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Sisterhood of Courage

Doree Lovell

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STUDENT'S NAME

SISTERHOOD OF COURAGE

By

Doree Lovell

A Woman's History Dramatization

in Two Acts



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Written as culminating project for master's thesis in Playwriting/
Theatre Criticism for Lindenwood College, Washington, D.C. campus.

— Doree Lovell

THE 1943s
1978

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This script was conceived as an historical dramatization, showing the important role women played in developing our nation's social, political and philosophical consciousness.

It is intended to be a dramatic "herstory," focusing on human rights and feminist issues, as they emerged from about the mid-19th to the early 20th century through the lives of five extraordinary women: Elizabeth Gady Stanton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Sanger, Sojourner Truth and "Mother" Mary Jones.

My primary aim was to revitalize and recreate the drama -- the innovative ideas, the courageous acts, the unswerving leadership -- of these feminine foremothers.

I choose these five women above all others because I was truly awed and inspired by their courageous words and works -- particularly in the context of the times in which they lived.

I have used what I believe is a dramatic narrative theatrical form to bring these women to life on stage. Ideas and incidents in this script were taken almost entirely from biographical or autobiographical writings of the major characters portrayed and from incidental writings of other 19th century women.

The staging of the script requires particular attention to setting the mood of the era in which they worked and struggled. Sets, costumes, props, visual aids (slides, photographs, etc.), sound effects and music must be used to recreate the century when women's rights were not taken for granted or hardly even acknowledged.

It would also be helpful, for example, if the theatre displayed in the foyer an exhibition of these early women's photographs, manuscripts of writings and other memorabilia. Ushers could wear 19th century costumes. Also, music composed by women of the times could be played before and after the performance. Perhaps some authentic refreshments of the era could also be served or sold.

Each of the five major characters must be made distinctly recognizable (through costume, movement, voice, demeanor), so the audience is immediately aware which of them is speaking. Minor unidentified female/male roles or voices can be uncharacteristic so as to subordinate them.

The role of the young girl is important. She represents not only youth -- youth of each of the major characters, youth of their era, youth of our era today -- but additionally stands for more. The young girl is spectator and commentator -- starting out in the opening scene at Stanton's side at the first woman's convention and ending up in the final scene as the last one at her side at life's end.

During the interval, she has watched, participated, experienced and developed with the ideas, words and deeds in the script. In other words, she is meant to progress from girlish teenager to blossoming young woman. The girl must therefore relate her actions and reactions partly to the onstage characters of the past and partly to the audience onlookers of the present. She is a link between past and present.

-- Doree Lovell

SISTERHOOD OF COURAGE

There are 6 actresses who will play six major parts and a variety of smaller roles. Major characters are:

- 1) Elizabeth Cady Stanton - ECS
- 2) Margaret Sanger - MS
- 3) Sojourner Truth - ST
- 4) "Mother" Mary Jones - MJ
- 5) Charlotte P. Gilman - CG
- 6) Young (teenage) girl - GIRL

The play should be performed in-the-round, preferably. There is one intermission.

One woman musician with guitar plays selected historic women's songs as background and transitional music throughout play.

ACT I

The stage is black. A small pinhole light appears on a gavel resting on podium. The stage is set with rocking chair, stools, podium, hatrack and trunk, which contains props and costume changes. Slides are projected on wall(s) with photos and dates of each major character as introduced.

A music medley is played by musician who enters in spot, crosses stage and takes seat back of stage. Attention focuses on her briefly before house lights start to blink. As soon as house lights blink, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Stanton and girl walk onto dimly lit stage, before house light are fully down. ECS, in costume of mid-1900s, raps on gavel which is still in spotlight on podium. Girl sits on floor and leans against podium.

House lights are now down, audience is seated. Pin spot on gavel has slowly grown to cover podium. Other actresses are seated throughout audience in end seats, so they may rise, speak and walk to stage easily. Their opening lines are to be spoken as each actress arises from seat in audience.

As soon as podium is in full spotlight, stage center, ECS quickly raps gavel again, looks down and nods at girl.

STANTON: This first convention on women's rights will come to order this 19th day of January, 1848....

GIRL: Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, presiding....

STANTON: Ladies (gavels again)... I will read from our Woman's Declaration of Independence. . . .

STANTON:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government. Such has been the patient sufferance of women and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.... the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world. . . .

(At the end of this reading, 1st actress stands up like a shot from seat in audience and reads her line, then strides quickly onstage into separate spot. Each of other three actresses do same in turn. All cast ends up on stage in spots surrounding ECS . . .)

1ST ACTRESS: Resolved, that woman is man's equal -- was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she be recognized as such;

2ND: Resolved, that all laws which prevent women from occupying such a station, or which place her in a position inferior to man, are of no force or authority;

3RD: Resolved, that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live;

4TH: Resolved, that the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women for securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce . . .

(Long pause before next resolution.)

ECS: Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise. (She does not move until the other actresses' reaction is over. Spots dim and general stage lights come up quickly.)

ALL: (Gasp, react look shocked. Young girl claps and looks pleased, jumps up excitedly.)

1ST: Is it possible? 3rd: Right here in public?

2ND: How bold! 4th: Where did she ever get the nerve?

3RD: (Jumps off stool) Lizzie, Thee will make us ridiculous . . .

GIRL: (defensively) What do thee call ridiculous . . . ?

1ST: Nay, to my mind. We women stand here in sublime subjugation, gathered together in protest brooded over the ages

2ND: We only ask for redress of injustices visited on the persons and destinies of half the human souls in our country

3RD: The prejudice against color, of which we hear so much, is no stronger than that against sex

(sarcastically)
4TH: ^ The Negro's skin and the woman's sex are both prima facie evidence that they were intended to be in subjection to the white Saxon man.

(Lizzie goes to young girl actress who has jumped up again, takes her hand. Lizzie pats girl's hand, then speaks.)

ECS: For fifty years we have been plaintiffs in the courts of justice, but as the bench, the bar, and the jury are all men, we are nonsuited every time. Some men tell us we must be patient and persuasive, that we must be womanly. My friends, what is man's idea of womanliness? It is to have a manner which pleases him--quiet, deferential, submissive, approaching him as a subject does a master. He wants no self-assertion on our part, no defiance. What do we know yet of the womanly? The women we have seen thus far have been, with rare exceptions, the mere echoes of men. Man has spoken in the State, the Church and the Home, and made the codes, creeds and customs which govern every relation in life, and women have simply echoed all his thoughts and walked in paths he prescribed. And this they call womanly.

GIRL: (She has been sitting occasionally raising hand, standing hesitantly up trying to get attention Now that she has made it, she pops up and pops off, the first to react to this speech of Stanton's.)

The true republic--men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less!

(She sits down, supremely happy; cheer, lights go out quickly. Spot comes up on Stanton . . .)

ECS: (in spot)
No words could express our astonishment on finding, a few days afterward, that what seemed to us so timely, so rational, and so sacred, should be a subject for sarcasm and ridicule to the entire press of the nation. (She looks around at other women.)

2ND: With our Declaration of Rights and Resolutions for a text, it seemed as if every man who could wield a pen

prepared a homily on "woman's sphere." All the journals from Maine to Texas seemed to strive with each other to see which could make our movement appear the most ridiculous. (She and another actress exit.)

3RD: So pronounced was the popular voice against us, in the parlor, press, and pulpit, that most of the ladies who had attended the convention and signed the declaration, one by one, withdrew their names and influence and joined our persecutors. (Remaining actresses except girl exit. ECS is last to leave. BLACK OUT.)

(Lights come up as other actresses enter carrying props. Each is playing role and work of housewife/mother/wife, daughter.)

GIRL: (She is in rocker holding baby doll; sits up and pipes up, impudently.) If all women could be born with inferior minds and men with superior ones, the scheme for the home could doubtless be perfectly satisfactory. But unless that can be done, it is not

1ST: (Scrubbing) Woman must feel that she is the equal and is designed to be the fellow laborer of her brother; I ask no favors for my sex All I ask our brethren is, that they will take their feet from off our necks, and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God designed us to occupy.

2ND: (Sewing) Women ought to feel a peculiar sympathy in the colored man's wrong, for, like him, she has been accused of mental inferiority, and denied the privileges of a liberal education.

3RD: (Cooking) The clearness and strength of the brain of the woman prove continually the injustice of the clamorous contempt long poured upon what was scornfully called "the female mind." There is no female mind. The brain is not an organ of sex. As well speak of a female liver.

(ironing)

4TH: A If God has assigned a sphere to man and one to woman, we claim the right ourselves to judge of His design in reference to us, and we accord to man the same privilege. We think that a man has quite enough to do to find out his own individual calling, without being taxed to find out also where every woman belongs There is no such thing as sphere for sex.

ECS: (Holding Bible, she enters and joins group in their "womanly" activities.) The first step in the elevation of woman to her true position as an equal factor in human progress, is the cultivation of the religious sentiment in regard to her dignity and equality, the recognition . . . of an ideal Heavenly Mother, to whom their prayers should be addressed, as well as to a Father. (Opens Bible and reads.) "God created man in his own image, male and female." Thus Scripture declares the eternity and equality of sex.

(Slow black out of lights, then slow face up of one spot.)

VOICE: (Proudly) Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founder of the Woman's Rights Movement, born 1815.

ECS: (In spot) I commenced the struggle of life under favorable circumstances on the 12th day of November, 1815, the same year that my father, Daniel Cady, a distinguished lawyer in the state of New York, was elected to Congress.

The first event engraved on my memory was the birth of a sister when I was four years old. I heard so many friends remark, "What a pity it is she's a girl!" that I felt a kind of compassion for the little baby. I did not understand at the time that girls were considered an inferior order of beings.

GIRL: (Reading from huge book she has been holding. It is obviously slightly beyond her normal vocabulary and she is making effort to sound grown up, occasionally stumbling over words.) All women are dissatisfied with their position as inferiors, and their dissatisfaction increases in exact ratio with their intelligence and development.

VOICE: Margaret Sanger, birth control pioneer, born 1879.

SANGER: (In spot) I was the youngest of six, but after me others kept coming until we were eleven. Our dolls were babies--living, wriggling bodies to bathe and dress instead of lifeless faces that never cried or slept.

Father, born in Ireland, was a non-conformist through and through. He was a philosopher, a rebel, and an artist, none of which was calculated to produce wealth. Our existence was like that of any artist's family--chickens today and feathers tomorrow.

His parting words to each of his sons and daughters who had grown old enough to fend for themselves were, "Leave the world better because you, my child, have dwelt in it."

I learned early in life to associate poverty and large families. Mother bore eleven children. She died at forty-eight. My father lived until he was eighty.

GIRL: (Still reading) An eminent physician of Boston once remarked that if in the economy of nature, the sexes alternated in giving birth to children no family would ever have more than three, the husband bearing one and the wife two. If men had to alternate with their wives the duties of the nursery, fewer & further between would be its inmates.
(Puts down and changes costume for next scene.)

(Stanton narrates as young girl and actress dressed as man act out the following scene.)

STANTON: When I was eleven years old, my only brother, who had just graduated from Union College, came home to die. A young man of great talent and promise, he was the pride of my father's heart.

I recall going into the large darkened parlor and finding the casket, mirrors, and pictures all draped in white, and my father seated, pale and immovable. As he took no notice of me, after standing a long while, I climbed upon his knee, when he mechanically put his arm about me, and, with my head resting against his beating heart, we both sat in silence, he thinking of the wreck of all his hopes in the loss of a dear son, and I wondering what could be said or done to fill the void in his breast. At length he heaved a deep sigh

FATHER: Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy!

GIRL: Throwing my arms about his neck, I replied: "I will try to be all my brother was." (Lights dim.)

(Girl gets off father's lap, moves to other part of stage, kneels as if saying prayers at bedside.)

(Sanger narrates as young girl and same actress dressed as man act out scene . . .)

SANGER: Saying my prayers for mother's benefit was spasmodic. One evening when we had finished this dutiful ritual I climbed on father's chair to kiss him good night.

FATHER: What was that you were saying about bread?

GIRL: Why, that was in the Lord's Prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'"

FATHER: Who were you talking to?

GIRL: To God.

FATHER: Is God a baker?

SANGER: I was shocked. Nevertheless, I rallied to the attack and replied as best I could, doubtless influenced by conversations I had heard.

GIRL: No, of course not. It means the rain, the sunshine, and all the things to make the wheat, which makes the bread.

FATHER: Well, well, so that's the idea. Then why don't you say so? Always say what you mean, my daughter; it is much better.

SANGER: Thereafter I began to question what I had previously taken for granted and to reason for myself. It was not pleasant, but father had taught me to think.

(Light down and out come up again quickly.)

VOICE: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, humanist, philosopher, born 1860.

(Girl says lines of young Charlotte; actress plays mother as CPG narrates.)

CPG: (In spot) The time: 1870. Scene, the little bedroom I shared with mother. I was sitting up in bed. She stood by the bureau combing her hair.

MOTHER: You must do it, or you must leave me.

CPG: "It" was to apologize to Mrs. Stevens--for a thing I had not done. There was a grape-vine in the back yard. Mrs. S. had eaten a bunch of grapes from it, I, sitting at a window, had observed her. Being something of a psychic, she asserted that I had thought harsh things of her--that she had no right to eat those grapes. I denied it, but mother believed her, and insisted that I apologize. I declined. Hence the ultimatum.

MOTHER: You must leave me.

CPG: It was an expression of her profound belief that the only modus vivendi for a child with a parent was absolute obedience. Never before had my own conscience come squarely against hers. To apologize for what I had not done was wrong.

So I sat there and made answer, slowly, meaning to say the first part, and the last part saying itself.

GIRL: I am not going to do it,--and I am not going to leave you--and what are you going to do about it?

CPG: Doubtless she was horrified beyond words at this first absolute rebellion from a hitherto docile child. (Mother hits child.)

GILMAN: She came over and struck me. I did not care in the least. She might do what she would, it could not alter my decision. I was realizing with an immense illumination that neither she, nor any one, could make me do anything. One could suffer, one could die if it came to that, but one could not be coerced.

GIRL: The isolation of every human soul and the necessity of self-dependence must give each individual the right to choose her own individual life.

VOICE: "Mother" Mary Jones, labor leader and freedom fighter, born 1830.

JONES: I was born in the city of Cork, Ireland.
My people were poor. For generations they had fought for Ireland's freedom. My father came to America in 1835.

After finishing the common schools, I attended school with the intention of becoming a teacher. Dress-making too, I learned proficiently. My first position was teaching in a convent. Later, I came to Chicago and opened a dress-making establishment. I preferred sewing to bossing little children. I was married in the year 1861. In 1867, a yellow fever epidemic swept the state and I lost my husband and four children Now, my address is like my shoes, it travels with me. I became more and more engrossed in the labor struggle and decided to take an active part in the efforts of the working people to better the conditions under which they worked and lived. Those were the days of sacrifice for the cause of labor. Those were the days when we had no halls, when there were no high salaried officers, no feasting with the enemies of labor. (She starts to leave stage, turns back to say . . .) The trouble is that no one in Washington cares. I saw our legislators in one hour pass three bills for the relief of the railways but when labor cries for aid for children they will not listen.

I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad he would be a United States Senator.

GIRL: The great woman's movement and labor movement of to-day are parts of the same pressure, the same world-progress. An economic democracy must rest on a free womanhood; and a free womanhood leads to an economic democracy.

VOICE: Sojourner Truth, evangelist, ex-slave, born 1797.

GIRL: Well, Sojourner, did you always go by this name?

(in usual heavy dialect)

TRUTH: A No, 'deed! My name was Isabella; but when I left the house of bondage, I left everything behind. An' so I went to the Lord an' asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord gave me Sojourner, because I was to travel up an' down the land. Afterward I told the Lord I wanted another name, 'cause everybody else had two names; and the Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people.

Ye see some ladies have given me a white satin banner (pulling out of her pocket and unfolding a white banner) printed "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

(Spot on her dims to low level. Spotlight comes up on guitarist beside stage)

(Guitarist in dim spotlight, plays and sings following lyrics, written by Sojourner Truth during her lifetime, and often sung by her.)

Song - By Sojourner Truth

I am pleading for my people --
A poor, down-trodden race,
Who dwell in freedom's boasted land,
With no abiding place.

I am pleading for the mothers
Who gave in wild despair
Upon the hated auction block,
And see their children there.

I feel for those in bondage--
Well may I feel for them;
I know how fiendish hearts can be
That sell their fellow-men.

But while your kindest sympathies
To foreign lands do roam,
I would ask you to remember
Your own oppressed at home.

I plead with you to sympathize
With sighs and groans and scars,
And note how base the tyranny
Beneath the stripes and stars.

(Lights up on stage; music plays softly, then hits militant chord.)

(Sojourner sits on stage as though in a sort of witness stand. Young girl is at her side. An actress approaches audience as a lawyer approaches a jury, and speaks. One cast member is with sitting back in audience in end row seat . . . She responds one line:)

LAWYER; (Actress) It has been justly remarked that "God never made a slave. Man never was put under the feet of men by the first charter of human rights which was given by God. (She grabs girl and thrusts her toward audience as though she's for sale . . .) I appeal to you, my friends, as mothers: are you willing to enslave your children? You start back with horror and indignation at such a question. But why, if slavery is not wrong to those upon whom it is imposed?

ACTRESS: (As audience) But why appeal to women on this subject since they did not make laws?

LAWYER: I know you do not make the laws, but I also know that you are the wives and mothers, the sisters and daughters of those who do; and if you really suppose you can do nothing to overthrow slavery, you are greatly mistaken.

1ST: You can read on this subject.

2ND: You can pray over this subject.

3RD: You can speak on this subject.

4TH: You can act on this subject

LAWYER: Speak to your relatives, friends, acquaintances,
be not afraid . . . to let your sentiments be
known

(Lawyer and Sojourner exit, leaving girl and Stanton on stage.)

(Slow fade of lights on one side stage; lights up on Stanton
and girl on other side of stage.)

(She narrates as young girl and other actresses as clients
act out scene:)

STANTON: As my father's office joined the house, I spent
there much of my time, when out of school, listening
to the clients stating their cases, talking with the students,
and reading the laws in regard to woman.

With the sad complaints of the women, my mind was sorely
perplexed. (Girl flips through several small books, marking
them at certain passages.)

When, from time to time, my attention was called to these
odious laws, I would mark them in my father's books with a pencil;
becoming more and more convinced of the necessity of taking
some active measures against these unjust provisions, I resolved
to seize the first opportunity, when alone in the office, to cut
every one of them out of the books; supposing my father and his
library were the beginning and end of the law.

(Girl picks up book from podium and comments while leafing through.
Slide flashed on wall also shows list of woman's grievances)

GIRL: We have every qualification required by the Constitution,
necessary to the legal voter, but the one of sex. We are
moral, virtuous, and intelligent, and in all respects quite equal
to the proud white man himself. The wife can own nothing, sell
nothing. She has no right even to the wages she earns, her
person, her time, her services are the property of another. She
can neither sue nor be sued. She is not held morally responsible
for any crime committed in the presence of her husband, so
completely is her very existence supposed by law to be merged
with that of another. By your laws, the child is the absolute
property of the father, wholly at his disposal in life or death.
In case of separation, the law gives the children to the father,
no matter what his character or condition. (Slams book shut.)

STANTON: However, this mutilation of his volumes was never accomplished, for without letting me know that he had discovered my secret, he explained to me one evening how laws were made, the large number of lawyers and libraries there were all over the State, and that if his library should burn up it would make no difference in woman's condition.

FATHER: When you are grown up, and able to prepare a speech, you must go down to Albany and talk to the legislators; tell them all you have seen in this office--the sufferings of these Scotchwomen, robbed of their inheritance and left dependent on their unworthy sons, and, if you can persuade them to pass new laws, the old ones will be a dead letter.

STANTON: Thus was the future object of my life foreshadowed and my duty plainly outlined by him who was most opposed to it later on.

(Lights on stage switch off from Stanton scene to C.P. Gilman.)

GILMAN: (Narrates, as actress and girl act out parts)
One day when that big schoolroom was quiet save for the soft buzz of many hushed voices muttering over their lessons, the speculative Charlotte said to herself:

GIRL: I wonder why we all have to keep still I wonder what would happen if any one spoke out loud . . . I'm going to find out. But I was cautious well as experimental, and selected the shortest word I could think of. Across the low-murmuring room arose a clear, childish voice remarking, "ME."

TEACHER: Who said that? GIRL: Up went my hand.

TEACHER: Come here. (The teacher puts her arm around her)
Why did you do that?

GIRL: I wanted to see what would happen.

GILMAN: Nothing happened. She said I must not do it again, for which indeed there was no occasion. So I learned another great lesson, long remembered and acted on--that things debarred may sometimes be done--in safety Another time, I had reached long division and learned how to prove the examples, a keen delight to the rational mind. Taking the slate to the teacher...

TEACHER: This one is wrong.

GIRL: I have proved it, I replied confidently.

TEACHER: (Showing girl book with answers) See, here is the answer, yours is wrong.

GIRL: But I have proved it.

GILMAN: Then she did the example herself, and proved it, and I was right -- the book was wrong! This was a great lesson; science, law, was more to be trusted than authority. . . .

(Lights on Gilman scene dim, lights upon Sanger narrating scene which actress and girl act out.)

SANGER: Though the immediate occasion for reading medical books had ceased with mother's death, I had never, during these months, lost my deep conviction that perhaps she might have been saved had I had sufficient knowledge of medicine, I could at least make a start with nursing.

The great self-confidence with which I entered upon my duties soon received a slight shock. One of our cases was an old man from the County Home. He complained chiefly of pains in his leg and, since his condition was not very serious, the superintendent of nurses left him one afternoon in my care. This was my first patient. When I heard the clapper of his little bell, I hurried with a professional air to his bedside.

ACTRESS: (as old man) Missy Sanger, will you please bandage up my sore leg? It does me so much good. (Girl proceeds to bandage leg)

SANGER: Having just had my initial lesson in bandaging, I was elated at this opportunity to try my skill. I set to work with a great precision, and, when I had finished, congratulated myself on a neat job, admiring the smooth white leg. My first entry went on his record sheet.

A little later the superintendent, in making her rounds, regarded the old man perplexedly.

NURSE: Why have you got your leg bandaged?

OLDMAN: I asked the nurse to do it for me.

NURSE: Why that leg? It's the other one that hurts.

OLD MAN: Oh, she was so kind I didn't want to stop her.

SANGER: I bowed my head in embarrassment, but I was young and eager and it did not stay bowed long.

(BLACK OUT)

(Mother Jones walks on stage while lights are coming up . . .)

MOTHER: It was about 1891 when I was down in Virginia. There was a strike in the Dietz mines and the boys had sent for me. When I got off the train at Norton a fellow walked up to me...

GUY: Are you Mother Jones?

MOTHER: Yes, I am Mother Jones...

GUY: The superintendent told me that if you came down here he would blow out your brains.

JONES: You tell the superintendent that I am not coming to see him anyway. I am coming to see the miners.

The Consolidated Coal Company that owns the little town forbade the distribution of the notices of our meeting and arrested any one found with a notice. But we got the news around. Several of our men went into the camp. They went in twos. One pretended he was deaf and the other kept hollering in his ear as they walked around.

1ST: Mother Jones is going to have a meeting Sunday afternoon outside the town on the sawdust pile.

JONES: Then the deaf fellow would ask him what he said and he would holler to him again. So the word got around the entire camp and we had a big crowd.

Then the company tried to bring in scabs. I told the men to stay home with the children for a change and let the women attend to the scabs. I organized an army of women housekeepers.

I decided not to go for I knew they would arrest me and that might rout the army. (As she describes the following scene, young girl ~~is~~ actress is on stage, dressing to match the description . . . other cast members mill around stage.) I selected as leader an Irish woman who had a most picturesque appearance. She had slept late and her husband had told her to hurry up and get into the army. Her face was red and her eyes were mad. I looked at her and felt that she could raise a rumpus.

JONES: You lead the army up to the Drip Mouth. Take that tin dishpan you have with you and your hammer, and when the scabs and the mules come up, hammer and howl. Then all of you hammer and howl and be ready to chase the scabs with your mops and brooms. Don't be afraid of anyone.

1ST: She led the women, and when the mules came up with the scabs and the coal, she began beating on the dishpan and hollering and all the army joined in with her. The sheriff tapped her on the shoulder.

(Slide projected on wall shows mules, miners, women, etc.)

(Recorded voice imitates male sheriff's lines, while girl mouths or mimes words to the recorded voice, exaggerating them)

SHERIFF: My dear girl, remember the mules. Don't frighten them.

JONES: She took the old tin pan and she hit him with it.

GIRL: (Hollering) To hell with you and the mules!

VOICE: He fell over and dropped into the creek. Then the mules bucked and kicked the scab drivers. The scabs started running down hill, followed by the army of women with mops and pails and brooms.

A poll parrot in a near by shack screamed at the superintendent

RECORDING: Got hell, did you? Got hell?

(Recorded voice of poll parrot repeats this line. All ladies flop down as if pooped, but pleased with themselves mightily.)

MOTHER: Those were the days before the extensive use of gun men, of military, of jails, of police clubs. There had been no bloodshed. There had been no riots. And the victory was due to the army of women with their mops and brooms.

(All women stand up, rattle mops, buckets, etc. victoriously, then march around military file, putting down props, taking stance and saying following lines:)

1ST: Is there any instance in all history of an oppressed class being secured in all their rights without assuming a "belligerent attitude".

2ND: Earnestness, determination, true dignity oftentimes require a "belligerent attitude."

3RD: Just imagine some writer in the old Boston Gazette, saying in the height of the Revolution of '76, "I am sorry James Otis, John Adams, Patrick Henry and George Washington are so belligerent. How disgraceful to the memory of the Puritans, for New England men to rush on board a vessel and pitch a whole cargo of tea into the harbor.

4TH: What spiteful child's play was that! How much better to have petitioned King George and his Parliament in a dignified manner for a 'respectful consideration' of their grievances. (All march off.)

(Elizabeth Candy Stanton steps stage center, Gilman sits on stool.)

ECS: It was in Peterboro that I first met one who was then considered the most eloquent and impassioned orator on the anti-slavery platform, Henry B. Stanton.

One outcome of those glorious days was a marriage in May, 1840, and a voyage to the Old World.

Mr. Stanton was going to Europe as a delegate to the World's Anti-slavery Convention, and we did not wish the ocean to roll between us. The clergyman who married us had to be persuaded to leave out the word "obey" in the marriage ceremony. As I obstinately refused to obey one with whom I supposed I was entering into an equal relation

I have very serious objections to being called by my husband's name. Ask our colored brethren if there is nothing in a name. Why are the slaves nameless unless they take that of their master? Simply because they have no independent existence. They are mere chattels. Even so with women. The custom of calling women Mrs. John This and Mrs. Tom That, and colored men Sambo and Coon, is founded on the principle that white men are the lords of all.

GILMAN: Although marriage is a means of livelihood, it is not honest employment where one can offer one's labor without shame, but a relation where the support is enforced by law in return for the functional service of the woman, the duties of wife and mother. Therefore no honorable woman can ask for it. It is not only that the natural feminine instinct is to retire, as that of the male is to advance, but that, because marriage means support, a woman must not ask a man to support her. It is economic beggary.

STANTON: The marriage service with its humiliating ceremony of giving the bride away, represents the transfer of a young woman from one master (her father) to another (her husband).

GILMAN: The father expects to be served by the daughter, a service quite different from what he expects of the son. He will feed, clothe and adorn her--she will serve him. From the subjection of the daughter to that of the wife she steps from one home to the other, and never enters the world at all--man's world.

STANTON: Our object in visiting England was to attend the World's Anti-slavery Convention, June 12, 1840. Delegates from all the anti-slavery societies of civilized nations were invited.

1ST: Yet, when they arrived, those women members of the National Anti-slavery Society, accustomed to speak and vote in all its conventions, and to take an equally active part with men in the whole anti-slavery struggle, were rejected because they were women.

STANTON: Abolitionists, while eloquently defending the natural rights of slaves, denied freedom of speech to one-half the people of their own race. Such was the consistency of an assemblage of philanthropists!

2ND: The clerical portion of the convention was most violent in its opposition.

3RD: The clergymen seemed to have God and his angels especially in their care and keeping, and were in agony lest the women should do or say something to shock the heavenly hosts.

STANTON: The question was hotly debated through an entire day. My husband made a very eloquent speech in favor of admitting the women delegates.

4TH: The most dramatic moment of the convention occurred when the great William Lloyd Garrison scorned the other delegates, joining the women in their seats behind a low curtain.

GARRISON: (played by actress) After battling so many long years for the liberties of African slaves he announced, I can take no part in a convention that strikes down the most sacred rights of all women. All of the slaves are not men!

(Garrison stalks off stage, taking all with her but one actress, who plays Lucretia Mott . . .)

STANTON: (Joins arms with other actress) The women present never forgot that act of sacrifice.

Mrs. Lucretia Mott and I walked home to our London lodgings, arm in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day.

I said,
When we return home, we must hold a convention and form a society to advance the rights of women. Lucretia readily agreed. (Other actress nods vigorously and they exit, chatting furiously . . .)

(As she exits, Stanton nods to Sojourner, who has been sitting at the anti-slavery convention, off to the side.)

TRUTH: W'en I was sole, my master died, an' we was goin to hab a auction. We was all brought up to be sole. My mother took my han' an' she sat down en says, "Look up to de moon an' stars dat shine upon you father an' upon you mother when you sole far away, an' upon you brudders an' sisters, dat is sole away," for dere was a great number ob us, an' was all sole away befor' my membrance. I asked her who made de moon an' de stars, an' she says, "God," an' says I, Where is God? "Oh!" says she, "chile, he sits in de sky, an' hears you w'en you ax him w'en you are away from us to make your marster an' misteress good, an' he will do it."

When we were sole, I did what my mother told me; I said, O God, my mother tole me ef I asked you to make my marster an' misteress good, you'd do it. An' dey did n't get good. /Laughter/ Why, says I, God, mebbe you can't do it. Kill 'em /Laughter and applause./ Dat was de idee I had. After I made such wishes my conscience burned me. Then I wud say, O God, do n't be mad. My marster make me wicked . . . (She begins to cry). We has heerd a great deal about love at home in de family. Now, children, I was a slave, and my husband and my children was sold from me. (Pausing a moment, she adds)

Nôw, husband and children is all gone, and what has 'come of de affection I had for dem? Dat is de question before de house!

(She stops composes herself, ^{actress dressed} as male slaveowner, one who had been eavesdropping at convention, passes.)

SLAVEOWNER: (meanly) Old women, do not think that your talk about slavery does any good? Do you suppose people care what you say? Why, I do n't care any more for your talk than I do for the bite of a flea.

SOJOURNER: Perhaps not, but, the Lord willing, I'll keep you scratching. (She exits, cluckling to herself.)

(Slaveowner becomes judge in next scene as he ~~does~~ judicial role, and sits on high stool behind podium. Actress as sheriff enters with Mother Jones, other actresses.)

SHERIFF: Mother Jones you're under arrest. They've got an injunction against your speaking.

JONES: I will be right with you. Wait till I run down.
I went on speaking till I had finished. Then I said,
Goodbye, boys; I'm under arrest. I may have to go to jail.
Keep up this fight!

(Other actresses leave reluctantly.)

JONES: I was put on the stand and the judge asked me if
I gave that advice to the miners, told them to use
violence. (She walks up close to judge.)

You know, sir, that it would be suicidal for me to make such a statement in public. You've been on the bench forty years, have you not, judge?

JUDGE: Yes, I have that.

JONES: And in forty years you learn to discern between a lie and the truth, judge?

SHERIFF: Your honor, there is the most dangerous woman in the country today. But I will recommend mercy of the court if she will consent to leave the state and never return.

JONES: I didn't come into the court asking mercy sir, but
I came here looking for justice. And I will not leave
this state so long as there is a single person asks me to stay.

SHERIFF: (Whispering) Madam, don't say 'judge' or 'sir' to the court. Say 'Your Honor.'

JONES: Who is the court? (whispered back).

SHERIFF: His honor, on the bench, (looking shocked.)

JONES: Are you referring to the old chap behind the justice counter? Well, I can't call him 'your honor' until I know how honorable he is. You know I took an oath to tell the truth when I took the witness stand.

JUDGE: (rapping gavel, suppressing smile.) This, uh, case . . . er, ah., ADJOURNED! (Raps gavel again.)

(All get up and exit while watching Jones in wonder. BLACKOUT)

(Slides flash on wall depicting sad plight of factory children.)

"MOTHER" JONES: I went down to Cottondale to get a job in the cotton mills. I wanted to see for myself if gruesome stories of little children working in the mills were true.

1ST: Little girls and boys, barefooted, walked up and down between the endless rows of spindles, reaching thin little hands into the machinery to repair snapped threads.

2ND: They crawled under machinery to oil it. They replaced spindles all day long, all day long.

3RD: Tiny babies of six years old with faces of sixty did an eight-hour shift for ten cents a day.

JONES: If they fell asleep, cold water was dashed in their faces, and the voice of the manager yelled above the ceaseless racket and whir of the machines.

The machines, built in the north, were built low for the hands of little children.

4TH: At five-thirty in the morning, long lines of little grey children came out of the early dawn into the factory, into the maddening noise, into the lint filled rooms.

JONES: Outside the birds sang and the blue sky shone. At the lunch half-hour, the children would fall to sleep over their lunch of cornbread and fat pork. They would lie on the bare floor and sleep. Sleep was their recreation as play is to the free child. (Actress walks on stage with baby in arms.)

JONES: I met a woman coming home from night work. She had a tiny bundle of a baby in her arms. (She walks up to woman.)

JONES: How old is the baby?

MOTHER (GIRL): Three days. I just went back this morning.
The boss was good and saved my place.

JONES: When did you leave?

GIRL: The boss was good; he let me off early the night the baby was born.

JONES: What do you do with the baby while you work?

GIRL: Oh, the boss is good and he lets me have a little box with a pillow in it beside the loom. The baby sleeps there. When it cries, I nurse it . . .

(Jones watches mother put baby in cradle.)

(Sanger walks on, takes over rocking cradle from baby's mother, played by young girl, who also plays Mrs. Sachs while Sanger narrates.)

SANGER: I wanted the world made safe for babies. My own motherhood was joyous, loving, happy. I wanted to share these joys with other women. My cozy and comfortable family existence was becoming a reproach to me. Since the birth of my first child I had realized the importance of spacing babies, but only a few months before had I fully grasped the significant fact that a powerful law denied and prevented mothers from obtaining knowledge to properly space their families.

Then one stifling mid-July day of 1912 I was summoned to a tenement. My patient was a small, slight Russian Jewess, about twenty-eight years old. The cramped three-room apartment was in a sorry state of turmoil. Jake Sachs, a truck driver had come to find the three children crying and her unconscious from the effects of a self-induced abortion. He had called the nearest doctor, who sent for me. The doctor and I settled ourselves to the task. Never had I worked so fast.

After a fortnight Mrs. Sachs' recovery was in sight. She smiled wanly at all who came to see her and thanked them gently, but appeared to be more despondent and anxious than she should have been. She finally voiced her fears.

GIRL: Another baby will finish me, I suppose?

SANGER: It's too early to talk about that. But when the doctor came to make his last call, I drew him aside. Mrs. Sachs is terribly worried about having another baby.

DOCTOR: She well may be. Any more such capers, young woman, and there'll be no need to send for me.

GIRL: I know, doctor. (She hesitates as though it took all her courage to say it.) What can I do to prevent it?

DOCTOR: (He laughs good-naturedly) You want to have your cake and eat it too, do you? Well it can't be done. (Picking up his hat and bag to depart) Tell Jake to sleep on the roof.

SANGER: We simply looked at each other, saying no word until the door had closed behind the doctor. Then she lifted her thin, blue-veined hands and clasped them beseechingly.

GIRL: He can't understand. He's only a man. But you do, don't you? Please tell me the secret, and I'll never breathe it to a soul. Please.

SANGER: (Not answering) I made her as physically easy as I could and promised to come back in a few days to talk with her again.

Night after night the wistful image of Mrs. Sachs appeared before me. I made all sorts of excuses to myself for not going back.

The telephone rang one evening three months later, and Jake Sachs's atitated voice begged me to come at once; his wife was sick again and from the same cause. For a wild moment I thought of sending someone else, but I hurried into my uniform, caught up my bag, and started out. All the way I longed for a subway wreck, and explosion, anything to keep me from having to enter that home again. But nothing happened.

(Actresses play silent parts of distraught husband, neighbors with babies in arms. There is a continual sound of loud baby cries.)

SANGER: Mrs. Sachs was in a coma and died within ten minutes. I folded her still hands across her breast, remembering how they had pleaded with me, begging so humbly for the knowledge which was her right. I drew a sheet over her pallid face. I could bear it no longer.

I went to bed, knowing that no matter what it might cost, I was finished with palliatives and superficial cures; I was resolved to do something to change the destiny of mothers whose miseries were vast as the sky.

(Sounds of baby cries rise in loud crescendo, then abruptly stop as lights go out.)

(Lights come up on Gilman, who has been sitting in corner observing.)

GILMAN: We have, so far, lived and suffered and died in a man-made world. So general, so unbroken, has been this condition, that to mention it arouses no more remark than the statement of a natural law. We have taken it for granted, since the dawn of civilization.

To the man, the whole world was his world; his because he was male; and the whole world of woman was the home; because she was female. She had her prescribed sphere, strictly limited to her feminine occupations and interests; he had all the rest of life; and insisted on calling it male. (Lights down, Stanton enters.)

STANTON: My experience at the World's Anti-slavery Convention, all I had read of the legal status of women, and the oppression I saw everywhere, together swept across my soul, intensified now by many personal experiences. My only thought was a public meeting for protest and discussion.

In this tempest-tossed condition of mind I received an invitation to spend the day with Lucretia Mott. I poured out the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare. We decided, then and there, to call a "Woman's Rights Convention." We wrote the call that evening and published it in the Seneca County Courier the next day, the 14th of July, 1848, giving only five days' notice. The convention was in every way a grand success. The house was crowded at every session, the speaking good.

These were the hasty initiative steps of the most momentous reform that had yet been launched on the world--the first organized protest against the injustice which had brooded for ages over the destiny of one-half the race.

(While scene is described, Sojourner enters and takes place on stage . . .)

VOICE: The cause was unpopular then. At a Woman's Rights Convention in Ohio, Mrs. Frances D. Gage presided in 1851 and relates the following:

MRS. GAGE: The leaders of the movement trembled on seeing a tall, gaunt black woman, in a gray dress and white turban, surmounted by a sun-bonnet, march deliberately into the church, walk with the air of a queen up the aisle, and take her seat upon the pulpit steps. A buzz was heard all over the house.

ACTRESSES: (1st, 2nd, 3rd)) 'An abolition affair!' 'Woman's rights and niggers!' 'We told you so!'

MRS. GAGE: Old Sojourner sat crouched against the wall. At my request, order was restored and the business of the hour went on; ministers came in to hear and discuss the resolutions presented. One claimed superior rights and privileges for man on the ground of superior intellect; another, because of the manhood of Christ. Another gave us a theological view of the sin of our first mother, Eve.

PREACHER: If God had desired the equality of woman, he would have given some token of his will through the birth, life, and death of the Saviour.

MRS. GAGE: Slowly from her seat in the corner rose Sojourner Truth, who, till now, had scarcely lifted her head. ('Do n't let her speak!' Other actresses buzz and comment around Mrs. Gage.) gasped half a dozen in my year. She moved slowly and solemnly to the front, laid her old bonnet at her feet, and turned her great, speaking eyes to me. There was a hissing sound above and below. I rose and announced 'Sojourner Truth.'

SOJOURNER: Well, chilern, whar dar is so much racket dar must be something out o'kilter. I tink dat 'twixt de niggers of de Souf and de women of de Norf all a talkin' 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout? Dat man ober dar say dat woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have de best place every whar. Nobody eber help me into carriages, or ober mud puddles, or gives me any best place (raising herself to her full height and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunder) and ar'n't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (she bares her right arm to the shoulder) I have plowed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me--and ar'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as a man (when I could get it), and bear de lash as well-- and ar'n't I a woman? I have borne thirteen chilern and seen 'em mos all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard--and ar'n't I a woman? Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head--what dis dey call it? (Intellect, whispers some one near.) 'Dat's it honey. What's dat got to do with women's rights or niggers' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint and yourn holds a quart, would n't ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?' (She points her finger and sends a glance at the minister who had made the argument.)

'Den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as man, cause Christ want a woman. Whar did your Christ come from? Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman. Man had nothing to do with him.'

MRS. GAGE: Turning again to another objector, she took up the defense of mother Eve.

SOJOURNER: If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all'lone, dese togedder (she glances her eyes over), ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again, and now dey is asking to do it, de men better let 'em.' (Long-continued cheering.)

(Lights go down, Sojourner exits.)

(On dark stage, a slide is projected on wall showing nude male body, with body parts sectioned off like side of beef . . . Young girl assists in handing out props, changing slides, etc.)

1ST: This is a very bad case, but a very common one, of the masculine-superiority fever which has converted so many millions of men into ruffians. I understand the disease very well, and can cure it easily when I have access to the patient, and can get my prescriptions administered . . . (She points with pointer to penis area . . .)

2ND: Of course the ignorant boor gets a vast opinion of his own importance, as it is continually held up to view by church and state; and it cannot be wondered at that he practises what our divines, statesmen, philosophers, and poets teach

(Takes over pointer from actress, pacing back and forth, touching various body areas, etc.)

3RD: So he puts his wife into "a woman's place," and keeps her there It is very well known that thousands nay, millions of women in this country are condemned to the most menial druggery, such as men would scorn to engage in, and that for one-fourth wages, and who says anything against it? But let one presume to use her mental powers--let her aspire to turn editor, public speaker, doctor, lawyer--take up any profession or avocation which is deemed honorable and requires talent, and O! bring the Cologne and take off his cravat! What a fainting fit Mr. Propriety has taken! Just to think that one of the "deah creathures," the heavenly angels, should forsake the spheres--woman's sphere--to mix with the wicked strife of this wicked world!

(Slide of woman's head, sectioned off, now projected on wall. Actress points to different sections with pointer while talking...)

1ST: He applies a common sense rule to the common principle, and argues "if Sallie has no right to hold office in church or state--if she is to submit to me in all things, to keep silence in churches, and learn from me at home, of course I must be wiser than she, and better too. The Constitution puts her down with "niggers" and ingins, or a little below 'em. She is heaven's "last best gift to man." an' mighty useful one can make her!"

(Actress in body stocking jumps on stool, is examined by others, who point to different parts of her body with pointers . . .)

(using man's voice)

2ND: ^A She can make hay as well as I can--then cook the victuals while I'm restin', and raise some sons and darters in the meantime to take care uv me when I get old! Tell ye, there isn't a horse on the place I wouldn't rather lose nor Sallie! "(Actress jumps off stool, throws cloak around herself.)

(All cast, sit down, take notes, as though at lecture. This speaker addresses them and approaches audience, too, at times.)

3RD: The efficient remedy for this class of evils is education; an equal education! Read--think, study, know your places and keep them, your own duties and do them. Try to understand and every thing you see and hear, to act and judge for yourselves; remember you each have a soul of your own to account for;--a mind of your own to improve. When you once get these ideas fixed, and learn to act upon them, no man or set of men can seriously oppress you. If women knew their rights, and proper places, we would never hear of men "making their wives" do this, that, or the other.

(Gilman rises to explain something.)

GILMAN: That one sex should have monopolized all human activities, called them "man's work," and managed them as such, is what is meant by the phrase "Androcentric Culture." There has never been a democracy, so far --only an androcracy. We have but a partial civilization, heavily modified to sex--the male sex. A group composed of males alone, even a male church, under the most rigid rule.

(Plops back down, seemingly overcome by it all.)

GILMAN: In large generalization, the women of the world cook and wash, sweep and dust, sew and mend, for the men.

We are so accustomed to this relation; have held it for so long to be the "natural" relation, that it is difficult indeed to show it to be distinctly unnatural and injurious. It has been amusing to see how this least desirable of labors has been so innocently held to be woman's natural duty. It is woman, the beautiful, the beloved wife and mother, who has by common consent been expected to do the chamber-work and scullery work of the world. All that is basest and foulest she in the last instance must handle and remove.

(Young girl dressed as slaveowner stands up . . . Squawks out.)

GIRL: Women and NIGGERS! Just like monkeys, baboons, niggers belong in a jungle, or a filthy kitchen.

(All cast starts to protest, jeer, get mad; but Sojourner rises to quiet them and speaks.)

SOJOURNER: Do n't dirty your hands wid dat critter; let me 'tend to him. Children (straightening herself to her full height,) I am one of dem monkey tribes, I was born a slave, I had de dirty work to do, de scullion work. Now I am going to 'ply to dis critter (points her long with withering scorn at the slaveowner.) Now in de course of my time I has done a great deal of dirty scullion work, but of all de dirty work I ever done, dis is de scullionist and de dirtiest. (Peering into the eyes of all around she continues) Now, children, do n't you pity me? (She jabs her finger into slaveowner's chest hard enough to knock him down . . . laughs) Yeah . . . don' you pity ME? (They all laugh and hoot, as slaveowner slinks out. Lights go down, come back up...)

(All cast huddles with heads together as if at important meeting.)
(In spot)

SANGER: A new movement was starting, and the baby had to have a name. The word control was good, but I did not like limitation--that was too limiting. My idea of control was bigger and freer. I wanted family in it, yet family control did not sound right. We tried population control, race control, and birth rate control. Then someone suggested, "Drop the rate." Birth control. We knew we had it. The baby was named.

(Slides on stage depict family scenes with words considered...)

1ST: Birth control information available in that period was inadequate at best and inaccurate at worst.

2ND: The two most widely read books on preventing conception were Robert Dale Owen's Moral Physiology (1830) and Charles Knowlton's Fruits of Philosophy (1832).

3RD: Owen recommended coitus interruptus as the most effective method, while Knowlton invented elaborate douching solutions of green tea, alum, zinc, or raspberry leaves for women to use after sexual intercourse.

4TH: Knowlton was also quite confident that a liberal use of pretty cold water would be a never-failing preventive.
(All laugh)

SANGER: With as crystal view as that which had come to me after the death of Mrs. Sachs when I had renounced nursing forever, I asked various doctors of my acquaintance, why aren't physicians doing something?

THREE ACTRESSES: (in unison - dressed as doctors) The people you're worrying about wouldn't use contraception if they had it; they breed like rabbits. And, besides, there's a law against it.

SANGER: Information does exist, doesn't it?

1ST: Perhaps. 3RD: But I doubt if you can find it.

2ND: Even if you do, you can't pass it on.

SANGER: Progressive women whom I consulted were thoroughly discouraging. Here, there, and everywhere the reply came, "Wait until women have more education. Wait until we secure equal distribution of wealth." Wait for this and wait for that. "What until we get the vote. Then we'll take care of that," They assured me. I had no idea how powerful were the laws which laid a blanket of ignorance over the medical profession as well as the laity.

(She sits down at desk to write, opens letters.)

An editor of the woman's page telephoned me one evening.

EDITOR: Will you help me out? We have a lecture scheduled for tonight and our speaker is unable to come. Won't you take her place?

SANGER: But I can't speak. I've never made a speech in my life.

EDITOR: You'll simply have to do it. There isn't anybody I can get,

SANGER: The young mothers in the group asked so many questions about their intimate family life and I mentioned it to the editor.

EDITOR: Just the thing, Write up your answers and we'll try them out.

SANGER: The result was the first composition I had ever done for publication, a series under the general title, What Every Mother Should Know.

Then the editor requested a second series, called What Every Girl Should Know. The motif was, "If the mother can impress the child with the beauty and wonder and sacredness of the sex function, she has taught it the first lesson."

These articles ran for three or four weeks until one Sunday morning I turned to see my precious little effort, and,

instead, encountered a newspaper box two columns wide in which was printed in black letters, (Slide is projected on screen with image below.)

WHAT EVERY GIRL SHOULD KNOW

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BY ORDER OF

THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT

The words gonorrhea and syphilis had occurred in that article and Anthony Comstock, head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, did not like them by the so-called Comstock law of 1873. On the eve of adjournment, the Post Office had been given authority to decide what might be lewd, lascivious, indecent, or obscene, and this extraordinary man Anthony Comstock had been granted the extraordinary power, alone of all citizens of the United States, to open any letter or package or pamphlet or book passing through the mails and lay his complaint before the Post Office.

To me it was outrageous that information regarding motherhood, which was so generally called sacred, should be classed with pornography.

I had not broken the law, because it did not prohibit discussion of contraception--merely giving advice. I harbored a burning desire to undermine that law.

(She picks up books and starts to search thru them, other cast members gather round her desk and start pitching in to help out . . . Lights go down on them as mother Jones enters, Stanton is onstage, watching both the earlier scene with Sanger and the next one with Mother Jones.)

MOTHER JONES: I read in the paper that the Paint Creek Coal Company would not settle with their men and went immediately to West Virginia to catch the one local train a day that goes into Paint Creek. The train's brakeman told me

BRAKEMAN: Mother, it will be sure death for you to go into the Creeks. They have machine guns on the highway, and don't care who they kill.

JONES: The train stopped and I got off. There were a lot of gunmen, armed to the teeth, lolling about. Here the miners had been peons for years, kept in slavery by the guns of the coal company, by the system of paying in scrip so that that a miner never had any money to leave the district. Cheated of his wages when his coal was weighed, cheated in the company store where he was forced to purchase his food.

(Girl runs on stage, all dirty, bruised up.)

GIRL: Oh Mother, Mother, they drove my papa away and we don't know where he is, and they beat my mama and me. (She pulls down cotton shirt and shows shoulders which are black and blue.)

JONES: The gunmen did that? Suddenly, I looked up and saw the miners running, the whistle of bullets and a machine gun around the bend.

(Couple actresses run on in miner's hats; others act as gunmen)

MINERS: God! God! Mother, don't come. They'll kill . . .

JONES: Stand still. I am coming!

MINERS: Oh Mother, don't come. Let them kill us; not you!

JONES: I walked up to the gunmen and put my hand over the muzzle of the gun. Then I just looked at those gunmen, very quiet, and said nothing. I nodded my head for the miners to pass.

GUNMEN: Take your hands off that gun, you hell-cat!

JONES: (keeps her hand on the muzzle of the gun.) Sir, my class goes into the mines. They bring out the metal that makes this gun. This is my gun! My class is not fighting you, not you. They are fighting with bare fists and empty stomachs the men who rob them and deprive their children of childhood. It is the hard-earned pay of the working class that your pay comes from.

(Several of the gunmen drop their guns.)

GUNMAN: I don't care a damn! I'm going to kill every one of them, and you, too!

JONES: Young man, I want to tell you that if you shoot one bullet out of this gun at those men, if you touch one of my white hairs, that creek will run with blood, and yours will be the first to crimson it. These boys have no guns! Let them pass! I kept my hand on the gun.

GUNMAN: (Stares straight into her eyes, slowly relents, drops his eyes, then his gun, saying) ADVANCE! (he waves them all on; mother pats him on back as she passes by last.)

(Cast assembles around Stanton, as though her disciples.)

STANTON: COURAGE! The best protector any woman can have, one that will serve her at all times and in all places, is courage; this she must get by her own experience, and experience comes by exposure.

GIRL: Begin with the girls of today, and in twenty years we can revolutionize this nation. The childhood of woman must be free and untrammelled.

1ST: The manner in which all courage and self-reliance is educated out of the girl, her path portrayed with dangers and difficulties that never exist, is melancholy indeed.

2ND: Better, far, suffer occasional insults or die outright, than live the life of a coward, or never move without a protector.

3RD: The girl must early be impressed with the idea that she is to be "a hand, not a mouth"; a worker, and not a drone, in the great hive of human activity.

4TH: Like the boy, she must be taught to look forward to a life of self-dependence, and early prepare herself for some trade or profession.

STANTON: Think you, women thus educated would long remain the weak, dependent beings we now find them? By no means. Depend upon it, they would soon settle for themselves this whole question of Woman's Rights.

YOUNG GIRL: (Jumps up enthusiastically. She grab Stanton's hand and leads her off. All exit happy and talking. Lights go down to dim. Young girl re-enters sneakily. She picks up Stanton's bonnet which has been left behind by ECS. It is too big, but she tries it on, starts strutting around and imitating Stanton's walk and voice.) COURAGE! The best protector any woman can have . . . is courage!

(She repeats this opening line of Stanton's talk; then concludes with the last line, addressing it to audience.)
Think you, women thus educated would long remain the weak, dependent beings we now find them? Depend upon it, they would soon settle for themselves this whole question of Woman's Rights.

(She struts off stage; lights dim; she runs back on, ^{takes off and} throws bonnet in air and catches it, puts it back where it was, looks around, lets out a war whoop and runs back off.)

END - ACT ONE

(Two actresses come on stage talking, as if they had just seen and heard Gilman lecture. They are each carrying one of her many published books. They say things like: "My, she is interesting to read, I've got all her books, but to hear her talk, well, that's downright exciting..." and "She has the best mind... she's the most original thinker -- for a woman -- I've ever heard..." They exit, as lights come up on Gilman sitting at desk, writing.)

GILMAN:

My main interest then was in the position of women, and the need for more scientific care for young children. As to women, the basic need of economic independence seemed to me of far more importance than the ballot; though that of course was a belated and legitimate claim, for which I always worked. Women are supported by men, in return for feminine functions; and this economic dependence of the female on the male is the continuous cause of difficulties. The relation of the sexes becomes commercial. We are the only animal species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only species in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation. (goes to podium) Woman whose industrial position is that of a house-servant, or who do no work at all, who are fed, clothed, and given pocket-money by men, do not reach freedom and equality by the use of the ballot. It has begun to dawn upon the minds of women that the money of the world is almost wholly owned by men.

(Lights go down on Gilman, up on other side of stage where Stanton and girl act out this scene. Girl plays timid young wife.)

STANTON: There are two classes of housekeepers--one that will get what they want and accept inevitable inconveniences with cheerfulness and heroism; the other, from fear of taking responsibility, accept everything as they find it, though with continuous complainings. Such a woman was our congressman's wife in 1854 and, as I was the reservoir of all her sorrows, I became very weary of her amiable non-resistance. She had a kitchen stove that smoked and leaked, which could neither bake nor broil,--a worthless thing. In telling me, one day, she actually shed tears, which so roused my sympathies that I exclaimed: "Why do you not buy a new stove?" To my common sense that seemed the most practical thing to do.

GIRL: Why, I have never purchased a darning needle, to put the case strongly, without consulting Mr. S., and he does not think a new stove necessary.

STANTON: What, pray, does he know about stoves, sitting in his easy chair in Washington? If he attempted to cook a

meal --granting he knew how--on your old stove, he would set it out of doors the next hour. Now my advice to you is to buy a new one this very day!

GIRL: Bless me! that would make him furious; he would blow me sky-high.

STANTON: Well, suppose he did go into a regular tantrum and use all the expletives in the vocabulary for fifteen minutes! What is that compared with a good stove 365 days in the year?

GIRL: Well, if you will go with me, and help select a stove, I think I will take the responsibility. (She starts looking around house) Now I am in equal need of a good stove in my sitting room, and I would like the pipes of both stoves to lead above, and thus heat two or three rooms upstairs for my children to play in, as they have no place except the sitting room; but I suppose it is not best to do too much at one time.

STANTON: On the contrary, as your husband is wealthy, you had better get all you really need now. Mr. S. will probably be no more surprised with two stoves than with one, and, as you expect a hot scene over the matter, the more you get out of it the better.(they busy selves, deciding what to order)

VOICE: So the stoves and pipes were ordered. All were in working order next day, and madam jubilant with her added comforts and newborn feeling of independence.

STANTON: Now, when your husband explodes, as you think he will, neither say nor do anything; sit and gaze out of the window with that far-away, sad look women know so well how to affect. If you can summon tears at pleasure, a few would not be amiss; a gentle shower, not enough to make the nose and eyes red or to detract from your beauty. Men cannot resist beauty and tears. Never mar their effect with anything bordering on sobs and hysteria. A scene in which one person does the talking must be limited in time. No ordinary man can keep at white heat fifteen minutes; if his victim says nothing he will soon exhaust himself. If silence is ever golden, it is when a husband is in a tantrum. (Mrs. S. exits practising summoning tears . . .)

(Mrs. Stanton sits, picks up book to read; a ticking clock loudly denotes passage of time ... Mrs. S. runs back in excitedly)

GIRL: My husband came just before dinner. He seemed very happy to see me and the children and we had a gay time.

At last, dinner was announced, and I knew that the hour had come. He ran upstairs to give a few touches to his toilet, when lo! the shining stoves and pipes caught his eyes. He explored the upper apartments and came down the back stairs, glanced at the kitchen stove, then into the dining room, and stood confounded, for a moment.

HUSBAND: Heavens and earth! Charlotte, what have you been doing?

GIRL: I remembered what you told me and did nothing, but looked steadily out of the window.

(She demonstrates her plaintive passive look for Stanton.)

GIRL: I summoned no tears, however, for I felt more like laughing than crying; he looked so ridiculous, flying round like popcorn on a hot griddle. The first time he paused to take breath I said, in my softest tones: 'William, dinner is waiting; I fear the soup will be cold.' Fortunately he was hungry. We had a very good dinner, and I have not heard a word about the stoves since.

(They both embrace and laugh as young girl who has taken off her bonnet upon entering, gives loud yelp, throws bonnet in air and walks off.)

STANTON: (Suppressing a beaming smile) All these reverend gentlemen who insist on the word 'obey' in the marriage service should be removed for a clear violation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, which says there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude within the United States (sits back down in chair, decisively).

(Young girl runs back on stage, picks up bonnet from floor and runs off . . .)

GIRL: (quickly while running) ME TOO, LIZZIE!

(Lights come back up on Gilman, who has been sitting on other side of stage in dark.)

GILMAN: (at podium; slide series shown on wall)
The man-made family is a despotism. The male is esteemed "the head of the family"; it belongs to him; he maintains it. Friendship does not need "a head." Love does not need "a head." Why should a family? if the family needs a head, it should elect a chairman--or chairwoman--pro tem. It will be good for all parties concerned--man, woman and child, and promote our general social progress admirably.

What man has done to the family, speaking broadly, is to change it from an institution for the best service of the child to one modified to his own service, the vehicle of his comfort, power and pride.

For some thirty-seven years, with voice and pen, I have endeavored to advocate this change. The gain made is that time is probably all that could be expected in so deep-rooted a custom as that of to-every-man-his-own-cook.

The human race is not well nourished by making the process of feeding it a sex-function. Is it not time that the way to a man's heart through his stomach should be relinquished for some higher avenue? The stomach should be left to its natural uses, not made a thoroughfare for stranger passions and purposes; and the heart should be approached through higher channels. (lights down on her, up on other side of stage)

(Stanton and friend Susan Anthony along with young girl, are working together, obviously discussing the right to vote.)

VOICE: Election Day, November 2, 1880.

STANTON: I accept no authority of either bibles or constitutions which tolerate the slavery of women. My rights were born with me and are the same over the whole globe. I may be denied their exercise in the mines of Siberia, in the empire of China and in the State of New York, through force, fraud, and sophistry; but they remain the same everywhere. (She relates this with heated vigor, close to anger.)

ANTHONY: The Republican wagon and horses, all decked with flags came for the male part of the household.

STANTON: I told the driver that my legal representatives were all absent, but that I would go down and vote.

DRIVER: You flabbergast me.

STANTON: But as I am now in the midst of writing the chronicles of the woman suffrage movement, it seemed quite in line to give a practical demonstration of the faith which is in me, so, notwithstanding the flabbergasted condition of the driver I thought I would take the risk and go down to the polls with him, accompanied by my faithful friend, Miss Anthony. When we entered the room it was crowded with men. I was introduced to the inspectors by Charles Everett, one of our leading citizens. (other actresses play Everett, inspector, etc.)

MALE VOICE: Mrs. Stanton is here, gentlemen, for the purpose of voting. As she is a taxpayer, of sound mind, and of legal age, I see no reason why she should not exercise this right of citizenship.

STANTON: The inspectors were thunderstruck I think they were afraid that I was about to capture the ballot box. One placed his arms round it.

INSPECTOR: Oh, no, madam! Men only are allowed to vote.

STANTON: I then explained to him that, in accordance with a recent amendment to the national Constitution, Congress had declared that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside" and are entitled to vote. I told them that I wished to cast my vote, as a citizen of the United States.

ANTHONY: Two of the inspectors sat down and pulled their hats over their eyes, whether from shame or ignorance I do not know. The other held on to the box.

INSPECTOR: I know nothing about the Constitutions, State or national. I never read either; but I do know that in New Jersey, women have not voted in my day, and I cannot accept your ballot.

MALE VOICE: (State Senator Cooper exclaims) Put an end to this and go on with your voting. It has been delayed long enough for a small matter.

STANTON: (Angrily) Gentlemen, this is the most momentous question the citizens of your town have ever been called upon to decide . . . So I laid my ballot in his hand, saying that I had the same right to vote that any man had, and on him must rest the responsibility of denying me my rights of citizenship. (lights dim, she walks to desk)

The whole town is agape with my act, I wrote my children Harriot and Theodore. The men have taken sides about equally. This is good example of what I have often said of late that acts, not words, are what is needed to push this woman suffrage question to the fore.

GIRL: (She has been along as spectator, watching the whole scene . . . Yells back to the men, inspectors at voting booth.) Men their rights and nothing more, women their rights . . .! (Stanton puts a gentle hand over her mouth before she finishes her angry statement. Girl grins sheepishly at this minor admonishment.)

STANTON AND GIRL: (in Unison) . . . Acts, not words, are what is needed . . . (both links arms with Anthony, who then walks out with girl, planning their next action . . .)

another
(Stanton sits down, writes a letter)

STANTON: New York, May 18, 1889. I am much worked up over the infamous Geary bill against the admission of the Chinese into the United States. How my blood boils over these persecutions of the Africans, the Jews, the Indians, and the Chinese. I suppose the Japanese will come next. I wonder if these fanatical Christians think that Christ died for these peoples, or confined his self-sacrifice to Saxons

(Lights go down in her as Sojourner Truth walks on stage with young girl, both with bibles in hands.)

TRUTH: Somethin' spoke out in me an' said, 'This is Jesus!' An' I spoke out with all my might says I, Jesus was my Jesus. I did n't dare tell nobody; 'twas a great secret. Everything had been got away from me that I ever had; an' I thought that ef I let white folks know about this, maybe they'd get Him away.

GIRL: But, Sojourner, had you never been told about Jesus Christ?

TRUTH: No honey. I had n't heerd no preachin' . Nobody had n't told me. I'd kind o' heerd of Jesus, but thought he was like Ginerall Lafayette, or somethin'. (Sojourner puffs on pipe she places in her mouth.)

GIRL: (leafs through bible quickly to find a certain place, finds it. She points it out to Sojourner.) But Sojourner, the Bible tells us that 'no unclean thing can enter the kingdom of Heaven.' What can be more filthy than the breath of a smoker?

TRUTH: Yes, child, but when I goes to Heaven I spects to leave my breff behind me. (She puffs contentedly. Girl looks puzzled, but scratches head and nods she understands.)

(Lights back up on Stanton at desk. She arises, joins Sojourner and girl. Other cast members come on stage. Sojourner sits to the side.)

STANTON: I had long heard so many conflicting opinions about the Bible--some saying it taught woman's emancipation and some her subjection--that the thought came to me that it would be well to collect every biblical reference to women in one small compact volume, and see on which side the balance of influence really was. The Church has thus far interpreted the Bible as teaching woman's subjection, and none of the revisions by learned ecclesiastics have thrown any new light on the question. It seemed proper and timely for women themselves to review the book.

1ST: We found that the work would not be so great as we imagined, as all the facts and teachings in regard to women occupied less than one-tenth of the Scriptures.

2ND: We purchased some cheap Bibles, cut out the texts, pasted them at the head of the page, and, underneath, wrote our commentaries, clearly and concisely, brief comments, to keep "The Woman's Bible" as small as possible.

GIRL: (Reads from Bible) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Genesis 1:27

STANTON: We have in these texts a plain declaration of the existence of the feminine element in the Godhead, equal in power and glory with the masculine. The Heavenly Mother and Father . . . (she nods to girl).

GIRL: The first step in the elevation of woman is the recognition by the rising generation of an ideal Heavenly Mother, to whom their prayers should be addressed. . . (she nods to Stanton).

STANTON: The Woman's Bible is the most happy title that I could have selected. I am sure of that. Women's Commentaries on What the Bible Says of Woman would have been too lumbering. When John Stuart Mill gave his little book the title of The Subjection of Women everybody carped at it. Mill, on his side, said he knew he had hit the right title because everybody had criticized it. I am sure, for the same reason, that our title is the true one.

3RD: When Part I of "The Woman's Bible" was finally published in November, 1895, it created a great sensation.

4TH: Some of the New York papers gave a page to its review. Extracts from it, and criticisms were printed in newspapers throughout America, Great Britain, and Europe.

STANTON: The clergy denounced it as the work of Satan, though it really was the work of myself and others.

(Lights dim on all but Sojourner)

TRUTH: (She rises, comes stage front, talks to audience.)
I used to tell God this--I would say, "Now, God, ef I was you, an' you was me and you wanted any help I'd help ye;-- why done you help me? Well, ye see I was in want, an' I felt dat dere was no help I know what it is to be taken in the

barn an' tied up an' de blood drawed out ob yere bare back, an' I tell you it would make you think 'bout God. But I got no good marster ontill de las' time I was sole, an' den I found one an' his name was Jesus. W'en God gi' me dat marster he healed all de wounds up. I used to hate de w'ite pepul so, an' I tell ye w'en de lobe come in me I had so much lobe I did n't know what to lobe. Den de w'ite pepul come, an' I thought dat lobe was too good fur dem. Den I said, Yea, God, I'll lobe ev'ybuddy an' de w'ite pepul too. Ever since dat, dat lobe has continued an' kep' me 'mong de w'ite pepul. On'y think ob it! Ain't it wonderful dat God gives lobe enough to de Ethiopins to lobe you? Well, 'mancipation came; we all know; can't stop to go troo de hull. I go fur adgitatin'. But I believe dere is works belong wid adgitatin'. too. (She puffs on pipe, exits, musing on 'works and agitating!)

(Mother Jones enters with valise, umbrella in hand.)

MOTHER JONES: In the spring of 1903 I went to Kensington, Pennsylvania, where seventy-five thousand textile workers were on strike. Of this number at least ten thousand were little children. The workers were striking for more pay and shorter hours.

1ST ACTRESS: Every day little children came into Union Headquarters, some with their hands off, some with the thumb missing, some with their fingers off at the knuckle.

2ND : They were stooped little things, round shouldered and skinny. Many of them were not over ten years of age, although the state law prohibited their working before they were twelve years of age.

3RD: The law was poorly enforced and the mothers of these children often swore falsely as to their children's age. Mothers explained it was a question of starvation or perjury. That the fathers had been killed or maimed at the mines.

JONES: I asked the newspaper men why they didn't publish the facts about child labor in Pennsylvania. They said they couldn't because the mill owners had stock in the papers.

"Well, I've got stock in these little children," said I, "and I'll arrange a little publicity.

4TH: We assembled a number of boys and girls one morning in Independence Park and from there we arranged to parade with banners to the court house where we would hold a meeting.

A great crowd gathered in the public square in front of the city hall.

JONES: I put the little boys with their fingers off and hands crushed and maimed on a platform. I held up their mutilated hands and showed them to the crowd and made the statement that Philadelphia's mansions were built on the broken bones, the quivering hearts and drooping heads of these children.

1ST: That their little lives went out to make wealth for others.

2ND: That neither state or city officials paid any attention to these wrongs.

3RD: That they did not care that these children were to be the future citizens of the nation.

JONES: The officials in the city hall were standing at open windows. I held the little ones of the mills high up above the heads of the crowd and pointed to their puny arms and legs and hollow chests.

I called upon the millionaire manufacturers to cease their moral murders, and I cried to the officials in the open windows opposite, "Some day the workers will take possession of your city hall, and when we do, no child will be sacrificed on the altar of profit."

The reporters quoted my statement. Papers got into a squabble with each other over the question. The universities discussed it. Preachers began talking. That was what I wanted. Public attention on the subject of child labor.

(Jones exits; Sanger enters, takes over stage, sits at desk as though busy in an office. Girl is there as her assistant. Some but not all of following speech is read by voice over mike, as Sanger and girl act out parts.)

VOICE: In March, 1914, appeared the first issue of my own magazine the Woman Rebel. My initial declaration of the right of the individual was the slogan "No Gods. No Masters." Gods, not God. I wanted that word to go beyond religion and also stop turning idols, heroes, leaders into gods. I defined a woman's duty. . . .

GIRL: (Picks up magazine and reads from it.) To look the world in the face with a go-to-hell look in the eyes; to have an idea; to speak and act in defiance of convention.

(She puts down magazine as she and Sanger go to work.)

My daily routine always started with looking over the pile of mail, and one morning my attention was caught by an official envelope from the New York Post Office.

(Sanger picks up letter, opens it and reads)

SANGER: Dear Madam, you are hereby notified that the Solicitor of the Post Office Department has decided that the Woman Rebel for March, 1914, is unmailable under Section 489, Postal Laws and Regulations.

E. M. Morgan, Postmaster.

VOICE: I reread the letter. It was so unexpected that at first the significance did not sink in. I had given no contraceptive information; I had merely announced that I intended to do so.

(Sanger sits down to write)

I wrote Mr. Morgan and asked him to state what specifically had offended. His reply simply repeated that the March was unmailable.

SANGER: At that time I visualized the birth control movement as part of the fight for freedom of speech. How much would the postal authorities suppress? What were they really after? I was determined to prod and goad until some definite knowledge was obtained as what was "obscene, lewd, and lascivious." (She proceeds back to business at desk.)

VOICE: One morning I was startled by the peremptory, imperious, and incessant ringing of my bell. When I opened the door, I was confronted by two gentlemen.

(Sanger goes to edge of stage; two actresses act as cops.)

SANGER: Will you come in?

COP: Are you the editor and publisher of a magazine entitled the Woman Rebel?

VOICE: When I confessed to it, he thrust a legal document into my hands. I had been indicted--indicted on no less than nine counts--for alleged violation of the Federal Statutes.

SANGER: If found guilty on all, I might be liable to forty-five years in the penitentiary.

VOICE: I was not going to have any lawyer get me out of this. Since my indictment had not stopped my publishing the Woman Rebel, through the columns of the September issue I told my subscribers I did not want pennies or dollars, but appealed to them to combine forces and protest on their own behalf against government invasion of their rights. That issue and the October one were both suppressed.

SANGER: I decided then and there that a birth control clinic should open at Brownsville. (Sits down to write, AGAIN).

VOICE: I sent a letter to the District Attorney of Brooklyn, saying I expected to dispense contraceptive information from this address. Without waiting for the reply, which never came, we began the fun of fixing up our little clinic. (Cast enters and starts helping out.)

SANGER: The morning of October 16, 1916. I opened the doors of the first birth control clinic in America, the first anywhere in the world except the Netherlands. I still believe this was an event of social significance.

GIRL: Would the women come? Nothing, not even the ghost of Anthony Comstock, could have kept them away.

SANGER: We had arrived early.

1ST: Do come outside and look.

2ND: Halfway to the corner they were standing in line, at least one hundred and fifty.

3RD: Some shawed, some hatless, their red hands clasping the cold, chapped smaller ones of their children.

(Slides on wall depict lines of women, children, one actress enters as their first patient and all converge to help her.)

SANGER: The next day, the waiting room was filled almost to suffocation when the door opened and a woman came in.

WOMAN: Are you Mrs. Sanger?

SANGER: Yes.

WOMAN: I'm a police officer. You're under arrest

(Lights go down on part of stage where cot is set up. Sanger is led there as though to jail cell. Cell bars of light are cast over Sanger as she talks of jail.)

VOICE: I stayed overnight at the Raymond Street Jail, and I shall never forget it. The mattresses were spotted and smelly, the blankets stiff with dirt and grime. The stench nauseated me.

(Sanger sits on cot, as voice narrates, she goes through motions described.)

I lay down and wrapped my coat around me. For endless hours I struggled with roaches and horrible-looking bugs that came crawling out of the walls and across the floor. When a rat jumped up on the bed I cried out and sent it scuttling. My bail was arranged by afternoon.

(She gets up, folds cot and places it to side. Re-enters her on-stage office and clinic.)

VOICE: I went straight back to the clinic, reopened it, more mothers came in. I had hoped a court decision might allow us to continue, but now Mr. Rabinowitz came downstairs. He said he was sorry, but the police had made him sign ejection papers, on the ground that I was "maintaining a public nuisance."

In the Netherlands a clinic had been cited as a public benefaction; in the United States it was classed as a public nuisance.

(Sanger closes desk top; BLACK OUT, All exit.)

(Gilman crosses stage from one side to other, pacing as though having discussion with self.)

GILMAN:

The Federal Democracy in its organic union has so strengthened, emboldened, the human soul in America that we have thrown off slavery, and with the same impulse have set in motion the long struggle toward woman's equality before the law. The woman's movement should be hailed by every right-thinking, far-seeing man and woman as the best birth of our century. The banner advanced proclaims "equality before the law," woman's share in political freedom; but the main line of progress is and has been toward economic equality and economic freedom. (She stops pacing, sits at side, writing as lights dim on her.)

(Sojourner and girl in bloomer dress stroll on stage.)

GIRL: Sojourner, what do you think of woman's Rights?

TRUTH: Well, honey, I's ben to der meetins, an' harked a good deal. Dey wanted me fur to speak. So I got up. Says I, 'Sisters, I a'n't clear what you'd be after. Ef women want any rights more'n dey's got, why don't dey jes' take 'em, an' not be talkin' about it?' Some on 'em came round me, an' asked why I did n't wear bloomers. An' I told 'em I had bloomers enough when I was in bondage. You see, dey used to we've what dey called nigger-cloth, an' each one of us got jes' sech a strip, an' had to wear it width-wise. Them that was short got along pretty well, but as for me (droll glance at her long limbs) Tell you, I had enough of bloomers in them days.

(Stanton comes on in bloomer dress, seeming happy as lark in new costume. She speaks to them . . .)

STANTON: There was one bright woman among the many in our Seneca Falls circle to whom I would give more than a passing notice--Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, advocate of the new cost costume which bore her name!

Although she wore the bloomer dress, its originator was my cousin, Elizabeth Smith Miller. (~~She demonstrates~~) In the winter of 1852 Mrs. Miller came to visit me in Seneca Falls, dressed in the Turkish style--short skirt, full trousers of fine black broadcloth; a cloak, of the same material, reaching to the knee; beaver hat and feathers and dark furs. To see my cousin, with a lamp in one hand and a baby in the other, walk upstairs with ease and grace, while, with flowing robes, I pulled myself up with difficulty, lamp and baby out of the question readily convinced me that there was sore need of reform in woman's dress, and I promptly donned a similar attire. On woman's fashionable attire, all agreed that some change was absolutely necessary for the health of women but the press stoutly ridiculed those who were ready to make the experiment.

Heigh! ho! in rain and snow,
The bloomer now is all the go.
Twenty tailors take the stitches,
Mrs. Stanton wears the britches.

(All cast has come in during her description of bloomer. One models the dress as she describes it. After speech, they join hands and sing--sing words, going 'round Stanton in circle, like playing, "here we go 'round the mulberry bush." Exit laughing.)

(Sojourner enters as music plays tune "John Brown." She sings first stanza . . .)

THE VALIANT SOLDIERS

Tune - "John Brown"

(This song was composed by SOJOURNER TRUTH during the war, and sung by her in Detroit and Washington.)

Look there above the center, where the flag is waving bright;
We are going out of slavery, we are bound for freedom's light
We mean to show Jeff Davis how the Africans can fight,

As we go marching on --CHORUS

Father Abraham has spoken, and the message has been sent;
The prison doors have opened, and out the prisoners went
To join the sable army of African descent,

As we go marching on. - CHORUS

Chorus--

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah, as we go marching on.

(After singing first stanza she gives following speech while music is continuing to play in background. After speech, Truth sings second stanza.)

SOJOURNER: Now, here is de question dat I am here to-night to say. I been to Washin'ton, an' I fine out dis, dat de colud pepul dat is libin on de government de United States ort to gi' 'em lan' an' move 'em on it. Dey are libin on de gov'ment, an' dere is pepul takin' care of 'em costin' you so much, an' it don't benefit him 'tall. It degrades him wuss an' wuss. Therefo' I say take an' put 'em in de West where you ken enrich 'em. How much better will it be for to take them culud pepul an' give 'em land? Dey say, Let 'em take keer of derselves. Why, you're taken all away from 'em. Ain't got nuffin lef'. Get dese culud pepul off ob de gov'ment, an' get de ole pepul out and build dem homes in de West, where dey can feed themselves, and dey would soon be abel to be a pepul among you. Dat is my commission. Now adgitate them pepul an' put 'em dere'. Learn 'em to read one part de time an' learn 'em to work de udder part ob de time.

(At this moment a member in the audience arises and leaves.)

I'll hole on a while, (she says) whoever is agoin' let him go. When you tell about work here, den you have to scud. I tell you I can't read a book but I can read de people. (She walks off stage, too.)

(Gilman/Stanton enter together)

GILMAN: Woman's natural work as a female is that of the mother;
Man's natural work as a male is that of the father.
But human work covers all our life outside of these specialities.
All government, education, religion; the whole living world
of achievement: all this is human work.

STANTON: I have bought here and worn a complete outfit of underclothing made by a man. He does the weaving and sewing on a machine, while his wife sells the goods and takes in the money--a perfect reversal of the old order of things, proving again what I have so often preached, that if we will only leave men and women quite free and to themselves, each will find his or her proper place. (She sits, listens to Gilman)

(Gilman lectures on cooking and cleaning while slides are flashed on stage wall; cast members enter to listen, too)

GILMAN: If there should be built and opened in any of our large cities today a commodious and well-served apartment house for professional women with families, it would be filled at once. The apartments would be without kitchens; but there would be a kitchen belonging to the house from which meals could be served to families. It would be a home

where the cleaning was done by efficient workers, not hired separately by the families, but engaged by the manager of the establishment; and a roofgarden, day nursery, and kindergarten, under well-trained professional nurses and teachers, would insure proper care of the children.

In suburban homes this purpose could be accomplished much better by a grouping of adjacent houses, each distinct but kitchenless, and connected with the eating-house... Even cleaning, rightly understood and practised, is a useful, and therefore honorable profession. An expert would clean one home after another with swift skill... While we treat cooking as a sex-function common to all women we can develop no farther. The art of cooking can never be lifted to its true place as a human need and a social function by private service. It should be a reputable, well-paid profession, wherein those women or men who were adapted to this form of labor could become cooks, as they would become composers or carpenters. This will require large changes in our method of living

(Lights go down on as Mother Jones enters.)

JONES: Public attention on child labor quieted down for a while and I concluded the people needed stirring up again. The Liberty Bell that a century ago rang out for freedom against tyranny was touring the country and crowds were coming to see it everywhere. That gave me an idea. These little children were striking for some of the freedom that childhood ought to have, and I decided that the children and I would go on a tour.

1ST: One little fellow had a drum and another had a fife. That was our band.

2ND: Banners were carried that said, "We want more schools and less hospitals." "We want time to play."
"Prosperity is here. Where is ours?"

(Slides of children with picket signs.)

JONES: We started from Philadelphia where we held a great mass meeting. I decided to go with the children to see President Roosevelt to ask him to have Congress pass a law prohibiting the exploitation of childhood. I thought that President Roosevelt might see these mill children and compare them with his own little ones who were spending the summer on the seashore at Oyster Bay. I thought, too, out of politeness, we might call on J. P. Morgan in Wall Street who owned the mines where many of these children's fathers worked.

3RD: We marched to New York. We told an immense crowd of the horrors of child labor in the mills. I showed some of the children.

(Slides of mill child, laborers.)

1ST: Eddie Dunphy, a little fellow of twelve, whose job it was to sit all day on a high stool, handing thread to another worker. Eleven hours a day with dangerous machinery all about him, for three dollars a week.

2ND: Gussie Rangnew. Her face was like an old woman's. Gussie packed stockings in a factory, eleven hours a day for a few cents a day.

JONES: A lot of money was raised for the strikers and hundreds of friends offered their homes to the little ones while we were in the city.

3RD: The next day we went to Coney Island at the invitation of Mr. Bostick who owned the wild animal show. The children had a wonderful day.

JONES: Mr. Bostick let me speak to the audience. There were the empty iron cages of the animals. I put my little children in the cages and they clung to the iron bars while I talked.

(Slides of children behind bars in zoo.)

We want President Roosevelt to hear the wail of the children. Fifty years ago there was a cry against slavery and men gave up their lives to stop the selling of black children on the block. Today the white child is sold for two dollars a week to the manufacturers.

I shall ask the president in the name of the aching hearts of these little ones that he emancipate them from slavery.

(Slides of children marching.)

We marched down to Oyster Bay but the president refused to see us and he would not answer my letters.

1ST: But our march had done its work.

2ND: We had drawn the attention of the nation to the crime of child labor.

3RD: Not long afterward the Pennsylvania legislature passed a child labor law that sent thousands of children home from the mills, and kept thousands from entering the factory until they were fourteen years of age.

(They all march off stage, following Mother Jones.)

(One actress plays judge; all others play jurors sitting on bench in courtroom. Sanger is led in and seated while her recorded voice says the first two paragraphs)

SANGER: (recorded) It surprises me that in my trial the prosecution should be carried on so vehemently, because the prosecutor had little to prove. To me there seemed to be no argument at all; the last thing in my mind was to deny having given birth control advice. Certainly, I had violated the letter of the law, but that was what I was opposing. One courtroom is much like another, and the attitude of one justice not so dissimilar from another. I was combating a mass ideology, and the judges who were its spokesmen merged into a single voice saying, "Be good and we'll let you off."

THE COURT: All we are concerned about is this statute, and as long as it remains the law will this woman promise here and now unqualifiedly to respect it and obey it? Now, it is yes or no. What is your answer, Mrs. Sanger? Is it yes or no?

THE DEFENDANT: I can't respect the law as it stands today.

THE COURT: Margaret Sanger, there is evidence that you established and maintained a birth control clinic where you kept for sale and exhibition various women articles for the prevention of conception, and that there you made a determined effort to disseminate birth control information and advice. You have challenged the constitutionality of the law under consideration and the jurisdiction of this Court. Refusal to obey the law becomes an open defiance of the rule of the majority. The judgment of the Court is that you be confined to the Workhouse for the period of thirty days.

(A sharp rap of the gavel is heard and silence falls.)

(Actresses who had been judge, jurors, now take roles of matron, prisoners, officials.)

SANGER: (Recorded) I was led into an anteroom where other prisoners were being put through the regular fingerprinting procedure. I refused; there was a definite connection in my mind between admission of guilt and fingerprinting; both in their different ways placed me in the category of criminals. We were ushered into a waiting room. A thin-lipped attendant of huge size callously pushed one weeping girl through the door.

MATRON: Get ready there, you!

SANGER: For what?

MATRON: For the doctor. (She repeated) Do you hear me? Go in and get your examination!

SANGER: I am not being examined.

MATRON: Ho, you're not? You're one of the fighting kind, are you? Well, we'll soon fix you, young lady!

(Matron exits angrily; returns with forced smile)

MATRON: Oh, You're Mrs. Sanger. Well, all right, come this way, please . . .

(Sanger is led to a nearby table for questioning.)

SANGER: (Recorded) I answered the usual interrogatory about where I was born, how old I was, etc. When the clerk came to.

CLERK: What religion . . . ?

SANGER: Humanity.

SANGER: (Recorded) He had never heard of this form of belief and rephrased the question

CLERK: Well, what church do you go to?

SANGER: None.

SANGER: (Recorded) He looked at me in sharp surprise. All inmates of the penitentiary went to church; ninety-eight percent in my corridor had been reared as Catholics....

was
The prison clothing which I[^]handed was much like a nurse's uniform and did not disturb me. But when I was recalled to the warden's office to be fingerprinted, I said flatly I would not submit. He sent me back to my cell.

(She is led offstage - lights go down then rise slowly to dim level as she reenters, sits on edge of solitary cot on stage in spotlight. The shadow of cell bars falls over her and the stage.)

The noisy clamor of the world could not reach me through thick stone walls; prison had been a quiet interim for reflection. There had been much notoriety and but little understanding. The next three steps were to be: first, education; then, organization; and, finally, legislation. The public had to be educated before it could be organized and before the laws could be changed as a result of that organization. I set myself to the task. It was to be a long one... Right now, I was to spend 30 long days and nights in prison....

(She lays head down to rest - spotlight on her goes out. . . Other actresses come on and act out with her the following scene, as her recorded voice describes it.)

SANGER: (Recorded) The only brutal treatment I received was during the last two hours. Since my fingerprints had not been taken on arrival, Warden McCann first tried to talk me into compliance. His argument that all prisoners' prints must be on file, that not having them was unheard of, got us nowhere. I refused to submit, even though it postponed my release. He then turned me over to two keepers. One held me, the other struggled with my arms, trying to force my fingers down on the inkpad. I do not know from what source I drew my physical strength, but I managed to prevent my hands from touching it. My arms were bruised and I was weak and exhausted when an officer at headquarters, telephoned an order to discharge me without the usual ceremony.

(She goes to stage edge, putting hat on, getting ready to leave prison.)

SANGER: (Recorded) March 6, 1917, dawned a bitter, stinging morning. Through the metal doors I stepped, and the tingling air beat against my face. No other experience in my life has been like that. Gathered in front were my old friends who had frozen through the long hours waiting to celebrate. They lifted their voices in the "Marseillaise."

TWO ACTRESSES: (Yelling) Margaret's coming out party!

(Other actresses act as prisoners; all sing "Marseillaise.")

SANGER: Behind them at the upper windows were my friends, the women with whom I had spent the month, and they too were singing. (Slides of women singing behind prison windows)

SANGER: . . . Something choked me. Something still chokes me whenever I hear that triumphant music and ringing words, "Ye sons of freedom wake to glory!"

(Sanger joins the group, then all cast but Sanger and girl exit as "Marseillaise" swells up and stops abruptly in middle of line . . .)

GIRL: Public interest and support grew rapidly. In 1921 the first American Birth Control Conference was held. Work was carried on by the American Birth Control League, and despite strong opposition, especially from the Roman Catholic Church, the dissemination of birth control information by doctors was finally legalized in the United States in 1937.

(Girl exits amid slow blackout.)

SANGER: (Walking past audience, with brief nod of head to them.) No woman can call herself free who does not own or control her own body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose conscientiously whether or not she will be a mother. (lights down.)

("Marseillaise" plays softly under these lines; then music changes to loud campaign song for next scene. Cast comes on following Stanton and Girl, all as if taking part in a political campaign.)

GIRL: (holds up sign 'Stanton for Congress,' yells to crowd) Since the legislative body is the medium of communication between the government and the various classes of society it would seem but justice that women, who form one half of every class should be participating in it.

(Slide projected on wall, replica of Stanton's actual candidate's card.)

<p>For Representative to Congress ELIZABETH CADY STANTON</p>
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VOICE: "Lizzie" Stanton was the first woman in the United States to become a candidate for Congress. In conformity with a prevalent practice she nominated herself on October 10, 1866.

(Cast goes about stage, into audience, passing out campaign literature, shaking hands, carrying placards, asking people to "Vote for Stanton," then returns to stage while Stanton talks)

STANTON: To the Electors of the Eighth Congressional District: Although, by the Constitution of the State of New York woman is denied the elective franchise, yet she is eligible to office; therefore, I present myself to you as a candidate for Representative to Congress. Belonging to a disfranchised class, I have no political antecedents, but my creed is free speech, free press, free men and free trade--the cardinal points of democracy. As an Independent Candidate, I desire an election at this time, as a rebuke to the dominant party for its retrogressive legislation in so amending the National Constitution as to make invidious distinctions on the ground of sex. That instrument recognizes as persons all citizens who obey the laws and support the State, and if the Constitutions of the several States were brought into harmony with the broad principles of the Federal Constitution, the women of the Nation would no longer be taxed without representation, or governed without their consent. Not one word should be added to that great charter of rights to the insult or injury of the humblest of our citizens. I would gladly have a voice and vote in the Fortieth Congress to demand universal suffrage. . . . (Cheers, shouts of support.)

If the party makes its demand for "Negro Suffrage" in good faith, on the ground of natural right, on no principle of justice can the women of the nation be ignored. (She remains behind podium.)

1ST: Do you see what the sons of the Pilgrims are doing in Congress? Nothing less than trying to get the irresponsible "male citizen" into our immortal Constitution. What a shame it would be to mar that glorious bequest of the Fathers by introducing into it any word that would recognize a privileged order. As our Constitution now exists, there is nothing to prevent women or Negroes from holding the ballot, but state legislation. But if that word "male" be inserted as now proposed . . . it will take us a century at least to get it out again . . . This attempt to turn the wheels of civilization backward, on the part of Republicans claiming to be the liberal party, should rouse every woman in the nation.

STANTON: (Replies from podium) Think of accepting the man-made constitution, the man-interpretation thereof, the man-made amendment submitted by a convention of aristocrats. One-half of the people have had no voice in the setting up of this constitution and I, for one, would not let a member of the legislature skulk behind the constitution until that document were amended. On the contrary, I say to him: "You represent me and it is your duty to see that justice is done. Set aside technicalities and on broad principles recognize my citizenship.

(rising)
SOJOURNER: ^ Children, I talk to God and God talks to me. I goes out and talks to God in de fields and de woods.

(shouting)
2ND: ^ The weevil has destroyed thousands of acres of wheat in the West this year. (Sojourner nods head at her, agreeing)

SOJOURNER: Dis morning I was walking out, and I got over de fence. I saw de wheat a holding up its head, looking very big. I goes up and takes hold ob it. You b'lieve it, dere was no wheat dare? I says, God, what is de matter wid dis wheat? and he says to me, Sojourner, dere is a little weasel in it. Now I hears talkin' about de Constitution and de rights of man. I comes up and I takes hold of dis Constitution. It looks mighty big, and I feels for my rights, but der aint any dare. Den I says, God, what ails dis Constitution? He says to me, Sojourner, dere is a little weasel in it!

GIRL: (has on lawyer's robe, paces back and forth as if addressing the legislature.) Gentlemen! if the 'white' comes out of the Constitution, let the 'male' come out also. Women have stood with the negro, thus far, on equal ground as ostracized classes, outside the political paradise; and now, when the door is open, it is but fair that we both should enter and enjoy all the fruits of citizenship.

(Two actresses alternate speaking men's words, using phony male voice tones . . .)

1ST: Our senators and representatives had an aversion to any legislation against loyal women, in view of their self-sacrificing work during the Civil War.

2ND: The only way they could open the constitutional door just wide enough to let the black man pass in was to introduce the word "male" into the national Constitution.

1ST: One of the committee proposed "persons" instead of "males."

2ND: That will never do, it would enfranchise wenches.

1ST: Suffrage for black men will be all the strain the Republican party can stand.

(All cast FREEZES. Phony recorded male voices read the following lines . . .)

1867

1ST VOICE: (recorded) The Constitutional Convention committee on woman suffrage made an adverse report.

2ND VOICE: (recorded, in southern drawl.) Committee does not recommend an extension of the elective franchise to women. However defensible in theory, we are satisfied that public sentiment does not demand and would not sustain an innovation so revolutionary and sweeping, so openly at war with a distribution of duties and functions between the sexes as venerable and pervading as government itself, and involving transformations so radical in social and domestic life.

(All cast remain in FREEZE, first one actress unfreezes, then a second one unfreezes to deliver following.)

1ST: Fourteenth Amendment, ratified July 28, 1868, made black men citizens and excluded women.

2ND: (unfreezing) The Fifteenth Amendment--enfranchising black males and again excluding women--was ratified, March 30, 1870.

GILMAN: (Unfreezing) What do we find, here in America, in the field of "politics?" We find first a party system which is the technical arrangement to carry on a fight. It is perfectly conceivable that a flourishing democratic government be carried on without any parties at all; public functionaries being elected on their merits, and each proposed measure judged on its merits. To develop human life in its true powers we need full equal citizenship for women.

1ST: That the framers of the Constitution had woman's rights clearly in their minds is borne out by its whole structure: nowhere is the word man used in contradistinction to woman. They avoided both terms and used...persons, for the same reason they avoided the word slavery...to prevent an untimely contest over rights.

(Rest of cast unfreezes, resumes speaking.)

STANTON: And then some men are astonished, or at least pretend to be, that there is a "shrieking sisterhood." We should do more than shriek; we would be perfectly justified if we were to strike.

1ST: Women have too long petitioned and begged of men; let them now make siege and carry the war into their own homes. It is coming to that, sirs, and it is going to be a dear piece of business for you. We are going to vote, peaceably if we can, but with war if we must.

2ND: Let women assist themselves as they have never assisted themselves before. Let them take care of their own interests. They have too long let their benevolent instincts work toward the church and men; let them now attend to themselves.

3RD: Let the churches alone; don't carpet churches, don't have fairs to deck them with painted windows, don't give your ministers donation parties. Put all your energies into earnest work for your own emancipation.

4TH: Make a social revolution. Carry the war if need be, into your own families; let the baby go without bibs, the husband's shirt without buttons, the home without care, until the men give in.

GIRL: When they find their comfort depends on following us the ballot, they will wheel into the line and give it to us.

STANTON: While the Constitution of the United States leaves the qualifications of electors to the several States, it nowhere gives them the right to deprive any citizen of the elective franchise. The Constitution expressly declares that no State shall make or enforce any law that shall abridge the privileges or immunities of its citizens; hence those provisions of the State constitutions that exclude women from the franchise are in direct violation of the Federal Constitution.

GIRL: Even the preamble recognizes, in the phrase, 'We, the people,' the true origin of all just government Are not women people?

(All cheer, etc.)

GIRL: Men their rights and nothing more, women their rights and nothing less!

(All cheer, etc., again.)

(Scene changes to poll counting station, where large blackboard tallies numbers of votes. Women rush off/on adding up votes on blackboard of two male candidates. Their votes soon reach thousands mark; Mrs. Stanton's votes can be slowly counted on your two hands . . .)

(Girl is tallying final votes she is handed . . . All look at girl, Stanton, crestfallen. Stanton goes over, pats girl on back lightly, as though to cheer her up. All cast flops down anywhere on stage to hear the bad news.)

GIRL: The result of the election was as follows: Mr. Brooks, 13,816 votes, Mr. Cannon, 8,210 and Mrs. Stanton, 24. (She hides her head on desk, as though crying.)

STANTON: Well . . . , I have had a successful defeat. (smiles slightly,) I regret only that I did not, before it is too late, get the photographs of my two dozen unknown admirers.

(All but Sojourner get up wish her well, hug each other and exit wearily. Stanton hugs Sojourner and leaves.)

(in usual dialect)

SOJOURNER: After my race was 'mancipated, I was engaged at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C. and often had to procure articles from various parts of the city for sick soldiers, sometimes obliged to walk a long distance, carrying burdens. I would gladly have availed myself of the street cars; but, although there was on each track one car called the Jim Crow car, nominally for the colored people, the seats were usually filled with white folks.

MRS. HAVILAND: Even so, white folks were still seldom allowed to ride if accompanied by a black one. So my good friend Sojourner and I decided to test the law. We went to take a car together.

SOJOURNER: As Mrs. Haviland signaled the car, I stepped one side as if to continue my walk and when it stopped I ran and jumped aboard. The conductor pushed me back, saying, 'Get out of the way and let this lady come in.' 'Whoop!' said I, 'I am a lady too.' I WANT TO RIDE!!!

MRS. HAVILAND: We met with no further opposition till we were obliged to change cars. A man coming out as we were going into the next car, asked the conductor if niggers were allowed to ride.'

(Other cast members take part of men, women and conductor in this scene.)

LADY: (One of the ladies calls out, in a weak, faint voice)
Conductor, conductor, does niggers ride in these cars?

CONDUCTOR: (Hesitantly) Ye, ye, Yes . . .

LADY: 'Tis a shame and a disgrace. They ought to have a nigger car on the track.

HAVILAND: Sojourner remarked, 'Of course colored people ride in the cars. Street cars are designed for poor white, and colored.'

SOJOURNER: (Spoken in her usual dialect.) Carriages are for ladies and gentlemen. There are carriages [pointing out of the window], standing ready to take you three or four miles for sixpence, and then you talk of a nigger car!!!

HAVILAND: Promptly acting upon this hint, they arose to leave.

SOJOURNER: Ah! now they are going to take a carriage. Good by, ladies . . . The conductor grabbed me by the shoulder and jerking me around, ordered me to get out. I told him I would not. Mrs. Haviland took hold of my other arm.

HAVILAND: Don't put her out.

CONDUCTOR: Does she belong to you?

HAVILAND: No, she belongs to humanity.

CONDUCTOR: Then take her and go. (He shoves Sojourner against the door.)

SOJOURNER: Sir, I will not let you shove me 'bout like a dog. Ms' HAVILAN, take de number of dis here car.

(At this conductor looks alarmed, lets her go.)

HAVILAND: When we arrived at the hospital, the surgeons were called in to examine Sojourner's shoulder and found that a bone was misplaced. She complained to the president of the road, who advised her to arrest the man for assault and battery. The Freedman's Bureau furnished her a lawyer, and the fellow lost his situation. It created a great sensation, and before the trial was ended, the inside of the cars looked like pepper and salt.

SOJOURNER: How great a change a few weeks had produced:
A lady saw some colored women looking wistfully toward a car, when the conductor, halting, said, 'Walk in, ladies.' Now they who had so lately cursed me for wanting to ride, could stop for black as well as white, and could even condescend to say, 'Walk in, ladies.'

(She bows to Mrs. Haviland who slightly bobs back, as though to say to each other, "walk by, lady." And both start to walk off proudly, side by side.)

SOJOURNER: (Slight nod of head toward audience.) Blessed to ye for hearing on me, and now ol Sojourner hasn't got nothing more to say . . . (exits).

(Gilman walks onto opposite side of stage).

GILMAN: We have been so taken up with the phenomena of masculinity and femininity, that our common humanity has largely escaped notice. The moralist has maintained that the highest form of association was with one's own family, that a desire for wider relationship was unworthy. "He is a good family man," we say admiringly of him who asks only for his newspaper and slippers in the evening; and for the woman who dares admit that she wishes further society than that of her husband we have but one name. With the children, too, our constant effort is to "keep the boys at home" to "make home attractive," so that the patriarchal ideal of families may be maintained.

But this is a world of persons as well as of families. We are born persons. As persons, we need to associate with other persons. In our exaggeration of the sex-relation, we have crudely supposed that a wish for wider human relationship was a wish for wider sex-relationship. When we shall not be content to sit down forever with half a dozen blood relations for our whole social arena, we shall need each other more, not less, and shall recognize that social need of one another.

The force which draws friends together is a higher one than that which draws the sexes together. Humanity means being together, and our unutterably outgrown way of living keeps us apart. How many people dare face the fact.

(She sits at left side of stage, lights go down on her and come up on mother Jones, entering from right side.)

MOTHER JONES: Five hundred women got up a dinner and asked me to speak. I told the audience how I had sent a letter to John Rockefeller, Junior, telling him of conditions in the mines. I had heard he was a good young man and read the Bible, and I thought I'd take a chance. The letter came back with "Refused" written across the envelope . . . Most of the women were crazy about women suffrage. They thought that Kingdom-come would follow the enfranchisement of women. You must stand for free speech in the streets, I told them.

1ST WOMAN: How can we, when we haven't a vote?

JONES: I have never had a vote, and I have raised hell all over this country! You don't need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice! . . .

The miners lost, I told them, because they had only the constitution. The other side had bayonets. In the end, bayonets always win. (Some of the women gasped with horror. One or two left the room.) I told the women I did not believe in women's rights nor in men's rights but in human rights. No matter what your fight, I said, don't be ladylike! God Almighty made women and the Rockefeller gang of thieves made the ladies. I have just fought through sixteen months of bitter warfare in Colorado. I have been up against armed mercenaries but this old woman, without a vote, and with nothing but a hatpin has scared them. Get out and fight, I told these women. Fight like hell 'till you get to Heaven! (She exits, walking past audience, with brief nod to them as she repeats last line.)

(Mother Jones exits, as Stanton enters . . .)

ECS: Without my knowledge or consent, my lifelong friend, Susan B. Anthony made arrangements for the celebration of my eightieth birthday in 1895. Naturally at such a time I reviewed my life, and counted its defeats and victories. I remembered when a few women called the first convention to discuss their disabilities, our conservative friends said: "You have made a great mistake, you will be laughed at from Maine to Texas. That first convention, considered a "grave mistake" in 1848, is now referred to as "a grand step in progress."

When, in 1860, I demanded the passage of a statute allowing wives an absolute divorce for brutality of husbands, this was also called a "mistake," and was regarded as "a step in progress" a few years later. Again, I urged the same demands of the Church that we had already made of the State. There was objection, saying, "An attack on the Church would injure the suffrage movement." But I steadily made the demand, as opportunity offered, that women be ordained to preach the Gospel and to fill the offices as elders, deacons, and trustees. A few years later some of these suggestions were accepted. Thus was another "step in progress" taken.

In 1882 I tried to organize a committee to consider the status of women in the Bible. When Part One of "The Woman's Bible" was published, again there was a general disapproval by press and pulpit, and even by women themselves. Like other "mistakes," this too, in due time, will be regarded as "as step in progress."

Such experiences have given me confidence in my judgment . . . The history of the world shows that the vast majority, in every generation, passively accept the conditions into which they are born, while those who demand larger liberties are ever a small, ostracized minority, whose claims are ridiculed and ignored.

(Lights dim as she sits to side, opposite Gilman, who speaks while seated at desk...)

GILMAN: In January, 1932, I discovered that I had cancer of the breast. I had not the least objection to dying. But I did not propose to die of this, so I promptly bought sufficient chloroform as a substitute...Why this fuss about death? Try to visualize a world without death! The first form of life would be yere yet, miles deep by this time, and nothing else; a static world. The resulting mass would leave death as a blessed alternative. Death is the essential condition of life, not an evil. I am most unconcernedly willing to die when I get ready. I have no faintest belief in personal immortality--no interest in nor desire for it. (rises and walks, talking to self and audience)

My life is in Humanity--and that goes on. The one predominant duty is to find one's work and do it, and I have striven mightily at that. Those who object to women's working on the ground that they should not compete with men or be forced to struggle for existence look only at work as a means of earning money. They should remember that human labor is an exercise of faculty, without which we should all cease to be human, that to do and to make not only gives pleasure, but is indispensable to healthy growth. (Sits at table)

(Lights dim on her; come up on ECS.)

STANTON: (writing) New York, February 14, 1897.

I am happy to learn that the people of Rochester, New York, who would never treat Frederick Douglass as a social equal while he lived amongst them, are now proposing to build him a monument. I loved him as he loved me because of the indignities we both alike endured. When I saw him for the last time, he remarked with that gentle play of humor that though I had been denied the rights of an American citizen on account of my sex, and he on account of his color, he felt sure that "we would stand on equal ground with the angels in heaven." "Alas," I answered, "we had better not be too sure of that, for earthly prejudices died hard, and even St. Peter might be influenced against us by some of the 'antis' of color or sex." "Then," he replied, "hand in hand we will go below."

(All cast come on stage. Stanton sits.)

SOJOURNER: This morning the Rev. Doctor Patton, President of Howard University, preached a sermon on "Woman and Scepticism," in which he took the ground that freedom for women led to immorality.

GIRL: Susan and Lizzie occupied front seats, and at the close went forward, and shook hands with the preacher, when Susan remarked earnestly:

SUSAN: Doctor, your mother, if you have one, should lay you across her knee and give you a good spanking for that sermon. (she sits.)

LIZZIE: (She arises.) I had hoped to get ahead of Susan's "spankade," so as to present it to my friends in its best light. But alas! on my way from Washington, I saw every paper I took up announced it.

5TH ACTRESS: Some presented the incident as if Susan had interrupted the services with a loud and vehement harrangue.

6TH: But the Graphic sustains us in an editorial.

STANTON: I have just written to Susan: (She sits and writes.) "The more I think of your Patton volley, the better I like it. It was an attack, a defiance and an argument all in one. Like that shot at Lexington, it ought to go round the world. It is done. Don't regret it. By the way, did you see that one of the papers said we were 'a spanking team'? That's not bad."

(BLACK OUT - All exit but Gilman and Stanton.)

(She is in spotlight on left side of stage, sitting at table with bottle on it.)

GILMAN: Human life consists in mutual service. No grief, pain, misfortune or broken heart is excuse for cutting off one's life while any power of service remains. But when all usefulness is over, when one is assured of unavoidable and imminent death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death.

Public opinion is changing on this subject. The time is approaching when we shall consider it abhorrent to allow a human being to die in prolonged agony which we should mercifully end in any other creature. Believing this open choice to be of social service in promoting wiser views on this question, I have preferred chloroform to cancer.

(She slowly and quietly puts hand around bottle as though about to use it; lights go down as she exits, come up on Stanton.)

STANTON: Having just celebrated my 87th birthday, I should be most thankful for the power to roll back the wheels of time at least thirty years, in order to enjoy the generation in which liberty, justice and equality will everywhere be vouchsafed to the mothers of the race. . . .

To go as quickly as possible thither whence one has come is the way I should like to die when the time comes Asked how I wish my funeral conducted, I answer that I should like to be in my ordinary dress, no crepe or black, no fripperies or fandangoes of any sort, and some common-sense women to conduct the services. When I pass the gate of celestial city and good Peter asks me where I would sit, I shall say, "Anywhere, so that I am neither a Negro nor a woman. Confer on me, good angel, the glory of white manhood so that henceforth, sitting or standing, rising up or lying down, I may enjoy the most unlimited freedom."

(She sits in rocker, picks up pen, paper and writes letter, the last she is ever to write.)

STANTON: To President Theodore Roosevelt, the White House, October 26, 1902,

Dear Sir: Abraham Lincoln immortalized himself by the emancipation of four million Southern slaves. Speaking for my suffrage coadjutors, we now desire that you, Mr. President, immortalize yourself by bringing about the complete emancipation of thirty-six million women.

(She puts down paper, reads it over. Later, her head falls quietly back in the rocking chair, the pen drops on the floor.)

VOICE: (Over mike) That day, sitting quietly in her rocking chair, Elizabeth Cady Stanton died at the age of 87, (spot on rocking chair dims slowly to low) 64 years after she called the first woman's rights convention in 1848 and 18 years before women were enfranchised to vote in 1920.

(Cast comes on stage, files past rocker in dim spot, says final line, then leaves stage to take seats in audience, from which they came at beginning of play. Each actress, except girl in last turn, delivers her line in a spotlight which goes out after her last words.

TRUTH: If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all 'lone, dese togedder (her eyes take in all the women in the audience) ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again....

SANGER: No woman can call herself free who does not own or control her own body. No woman can call herself free until she can conscientiously choose whether or not she will be a mother....

JONES: I do not believe in women's rights nor in men's rights but human rights...No matter what your fight, don't be ladylike... Get out and fight -- fight like hell till you get to heaven...

GILMAN: We have, so far, lived and suffered and died in a man-made world...The woman's movement should be hailed by every right thinking, far-seeing man and woman as the best birth of our century. The banner advanced proclaims 'equality before the law.'

(Gilman starts to leave stage as other actresses have, but halts just at the edge of stage, still in spotlight.)

GIRL: Courage ... the best protector any woman can have, one that will serve her at all times and in all places, is courage... Begin with the girls of today and in 20 years we can revolutionize this nation. (She halts beside Stanton in rocker, remaining on stage.)

GILMAN: (Speaks from edge of stage, softly) Lizzie, thee did not make us ridiculous...

GIRL: (Softly, from side of rocker) Women their rights, and nothing less...

(Gilman and girl have moved quickly to their seats in audience after their last lines. Spotlight on Stanton in rocker slowly dims as the following lines are heard.)

STANTON: (Voice over mike) Let this generation pay its debt to the past by continuing this great work until the last vestige of woman's subjection shall be erased from our creeds and codes and constitutions....

(All actresses are by now in seats in audience; stage is BLACK. As audience begins to applaud, house lights come up quickly and actresses take bows from audience seats. ECS does not move. House lights quickly go down and spot comes up on ECS who rises and bows; other actresses quickly join her on stage for final bow.)

-E N D -

Doree Lovell
Lindenwood College
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