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A CHURCH MOVEMENT

In the very heart of conservative orthodoxy, a most admirable training school for women as orators, legislators, and voters has been established, and is now in the full tide of successful operation.

Under the sheltering wing of the Advance, and without even a frown from Prof. Bartlett, the annual meeting of the Woman's Board of Missions for the Interior has just been held in Chicago.

The melancholy spectacle of women out of their sphere, to the amount of some hundreds, from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, various portions of Illinois and other western States, was witnessed in that degenerate city without a sigh or tear, or even an ecclesiastical censure.

What is still more startling, these women seemed perfectly at home, on the platform and even in the pulpit; spoke with ease and self-possession, and conducted business in accordance with parliamentary rules, as if "to the manor born."

The business meeting of the board was held on the morning of April 11th, in the First Congregational church. Mrs. Moses Smith in the chair. Mrs. S.C. Bartlett, President of the Board, was unable to attend. (Her absence, I was told, was occasioned by the presence of a "well-spring of joy" in her home. Had the absence of a "Woman's Rights" leader from a convention thus occurred, what a "significant fact" it would have been – what volumes it would have spoken. As it was, nobody discovered any incongruity in the circumstance; the place was readily filled, and nothing further was thought of the matter).

Mrs. Smith presided with charming sweetness and dignity, and I could not but think what an admirable Speaker of the House she will make, if the "good time coming" gets here before it is too late to secure her services.

Reports from various delegates were heard, some written, others verbal, all brief and to the point, and given without hesitation or embarrassment.

The afternoon session was a union of the Congregational with the Presbyterian Board, and was held in the Third Presbyterian church. Mrs. Dr. House, returned missionary, from India, delighted the audience with a very descriptive account of life in that quarter of the globe, together with some remarks on Buddhism. From these it appears that our brethren of that faith are more consistent than Christians, in one respect at least. They, too, believe that "woman's sphere is home," and therefore do not allow their women to attend worship in the temples, reasoning doubtless with Paul that, if she would learn anything, she can ask her husband at home. Mrs. House spoke without notes, with great ease, clearness, and fluency.

Remarks were also made by Rev. Mr. Walker, of the Gaboon Mission, Africa; by a native of Africa, a colored boy, who has been educated in the country, and is about to return as missionary to his native land; by Mrs. Hough, and other ladies.

The gentlemen, after making their speeches, folded their tents like the Arabs, and silently stole away. By the way, this custom of the Woman's Board, which rigorously excludes gentlemen from its meetings, is all that saves it from the reproach of a "Woman's Rights" movement, the frowns of Prof. Bartlett, Drs. Van Dyke and Duryea, and the charge of "infidelity," "usurping authority," and designs against society generally!

What would have been the result had a man chanced to hear the speeches of any of those gentle ladies, it is difficult to predict. I trembled in my shoes once when a gentleman entered the room to open a window; but he left so quick that I trust Christianity and civilization were not seriously imperiled.

We are not told whether husbands or children suffered from neglect while the good ladies of the Board were thus interesting themselves about the heathen of India and China, but if they had been absent from home half as long to vote for a temperance governor, or send a high-minded and patriotic representative to Congress, the misery caused thereby would doubtless have been incalculable!

In the evening, the delegates and their friends were invited to the hospitable home of Mrs. Culver, for a social reunion. It was quite a pleasure to meet the gentlemen after so long a separation, and be able to exchange ideas with them, without being suspected of any intention to "usurp authority." So with merry chit-chat, the forming of new friendships, and strengthening of old ties, the busy day of the Woman's Board Meeting closed.

God bless its gentle workers! They are building better than they know. Many happy returns of this annual gathering; and may

"Each new temple, nobler than the last
Shut 'them' from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till 'they' at length are free."

Lavinia Goodell, Janesville, Wis.