

and was justified in so doing. As then the slaves who got their freedom had to take it over or under or through the unjust forms of law, precisely so now must women take it to get their right to a voice in this government; and I have taken mine, and mean to take it at every opportunity.

Judge Hunt. The Court orders the prisoner to sit down. It will not allow another word.

Miss Anthony. When I was brought before your honor for trial, I hoped for a broad and liberal interpretation of the Constitution and its recent amendments, which should declare all United States citizens under its protecting aegis—which should declare equality of rights the national guarantee to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. But failing to get this justice—failing, even, to get a trial by a jury *not* of my peers—I ask not leniency at your hands but rather the full rigor of the law.

Judge Hunt. The Court must insist—[Here the prisoner sat down.] The prisoner will stand up. [Here Miss Anthony rose again.] The sentence of the Court is that you pay a fine of \$100 and the costs of the prosecution.

Miss Anthony. May it please your honor, I will never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty. All the stock in trade I possess is a debt of \$10,000, incurred by publishing my paper—*The Revolution*—the sole object of which was to educate all women to do precisely as I have done, rebel against your man-made, unjust, unconstitutional forms of law, which tax, fine, imprison and hang women, while denying them the right of representation in the government; and I will work on with might and main to pay every dollar of that honest debt, but not a penny shall go to this unjust claim. And I shall earnestly and persistently continue to urge all women to the practical recognition of the old Revolutionary maxim, “Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.”

Judge Hunt. Madam, the Court will not order you to stand committed until the fine is paid.

## *Woman Wants Bread, Not the Ballot!*

During a brief two-year period, from 1868 to 1870, Susan B. Anthony published a weekly newspaper, *The Revolution*, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the abolitionist Parker Pillsbury as co-editors. *The Revolution* discussed such “scandalous” issues as divorce, prostitution, and the role of the church in the subjugation of women. The weekly also allied itself with the needs of workingwomen. (Anthony founded a Working Woman’s Association of printing trade employees and was their delegate to the 1868 National Labor Congress.) *The Revolution* urged more female workers to join unions and “together say *Equal Pay for Equal Work*.”

Stanton and Anthony’s determination to keep the platform of the woman’s movement broad and inclusive by speaking out on labor and controversial social issues that affected women’s lives, coupled with their earlier decision to oppose any suffrage amendment that did not include females, created grave dissent within the movement. By 1869 the feminist forces split. The National Woman Suffrage Association was organized under the leadership of Stanton and Anthony; the American Woman Suffrage Association was centered in New England, with Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe as prominent influences and many former anti-slavery stalwarts as adherents. The American based itself solely on the woman suffrage issue and gradually acquired a large conservative following.

In 1870 *The Revolution* collapsed financially and left Anthony with a \$10,000 personal debt. Then fifty years old, Anthony undertook strenuous cross-country speaking tours to earn money; it took six years before she could repay it all. The selection below is from one of her most popular speeches of that period.

By this time Anthony had moved beyond the stage of a mere listing of the wrongs perpetrated against women. She was now

considering how woman might bring about change—what leverage, what power does she have? Anthony finally concluded that women needed political power and that the ballot was the means to that power.

The title *Woman Wants Bread, Not the Ballot!* is an ironical comment on the failure of workingwomen in any significant numbers to participate in the suffrage movement. It was Anthony's favorite speech, combining as it did two themes that greatly interested her: the economic exploitation of woman and her need for the vote in a democratic nation in order to assume some control over the conditions of her life in every sphere. In another of Anthony's speeches of the seventies, *Social Purity*—a full-blown endorsement of Victorian morality for both men and women—she notes that it is idle for women to hope to do battle “until they shall be armed with weapons equal to those of the enemy—votes and money.”

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Wherever, on the face of the globe or on the page of history, you show me a disfranchised class, I will show you a degraded class of labor. Disfranchisement means inability to make, shape or control one's own circumstances. The disfranchised must always do the work, accept the wages, occupy the position the enfranchised assign to them. The disfranchised are in the position of the pauper. You remember the old adage, “Beggars must not be choosers;” they must take what they can get or nothing! That is exactly the position of women in the world of work today; they can not choose. If they could, do you for a moment believe they would take the subordinate places and the inferior pay? Nor is it a “new thing under the sun” for the disfranchised, the inferior classes weighed down with wrongs, to declare they “do not want to vote.” The rank and file are not philosophers, they are not educated to think for themselves, but simply to accept, unquestioned, whatever comes.

Years ago in England when the workingmen, starving in the mines and factories, gathered in mobs and took bread

wherever they could get it, their friends tried to educate them into a knowledge of the causes of their poverty and degradation. At one of these “monster bread meetings,” held in Manchester, John Bright said to them, “Workingmen, what you need to bring to you cheap bread and plenty of it, is the franchise;” but those ignorant men shouted back to Mr. Bright, precisely as the women of America do to us today, “It is not the vote we want, it is bread.” . . .

But at length, through the persistent demands of a little handful of reformers, there was introduced into the British Parliament the “household suffrage” bill of 1867 . . . . the opposition was championed by Robert Lowe, who presented all the stock objections to the extension of the franchise to “those ignorant, degraded working men,” as he called them, that ever were presented in this country against giving the ballot to the negroes, and that are today being urged against the enfranchisement of women. . . . But notwithstanding Mr. Lowe's persistent opposition, the bill became a law; and before the session closed, that same individual moved that Parliament, having enfranchised these men, should now make an appropriation for the establishment and support of schools for the education of them and their sons. Now, mark you his reason why! “Unless they are educated,” said he, “they will be the means of overturning the throne of England.” So long as these poor men in the mines and factories had not the right to vote, the power to make and unmake the laws and lawmakers, to help or hurt the government, no measure ever had been proposed for their benefit although they were ground under the heel of the capitalist to a condition of abject slavery. But the moment this power is placed in their hands, before they have used it even once, this bitterest enemy to their possessing it is the first man to spring to his feet and make this motion for the most beneficent measure possible in their behalf—public schools for the education of themselves and their children. . . .

The great distinctive advantage possessed by the working-

men of this republic is that the son of the humblest citizen, black or white, has equal chances with the son of the richest in the land if he take advantage of the public schools, the colleges and the many opportunities freely offered. It is this equality of rights which makes our nation a home for the oppressed of all the monarchies of the old world.

And yet, notwithstanding the declaration of our Revolutionary fathers, "all men created equal," "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," "taxation and representation inseparable"—notwithstanding all these grand enunciations, our government was founded upon the blood and bones of half a million human beings, bought and sold as chattels in the market. Nearly all the original thirteen States had property qualifications which disfranchised poor white men as well as women and negroes. . . .

It is said women do not need the ballot for their protection because they are supported by men. Statistics show that there are 3,000,000 women in this nation supporting themselves. In the crowded cities of the East they are compelled to work in shops, stores and factories for the merest pittance. In New York alone, there are over 50,000 of these women receiving less than fifty cents a day. Women wage-earners in different occupations have organized themselves into trades unions, from time to time, and made their strikes to get justice at the hands of their employers just as men have done, but I have yet to learn of a successful strike of any body of women. The best organized one I ever knew was that of the collar laundry women of the city of Troy, N.Y., the great emporium for the manufacture of shirts, collars and cuffs. They formed a trades union of several hundred members and demanded an increase of wages. It was refused. So one May morning in 1867, each woman threw down her scissors and her needle, her starch-pan and flat-iron, and for three long months not one returned to the factories. At the end of that time they were literally starved

out, and the majority of them were compelled to go back, but not at their old wages, for their employers cut them down to even a lower figure.

In the winter following I met the president of this union, a bright young Irish girl, and asked her, "Do you not think if you had been 500 carpenters or 500 masons, you would have succeeded?" "Certainly," she said, and then she told me of 200 bricklayers who had the year before been on strike and gained every point with their employers. "What could have made the difference? Their 200 were but a fraction of that trade, while your 500 absolutely controlled yours." Finally she said, "It was because the editors ridiculed and denounced us." "Did they ridicule and denounce the bricklayers?" "No." "What did they say about you?" "Why, that our wages were good enough now, better than those of any other workingwomen except teachers; and if we weren't satisfied, we had better go and get married. . . . It must have been because our employers bribed the editors." . . . In the case of the bricklayers, no editor, either Democrat or Republican, would have accepted the proffer of a bribe, because he would have known that if he denounced or ridiculed those men, not only they but all the trades union men of the city at the next election would vote solidly against the nominees advocated by that editor. If those collar laundry women had been voters, they would have held, in that little city of Troy, the "balance of political power". . . .

There are many women equally well qualified with men for principals and superintendents of schools, and yet, while three-fourths of the teachers are women, nearly all of them are relegated to subordinate positions on half or at most two-thirds the salaries paid to men . . . . sex alone settles the question. . . .

And then again you say, "Capital, not the vote, regulates labor." Granted, for the sake of the argument, that capital does control the labor of women . . . but no one with eyes

to see and ears to hear, will concede for a moment that capital absolutely dominates the work and wages of the free and enfranchised men of this republic. It is in order to lift the millions of our wage-earning women into a position of as much power over their own labor as men possess that they should be invested with the franchise. This ought to be done not only for the sake of justice to the women, but to the men with whom they compete; for, just so long as there is a degraded class of labor in the market, it always will be used by the capitalists to checkmate and undermine the superior classes.

Now that as a result of the agitation for equality of chances, and through the invention of machinery, there has come a great revolution in the world of economics, so that wherever a man may go to earn an honest dollar a woman may go also, there is no escape from the conclusion that she must be clothed with equal power to protect herself. That power is the ballot, the symbol of freedom and equality, without which no citizen is sure of keeping even that which he hath, much less of getting that which he hath not.

## VICTORIA WOODHULL & TENNESSEE CLAFLIN

*Virtue: What It Is, and What It Is Not*

Victoria Claflin Woodhull (1838–1927) and her sister Tennessee Claflin (1846–1923) never had been affiliated with the organized woman's movement when they burst upon the scene in 1870 with the publication of their radical feminist newspaper, *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*. The editors discussed such topics as prostitution, venereal disease, abortion, and female sexuality, and printed news about workingwomen and their efforts to organize and better their conditions. The *Weekly* advocated spiritualism, socialism (it was the first American periodical to publish the *Communist Manifesto*) and free love (a novel by George Sand was published as a serial).

The resourceful Claflin sisters, whose background included dismal poverty and unsavory careers with a "medical" road show and as clairvoyants, had recently earned a considerable fortune in New York as Wall Street's first female stockbrokers. (Their brokerage firm was bankrolled by Cornelius Vanderbilt, an ardent admirer of Tennessee Claflin.) Their uninhibited sex lives, which they made no attempt to conceal, were the subject of much gossip.

Thus, when Victoria Woodhull showed up in Washington in early 1871, just as Susan B. Anthony was about to open a convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association, her presence was probably a source of embarrassment for some delegates. Opponents of woman's rights had long used the charge of "free love" to discredit the movement, and Woodhull frankly avowed her belief in sexual freedom.