

For the Torch of Reason.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Dutch Aristocracy.

BY HELEN H. GARDENER.

Few of us who belong to the younger generation have any realizing sense of the methods and motive which attended the birth of the woman suffrage idea. It is only recently that I have learned why the old Dutch aristocracy of New York approved certain features of the work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, at a time when she stood as pre-eminently the leader of that derided cause, as early as 1844.

Residing in Albany several years, Mrs. Stanton, being interested in the bills before the legislature, took an active part in the discussion on the "Married Woman's Property Bill," then pending, from 1844 to 1848. With Ernestine Rose and Pauline Wright Davis, she scattered petitions in favor of the bill all over the state.

As she was personally acquainted with many of the members, and connected with the Dutch aristocracy through the Livingstons and Schuylers, she had many social opportunities for discussing the question before the legislature.

As the young men belonging to the aristocracy were generally extravagant and luxurious, the Dutch farmers were not willing to see their hard-earned fortunes pass into such hands. By the old common law of England, at that time married women could inherit nothing; the husbands not only owned their wives, but their inheritance and everything they possessed. The father owned the children; could will away the unborn child. He owned the wife's clothes, her ornaments, her wig, false teeth, her cork leg, if she had one.

The Dutch fathers, wishing their fortunes to descend to their daughters and grandchildren, were deeply interested in the passage of the "Married Woman's Property Bill." Thus, the influence of the aristocracy on one side and reformers on the other, combined to secure a speedy passage of the bill. Mrs. Stanton had several hearings before the committee that had the bill in charge, from year to year, until it passed in 1848.

Having removed to Seneca Falls, New York, Mrs. Stanton called a convention there the same year, the first ever known for the discussion of the rights of women. She made all the arrangements, wrote the bill of rights and the resolutions, and there made the first demand for the right of suffrage.

This resolution was opposed by all the friends in committee, and she was urged not to present it to the convention. But she said it was the most important resolution in the series, and she would take the responsibility of its success or

defeat. She consulted Frederick Douglass (as he could speak from personal experience), who agreed with her that the first need of an oppressed class was a voice in the laws and law-makers; so he helped her to argue the point with their opponents, and together they carried the resolution by a large majority vote.

Mrs. Stanton was the only woman in the state who interested herself in the "Divorce Bill" when that was pending. She was invited to address the legislature, and her able speech was published by the hundreds and widely circulated. The bill, asking divorce for drunkenness, desertion, imprisonment and cruel and brutal treatment, lacked only four votes of passing. Again, Mrs. Stanton was the only woman who had a hearing on the bill to license the social vice. The committee who had that bill in charge were to report the next day. A member strongly opposed to it met Mrs. Stanton by chance in the corridor, and urged her to go before the committee and make her protest in the name of woman. He at once secured her an invitation to do so. As she had no speech prepared, she thought that the bill itself, read by a woman in the presence of a woman, would rouse every spark of chivalry there was in the soul of man. Her rich, deep voice and impressive manner revealed a new depth of infamy in that execrable bill. As she slowly read its gross provisions, its advocates one by one bent their heads. At the close she said: "Honorable gentlemen, would any of you be willing that one of your daughters should be subject to the provisions of such an odious bill?" Deep voices answered in chorus, "No, no, no!" "Then," said she, "legislate for the unfortunate wards of the state as you would for your own daughters. This bill is an insult to every woman in the Empire State. Kill it in your committee that it may never appear before the legislature, and thus, gentlemen, honor yourselves!"

The committee adjourned, and nothing more was heard of the bill. Mrs. Stanton was unsparingly denounced for her appeals in the halls of legislation. Women would cross the street to avoid speaking to her (ancestors, probably, of the present anti-suffragists, all of whom, then as now, grasped eagerly all of the benefits of property and other rights which her labor thus secured to them).

Although the busts of several women from other states have been placed in our Capitol, Mrs. Stanton, who was born within forty miles of Albany, and who inaugurated the movement for the political rights of women in this state, has as yet no place there.

Fortunately, Susan B. Anthony appeared, eight years after Mrs.

Stanton commenced her public work, and then Mrs. Stanton was indeed made whole. With Susan by her side, she was ready to defy the world. Arm in arm with her, she did not care if every woman gathered her skirts about her and crossed over to the other side. It seems to me it is not asking or expecting too much that, while Mrs. Stanton is still alive, her bust may be placed beside that of Aunt Susan. United in life and in labor, death should not divide them.

To Susan B. Anthony.

ON HER 80TH BIRTHDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1900.

[We think the following from Mrs. Stanton's own pen, is a very appropriate companion to the above noble tribute—E.D.]

My honored friend, I'll ne'er forget
That day in June when first we met.
Oh, would I had the skill to paint
My vision of that Quaker Saint.
Robed in pale blue and silver gray,
No silly fashions did she essay.
Her brow was smooth and very fair
'Neath coils of wavy, soft, brown hair.
Her voice was like the lark—so clear,
So rich and pleasant to the ear.
The "Prentice hand," on man oft tried,
Now made in her a Nation's pride.

We met and loved, no more to part,
Hand clasped in hand, heart bound to heart.

We've traveled in the West together,
Both day and night, in stormy weather;
Climbing the rugged suffrage hill,
And bravely facing every ill,
While resting, speaking, anywhere,
Quite often in the open air;
From sleighs, oxcarts, or, mayhap,
coaches,
Besieged with beetles, bugs and roaches.
All this for the emancipation
Of the dear women of the nation.

Now we have had enough of travel,
And in our turn laid down the gavel.
So, in the time-honored retreat,
Gladly now we'll take our seat.
In triumph, having reached four-score,
We'll give our thoughts to art and lore.
To younger hands resign the reins
With all the honors and the gains.
United, down life's bill we'll glide,
Whate'er the coming years betide.
Parted only when first, in time,
Eternal rest is thine or mine.

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Enemies of the Public Schools.

BY G. A. WALKER.

The question of public education is hardly debatable any longer. Throughout the greater portion of the country the public school system is an established fact, and the question of its policy is as irrelevant as would be the comparison of the full-grained cereals of modern cultivation with the shriveled kernels of wild, original growth, or the fine wool of the Merino with the hair-like fleece of the sheep's first parents.

Debates on public school education, whose arguments are grounded on what Aristotle, or any other antiquated Heathen or Christian, may have said, are as puerile as were the arguments on the slavery question backed up by passages from the scriptures, or on the temperance question with weapons polemical, extracted, often extorted, from the same source. Not what any one said a few years or centuries ago, but what obtains today, is what we should consider. The logic of events wiped out slavery, and

the logic of events has given us the public school.

That the public school is doing its appropriate work well, its worst enemies will not deny. That its instruction is thorough, practical, and cheap, will not be denied. That it does not give religious instruction is its fault in the eyes of its enemies; yet the same people will allow that it could not give such instruction and be true to its nature, and conform to the conditions essential to its life. Its enemies do not seek to improve or reform, but to destroy, the free public school. It is folly to argue with such people. The motive of their hostility renders all reasoning nugatory. An exhibit of the good done by the schools in their peculiar line, only increases the hatred of the enemy, and, increased in an armor of bigotry and prejudice, he is proof against appeal and impervious to reasoning.

One argument used against public education is that the State has no right to do what the parent should do; and that, if the State educates, it should, to be logical and consistent, feed, clothe, catechise, and create the child. This style of argument, so fond of the garb of logic, is apt to be exceedingly nonsensical in its final deductions. Because the State does one thing, it does not follow that, to be consistent, it must do everything. Because a man swallows a mouthful of salt water he is not bound to drink up the sea. Because man bores into the earth for ore, is he by consistency compelled to work through to China? Truly consistency is the bugbear of little minds.

The State is an artificial person, and, like all such, it has its powers, obligations, privileges, and limitations—lines well defined in all clear, honest minds. Surely in view of the close relationship of ignorance and crime; in view of the utter unfitness of many parents to provide for the education of their children; in view of the fact that the central principle of government is association for protection, improvement and preservation; in view of the multitudes of children on our streets for whose education no parental or religious provision is made; in view of the fact that with all male adults citizenship means suffrage and suffrage means rule; in view of the fact that nothing is so conducive to intelligence as education, and nothing so conducive to honesty and morality as intelligence—in view of all this, might it not seem to be the province and privilege of the State to educate the children within its borders?

If the enemies of the public school can not see the force of this argument, let them go west and learn how, on the vast prairie, a community of "buffalo bulls" would form a circle outside their huddled herd of young when a formidable