Our Editor’s Bi-Weekly Letter.

DEAR LIGHT-THINKERS: After much mental wrestling of the pros and cons I have decided to make a proposition—something of an innovation. I do this with many misgivings, or doubts as to its reception. Judging the future by the past, some readers will say that I have a love of impertinence in the impertinent manner, rather than a desire to be helpful to others. Believing, however, that it is only those who are conscious of much weakness themselves that will need me of a tokener after mortification I will make the venture and see what comes off. In a few words: If possible here it is:

Among the causes that have conspired against women’s equal right to the earth and what it contains are the discriminations found in the structure of our language. Our English tongue rank us it with the tropics pondersed from every other language, dead or living, is poor in not having a generic name, a noun of the common gender, singular number, meaning either man or woman. The words “man” and “mankin’d” are used to mean both genders. Women is woman, but with qualifying prefixes! This is, she belongs to the same species but is not fully up to the plane upon which masculine men stride—she is not yet fully or wholly human.

Then we have no lexicon of the common gender, singular number that can be used for “he or she,” “him or her,” “his or hers,” “his” or “herself.” Among adjectives we lack feminine corresponding to the masculine “infrast”—Why not

have “sorrow” from some, “sister,” as well as internal from father, “brother”? Why not have sorrow to correspond with friendship?

These are a few only of the discriminations as to words themselves. As to the order of words: we have all noticed that masculine nouns and pronouns always march at the head of every procession of words—“man and woman,” “father and mother,” “boy and girl,” “sons and daughters,” “uncle and aunt,” “he and she,” “him and her,” etc., etc.

Women writers, teachers, legislators, sequence in these discriminations to make and perpetuate the chains of custom that bind them to or in a position of inferiority—a lower class, a primacy or a minor class. and, therefore, rightfully, a subject class.

They have rights who dare to take them! Hence I have but little hope of a subject class that dares not take the rights that by nature belong to it. But believing that there are some women sufficiently awake to these mazes that educe themselves and their sisters I now venture to call the attention of such to these mazes in the history of their enslavement, and to ask them if it is not time to enter a mild but earnest protest against the discriminations implicit in the structure of language itself.

We think in words. As we think so we are. If we allow words to discriminate against women our thought will discriminate against them, and as our thoughts are thoughters or materialized, what can we expect but that our acts should assign to women a secondary or an inferior place?

“Can women write?” says Billings. This was meant as fun or pun. But we are told seriously that “man” is generic as well as masculine and that we need no other generic word for the human race. Would it not be more sensible, more true to nature, to make woman the generic term instead of “man”?

It is true that man embraces woman, in a literal sense, but is it not more true that woman embraces man in the literal sense? If men were not endowed within woman’s body during the months of gestation, and afterwards in woman’s arms during lactation, there would never have been a man to literally, and Billings-like, embrace a woman.

But this is not the remedy I would suggest. I do not favor substituting a feminine generic for a masculine. While I would hope that some reader should suggest a new word, I will simply ask what the objections are to the Latin word hario, meaning “woman or man,” and to the word genus homo, to mean every human being, old or young, as is now meant by “mankind”! While and asking others to make suggestions as to a new pronoun—common gender, singular number, ask what the objection is to using the syllable ar to mean “he or she,” “her or him,” and ever to mean “his or hers.” Then and “herself”?

I think others before me have made similar suggestions and therefore I shall claim no patent or copyright if—what I scarcely dare express—my suggestions should meet with favor from the great English-speaking public. I should be glad to hear from Leducer’s readers on this subject.

Again my dim old eyes are gladdened with the sight of our Morning Star, our Day Star of Hope, that is wont to rise every Friday at the central city, the metropolitan city, Topkapi, Kan—this a little tardy, as prophesied by the astronomers in charge of the “observatory,” owing to its temporary absence—our Star shows the astronomer—his absence to New York, a provincial town, “port of entry,” of which some of our readers may possibly have heard.

To make up for its tardiness our Day Star seems brighter even than is wont—if such a word be intrinsically possible—and remarkably free from size-spot typographic errors, etc. Dropping myset and speaking in plain terms I would say that, barring the article entitled the “Missouri vs. the Physiognotomi,” I am greatly interested in and pleased with the entire issue. “Presidential Influence” is a strong and thoughtful—inspiring essay on a subject that takes precedence of all other subjects of human interest—as I think,—while my own investigations, observations and reading have led me to conclusions different somewhat from those enunciated by Mrs. Johnson, I recognize her testimony, as woman and mother, deserves careful consideration, and should command the thoughtful attention of all investigators. It is the old story of the many-sided nature of truth. What we want now, most of all, are the facts of personal experience, and freedom to give publicity to these facts.

The report of the Freedmen’s Congress was devoured with keen relish; also the flattering notices of our New Humanity—everything, in fact, in Leducer No. 381, except advertisements and the article already barred. The quotation from N. Y. World concerning the “Rights of Agreement in England” possesses peculiar interest to those who have been fighting the battle for freedom along the lines therein indicated, for the great issue: "Presidential Influence" is a strong and thoughtful—inspiring essay on a subject that takes precedence of all other subjects of human interest—as I think,—while my own investigations, observations and reading have led me to conclusions different somewhat from those enunciated by Mrs. Johnson, I recognize her testimony, as woman and mother, deserves careful consideration, and should command the thoughtful attention of all investigators. It is the old story of the many-sided nature of truth. What we want now, most of all, are the facts of personal experience, and freedom to give publicity to these facts.

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