

Liberty, Independence and

EQUAL RIGHTS.



TO THE FACTORY GIRLS OF DOVER.

I have been looking on with the greatest admiration at the course you are pursuing in relation to the late simultaneous attempt throughout all the manufacturing establishments in New-England to reduce the price of female labor. That this attempt is most unwarrantable; uncalled for by "the pressure of the times;" oppressive and degrading to the free-born daughters of New England; and also an attempt to increase the profits of comparatively a few rich proprietors, at the expense of thousands of poor females, is self evident to every candid reflecting mind. And that it has not before this called forth the effusions of many and abler pens than mine is to me matter of surprise and regret. What is the question upon which you have now joined issue? It is in my humble opinion, though not perhaps so much so in its immediate effects as in its more remote consequences, a proposition to choose between Liberty and Slavery. And shall the daughters of those mothers and grandmothers who wielded the battle axe to destroy the savages of the forest, hesitate a moment to deny themselves a few of the luxuries of life (should such denial become necessary,) in order not only that they may be free, but that posterity may continue to enjoy our present privileges. I venture to say they will not. How stands the case? James F. Curtis, agent, gives notice thus:

NOTICE.
The increasing pressure of the times has determined the Proprietors to lessen the manufacture, and No. 2 Mill is therefore to be stopped on the 15th of March. The reduced tariff of wages will likewise take effect from that day. The Overseers will make known to the Females under their charge, the prices which the Company can afford to pay, and it is to be hoped that no person will leave their work without giving the usual fortnight's notice of their intention. Riotous combinations answer no good purpose and only lower in the public estimation a class, otherwise respectable.

JAMES F. CURTIS, Ag't.
Dover, Feb. 20, 1834.
He does not say, and you are not informed how much the wages are to be reduced—No! You must trust that to the sovereign will and pleasure of your employers! They assume the right, and should you submit to it now, will hereafter say to you and all others in their employ, as the British Parliament once said to our fathers, that they have a right to "bind you in all cases whatever"—Why was not the male part of their help included in this reduction? Are not their wages proportionably as high as yours? Yes, indeed higher than yours! It was because they, the proprietors, thought a war upon helpless females alone would be more likely to succeed. But they much mistake, or I mistake the spirits that animate the fair bosoms of the daughters of those mothers who in revolutionary times would resolutely deny themselves their favorite luxury—tea—because the British Parliament had assumed the right and had levied an inconsiderable tax upon it. Those same mothers who could cheer their fathers, brothers, and husbands onward to battle: And in later times, at New Orleans, could dismantle their beds, to furnish cords to secure the captured enemies of their country.

The time and circumstances under which the attempt is now made, are such as to satisfy every true friend of the country that while the proprietors are intending to make a speculation at the expense of thousands of innocent females employed, they endeavor also to assist the U. S. Bank in its attempts to build up itself and put down President Jackson, who once defended successfully the "Beauty" of New Orleans against a ruthless foreign enemy. And as an evidence of the feeling of your agents toward the First Magistrate of this happy country, I will insert an article from the Dover Enquirer of the 25th ult. and take the liberty to guess that J. F. Curtis was the author, giving him the liberty to guess also who is the writer of this:

"I cannot express, the feelings of HORROR and DISGUST with which I was filled, on seeing that orders had been issued by the Secretary of the Navy, to place upon the bows of the nation's favorite, a figure of JACKSON. Good Heavens! to make that gallant ship, every plank of whose deck is sacred to honor and patriotism, and whose noble exploits are not surpassed by any other Frigate in

the world, to make her, I say, carry about with her, the EFFIGY OF A MAN, whose life, with one exception, has been a DISGRACE to the NATION, IS TOO BAD. It is a desecration which nothing could exceed, a stain which all the waters of the Atlantic could not wash out. Let the slavish minions, who surround their miserable master at Washington, raise a statue if they please, in every room in his palace, let the Secretary of the Navy fall down and worship them as much and as often as he likes, let him do any thing and every thing which shall insure him the continuance of his place—we care not—'tis his foul vocation—but, let him not wound the honor of the navy, so grievously as the execution of the order referred to, would wound it. Better would it have been, that the old ship had left her time honored bones upon some foreign strand, better that the waters which have borne her in triumph, should have received her into their deepest recesses, and have thus placed her beyond the reach of time serving politicians, who would thus dishonor her."

"Who (asks the N. H. Patriot of Saturday last,) but a coward knave, a scoundrel traitor, or a frenzied fool, could indite such sentiments as these, and who but the men who considered it 'unbecoming a moral and religious people' to rejoice over the victories gained by the gallant Constitution during the last war, would approve them?"

Suppose for a moment that the Company, as they say, intend to stop their works unless they can employ at reduced pay. What then should you do? Why, after waiting if you choose a proper time to ascertain that fact, return to your friends and suffer those noble walls which so lately imprisoned your delicate forms to moulder into dust unoccupied; for what assurance have you that if you submit to this, that the next month, or the next year, there may not be another reduction, and so continue until wages are so low, that like the operatives in England, through mere poverty many of you will be obliged to remain until some kind friend in charity may interfere—Better would it be that Cocheco falls should again be the abode of the "four-footed denizen" of the forest, and the haunt of savage nations, than that the "Bell of No. 2" at each successive peal should call together hundreds of willing and obedient slaves. And should you now fail, would it not be far better to return to your fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, around the family hearth, there to learn those domestic duties which you can never acquire here; and which are so absolutely necessary to fit you for that all important station in life for which nature designed you, and which the customs of all civilized nations seem to require that you should fill?

Your present "tariff of wages" is not too high. Companies can and will afford to pay it, and still be making large profits; while you cannot afford to work for less. Many of you, at the expense of health and every other comfort which can make life desirable, do perhaps lay up some money. But if the multitude of pale and sickly countenances and muffled faces, that so frequently appear in the streets at "Bell time," are any evidence of the state of your health, many of you must leave this employment or soon depart from those walls for that bourne from which no traveller ever returned.

On you alone rests the responsibility of the decision of this question. This must be a bargain of your own. And permit me respectfully to suggest to you to continue to manifest that same orderly propriety which has thus far so nobly characterized your conduct. The several manufacturing establishments of the different villages in New England having at the same time made the proposition to reduce wages, gives it the appearance of a systematic arrangement, and would no doubt justify you in forming associations to defeat that object; and I doubt not but you can defeat it by unity and firmness. You should meet together and enter into obligations not to work for reduced wages, and spurn from your society all such as would meanly propose to do it. Correspond with all your acquaintances at the principal manufacturing establishments in New England, and request them to do the same—Call on your agent and respectfully tell him that he does not now walk upon and command the deck of a Man of War; but is on land, surrounded by thousands of the choicest of Heaven's blessings, who are as "true as the needle to the pole;" each of whom thinks herself made from the same original lump that he was, is accountable to the same laws both human and divine, and, in fact, entitled to the same rights and privileges as he is in every particular; and will never surrender any of her privileges except to that favored one whose breast she may choose to make the repository of all her cares and all her joys;—and that she has been, and

still is, willing to be his servant at a fair price; provided she can make one half the gain, but she will never consent to be any man's slave.

It is certain that the power of the operatives of the several manufacturing establishments united, to prevent a reduction of wages. And talk as much as they will about being unable to go on, "by the moonshine."—They will not suffer all those large establishments to remain idle; and without experienced hands they cannot be operated.—Look about you—Enquire who are your friends—You have none, and a few days and perhaps a week may be profitably spent. Who are those who so lately would have you sign papers agreeing to trade with none who dealt in ardent spirits? Are they so much engaged in their zeal for the cause of temperance that they have forgotten you or think you have no rights? How is it with those of whom you buy your "thousand and one" articles of decoration and ornament? Have they forgotten that it is for their interest that your wages should not be reduced? Do they not seriously fear the loss of your custom? And will they not come to the rescue?

Enquire into these things—save your change, and let her who has plenty lend to her that has none—maintain a steady, firm, determined, but modest deportment, and by so doing you will soon find friends you little think of now. Whatever may be the sentiments of Dover, however such or either of the political parties here may be disposed to worship at the shrine of its own idol, and care for nothing else, be assured of friends in the country who will be with you in feeling, in sentiment, in heart, hand and purse; if you persevere. Be not discouraged.—Should you fail in this; although you may not find immediate employment elsewhere as profitable as you may have been engaged in, yet ere long I confidently hope there will be established in your country a new employment for females less prejudicial to their health and progress. The culture of silk, the encouragement in most sections of the Union, and this will be a work that will be done on their own side, and in one of their domestic circles; and will open a new and pleasant

And who could not but admire amid the pure country air, free from the noise and bustle of thick settled villages, and the stench and danger of Cotton Mills, to pick the mulberry leaves and assist the untiring silk worm to wind his ball, and from it to reel the material for the most beautiful and durable fabric that female innocence can be attired in.

I am induced to make these observations to you, not from any interested feelings or views.—I am not to gain or lose by the result. The wages I receive I expect will neither be increased or diminished; and if they were to be, I should still be actuated by principle, and not hesitate to raise my warning voice when the good of my country required it. For I do believe that the decision of this question involves not only your dearest interests, but the interests of posterity in all future time. It is a question no less than this—Shall the future sons and daughters of America be free? Or shall they be slaves! And while I profess to be actuated by the noblest spirit of Patriotism and love of country, I am not ashamed to own that there may be existing, in a small degree, a chivalrous feeling toward your sex.

A WATCHMAN.
Dover, N. H. March 3, 1834.

FACTORY GIRLS MEETING.

We have been furnished with an account of a meeting of the GIRLS lately employed in the manufacturing establishments in this village held at the Court House on Saturday, together with a series of Resolutions there adopted, which we give below.

These Resolutions evince a knowledge of their rights; a perception of the reasons why they are attempted to be deprived thereof; and of the fate to which surrender would inevitably tend, highly creditable to the intelligence of those who composed the meeting.—They proclaim a fixed determination that those rights shall be maintained; and breathe a spirit of liberty and Republican Independence worthy the descendants of the heroes and patriots of the Revolution—richly entitling them to the proud appellation of DAUGHTERS OF REPUBLICAN AMERICA. The Resolutions were adopted without a single dissenting voice, in a meeting composed of more than six hundred individuals, and we hope will be republished in every paper friendly to the cause of EQUAL RIGHTS throughout the whole New-England States.

In justice to the girls we feel it our duty to say that their whole conduct since leaving the Mills on Friday morning has been marked with the strictest regard to propriety and decorum, and merits unqualified approbation.

Instead of forming processions and parading the streets to the amusement of a crowd of gaping

idlers, they have confined themselves for the most part within their respective boarding-houses and seem impelled by no other motive than a firm determination, to maintain their just rights, of which they believe it is in contemplation to deprive them.

That our country should have arrived to a situation like the present while yet in its infancy, and while our system of Government is regarded only as an experiment, is a fact to be greatly deplored; but it is some consolation to the patriotic mind that the principles of liberty are so deeply engrained into our National character that even helpless females will rise en masse to resist the oppressions of "haughty insolence." The conduct of the Factory girls of this town is a noble example to those of other places and an imperishable honor to themselves. They need now the encouragement and assistance of the stronger sex, and they will assuredly receive it. Having proved themselves possessed of a knowledge of their rights, and a firmness to maintain them, there is not a friend of liberty,—of the honor and prosperity of his country,—and of the happiness of posterity but who will come forward to their assistance. Though their prospects may appear gloomy, they have only to persevere, and they will inevitably succeed.

The subject is inexhaustible, but the crowded state of our columns admonish us to bring it to a close by inserting the proceedings of the meeting.

GREAT MEETING.

In consequence of the notice, given by the Agent to the Females, employed in the Manufacturing establishments in this town; that from and after the 15th instant, their wages would be reduced, to enable their employers to meet the "unusual pressure of the times," the girls, to the number of between 600 and 700, assembled in the Court-House on Saturday afternoon, to devise ways and means to enable themselves to meet the "pressure of the times" anticipated from this threatened reduction.

The meeting was organized and a committee of three appointed to prepare resolutions and a report of the proceedings. The notice of the Agent, informing them, that when the mills were again started, it would be upon the "new prices" was then read and the following Resolutions unanimously passed.

1st. Resolved, That we will never consent to work for the Cocheco Manufacturing Company at their reduced "Tariff of Wages."

2d. Resolved, That we believe the "unusual pressure of the times" which is so much complained of, to have been caused by artful and designing men to subserve party purposes, or more wickedly still, to promote their own private ends.

3d. Resolved, That we view with feelings of indignation the attempt made to throw upon us, who are least able to bear it, the effect of this "pressure," by reducing our wages, while those of our overseers and Agent are continued to them at their former high rate. That we think our wages already low enough, when the peculiar circumstances of our situation are considered; that we are, many of us, far from our homes, parents and friends, and that it is only by strict economy and industry that any of us have been able to lay up any thing. That we view, with feelings of scorn, the attempt, made by those who would be glad to see us bound slaves for life, to magnify the small amount of our earnings into fortunes, that their oppressive measures may wear the appearance of justice.

4th. Resolved, That we view this attempt to reduce our wages as part of a general plan of the proprietors of the different manufacturing establishments to reduce the Females in their employ to that state of dependence on them, in which they may openly, as they do now secretly, abuse and insult them, by calling them their "slaves." That while we feel our independence, we will neither be ennobled by flattery nor intimidated by threats, from using all the means in our power to prevent the accomplishment of a purpose so much to be deprecated.

5th. Resolved, That we view both the ungenerous accusation of our effecting "riotous combinations" and the poor compliment of our being "otherwise respected," with the like feelings of contempt; and consider them both, as in the last degree, insulting to the daughters of Freedom.

6th. Resolved, That however freely the epithet of "Factory Slaves" may be bestowed upon us, we will never desecrate it, by a base and cringing submission to proud wealth or haughty insolence.

7th. Resolved, That it be considered base in any one to depart from the determination expressed by our first resolution.

After the adoption of the above Resolutions a communication from one of the members was read, exhorting them to persist in their endeavors to obtain the old prices for labor and not to work for the new, and to correspond with those of their own sex similarly situated in other places, to encourage them to adopt a like course.

The communication was well received and after it had been read the following Votes were passed.

Voted, That a committee of twelve be chosen to communicate the proceedings of this meeting to the girls employed in the Factories at Great Falls, Newmarket and Lowell.

Voted, That a fund be raised and appropriated to defray the expenses of those, in returning to their homes, who may not have the means at their command.

Voted, That the proceedings of this Meeting be published in the Dover Gazette and N. H. Globe, and in all other papers printed in this State whose editors are opposed to the system of slavery attempted to be established in our manufacturing establishments.

Voted, That this meeting be adjourned.