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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE GENERAL

ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION,

CALLED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

AND

HELD IN LONDON,

FROM

FRIDAY, JUNE 12th, TO TUESDAY, JUNE 23rd, 1840.

LONDON:

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

37, NEW BROAD STREET;

THOMAS WARD AND CO., AND HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW;
J. L. PORTER, SLOANE STREET, CHELSEA; BIRMINGHAM, J. W. SHOWELL
LIVERPOOL, MARPLES; DUBLIN, CURRY, JUN. AND CO.; EDINBURGH,
OLIPHANT AND SON; GLASGOW, W. COLLINS; NORWICH,
JARROLD AND SON; NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, JAMES
FINLAY, AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1841.
enjoy the blessing of God, and that great benefits will result from your deliberations. It is good to be the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be engaged in promoting His cause.

THOMAS CLARKSON, Esq., then retired from the chair, and on the motion of Mr. ALEXANDER, seconded by Mr. BENNET, W. T. BLAIR, Esq., one of the vice-chairmen was called to occupy it.

The CHAIRMAN.—In being called on immediately to succeed our venerable and respected President, I cannot but feel and express how undeserving I am of the distinction which has been conferred upon me. I can truly say, without any affectation, that there are very many in the assembly who possess far stronger claims and better qualifications than myself to occupy such a position. In bowing, however, to the decision of the Convention, I have only to throw myself on the kind consideration and indulgence of the assembly; and to solicit for myself and my respected colleagues your united support, in our endeavours to maintain that good order and harmony which is essential to the credit of our proceedings. This meeting having been opened in the usual way, by the speech of our respected President, it would be unsuitable and unnecessary for me to detain you by any observations of my own. But I will just hazard one remark, which may not be altogether unimportant in reference to the harmony of future proceedings. It must be obvious to every one present, that this meeting is composed of gentlemen entertaining a great diversity of sentiment upon political and religious subjects, as well as others; though cordially united, I trust, as one man, in the great object which brings us together. I trust, that no opinion or expression will escape in the progress of discussion that can possibly wound the feelings or offend the innocent prejudices of any one, that a spirit of forbearance and conciliation will be maintained throughout the proceedings, and nothing will be suffered to clash with the paramount object we have in view.

Mr. G. THOMPSON, rose to submit a resolution expressive of the feelings of the Convention in reference to the President, which motion was withdrawn in order to be re-introduced at the close of the Convention.

WENDELL PHILLIPS, Esq. (of Boston, Massachusetts, U. S.)—Those who may have watched the proceedings of this Convention during the presence of Thomas Clarkson, will have observed that we have not yet provided for the formation of any roll of membership. There is no constituted body emanating from this Convention to receive the credentials of delegates, and inscribe their names. Several friends who are interested in the matter have proposed to make a motion to that effect, in the regular course of business, but it was suggested that as it might lead to discussion, it would be better to delay it till after the retirement of our venerated friend. I make these remarks to apologize for the seeming inappropriateness of the motion which I have to submit to the meeting. It is as follows:—

"That a Committee of five be appointed to prepare a correct list of the members of this Convention, with instructions to include in such list all persons bearing credentials from any Anti-Slavery body."
It may be necessary before I sit down to state the reason of making that motion, when to all appearance there exists on this table a list of delegates. I do it because, coming from the state of Massachusetts, there are several of my co-delegates, who though in this Hall, have not received an entrance as members of the Convention by the authority of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, who have undertaken to settle the qualifications of membership of this body. Under their control the list before me has been formed; a list very useful for the purposes of reference or communication between the various members who have arrived in this city. But some of us feeling ourselves, shall I use too harsh a term when I say, aggrieved! by this act of the Committee, have thought it our duty to bring the subject before the Convention. I allude to the refusal of tickets of admission to the women of Massachusetts. When the call, which was read by Mr. Tredgold, reached America, we found that it was an invitation to the friends of the slave of every nation, and of every clime. Massachusetts has for several years acted on the principle of admitting women to an equal seat with men in the deliberative bodies of anti-slavery societies. When the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society received that paper, it interpreted it, as it was its duty, in the broadest and most liberal sense. If there be any other paper emanating from the Committee limiting to one sex the qualification of membership, there is no proof, and as an individual I have no knowledge, that such a paper ever reached Massachusetts. We stand here in consequence of your invitation, and knowing our custom, as it must be presumed you did, we had a right to interpret "friends of the slave," to include women as well as men. In such circumstances we do not think it just or equitable to that State, nor to America in general, that after the trouble, the sacrifice, the self-devotion of a part of those who leave their families, and kindred, and occupations in their own land, to come 4000 miles to attend this World's Convention, they should be refused a place in its deliberations. The meeting will observe that I have purposely introduced into the motion language which brings the question before the Convention.

PROFESSOR ADAM, (of Cambridge, Massachusetts, U. S.)—I shall merely state, that I have great pleasure in expressing my entire concurrence in the sentiments that have now been stated to the meeting. I will only add, if the ladies who have come from America are not deemed entitled, in consequence of the credentials they bear, to a place in this assembly, I feel for one that I am not entitled to occupy such a position. My credentials proceed from the same persons, and from the same societies, and bear the same names as theirs. I have no other authority to appear amongst you, to take a place in your proceedings, and give a voice in your deliberations, than that right which is equally possessed by the ladies to whom a place among you has been denied. In the Society from which I have come, female exertion is the very life of us, and of all that we have done, and all we hope to do. To exclude females, would be to affix a stigma upon them.

Mr. STACEY.—I feel that any one is placed in a very invidious position in having to speak a word against the proposal now made. It is inconsistent with our natural feelings to take a part which may seem in the least degree to imply an unfavourable opinion of the conduct, exertions, influence, or power of our female friends in this cause. I believe no persons estimate more highly than the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society do, the bright example and philanthropic efforts of our
female friends. But the custom of this country is well known and uniform. In all matters of mere business, unless females are especially associated together, and announced as such, in the promotion of the objects in view, they do not become a part of the working committees. Having, from its formation, been a member of the Committee from which the invitation referred to was sent, and having taken a constant part in its proceedings, I feel myself in some degree qualified to bear testimony to the meaning of such documents as it has issued; and I do take the liberty of saying that, to my knowledge, the document calling this Convention had no reference to, nor did the framers of it ever contemplate that it would include, females. We did become aware in the progress of the business that there was a disposition on the part of some of our American brethren, and that with the best intention, to construe the document in question as it might have been construed, had it been issued by themselves—that is, that it might include females, as well as men. The earliest moment that this circumstance came to the knowledge of the Committee, that Committee issued another circular, which bears date the "15th of February," in which the description of those who are to form the Convention is set forth as consisting of "gentlemen." We thus felt that we had done all we could to prevent inconvenience to our American friends on this subject, and supposed that we should not have been brought into difficulty with the question. But as the point has been introduced, I take it for granted, that sooner or later the opinion of the Convention must be taken, as to whether or not females are to become a part of the Convention. I waive all remarks with respect to the operation of the proposal now made; for I think that the sooner the matter is brought to a conclusion, the better.

Dr. BOWRING.—I think the custom of excluding females is more honoured in its breach than in its observance. In this country, sovereign rule is placed in the hands of a female, and one who has been exercising her great and benign influence in opposing slavery, by sanctioning, no doubt, the presence of her illustrious consort, at an Anti-Slavery meeting. We are associated with a body of Christians, who have given to their women a great, honourable, and religious prominence. I look upon this delegation from America as one of the most interesting, the most encouraging, and the most delightful symptoms of the times. I hope that a committee will be appointed to consider this question, and to report on the facts of the case. I cannot believe that we shall refuse to welcome gratefully the co-operation which is offered to us.

The Rev. J. BURNET.—I feel that, if there ever was a time when it was necessary for this Convention to be calm and self-collected, this is that moment. I have no hesitation in saying, that I feel that the Convention itself is peril in this discussion, and whilst I have the highest possible regard for the ladies of America and England, and whilst neither for the one nor for the other, can I entertain for a moment any feeling but one of the greatest respect; I must at the same time claim your indulgence while I take a calm and deliberate view of the question,—one of the most important that can be discussed in connexion with the mere forms of this Convention. We must be calm, and we must be firm; and I shall be as firm in the maintenance of my sentiments, as I shall be calm in the statement of them. The gentleman who has proposed the motion, which is now before you, stated his case very well and very calmly; and very fairly stated the claims which the ladies have to the kind consideration of all for their works of usefulness, and their energy in those works. We hail the
continuance of their works of usefulness; we thank them for the past, we trust them in the present, and we anticipate great things from them in the future. I would apply this to England as well as to America. The ladies of England are active and diligent in all works of benevolence, they have frequently stimulated to the creation of such institutions as this, when the lords of creation did not think of creating them. The ladies have carried them on, when the gentlemen would have found it impossible, from the multiplicity of demands made on their time by the business in which they are engaged. But let me say, and I take it for granted, I shall carry with me the gentleman who moved the resolution when I say that, English ladies and English gentlemen are accustomed to consider what takes place on this side of the water, just as American ladies and American gentlemen consider what takes place on their side the water. He thinks that he should put an American interpretation on American phraseology and so he ought; but upon the same principle he will agree that we ought to put an English interpretation on English phraseology. So far, we stand on precisely the same ground. But let me add further, that in taking this question into consideration, and deliberating upon it, it never did occur to the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, that they were inviting ladies from any part of the globe, to take an essential part in the proceedings of the Convention. It never was contemplated in the formation of the Society; it never was practised in the doings of the Society; it never was intended in the resolutions of the Society. I am not now saying, be it remembered, whether it was right or wrong; but, this I do say, that it never was contemplated, and consequently, it has come upon us now without our contemplation. It never was anticipated that such a contingency could arise. With regard to what has been stated by the gentleman who has just addressed you in connexion with the indignity offered to these ladies, I should say, that no such indignity was intended. We place them on a level with our own ladies. Our wives and our daughters are in the same position with them. And surely, if they are placed in the same position as the ladies of England, it cannot be said that we have cast indignity upon them. I should not have thought that America would select ladies for such an object. But I welcome those ladies to this Hall; I welcome them to all the proceedings where ladies can, according to the custom of the country, take a part. I thank them for the self-sacrificing devotedness that brought them here. Nothing could be a greater misapprehension of the feelings of the British nation than the idea that the slightest affront was intended them. Nothing could be a greater mistake than to suppose that anything was meant towards them but the profoundest affection, the deepest respect, and the most cordial welcome. But it is quite another thing to clothe them with office. To make officers of them is one thing—in connexion with a custom not pursued in this country; to receive them with kind consideration is quite another. My own impression is, that as we need all the individuals we can obtain in the country to help us onward, so we must have their help, and we cannot do without it. But this great change in all the practices, and feelings, and habits of England—the propriety of these practices, and feelings, and habits, is another question, a question which I am not called now to argue—would, I am convinced, keep away those whom we cannot do without, and would take away from us those with whom we are acting already. I do state my firm conviction— I
use strong language to express a strong conviction—it would be better that the Convention should at this moment be dissolved, than that this resolution should be adopted. Some gentlemen say "no, no." I wish them to think seriously and gravely. If this Convention should take the course proposed by the mover and second of the resolution, I am deeply convinced that they will sincerely regret it. I should say that our American friends would add another laurel to those they have already reaped in the Anti-Slavery field, amid their deep self-denial and great suffering, were they to say at this moment, "Let us not make shipwreck of our vessel, let us, not even for a moment, put her in a perilous sea. As we are in England let us act as England does; and when English abolitionists come to America, we shall expect the same ready conformity. There is no violation of principle in the adoption of the spirit of the land to which we have come, to mingle with the inhabitants for the purpose of doing good." As to the first lady of the land, our honourable and worthy friend, who has just sat down known as well as most men, and better than most men, the peculiarities of that case. It is not necessary, because we have a Queen, henceforth to clothe all the ladies with office in the general management of our social affairs. I do appeal to our friends, with sincere regard, both for them and for their good ladies, and I hope and trust they will meet the appeal as kindly as it is made. I beg of them to withdraw this question, and to let the Convention proceed to its urgent and substantial business.

The Rev. H. GREW—I stand here, on behalf of America, while my heart responds to all the encomiums passed on the female sex in respect to the importance of their co-operation, their past good work, and their future efforts, without which I do not anticipate success; and while, at the same time, I wish to express that the invitation to this meeting was understood by many in America, in the sense represented by my respected brother, yet the proposition now made is not in accordance with my own views of propriety. Let me add, not that I wish to say anything of a sectarian character, the reception of my respected female friends, as a part of this Convention, would be in the view of many who stand precisely in the same position as I do on this occasion, be not only a violation of your customs, and of the customs of other countries, but of the ordinance of Almighty God, who has a right to appoint our services according to his sovereign will.

The Rev. N. COLVER, (from Boston, Massachusetts, U. S.)—I do not rise to discuss this question. I came at the invitation of the Society, with their explanation before the public, which was understood by a great portion of the American community precisely as you understand it here. From an accidental omission on the part of Mr. PHILLIPS the case has not come fairly before the meeting. The American delegation are represented as being one on this subject. It is not so. That brother and others are from a Society which allows of ladies sitting in its meetings; but a large portion of the delegates are from another branch who have resisted this attempt to change the customs of the country; and but for the assurance that the Convention would be composed as it now is, a large number of us would not have been here to-day.

Mr. STACEY.—I believe it will not be for the good of the meeting to go into the abstract question. I therefore think it is time to have a substantive resolution upon it. With that view I beg to propose the following amendment:
"That this Convention, upon a question arising as to the admission of females appointed as delegates from America to take their seats in this body, resolve to decide this question in the negative."

The Rev. ELON GALUSHA, (of New York, U. S.)—It affords me great pleasure to second the amendment; and you will allow me to say, that I am one of the representatives of a portion of the American public, whose number is equal to half the population of this great metropolis. And although I have travelled through all the free states of the Union, I know not of a single individual belonging to the body which I represent, whose views on the subject do not accord with those of our British friends. I would further say, that it is my honest and unwavering conviction, that those who entertain a different view of the question are an exceedingly small minority of the American people. In support of the other side of this question, reference has been made to your present sovereign. I most cordially approve of the policy and sound wisdom, and commend to the consideration of our American female friends who are so deeply interested in the subject, the example of your noble QUEEN, who by sanctioning her consort, His Royal Highness, PRINCE ALBERT, in taking the Chair, on an occasion not dissimilar to this, showed her sense of propriety by putting her Head foremost in an assembly of gentlemen. I have no objection to woman's being the neck to turn the head aright, but do not wish to see her assume the place of the head.

Dr. ROLPH, (from Upper Canada).—I feel very reluctant to approach this question; but I should be wanting in my duty to my own feelings, and also to a very large portion of ladies on the continent of America, if I did not express my warm approbation of the resistless appeal made to your feelings by the eloquent observations of the first Reverend Gentleman who took the negative side of the question. It must be remembered that this is a question on which America is undecided, and the decision of the subject by this Convention would impose upon us the invidious office of umpire between two contending parties in that country. I have witnessed the self-devotedness, the heroism of ANGELINA GRIMKE, and other American females in urging the abolition of slavery. I am not insensible to their services, and I would be the last to say anything that could be construed directly or indirectly to reflect on their character, their heroism, and their devotedness. But in the consideration and construction of the letter of invitation, it appears that the Society of Massachusetts has interpreted it contrary to all the rest. The interpretation thus given ought not to outweigh the opinion founded on it by all others to whom it has been submitted. I trust, if the Convention comes, as I hope it will, to the negative proposition before it, that it will be considered neither by Americans nor Englishmen to cast a reproach on the service of the ladies.

Mr. BRADBURN.—This question has occupied, and is likely to occupy, more time than I had hoped it would. I had hoped, that the vote would be taken without discussion; that here, in a World's Convention, there would be very little difference of opinion on the subject, how much soever Englishmen, as such, might differ from some of us respecting it. We have been told, that when the invitation was issued, no reference was made to women. But I ask, if, when that invitation was sent into different quarters of the globe, it was not intended to make this, in reality, a World's Convention of abolitionists—
that abolitionists every where should be represented in it! Will any one undertake to say, that it was intended to exclude from representation in this body the abolitionists of Massachusetts, and of Pennsylvania; for it is not true, as some one has asserted, that Massachusetts is the only state that has sent female delegates hither? Do you intend to say, that the abolitionists of those States had not the right to elect such persons as they pleased, to represent them in this Convention! But you do say this, if you exclude from these seats any whom those abolitionists have regularly appointed to occupy them. I cannot, I will not, believe, that the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society did intend thus to tie up the hands of American abolitionists. And what a misnomer, to call this a World's Convention of abolitionists, when some of the oldest and most thorough-going abolitionists in the world are denied the right to be represented in it by delegates of their own choice! The Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society would have spurned the invitation of the Committee, had it known it was not at liberty to elect its own delegates. The members of that Society are none of your half-and-half sort of abolitionists. They are thoroughly imbued with love for the cause; have made sacrifices for it; have been ready, I trust to die for it, if need were; and they know it were as contradictory of facts, as it would be ungrateful, to say, that women, in virtue of their sex, were unqualified to represent them in a Convention of this character. Let it not be forgotten, that this was designed to be a World's Convention.

W. WILSON, Esq. (of Nottingham). I rise to know what is meant by a World's Convention!

Mr. BRADBURN resumed.—The invitation was extended to all abolitionists throughout the world; and no doubt it was earnestly desired, as well as designed, that they should all be represented here. If this were not the grand prominent idea of the Committee, I know not what it was. I know that some time after the invitation was sent forth, and after some of our delegates had been appointed, a letter was published by some one, stating that gentlemen only were expected to attend. But we neither did nor could regard this as of any consequence. We deemed the question of who should sit in the Convention, would be determined by the Convention itself, not by any self-constituted Committee, and least of all by any individual. But we are now told, that it would be outraging the tastes, habits, customs, and prejudices of the English people, to allow women to sit in this Convention. I have a great respect for the customs of Old England. But I ask, gentlemen, if it be right to set up the customs and habits, not to say prejudices, of Englishmen, as a standard, for the government, on this occasion, of Americans and of persons belonging to several other independent nations! It seems to me that it were, to say the least, very unadvisable to do so. I can see neither reason nor policy in so doing. Besides, I deprecate the principle of this objection. In America it would exclude from our Conventions all persons of colour; for there, customs, habits, tastes, prejudices, would be outraged by their admission. And I do not wish to be deprived of the aid of those who have done so much for our cause, for the purpose of gratifying any mere custom or prejudice. I know that women have furnished most essential aid in accomplishing what has been accomplished in the state of Massachusetts. If, in the legislature of that state, I have been able to do any thing in furtherance of this cause, by keeping on my legs eight or ten hours, day after day, it was mainly owing to the
valuable assistance I derived from the women of Massachusetts. And shall such women be denied seats in this Convention? My friend, George Thompson yonder, can testify to the faithful services rendered to this cause by some of those same women. He can tell you, that, when "gentlemen of property and standing," in broad day and in broad cloth, undertook to drive him from the city of Boston, putting his life in peril, it was our women who made their own persons a bulwark of protection around him! And shall such women be refused seats here in a Convention seeking the emancipation of slaves throughout the world? I was sorry to hear my friend from Pennsylvania say, that he was satisfied with the explanation which had been given; that we ought to understand the invitation in the sense in which it has been said to have been understood by the Committee. I object to acting on any such understanding of it, because, as was well observed by another, it would be taking the English yard-stick to measure the American mind. And as to its being a sin against God, to allow women to participate in the proceedings of a body like this, I confess I was astonished to hear such a sentiment uttered here, for this is neither the time nor the place to discuss that question. Another friend from America has said, that there is a difference of opinion there on this subject; that the American delegates themselves were not united respecting it; and that the great body of the American people were utterly opposed to the admission of women into such companies as this. I admit it. But I have to ask that friend, if he means to say, that the great body of the real, working abolitionists of America would be opposed to it? I know they would not. In America, women have taken, and they continue to take, part in meetings of this sort. On the American Anti-Slavery platform, they stand as the equals of the men, in respect, at least, of rights and privileges. The American Anti-Slavery Society has decided, that, as members of that body, they ought so to stand. It has been so decided in most of the local societies in Massachusetts, where the standard of abolitionism was first planted. And, with all deference to the abolitionists present, I say, that the best, the bravest, and those who have sacrificed most for this cause, are, with very few exceptions, decidedly on this side of the question; and they would never have consented to any participation in the proceedings of this, or of any other Convention, had they supposed that any delegates freely chosen by themselves would be denied the right to sit in it. Some one has said, that if women are admitted, they will take sides on this question. Well, what then? Have they not just as good right to take sides as we have? But I shall be satisfied if this Convention, not the Committee, will decide who are, and who are not, entitled to seats here. This will also, I doubt not, satisfy the delegates whose seats are contested. They do not feel at liberty, I speak of those more especially who have come from Massachusetts, to withhold their credentials from the Convention, merely because a Committee, not created by this body, has seen fit to reject them. They feel bound, in justice to those by whom they were sent, to impose the responsibility of receiving, or of rejecting those credentials upon the Convention itself. They therefore present them, in obedience to their convictions of duty. You, gentlemen, can dispose of them as you please.

The CHAIRMAN.—If the discussion proceeds, the second letter of invitation, explanatory of the first, defining the terms in which the Convention is called, should be read. Perhaps it will be better that both should be read.

Mr. TREDGOLD.—The first is to this effect.
"For the purpose of promoting this great and truly Christian object the Society has concluded to hold a General Conference in London, to commence on the 12th of June, 1840, in order to deliberate on the best means of promoting the interests of the Slave; of obtaining his immediate and unconditional freedom; and, by every pacific measure, to hasten the utter extinction of the Slave-Trade. To this Conference, they earnestly invite the friends of the Slave of every nation and of every clime."

The second or explanatory letter is the following:

Mr. PHILLIPS.—Where was that sent to?
Mr. TREDGOLD.—To America.
Mr. PHILLIPS.—To whom?
Mr. TREDGOLD.—To the Anti-Slavery friends.
Mr. W. WILSON.—It is of no value to read this unless it was sent to them.
The Rev. J. BURNET.—Read it. It has been so decided by the Chairman.

Mr. TREDGOLD proceeded—"The Committee are anxious early to receive from the different Anti-Slavery bodies who may appoint deputies, the names of the gentlemen who are to represent them. Such deputies and the members of the London Committee to form the Conference. The business of the Conference will comprehend the following, amongst other matter:—information as to the results of Emancipation in Hayti: the British West Indies, &c.: the nature and extent of Slavery in the different countries where it exists, but especially as regards the African race and their descendants: the nature and extent of the Slave-Trade; and, finally, the best measures by which, consistently with the great principles on which the Society is founded, the total and unconditional abolition of slavery and the slave-trade can be obtained, and the liberties and welfare of the emancipated population secured."

Mr. JOSEPH STURGE.—My friend will admit that it appeared in the Anti-Slavery papers of America.

COLONEL MILLER, (of Vermont, U. S.)—I fortunately belong to a state in America which has never been troubled with the woman question. The women were among our primeval abolitionists. They took it into their heads to establish a standard of liberty, and were seconded by their husbands. The question ought not to have come to be settled here; it ought to have been settled on our own shores; but as it is here I may state that I believe in the right of women, properly and duly delegated, to take a part in this cause of humanity. I do not claim a pre-eminence for them over men, but they were early in their attendance at the cross, they were the first and the last at the sepulchre, and from that time to this, they have taken the van in the march of civilization and liberty. I agree with the gentleman from Massachusetts
that we will bow with all due deference to your decision. We are not here to
lord it over the Convention. There is not a female delegate from the state
to which I belong; but if the female friends of the cause in that state were
here, this Hall would not hold them. We have taken up time enough on this
question, I only want a fair and honourable expression of the opinion of the
Convention, and to that expression I pledge myself the delegates from America
will bow.

CAPTAIN STUART (of Bath).—There is plainly a difference of opinion
between our friends from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, and the Committee
of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, respecting the interpretation
of the invitation. The Committee give one interpretation; our friends
another. I leave it to the Convention to settle to which we are to defer; but
I am persuaded from having travelled in the United States and from having
become acquainted with a large body of abolitionists both in Massachusetts
and Pennsylvania, that some of the noblest and most uncompromising friends
of liberty and of the slave there, are against the reception of lady delegates,
and in favour of the British view. I am satisfied that there is a vast amount
of that feeling.

Mr. W. ALLEN.—There is one thing which I would submit to the Conven-
tion. I would urge them to consider the value of the cause which we are
all met to promote. I do not give an opinion with regard to the propriety
of female delegates, but I do regret that a motion of this kind has been mooted
here. It may be a subject for grave consideration at another time and in
another place, but I lament that at this Convention, met for a different
purpose we should have anything thrown amongst us which is likely to
prove an apple of discord. I put it to every one who loves the cause, whether
such sentiments as have been advanced ought not to have been kept in abey-
ance. During the discussion of the question I have thought of what took
place at Ephesus; when there was a great commotion, and the officer came in
to quell the tumult raised, he exhorted them to quietness, not to go into dis-
putes of that kind, adding, if there is anything to be brought forward let it
"be determined in a lawful assembly; for we are in danger to be called in ques-
tion for this day's uproar."

Mr. G. THOMPSON.—I desire to obtain the attention of the Convention
for a few moments, because the question is one on which I think the fate of
the Convention, for all good purposes, hinges. It is my satisfaction to
feel assured, that there is not an individual in the assembly who knows the
view I am about to take of this question, or the vote which I am about to
give upon it, if unhappily a vote should be called for. My esteemed friends
who sit in your presence to-day, and whom I delight to see here, and to recog-
nise as among the foremost and fastest defenders, both of my principles and my
person, in the United States of America, will bear me witness that I have
hitherto refrained from the expression of any opinions, except those which had
reference to the policy which might commend itself to them, in order to see
what was their feeling of duty, and to ascertain what was their principle
of action; and be to them the faithful interpreter of the true state of our
country upon the question which concerns them, our customs, our laws,
our feelings, our prejudices, our antipathies. I have deprecated most
sincerely the introduction of the abstract question into this Convention. I
have anticipated it with dread; and I now feel that though unhappily we
are not in a condition to retrace our steps, yet we may possibly avert
the consequences which must inevitably arise, if we become partisans in this matter, if we commit ourselves by our votes, if we array ourselves on one side or the other, and on a future occasion, in consequence of our recorded votes, should regard each other as friends with whom alone we can associate, or opponents from whom we must stand aloof. I am speaking of the effects of a decisive vote. (Cries of no, no). Gentlemen may say "no," but I argue from universal experience. When a vote is given opposite to me, I cannot help the feeling arising in my mind, that the gentleman who has given it stands opposed to my conviction of what is right and wrong. But, I say, we may possibly avoid that, if a middle course be taken. I have listened to the arguments advanced on this side, and on that, of this vexed question. I listened with the profoundest attention to the arguments of Mr. Burnet, expecting that from him—as I was justified in expecting—I should hear the strongest arguments that could be adduced upon this or any other subject upon which he might be pleased to employ his talents, or which he might adorn by his eloquence. What are his arguments? Let it be premised, as I speak in the presence of American friends, that that gentleman is one of the best known controversialists in this country; and one of the best authorities upon questions of business, points of order, and matters of principle. What are the strongest arguments which one of the greatest champions, on any question which he chooses to espouse, has brought forward? They are these, first, that English phraseology should be construed according to English usages; secondly, that it was never contemplated by the Anti-Slavery Committee that ladies should occupy a seat in this Convention; thirdly, that the ladies of England are not here as delegates; fourthly, that he has no desire, nor has any other individual, to offer an affront to, still less to insult, the ladies now before us. These are the strong arguments, I presume the strongest arguments, which that gentleman has to adduce: for he never fails to use to the best advantage the resources within his reach. I look at these arguments, and I place on the other side of the question, the fact, that there are in this assembly ladies who present themselves as delegates from the oldest societies in America, the originators of all the other societies of America. I expected that Mr. Burnet would, as he was bound to do, if he intended to offer a successful opposition to their introduction into this Convention, grapple with the constitutionality of their credentials. I thought he would come to the question of title; I thought he would dispute the right of a Convention assembled in Philadelphia for the abolition of Slavery, consisting of delegates from the different states in the union, and comprised of individuals of both sexes, to send one or all of the ladies now in our presence. I thought he would grapple with the fact, that those ladies came to us who have no slavery, from a country in which they have slaves, as the representatives of two millions and a half of captives. Let gentlemen when they come to vote on this question remember, that in receiving or rejecting these ladies, they acknowledge or despise, (loud cries of no, no). I ask gentlemen who shout "no," if they know the application I am about to make! I did not mean to say you would despise the ladies, but that you would by your vote acknowledge or despise the parties whose cause they espouse. Something has been said about usages and customs. It appears that we are prepared to sanction ladies in the employment of all means, so long as they are confessedly unequal with ourselves. It seems that the grand objection to their appearance amongst us is this, that it would be placing them on a footing of equality,
and that, that, would be contrary to principle and custom. I suppose I may put my own construction on the arguments which have been employed. I yield to no gentleman in anxiety for the settlement of the question; but I stand here in peculiar circumstances. I have been in the country from which those ladies come, and I should wrong both them and myself, if I did not speak my sentiments on the question. I ask, if they are not to sit in this assembly, why is it? It is answered, because English phraseology is to be interpreted by English usage. That is a flimsy excuse for their exclusion. It is again replied, because it is not intended by those who gave the invitation that women should sit in it. It was known years before this Convention was contemplated, that these ladies were fighting the battle amidst calumny and danger, and in constant apprehension of death; aye, at a time when some of those who are now their most vigorous opponents were unknown as abolitionists. While gentlemen talk of not affronting such ladies, they not only affront them, but the bodies from which they came. These ladies came from the United States, the representatives of large associations. Captain Stuart has spoken of a majority in America being opposed to the admission of females. I differ from him on the subject. If he says a majority of the entire population of the United States, I grant it; but if he says a majority of the real abolitionists, then, from my intimate acquaintance with this movement from its commencement in America up to the present time, I am decidedly opposed to his opinion. These ladies are not only accredited by the local societies they represent, but by the National Society of the United States. Again, I ask, why are they excluded? Is it on the score of intellect? No gentleman, I am sure, will call their intellectual qualification in question. Is it on the score of principle? No gentleman will call that in question. Is it on the score of discretion? Putting this their present act in dispute out of the question, (in my opinion the noblest of their lives), they stand acknowledged by their countrymen and countrywomen to be irreproachable in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation. Are they ineligible on the ground of their inferior zeal? Oh, that we all opposed slavery half as earnestly; then instead of being the opposers of their entrance into this Convention, we should feel ourselves honoured in admitting them. Is it on the ground of their past conduct in the Anti-Slavery cause? That conduct has been above all praise, much more my humble praise, (question). I do trust, that while upon this subject, especially while any one is speaking in behalf of these excluded females, no gentleman will call, "question." Why are these our sisters with us to-day? Because gentlemen in their own country are either too absorbed in business, or too temporizing in their principles to make the same sacrifices. For years, the women of America have carried their banner in the van, while the men have humbly followed in the rear. It is well known that the National Society solicited Angelina Grimke to undertake a mission, to rouse the spirits of New England women, and that that distinguished woman displayed her talent, not only in the drawing-rooms, but before the senate of Massachusetts. Let us contrast our conduct with that of the senators and representatives of Massachusetts, who did not disdain to hear her. It was in consequence of her exertions, which received the warmest approval of the National Society, that that interest sprung up, which has awakened such an intense feeling throughout America. Then with reference to efficient management, the most vigorous Anti-Slavery Societies are those which are managed by ladies. These things I state in justice to these
fellow-labourers, that you may have their characters before you. Upon the
abstract question I have my own feelings. I am decided upon this point,
that it would have been better to have kept that question out of the Con-
vention. I have laboured up to the eleventh hour to effect this. If now
after the expression of opinion on various sides, the motion should be
withdrawn, with the consent of all parties, I should be glad. But when I
look at the arguments against the title of these women to sit amongst us, I
cannot but consider them frivolous and groundless. The simple question
before us is, whether these ladies, taking into account the credentials they
hold, the talent they have displayed, the sufferings they have endured,
the journey they have undertaken, should be acknowledged by us, in virtue
of these high titles, or be shut out for the reasons stated. One gentleman has
said, that if we do not exclude them we shall regret it. What shall we have to
regret? Our magnanimity, our justice, our gentlemanly feeling? What harm
can their admission do unless their opponents should feel too straitened,
that they cannot co-operate with them, and those who admit them. It may be
said, that beyond this place, the fact of their admission may tell against our
cause. I have anticipated these difficulties. But I apprehend that division
and exclusion will be attended with still greater danger. If our friends, by
an expression of their opinion, in a protest against the opinion of the Com-
mittee, to be laid on the table, can discharge their duty to those who have
delegated them, and withdraw the motion, I should feel thankful for such a
termination of the debate. To conclude, having seen the devoted heroism,
the unblameable conduct of the ladies now amongst us, I felt that I should
have been recreant to all that is honourable, and just, and grateful, if I had
forborne to bear my testimony in their behalf. I am perhaps, in some
degree, to blame for the appearance of some of these ladies. When the call
for this Convention first went out, I wrote to the United States, expressing
a hope to see, not only a strong muster of the male champions of the
cause, but of the ladies. What, however, I have already said to the ladies
elsewhere, I now say on this occasion, to clear myself from suspicion, that
I had no reference to the capacity in which they should come. I did not
refer to their being formally delegated. I do not remember that such a
thought was before my mind. I hoped many of them might be able to come,
and I could wish, if it were without strife and debate among us, that they
had been a thousand times as many as they are. With these views, I
recommend the American friends, with all the respect I can express, to with-
draw their motion. I have boldly uttered my opinion, they have as boldly
uttered theirs; and as nothing is to be gained, and much may be lost by a
vote, I repeat the expression of my hope, that they will prevent the necessity
of taking the ayes and the noes on the question of admitting or excluding
these our estimable sisters; and I hope that those ladies will be disposed to
unite most cordially in any plan, which may promote the peace of the Conven-
tion, and the prosperity of the cause in which we are all engaged.

Mr. STACEY.—I will withdraw the amendment, on the condition that our
friend from America will withdraw the original motion; otherwise I believe
the Convention must go to the question, yea, or nay. I trust, however, that
we shall not be driven to this alternative.

Mr. PHILLIPS.—It has been hinted very respectfully by two or three
speakers that the Delegates from the state of Massachusetts should withdraw
their credentials, or the motion before the meeting. The one appears to me
to be equivalent to the other. If this motion be withdrawn we must have another. I would merely ask, whether any man can suppose that the Delegates from Massachusetts or Pennsylvania can take upon their shoulders the responsibility of withdrawing that list of delegates from your table which their constituents told them to place there, and whom they sanctioned as their fit representatives, because this Convention tells us that it is not ready to meet the ridicule of the morning papers, and to stand up against the customs of England. In America we listen to no such arguments. If we had done so, we had never been here as abolitionists. It is the custom there not to admit coloured men into respectable society, and we have been told again and again, that we are outraging the decencies of humanity when we permit coloured men to sit by our side. When we have submitted to brick bats, and the tar tub and feathers, in America, rather than yield to the custom prevalent there of not admitting coloured brethren into our friendship, shall we yield to a parallel custom or prejudice in Old England? I wish to add one word. We cannot yield this question if we would: for it is a matter of conscience. But we would not yield it on the ground of expediency. In doing so, we should feel that we are striking off the right arm of our enterprise. We could not go back to America to ask for any aid from the women of Massachusetts, if we had deserted them when they chose to send out their own sisters as their representatives here. We could not go back to Massachusetts, and assert the unchangeableness of spirit on the question. We have argued it over and over again, and decided it time after time in every Society in the land in favour of the women. We have not changed by crossing the water. We stand here the advocates of the same principle that we contended for in America. We think it right for women to sit by our side there, and we think it right for them to do the same here. We ask the Convention to admit them; if they do not choose to grant it, the responsibility rests upon their own shoulders. Massachusetts cannot turn aside, or succumb to any prejudices or customs even in the land she looks upon with so much reverence as the land of Wilberforce, of Clarkson, and of O'Connell. It is a matter of conscience, and British virtue ought not to ask us to yield it.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Phillips having now replied, I will put the question.

Dr. BOWRING.—When the gentleman who has moved a resolution has spoken in reply it is not usual to re-open the question.

The CHAIRMAN.—It appeared to me that Mr. Phillips having exercised his right of reply, the debate must close.

W. H. ASHURST, Esq.—Mr. Phillips was called upon to say whether he would or would not withdraw the motion. He gave his reason why he could not withdraw it. If I had supposed that he had risen to reply, I should have interposed to make a few remarks.

The CHAIRMAN.—I understand from Mr. Phillips that he had no idea of making a reply but only to answer a question, the discussion may therefore continue.

The Rev. J. H. JOHNSON.—We must come to a division and the sooner the better.

The Rev. CHARLES EDWARDS LESTER, (of Utica, U. S.) I trust we shall meet the question like men, and not disgrace those who have sent us.

WILLIAM CAIRNS, Esq., (of Edinburgh).—In order to settle this question
without offending the feelings of any party, I have drawn up an amendment. It is this:—

"That this Convention feels itself placed in a state of great perplexity in reference to the female delegates from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania; and they regret that, agreeably to the terms employed in describing the persons who were to be delegates of the Convention, they cannot recognize them as delegates; they at the same time contemplate with feelings of the highest satisfaction the zeal and intrepidity, as well as philanthropy, which have been so nobly manifested by them in this cause, and in their coming 4000 miles to be present at this meeting."

Mr. ASHURST.—It does not matter in the consideration of this question what were the intentions of the Committee in issuing the invitation; we are now to consider what ought to be the extent of the invitation given by a Convention like this. It is clearly a meeting on the principles of universal benevolence, and you ought to welcome all human beings who come here for the purpose of carrying those principles into effect. It has been stated by those who are able to bear their testimony, that to those whom you now propose to exclude, you owe the deputation which has come from America; and yet at the first Convention met to act on the principles of universality, you propose to commence by disfranchising one-half of creation. Are not those women as competent as yourselves to judge of the principles of Christianity, and to bring forth the best affections of our nature? If these are their qualifications, should you upon principle exclude them. It seems impossible for you or for any Christian men to draw that conclusion. I use that argumentatively, because I am aware that many take a different view of the same principle. This is my view of the subject—not casting the least reflection upon those who vote against me. But let us look at the arguments which have been brought forward by a gentleman who would have adduced others if they were to be found. The only argument is, that you must construe the invitation according to the custom of the country in which you are assembled. What would be the result of such an argument employed in Virginia? Would they not say that slavery is the custom here, and therefore you have no right to place yourselves in opposition to the prejudices and customs of society by attempting to put it down. But come back to our principle. You are convened to influence society upon a subject connected with the kindliest feelings of our nature; and being the first assembly met to shake hands with other nations, and employ your combined efforts to annihilate slavery throughout the world, are you to commence by saying, "we will take away the rights of one-half of creation?" That is the principle which you are putting forward.

The Rev. A. HARVEY, (of Glasgow).—I regret exceedingly that this question should have been brought before the notice of the Convention. I am sure that every individual who was present during the two first hours of our meeting was deeply and solemnly impressed with the vast importance of the cause on which we are met; and I think there has unhappily been brought before us a question, altogether foreign to the object for which we have
assembled. The question for discussion now, is not whether we are to deliver men from the condition of abject slavery, but whether from this Convention there shall go forth a decision in reference to the rights of females. That seems to be the point involved in the present debate. I will yield to none in the high estimate which I form of female talent, female genius, female kindness, and female accomplishments. I believe that they have laboured most efficiently in this cause, and that the sphere which they have hitherto occupied, is the one in which they can best promote the grand object in view. I question whether, in coming forward to sit in such a meeting as this, females are in their own sphere. I have my doubts on the subject. The question is whether in recognizing them as members of this Convention, we should not be introducing them into a position which might be injurious to our cause. I am certain that it would be in direct opposition to the opinion of a vast majority of the people of this country. But we must look at the consequences. It was stated by a brother from America that with him it is a matter of conscience; and it is a question of conscience with me too. I have certain views in relation to the teaching of the word of God, and of the particular sphere in which woman is to act. I must say, whether I am right in my interpretation of the word of God or not, that my own decided convictions are, if I were to give a vote in favour of females sitting and deliberating in such an assembly as this, that I should be acting in opposition to the plain teaching of the word of God. I may be wrong, but I have a conscience on the subject; and I am sure that there are a number present of the same mind. I must, however, state that I admire the devotedness of character exhibited by the females of America, and I admire still more the heroism and the zeal, the enlightened zeal which they have displayed: although in the present instance the request which is tendered to us for their admission is not quite in accordance with the view I entertain with respect to the sphere of female labour, yet I will call it enlightened zeal for the amelioration of the unhappy condition of so many millions of our oppressed and injured fellow men. I tender them my warmest thanks for their zeal; I hold them up as examples for British imitation; and I am sure that whether they are admitted into the Convention or not, the very devotedness which they have displayed will have a most electric effect on the females of England, and tend to raise them to a degree of activity and self-sacrifice such as they have never before exhibited in this good cause.

The Rev. J. A. JAMES.—I have not been an inattentive, an indifferent, or an inactive spectator, so far as I could observe it from the shores of my own country, of the progress of the abolition of slavery in America. And such has been the impression produced on my own mind by the exertions of those illustrious females, of whose names America may justly be proud, that I would have travelled to the metropolis, had it been for no other purpose, could I have enjoyed the gratification of seeing Mrs. Chapman and Mrs. Weld. But I am quite sure, that in this assembly this morning, had even they been present, they would rather by their presence have prejudiced than promoted that cause which is dearer to their own hearts than life. I am sorry that the abstract question of the rights of woman has occupied so large a share of the attention of the Convention. I regret that this question, litigated so warmly in America, should have been brought here for our decision. It would have been better to have settled it there; and that we should
have been suffered to pursue our own course, without being embarrassed by the introduction of this subject. But one or two expressions have been used by gentlemen from America which delighted my heart, and which led me to imagine, that, although we could not come to an agreement in sentiment, yet we should not be materially disturbed in the feelings with which we regarded each other. I was pleased with the declaration of Colonel Miller, that he was prepared for one to bow to the decision of the assembly; and, though Mr. Phillips cannot conscientiously consent to withdraw the resolution, and therefore the question cannot come to a conclusion without a vote, yet it will be considered as a point of conscience with us all, and not simply as a matter of opinion and disagreement; and however we may give our vote, we shall stand prepared to abide by the decision of the majority, and go forward in this good work with a perfect confidence in each other's conscientious motives, though we may not have the same confidence in the correctness of each other's opinions. We shall differ on many subjects, and it is not to be expected but that there should, on so delicate a subject as this, be a difference of opinion. The question is almost new in this country, and this is not the assembly where it should have been mooted. We are not yet prepared to discuss it. Our brethren from America may charge us with some obtuseness of understanding, on a point which has commended itself to their more acute vision. We are not prepared to jump to a conclusion. The question involves in this, and every country far wider considerations than even the Anti-Slavery cause itself. I trust, therefore, that we shall not gratify the enemies of that cause, by quarrelling on the very threshold of it, that we shall not strengthen the prejudice of those who have imbibed prejudice already against the whole subject; but that if we do vote, and should oppose each other, as I presume we must do, it will be only opposition of sentiment. Our friends from America have done honour to themselves by the frankness, I will not say the pertinacity, with which they have held their opinions. They will stand acquitted, at the bar of their own country, of all accusations of lukewarmness. The female part of Massachusetts will never reproach them with having deserted their cause. They will carry back no disgrace from this country; on the contrary, they will go back honoured amongst all those who sent them here to represent their claims. Should it be, that in the progress of sentiment amongst us, we shall one day agree with them in opinion, then, how welcome will be those females within the bar, who are this day placed above it and beyond it; and who, they will permit me to say, do not, in my judgment, disgrace themselves by being there. They are entitled to our admiration, for much they have done in America. No man can have read the "Martyr Age," and have gone through those glowing pages, which to me possessed the charms of romance, without forming the highest opinion of the devotedness, the talents, and the heroism of the women of America. If any thing could have convinced me that those females ought this morning to have been amongst us, instead of with us and around us, that pamphlet would have done it. America is the only country yet, which, in fact can boast of a very extended martyrology in this great cause; and they will add another laurel to their brow, if they will but concede the point we are now discussing. I trust, that though we should beat them, and if it be carried to the vote, I believe, and I hope we shall, they will go through with us in the delightful proceedings of an assembly unequalled in the world. It is the first of the kind that has been presented on the face of our globe since slavery has existed. I hope all that has occurred on this question, will be only like
the notes of discord sometimes introduced in the best concerted music, to make the harmony the sweeter.

The CHAIRMAN.—We will take the decision on the original motion. After the long time during which the subject has been under discussion, and the general call for a division, I am bound to say that we must divide.

The motion of Mr. CAIRNS not having been seconded, fell to the ground.

Mr. STACEY.—I consented to withdraw my amendment only on the condition, that WENDELL PHILLIPS would withdraw his original motion; as he has not withdrawn it, my amendment must be submitted to the Convention.

The CHAIRMAN again said, he was ready to put the question.

The Rev. Dr. COX.—We were told that every thing was to be done in calmness; that every thing was to be done in the manner demanded by the solemnity of the occasion. I do not think that it is competent for any number of gentlemen to call upon the Chairman to come to a prompt decision, and say that others are not to be heard. Considering that some gentlemen have come across the Atlantic, and that this is a question of the greatest possible interest, I do think that gentlemen ought to be heard, unless the impatience of the assembly is such that they will not attend to them. I think gentlemen on the other side have a right to be heard; if they are not heard, I shall move an adjournment.

Mr. FULLER.—I apprehend that I represent a larger constituency than any man here. I am surprised that I should be prevented from speaking while a number of others have been allowed to go on. I hope that we shall not be prevented from having a hearing. One friend said, that this question ought to have been settled on the other side of the Atlantic. Why it was there decided in favour of the women a year ago. With regard to the invitation, there was nothing about "gentlemen" in the first invitation, and the women from Pennsylvania were appointed previously to the issuing of the amended notice calling this meeting. This is the only explanation I want to make.

Captain WAUCHOPE, R. N. (delegate from Carlisle).—In whatever country an institution may be formed, something should be given up to the feelings and prejudices of that country. Now I hold that England has something to say upon the efforts which have been made to annihilate slavery. The ladies across the Atlantic have exerted themselves nobly, and I trust that they will continue their efforts, even though this question should be carried against them. I entreat the ladies not to push the question too far. They do not fully comprehend the feelings of this country on the subject. I wish to know whether our friends from America are prepared to cast off England altogether? Have we not given £20,000,000 of our money for the purpose of doing away with the abominations of slavery? Is not that proof that we are in earnest about it? I can answer for the friends of emancipation here, that if this society had been established in America, they would never have mooted the question of the exclusion of females; but I must say, that our American friends are violating the feelings of the country in which they are now assembled. I trust they will do nothing calculated to cripple the great cause in which we are engaged.

The CHAIRMAN.—Permit me to say in reference to an observation which
fell from a gentleman at the end of the room, (Mr. Fuller), that I trust
I am not in the least disposed to limit the freedom of debate. I thought that
I was only interpreting the general feeling of the meeting when I suggested
that the time had arrived to take the vote.

Mr. Birney.—I rise to correct an erroneous impression which may have
been made on the Convention by what has fallen from some of my American
friends, as well as from my friend, Mr. Thompson. They spoke as if
the question of promiscuous female representation in the Anti-Slavery
Societies of the United States was already settled. This, in my apprehension,
is far from being the case. The question is a mooted one there as here; it
has been as distracting to Anti-Slavery Conventions there, as it is likely
to become to this Convention, if it be obstinately persisted in. It has been
stated, that the right of women to sit and act in all respects as men
in our Anti-Slavery associations, was decided in the affirmative at the
annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in May, 1839. It is
true, the claim was so decided on that occasion, but not by a large majority;
whilst it is also true, that the majority was swelled by the votes of the women
themselves. A portion of the minority thought they were called on to protest
in a formal manner against the act of the majority, which they accordingly
did. Since that decision, the question has been pressed with great pertinacity
by those who favour the right of women to sit in the Anti-Slavery meetings,
and resisted in the same manner by those who are opposed to it. Votes have
been taken in several instances in the auxiliary societies; and wherever
the result has been in favour of the admission of female representation,
females have themselves voted. In Massachusetts it has been made a principal
ground of separation between the abolitionists of that State. It is true, there
were other grounds of separation deemed more obnoxious than the one now
under discussion; but it was one of the grounds, and considered by no means
an unimportant one. The abolitionists who were in the negative on the
"women’s rights" question, and who thought the other ground of separation
alluded to still more imperative, separated from the old society and instituted
another, which is conducted exclusively by men. I regret that it has been
thought proper by my friend, Mr. Thompson, to institute any comparison
between the two parties, as to the thoroughness of their abolitionism. He
cannot but know, that in the new society, there are those whose purity as
abolitionists cannot be questioned, or even disparaged by any comparison into
which they may be brought with others, no matter how high those others may
stand in his estimation. I think it proper also here to state, that I have just
received from a gentleman in New York, well known to Mr. Thompson, one
whose Anti-Slavery standard he, (Mr. T.) would be among the last, in any way,
to underrate, a letter communicating the fact, that the persistence of the
friends of promiscuous female representation, in pressing that practice
on the American Anti-Slavery Society, at its annual meeting on the 12th
of last month, had caused such disagreement among the members present, that
he and others who viewed the subject as he did, were then deliberating on
measures for seceding from the old organization, and instituting a new one,
from which this cause of dissension would be excluded. The immediate
occasion of the secession was this: the Chairman of the meeting, one of the
Vice-Presidents of the Society, who it is understood is decidedly favourable
to female representation, in appointing the "business Committee," nominated a
lady as a member of it, together with Mr. L. Tappan and others who were well
known to be opposed to ladies acting in such matters promiscuously with gentlemen. The lady was not herself present at the meeting. It was moved that the husband of the lady, a gentleman in every way qualified for any station for which respectability and intelligence are considered qualifications, should be substituted for his wife. This, as I understand the letter, was not done, but instead of it another lady was made the substitute for the one who had been nominated in her absence. Believing that the time had at length come when the American Society was to be made the instrument of carrying this measure, in connexion with others still more obnoxious, which were known to be cherished by the most zealous of the women's rights party; and not being ready to aid in any way in furthering such purposes, a large number withdrew from the Society, and were, at the date of the communication, deliberating on the organization of a new association, from which all matters of reform, except those inseparably connected with slavery and emancipation, should be carefully excluded. I have alluded to other measures deemed still more obnoxious than the women's rights question, but to which the latter was considered as having been associated by the most zealous of its supporters. These may be considered as coming within the designation of the Non-Resistance or the No-human government scheme. I think it may truly be said, and without exception so far as I am informed, that the members of this sect, one that is new in the United States, and which denies the rightful existence of all human governments, except such as are merely advisory, are zealous for the perfect equalization of the sexes as to rights, duties, &c., &c. But whilst I give this as my opinion, I must also say, that there are among us in America, multitudes of abolitionists of the firmest and most approved texture, the friends and supporters of human governments as they now exist, who also believe, that by the constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society (in which its members are described as "persona"), females desiring to be considered as members cannot be excluded. I do not so interpret the constitution. I have thought it due to those whom I, in part, represent, as well as to this Convention, to make this statement, trusting that it will aid us in some measure, in coming to an intelligent decision of the question before us.

Mr. BRADBURN.—I wish to speak to certain facts. I know from the kind attention which the meeting has already paid, that it wishes to get at facts.

The Rev. J. BURNET.—I speak to a point of order. Our worthy friend is about to speak to facts, in the way of reply to the gentleman who has just sat down. That is not what we call explanation, and it cannot be entered upon. I would just say, that this question must come to a close at some time, or the business of the Convention can never be done.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. BURNET has rightly interpreted the rules; no gentleman who has spoken before can speak in reply, or otherwise, to matters of fact, except the gentleman who opened the discussion.

Mr. G. THOMPSON.—In what I said, I did not intend to institute a comparison between parties who had divided.

The Rev. C. STOVEL.—I think that the whole of the question has now become one entirely of order. I think, that we are convened here by your summons sent to the United States, and to several parts of the world from which we now have delegates. I fancy that we have been convened on a question relating to negro slavery; or rather, we are now an Anti-Slavery body. I know that we have a right to constitute ourselves, and that we
have a right to sit on that question; but whilst we have been speaking on this question respecting the reception of delegates, we have been brought to a topic, which however it may have been discussed in America, is one which is totally new to me. I never heard a word about it before. I certainly never studied what is called the rights of women. I would not withhold from them one right. I would give them more than their rights; for I think the women will be badly off when they have nothing but their rights, and the men also. I do not think that this is the time when that should be discussed. I appeal to you on all sides of the question, whether what you are pursuing is the great object for which we are met, whether it forms any part of the order of our proceedings! We ought not to be compelled to discuss this question, or to decide upon it now. If it tears your Societies to pieces in the United States, why would you tear in pieces our Convention! If I had been on the Committee, and the Committee had voted to receive ladies, I would receive them as a matter of courtesy. But when you attempt to divide the Convention on this subject, you are out of order, and we ought not to entertain the question. My vote is, that we confirm the list of delegates; that we take votes on that, as an amendment; and that we henceforth entertain this question no more. Are we not met here pledged to sacrifice all but every thing, in order that we may do something against slavery, and shall we be divided on this paltry question, and suffer the whole tide of benevolence to be stopped by a straw! No! You talk of being men, then be men. Consider what is worthy your attention. You talk of possessing liberty, then by all means conduct yourselves as freemen ought to do. You have undertaken to do something to destroy slavery; expose not yourselves then to ridicule, through the length and breadth of the country, by a question of this sort. If you are wise men use wisdom, and if you are strong men use strength in the accomplishment of what you have undertaken to do. If you think it right, when you have done this work, sit down and consider the rights of women. I shall move as an amendment that the list of delegates taken by the Committee be adopted.

S. J. PRESCOD, Esq., (of Barbadoes).—I wish to state a very simple circumstance in connexion with this question which has been most improperly forced upon us. The fact is this, that the ladies themselves did not come here with a certain expectation of being received amongst us. I had this fact from the ladies themselves. The ladies were elected conditionally, namely, that if the customs of this country and the sense of the Convention were against their sitting with us, they were absolved from all responsibility. I state this, not only in the presence of the American delegates, but of the ladies themselves.

The Rev. W. BEVAN.—I beg to protest against mere private conversations being repeated before a public assembly.

Mr. PRESCOD.—The conversation which took place last night was not a private one. There was a preliminary meeting at which persons, not delegates, were present.

One or two gentlemen denied that Mr. PRESCOD had given an accurate representation of what had taken place.

The CHAIRMAN.—The speaker is decidedly out of order in giving the details of private conversations; he has clearly no right to do so.
The Rev. Dr. MORRISON.—I feel, I believe, as our brethren from America and many English friends do at this moment, that we are treading on the brink of a precipice; and that precipice is the awakening in our bosoms by this discussion, feelings that will not only be aversive to the great object for which we are assembled, but inconsistent, perhaps, in some degree with the Christian spirit, which I trust will pervade all meetings connected with the Anti-Slavery cause. For I do believe that whatever has been done to purpose in this great work in our own country, or in any other, has been effected mainly under the guidance and direction of Christian principle. There are, we must all perceive, firm minded men, on both sides of this question. The Americans have proved themselves to be firm minded men; and I honour them for it; but they must see also that English Christians are equally firm and decided in the course which they intend to pursue. It is a question of conscience between the two parties; but it is a question of conscience between a very small minority on the one side, and a mighty majority on the other. If you discuss this topic, not only till the sun goes down, but until this Convention shall be under the necessity of breaking up, is there a shadow of hope in the mind of any American, or of any Englishman, that such discussion will harmonize the minds of the Convention? I do hope that our American friends, considering what a small minority they are, will withdraw the motion: for on no other ground can unity be secured. I cannot yield my convictions till I have had the same opportunity of discussing this topic as has been enjoyed by my American friends. They have already anxiously discussed it; but the people of this country have not. But have their discussions of it across the Atlantic tended to harmony? I say, unhesitatingly, because I know it, they have not. Will they then, upon a question of a minor order, divert attention from the great object for which we have been convened? Will they so far sacrifice themselves—their Christian selves—their Christian manhood—and the cause which I believe is most dear to them, and which I know they have proved by the sacrifices which they have made for its promotion? Will they on a minor question—the admission of female delegates from a small section of the American continent—run the hazard, the fearful hazard, of exciting a spirit which may tarnish the whole procedure in which we are engaged? I beseech them calmly to consider the nature of these proceedings. This is very unlike the meetings we have hitherto held. We have been unanimous against the common foe; but we are this day in danger of creating a division among heartfelt friends. Will our American brethren put us in this position? Will they keep up a discussion in which the delicacy, the honour, the respectability, of these excellent females, who have come from the western world, are concerned. I tremble at the thought of discussing the question in the presence of these ladies, for whom I entertain the most profound respect. I am bold to say, that but for the introduction of the question of woman’s rights, that it would be impossible for the shrinking nature of woman to subject itself to the infliction of such a discussion as this. I do entreat, Mr. CHAIRMAN, that you will keep the meeting to its business. I am not here to instruct you; you are better capable of instructing me. I have known you long, and your devotion to this cause. I look around me on men whose hearts are warm in it, and none beats more warmly in the cause than those of the Americans. I have held correspondence with some of the best Anti-Slavery men in America, and I know that they have been rendered overwhelmingly anxious by the discussion of this subject, which
is now threatening to make us as unhappy as our friends on the other side of the Atlantic. Our friends do not know the position we occupy in this country, or they would not obtrude the question upon us. I do entreat the meeting not to let any more time be lost. We cannot be convinced on either side. Our judgments in England are not things of straw, any more than those of our American friends. I give them credit for the manliness with which they have asserted that, which they regard to be a great principle; but having asserted it as Christian men, let us be content to proceed to a division, and then determine, in the spirit of Christians, to abide by that decision.

The CHAIRMAN.—As the hour is so late, I will now call upon Mr Phillips to reply.

Mr. PHILLIPS.—I will not enter on a reply. I have only one word to say, and that is to correct misrepresentations. The first respects what was stated by a gentleman on my right, (Mr. Prescott), that the women did not expect their seats when they came here. I deny it. They may have said that they did not expect to be in a majority if it went to a division. Secondly, he states they came here with liberty left to them of presenting their credentials or not. We should have come before the Convention with a lie in our mouths, we should have detained this meeting under the most false pretences, and have practised the grossest deception upon it, in making the statements we have done, had we been entrusted with this liberty of choice. The only women who have presented credentials are those from the State of Massachusetts, and there was no such liberty left to them. He has exaggerated what transpired, and confounded different cases. With respect to the observations made by Mr. Birney, I think it is my duty to advert to one of them. He has stated that the woman question has rent the Massachusetts Society asunder. That is not true. I attribute no want of truth to Mr. Birney; we know each other too well for him to suspect that I should make such an assertion. He has misapprehended the state of the matter. It was political action which divided us, and not the introduction of the woman’s question.* Mr. Birney has also stated that most of the advocates of the woman’s question are friends of the no-human government system. I might go over a long list, and show that the majority of those who have permitted me to stand up here are not favourable to the no-human government system. The defenders of that scheme are but a small portion of our body; but, thank God, the friends of woman on the platform of abolitionism are the majority. I throw back the imputation, that the main body on the woman question are the no-human government men. I rose to correct mistakes, and have done it.

The CHAIRMAN then submitted Mr. Stacey’s amendment, which was put and carried by an overwhelming majority.

The Rev. J. H. JOHNSON.—I hope we shall now all proceed unitedly with heart and hand.

* Mr. Phillips has since expressed a desire that an acknowledgment should be made on his behalf that he was in error here. The alleged causes of the division in America have been the introduction of women into the meetings, and differences about resolutions on political action.
Mr. G. THOMPSON.—I hope that as the question is now decided it will never be again brought forward; and I trust that Mr. PHILLIPS will give us the assurance that we shall proceed with one heart and one mind.

Mr. PHILLIPS.—I have no doubt of it. There is no unpleasant feeling in our minds. I have no doubt that the women will sit with as much interest behind the bar as though the original proposition had been carried in the affirmative. All we asked was an expression of opinion, and having obtained it, we shall now act with the utmost cordiality.

PROFESSOR ADAM.—I shall co-operate with the gentlemen now around me with the same zeal and earnestness as I should have done if this question had never been started.

Mr. JOSEPH STURGE moved, and Mr. BENNET seconded, that the Convention adjourn until ten o'clock to-morrow morning, which was put and agreed to.

SECOND DAY’S SITTINGS, SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1840.

(MORNING.)

JOSEPH STURGE, Esq. in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN rose and said,

Before commencing the business of the day, I am anxious to offer a remark or two on the somewhat irregular way in which the meeting was opened yesterday morning. It was the desire of the Committee to save our venerable friend, THOMAS CLARKE, as much as possible from excitement: and they arranged that he should be voted into the Chair before he entered the room, I did not know that this had not been done, when I accompanied him to the platform, yesterday; but the question was not regularly put to the meeting, though no doubt could exist that it would have been unanimously carried. As one or two of our friends who have been elected office-bearers, arrived only on the preceding evening, they could scarcely be thoroughly cognizant of the arrangements for preserving order in conducting the business; and should any other little irregularity in the proceedings of yesterday have occurred, I hope this will be accepted as an apology. In future, it will be necessary to act in strict accordance with the prescribed rules, as by so doing much valuable time will be saved. I trust, we shall go on in that spirit of love, unanimity, and Christian charity, which especially marked the early proceedings of yesterday. I am glad that our friends who were in the minority last evening, are now not only present, but, I believe, anxious, cordially and sincerely, with the best and kindest feelings, to unite in all the proceedings, and to further the great objects, of this Convention.

M. ISAMBERT, the secretary to the French Anti-Slavery Society, and a member of the Chamber of Deputies, in whose honour medals have been struck by the coloured inhabitants of the French colonies, and M. LAURE, also a distinguished member of the French Society, were