

# MEMORIAL

OF THE

## AMERICAN EQUAL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION to the CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The undersigned, Officers and Representatives of the American Equal Rights Association, respectfully but earnestly protest against any change in the Constitution of the United States, or legislation by Congress, which shall longer violate the principle of Republican government, by proscriptive distinctions in rights of suffrage and citizenship, on account of color or sex.

Your Memorialists would respectfully represent, that neither the colored man's loyalty, bravery on the battle field and general good conduct, nor woman's heroic devotion to liberty and her country, in peace and war, have yet availed to admit them to equal citizenship, even in this enlightened and republican nation.

We believe that humanity is one in all those intellectual, moral and spiritual attributes, out of which grow human responsibilities. The scripture declaration is, "so God created man in his own image: male and female created he them." And all divine legislation throughout the realm of nature recognizes the perfect equality of the two conditions. For male and female are but different conditions.

Neither color nor sex is ever discharged from obedience to law, natural or moral; written or unwritten. The commands, thou shalt not steal, nor kill, nor commit adultery, know nothing of sex in their demands; nothing in their penalty. And hence we believe that all *human* legislation which is at variance with the divine code, is essentially unrighteous and unjust.

Woman and the colored man are taxed to support many literary and humane institutions, into which they never come, except in the poorly paid capacity of menial servants. Woman has been fined, whipped, branded with red hot irons, imprisoned and hung; but when was woman ever tried by a jury of her peers?

Though the nation declared from the beginning that "all just governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed," the consent of woman was never asked to a single statute, however nearly it affected her dearest womanly interests or happiness. In the despotisms of the old world, of ancient and modern times, woman, profligate, prostitute, weak, cruel, tyrannical, or otherwise, from Semiramis and Messalina, to Catharine of Russia and Margaret of Anjou, have swayed, unchallenged, imperial sceptres; while in this republican and Christian land in the nineteenth century, woman, intelligent, refined in every ennobling gift and grace, may not even vote on the appropriation of her own property, or the disposal and destiny of her own children. Literally she has no *rights* which man is bound to respect; and her civil privileges she holds only by sufferance. For the power that gave, can take away, and of that power she is no part. In most of the States, these unjust distinctions apply to woman, and to the colored man alike.

Your Memorialists fully believe that the time has come when such injustice should cease.

Woman and the colored man are loyal, patriotic, property-holding, tax-paying, liberty-loving citizens; and we cannot believe that sex or complexion should be any ground for civil or political degradation.

In our Government, one-half the citizens are disfranchised by their sex, and about one-eighth by the color of their skin; and thus a large majority have no voice in enacting or executing the laws they are taxed to support and compelled to obey, with the same fidelity as the more favored class, whose usurped prerogative it is to rule.

Against such outrages on the very name of republican freedom, your memorialists do and must ever protest. And is not our protest pre-eminently as just against the tyranny of "*taxation without representation*," as was that thundered from Bunker Hill, when our revolutionary fathers fired the shot that shook the world?

And your Memorialists especially remember, at this time, that our country is still reeling under the shock of a terrible civil war, the legitimate result and righteous retribution of the vilest slave system ever suffered among men. And in restoring the foundations of our nationality, your memorialists most respectfully and earnestly pray that all discriminations on account of sex or race may be removed; and that our Government may be republican in *fact* as well as *form*; A GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, AND THE WHOLE PEOPLE; FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THE WHOLE PEOPLE.

In behalf of the American Equal Rights Association,

LUCRETIA MOTT, President.

THEODORE TILTON,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS,

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON,

} Vice Presidents.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, Secretary.