

Lesson Plan: Seneca Falls Convention

Description/Purpose: The student will examine primary sources about the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 to understand why a women's rights movement was necessary to gain greater rights for women.

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Theme: Voting Rights, 19th Century, Source Analysis

Standards: UCLA Social Studies Standard 1C: Specify the issues raised by various women and how mainstream Progressives responded to them. [Consider multiple perspectives]

UCLA Social Studies Standards Available Here: <http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards>

Common Core Alignment:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Common Core Standards for Social Studies Available Here:

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH>

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Time: 15 minutes (The lesson can also be lengthened into a 45-minute class. See below in "Guided Practice" section for optional class extension.)

Materials:

- Documents from Library of Congress and Other Sources (see attached)
- The "Observe, Reflect, Question" Tool via The Library of Congress:
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf

Process:

1. *Starter/Hook:* On the board, write “Reasons Why Children Should or Should Not Be Allowed to Vote” to initiate a discussion. Have students give their own opinions about why children (18 and under) should or should not be allowed to have a voice in picking their government. After the discussion, explain to students that the same reasons they listed for youth voting were used regarding whether women should vote.
2. *Direct Instruction:*
 - a. Provide background on women’s place in 19th century American society to the class. Explain to them that:
 - i. Women were limited in freedoms and rights in the 19th century
 - ii. A women’s movement was necessary to gain greater rights and suffrage
 - iii. Men and women reformers both took part in the Seneca Falls Convention
 - iv. Opinions regarding women’s rights differed in the 19th century
 - b. Use the NWHM’s “Crusade for the Vote” to provide background information:
<http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/early-republic>
<http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/abolition>
<http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/seneca-falls-meeting>

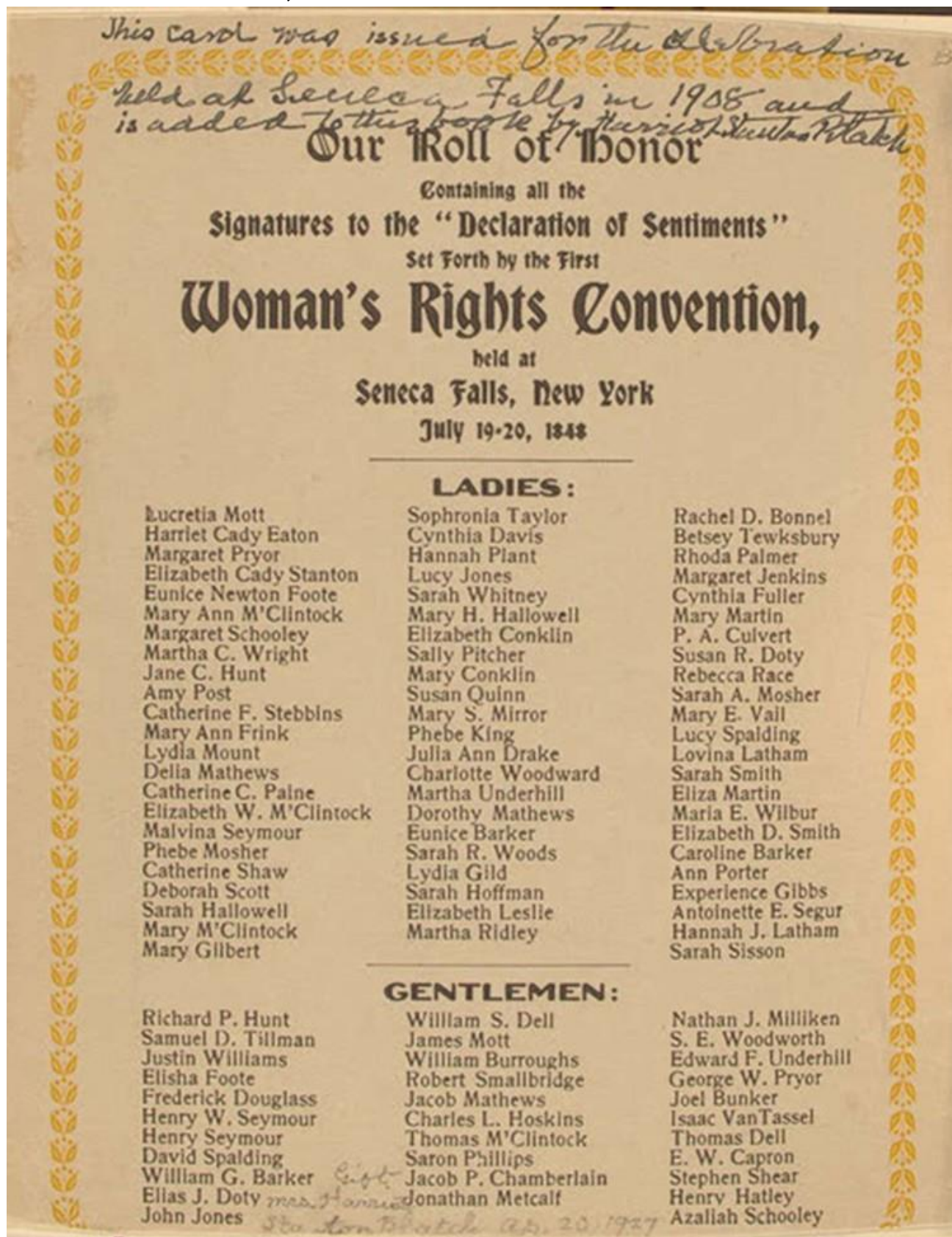
For gifted/honors students or if class time is limited, have the students research the background information ahead of time (previous class period) and bring their research to class. You can also print out the websites and distribute to the collaborative groups (see below).

3. *Guided Practice:*
 - a. Divide students into groups of six and assign a primary source (see below).
 - b. Tell each group to Observe, Reflect, and Question using the ORQ Tool from the Library of Congress. Each group will examine a specific source for evidence related to the central question: Why was a women’s rights movement necessary?
 - c. Explain to students that some of the sources reflect positively on the convention and others are opposed to the convention.
 - d. Once each group has examined the sources, write on the board Observe, Reflect, and Question. Have students send a representative from each group to record their observations, reflections, and questions. Discuss as a class.

Optional: Extend the lesson by having students create a skit on the proceedings of the Convention. Assign roles to students by having them play the part of convention participants, journalists, and those opposed to the convention.

4. *Follow-Up/Independent Practice:*
 - a. Students will research one of the participants of the Seneca Falls Convention and create and short presentation to show the class during the next class period.

Declaration of Sentiments, 1848



Excerpt from How Women Got the Vote: The Story of Women's Suffrage in America by Ida Husted Harper (published 1920)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Ida Husted Harper wrote the History of Woman Suffrage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a reflection history of the movement.

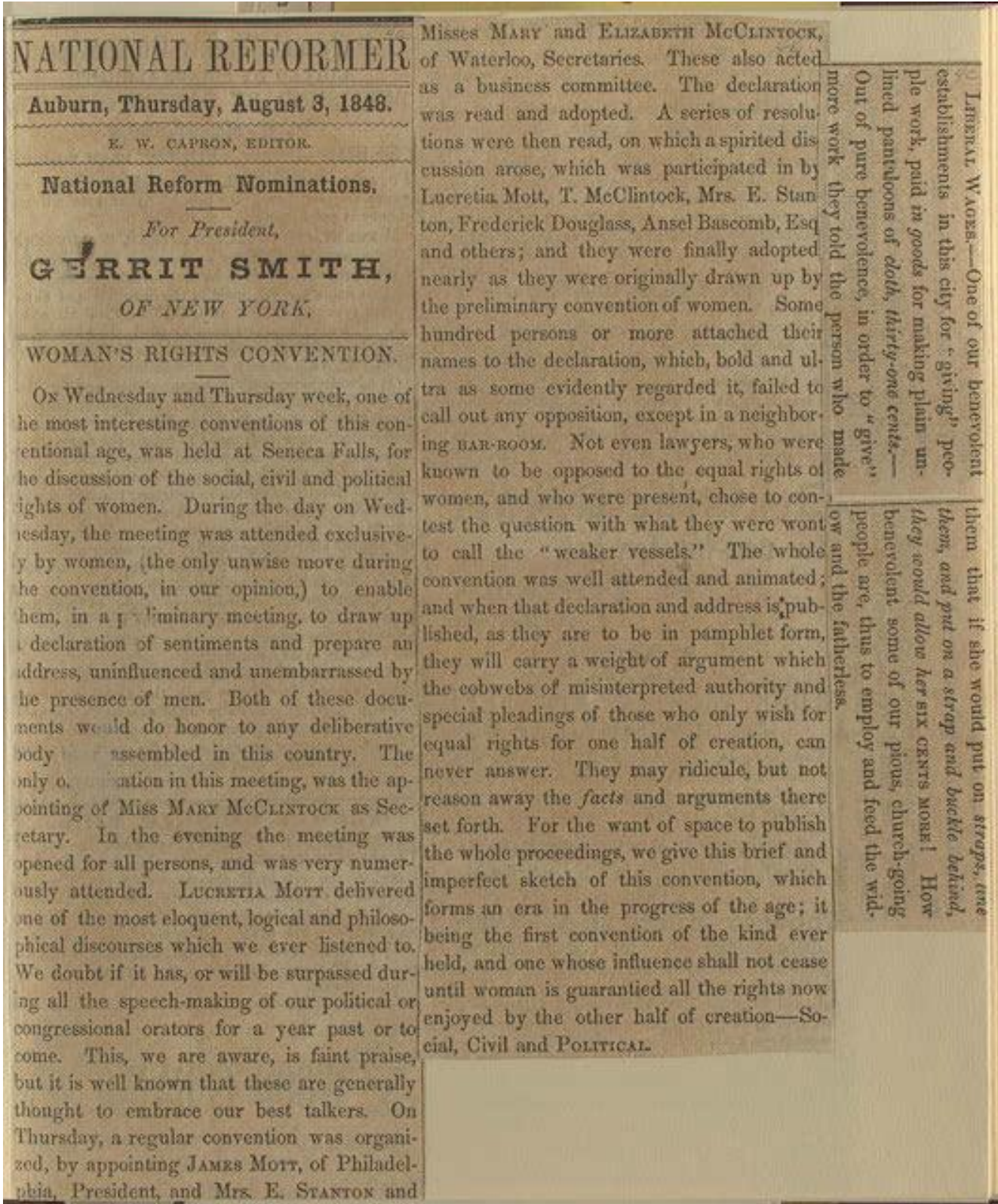
“The question of woman’s rights to take public part in this movement was carried to the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London in June 1840, which refused to recognize the eight women delegates from the United States . . . it was decided that on their return to the United States they would organize a movement especially for the rights of women . . . In 1848 during the yearly meeting of the liberal branch [of Quakers] in Waterloo, New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton went over from her home in the neighboring village of Seneca Falls to be with Lucretia Mott at the home of a mutual friend, Mary Ann McClintock and Martha Wright. The four women talked over the situation and Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton decided to put into effect the resolution they had made in London eight years before to call a convention for the public discussion of the rights of women. In June these four issued a “call” for the first woman’s rights convention in all history and published it, unsigned, in a local paper. They then prepared a declaration of rights modeled after the Declaration of Independence and a set of resolutions that demanded practically every right that women are enjoying at the present day, including suffrage. The convention met in Seneca Falls, July 19-20, in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and James Mott, of Philadelphia, the husband of Lucretia, presided. As many as the church would hold were present; the declaration and resolutions were discussed and adopted, and here began the movement for woman suffrage, which then continued without cessation.”

Excerpt from Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Address on Women's Rights, September 1848

From the Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony

“The present social, civil, and religious condition of women is a subject too vast to be brought within the limits of one short lecture. Suffice it to say for the present, that wherever we turn the history of woman is sad and drear and dark, without any alleviating circumstances, nothing from which we can draw consolation. As the nations of the earth emerge from a state of barbarism, the sphere of women gradually becomes wider but not even under what is thought to be the full blaze of the sun of civilization is it what God designed it to be. In every country and clime does man assume the responsibility of making out the path for her to tread . . . There are many differences in habits, manners, and customs, among the nations, but there is little change for the better in woman's lot – she is either the drudge of man to perform all the hard labor of the field and the menial duties of the hut, tent, or house, or she is the idol of his lust the mere creature of his ever varying whims and will.”

Article from National Reformer Newspaper, August 3, 1848



NATIONAL REFORMER

Auburn, Thursday, August 3, 1848.

E. W. CAPRON, EDITOR.

National Reform Nominations.

For President,

GERRIT SMITH,
OF NEW YORK.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.

On Wednesday and Thursday week, one of the most interesting conventions of this conventional age, was held at Seneca Falls, for the discussion of the social, civil and political rights of women. During the day on Wednesday, the meeting was attended exclusively by women, (the only unwise move during the convention, in our opinion,) to enable them, in a preliminary meeting, to draw up a declaration of sentiments and prepare an address, uninfluenced and unembarrassed by the presence of men. Both of these documents would do honor to any deliberative body assembled in this country. The only objection in this meeting, was the appointing of Miss MARY McCLINTOCK as Secretary. In the evening the meeting was opened for all persons, and was very numerously attended. LUCRETIA MOTT delivered one of the most eloquent, logical and philosophical discourses which we ever listened to. We doubt if it has, or will be surpassed during all the speech-making of our political or congressional orators for a year past or to come. This, we are aware, is faint praise, but it is well known that these are generally thought to embrace our best talkers. On Thursday, a regular convention was organized, by appointing JAMES MOTT, of Philadelphia, President, and Mrs. E. STANTON and

Misses MARY and ELIZABETH McCLINTOCK, of Waterloo, Secretaries. These also acted as a business committee. The declaration was read and adopted. A series of resolutions were then read, on which a spirited discussion arose, which was participated in by Lucretia Mott, T. McClintock, Mrs. E. Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Ansel Bascomb, Esq and others; and they were finally adopted nearly as they were originally drawn up by the preliminary convention of women. Some hundred persons or more attached their names to the declaration, which, bold and ultra as some evidently regarded it, failed to call out any opposition, except in a neighboring BAR-ROOM. Not even lawyers, who were known to be opposed to the equal rights of women, and who were present, chose to contest the question with what they were wont to call the "weaker vessels." The whole convention was well attended and animated; and when that declaration and address is published, as they are to be in pamphlet form, they will carry a weight of argument which the cobwebs of misinterpreted authority and special pleadings of those who only wish for equal rights for one half of creation, can never answer. They may ridicule, but not reason away the facts and arguments there set forth. For the want of space to publish the whole proceedings, we give this brief and imperfect sketch of this convention, which forms an era in the progress of the age; it being the first convention of the kind ever held, and one whose influence shall not cease until woman is guaranteed all the rights now enjoyed by the other half of creation—Social, Civil and POLITICAL.

Liberals Waives.—One of our benevolent establishments in this city for "giving" people work, paid in goods for making plain unlined pantaloons of cloth, thirty-one cents.— Out of pure benevolence, in order to "give" more work they told the person who made

them that if she would put on straps, one them, and put on a strap and buckle behind, they would allow her six cents more! How benevolent some of our pious, church-going people are, thus to employ and feed the widow and the fatherless.

THE NORTH STAR.

ROCHESTER, JULY 28, 1848.

The Rights of Women.

One of the most interesting events of the past week, was the holding of what is technically styled a Woman's Rights Convention, at Seneca Falls. The speaking, addresses, and resolutions of this extraordinary meeting, were almost wholly conducted by women; and although they evidently felt themselves in a novel position, it is but simple justice to say, that their whole proceedings were characterized by marked ability and dignity. No one present, we think, however much he might be disposed to differ from the views advanced by the leading speakers on that occasion, will fail to give them credit for brilliant talents and excellent dispositions. In this meeting, as in other deliberative assemblies, there were frequently differences of opinion and animated discussion; but in no case was there the slightest absence of good feeling and decorum. Several interesting documents, setting forth the rights as well as the grievances of woman, were read. Among these was a declaration of sentiments, to be regarded as the basis of a grand movement for attaining all the civil, social, political and religious rights of woman. As these documents are soon to be published in pamphlet form, under the authority of a Committee of women, appointed by that meeting, we will not mar them by attempting any synopsis of their contents. We should not, however, do justice to our own convictions, or to the excellent persons connected with this infant movement, if we did not, in this connection, offer a few remarks on the general subject which the Convention met to consider, and the objects they seek to attain.

In doing so, we are not insensible that the bare mention of this truly important subject in any other than terms of contemptuous ridicule and scornful disfavor, is likely to excite

against us the fury of bigotry and the folly of prejudice. A discussion of the rights of animals would be regarded with far more complacency by many of what are called the wise and the good of our land, than would be a discussion of the rights of woman. It is, in their estimation, to be guilty of evil thoughts, to think that woman is entitled to rights equal with man. Many who have at last made the discovery that negroes have some rights as well as other members of the human family, have yet to be convinced that woman is entitled to any. Eight years ago, a number of persons of this description actually abandoned the anti-slavery cause, lest by giving their influence in that direction, they might possibly be giving countenance to the dangerous heresy that woman, in respect to rights, stands on an equal footing with man. In the judgment of such persons, the American slave system, with all its concomitant horrors, is less to be deplored than this wicked idea. It is perhaps needless to say, that we cherish little sympathy for such sentiments, or respect for such prejudices. Standing as we do upon the watch-tower of human freedom, we cannot be deterred from an expression of our approbation of any movement, however humble, to improve and elevate the character and condition of any members of the human family. While it is impossible for us to go into this subject at length, and dispose of the various objections which are often urged against such a doctrine as that of female equality, we are free to say, that in respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction that all political rights which it is expedient for man to exercise, it is equally so for woman. All that distinguishes man as an intelligent and accountable being, is equally true of woman; and if that government is only just which governs by the free consent of the governed, there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and adminis-

tering the laws of the land. Our doctrine is, that "Right is of no sex." We therefore bid the women engaged in this movement our humble God-speed.

Oneida Whig.

TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 1.

BOLTING AMONG THE LADIES.—A Woman's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls on the 19th and 20th inst., at which the opposers of female slavery adopted a declaration of sentiments, declaring that these truths are self evident—that all men and women are created equal, &c., &c., and that when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government. The delicacy of Jessica when she assumed the unmentionables, has been much praised as indicating a consciousness that she was departing from the line of female propriety:

"I am glad 'tis night, you do not look upon me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange."

but the Woman's Rights Convention glory in the publicity of such an exchange. They have "let the facts be submitted to a candid world:"

"He has never permitted her to exercise her alienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws in the formation of which she has had no voice."

Was there ever such a dreadful revolt?—They set aside the statute, "wives submit yourselves unto your husbands;" they despise the example of the learned Portia, whose conduct Mrs. Jameson characterises as "consistent with a reflecting mind and a spirit at once tender, reasonable and magnanimous," when she, who was the lord of a fair mansion, master of her servants, queen over herself, committed herself to her husband, "to be directed," and her house, her servants, and the same herself were given to the care and keeping of her lord. This bolt is the most shocking and unnatural incident ever recorded in the history of womanity. If our ladies will insist on voting and legislating, where, gentlemen, will be our dinners and our elbows?

where our domestic firesides and the holes in our stockings?

Here is another shot:

"Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

"He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

"He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns."

"The most beautiful pagan, the most sweet Jew," shows herself at this point very strikingly. She eschews such abominations as scant pin money. Oh man! proud man! "it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." Do give the girls the spoons! Trade will be more brisk if bargains are not quite as sharp.

More grape!

"He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming to all intents and purposes her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty and to administer chastisement."

This is the age of reform. Our ideas of female excellence, formed from the study of such models as Lady Russell and Catherine of Arragon, are getting sadly out of fashion.

They used to speak,

"Not as desiring more,
But rather wishing a more strict restraint
Upon the sisterhood;"

but the bolters are too wise, too witty and too wilful to endure such a state of bondage, and the lords of creation will hardly escape the "predestinated scratched face." They should recollect however, the illustrious member of their bolting sisterhood who had not long worn the nether garments before she found it in her heart to disgrace her man's apparel and to cry like a woman. The lion's skin in history was not large enough to hide the timidity of the peaceful animal who thought to swagger.

We give the rest of the declaration.