided until the day of the lecture, when I went over again to press Mr. BEECHER to a decision. I had then a long private interview with him, urging all the arguments I could to induce him to consent. He said he agreed perfectly with what I was to say, but that he could not stand on the platform of Steinway Hall and introduce me. He said, 'I should sink through the floor. I am a moral coward on this subject, and I know it, and I am not fit to stand by you, who go there to speak what you know to be the truth; I should stand there a living lie.' He got upon the sofa on his knees beside me, and taking my face between his hands, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, begged me to let him off. Becoming thoroughly disgusted with what seemed to me pusillanimity, I left the room under the control of a feeling of contempt for the man, and reported to my friends what he had said. They then took me again with them and endeavored to persuade him. Mr. TILTON said to him: 'Mr. BEECHER, some day you have got to fall; go and introduce this woman and win the radicals of the county, and it will break your fall.' 'Do you think,' said BEECHER, 'that this thing will come out to the world?' Mr. TILTON replied: 'Nothing is more certain in earth or heaven, Mr. BEECHER; and this may be your last chance to save yourself from complete ruin.'

"Mr. BEECHER replied: 'I can never endure such a terror. Oh! if it must come, let me know of it twenty-four hours in advance, that I may take my own life. I cannot, cannot face this thing!'"

"Thoroughly out of all patience, I turned on my heel and said: 'Mr. BEECHER, if I am compelled to go upon that platform alone, I shall begin by telling the audience why I am alone, and why you are not with me,' and I again left the room. I afterward learned that Mr. BEECHER, frightened at what I had said, promised, before parting with Mr. TILTON, that he would preside if he could bring his courage up to the terrible ordeal."

"It was four minutes of the time for me to go forward to the platform at Steinway Hall when Mr. TILTON and Mr. MOULTON came into the ante-room asking for Mr. BEECHER. When I told them he had not come they expressed astonishment. I told them I should faithfully keep my word, let the

consequences be what they might. At that moment word was sent me that there was an organized attempt to break up the meeting, and that threats were being made against my life if I dared to speak what it was understood I intended to speak. Mr. TILTON then insisted on going on the platform with me and presiding, to which I finally agreed, and that I should not at that time mention Mr. BEECHER. I shall never forget the brave words he uttered in introducing me. They had a magic influence on the audience, and drew the sting of those who intended to harm me. However much Mr. TILTON may have since regretted his course regarding me, and whatever he may say about it, I shall always admire the moral courage that enabled him to stand with me on that platform, and face that, in part, defiant audience. It is hard to bear the criticisms of vulgar minds, who can see in social freedom nothing but licentiousness and debauchery, and the inevitable misrepresentation of the entire press, which is as perfectly subsidized against reason and common sense, when social subjects are discussed, as is the religious press when any other science is discussed which is supposed to militate against the Bible as the direct word of God to man. The editors are equally bigots, or else as dishonest as the clergy. The nightmare of a public opinion, which they are still professionally engaged in making, enslaves and condemns them both."

Mrs. WOODHULL concluded by saying that since her Steinway Hall speech she had surrendered all hope of easing the fall of Mr. BEECHER, that she had not attempted to see him, and had not in fact seen him. She only added one other fact, which was, that Mr. BEECHER endeavored to induce Mr. TILTON to withdraw from his membership in Plymouth Church, to leave him, Mr. BEECHER, free from the embarrassment of his presence there; and that Mr. TILTON had indignantly rejected the proposition, determined to hold the position with a view to such contingencies as might subsequently occur.

So much for the interviewing which was to have been published some months ago; but when it failed or was suppressed, I was still so far undecided that I took no steps in the matter, and had no definite plan for the future in respect to it, until the events as I have recited then, which occurred at Boston. Since then I have not doubted that I must make up my mind definitely to act aggressively in this matter, and to use the facts in my knowledge to compel a more wide-spread discussion of the social question. I take the step deliberately, as an agitator and social revolutionist, which is my profession. I commit no breach of confidence, as no confidences have been made to me, except as I have compelled them, with a full knowledge that I was endeavoring to induce or to force the parties to come to the front along with me in the announcement and advocacy of the principles of social revolution. Messrs. BEECHER and TILTON, and other half-way reformers, are to me like the border States in the great rebellion. They are liable to fall, with the weight of their influence, on either side in the contest, and I hold it to be legitimate generalship to compel them to declare on the side of truth and progress.

My position is justly analagous with that of warfare. The public, Mr. BEECHER included, would gladly crush me if they could—will do so if they can—to prevent me from forcing on them considerations of the utmost importance. My mission is, on the other hand, to utter the unpopular truth, and make it efficient by whatsoever legitimate means; and means are legitimate as a war measure, which would be highly reprehensible in a state of peace. I believe, as the law of peace, *in the right of privacy*, in the sanctity of individual relations. It is nobody's business but their own, in the absolute view, what Mr. BEECHER and Mrs. TILTON have done, or may choose at any time to do, as between themselves. And the world needs, too, to be taught just that lesson. I am the champion of that very right of privacy and of individual sovereignty. But, that is only one side of the case. I need, and the world needs, Mr. BEECHER's powerful championship of this very right. The world is on the very crisis of its final fight for liberty. The victory may fall on the wrong side, and his own liberty and mine, and the world's, be again crushed out, or repressed for another century for the want of fidelity in him to the new truth. It is not, therefore, Mr. BEECHER as the individual that I pursue, but Mr. BEECHER as the representative man: Mr. BEECHER as a power in the world; and Mr. BEECHER as my auxiliary in a great war for freedom, or Mr. BEECHER as a violent enemy and a powerful hindrance to all that I am bent on accomplishing.

To Mr. BEECHER, as the individual citizen, I tender, therefore, my humble apology, meaning and deeply feeling what I say, for this or any interference on my part, with his private conduct. I hold that Mr. TILTON himself, that Mrs. BEECHER herself, have no more right to inquire, or to know or to spy over, with a view to knowing, what has transpired between Mr. BEECHER and Mrs. TILTON than they have to know what I ate for breakfast, or where I shall spend my next evening; and that Mr. BEECHER's congregation and the public at large have just as little right to know or to inquire. I hold that the so-called morality of society is a complicated mass of sheer impertinence and a scandal on the civilization of this advanced century, that the system of social espionage under which we live is damnable, and that the very first axiom of a true morality, is for the people to *mind their own business*, and learn to respect, religiously, the social freedom and the sacred social privacy of all others; but it was the paradox of Christ, that as the Prince of Peace, he still brought on earth, *not peace but a sword*. It is the paradox of life that, in order to have peace, we must first have war; and it is the paradox of my position that, believing in the right of privacy and in the perfect right of Mr. BEECHER socially, morally and divinely to have sought the embraces of Mrs. TILTON, or of any other woman or women whom he loved and who loved him, and being a promulgator and a public champion of those very rights, I still invade the most secret and sacred affairs of his life, and drag them to the light and expose him to the opprobrium and vilification of the public. I do again, and with deep sincerity, ask his forgiveness. But the case is exceptional, and what I do I do for a great purpose. The social world is in the very agony of its new birth, or, to resume the warlike simile,



the leaders of progress are in the very act of storming the last fortress of bigotry and error. Somebody must be hurled forward into the gap. I have the power, I think, to compel Mr. BEECHER to go forward and to do the duty for humanity from which he shrinks; and I should, myself, be false to the truth if I were to shrink from compelling him. Whether he sinks or swims in the fiery trial, the agitation by which truth is evolved will have been promoted. And I believe that he will not only survive, but that when forced to the encounter he will rise to the full height of the great enterprise, and will astound and convince the world of the new gospel of freedom, by the depth of his experiences and the force of his argument.

The world, it seems, will never learn not to crucify its Christs, and not to compel the retraction of its Galileos. Mr. BEECHER has lacked the courage to be a martyr, but, like Galileo, while retracting, or concealing and evading, he has known in his heart that the world still moves; and I venture to prophesy, as I have indeed full faith, that he and the other parties to this social drama will yet live to be overwhelmed with gratitude to me for having compelled them to this publicity. The age is pregnant with great events, and this may be the very one which shall be, as it were, the crack of doom to our old and worn out, and false and hypocritical social institutions. When the few first waves of public indignation shall have broken over him, when the nine days' wonder and the astonished clamor of Mrs. Grundy shall have done their worst, and when the pious ejaculations of the sanctimonious shall have been expended, and he finds that he still lives, and that there are brave souls who stand by him, he will, I believe, rise in his power and utter the whole truth. I believe I see clearly and prophetically for him in the future a work a hundred times greater than all he has accomplished in the past. I believe, as I have said, a wise Providence, or, as I term it, and believe it to be, the conscious and well calculated interference of the spirit world, has forecast and prepared these very events as a part of the drama of this great social revolution. Of all the centres of influence on the great broad planet, the destiny that shapes our ends, bent on breaking up an old civilization and ushering in a new one, could have found no such spot for its vantage ground as Plymouth Church, no such man for the hero of the plot as its reverend pastor, and, it may be, no such heroine as the gentle cultured, and, perhaps, hereafter to be sainted wife of Plymouth Church's most distinguished layman. Indeed I think that Mrs. TILTON has had, at least at times, a clearer intuition guiding her, a better sense of right, and more courage than her reverend lover; for, on one occasion, Mr. TILTON told me that he took home to her one of my threatening notices, and told her that that meant her and Mr. BEECHER, and that the exposure must and would come; and he added that she calmly replied: "I am prepared for it. If the new social gospel must have its martyrs, and if I must be one of them, I am prepared for it."

In conclusion, let us again consider, for a moment, the right and the wrong of this whole transaction. Let us see whether the wrong is not on the side where the public puts the right, and the right on the side where the public puts the wrong. The immense physical potency of Mr. BEECHER, and the indomitable urgency of his great nature for the intimacy and the embraces of the noble and cultured women about him, instead of being a bad thing as the world thinks, or thinks that it thinks, or professes to think that it thinks, is one of the noblest and grandest of the endowments of this truly great and representative man. The amative impulse is the physiological basis of character. It is this which emanates zest and magnetic power to his whole audience through the organism of the great preacher. Plymouth Church has lived and fed, and the healthy vigor of public opinion for the last quarter of a century has been augmented and strengthened from the physical amateness of HENRY WARD BEECHER. The scientific world know the physiological facts of this nature, but they have waited for a weak woman to have the moral courage to tell the world such truths. Passionate starvation, enforced on such a nature, so richly endowed, by the ignorance and prejudice of the past, is a horrid cruelty. The bigoted public, to which the great preacher ministered, while literally eating and drinking of his flesh and blood, condemned him, in their ignorance, to live without food. Every great man of Mr. BEECHER's type has had, in the past, and will ever have, the need for, and the right to, the loving manifestations of many women, and when the public graduates out of the ignorance and prejudice of its childhood, it will recognize this necessity and its own past injustice. Mr. BEECHER's grand and amative nature is not, then, the bad element in the whole matter, but intrinsically a good thing, and one of God's best gifts to the world.

So again, the tender, loving, womanly concessiveness of Mrs. TILTON, her susceptibility to the charm of the great preacher's magnetism, her love of loving and of being loved, none of these were the bad thing which the world thinks them, or thinks that it thinks them, or professes to think that it thinks them to be. On the contrary they are all of them the best thing—the best and most beautiful of things, the loveliest and most divine of things which belong to the patrimony of mankind.

So again, it was not the coming together of these two loving natures in the most intimate embrace, nor was it that nature blessed that embrace with the natural fruits of love which was the bad element in this whole transaction. They, on the contrary, were good elements, beautiful and divine elements, and among God's best things for man.

The evil and the whole evil in this whole matter, then, lies elsewhere. It lies in a false and artificial or manufactured opinion, in respect to this very question of what is good or what is evil in such matters. It lies in the belief that society has

the right to prohibit, to prescribe and regulate, or in any manner to interfere with the private love manifestations of its members, any more than it has to prescribe their food and their drink. It lies in the belief consequent upon this, that lovers own their lovers, husbands their wives and wives their husbands, and that they have the right to complain of, to spy over, and to interfere, even to the extent of murder, with every other or outside manifestation of love. It lies in the compulsory hypocrisy and systematic falsehood which is thus enforced and inwrought into the very structure of society, and in the consequent and wide-spread injury to the whole community.

Mr. BEECHER knows all this, and if by my act he is compelled to tell the world that he knows it, and to force them to the conviction that it is all true, he may well thank God that I live, and that circumstances have concurred to emancipate him, despite of himself, from his terrible thralldom, and to emancipate, through him, in the future, millions of others.

Still in conclusion, let me add, that in my view, and in the view of others who think with me, and of all, as I believe, who think rightly on the subject, Mr. BEECHER is today, and after all that I have felt called upon to reveal of his life, as good, as pure and as noble a man as he ever was in the past, or as the world has held him to be, and that Mrs. TILTON is still the pure, charming, cultured woman. It is, then, the public opinion that is wrong, and not the individuals, who must, nevertheless, for a time suffer its persecution.

Mrs. ISABELLA BEECHER HOOKER has, from the time that I met her in Washington, stood my fast friend, and given me manifold proofs of her esteem, knowing, as she did, both my radical opinions and my free life. I have been told, not by her, but upon what I believe to be perfectly good authority, that she has for months, perhaps for years past, known the life of her brother, and urged on him to announce publicly his radical convictions, and assured him that if he would do so she, at least, would stand by him. I know, too, by intimate intercourse, the opinions, and, to a great extent, the lives of nearly all the leading reformatory men and women in the land; and I know that Mr. BEECHER, passing through this crucial ordeal, retrieving himself and standing upon the most radical platform, need not stand alone for an hour, but that an army of glorious and emancipated spirits will gather spontaneously and instantaneously around him, and that the new social republic will have been for ever established.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

I publish the following letter, not to attempt to justify the exposure given above, but to show that I am not alone in the belief that benefit will accrue to the world from it. It may have been Mr. Parker who moved me to the utterances made at Boston. I have no doubt it was he, since I have been so informed both by himself and his friends. I desire it to be distinctly understood, however, that I do not wish to shoulder any of the responsibility on the spirit world for what I have done, although I know I shall have its support in whatever way I may need it in carrying forward this system of social warfare. The public will ere long learn that if it attempt to stop the social revolution which is impending it has more than one weak woman to contend against.

V. C. W.

RINGGOLD ST. PROVIDENCE, R. I.  
September 16, 1872.

MY DEAR VICTORIA:

My husband and myself called on Friday evening, accompanied by Mrs. Colonel Pope, of Harrison street, on Mrs. J. H. Conant, and found her at home; Dr. Pyke was with her. He, the doctor, entered into conversation with me concerning your attack upon Beecher, as he termed it, which I defended, whereupon Theodore Parker controlled Mrs. Conant and spoke in substance as follows:

"When Henry Ward Beecher, knowing spiritualism to be true, stood in his own pulpit and denounced it as 'one of the most dangerous humbugs of the day,' the spirit world felt that it had pleaded and borne with him long enough, and that they would unmask and show him to the world a hypocrite as he is. This it has done, and it mattered little whether Mrs. Conant, Victoria Woodhull or Laura Cuppy Smith was the instrument used. The spirit world has not yet completed its work. Other canting hypocrites remain to be proclaimed to the public in their true colors, and the Scripture shall be verified, 'There is nothing secret that shall not be made known, nothing hidden that shall not be revealed.' If I could have divested my medium of the influence of persons in the form I should have proclaimed this through her lips on the platform of John A. Andrews' hall on Wednesday afternoon."

I think I have given you Theodore Parker's words verbatim.

The same evening I was conversing with E. B. Beckwith, a prominent lawyer of Boston, who remarked that there seemed to him to be a retribution following the Beechers, and that you could use in your own behalf the same argument in vindication of your exposure of Beecher that Mrs. Stowe and her family had used in her defence with regard to the Byron affair, with this addition, that you had not accused the living, who could defend themselves, of half so base a crime as she laid to the charge of the poet and a sister woman, the dead who could not reply. I thought the suggestion too good to be lost, shall use it myself freely, and send it to you.

LAURA CUPPY SMITH.

[From The Thunderbolt.]

#### THE REPUBLIC THREATENED.

THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL AND THE BEECHER-BOWEN-COMSTOCK CONSPIRACY—THE SEAL BROKEN AT LAST—WOODHULL'S "LIES" AND THEODORE TILTON'S "TRUE STORY"—THE ACCOUNT HORRIBLE AT BEST—NO "OBSCENITY," BUT GOD'S TRUTH—THE SEXUAL ETHICS OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH—A NEW REVELATION—THE BROOKLYN SAINTS TORTURE SAINT PAUL INTO A FREE-LOVER—THE "THUNDERBOLT" SHATTERS A BAD CROWD AND PLOWS UP THE WHOLE GROUND.

CHRISTIANITY is the highest word of civilization, and the spirit of Jesus is the true "RELIGION OF HUMANITY." But to-day the "ORTHODOX PULPIT" is a MENACE TO FORTY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. To save one powerful preacher from deserved shame its special retainers have raped the goddess of American liberty. And to accomplish this outrage they have resorted to fraud, and have not scrupled at a "monstrous conspiracy." 'Tis the purpose of this paper,

THE THUNDERBOLT,

to stun the nation into a knowledge of these crimes. The "Evangelical Church," with its "Young Men's Christian Association," shall no longer cheat the Government, browbeat the courts and subsidize the press with impunity. When a republic is crucified between its priests and its editors, honest patriots should speak out. It is time that theological plotters be thrown upon the defensive, and be made to beg of common sense a further lease of their own life. The Thunderbolt has power to effect much of this purpose through the very "forbidden fruit" that has tempted the present quacks of conventional piety to become liars, perjurers and law-breakers. By this "forbidden fruit" I mean

#### THE GREATEST SOCIAL DRAMA

OF MODERN TIMES,

#### THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL!

This scandal, as reported by Victoria C. Woodhull, is at once a truth and a falsehood; or, as Theodore Tilton has himself explained, a "true story" underlies "the false one." Three months after the Woodhull account had been published, and no one had given the public a direct, authentic denial of it—three months after the country had been insulted in connection with it by the moral and legal fraud of "obscene literature"—I was stung into writing "A FULL ACCOUNT, ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL." In that article (published in the Troy Daily Press of February 11th, and since reproduced in other journals), the Woodhull account was given in condensed form, as follows:

"The Beecher-Tilton Scandal Case" is this: Mrs. Woodhull declares there has been a long-continued *liaison* between Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton; that it first came to Mr. Tilton's knowledge through the revelations of one of his children; that he accused Mrs. Tilton or it, and received her acknowledgment of guilt; that he was driven nearly to insanity at the moment, and treated Mrs. Tilton so severely that she miscarried a child, which was considered the offspring of Mr. Beecher. Mr. Tilton kept his grief secret, however, as Mrs. Woodhull asserts, until Mr. Beecher went again to his house, during his absence, and extorted a letter from Mrs. Tilton to the effect that he had never been guilty of the wrong she had acknowledged to her husband. Then Mr. Tilton, doubly outraged, confided his grief to a bosom friend, Mr. Frank Moulton, who went to Beecher's house and forced him, at the mouth of a pistol, to give up the letter.

This story, in whole or in part, Mrs. Woodhull says, was first revealed to her by Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis, who received it from Mrs. Tilton; and then by Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who received it from Mr. Tilton. The knowledge of it came to Mrs. Woodhull in the early part of 1870, and she refers to an allusion which she made to it in WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY at that time. "Subsequently," continues Mrs. Woodhull, "I published a letter in both World and Times, in which was the following sentence: 'I know a clergyman of eminence in Brooklyn who lives in concubinage with the wife of another clergyman of equal eminence.'"

Mrs. Woodhull affirms that the day when this letter appeared in the World, Mr. Tilton came to her office, No. 44 Broad street, and showing Mrs. Woodhull the letter, asked her whom she meant, "Mr. Tilton," she replied, "I mean you and Mr. Beecher."

According to Mrs. Woodhull's statement, Mr. Tilton then acknowledged that the account was true, and worse than she had heard it. But he said that he was broken-hearted, that his wife was broken-hearted, and that she especially was then in no condition to be dragged before the public. Mr. Tilton took her to see Mrs. Tilton, and both imparted to her the whole story. The same thing was again detailed to her by Mr. Tilton's friend, Mr. Frank Moulton, and finally by Henry Ward Beecher himself.

Mrs. Woodhull's declared purpose in publishing the Beecher-Tilton Scandal was to create a "social revolution." She wished to show that "the foremost minds of the age" had "outgrown the institution of marriage," rendering to it only the outward homage of hypocrites, not the adherence of conscience or the practice of life. There is no danger that any "social revolution" will grow to proportions beyond the actual truth and common-sense contained in it. But in one thing Woodhull and Claflin instantly succeeded: they created a

#### SOCIAL PANIC THAT TURNED NEW YORK INTO A MOB!

Their scandal, as they have since boasted, was indeed "a bombshell" that carried dismay on every hand—an infernal machine of letters so terrific "that many even feared to read it," while others "cursed and prayed, laughed and cried, as if in the presence of the crack of doom."

The plans of this "Social Revolution," it seems, were somewhat deeply laid. The issue of WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY containing the "bombshell" was dated



November 2, 1872. But, anticipating that some steps might be taken to suppress the entire issue when its contents should become known, the paper was dispatched to its subscribers a week in advance, and (if the word of its "social revolutionists" can be trusted in anything), "to the entire list of newspapers in the United States, Canada and Great Britain." Then, on Monday morning the 28th of October, it was put on sale at the Woodhull headquarters. Before night the demand "grew to a rush." During the week it increased to "a crush," needing even the regulation of the police. 'Tis said the sales reached a hundred and fifty thousand copies, and promised two millions. For several days newsmen retailed the paper as high as fifty cents. On the day of its suppression \$2.50 was a common price for it. In some instances single copies brought \$10, and one extraordinary lover of literature is reported to have invested \$40 in a copy. Owners of the paper then leased it to other readers at a dollar a day.

But by Saturday, November 2, the general panic of "good society" in New York had so far subsided, that "some steps" were indeed taken—and with a vengeance—to suppress the Beecher-Tilton Scandal. And 'tis these steps alone that make the scandal of sufficient importance to claim the interference of persons in no way connected with it, and to need the unfaltering scrutiny of the public. The "steps," then, were nothing less than a

#### DARING CONSPIRACY,

not merely against the audacious and hated women, Woodhull and Claflin, but

#### AGAINST THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES!

In no other terms will I ever consent to describe that bastard New York-monstrosity, begotten of lust, fear and guilt—the arrest of Woodhull and Claflin for "publishing obscene literature."

If I had myself been situated like Theodore Tilton on the day of that arrest, and the darlings of my household had been so cruelly belied as his "true story" claims of his own, I don't know but I could have gone into Broad street and cut the throats of Woodhull, Claflin and Blood, with as little compunction as I would shoot a mad dog. But that would have been a business and a risk confined to three or four persons. It would not have been a national fraud, endangering every great principle at the bottom of human liberty. The special friends, however, of Henry Ward Beecher—the skulkers of Plymouth Church and the Young Men's Christian Association—preferred to deflower the laws of their country and the freedom of its people by a gigantic performance of bigotry and chicanery. In the shadow of their false pretenses, the Woodhull slanders, however atrocious, have grown comparatively dim and insignificant. The question of the mere rake, whom the moralist might pity and forgive, sinks in the question of the conspirator and traitor whom the patriot must hate.

A law of the United States, passed June 8, 1872, makes a very proper provision in aid of public morals by branding the transmission of obscene literature through the mails as a misdemeanor. The Act is this:

"No obscene book, pamphlet, picture, print, or other publication of a vulgar or indecent character, or any letter upon the envelope of which, or postal card upon which, scurrilous epithets may have been written or printed, or disloyal devices printed or engrossed, shall be carried in the mail; and any person who shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited, for mailing or delivery, any such obscene publication, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall for every such offense be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or be imprisoned at hard labor not exceeding one year, or both, at the discretion of the Courts."

Whatever sins Woodhull and Claflin had committed in issuing their WEEKLY of November 2, 1872, they had carefully avoided any violation of this statute against obscene literature. Their paper contained a harrowing account of seduction—an instance of such diabolical heartlessness that the noted philanthropist, Parker Pillsbury, has since declared that if its revelations were true, "no matter though Mrs. Woodhull were an imp of hell, she should have a monument of polished Parian marble as high as Trinity steeple, and every father and mother of daughters should be proud to contribute a stone." In addition to that nightmare of horrors, the paper contained several bold articles on social, religious and financial themes, in the midst of which was the Beecher-Tilton Scandal—a sad, unexpected story of adultery, but differing little in its details from scores of such stories reported in hundreds of newspapers. There is only one test of obscene literature.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLICATION:

and any other test a free people should resent, it necessary,

#### WITH BATTLE AND BLOOD!

Any other test would overturn the Bible, destroy the classics, and exclude physiology from human knowledge. It would insult the grave of every great thinker and poet, from Plato to Shakespeare and Burns. It would steal the bread and meat of letters, and leave only the baby sugar-tits of a Sunday-school library. The purpose of obscene literature is to pamper lust; and no fact, no fiction is obscene without this purpose. But the expressed intent of the Woodhull articles was to *destroy* lust; and, whether this intent was real or feigned, the articles were so written as almost to stop the breath and freeze the soul. In a word, they were ghastly, sickening *libels*, if false, but no more *obscene* than a picture of the crucifixion.

Woodhull and Claflin, however, were two women regarded almost as outlaws. They had become feared as "black-mailers," and unfrankly notorious as "free-lovers." For such reasons, undoubtedly, the special guardians of Mr. Beecher's reputation thought that the worst of means might be good enough to sweep "female nuisances" out of Broad street. Public sentiment was exasperated, not quite enough for a direct mob, but an indirect mob, slinking behind a pretence of law, might crush its victims with safety. In his position, the legal subterfuge was found in the act of

Congress passed to punish the venders of obscene prints. Then

#### MR. ANTHONY J. COMSTOCK, BACKED BY THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

stepped up to manage the dangerous fraud. Mr. Comstock is generally credited with "good intentions;" and as hell, also, is said to be paved with the same materials, I have never doubted their presence in the man. God seems to have made him partly a fool, in order that the fellow could do a good work as long as he could be kept from getting above his business. The dirty wretches who corrupt young minds by feeding them on licentious books need some little man, by nature a spy and hypocrite, to check their villainous trade. A full-grown, honest soul could neither sell the books nor dodge and lie to catch those who do. In such a dilemma the earth has a Comstock.

Mr. Comstock declares that, in prosecuting Woodhull and Claflin, he has never moved in collusion with Mr. Beecher. In spite of the habit of tongue necessary to his vocation, he probably tells the truth: Mr. Beecher has acted, from the first, through his friends. But one of the affidavits on which the arrest of the two women was procured, was made by one Talliesin William Rees, a clerk in the office of the *Independent*; and that Mr. Henry C. Bowen, the proprietor of that journal, might be trusted to act for Mr. Beecher (when he could *save himself* by the same industry), will be quite evident by and by to the "gentle reader" of the *Thunderbolt*. Is it not known that the scheme was planned in Mr. Bowen's office—spies being thence dispatched to Woodhull and Claflin to buy papers, and order them sent to certain persons by post? On receipt of the papers, Mr. A. J. Comstock made his complaint before Commissioner Osborne, and the women were arrested. They were in a carriage at the time, and claim to have been hunting up the officials who had come for them.

As the charge against them was

#### A FRAUD, BORN OF A PLOT,

and as they, if no one else, had brains enough to know it, they naturally supposed it could soon be broken. But in this opinion they measured only the justice of law itself, not the powers of a mob called "public opinion," which renders American law useless on so many important occasions. The United States Government, however, treated Woodhull and Claflin with endearing familiarity. It sat in their lap on the way to Court, through the supreme gallantry of Marshall Colfax or Bernhard—one of the two Chesterfields who had them in charge. It then hurried them, not into open court, but into a side room where the "examination" might be private. In this "star-chamber" they met five persons—District-Attorney Noah Davis, "a member of Plymouth Church and a family connection of Mr. Beecher;" Assistant District-Attorney General Davies, Commissioner Osborn, and two other gentlemen, one of these being also a member of Plymouth Church. But the "brazen sisters" sent for counsel, and, insisting on being conducted to the proper court-room, their examination was finally held in public. In

#### THIS EXAMINATION

the prosecuting blunderer, Gen. Davies, let out the secret that Woodhull and Claflin were not merely guilty of "circulating obscene literature," but of a "gross libel" on a "gentleman" whose character it was "well worth the while of the Government of the United States to vindicate." Interpreted, this lingo meant that a United States Court had been procured to convict, on the pretense of *obscenity*, two women who had *libelled a man*—this man declining to protect himself, except through a conspiracy of his friends and lackeys.

This "holy show" of American jurisprudence took place on Saturday, the 2d of November, 1872, and was finally adjourned to the ensuing Monday, the prisoners being held to bail in eight thousand dollars each, with two sureties. But when Monday came the Beecher tools of the United States Court *dodged a further examination altogether*. By an unheard-of proceeding, the Grand Jury had pushed in an indictment which took the case out of Commissioner Osborn's jurisdiction. The motive was evident; Mr. Beecher's General Davies had found that his owner could never be persuaded or dragged into court to pursue Woodhull for her "gross libel," and that the charge of "obscenity" was a most ruinous one to try, if Plymouth Church had any further desire to save its Bible. For by far the most "indecent passage" in WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY had been cut out of the divinely inspired book of Deuteronomy. By this indictment, however, the prisoners were remanded to jail in utter disgrace, the mob of piety and fashion was appeased, and the Young Men's Christian Association was sustained in fraud!

So much done, it was only necessary to muzzle the New York newspapers (some of whose editors had strong personal reasons for dreading "black-mailers" if not "free-lovers"), and to bribe or cheat the Associated Press into sending lies by lightning throughout the country. Both feats were performed. A consultation of leading quills *adopted darkness and falsehood as a deliberate policy*; and as for our "country press," that never dares to sneeze unless the metropolitan nose is crammed with snuff. The telegraph even prated about the finding of "immodest cartoons;" and on the 4th of November the credulous public actually supposed that two women, claiming to be "reformers," were guilty of the meanest offense in the calendar of shame. The ablest lawyer in the United States has since given an opinion scouting the whole arraignment, and of course the parties will never be tried, much less convicted. But, on a second arrest, they were taken before another United States Commissioner—Davenport—who was obliged to make some appearance of a "decision." And that fearful and wonderful thing was this:

"As to the intention of Congress in the framing and passage of the statute under which these proceedings were instituted, I am clear that a case of this character was never contemplated. \* \* \* However \* \* \* I am disposed to, and shall hold, the prisoners."

And for this "decision," the Commissioner declared there

was no American precedent, but that an "English case furnished one."

From Commissioner Davenport's ruling there is just one logical deduction: that this faithful servant of her Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain, should be swiftly retired from the American bench and sent where his English decisions may be rendered in English courts.

I have dwelt upon the dry details of law, and in the miserable company of its New York expounders, to show beyond a doubt that the ridiculous proceedings against Woodhull and Claflin were simply

#### THE WORK OF A VIRTUAL MOB.

And in our "commercial metropolis"—the great city of this Beecher-Comstock rabble—there was only one notable man with brains and pluck enough to care nothing about persons, and to look only at principles. In an age of Daniel Drew, "Jim" Fisk, and Phelps, Dodge & Co., that man is naturally deemed "insane." I refer to George Francis Train. This "lunatic" instantly perceived the vast public dangers that loomed up in a conspiracy by which the Church might shut the mouth of slanderers or truth-tellers alike, disembowel literature, and stay the march of humanity itself.

"Beecher must have justice," said Train; "so must Mr. Tilton—so must the Sisters Claflin."

To these women he said:

"Never approving your doctrine of Free Love, I fought you out of the Woman-Suffrage movement and the International, when you were in prosperity; but now you are in adversity, I am your friend."

From his hotel (the St. Nicholas) he instantly wrote them a note:

"I will go your bail. I am satisfied the cowardly Christian community will destroy you, if possible, to cover up the rotten state of society."

Events have since proved that the "mad-cap,"

#### GEORGE FRANCIS TRAIN,

was the one greatly sound mind in New York.

In spite of the momentous principles at stake, it soon became evident (as I have already shown) that the great "churches of commerce" and the Young Men's Christian Association were in league with the greedy, corrupt press of the city, and that all had joined hands to deceive the nation. Not even a public hall could be secured by Mr. Train to speak in.

#### HE, TOO, WAS GAGGED!

It was in this exasperating state of affairs that he took desperate measures and issued a newspaper of his own—the *Train Lique*. He rung a score of changes on the expressions called "obscene" in WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY. He flung them into the streets of the city and dared the authorities to arrest him. He demanded the prosecution of the Bible Publishing Company for printing "disgusting slanders on Lot, Abraham, Solomon and David." But the Government footboys of Mr. A. J. Comstock had become timid and wary. They let Train alone, while the cords were drawn more tightly still around Woodhull and Claflin. In unspeakable disgust Mr. Train then issued his

#### SECOND TRAIN LIQUE,

in which he scattered about the most shocking parts of the Old Testament, under the most audacious of sensational heads, but used no doubtful words except those having the authority of the Bible itself. The work was a coarse one. Only a thorough "Pagan Preacher" could have done it. It seemed revolting and blasphemous; and my own first impression was that Train should be punished for it. But better aware now of the provocation, I have no doubt that history will justify the *Train Lique* as the natural reaction of Comstock's idiocy, and as a last Democratic test of absolute religious equality. Mr. Train was finally arrested by the State, not the United States authorities, and after the latter had declined to touch him. He was thrown into the Tombs. He pleaded guilty to "quoting obscenity from the Bible," and refused to leave the Tombs on bail. The Church and the Young Men's Christian Association, again, dared not risk a trial—which would either justify Woodhull and Train or else convict the Bible. In such straits, the Beecher-Bowen-Comstock traitors have attempted at last to end their conspiracy by sending George Francis Train to a "lunatic asylum."

#### TO OPPOSE THESE ASSASSINS OF LIBERTY

is now the highest duty that God gives me to see. I would help do it, if necessary, with battle and blood. I will first do what I can with ink and types—going back to the cause of the struggle.

#### THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL.

"I said that Victoria C. Woodhull's account of it is 'at once a truth and a falsehood.' As for Theodore Tilton's 'true story,' long since promised to the public, that also shall now be judged.

In a criticism of my own, from which I have already quoted, I said two months ago that Mrs. Woodhull's statement must be accepted as substantially true, for of the six persons on whose authority it was told, not one had uttered a word of direct denial. I have now in my possession two letters from Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis—both dated at Paris, one the 20th of November and the other the 28th—showing that I was mistaken. But a mere extract from one of these letters had been set afloat in the newspapers, and had at last become so tortured by a change of names that, as I saw it, I knew it must be either a falsehood or a forgery. Mrs. Davis' first letter is this:

PARIS, November 20.

TO JUDGE—

Dear Friend—Yours, with its astounding contents, is just received. Thanks for your consideration

In relation to the Tilton *versus* Beecher affair I have only this to say: I was *never* on any terms of intimacy in the family of either party. I never visited at Mr. Tilton's but once in my life, and that was *ten years* ago, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. A year or two since I called at Mr. Tilton's house for some books which I had lent Mr. Tilton. I then saw Mrs. Tilton for ten or fifteen minutes. I have met



Mrs. Tilton two or three times at the houses of mutual friends, but at no time has there ever been the slightest approach to a confidential conversation between us. Nor have I ever even insinuated that there had been. If Mrs. T. has ever, in my presence, spoken of Mr. Beecher, it has been in terms of respect as a man of honor and her pastor.

I did believe that V. C. Woodhull was going to do a great work for woman. I am grieved that she has failed in what she gave promise of doing.

I am writing in great haste, and must be very brief, that my letter may go to England to-night by a friend, and so reach you at the earliest hour, and set your mind at rest that I could never have originated or spread this scandal.

Yours very truly,

P. W. DAVIS.

#### COMMENTS.

[A letter differing somewhat from this, but evidently having the same source, went the rounds of the press in December. At that time I pronounced it, so far as it denies the truth of my statement, as false, and I now re-affirm that I have good reasons for stating that this letter has been "doctored" by Mrs. Davis' friends since it was received. Mrs. Davis is an honorable, straight-forward woman, and will not consent to lie. Had I used her name in this connection against her expressed wish, which I have not, I am sure she would not deny it. Mrs. Davis knew that I intended to use the "Beecher corruption" to bring on the social revolution, and instead of endeavoring to dissuade, always encouraged me to do so. I therefore again repeat that I believe this letter is a forgery, and I know that at least one of the persons behind Mr. Clark believes it to be so. I shall never believe that Mrs. Davis will consent to have this stand as her letter until I either see her own handwriting to that effect or she tells me herself that it is so. I therefore call upon Mrs. Davis to state to me in writing, which I promise in advance to publish in the WEEKLY, the truth or falsity of this whole matter.

I know that this letter has been in the hands of Mr. Tilton as well as others from other persons whom I named as my authority; and I also know that had they contained the much-needed contradiction they would have been published authoritatively by him long since. Nevertheless, he took care to have it come to my ears that he had letters completely refuting my statements; but the perusal of the letters to and by others revealed this thin pretense. They perhaps question the language used, but not the thing stated. Now let this be disproved if it can be, by the publication of the original letters from Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Stanton; all others, as I believe, are forgeries.]

"According to the WOODHULL, she received a letter from Mrs. Davis in May, 1871, in which Mrs. D. said:

"I believe you are raised up of God to do a wonderful work, and I believe you will unmask the hypocrisy of a class that none others dare touch. God help you and save you. The more I think of that mass of Beecher corruption the more I desire its opening."

In Mrs. Davis' second note from Paris, she refers to her letter from which Mrs. Woodhull claimed to have taken this extract, and says:

"The reference in my letter I do not remember; but, if there, it was in allusion to statements made by them to me. But I think it was not there."

#### COMMENTS.

[Now, if Mrs. Davis wrote the above, which I do not believe she did, the following may refresh her memory:

HOME, Wednesday.

Dear Victoria—I have prepared the manuscript and returned it to Mr. Wood. There is a sentence missing at the end of Mrs. Stanton's address, which I have written in pencil. I think if the appendix was begun in the middle of the page it would look better. I wish that a dozen could be sent at once to Mrs. Emily Pitt Stevens, Pioneer, San Francisco, California. Pray ask Mr. Andrews, Col. Blood—any one who has time, to see that it comes out right this time. If he would send me a copy before the edition is struck off it would be a good thing.

It seems to me, on the whole, that it will not be best to send the platform out in this edition—that is, to bind it up with it. The appendix closes properly with the winter's work. The platform belongs to another season.

How I wish, dear, you could be here a little while, it is so quiet and peaceful. I wonder I ever want to go anywhere—into the turmoil and strife of life.

I thought of you half of last night, dreamed of you and prayed for you.

I believe you are raised up of God to do a wonderful work, and I believe that you will unmask the hypocrisy of a class that none others dare touch. God help you and save you. The more I think of that mass of Beecher corruption the more I desire its opening.

I wish you would send me the names of the two kept women on the platform of Boston. I will not use them till you give me leave, but it will help me to act as I must.

I suppose you have seen the scrap I inclose; at all events, it's best you should be armed at all points.

If Mr. Andrews will give an hour or two to that book it will give me rest. Kind regards to him and Jennie.

Ever yours lovingly,  
PROVIDENCE, May 29, 1871.

Immediately after the Washington Convention in January, 1871, Mrs. Davis began the preparation of "The Twenty Years' History of the Woman Suffrage Movement," which was published under the supervision of WOODHULL & CLAFLIN by their printer. This letter refers to that work and was written in May after the Convention in Apollo Hall, and if I remember rightly, was the first one received from her on her return home after that convention.

Who can read this letter, the original of which in her own

handwriting and bearing her own signature, I happen still to have, and believe that Paulina Wright Davis ever wrote the first letter in the *Thunderbolt*, pretending to be from her. I will not attempt here to show the inconsistencies of the several statements contained in the letter dated Paris, November 20, 1872, which that of May, 1871, does not refute, since I have no excuse to review Mrs. Davis until I am satisfied that she has denied something. But I may consistently show the disparity between such points of the two letters as their own language involves. "I did believe that V. C. Woodhull was going to do a great work for woman; I am grieved that she has failed in what she gave promise of doing." Now, what was that work? Her letter to me fully explains. "I believe you are raised up of God to do a wonderful work; and I believe that you will unmask the hypocrisy of a class that none other dare touch. God help and save you. The more I think of that mass of Beecher corruption the more I desire its opening." It seems clear that she conceived the great work that I was to do was the very thing I have done and the very thing that Mrs. Davis desired should be done. Where, then, have I failed to do what she believed I was raised up of God to do? And can Mrs. Davis be grieved because I have opened just what she desired should be opened, which "none other dare touch?"

And she was thinking more and more of "that mass of Beecher corruption." Now, what did that mass consist of? A mass means more than one thing of one kind, and Mrs. Davis is a careful writer, never writing one thing and meaning another. When she said "that mass of Beecher corruption" she meant just what I have stated that she said to me she learned from Mrs. Tilton, not only about herself, but all that has more recently come to the light of day, by the publication of Tilton's letter to Bowen regarding a member of his own family, which is the foundation for the statement by Mrs. Tilton, that she had recently learned that Mr. Beecher had had intercourse under most extraordinary circumstances with another person. What those extraordinary circumstances were, may be learned by referring to Tilton's letter to Bowen. In Mr. Bowen's own language, "He took her in his arms by force, threw her down upon the sofa, accomplished his devilry," and left her \* \* \*

I repeat that the first knowledge I had of the Beecher-Tilton matter was imparted to me by Mrs. Davis at my office, 44 Broad street, where she called on her way over from Mrs. Tilton's, and related to me what she had just heard from her. But she told me nothing of Mr. Bowen. Whatever I know of him I learned much later, from Mr. Tilton himself. Neither did Mrs. Stanton say anything to me about the Bowen affair, and when I published my first intimation in the *World* and *Times* that "I knew a clergyman of eminence in Brooklyn who lives in concubinage with the wife of another clergyman of almost equal eminence," I meant Mr. Beecher and Mr. Tilton. Had I known at that time that Bowen was mixed up in the muddle I should have used it, because he had just made a furious and unwarrantable assault upon me in a leading editorial in the *Independent*. Mrs. Davis, I am certain, did not originate this scandal, but that I first heard some of the particulars from her I have ample proof, which will be advanced should a denial from her ever make it necessary. But I wish parenthetically again to state my position regarding Mrs. Tilton. I conceive that Mrs. Tilton's love for Mr. Beecher was her true marriage, and that her marriage to Mr. Tilton, while loving Mr. Beecher, is prostitution. If I have any cause to criticize her, it is for consenting to remain the legal wife of Mr. Tilton. As I said in the original article, Mrs. Tilton is really far advanced in the principles of social freedom, as I learned from Mr. Tilton himself.

In view of all this, can anybody believe what Mr. Clark infers from the pretended letters of Mrs. Davis that "Mrs. Woodhull is flatly denied." If there is a denial it is Davis against Davis. Besides this, I have a recent letter from Providence, from one who knows some of Mrs. Davis' friends, which says: "There are not a few of her friends who do not credit the authority of the letter."

"As far, then, as Woodhull has given Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis for authority in the Beecher-Tilton Scandal, she is fairly and flatly denied.

"The position, however, of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is quite different. At Lewiston, Maine, she undoubtedly 'denounced' Mrs. Woodhull's story, as the newspapers declared at the time; and Theodore Tilton holds a letter from her, in which she declines to stand in the precise attitude portrayed by Mrs. Woodhull. Yet an excellent lady, whose letter I have traced to its source, declared in the *Hartford Times* soon after Mrs. Stanton was interviewed in Maine, that she "had charged Mr. Beecher, to parties residing in Philadelphia and known to the correspondent, with very much the same offense of which Mrs. Woodhull speaks." This testimony is confirmed by Edward M. Davis, Esq., the disciple and son-in-law of the venerable Lucretia Mott, and by Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, who asserts that Mrs. Stanton whispered the scandal to her "a year and a half ago," and said "the Woodhull knew all about it." At Rochester, not long since, Mrs. Stanton publicly refused to deny anything; and, last of all, she has recently sent to me, through a mutual friend, this word: "ASSURE MR. CLARK THAT I CARE MORE FOR JUSTICE THAN FOR BEECHER." Mrs. Stanton, in short, has been somewhat perverted by Woodhull, and denies the perversion."

#### COMMENTS.

[Why has the part played by Mrs. Stanton been so niggardly treated by Mr. Clark? It seems to me that she is of sufficient importance to have received much greater considera-

tion. Or does Mr. Clark know that too many people have learned the same facts from her that I learned? People in California and Chicago, as well in Philadelphia and Iowa, testify to the same things. Mr. Clark says I have lied. In what, Mr. Clark? pray inform me. And if I have lied, do you mean to also say that Mrs. Stanton has lied? But why does Mr. Clark say, "At Lewiston, Maine, she undoubtedly denounced Mrs. Woodhull's story," when he knows that she has denied that telegraphic statement of "two clergymen."

The following was published in the WEEKLY of Feb. 15: The following we clip from the *Springfield Republican's* Boston letter:

"Mrs. Stanton, by the way, has disclosed a curious fact about the dispatch from Lewiston, Maine, sent all over the country, some months since, to contradict Mrs. Woodhull's Beecher slander on Mrs. Stanton's authority. She never authorized such a dispatch, and asserts that the two clergymen at Lewiston who called on her to talk about the matter, quite misrepresented what she said to them. Without going into the general question of fact, it is understood that Mrs. Stanton's correction of Mrs. Woodhull's account referred only to some expressions of her own there quoted, and she expressly disclaims any statement that Mrs. Woodhull's story was "untrue in every particular," which the Lewiston dispatch made Mrs. Stanton say, but which she never has said."

There has been a great deal said by the members of Plymouth Church about a letter from Mrs. Stanton in the hands of Mr. Tilton, which they claim is parallel with the Lewiston telegraph dispatch. Now that Mrs. Stanton has said that "two clergymen" stated untruth in the Lewiston dispatch, will the above-mentioned members please publish the letter, so that the public may see if they too have not, in their zeal for Mr. Beecher, gone as far beyond the truth as their Lewiston friends?

It will also be remembered that in the "Justitia" letter published in the *Hartford Times*, and dated November 25, 1872, the writer, in speaking of the reason that this alleged denial could not have been written by her, said: "I will tell you, Mr. Editor; simply because Mrs. Stanton dare not imperil her own reputation for veracity; for she has herself charged Mr. Beecher to parties residing in this city and known to me, the writer, and elsewhere, with very much the same offenses of which Mrs. Woodhull speaks."

In direct connection with the above, we find the following in the *Patriot*, of Chariton, Iowa:

"In the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* Mrs. Amelia Bloomer says: In the general condemnation of Mrs. Woodhull for publishing the scandal told to her, the question of its truth or falsity is in a great measure lost sight of. A. B. does not believe that Mrs. Woodhull manufactured these stories; and now that the thing is out, she would like to see 'the Beecher-Tilton Scandal' tried on its merits. One year and a half ago this scandal was whispered in the ears of A. B. by one of the parties given as authority, by 'the Woodhull,' and the one so whispering gave Mr. Tilton himself as her authority. She further said that 'the Woodhull' knew all about it, and threatened its publication. This agrees, as far as it goes, with the statement of Woodhull, and proves she did not get up the story for the purpose of 'blackmailing.' A. B. has kept this scandal to herself, and never would have revealed her knowledge if it had not come so fully before the public. While deploring, for the sake of all parties concerned, for the sake of the church, for the sake of decency and good morals, that it has ever come to the light, she hopes, now it is out, that truth will be elicited and justice done—that the chief actors may receive their share of punishment, instead of being shielded from censure, while the tale-bearer alone is condemned."

It is useless to add more to this. Neither of these refer in the slightest manner to the solution of the matter by the Bowen affair; nor are they based upon "rumors" or "hallucinations." It is preposterous simply, to attempt to evade the fact that Mr. Tilton is the authority to more than me for the details of the Beecher-Tilton, not the Beecher-Bowen, Scandal. I have only to ask if Mrs. Stanton could have denied the truth of my statement regarding Mrs. Tilton, would she not have done it long ago? Everybody must unhesitatingly answer yes. But instead of this, her letter to Laura Curtis Bullard, which Mr. Tilton has in his possession, only qualifies the language used, but not the thing said. I believe she claims she did not say that Mr. Tilton called Mr. Beecher a damned lecherous scoundrel.

I am satisfied to let it remain as Mr. Clark concluded, "Mrs. Stanton, in short, has been somewhat perverted by Woodhull, but denies the perversion."

"THEODORE TILTON'S LETTER TO HIS 'COMPLAINING FRIEND:'"

One of the strangest epistles on record, and one which every careful reader was immediately obliged to record as a negative confession of much that Mrs. Woodhull asserted.

"174 LIVINGSTONE ST., BROOKLYN, Dec. 27, 1872.—My complaining Friend—Thanks for your good letter of bad advice. You say, 'How easy to give the lie to the wicked story and thus end it forever.' But stop and consider. The story is a whole library of statements—a hundred or more—and it would be strange if some of them were not correct, though I doubt if any are. To give a general denial to such an encyclopedia of assertions would be as vague and irrelevant as to take up the *Police Gazette*, with its twenty-four pages of illustrations, and say, 'This is all a lie.' So extensive a libel requires (if answered at all), a special denial of its several parts; and furthermore, it requires, in this particular case, not only a denial of things misstated, but a truthful explanation of other things that remain unstated and in mystery. In other words, the false story (if met at all) should be confronted and confounded by the true one. Now, my friend, you urge me to speak; but when the truth is a sword, God's mercy sometimes commands it sheathed. If you think I do not burn



to defend my wife and little ones, you know not the fiery spirit within me. But my wife's heart is more a fountain of charity, and quenches all resentments. She says: 'Let there be no suffering save to ourselves alone,' and forbids a vindication to the injury of others. From the beginning she has stood with her hand on my lips, saying, 'Hush!' So when you prompt me to speak for her, you countervail her more Christian mandate of silence. Moreover, after all, the chief victim of the public displeasure is myself alone; and so long as this is happily the case, I shall try, with patience, to keep my answer within my own breast, lest it shoot forth like a thunderbolt through other hearts.

"Yours truly,  
THEODORE TILTON."

MR. TILTON'S "THUNDERBOLT" HAS COME!

I have tapped the mysterious cloud in which it lay sheathed; and if it now "shoots" through any "hearts," let their owners remember the danger of conspiring against the most sacred rights of an American citizen!

I will remark, at this point, that the defense which Mr. Tilton prepared against Mrs. Woodhull—which he indirectly promised to the public, and then "concluded to withhold"—is a thick, heavy pile of manuscript, written on foolscap, and bound in flexible black leather. It has every appearance of elaboration—being erased in parts and rewritten—and is very circumstantial. How this "true story" came into my possession is of no consequence to the public, but can easily be ascertained in the courts, if any of the specially interested parties should have the temerity to press an investigation. I shall give the substance of it, but as briefly as possible, and chiefly, though not wholly, in my own language. Here, then, is

THEODORE TILTON'S "TRUE STORY."

He asserts that, in the fall of 1870—Mrs. Tilton having just returned to her home from a watering-place—she was visited by Mr. Beecher; and that on this occasion the pastor of Plymouth Church unbridled his fiery passions, and besought of Mrs. Tilton the most intimate relationship accorded by her sex. Such warmth of pastoral attention was declined by Mrs. Tilton—not with the loud anger of ostentatious virtue, but with the mature sadness of common sense. The good lady was surprised, and the true wife reported the occurrence to her husband. Greatly angered and grieved, he requested her to make a memorandum of it. She did so; and I give her own words, literally, as they were written:

"Yesterday afternoon my friend and pastor, Henry Ward Beecher, solicited me to become his wife in all the relations which that term implies."

In his manuscript book Mr. Tilton comments, with some evidence of pride, upon the delicate and skillful manner in which Mr. Beecher's hideous overtures were here expressed. Mrs. Tilton's language is striking, and is apt to impress itself on the reader's memory."

COMMENTS.

[As a correction to this introduction to the "true story," I ask Mr. Tilton to publish to the world a certain letter received from Mrs. Tilton, during her absence from Brooklyn at "a watering-place," in the summer of 1871, and refresh his own memory somewhat about the facts therein treated of. I remember them very distinctly. Perhaps he will accommodate Mr. Clark with the loan of that letter. Will Mr. Clark please manage to steal that letter if Mr. Tilton will not loan it? I assure you that it will give a great deal of light as to my truth or falsity; and if Mr. Tilton will not loan you the letter, and you cannot manage to steal it, please ask him if that letter did not state that Mrs. Tilton said she had been reading "Griffith Gaunt," and that night, while on her knees till midnight, she had awakened to the horrible crime she had committed against her husband. I am sorry to be obliged to jog Mr. Tilton's memory on these points; but Mr. Clark might also ask him if, in that letter, she did not state that she felt that she had been divorced from him, and that she could never live with him again unless they were remarried. Again, it may not be invidious to inquire, What was the cause of the misunderstanding between Mr. and Mrs. Tilton, which could cause Mrs. Tilton to feel divorced? Surely the refusal to accept Mr. Beecher's kind proposals could not have been a cause for divorce! Such faithfulness is generally repaid by other treatment than this. But let us have the letter. Do not let this rest upon my word merely when so good proof exists. If Mr. Tilton prepares a "true story" and permits it to be stolen, let it be a "true one," not a partly true one, but a wholly true one—a half-truth always being a lie.]

"At the time Mrs. Tilton's memorandum was written, Mr. Tilton was the editor of the New York Independent and of the Brooklyn Union, receiving \$5,000 a year from each of these sources, and about \$5,000 more from still another source, and was in most intimate business relations with Mr. Henry C. Bowen, the eminent publisher, and a fellow member of Plymouth Church. As Mr. Tilton was writing his "true story," he could hardly be blamed for a yearning look backward at those halcyon days of the Bowen flesh-pots.

About six weeks after Mr. Beecher's pastoral interview with Mrs. Tilton, the nature of it was explained by Mr. Tilton to his friend and patron, Mr. Bowen. The confidence was natural; for Mr. Tilton affirms that, during a whole previous year, Mr. Bowen had been denouncing Mr. Beecher as "A CORRUPTOR OF BROOKLYN SOCIETY," and charging him, in unmistakable terms, with "NUMEROUS ADULTERIES AND RAPES." Mr. Tilton justifies his own terrible statement, at this juncture, by the affidavit of another gentleman (whose name has thus far been kept out of the scandal), but who swears that on two occasions he had also heard Mr. Bowen impute these crimes to Mr. Beecher. Again, during a summer respite at his country seat in Woodstock, Conn., Mr. Bowen had written a letter to Mr. Tilton, condemning Mr. Beecher more severely than ever, and bitterly accusing himself of infidelity to his own conscience in having so long de-

layed an exposure of so base a scoundrel. He added that he should publish Beecher's guilt on returning to the city. Mr. Bowen failed to keep the promise; but he still vented his indignation in private to Mr. Tilton, who finally unbosomed the story of his own household.

Thereupon Mr. Bowen became unusually excited. He said the time had come to act. He urged Mr. Tilton to write instantly to Mr. Beecher, demanding his retirement from Plymouth Church and his withdrawal from Brooklyn. "Write that letter," exclaimed Mr. Bowen, "and let me carry it to the scoundrel for you." Impelled by such eloquent friendship, Mr. Tilton says he wrote the following note:

"HENRY W. BEECHER:

"Sir—For reasons which you well understand, and which I need not therefore recite, I advise and demand that you quit Plymouth pulpit forever, and leave Brooklyn as a residence."

"THEODORE TILTON."

The note was then handed to Mr. Bowen, according to his vehement solicitation, for delivery to Mr. Beecher.

In Mrs. Woodhull's account of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal she cites a Frank Moulton as one of her witnesses. This gentleman's name appears also in Mr. Tilton's manuscript-book. He is a member of Plymouth Church. He has long been Mr. Tilton's most intimate friend. He was called into the difficulty at the very first step. A day or two after Mr. Beecher's visit to Mrs. Tilton in the coveted light of a "wife," Mr. Tilton consulted Mr. Moulton, it appears, and placed Mrs. Tilton's memorandum in his hands. And now, after sending the note of "advice and demand" to Mr. Beecher, Mr. Tilton imparted the circumstance to Mr. Moulton.

"But, Tilton," said Mr. Moulton at once, "did Bowen sign that letter with you?"

"No," replied Mr. Tilton; "I signed it alone."

"Then you are a ruined man!"

How Mr. Frank Moulton acquired "the gift of prophecy," we need not pause to inquire. But that he understands the "pillars" of Plymouth Church was soon proved. For when Mr. Tilton's friend, Bowen, reached Brooklyn Heights with the letter which he had so earnestly requested to bear to "that scoundrel, Beecher," he certainly delivered it with remarkable suavity, under the circumstances. Said he:

"Mr. Beecher—a letter from Tilton. Tilton is your implacable enemy, Mr. Beecher, but I will be your friend."

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to explain Mr. H. C. Bowen's motive in this unparalleled act of "strategy," not to say treachery. But not long afterward it became known to the "newspaper world" that Mr. Bowen had concluded to dispense with the services of Mr. Tilton on the Independent. To kill off a useless friend, and at the same time grapple a useful enemy with "hooks of steel," is sometimes an object to a shrewd man of business.

Some eight months after the commencement of the Beecher-Tilton differences, an investigation and a storm were thought to be brooding over Plymouth Church; and Mr. Beecher, fearing that Mr. Tilton's memorandum (which he had heard of) might be brought to light, made bold to visit her in Mr. Tilton's absence. Although informed that she was sick in bed, he insisted on seeing her, and was finally admitted to her room. Mr. Tilton's "true story" declares that the great preacher drew a doleful picture of his troubles. He pleaded with Mrs. Tilton that he was on the brink of ruin, and that she alone could save him. Mrs. Tilton finally sat up in bed, with book and paper in hand, and wrote at Mr. Beecher's dictation a few lines, the point of which is that in all his intercourse with her he "had conducted himself as a gentleman and a Christian." Flushed with success, the Plymouth shepherd then pressed her to add that the troublesome memorandum in Moulton's hands had been wrested from her when she was "ill," and in "an irresponsible condition." She gave an oral promise also, as Mr. Tilton adds, that she would not appear against Mr. Beecher in any coming investigation, unless her husband should move in the matter. In "the Woodhull's" scandal, she speaks of Mrs. Tilton's "sweet conciseness." Much of it seems also evident in Mr. Tilton's "true story."

On Mr. Tilton's return home, Mrs. Tilton again told him what had happened. He assures the reader that he would now have borne the humility of his wife's merciful retraction, had it not been for the concluding portion, which apparently placed him in the position of having compelled her to indite her first memorandum. Mr. Tilton's proud spirit, outraged at the possibility of this appearance of vulgar malice on his part—or even blackmail itself—had recourse at once to his unfailing social strategist, Mr. Moulton. He urged Mr. Moulton to hasten to Mr. Beecher, and force him to give up Mrs. Tilton's last paper.

Mr. Moulton went; and he had a long, private conversation with his beloved pastor. He requested and insisted that the document should be given up. Among other things he reminded Mr. Beecher that the statement which he had just worried out of Mrs. Tilton was false on its face—as the lady was known to have been not "ill" and "in an irresponsible condition" when her original memorandum was made, but uncommonly well, as Mr. Beecher remembered—she having just returned home from a summer resort. Mr. Moulton further elucidated to his minister that Mrs. Tilton was now "ill" and in an "irresponsible condition," instead of on the former occasion.

Mr. Moulton's persuasions were not easily answered, though Mr. Beecher still held on to the paper. As the discussion sharpened, however, and Mr. Moulton evinced that he was not to be trifled with, Mr. Beecher finally asked him what he would do with the paper if it should be placed in his hands. "I will keep the first memorandum and this one together," said Mr. Moulton, "and thus prevent you and Tilton from harming each other."

"But," said Mr. Beecher, imploringly, "Frank, can I, can I confide in you? Will you protect the paper?"

"Yes," was the reply; "nobody shall have it; I will take care of it."

"How?" asked Mr. Beecher.

"In every way," replied Mr. Moulton; and then, put-

ting his hand on a pistol in his vest pocket, he added: "with this, if necessary."

Mr. Beecher thereupon gave up the document, and Mr. Moulton has faithfully kept his promise. But he returned at once to Mr. Tilton, and made a full, circumstantial record of the conference with Mr. Beecher. Therecord was written in short-hand, but was afterward rendered into ordinary English, and it now occupies several pages of Mr. Tilton's "true story," and is highly dramatic reading."

COMMENTS.

[Here we have as tangled a web as was ever unraveled. But does it explain away the original statement upon these facts? Read both carefully and then consider the following which I purposely omitted stating at the time, as I had no desire to introduce Mr. Beecher to the public in any light other than was necessary for my purpose. But the above is given to the public, as will be believed, by Mr. Tilton's consent, and I am therefore justified in saying that what is here called his "true story" differs in some material points from the story he told me, which was this:

He said after he had learned of the facts, and while Mrs. Tilton was still dangerously ill from the premature birth of a child induced by her treatment, that he met Mr. Beecher at Frank Moulton's and there confronted him; that they endeavored to compel Mr. Beecher to terms, and that the interview was suddenly terminated by Mr. Beecher begging to be excused for a few moments until he could consult a friend. This was granted. He left them, returning in half an hour or so, his manner entirely changed. His suing for mercy was turned into defiance. He simply rang the door bell and said, "Gentlemen, I do not see fit to prolong this interview; I have got my vindication in my pocket," and turned upon his heel and incontinently left.

He said both he and Frank were utterly astonished at the conduct of Mr. Beecher, but it was fully explained when he returned to his home, where Mrs. Tilton, in deep distress, stated that Mr. Beecher had been there, and that she had signed some paper she scarcely knew what, but she was afraid it was something that might do harm. It was then that Mr. Moulton went to Mr. Beecher, and in the manner that I have already described demanded the document. No such rendition as the one given in the "true story" was ever given to me either by Mr. Moulton or Mr. Tilton, and it is entirely inconsistent with his conduct toward Mrs. Tilton, and his grief and rage before me, and especially his conduct when he took me to ride to the grave where was buried, as he said, the fruits of Mr. Beecher's intimacy with his wife, at which time, sitting on the Battle Hill Monument, he went anew over the whole story, including the stamping of the wedding ring into the soil of the grave. It is also utterly inconsistent with the sentiment of the poem in which is "She, too, false like the rest." And what was the great grief that caused him to walk the streets of Brooklyn the whole night inconsolable, as he has done night upon night either alone or with Mr. Moulton; and his constantly-expressed desire "to die, as he had nothing to live for in this world?" The purported faithfulness of Mrs. Tilton in saving Mr. Beecher from becoming an adulterer ought to have made Mr. Tilton extremely happy in her possession. Or was he distracted because she did resist the persuasions of Mr. Beecher? But I have no desire at this time to call attention to the other discrepancies between Mr. Tilton's statements to me and his "true story," except to say that my statement stands, made by me as I received it, fact after fact from Mr. Tilton himself, most of which were also confirmed by the several witnesses whom I have mentioned. Had Mr. Tilton never told the same story to others than to me, I might feel called upon to go into a detailed proof of the whole matter; but since he has so repeated it to a half-dozen persons whom I know, I do not think it necessary to refute his later and amended statement. The public will place it side by side with mine, and give due weight to the fact that the amended statement was prepared under the bias of an emergency which, perhaps, he did not contemplate when he made the former and unbiased statement to me and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Col. Mix and others; although I ought to say that Mr. Tilton always gave me to understand that he should be glad when the matter was out, but that he should not want to be the one to first move in it.]

"In due time Mr. Tilton became acquainted with Mr. Woodhull. He says he had previously declined an introduction to her; but met her accidentally one day in company with a mutual friend, and was presented to her. He afterward visited her at times, as did most of the other men and women in New York who were connected with the Woman Suffrage movement. On one occasion of a visit at her office she suddenly seized a copy of the World, and, thrusting it before him, pointed to this passage in a letter she had written to that journal:

"I know a clergyman of eminence in Brooklyn, who lives in concubinage with the wife of another clergyman of equal eminence."

"Mr. Tilton," said Woodhull, "do you know whom that means?" "No." "It means you and Mr. Beecher."

Mr. Tilton claims that he said nothing, or almost nothing, in reply, but was simply thunderstruck. He instantly perceived that the woman had heard, in an exaggerated form, rumors that had been traveling about for a year or two, and he feared that in her possession they might become very dangerous. He soon left Mrs. Woodhull, and sought, of course, the Napoleonic Moulton. The result was the deliberate plan of a campaign to get thoroughly on the right side of Woodhull, keep there, and thus close her mouth. He then called upon her frequently—sometimes in company with Moulton, sometimes alone; took her part publicly, and de-



fended her character. He sometimes saw her in such exaltations as he considered states of trance, and her husband in affinity, Colonel Blood, used to read to him extracts from the heavens, which Victoria was said to have received (often the night before) from "the spirits." Mr. Tilton does not deny that he honestly considered Mrs. Woodhull a remarkable woman, with a "mission;" and, if mistaken, he naturally contends that Mr. Beecher, his sister Mrs. Hooker, Mrs. Stanton and many others "trained in the same regiment" of erring mortality."

[Mr. Tilton did not meet me accidentally in company with a mutual friend, but he came to my office with Stephen Pearl Andrews and was introduced to me, and this was the only time I ever saw him previous to that when he called with the *World*. To others he has said that upon that occasion I sent for him to come to see me. In his "true story" he has neglected to do this, and he does so because he knows it is not true. I neither sent for him nor thrust the *World* before him when he did come. He came of his own accord with the article in question from the *World*, and asked me: "Whom do you mean by that?" But the idea that an exaggerated rumor that had been traveling about for a year or two, which he could have instantly corrected if false, but which he did not even attempt to do, might become very dangerous in my hands, would be preposterous if it were not ridiculous. I do not think any logical mind can read this part of the "true story" and not conclude, if it be true, that there is still another true story which he at least has not told, and that the magnified proportion of the campaign which was planned to capture me is only to be believed upon the theory that what I knew, which it was necessary should be kept quiet, was not exaggerated rumors merely.

It must be remembered that this occurred in the spring of 1871, soon after the May Convention in Apollo Hall. It will also be seen by reference to the "true story," that this imbroglio with Mrs. Tilton began "in the fall of 1870;" that it was "six weeks" thereafter that Mr. Tilton explained the matter to Mr. Bowen, after which the other facts occurred. But it was "eight months after the commencement of the Beecher-Tilton differences" that Mr. Beecher visited Mrs. Tilton and got the letter from her. Now this would carry the time forward at least to August, 1871, and yet I am found possessed of "exaggerated rumors" regarding it in May of this same year, before they happened, which "had already been traveling about for a year or two." Figures are dangerous things with which to attempt to lie, because they always mean definite things and the same things to all people. In constructing a "true story," Mr. Tilton should have made more careful use of such a dangerous agent. Of course he presumes that he can place his own word in opposition to mine, and be believed; but he is not egotist enough to imagine he can arrange figures to suit himself and be able to palm them off as correct when any one is liable to prove them. The failure to keep his time correctly, to my mind, will invalidate his "true story" to no inconsiderable extent, in the minds even of those who may wish to accept and believe his false one. Mr. Clark ought to have been clear enough to have detected this discrepancy in the "True" Statement.]

"On statements furnished by Mrs. Woodhull and Colonel Blood, Mr. Tilton finally made the last bold stroke to win the undying gratitude of 44 Broad street by giving his name and the literary finish of his pen to the "Biography of Victoria C. Woodhull." He was mistaken, he now thinks, in that person. With "the Woodhull" "gratitude" is nothing, "principle" everything; and principle in her case, as in Vanderbilt's, is to "carry a point." Mr. Tilton had a terrible warning of this phase of her character, when some of his lady acquaintances and special friends deemed it necessary, in the early part of 1872, to disown Mrs. Woodhull in the arena of Woman's Rights on account of her social doctrines. The Woodhull instantly flanked the movement by sending the ladies printed slips of their own private histories (in an article called "Tit for Tat"), declaring that if they should disgrace her for teaching "social freedom," she would print the article in her *WEEKLY*, and they should sink with her for practicing the theory."

## COMMENTS.

[I scarcely know in what manner justly to characterize the misconstruction contained in the above paragraph. To properly show all the circumstances involved would require an entire paper, which is impossible here; but as it refers to circumstances that have been variously and widely commented on, and in a manner most prejudicial to me, I feel that I ought not to pass them without the notice they deserve.

Mr. Tilton upon several public occasions, long before my publication of the scandal, regretted that he had written my biography, in a manner and with explanations that perhaps ought at the time to have received notice. The statement here, however, is very guarded, compared with some others he has made. Just previous to the writing of that biography, The Victoria League had been formed, and it was found necessary to put some authoritative statement before the world regarding my past life in the form of an autobiography. I put Col. Blood in possession of the material, and requested him to arrange it for me. While he was doing this, Mr. Tilton came forward with the proposition that this must be his work, and he insisted so strenuously on performing it that I consented, and he did it. But he did not take the manuscript prepared by Col. Blood as his only authority. All the important or seemingly extravagant statements he took special pains to verify by other authority, while all the "finish," and that which upon its face is his own, and which really gives it all its importance, was the

result of his own observation and was his own judgment. He may, for aught I know, have written that biography for some motive unknown to me; but it is absurd to pretend that it was to keep me from publishing the scandal, the basis for the whole of which, as I have already shown according to his figures, did not at that time exist.

But what, as early as the Cincinnati Convention, had occurred to cause him to change his judgment of me? He had found me a "truthful person," and one with whom he was proud to be known or connected. Something must have compelled a change. He has stated on some occasions that it was the "Tit for Tat" above referred to. What was that article? I will state just what it was, and thus at one and the same time correct the erroneous version given above, and show that it was not the cause of the breach between Mr. Tilton and me. A number of women, all of whom belonged to "one set," had for two years taken every occasion to let their long and loose tongues wag in defaming me. I determined to stop it. I grouped them together in an article which I had put in type, sending a proof of it to each of the persons involved. In the next issue of the *WEEKLY* I wrote an editorial, in which I faithfully promised them if the blackguarding of me did not cease I should publish the article.

Not one of these, however, was "some of his lady acquaintances and special friends," who disowned me "in the arena of Woman's Rights" "on account of my social theories," since none of them had ever taken any part with the wing of suffragists in which I labored. Nor, was it because they disowned me as a suffragist that I prepared the article, as Mr. Tilton's "true story" relates? And nobody knows this better than Mr. Tilton himself. He knows it was because I was constantly belied by them as to what Free Love meant to me in practice. The editorial to which I refer sufficiently indicates this, and it was not misunderstood by any of them at whom it was written. I have had no occasion to publish it.]

"This generalship may be defended by the old proverb that "anything is fair in love and war;" but such a blow "under the belt" was severely rebuked by Mrs. Stanton, and was regarded with reasonable terror by Mr. Tilton. He new became fully conscious of Mrs. Woodhull's capacity of destruction, and retired completely from her circle. The impending "crack of doom" was not to be hushed up with "gratitude." Mr. Tilton had himself confided the substance of his "true story" to Mrs. Woodhull, and knew that so much of his fate was in her hands. Still, he affirms that he was astonished beyond measure when she at last magnified it into the unearthly proportions of the Beecher-Tilton Scandal."

## COMMENTS.

[What does Mr. Tilton mean when he says, "I was severely rebuked by Mrs. Stanton"? I have Mrs. Stanton's letter to me regarding it; but when he says it is in the form of a rebuke he only again willfully perverts it. I never received a kinder note from Mrs. Stanton than that one, and I therefore hurl this utter disregard for truth in his teeth as another evidence that he has "a constitutional disregard for truth which is ever showing itself even when an opposite course would serve him better."

Now, as to the "terror" it inspired in Mr. Tilton, and "the terrible warning" it was to him, and his "retiring completely from her circle," I am perfectly conscious that he was terrified by it, since he came with it to me and said Laura Curtis-Bullard had just left his office, having come there with the article which he held in his hand. He said, "Strike out this portion," pointing to a part of it, "and I will help you kill the rest." But he played none of the "heroics" with which he has been in the habit of relating this interview, which he says occurred in his office instead of mine—only another evidence of his constitutional defect. Theodore Tilton never attempted heroics with me but once, and he found they did not have the desired effect, and he at once and forever abandoned their use; but he has become so accustomed to them when others are involved, that when I am not present he forgets himself and assumes them in things which involved me.

"He had become fully conscious of Mrs. Woodhull's capacity for destruction and retired completely from her circle," and this he presents as the cause of the breach between us to which I refer in the opening of this case. But before proceeding to perform a disagreeable task, I must premise by saying I had hoped that selfish personal considerations on the part of Mr. Tilton, if no higher motive, would have for ever saved me from the necessity of doing this; but since he seems to court distinction, let him have it to his heart's content.

I therefore state, as emphatically as I can, that it was not "Tit for Tat" that caused him to "retire from her circle." At the time he came to me with that article I had not seen him for six weeks, and I should not have seen him then had it not been for "reasonable terror" that something regarding a particular friend of his which it contained was going to be made public. But he did call quite frequently after that, during the interval until the Cincinnati Convention. The day before he left to attend that Convention he called upon me for the last time.

He said he was "going to the Convention to report it for the *Tribune*."

I said, "Theodore you are lying again. You are going to Cincinnati to nominate Mr. Greeley, and I see, clairvoyantly, a coffin following you, in which you will be responsible for putting him, because it will result in his death."

He sat looking and listening to me, and for a long time never said a word; but finally, with a sad tenderness I shall never forget, rose and left me, and I have never spoken with him since. Up to that time he had never even hinted that he regretted his associations with me; but, on the contrary, always expressed a deep satisfaction regarding it, the reasons for which I have no desire to make public unless compelled, when I shall not hesitate to do so to the fullest extent.

But to return to the time prior to the "Tit for Tat" article. A goodly time before that, I was forced to the conclusion, in spite of all his efforts in behalf of reform, that his inspirations and mine were entirely dissimilar. I was absolutely absorbed in reform projects, and was indifferent to any and all who were not the same; and I could no longer afford to be annoyed in the manner in which I was annoyed by him. As he would not accept a verbal communication from me as meaning anything, I was finally compelled deliberately to write a formal letter, which I know was delivered to him, and a copy of which I now have before me, instructing him that his visits to me, both at my house and office, must be discontinued, plainly stating the reasons for so doing. They were not for any want of esteem and kind regard, because I had a regard amounting almost to affection for him. Besides, I had been his teacher in the principles of the new social dispensation, and I found elements in him that I was hopeful might make him the hero of that dispensation. That hope I never finally abandoned until a few days after the appearance of his letter to "my complaining friend." On Christmas day last I wrote him a final appeal endeavoring to rouse him to a sense of what he was losing, and to stimulate him, even at that late moment, to come forward and be the hero:

CHRISTMAS DAY, New York City, 1872.

Theodore—The spirit saith unto me, "Write:" "And the truth shall make you free,"—while anything less than that will add to the bondage of the present.

I told you, a year ago, that within six months you would fall away from me. "By all that's good, never!" you replied. Nevertheless the fall came!

I told you that you were going to lead your friend to his grave; you thought it would be to the Presidential chair. He lies buried—a victim to the ill-starred movement led off by you.

You became a champion of advanced freedom in your support of me; and your name was on the lips and treasured in the heart of every Radical in the world. You repudiated the course that had won this love, and neither Radical nor Conservative stands by you.

And now I say: There is a single course of redemption left you; and for your own sake I pray you heed it. Accept the situation. Stand by principle, and be not affrighted by public opinion.

You have the most glorious opportunity ever vouchsafed to man. Strike the hypocrite (if you will) the blow you have at your service; but put your loving, protecting arm about the angel whom he deceived. Dare to defend her freedom, and stand by her, not to the death, but to the new life.

Think not to gain what you desire, by catering to the hypocrisy, the poltroonery, the cowardice of the present; but strike for the glorious and redeemed souls of the near future, and become their hero.

VICTORIA.

Since then I am grieved to confess I have believed him lost, lost to the cause, lost to himself, and lost to all sense of honor and truth. I believed firmly that he would come forward as he had so often said he would, when the time should arrive, and stand by the cause. He knew that the statement of November 2d was to be published, and that I only wanted to receive the command of him whom I serve to publish it. Well do I remember an evening when he and I were discussing this very subject, that Col. Blood turned from the desk at which he was writing and said:

"Theodore, do you think you will have the courage to stand in the gap with us when that time shall come?"

He replied with the most extraordinary asseverations in the affirmative; and when the whole history of the incipency of this scandal shall come to be known, as it soon will, if justice cannot be forced without it, I fear that the once glorious spirit of Theodore Tilton will set in the mud. Nobody, not even those who are now apparently his best friends, will mourn for him more sincerely than I shall; and whatever they may pretend to him now, not one of them more deeply regrets his position than I do, and none would do more to save him than I would do, short of the sacrifice of truth, honor and justice. And in his soul Theodore Tilton knows this to-day; but he also knows that my sense of outraged justice could not be swerved to save my own life; and here I again say, there is still an avenue of escape for him. He knows what it is, but he will not avail himself of it. "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." Theodore Tilton rests under their ban. I know whereof I speak when I say that his affirmations "that he was astonished beyond measure" when the scandal appeared were of the same unapproachable acting, in which long practice has made him perfect, with which he received the announcement that the *Thunderbolt* had appeared; and the inspiration in both instances was the same—knowledge and expectation. Mr. Tilton did confide all the details of the Beecher-Bowen-Proctor Scandal to me, besides a dozen others equally astonishing and confounding; but those that I obtained from him in this way I have not used in my war upon social rottenness, neither shall unless compelled; but what I have used I was not indebted to his confidence for, since I wrung it from him, perhaps not so skillfully as he did the Bowen Scandal from the lady involved, nevertheless with sufficient adroit



ness to become fully possessed of it without being under any obligations to not disclose it."

Mr. Tilton having disclosed it to me, "knew so much of his fate was in her hands." Mr. Tilton could not have considered the force of those few words, otherwise he would never have used them. If his "true story" is really a true one, and the only true one, what had I to do with fate to him? How could I possibly have been able to do him harm by any use which I might make of the so-called facts of that story? It is one of the most difficult of roles to maintain to endeavor to tell a consistent stream of lies about any grave thing. A lie once told needs continual lies to sustain it; and people forget lies, and neglect to always tell the same one. The truth will sometimes slip out unwittingly. This instance is a singularly forcible illustration. My possession of the really true story he might consistently have considered as so much of his fate in my hands; but with his true story only he should have said so much of Mr. Beecher's fate in my hands. I have no doubt every person will at once perceive this. And with this I may close the analysis of the matter very nearly in the language of Mr. Clark with which he closes the presentation of his resume of the "true story":

Such is a careful summary of that "true story" which Theodore Tilton said he should try to keep within his own heart.

Changed, however, in this wise:

Such is the result of a hasty analysis of the whole story which, if Theodore Tilton did not desire made public, he should, from the outset, have confined within his breast.]

"AS FAR AS MR. BEECHER IS CONCERNED, it will instantly be seen that his virtue, at best, is not always the inclination of his own will. If Mrs. Woodhull has misrepresented him, and Mr. Tilton has turned her falsehood into truth, still it was only through Mr. Beecher's failure in carrying out an immoral purpose that Mrs. Woodhull's story is not correct. A correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial—who has evidently been admitted into some of the secrets of Mr. Tilton's foolscap volume, and at the same time employed to whitewash Mr. Beecher—declares that the "true story" embraces "a period of ten years," implicates "persons who have not publicly figured in it," and "elucidates some things not likely to be known till the Day of Judgment."

These stilted phrases have some foundation, though it would not be difficult for so plain a man as myself to bring that "Day of Judgment" close to hand, if necessary. I have no wish, however, to drag any cringing mortal before the public in mere wantonness—especially any woman. I regard Mr. Henry C. Bowen as Mr. Beecher's chief "supe" and conspirator, in combining with the wretched Jesuit of Protestantism, Anthony J. Comstock, to violate American liberty. From my position, Mr. Bowen deserves no mercy beyond the bare truth. In regard to other persons, I think the public have no special interest in them, with one exception.

#### COMMENTS.

[Now here the cause which makes the case hang fire in Brooklyn is at last reached. Mr. Clark could, if he saw fit, bring the day of judgment close to hand, but he has no wish to drag a cringing woman before the public. Had it been my desire, as the act has been generally interpreted, to destroy the usefulness of Mr. Beecher and to drive him from Plymouth Church, I could have made such use of the material in my possession as to have accomplished it. He could not have escaped under having me prosecuted on an impossible charge of obscenity. He would either have had to throw himself upon the Church and confessed or prosecuted me for libel, which I know very well he would never attempt to do so long as three witnesses now living should live. But such was not any part of my motives, and I only used such facts as I had good reasons for believing would not be very objectionable to any of the parties involved, Mr. Beecher alone excepted. And I know that, should he be compelled, as he would have been had Mr. Tilton acted well his part, to have acknowledged the whole matter, that Plymouth Church would be compelled to sustain or fall with him. Mr. Beecher did not hesitate to say that he knew of fifty members of his congregation who would stand by him in any event.

But the suppression policy can not succeed. Everything will eventually be made public. It has gone too far. All the facts are in the possession of too many persons, some of whom, I think, do wish to kill Mr. Beecher, and who will not hesitate to drag even a "cringing woman" before the public to do it. The only method of salvation, as I frankly informed Mr. Beecher, was to come at once to the front and say: "Well, this is true; and now what are you going to do about it."

But I frankly confess that I believe the ultimate fate of the now distressed woman, who every hour of her life stands in mortal dread of the facts coming before the public, would be much better if she were herself to come out and solve this whole matter. It will come some time, and the indications now are that it is not far off. There should be no more real disgrace attach to her about the affair, than there should be had she personally been injured in some other manner. No honest person could condemn her for any part she was compelled to play, and for the judgment of the dishonest none should trouble themselves. Therefore, the wise part is to at once ventilate this whole affair before its attempted suppression drags a half dozen other families into its warring vortex.]

"As I view the whole case, in all its bearings, I deem it right to say that Mr. Tilton claims that he has been violently hated by his wife's mother, Mrs. Morris—a lady who is definitely represented to me as insane.

This poor lady is said to have circulated, for many years, the most damaging reports against the character of her daughter, and against Mr. Beecher and Mr. Tilton. The earliest scandals concerning Mrs. Tilton and the Plymouth pastor are said to have proceeded from her. I must add, also, that a long time ago there were rumors, among the special acquaintances of the parties, that Mrs. Tilton was subject to the hallucination that some of Mr. Beecher's children were those of her own household. (But Mr. Tilton's narrative affords me no hint of this rumor.)

I think it was very unwise in Mr. Tilton to attempt to drag his mother-in-law into the controversy. But what must be said of the "rumors" among the special acquaintances of the parties about Mrs. Tilton's "hallucination"? Those strange rumors remind me at once of the finding of Moses in the bullrushes of the Nile, and of the immaculate conception of Jesus; and I have no doubt if Mr. Tilton's "true story" stands, that this last hallucination will pass into history and be accounted by the future as an equally marvelous example of the Special Providences of the God of the Christians.

But this hallucination, as I happen very well to know, did not extend to Mr. Tilton's brain, but in him it rather assumed the form of madness, venting itself in violence, especially upon the picture of one of the persons involved in the hallucination. Whatever milder forms it may now have assumed in him, I fear its former violence may cast as serious doubts upon the future divinity of this last manifestation as the skeptics of to-day throw around that of eighteen centuries ago.

What, however, must be the judgment of the future should it come to know that this paper, this *Thunderbolt*, was prepared in the rooms of the *Golden Age*; and when it shall come to be known that the letter of "my complaining friend," which called out the reply contained in the *Thunderbolt*, was actually written by the dictation of Theodore Tilton, and that at the time it was written he was preparing the way to publish in the *Golden Age* the whole of the "true story." I do not think I overstate it when I say that no such combination of hypocrisy, duplicity, falsehood and social irregularities ever existed as the future will show the Beecher-Tilton-Bowen-Proctor Scandal to have been; and I am ready to stake my future upon its being so.]

"And now

WHAT CONCLUSION IS TO BE DRAWN from Mr. Tilton's "thunderbolt" on one hand, and Mrs. Woodhull's vaunted "bombshell" on the other? I am sorry to say I have little confidence in the strict veracity of either account."

[But Mr. Clark, apparently unwittingly, has let the cat out of the bag, since does he not say, "Mr. Tilton's *Thunderbolt*?" That is sufficient. It cannot be Mr. Clark's *Thunderbolt* if it be Mr. Tilton's; and, moreover, does he not say that he has very little confidence in the strict veracity of it? And if he has as little in my bombshell, I can afford to wait yet a little longer. I know the truth will come out uppermost, and I court its coming. Almost everybody else who is concerned in the affair seems to be using the most superhuman exertions to "squelch" the whole thing. So much, at all events, would appear at present to stand in my favor; and those who have seen fit to daub me all over with contemptuous epithets, will have more cause to be ashamed of them in the future than I have now. I can afford to stand under the implication of having "belied Mrs. Davis," and of having "warped and stuffed out" Mrs. Stanton, because I know that

"Ever the right comes uppermost,  
And ever is justice done."]

"As for 'the Woodhull' there can be no doubt that she has belied Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis completely. This excellent lady did believe, to use her own language, "that V. C. Woodhull was going to do a great work for woman," and in that belief Mrs. Davis encouraged her by word and deed. About a year ago Mrs. Davis went to Europe, and as late as May of 1872, she seems to have retained an affectionate regard for Mrs. Woodhull. It is supposed that when "the Woodhull" printed her slips to use against those select advocates of Woman's Rights who wished to push her aside, one of the slips was sent abroad to Mrs. Davis; for Mrs. Woodhull has since published a letter (thought to be genuine) which can only be explained by some such cause. Here it is:

*My dear Victoria*—Driven to bay at last, you have turned, poor hunted child, and dealt a cruel blow on the weak instruments of men—such men as the editors of the *Herald*, *Tribune*, *Sun*, etc. Every one of the women you name has been hounded by these men, and now that it suits them they make cat's-paws of them to hunt you. The first time I ever saw Mrs. Phelps, I was told by a man that she was a woman of damaged reputation. T. W. Higginson said the same thing of Mrs. Blake in a meeting of ladies in Providence. I was urged to avoid these women, but it was not for me to make war on any one who would work for woman's freedom. They have not stood by me in my faith in you. But, dear child, I wish you had let them pass, and had taken hold of those men whose souls are black with crimes and who set up to be the censors of morality. They should be torn from their throne of the judgment of woman's morals, and made to shrink from daring to utter one word against any woman as long as they withhold justice from her. Men are the chief scandal-mongers of the age: it is they who import all the vile scandals of New York here, and so make society detestable. You are not befooled by them, hence you must be crucified.

God in his mercy pity you and give you grace, strength and wisdom to do your work aright. But do not again take hold of the 'cat's-paw'; exorcise the monkeys, the scandal-mongers, the base-hearted, cowardly betrayers of woman's confidence and honor. Give woman a fair field of equality, and then if she is weak, wicked and mean, let her bear her share of the odium.

"Ever yours,

PAULINA WRIGHT DAVIS.

"FLORENCE, Italy, May, 1872."

This letter—which I consider worthy the head and heart of any woman that ever lived—commits Mrs. Davis to the cause of social fair-play in the broadest sense. She has no fear, surely, for the "face of man;" and, as one man, I always take off my hat to such a woman. Yet Mrs. Davis flatly contradicts Mrs. Woodhull, and declares that if she ever spoke to her of the "Beecher-Tilton Scandal," she relied simply on Mrs. Woodhull's own declarations.

Mrs. Stanton, again, has now said enough to show that she considers her conversation with Mrs. Woodhull to have been warped, if nothing more, and stuffed out for dramatic effect. Then Theodore Tilton denies "the Woodhull"—that is, when the letter to his "complaining friend" finds interpretation at last in the *Thunderbolt*.

This complaining friend is Col. James B. Mix, a well-known journalist long connected with the *Tribune*—a gentleman who has undoubtedly read Mr. Tilton's "true story," and who has since rebuked him severely for not fulfilling his declared intention to publish it. In the *Chicago Times* of February 23, Col. Mix has the one remarkable letter, as far as any hint of hidden facts is concerned, that the Beecher-Woodhull excitement has thus far produced. The rest are either thick lamp-black or else thin whitewash. First explaining his position in connection with Mr. Tilton, Col. Mix says:

"We never expected again to put pen to paper in this matter. But since you, Theodore Tilton, stand trembling with your written statement in your hand, we deem it an act of friendship to give you that spur which shall start you on the stern path of duty. \* \* \* One would suppose that the Christian Church was founded with the birth of the reverend gentleman who is principally concerned, so mealy-mouthed are the blind idolaters who worship at the shrine of Plymouth. \* \* \* FOR YEARS THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES HAS BEEN SUSPENDED ABOVE HIS PLATFORM, and yet he has never flinched. One miscreant among his congregation has, figuratively speaking, been shaking the finger of guilt at him for years. \* \* \* PEOPLE ASK WHY HAS MR. BEECHER NOT SAID, 'THIS IS ALL A LIE.' IT IS ONLY A LITTLE BAND OF DEAR FRIENDS WHO KNOW OF THE EFFORTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE DURING THE PAST WINTER TO SHIELD MR. BEECHER FROM THE PARASITES THAT HAVE SURROUNDED HIM, AND WHO NOW FEEL THAT EVERY HONORABLE EFFORT HAVING AVAILED NOTHING, HE MUST MEET THE BLOW."

Col. Mix—impersonating Diogenes, out with his lantern to look for an honest man—next addresses Mr. Beecher directly:

"Why was it that you desired that your *protege* should read you his written statement, which he did but a few nights since at the house of a mutual friend? Why was it necessary for you to correspond with 'the Woodhull'? If she is the vile wretch they say she is; and if the letters you have from her contain anything but the woman's inmost thoughts; anything that can be construed into a threat; anything that will bear the construction of blackmail, why not give them to the world, so that those who love you for your great talents and the good you have accomplished in the world, may breathe freer? Why was it that she and you were together on the Heights, November 19, 1871, except it was that she then expected you to make your 'new departure,' and become the high priest of that peculiar sect of which she is the champion? What mysterious influence was it that she then possessed over you, that you allowed her to dare to propose that you should introduce her at Steinway Hall? Was it her pure, unadulterated cheek, or did she know 'who was who'? CERTAIN IT WAS THAT SHE WAS NOT Dismayed; AND SHE NERVED YOUR PUPIL TO DO THAT FROM WHICH YOU SHRANK.

"Did not one of the noblest of men \* open wide for you another field of usefulness? \* \* But, alas! Mammon again claimed you. \* \* The auctioneer was again on hand, and one by one the most conspicuous spots were secured. \* \* Why was it that your sister Harriet, Sunday after Sunday, sat at your feet? Was it that another sister, more impulsive, had threatened to mount your platform and plead your cause?

"Come to the front and centre, Henry Ward Beecher! You are but human. \* \* You have a constituency outside of Plymouth Church, to which they are but a drop in the bucket. In your proper element, you can unmask the cold-blooded varlets that flaunt their piety on 'Change and in the mart. \* \* Society was organized on a substantial basis, and no man or woman can overthrow it. Let us have the truth though the heavens fall. Shall it be? Or must a desperate woman be allowed an excuse, THROUGH THE COWARDICE OF THOSE WHO HAVE COMMUNED WITH HER, to give to the world that which may sear other hearts, and tear open, afresh, wounds that are almost healed?"

The immense suggestiveness of this letter, taken in connection with its source, supplies all need of excuse for quoting it so liberally. It is the only article from the Beecher-Tilton circle that the Woodhull herself has deigned to notice. And what remarkable notice! She says:

"This is but another attempt on the part of the defense, many others of different bearing having failed, to draw our fire before the turning point. But it will fail, as all others before have failed. \* \* We shall neither be surprised, annoyed, nor driven into a showing of our hands until the right time comes. But when that time shall come, the 'Manrico's,' 'Brooklyns,' 'Vidies'—the curs who bark at our heels, behind *nom de plumes*—\* \* these, we say, all these will have good reason to think the last trump has sounded; for we shall then tell the whole truth though the heavens do



fall, and though, WITH THE BEST, WE GO DOWN IN THE GENERAL RUIN."

It is this close, deadly fire, and then the locking of bayonets between Col. Mix and the Woodhull, that gives me pause over Mr. Tilton's "true story;" this, and one thing more: from Brooklyn I am asked this question:

"How can Tilton deny even what you say he does? Mrs. Stanton has not been his only confidant. My friend, —, long ago received from him a story that did not so spare his hearthstone. It was Woodhull's account, or much like it."

I have greatly admired Mr. Tilton. I have thought him a hero, erring, perhaps, but loving, forgiving, and abused on many sides. But was that "true story" written, after all, on purpose to be hidden, and to be sprung, by and by, as a trap, on history? Is it another book by a Bolingbroke, who "loaded his gun," as Dr. Johnson said, "but dared not fire it, and so hired a beggarly Scotchman to pull the trigger after he was dead?"

But Col. Mix, in his article, makes no scruple of describing Mr. Beecher as

#### "THE MODERN ARBACES"—

insatiate luxury masked in the idol of a god! The picture is either very careless or else very frightful. He tells "Arbaces" that Mrs. Woodhull knew "who was who," and "NERVED HIS PUPIL TO DO" THAT FROM WHICH HE "SHRANK." Mr. Tilton's "complaining friend" fears, too, that Mrs. Woodhull may "SEAR OTHER HEARTS, AND TEAR OPEN, AFRESH, WOUNDS THAT ARE ALMOST HEALED." Then Mrs. Woodhull herself assures him that she shall YET "TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH, THOUGH THE HEAVENS DO FALL," and though SHE "GOES DOWN WITH THE REST IN THE GENERAL RUIN." Very well; but when those heavens crack and tumble, WILL THE WOODHULL "GO DOWN" IN THE ARMS OF "ARBACES," OR OF THE "PUPIL," OR OF BOTH? I have so little faith in the chastity of Plymouth Church that the two brethren may "toss up a cent" for the benefit of the doubt. And now let us

#### GLANCE OVER THE WHOLE FIELD

of the Woodhull-Beecher battle, pick up the wounded, bury the dead, AND LOOK ALL THE RESULTS STRAIGHT IN THE FACE.

As far as Mr. Beecher is concerned, the most direct, though interested witness, Mr. Tilton, affirms that he is not an adulterer, as charged; but that, in spite of his eager intentions to become one, his virtue was preserved by Mrs. Tilton.

But Mr. Beecher's method of magnetizing a sick person into writing down lies for his temporal salvation, is itself as bad as a breach of the Seventh Commandment. It marks at once the perfidious conspirator. It is the old spirit of David putting Uriah in the "fore front of the battle." It justifies every suspicion that leagues Beecher with Bowen and Comstock in their raid on American law and the necessities of human progress. No: Plymouth Church may cling to Henry Ward Beecher, asking no questions, and both may go to the devil together. But he is henceforth on the retired list of great names and honest men. "The Woodhull" has always claimed that his dead silence, as to her, is a "masterly system of tactics"—a waiting until public sentiment can tide up to his justification in "social freedom." She may bottle her soothing-syrup. The man has no self-sacrifice, much less a bit of aggressive heroism. He is not fit to stand even with her in "reform." HE WILL ROT AWAY IN A DEAD CHURCH.

But he can easily be spared in all other connections. The Beecher family has been great in American history. Forty years ago Lyman Beecher had power to make even Wendell Phillips a Calvinist, though he prudently excused himself, as a shrewd Christian, from joining Garrison and the Abolitionists, on the plea that he already had "too many irons in the fire." When the battle for freedom had grown warm, and the ranks were pretty well filled, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and Henry Ward Beecher stood vigorously up for old John Brown. A grateful country can never forget such services. The younger Mr. Beecher, too, has made Puritanism as broad as the sons of Puritans would let him; but he has always been very careful not to step an inch ahead of assured support. Theodore Parker—the one great thinker of the recent American pulpit—once spoke of Mr. Beecher's "deep emotional nature, so devout and so humane," and his "poetic eloquence that is akin to both the sweet-briar and the rose, and all the beauty which springs up wild amid New England hills." No thoroughly trained scholar has ever given Mr. Beecher credit for anything more than Theodore Parker described.

His mind is loose and uncertain. He has borrowed a great deal of "originality" from Emerson, mixed it with sentiment and theology, and fed it to Plymouth Church. But a profound systematic thinker, like Kant or Hegel, would give him the lock-jaw. He is like the recent book "Ecce Homo," which furnished the crude average mind of the day with a new conception of Jesus, but was only a pretty toy to real scholars. As an orator and actor, however, Henry Ward Beecher has few equals; and like Butler at the bar, or Phillips on the platform, Beecher can always bring instantly to the pulpit all that is in him. His greatness is his readiness. But when he combines with Bowen and Comstock to save a name by endangering a nation, it is evident that he has been petted and pampered into counting himself a god. When Harriet Beecher Stowe—after digging up Byron to brand "incest" on the corpse—holds back Isabella Beecher Hooker from admitting her brother's faults, the further usefulness of Mrs. Stowe to the world may also be questioned. And when at last the author of "Catherine Beecher's Cook Book" demands that some defunct law shall be unburied to imprison Woodhull without the appearance in court of a prosecuting witness, the end has come to an illustrious line. "Assez de Bonaparte," said France in 1814. America is just ready to say: "Enough of the Beechers!"

IN ESTIMATING THEODORE TILTON, I scarcely know what to think. He has several letters from

Beecher, exalting him as the most magnanimous of men and Christians. He would have earned these on the supposition that his "true story" is not a false one, and he would have doubly earned them, certainly, on the supposition that the worse version of Woodhull has any truth at all in it. Mr. Tilton has been the most brilliant young editor in the United States, though he, too, seems dependent on the inspiration of the moment, rather than on any very deep centre of thought. He may yet be pushed into showing that he has not become rotten before getting ripe. But his silence with Beecher, and his patience with Bowen and Comstock, fill many who would like to love him with doubt and distrust.

And how, finally, shall

#### THE THUNDERBOLT FALL ON THE WOODHULL HERSELF?

I have never seen the dreaded ogre of Broad street but once—a year or two ago—when I conversed with her a few minutes in a public hall. Her sister, Miss Claflin, I have never seen at all. But having taken a deep interest in great principles victimized through these two women; and having honestly sought nothing but truth in scrutinizing the Beecher-Tilton Scandal, this attitude has drawn to me many people, and has opened various sources of information on all sides. I know persons who admire Mrs. Woodhull, those who hate her, those who think her nature distorted, but her work necessary, and those who have watched and studied her, with the care of detectives, for both public and private purposes.

On seeing her myself, I said (in the *Troy Whig* of September 25, 1871) that she struck me as a rapt idealist—"out of her head" in the sense of "enthusiasm;" a nature "so intense that she might see visions of angels or devils," and as many as St. John or Luther. "Had she been carefully trained from childhood," I added, "I must think she would have been a wonderful scholar, poet and thinker. As it is, she is an abnormal growth of democratic institutions, thoroughly sincere, partly insane, and fitted to exaggerate great truths." As precisely this opinion has been reflected back to me by several very acute minds—both men and women—I have no doubt, to-day, that it describes "the Woodhull," in one mood, pretty closely. But I know, from facts in my possession, that she has other moods in which she loses her remarkable sweetness of voice and all touch of the heavens, to swagger like a pirate and scold like a drab.

This phase of her character has been so conspicuous at times, before close judges of human nature, that they regard her as an ingrained liar and a complete quack. At one time she sinks every vestige of egotism in the absorbed expression of ideas; and at another time she would steal the genius of a friend to aid her in "putting on airs." It seems as if she loves notoriety more than any other being on earth; yet she loves her notions of duty even more than notoriety. She is ignorant; and her strong signature in letters and on the backs of photographs, is commonly the handiwork of Col. Blood. It is probable that she never wrote, unaided and alone, any of her "great speeches" or her stirring editorials—the "Beecher-Tilton Scandal" being no exception. Yet she is the inspiration, the vitality and the mouthpiece of her clan and "cause." Her organ, WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY, has voices from the "seventh heaven" and the gabblings of a frog-pond. Its advertisements are gratuitous "blinds;" and its proprietors have lately had the kindness to publish my own circular without request or leave; yet the amazing journal is crowded with thought, and with needed information that can be got nowhere else. And to-day it stands as the test of a free press, and the possibility of a better breed of men than now make the city of New York a vast *immoral improvement* on Sodom and Gomorrah. Mrs. Woodhull, in short, is like Daniel O'Connell, as judged by "Bobus Smith." She ought to be hanged, and then have a monument erected to her memory at the foot of the gallows."

#### COMMENTS.

[Were it not for a single point, I should pass without notice "The fall of the Thunderbolt on Woodhull herself," and as that is the special one that—more than all others—causes me to doubt the thorough honor and consistency of Mr. Clark, I will touch it first, although in order of succession it should be last. He says: "Its proprietors have lately had the kindness to publish my circular without request or leave. Its advertisements are gratuitous blinds." Mr. Clark must surely have forgotten himself to have made this fling at me, to which I make bold to say, the most debauched Bohemian in New York would not have stooped. Even had I published his circular without request or leave, he ought, as a gentleman, to have accepted it as a journalistic courtesy, and refrained from dragging it into this controversy. Besides, what has it to do with the question at issue? Does that have any bearing upon the truth or falsity of the Scandal? I confess I cannot see that it does. My "ignorance" may, however, prevent me from seeing it. What business had Mr. Clark, to do this thing? But it happens that I did not publish his circular without request or leave. Mr. Clark, in a letter to me, sent a dozen of his circulars, and in the letter requested me to notice their contents. Instead, however, of writing any notice, I ordered the circular, or parts of it, published. It may barely be possible that this may have slipped his memory; but upon no other ground can I forgive so outrageous a breach of courtesy.

And, pray, what have my "other moods" to do with the effect of "The Thunderbolt upon Woodhull;" and what, pray, upon the truth or falsity of the Scandal, which Mr. Clark has taken specific pains to assert, "as having honestly sought nothing but truth, in scrutinizing the Beecher-Tilton Scandal?" Suppose I am "out of my head;" that I am "an enthusiast;" that I see "angels" or "demons;" that I "swagger like a pirate" and "scold like a drab," what has all that to do with arriving at the truth of the

Scandal? Can Mr. Clark inform me? Perhaps he may be cajoled into furnishing me the facts in his possession about this swaggering and scolding. If he can, I will make all possible haste to publish them. Come, Mr. Clark, you have said this; now send on the facts, because I am anxious to be as well informed regarding myself upon these points as you seem to be.

And why does he seek to belittle me by saying I am "ignorant," that I never write my "great speeches" or "stirring editorials"? How can he know all this? The resort to this contemptible meanness by my enemies, to endeavor to injure me in the esteem of those who can only know me by repute, is the best possible evidence that they can find no better means by which to attempt it. For two years I have stood before the world, almost alone, as the pronounced advocate of social freedom, and I have been the butt of ridicule, of abuse and of censure from almost everybody who writes for the public press, and now, at this late day, when, still almost alone, I am fighting the battle of a free press and free speech against the combined powers of state and church, it was entirely uncalled for on the part of Mr. Clark to enter the arena, and attempt to destroy any part of my strength, and to stab me in the back in the house of my friends. Perhaps this act of unkindness may be the very one to make it impossible to withstand the immense odds pitted against me, and I go a martyr to the Infernalism of the Christianity of the nineteenth century. But I do not intend that it shall accomplish this. I intend that Mr. Clark's effort to aid the enemies of reform in their crusade against it in my person shall fall dead upon the ears and hearts of every lover of freedom in the country. Had I been strong financially, and backed up by powerful friends; had I been a man even, lacking these, the reformatory world might have forgiven Mr. Clark this ungenerous aid to the enemy; but lacking all these, having to struggle personally against all sorts of obstacles, and with few friends who have the moral courage to stand pronouncedly and boldly with me, it was a most cowardly attack, and I am sorry, for Mr. Clark's sake, that the bitterness of Theodore Tilton or of any body else should have been so potent with him as to induce him to stoop so ungenerously; and so on to the end, through all the rest of his presentation of me personally; but I refrain from following him. The judgment of the reformers of the world will, however, do so, and it will be inexorable, since they will come, sooner or later, to know that Mrs. Woodhull is not "only a tremendous horn that Col. Blood is now blowing in front of Jericho," but that she, of all persons, insists on blowing her own horn.]

"Does all this seem like a

#### CONTRADICTION OR A JOKE?

very likely—to the puny-souled babes, suckled on the dish-water that is nowadays called "religion," "theology," "morality." The Sunday school, and the Young Men's Christian Association divide mankind into two classes—the good and the bad. But their Jesus said: "There is none good but one—the Father;" and the Son went down to sympathize with publicans and harlots.

The world should have done, once for all, with expecting to find a saint who is all sanctity, or a sinner who is all sin. The conception is an old humbug, clasped to the bosom of snobs to double their natural hypocrisy. God made the world—every thought and every thing—out of two opposites. Philosophy, in a Hegel, analyses them into abstracts, calls them "being" and "nothing," poses these abstracts in necessary evolution, and then synthesises the whole solid world back again. Common sense sees the same thing in every human being, and calls it good and evil. In strong people, especially, it is stiffly mixed. "Every literary man," said Landor, "has the spice of a scoundrel in him." The most useful American writer during four or five years of our "Great Rebellion," is a natural miser, and bummer, and "dead-beat"—and he is my friend, and I love him heartily. If Beecher himself would only be honest, and not try to garrote the prospects of his race to cover his own frailties, I could hug him in ten minutes. But he prefers the "orthodox" embraces of "twenty mistresses" and a few millions of fools. But of all

#### INCARNATE MIXTURES OF MANNA AND HELLEBORE

that are now going "to and fro on the earth and walking up and down in it," the Woodhull appears to be the most extreme. According to her story (Tilton's biography) she was conceived in the frenzy of a Methodist revival and born in a treacherous nest of human catamounts. She was marked from the womb with preternatural excitement. The baby played with ghosts. She dug in the garden with the devil's foot on her spade, to hurry her up. The child of fourteen married to please a rake's whim, and lived fifteen years for a man she ought to have left in a week. She was a little of everything to earn hard bread—handmaid and shopgirl, actress and clairvoyant healer of general aches. What else, poor soul, they tell me, is not down in the book. She was crushed and cursed in motherhood with an idiot-boy. She was taunted with marital infidelity by a husband who was himself the popinjay of strumpets.

This poor, imp-ridden, heart-burned woman turned at last against the social fate that had crushed her; and, having been its manifold victim, she knew all its sores and all its weapons. Her treatment of its diseases is new; SHE CURES SEDUCTION BY KILLING REPUTATION, AND LANCES ADULTERY WITH A "SOCIAL REVOLUTION."

#### SHE IS ACCUSED OF LEVYING BLACKMAIL,

and special detectives of Wall street claim to hold indictments against her, hidden in their safes. But if such papers were of any effect, when New York would pay a million dollars for a legal pretext to send the woman to Sing Sing, the detectives must have blackmailed somebody for two mil-



lions, in the interest of burning the indictments up. That Mrs. Woodhull is at all "nice" in business honor, I doubt. If she would use the name of Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis falsely, to strengthen even an essential truth, she would suborn a friend's purse to carry out some other "mission."

But that holy horror should gripe the bowels of the whole New York press at the two-penny corruptions of Woodhull & Claflin, is enough to make the mummy of Bennett wink with its cock-eye. The *Herald* was born in smut and libel, and now keeps a regular assignation-house in its columns. Yet, perhaps, 'tis the most manly of all the great city dailies. How many times was the *World* blatant with threats at the Tammany Ring, and then sopped into silence? Whitelaw Reid has lately elected himself editor and publisher of the *Tribune*, with half a million dollars behind him. Who owns the dog now that nosed Greeley into his grave? When the *Tribune* truckles to Jay Gould, calls for the hanging of Stokes, and plays into the hands of David Dudley Field, a little blackmailing would dignify its character. Faugh! the American Press has been the mere skunk of the Church, bribed by its subscription-list to save Beecher in a universal stench of blackmail!

BUT THE WOODHULL'S DOCTRINE OF FREE LOVE—the one thing "bestial and abominable" that now inhabits the earth!

Well, I praise the Lord that I have never had any personal use for this doctrine. The "effete system of marriage," as Woodhull and Claflin sometimes call it, has always been good enough for me, in spirit and in letter. And there can be no possibility that the love of average human beings will ever fall into chaotic license—the common *mis*-understanding of "free-love"—and which the poet Wordsworth once described to Emerson as "the crossing of flies in the air." But for even the earnest opponents of a theory, it is well to know what the theory is.

Such, however, is not the current method of opposing "social freedom." The rule in this case is to shut both eyes, strike out with all your might, and hit—nothing. That is, the fops and dolls—the nincompoops in general—who make up what is called "society," are without the mental capacity to understand what free-love means. The whole world is a big brothel—that is their conception. And they can't be cured of it. The true idea would burst open their little heads. With them, too, "free-love" is now the last rotten-egg they can find to throw at people who *do know* something. Though enlisted for any war against free-love, in the sense of unchained lust, and though distrusting and opposing any departure from monogamy in marriage, I have no desire to stand in an infant-class of idiots, who answer an argument, first by misconceiving it, and then by turning up the end of a pug nose.

Besides, there is much in the movement called "social freedom" that should be admitted at once, as simple justice, in the practical application of rights and morals.

In a recent article, for instance, by Tennie C. Claflin (to take an authority sufficiently obnoxious), she claims this:

"If the loss of purity is a disgrace to unmarried women, then the same should be held of men; if the mother of a child out of legal wedlock is ostracised, then the father should share the same fate. \* \* If a life of female prostitution is wrong, a life of male prostitution is equally wrong. If Contagious Diseases Acts are passed, they should operate equally on both sexes; if women are inspected, men should be inspected; if the names of women are recorded and open to inspection, the names of men should stand on the same record. \* \* On the other hand, if the male debauchee is allowed to circulate in respectable society and marry women with unsoiled robes, then the female debauchee should be allowed the same privileges and treated in the same manner."

The Young Men's Christian Association of New York HAVE ENDEAVORED TO PREVENT THE EQUAL CHASTITY OF THE SEXES, by suppressing Miss Claflin's article as "obscene." But there is more of the Christian religion in it, and more good sense, than in Dodge and Comstock's entire band of theological Hessians.

But directly in regard to the doctrine of "free-love," again, it is necessary for an intelligent opponent to acknowledge that 'tis not merely a Woodhull that believes in "new social relations" for men and women, but 'tis many of the most capacious minds and hearts on earth, from John Stuart Mill to Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Woodhull is only a tremendous horn that Colonel Blood is now blowing in front of Jericho.

When Mrs. Stanton stood up in New York, after the trial of McFarland for killing Richardson, and said that no brute should be the dreaded owner of a woman's body and soul, she stated the principle of social freedom as understood by its own exponents. Mrs. Stanton felt that no statute in a book was so sacred as that crushed woman's right to her own individuality.

"SOCIAL FREEDOM," THEN,

from one view, is merely the EXTREME LOGICAL END OF DEMOCRACY—ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY—SINGLE SELF-OWNERSHIP. No bond, no custom, no law can righteously deny it. YET THIS TRUTH, after all, is ONLY HALF A TRUTH, and the OTHER HALF is the DUTY WHICH EVERY INDIVIDUAL—EVERY SELF-SOVEREIGN—OWES TO HIS NEIGHBOR—THAT IS, TO SOCIETY.

"Love," says the Woodhull, should be "free," precisely "like worship." The world has outgrown laws to govern religion, and leaves conscience unfettered. The fetters of constraint should be broken from marriage, and the parties allowed to mind their own business.

Such is the argument. But the world has not outgrown all laws concerning worship. It prevents one congregation from disturbing another, or taking possession of their church. And in regard to marriage, has Society no "inalienable rights?" Marriage is not a relation of two individuals solely, but of their children as well. And has my neighbor no right to protect himself against the enforced support of my children? Undoubtedly there is no mysterious and cerulean

sacredness in the relation of sex; it is a human affair, amenable to human justice.

'Twould now be useless to treat it otherwise; for general liberty has become so broad that strong persons, justified to themselves, take their lives in their own hands, defying society if necessary and conquering it by ability and success, as Mr. and Mrs. Lewes have done even in the midst of English conservatism. The sentiment of love is perhaps the most important in the happiness of life. Nor is it ever perfect without the expectation of permanence. So 'tis easy enough to see that two human beings will not generally give themselves up to each other in the closest of intimacy and responsibility, without as much formality, at least, as they would take in "passing receipts" over the transfer of a horse or a pig. Still, the tendency in America is doubtless to multiply the facilities of divorce; and the laws will probably end in according all the "sovereignty" that two parties to a "civil contract" mutually desire, and that the interests of offspring will permit.

IN THE BEECHER-TILTON SCANDAL, HOWEVER,

the WOODHULL sets up an illustration of "social freedom" that must delight the soul of Stephen Pearl Andrews, but would empty the very meaning of virtue out of the world. Claiming all she does of Beecher, she claims with it that *no wrong was done, except in the deceit of the doing and the hypocrisy of hiding the deed.* A man who feeds Plymouth Church with his soul, needs the magnetic sustenance of "many women." It is all lovely to WOODHULL—all serene and beautiful. The only fault would be in a Tilton's monopolizing some poor woman, so that she should not be comforted by her pastor, and so that he should be deprived of elixir for new prayers and sermons."

[Mr. Clark doesn't understand my indictment against Mr. Beecher at all. I do not claim that "no wrong was done except the deceit of the doing and the hypocrisy of hiding the deed." I said it was nobody's business what Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton did as lovers, and I say so still. Simply as such I had no right to touch the matter; but when they practiced the theories I advocate, and then denounced me for advocating them, it became my business, and I not only had a right, but to me it became a duty, that I strip off the hypocritical mask. Mr. Beecher, with Plymouth Church, stood a mighty barrier in the way of the progress of social freedom. I essayed to remove it, and from present prospects it appears likely that they will, as I hoped, join the already rapidly moving cause of social reform.]

„Here is the Oneida Community let loose—Free-Love for the saints without even the advantages of material communism. Fourier himself puts Ninon de L'Enclos, Beecher and the Woodhulls in a separate "phalanx" of their own kind, though he insists that some such people will always exist as exceptions to the rule. They have got out of their "phalanx," it seems, and have gone to "reforming things."

Woodhull, Claflin and Blood are quite as remarkable a "trinity" as they assume to be, and the last is by no means the least, but one of the most overcharged and untiring fanatics that ever lived. He honestly thinks that the "true courtesy of the future" will be "not even to know what relations our lovers have with any and all other persons." If his wife (by affinity) sees fit to commit a few great preachers and editors to "free love" by committing them to the currents of her own magnetism, his relentless consistency permits him to see only the glory of the "cause." A queer bulb is the human head, and it takes all manner of people to make a New York."

[I am happy to be able to say that upon this point Mr. Clark has been equal to the comprehension of just what we hold as "true courtesy." Neither Col. Blood or myself is simply a pretender. We not only believe but live the theories we teach, and the results to us of this course have been demonstration beyond all doubt of the truth and the benefit to the human race of the principles of freedom extended to the social relations. I am happy and proud to say to the world that whatever our individual happiness requires is the mutual happiness of both to accord, and not only to accord but to aid in obtaining. We do not do this for the "cause," however; we do this for ourselves, since in so doing we find not only the happiness we seek, but also the means by which to avert all the shoals upon which so many souls are socially wrecked. If this be a "queer bulb," I say the sooner the world has it well developed the sooner such scandals as this is which is now being "smoked" out will cease to occur to show how really low we all are in the scale of social evolution.]

"But, as Mrs. Paulina Wright Davis says, the Woodhull is not to be "befooled." The woman's bitter experience has taught her all the sickness of the times. "Free love" and "stirpiculture" are rather striking remedies for it. But in an age of Tweed and Oakes Ames; Challis, Comstock and God-in-the-Constitution; Oakey Hall, model artists and Rensselaer; industrious fleas and Dr. Houston; Beecher, Bowen, the Tombs and the *Police Gazette*—in such an age the world can't change for the worse. Free love may possibly be its last hope. At any rate, if a young woman of thirty-four years, and another of thirty, with one Missouri Colonel behind them, can frighten the whole American people out of free speech, a free press and an honest court house, "stirpiculture" is needed at once for the begetting of some tolerable race of men.

E. H. G. CLARK."

SUMMING UP.

It is desirable that a thorough summing up of the whole case should be made, a careful and just review of all that has transpired regarding it up to the present time, so that a just judgment of it, as it stands to-day, may be arrived at. This, however, is a task that time makes it impossible for me to perform to present in this week's issue of the WEEKLY.

But next week I shall do this. I shall go back to the

starting point of this scandal to fasten its source where it belongs. I shall trace it from that source through all its ramifications up to date; I shall compare the various statements and facts which appeared previously to November 2 with those that have been put forth since, and endeavor to find a solution for their discrepancies. And I think I am not presuming too greatly to say, that if any now have doubts as to the substantial truth of all that I said November 2, they will be removed when the review shall have been read.

This will be done, however, with no view to the conviction if it must be so regarded, of Mrs. Tilton. I should have been glad never to have mentioned her name in the affair, but some one of the several I had at command had to be used. It was useless simply to charge Mr. Beecher with an offense. It was necessary to give the specifications upon which the charge was founded. I am glad, however, that in all the discussion that has grown out of it, her name has been seldom mentioned, and I have yet to hear her condemnation from the lips of any one.

Had Mr. Tilton, or his friends for him, been satisfied to let the matter rest there, I should have never written another word as to the truth or falsity of the charge, so far as Mrs. Tilton is concerned. I was perfectly satisfied to have accomplished what I aimed at—to establish the fact that Henry Ward Beecher, notwithstanding his professions, is at heart and in practice, just as much a Free Lover as I am; and that Plymouth Church is a Free Love Church, and ought to stand, as it will have ultimately to do, side by side with me in the advocacy of social freedom. Of this, since the appearance of the *Thunderbolt*, no sensible person can entertain a doubt. Mr. Beecher stands before the world as one who believes it his right as an individual to administer his social relations as pleases himself, and Plymouth Church as upholding him. This was all I desired, and the attainment of it has been made much sooner than I had any hope it would be.

But they have made the attempt to cast me into the lie, and this, my own sense of right compels me to repel, and I shall do it with all the ability I can command in the use of facts already before the public; but as I have often said before, I shall not be betrayed into a full showing of my case unless the course against me shall be such as to force me to it; and I repeat, if that time ever come, there will be "good reason to think the last trump has sounded, for I shall tell the whole truth though the heavens do fall, and though, with the rest, I go down in the general ruin." And those who would be involved in it know me too well to even imagine I will not keep my word to the very letter.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

#### PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

ITS ELEMENTS AND ITS SEXUAL ETHICS.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., April 21, 1873.

Editors of the "Thunderbolt."

You desire a brief description of the religious body in this city known as Plymouth Church, and, if possible, some statement of the sexual ethics of its members. But on the latter point you cannot expect that I should be able to give you the doctrine of the church as a whole, or as a membership really uniting in any one view.

Plymouth Church is an independent organization, owing no allegiance to any "consociation" or "association," and its members are quite independent of each other as regards their speculative beliefs. Some of them are very rigid, almost superstitious, while others are little more than "free-thinkers," or "deists," by whom "vicarious atonement," "trinity," and other theological dogmas are very lightly considered. Remember, too, that in this church, above all others, there are two very distinct classes. One is shrewd and intelligent, making use of Mr. Beecher's genius and skill to fashion for them a religious veil, which, while not vexatious to wear, serves to cover all desirable indulgences, and secure a good social status. These Plymouth disciples believe little or nothing in the superstitions of the ordinary "Christian." The other class is the goodly, simple people, who would join somebody's church if not Plymouth, and who believe all that is taught them. Of course, the wise class do not communicate their own free and easy notions to the simple ones, and it is the latter class who do not even now believe a word of the scandals about Mr. Beecher.

Mr. Beecher's greatest devotees of the male sex are a motley set, mostly New York merchants of different grades, doing business there but residing in Brooklyn. Perhaps he has no more pronounced admirer than a certain Mr. —, whose store is within "rifle shot" of Printing House Square. Mr. — is a wholesale grocer; that is, he deals mostly in intoxicating liquors, which he manufactures according to the "honest laws of trade" and the morality of Plymouth Church. He sells his wares (when profitably adulterated) to our simple brethren of the South. Before the late "unpleasantness" he did a thriving business. During the war he was a moderate "copperhead," and now he luxuriates again in the profits of his bad whiskies and the freedom of Plymouth Church. As another specimen, whose fame entitles him to mention by name, I ought not to forget Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, the partner of David Dudley Field. Mr. Shearman was at once the favorite legal sharer of Fisk and Gould, in their "Erie raids," and the Superintendent of Mr. Beecher's Sunday-school. Such men as these stoutly pretend, as a general thing, to disbelieve that Mr. Beecher would be caught in any irregularities.

Yet some of the "pillars" are not so "good," and it is a recent conversation with one of these (a personal friend) that enables me to reply to your query respecting the "sexual ethics" of the Plymouth saints.

"Well," said the gentleman I conversed with, "what if



Mr. Beecher has been guilty of intimacy with Mrs. Tilton, just as that stram of a Woodhull charges? Doesn't everybody know, who reads the Bible, that it's a matter between themselves, if nobody else objects or knows it? Nobody had a right to complain but Tilton, and while he didn't know of it he had no occasion to complain; and when he did come to know it, he and Mr. Beecher settled it all right: that's the substance of the Woodhull story, isn't it, sir?"

I said yes, but expressed my astonishment at his claim of Bible support for his opinions. He retorted by asking if I had ever studied the Bible in the matter, and then proceeded to an earnest exegesis of his doctrine. He waxed quite eloquent and cited numerous texts, a few of which I noted down for study, at the end of our conversation.

"Sin," said he, "is not imputed where there is no law. That is the start; remember it. No law, no sin. (Romans v., 13.) Now, it is by nature no more sinful to exercise the genital functions than the palate; and starvation, passion as well as stomachic, is to be avoided for health's sake: hence, it is better to marry than to burn," as St. Paul says. Well, no law, no sin; but the old Mosaic law, with its seventh commandment, was done away with in Christ's coming: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x., 4.) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." (Gal. iii., 13.) Again, "If ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. v., 18.) So the law has passed away; and, brethren, ye are called unto liberty." (Gal. v., 13.) "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh"—that is, don't misuse liberty, commit no excess, which is always a sin—"but by love serve one another."

"Now, a man has no property in his wife—in her body The gospel upholds no sort of slavery. It teaches liberty. As a Christian, a husband cannot complain of his wife if she is affectionate and kind to him. This is all he has a right to expect. She has control of her own person, and the enjoyment of her own desires. Suppose what you do, then, of Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton. What of it? Besides, both Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton are members of the church; and "if ye be led by the spirit ye are not under the law," so they would not be in a sinful state even if the law were not abolished. There was no sin, therefore, in their intimacy; and as long, especially, as Mr. Tilton didn't know it there was no practical violation of the Golden Rule, in which the law was fulfilled. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Gal. v., 14.)

"But Tilton finally discovered what he wickedly, in a fit of anger, calls Mr. Beecher's 'damnable treachery.' And here comes in the Golden Rule again. If Tilton is really harmed—if his sensibilities are wounded, and he can't rise above his selfishness—Mr. Beecher has no right to 'offend his brother' through the brother's wife. But he is not forbidden to reason with Tilton; and, according to Woodhull, he *did* reason, and Tilton came to acknowledge his own selfishness, and then, in the most Christian spirit, brought Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton together again, that they might enjoy their blessed liberty. There's the whole argument, sir, and the true one; and it's from the Bible."

I made no farther reply to my friend, and you have his biblical erudition for what it is worth. It is ingenious, truly. It evidently satisfied him, and it goes far to explain to me why Plymouth Church has taken no public steps to examine into the Beecher-Tilton Scandal.

You will please to bear in mind that I do not pretend to sit in judgment on the doctrines of Plymouth Church, as given to me by my friend. They were novel to me, and greatly at variance with my early instructions. But my studies have led me to believe (with Strabo) that the Christians of the first centuries were far more "advanced" and "free" in their sexual relations than those of Plymouth Church to-day. I shall not be surprised if, when Mr. Beecher gets stronger, and has passed the untimely shock which the low-bred Woodhull has given him, he may come out boldly and avow his broadest views. I cannot afford to judge him. When once in a position to vex the Mormons, I refused to do so, because I felt that the masses of them are honest though bigoted in their tenets and lives, and that they are the proper moulders and conservators of their own morals. I should not wish to be less respectful of the religious rights of Mr. Beecher and Plymouth Church than of Brigham Young and the Mormons.

Yours, very respectfully, J. E.

#### THE BEAUTIES (INFAMIES) OF MODERN JOURNALISM.

If anything were wanting to convince the searcher for causes for revolution that it is not only at our doors, but that it is necessary to the welfare of the people that it come quickly, it may be found in an analysis of modern journalism. Never was there such an infernal despotism foisted upon a people as, in the name of liberty, there has been foisted upon this country by the public press. There are not a dozen journals in the six thousand published in the country which are conducted upon the principle of freedom of the press and justice to the involved.

But this was never developed until we came before the public as advocates of social freedom. With this advent, the press almost unanimously have permitted their columns to be used by any and everybody who had a foul word to say about us, and when these were wanting the editors themselves have supplied the deficiency by dipping their pens in gall and writing it. There is scarcely a journal in the country which, at some time, has not written us down in some vile manner, and yet never a single one of them has had any facts upon which to base its infamous slanders. When this tirade against us first began, we attempted to reply in the columns of the papers in which we were attacked; but the almost universal result has been that our manuscript found its way into the waste basket instead of into the pa-

per. To this, however, there has been now and then an exception, prominent among which we name the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*, which said to us, "Our columns are open to the reply of any who are attacked in them." But this honorable rule is discarded in most other more pretentious journals; while some there are which have made it their especial duty to glean every possible mean thing that could be found against us and parade it in their columns, presenting the most outrageous lies and infamous slanders and utterly refusing even a single word of denial.

Especially has this been true since the high-handed career of the Government in arresting us for obscenity at the command of its superior—the Y. M. C. A.—whose tool merely it is fast degenerating to be. The lies conceived in the debauched brains of some moral, pattern editorial writer and publisher in a "big daily," is copied by all the papers in the country, and the people made to believe by it that we are worse than theimps of those who belong to the God of the Y. M. C. A.—that merciful Father who from the beginning prepared to roast ninety one hundredths of his children in hell eternally.

To illustrate how this thing works, we will give some recent examples:

The following letter appeared in the New York *Tribune*, of March 28. This letter was quickly copied by the editors of the *Sun* (they, too, are immaculate, virtuous and possessed of all the virtues of modern morality, as we well know); and then by numerous journals throughout, last and least of all of which is the *Religio-Philosophic Journal*, of Chicago, Ill., edited by another purely moral man, sexually, as we and many others well know. But here is the letter:

A WORD TO THE LADIES OF NEW YORK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TRIBUNE:

Sir—An emergency involving the delicacy and honor of my sex makes it my duty to submit the following facts to the ladies of this city:

Nearly two years ago, at the request of a friend who had perfect confidence in her truth and purity, I accepted an invitation from Victoria Woodhull to ride with her in Central Park. The result was an impression that she was either insane or the hapless victim of malignant spirits. For she calmly informed me that several distinguished editors, clergymen and lady authors of this city, some of them my personal friends, and all of them models of domestic purity and virtue, not only held her opinions on free love, but practiced accordingly, and that it was only a lack of moral courage which prevented their open avowal of such opinions. I concealed all this, excepting from a few personal friends, because it is cruelty and a disgrace to any persons of delicacy and refinement, especially to ladies, to have their names and character publicly subjected to inquiry as to such practices. Since that interview this woman or her associates have been carrying out a plan for making money by maligning or threatening conspicuous persons of such purity and sensibility that it would be expected they or their friends would pay large sums rather than come in collision with such antagonists and their filthy weapons.

Such an operation carried out in New York would extend indefinitely. The proper way of meeting this evil is to secure the enforcement of an existing law, by which an officer of the State, and not the person assailed, may prosecute any who circulate aspersions of character which they cannot prove to be true, it being made, in such cases as this, a penitentiary offense. When such a law is well executed, and when imprisonment for life, without power of pardon in any human hands, shall be the penalty for murder, then the present exasperating surges of society will be assuaged, and the dove and olive branch appear. American women possess a power little appreciated or exercised; for it is certain that there is no beneficent law which they would unite in asking to have enacted or enforced which would not readily be granted. For this reason the influence of the ladies of this city is besought to secure in this conspicuous case the enforcement of the penalty for the most cruel slander that many have already suffered, and which is still threatened to others. The officers of law whose duty it is to abate this evil are at hand, and their ear can be reached by many a woman whom they respect. At the same time our clergymen can be entreated to lend their co-operation by teaching from the pulpit (what many do not know) that helping to circulate aspersions of character which they cannot prove to be true is a violation both of the Decalogue and of civil law.

CATHARINE E. BEECHER.

NEW YORK, March 26, 1873.

To this we immediately made the following explicit reply and submitted it at once to Mr. Reid and Mr. Dana, with the request that it should be published immediately so as to expose the infamous lie concocted by this woman before it should be copied extensively:

To the Editors of the *Tribune* and *Sun*:

An emergency, involving the honor and veracity of one of my sex, makes it my duty to submit the following facts to the men and women of this country; but before proceeding to the facts I will state what the emergency is, so that none can be in doubt as to what it may be, as all are left to be by Miss Beecher in her gratuitous attack upon me in the *Tribune* on Friday last.

Now what Miss Beecher has stated is either true or false. If true, she has done well; if not, she is as infamous as she has been, and still is, endeavoring to make the world believe me to be. I propose to show not only that the foundation of her statement is false, but that her elucidations are also equally as fallacious; and moreover, that she has made an accusation both false and libelous which she, if not those who gave it currency, may yet have occasion to learn to their sorrow.

But to the facts. To what credit, let me ask, is a statement entitled that begins by an absolute falsehood, as does this

one of Catherine Beecher? She says, "At the request of a friend I accepted an invitation from Victoria Woodhull to ride in Central Park." I repeat, that this is false, the converse being true. Here is the truth: Without having seen or known me, Miss Beecher, as Isabella-Beecher Hooker informed me, was in the habit of making unguarded statements about my life and social theories, by which she said Miss Beecher was doing me immense harm with people not personally acquainted with me. Mrs. Hooker had remonstrated with her, saying that she did not understand me, and that she ought to be more careful in her statements of things of which she was not competently informed, or of which she was ignorant. Mrs. Hooker desired me to see Miss Beecher, as she had expressed a wish to that effect, and said that she would stand corrected if she found she was wrong. I acquiesced. Soon after I received a letter from Mrs. Hooker in which she informed me that, at a convenient time, Miss Beecher would send for me to ride with her. She did send me a note which I still have, appointing the time. I did ride with her in the park, but I was invited to do so. I did not invite her. For the truth of this Mrs. Hooker is competent authority, without giving any weight to my own testimony.

During that ride, at her request, I frankly stated my views upon the social question, as I am ready to do to any inquirer. I told her I believed, and that nature confirmed it, that all sexual commerce not founded on love is prostitution, whether in or out of marriage; that to maintain marriage where love is wanting is to me the very worst form of prostitution, because it entails diseased children upon the world; and that wherever there is love there is no prostitution. I also frankly told her what I knew about her brother, Henry Ward Beecher, and other eminent men and women, to show her that many good and great people had already accepted, and were living, the theory of social freedom, though not yet ready to become its avowed advocates, one of whom I am.

She replied: That such doctrines were the rankest heresies, and that marriage, being divine, could never be sundered. She said: If a woman is compelled to leave her husband, she should take her children and retire into solitude for life, and never think of another man. She took upon herself to vouch for Mr. Beecher's faithfulness to his marriage vows, though I compelled her to admit she had no positive knowledge which could justify her in so doing; but she "*knew*" that, although her brother was an unhappy, he was nevertheless a true husband. She said (and the same has been repeated to me by other members of the Beecher family) that Mrs. Beecher was a virago—a constitutional liar—and so terrible a woman altogether that his friends seldom visited her house.

I replied: What you tell me that I did not previously know is sufficient to make it almost absolutely certain that what I do know must have been so; and if you were a proper person to judge, which I grant you are not, you should see that the facts you state are fatal to your theory of faithfulness to marriage. This seemed to awaken a new thought in her mind, for she became very abusive, calling me many hard names. When we parted, she said: Remember, Victoria Woodhull, that I shall strike you dead! I replied: Strike as much and as hard as you please, only don't do it in the dark, so that I cannot know who is my enemy.

She retorted: I will strike you in every way; I can and will kill you, if possible [all of this I repeated to Isabella Beecher Hooker at the time]; but I see she imagined the "malignant spirits" manifested by herself were mine instead of hers. She was drunk of them, and, as drunkards invariably do, thought that they were confronting instead of being possessed by her.

Shortly after this ride, I went to Hartford (her home) to speak on suffrage, not intending to even mention my social views. Miss Beecher thereupon wrote letters to all the Hartford papers, in which she warned all people from going to hear me, making nearly the same statements as those contained in her recent *Tribune* article, and sending others of a vilifying and libellous character.

As you well know, I have repeatedly, both in my paper and on the public rostrum, given the lie direct to the allegations about extorting money, and have defied those who deal in them to advance a single instance. It has never been done. Nevertheless, the assertion continues to be made, as if it can be continued indefinitely with utter impunity. Are you, sir, sufficiently informed to warrant the responsibility of that charge? Because I have permitted the press to originate and circulate all manner of things about my social life without rebuking it for meddling with what is nobody's business but my own, is it imagined I shall also permit it to charge base crimes against me and to go unscathed? If so, a slight mistake is made.

The only possible shadow of foundation Miss Beecher can find upon which to accuse me of "threatening" is something I would not have made public had she not compelled me. It is this: About a year ago I concluded to shut the mouths of a clique of loose and loud-tongued women who were continually stabbing me behind my back and making me a fiend incarnate in the eyes of the people. I grouped the clique together in an article of which I sent each member a printed slip, and in the following issue of the WEEKLY I wrote an editorial, in which I gave distinct notice that if the abuse of which I had cause to complain did not cease, I should retort by the publication of the article. Suffice it, the filthy fountains suddenly ceased to vomit forth their slime, and I have had no occasion to publish the article; but if it still arise, I shall not hesitate to do so.

I have also at sundry times urged Mr. Beecher to an avowal of his social views, by holding up the facts of his life as arguments. If this is what Miss Beecher refers to, I plead guilty; but she speaks of money, and to this I again reply, it is false, and challenge her or any other person, or all other persons, to produce a single instance to support the damning allegations.

Not long since the story was briskly circulated that I had attempted to blackmail Mrs. Elizabeth Phelps, and "War-



ington" was entrapped into repeating it in the Springfield *Republican*; but he was glad afterward to get out of it by saying it was the gossip of the Boston women (meaning the woman's journal clique, I suppose), which he ought not to have repeated. My lawyer called upon Mrs. Phelps, who indignantly denied the whole affair.

Fred B. Perkins, of *Old and New* made a similar allegation in the Hartford *Post*, copied in the Springfield *Republican*, in connection with Mrs. Livermore. I called on Mrs. L., in the latter paper, to admit or deny the truth of it, and she remains silent, not daring in public to stand by her private gossip. I say that people who resort to this method to damage an opponent are unworthy the name of man or woman.

Quickly following the article in the *Tribune* another appeared in the Worcester *Spy*, in which Woodhull and Claflin were distinctly charged with an attempt to blackmail Rev. Dr. Bellows. Friends immediately called on Dr. Bellows, who denied all knowledge of the source of the article and pronounced it utterly false.

Now, if there is a clique of persons, or any person, who think to break the force of the truth of anything I have published about anybody by this system of stigmatizing me all over the land as a professional blackmailer, and there are papers that will lend their aid to such a scheme, then I shall be compelled to adopt a course that will at once and forever stop its career.

In conclusion permit me to add, that I believe this letter was printed by Miss Beecher without the knowledge of her brother; because upon another occasion when she had volunteered to vouch for his virtue, he had replied to it: "I wish the driveling old — would mind her own business, and permit me to take care of my own reputation." I have no doubt he will make the same reply to this, her later effort.

And finally: Does Miss Beecher realize that she is invoking the interposition of the officials in her own case, since she has made statements derogatory to me which she cannot prove?

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

NEW YORK, April 2, 1873.

But we have waited patiently until now, hoping that these persons in the shape of men had a sufficient sense of honor and justice to permit us to refute the vile, base slander in the same columns in which it first appeared, but have waited in vain. On the contrary, we are informed that there is too great a sentiment against us and in favor of Henry Ward Beecher to allow our reply to appear before the public. To what depths of degradation has journalism sunk! To what depths of degradation have they who moved public opinion sunk! To what depth of degradation have all things sunk, when in a so-called Christian community a woman who has dared to speak the truth of the vicegerent of the Pagan God of the Bible, is denied what has never before been denied to the lowest and meanest of humanity! The *Tribune* and the *Sun*, two great leading dailies of the metropolis of America, dare not permit a woman to speak in her own defense in their columns, after publishing her to the world as guilty of one of the most infamous of felonies! Verily, the torch of the Commune cannot come too quickly to wipe out such disgraces to civilization and liberty; and verily it shall come, and that quickly; but it shall be a judgment they themselves invoke upon their own heads, as the slave holders invoked the war that exterminated slavery!

But the contemptible malignity of Miss Beecher was soon surpassed by the outrageous effrontery of some cur, barking at the command and under the pay of Plymouth Church, who wrote a "New York Letter" to a Rochester paper as follows:

A New York letter writer says the latest attempt of Woodhull and Claflin to blackmail a minister was made on the Rev. Dr. Bellows. They sent him a printed proof of what they were going to publish about him in case he did not come down with the cash. He was set down in the stereotyped fashion as a wolf in sheep's clothing, as a pious profligate, as a sacerdotal sinner, etc. Everybody is aware that Dr. Bellows is not that sort of a man, and, moreover, is capable of an exalted degree of indignation. Running his eye over the clear typography, his face flushed with righteous wrath. He informed the messenger of his opinion of those vile women, adding, if they published any such thing in regard to him, that he would make them smart for it. He then advised the carrier to leave the house instantly, on pain of being kicked out of doors, and the carrier left. Dr. Bellows has regretted ever since that he showed so much amiability.

Like its predecessor this was widely copied, and how widely may be inferred from the fact that the clipping from which this is printed was from the *Oregonian* of Portland, Oregon, sent us by a friend asking if there is any foundation for it.

The first copy, however, which we saw of it was from the *Spy*, Worcester, Mass. At that time Mrs. Dr. Ruggles and Laura Cuppy Smith were in our office. They immediately called upon Dr. Bellows, and he authorized them in his name to deny *in toto* that anything of the kind had ever happened. This they did, and their denial was published in the *Spy*.

Now, who the infamous scoundrel is who lives in New York and wrote that letter we do not know and have been unable to find out, but we now pronounce him a sneak-thief who dare not come to our office and face us, and who dare not inform us where he may be found.

But there is another sort of infamy to which many of the leading journals are given, which deserves the contempt of every honest person. For instance, of our recent lecture in Chicago, the *Tribune* of that city said editorially that it was unfit to be listened to, and spoke altogether in such a terribly condemnatory manner that all who did not hear it

were stunned by it. This paper gave no report whatever of what was said. The next day the editor was waited upon and expostulated with regarding the manner in which the lecture was treated, and was told that the signatures of a hundred respectable citizens could be obtained that there was not an obscene word in the whole lecture. The honest editor replied: "Oh! Editors know that all she has said about Beecher is true, and we must either indorse her and make her the most popular woman in the world, or write her down and crush her out; and we have determined to do the latter."

An evening or two later we spoke in East Saginaw. The following morning's paper not only refuted what had been said by the *Tribune*, but to prove it printed almost the whole lecture. And we defy any person to point out a single word in that speech that may not be freely spoken in the most refined society. So much for honesty in journalism; and so much for honest editors of the stripe of him of the Chicago *Tribune*, to whom we recommend for careful consideration the letter of Henry C. Bowen to Theodore Tilton, recently widely published, charging Henry Ward Beecher with rape.

We are sorry to feel obliged to use so much of our limited space to set forth the matter; but we are constantly receiving "clippings" from our friends, who are justly indignant that these things should float about uncontradicted, asking their origin, and we take this opportunity to answer for all that are past and for all that may come, that, first, last and all the time these libels upon us are without even a shadow for a foundation, and we trust our indignant friends will hurl this denial in the teeth of every contemptible scoundrel who will so far forget his manhood and lose all honor as to retail libels of which he has no proof. The whole press has howled at us because we spoke what we happened very well to know of "a revered citizen." Yet that same press has systematically villified us for three years by printing what it did not know and what is not true. But to just such degradation has journalism and journalists sunk in this country. Is it any wonder that revolution is sounding from one end of the country to the other; or any wonder that thousands will welcome it as the only competent salvation from the horrible despotism of the impacted mass of cowardice, hypocrisy and corruption called modern civilization, which now holds high carnival over the prostrate form of liberty.

#### OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

Over and over again,  
No matter which way I turn,  
I always find in the Book of Life  
Some lessons I have to learn,  
I must take my turn at the mill,  
I must grind out the golden grain,  
I must work at my task with a resolute will  
Over and over again.

We cannot measure the need  
Of even the tiniest flower,  
Nor check the flow of the golden sands  
That run through a single hour.  
But the morning dew must fall;  
And the sun and the summer rain  
Must do their part and perform it all  
Over and over again.

Over and over again  
The brook through the meadow flows,  
And over and over again  
The pond'rous mill-wheel goes  
Once doing will not suffice,  
Though doing be not in vain:  
And a blessing, failing us once or twice,  
May come if we try again.

The path that has once been trod  
Is never so rough to feet;  
And the lesson we once have learned  
Is never so hard to repeat.  
Though sorrowful tears may fall,  
And the heart to its depth be driven  
With storm and tempest, we need them all  
To render us meet for Heaven.

NEW YORK, April 20, 1873.

Mesdames Woodhull and Claflin—I am connected with the U. S. Courts, and write this to inform you that it is settled in the forthcoming trial that you are to be found guilty. It is no matter whether you are innocent or not, your fate is sealed. The Y. M. C. A. and the U. S. authorities have the whole thing fixed in your case. I do not like to see this wrong perpetrated, hence I warn you to look to your interests. I have overheard conversations about this plot and know it to be a fact, so you can depend upon it. You cannot get any show of justice in U. S. Courts, as the Y. M. C. A. are too influential here. If your lawyers should proclaim this fact in the court, then the U. S. authorities might get scared and back down; but this is the only chance you have.

A FRIEND.

If the Government do this and the people can stand the perpetration of such villainy, it is well that we suffer that they be reduced to know just what they are: a race of dogs, fit only to be kicked about by their masters, whom they have been fools enough to set up over them. Blood cannot flow too soon or too freely when such a plot as this can be coolly contrived by nearly the highest court of justice in the nation. Go ahead, gentlemen, you will soon reach the end of your rope. But then, look out for your heads!

AYER, Mass., March 24, 1873.

What an inglorious comment on a government that proposes to guarantee "liberty and the pursuit of happiness," rife with the spirit of intolerance, clamorous to have some of their God's

Christ or the Bible put into the Constitution. We have the God of Paine, Jefferson and Franklin already in possession who will repel every invader. Jesus conquered all ambition for distinction in that line. And the Bible, if it is the infallible Word of God, is a work of such rare theological wisdom, that they made it the limitation of his speech if it is a crime worthy of martyrdom to repeat it.

Tolerance, the younger brother of intolerance, is really assuming the voice and courage of its elder brother; the former says thou shalt not go, the latter, in the same tone, says thus far. But freedom, that hated word—child of love—is being rescued from that ark of rushes which holds the conqueror of kings.

Every day that moral hero lies in the Tombs is a disgraceful advertisement of the desecration of human rights and widens the stream of sympathy freighted with material aid, that sets directly toward the object of their hate and persecution.

How true! "He that diggeth a pit shall fall therein."

"Can ye burn the truth in the martyr's fire?  
Or chain the thought in the dungeon dire?  
Or stay the soul as it soars away,  
In the glorious light from the mouldering clay?  
The truth that liveth, the thoughts that grow,  
The spirit ascending, all answer no!"

In writing the inclosed I followed the dictates as a special impression.

Yours, for truth,

E. MYRICH.

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