

WOMAN'S VIEW OF A WOMAN'S DUTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE JOHN BROWN CRIME, &c., &c.

To the Editors of the N. Y. Express :

Ever since Uncle Tom's Cabin met with its pernicious success, the isms of a few fanatics, male and female, have been made a prominent feature in our national politics. The evil popularity of one woman, who had been writing twenty years almost unheard of, had set a portion of the sex crazy with a desire for like notoriety. Mrs. Stowe had been diligently writing into middle age, without being known as an author, and at last issued from obscurity, not by an extraordinary talent, but because the restless Beecher blood led her to strike a rich vein of passion and prejudice, which arose at once and recognized her talent, when it took an incendiary form, which had been overlooked in its legitimate channel for nearly half a life.

This book was the first of a class that had been sewing evil thoughts throughout the land, which are now become murderous acts. The evil spirit was evoked by anti-slavery novels mostly written by women—the sermons which pleaded for Sharp's rifles, as if holiness was murder, were listened to by women. The Abolition press, which joined full cry, women read approvingly, as if treason were religion—all this has done its work, and that is—murder!

The evil tendency of these teachings is not confined to the developments at Harper's Ferry, but have spread through society, perverting every thing that is sweet and sacred in the female character where a poisonous seed has fallen near the hearthstone. Since that time, females have ceased to blush when Free Love as an institution is mentioned, but discuss it side by side with the negro question. The slavery of the South and the slavery of marriage take now about equal prominence. Woman's rights and negro rights ride the same saddle, and women appear now with a shameless audacity and partake in discussions which the most hardened of the sex would have shrunk from twenty years ago.

The irreligion, the want of reverence, the audacious ambition which this state of things has developed in women, is a terrible feature of the times. A thirst for notoriety is driving the sex insane. They call it by a thousand specious names, but the fountain is in the insatiate vanity, which nothing but the lightning of the press or the clamors of a multitude can appease. The women who have set an example and given their talent to produce this state of things are as culpable as the man who poisons a well at which a whole village must drink. They are like little boys who have the power to unlock a flood-gate, but none to arrest the cataract of water that pours through.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe, and her train of small imitators have something more to answer for than the death of those who have had faith in their sincerity. When Old John Brown, the victim of their teachings, atones for his fault on the scaffold, it will be the most painful or repulsive picture that teachings of these unwomanly women have inflicted on society; for the execution of a man is not half so revolting as the demoralization of one woman. The evil which his death will spread, is nothing to the spirit of defiance to law and order which overshadowed many a New England hearthstone, where our mothers performed their household duties, worshipped God, and revered the laws.

If Old John Brown is executed on the day appointed, such women as Mrs. Stowe, and such men as Henry Ward Beecher, will have his blood on their souls, if not on their hands. It was his belief in their courage and sincerity that led this old man into the crime which he must expiate on the gallows, while the incendiary words which lured him and his followers to death, coin for their writers fame and money, with which to purchase appliances for luxurious living. Incendiary acts, incited, encouraged and fostered by these mercenary teachings, have led braver souls than they will ever possess to the scaffold.

And what have the anti-slavery men and women done to help their victims? Why, contented themselves with vituperations against the South; fled to Canada for safety, or sent artistically prepared letters asking permission to visit John Brown in his dungeon, that each word gathered from his miserable lips may hereafter be turned to a grain of gold. The anti-slavery women have talked and written any amount of sentimental incendiarism; but now, when these teachings take form, and are about to make the wife of old John Brown a widow, what can they do? They cannot write him out of prison, or preach the gallows from under his feet. They have urged an excitable, ardent and rash fanatic on to a bloody death, and instead of going on their knees and paying Almighty God to forgive this horrible sin, content themselves with writing letters for publication, or making sentimental journeys to their victim's prison.

During the last few weeks, letters have been floating, thick as leaves, through the newspapers,—all calculated to exalt a handful of unhappy rioters into martyrs, and to give the names of the writers to the public,—a bliss for which some women of ardent vanity and mediocre mind would, I believe, take a place on the gallows themselves.

Mrs. Lydia Maria Child first sets the example, and writes a letter, beautifully adapted for publication, to Governor Wise, asking permission to console, comfort and sympathize with John Brown in his prison. Of course Mrs. Child knew that she had a perfect right to visit Virginia, and that there was no more danger in doing so than in seeking her own bed chamber at night. In this country women are more than respected wherever an American citizen is to be found.

There was no more necessity for sending this letter to Governor Wise than there was to ask the Governor of Massachusetts for permission to eat her breakfast. As for ad-

mittance to the prison, Mrs. Child, as the wife of a lawyer, must have known that the officer in whose charge Brown rested at the time was the person to whom she must apply, and that once in Virginia she was sure of being treated with the courtesy due an American lady. But why should Mrs. Child wish to visit and nurse John Brown? She knew well enough that he was properly cared for and kindly treated, and ought to have known that the presence of any women other than his wife or daughter must be an intrusion on the precious time of a man sentenced to die. John Brown has a wife and Mrs. Child was aware of it. What right had she to offer to stand in that wife's place by a husband condemned to death? She could not really have expected to be of material assistance because she is herself quite an elderly, not to say old, lady, on whom the duties of a nurse would have fallen heavily.

Of course all these things Mrs. Child knew well enough. John Brown, according to his own sensible letter, was tenderly nursed and kindly treated. He wanted no stranger to disturb the little time left for preparation for certain death, and stand between his thoughts and an offended God. He had found out the value of Abolition sentiment; it had lured him to a bloody grave! So old John Brown declined the nurse who proposed to stand in the place of his wife, and remembering the woman whom Mrs. Child seems to have forgotten, besought that the ostentatious kindness extended to him might be directed to her, a course which real feminine benevolence would have taken at first.

But no woman of these times can strike an original road to notoriety without finding a swarm of the ambitious sisterhood on her track. Mrs. Child's letter had hardly taken wing; when up stars other female philanthropists of whom no one ever heard, who is resolved to secure a slice of the notoriety so adroitly earned. Eager for her share of newspaper paragraphs, she makes haste to Virginia, energetically forces a passage to Brown's cell, greedily gathers up his words for some promised future publications, arranges a quantity of autumn leaves in the grating of his widow, and comes away solemnly convinced that she has done a great act, and secured to her self a place in future history. A great act is it? That of crowding unasked into the place which a wife only should occupy! Who else should dare to gather the breath from his dying lips, that it may be coined into money; or worse still, into new mischief, by which more men may be led to ruin! True mercy would leave the moments not consumed to penitential prayers to God for forgiveness of a fearful crime, to the poor woman who will soon be a widow.

The sympathy which encouraged crime, and beyond a doubt wrought the death of this man, must seem to him as a cold mockery. Yet the newspapers, and the Express among the rest, give importance and space to the actions and letters of these ladies, which only belong to deeds of delicate benevolence and real courage. Compare the acts of these ambitious ladies with the bravery of that daughter of Virginia—that true woman, full of merciful heroism—who flung herself before the levelled guns of her friends to protect the very men who had come, armed to the teeth, to scatter fire and death upon her and all that she had dear in life—this was the true courage of womanhood! This was an act, which gives genuine fame, because it sprang promptly from a compassionate heart; because it had but one result in view, that of saving a human life. Yet this deed of heroism, so beautiful in itself, so womanly, so grand, has passed with comparatively little notice, while Mrs. Child's letter, and the lady who made a pilgrimage to John Brown's cell, in order to place some autumn leaves in his window, is filling the press as if some very meritorious deed has been performed.

A WOMAN.