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An Incident with its Sequel (2)

William Kennedy Brown

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An Incident With Its Sequel.

About the first of February, 1869, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a visit to Alliance, Ohio, on which occasion she lectured in the New Opera House. She called at the Parsonage to see Mrs. ^{McKellan} Brown. My wife being away on a similar tour, I appeared for Mrs. Brown. I found Mrs. Stanton a remarkably entertaining conversationalist. She desired to meet Mrs. Brown to enlist her in the movement for Woman Suffrage. She had understood that Mrs. Brown did a good deal of speaking and that she also had ^{editorial} charge of the city newspaper. She thought a good work might be done for the cause of Woman's civil and political equality by Mrs. Brown owing to her having such excellent opportunities of reaching the public.

I was fairly well posted in certain ideas advanced by leading Woman Suffragists of that time in regard to orthodox religion, social life and particularly the Holy Scriptures. Hence I said: Mrs. Brown could not afford to unite in advocacy of the ~~reform~~ you represent. She wanted to know why I should make such a statement. I candidly referred her to the attitude of her associates on the questions alluded to. Then I remarked: Even you, ^{Mrs. Stanton} cannot secure evangelical ^{Christian} churches to speak in. She admitted I was correct. Now Mrs. Brown is sought to speak in churches of the different denominations. She is organizing ^{both men & women} Women for the agitation of the Temperance question, ^{local women} even more than men. These women are learning to think and speak on their feet, they are also becoming enthusiastic for ~~reform~~ and Temperance. After a time they will go from their ~~lodge~~ rooms to their church ^{es} and prayer meetings and some of them to the public platform with an interest similar to that which Mrs. Brown has for Temperance ~~reform~~. Then they will learn that the Temperance Reform must be carried by converting politics and politicians. They will also learn that ^{politicians} ~~male politics~~ will not grapple with the liquor traffic in any destructive or definite way and that women without being voters, can do little. ^{now} Here they will soon become the most ardent and persistent advocates of Woman Suffrage in the land. Coming from the churches, they will influence church people; and so you see the army of Temperance Suffragists which Mrs. Brown is developing, will be capable of doing much more for your cause, than your people who make themselves obnoxious to the great Christian Public by criticising the Scriptures and church institutions, can ever become.

Mrs. Stanton bowed her head to her hand and sat thoughtful for a few moments. Then she calmly remarked: Let Mrs. Brown work in her own way. After some general conversation she departed, apparently well satisfied with her visit. That was my first and last interview with Mrs. Stanton; but she impressed me as a woman of strong character and great natural ability.

I was positive, perhaps to rudeness; and I have often ^{pondered over and} wondered, on recalling the inspiration and comprehension which I had of the Temperance and Woman questions, while holding that interview with Mrs. Stanton. They are scarcely more real today than they were twenty ^{eight} ~~seven~~ years ago, and that was seven years before the uprising of the Ohio women. I saw in anticipation an army of Christian Suffragists larger and far more influential among humanity than the gatherings of sceptical women and men representing this cause. And I distinctly asserted my prophecy to Mrs. Stanton.