



*Portrait by Napoleon Sarony
in the Historical Museum, Des Moines*

Annie Savery

Annie Savery: A Voice for Women's Rights

Louise Noun

Oh, Testorides, do you know that of the many things hidden from the knowledge of man, there is nothing so incomprehensible as the human heart?

—Homer

ANNIE SAVERY QUOTED THE ABOVE PASSAGE IN A LETTER TO her friend, Amelia Bloomer, in which she commented on the sudden popularity of the woman suffrage cause. The Iowa General Assembly had just approved a woman suffrage amendment on March 30, 1870. She recalled "the *bitter* and denunciatory words" which her sister-in-law, Mrs. Chester Savery, had spoken to her only two years earlier after she had lectured on woman suffrage in Des Moines. And she reflected, "I never mingle in society and see the mental somersaults which many make without thinking of poor wise Homer."¹

Savery, a pioneer Des Moines resident and social leader, was a woman of towering intellect, warmth, and enthusiasm. In January 1868, at a time when woman suffrage was primarily the object of popular scorn and ridicule, she displayed the courage of her convictions by speaking out publicly for the enfranchisement of women. In June 1870 she was elected corresponding secretary of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association when it was organized at Mt. Pleasant, and soon thereafter she became the most prominent suffrage advocate in the state.

Unfortunately Savery's story has been lost not only because she was a woman, and women's history has rarely been preserved, but also because she was rejected by many of her associates in the women's rights movement. This alienation was precipitated by Savery's refusal to denounce free-love advocate

¹Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, April 12, 1870. Bloomer Collection deposited at Council Bluffs Public Library (hereafter cited as CBPL).

Victoria Woodhull, a proponent of sexual freedom and birth control, who was publisher of a radical journal, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*.

Woodhull created a national sensation in January 1871 when she became the first person to succeed in obtaining a hearing for woman suffrage before a judiciary committee of Congress. She was immediately welcomed into the National Woman Suffrage Association, the liberal wing of the women's rights movement led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Conservative suffragists were upset by Woodhull's association with the movement because her presence provided justification for those who claimed that the women's rights cause was primarily a front for free-love advocates. Since its inception the movement had been plagued by the accusations of free love spread by a hostile press. Now newspapers over the country seized Woodhull's acceptance by Stanton and Anthony as proof of these charges.

Many suffragists, intimidated by these attacks, denounced Woodhull in a rush to cleanse their ranks of free-love taint. Savery adamantly refused to join in these efforts to prove respectability. She believed that the woman suffrage movement should embrace anyone who supported the cause, regardless of personal morals. Her stand led to ostracism from the Iowa woman suffrage movement, thus depriving the cause of a brilliant and able defender. Feminists today can gain inspiration from the example of this beleaguered woman who refused to let expediency triumph over principle. The internal strife which split the women's rights movement more than a century ago muted one of its most original voices.



Courtesy Iowa State
University Press

Victoria Woodhull

LITTLE is known of Annie Savery's early life. She was born Annie Nowlin in London in 1831 and came to the United States while still an infant. She was married to genial thirty-two-year-old James Savery, an inveterate promoter and speculator, in Saratoga, New York in January 1854, and the couple settled in Des Moines the following April.²

Frank M. Mills, pioneer Des Moines book store owner, relates in his *Autobiographical Reminiscences* that Savery, "starting with scarcely the advantages of a primary school education, made herself probably the best educated woman in Iowa."³ She began by ordering, through his bookstore, text books covering all the courses taught in the Des Moines schools. Later, she sought out a tutor to coach her in the subjects usually covered in higher education.

Outside of Mills' reference to Savery, most of the information extant about her life comes from lengthy obituaries and eulogies in Des Moines newspapers at the time of her death on April 14, 1891. Judge N. M. Hubbard of Cedar Rapids, an intimate friend who spoke at her funeral, commented at length on her intellectual attainments.⁴ She learned to read, write, and speak French after she was married. She studied the English and American classics and became one of the best Shakespearian scholars the Judge had ever met. Later she took up the study of history. Hubbard said that in any conversation concerning an historical subject, she was always more familiar with all the details than any other person present. In her later years Savery explored religious thought and caused raised eyebrows among her orthodox Christian friends when she became a student of Theosophy, a philosophy which incorporates elements of Buddhism and Brahmanism in a search for spiritual insight.

When Savery and her husband arrived in Des Moines in 1854 they purchased a small hotel, the Marvin House, located in a log building at Third and Walnut which James Savery

²Minute Book of Polk County Old Settlers' Association, deposited in Manuscript Collection, Iowa State Historical Department, Division of Historical Museum and Archives (hereafter cited as IHMA).

³Frank Moody Mills, *The Mills Family and Its Collateral Branches with Autobiographical Reminiscences* (Sioux Falls, S.D., 1911), 116.

⁴*Des Moines Register*, April 18, 1891.

paid for with \$3,000 he had brought back from the California gold rush. Annie Savery managed the hotel while her husband looked for easier ways to make his fortune. The Marvin House, later named the Des Moines House, was remembered for its pioneer hospitality. It was the headquarters for the Western Stage Company, and the influx of land buyers and speculators kept it crowded. Savery management ceased in 1855. The same year James Savery and other promoters began construction of a new and much larger hotel, the Savery House, which after a number of vicissitudes was completed in 1865.⁵

In the late 1850s James Savery became a partner in the American Emigrant Company, an eastern-based concern, which was acquiring vast tracts of land—much of it in north-west Iowa—and selling it to Scandinavians who wished to settle in the United States. The company sent agents to Europe to promote the sale of its land in package deals which included the cost of transportation to the emigrants' destination in the United States.⁶ James Savery went to Europe several times as an agent for the American Emigrant Company, and Annie Savery, who had no children to keep her at home, went with him on two of these trips—in 1866 and again in 1869. However, while her husband was scouting business in Scandinavia, Savery spent her time in more southerly European countries. During her 1866 trip, which lasted almost a year, she spent most of her time in Paris and Rome. While in Paris she was presented to the Emperor, Louis Napoleon, at a reception at the Tuilleries Palace. The Saverys also spent several months each winter in New York and Washington where James Savery attended to American Emigrant Company business.⁷

ON January 24, 1867, soon after her return to Iowa from her first European trip, Savery delivered a lecture at the Court

⁵For information about the Marvin House see: C. F. Andrews, *Pioneers of Polk County, Iowa* (Des Moines, 1908), I, 211; Annie Savery obituary in *Des Moines Register*, April 15, 1891; also, *Des Moines News*, April 15, 1891; J. C. Savery obituary in Tacitus Hussey Scrapbook, IHMA.

⁶For information about the American Emigrant Company see: *Palimpsest* (Iowa City) April 1962, "The Scandinavians," p. 166; the *Dubuque Herald*, January 31, 1869; and Cyrenus Cole, *Iowa Through The Years*. (State Historical Society, Iowa City, 1940), p. 354.

⁷*Des Moines Register*, February 14, 1866, January 22, 1867; Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, December 11, 1869, February 14, 1870, CBPL.

House titled "From the Tuilleries to the Forum, or a Western Woman's Impression of Europe." This was Savery's first public speaking venture, an occupation which was still considered unlady-like unless, as in this case, the proceeds were given to charity. "While her attempt has . . . given her a new leaf of laurel to add to her reputation," commented the *Des Moines Register*, "we hope the public will not forget she performed the task merely at the promptings of a heart that strokes in sympathy with unfortunate humanity." The lecture was a success (\$155 being raised) despite the fact that a violent snow storm was raging that evening.⁸

Although apparently not directly engaged in managing any of her husband's properties after disposing of the log hotel in 1856, Annie Savery continued to take an active interest in his various business ventures. Friends recalled that he always delighted in giving her credit for an equal or greater share of the work and management of his affairs.⁹

The Savery fortune grew rapidly during their early years in Des Moines. The 1860 census lists the value of Savery's real estate at \$10,000 and the value of personal property at \$1,000. Ten years later, the real estate value had risen to \$250,000 and the value of personal effects to \$100,000. However, the depression of the 1870s brought financial disaster to James Savery. The Savery Hotel went into bankruptcy and in 1878 he and Annie along with B. F. Allen, builder of Terrace Hill, went to Montana presumably to escape angry Iowa creditors. Here he is said to have recouped his fortune within a few years. Annie Savery's will, signed in Des Moines in July 1880, indicates that the Saverys were back in the city by that time.¹⁰ Sometime in the early eighties the Saverys settled in New York City but they always kept close ties with Des Moines.

Annie Savery's Des Moines home, which stood on a bluff overlooking the Racoon River in the 1900 block of Grand Avenue, was completed in 1858. Although much smaller than its grandiose neighbor, Terrace Hill, built ten years later by B. F.

⁸*Des Moines Register*, February 14, 1866, January 22, 25, 26, 27, 1867. February 24, 1867.

⁹*Des Moines Register*, April 15, 1891.

¹⁰C. F. Andrews, *Pioneers of Polk County, Iowa*, 214, 215; *The Last Will and Testament of Annie Savery* (Des Moines:) Recorder's Office, Polk County Court House.



Courtesy of author

James and Annie Savery's home was located in the 1900 block of Grand Avenue. This photograph was taken circa 1864.

Allen, one Iowa's wealthiest bankers, the Savery home was considered one of the most elegant in the city. It housed objects of art, paintings and sculpture which the Saverys had purchased in Europe. Formal gardens on the spacious grounds were adorned with statuary. The library contained one of the finest collections of books in the state. The Saverys lived in this home—with long absences while they were in the East or in Europe—from 1858 until it burned in March of 1874. Many of the furnishings and personal possessions were destroyed in the fire; others were carried away by looters. Annie Savery's watch, which had been made to order in Europe at a cost of \$1,000, was stolen from a mantelpiece, and silverware was stolen from a safe. There was no insurance on the home or its furnishings and the Saverys could not afford to rebuild. After the fire they moved to a suite in the Savery Hotel.¹¹

¹¹For accounts of Savery fire including contents of home see: *Des Moines Register*, March 20, 1874; *Des Moines Leader*, March 19, 1874; Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, April 23, 1874, CBPL.

Comments about Savery at the time of her death invariably mention the warmth and friendliness of her Des Moines home. "She is remembered for the hospitality of her home on Grand Avenue," the *Des Moines Leader* said. "Here she was accustomed to entertaining old and young, rich and poor, and all with a freedom and cordiality which marked her as a friend of all." Captain J. A. T. Hull, an old friend, recalled that as a boy he had always been a little embarrassed in conversing with Annie Savery because she was so strong intellectually.

But her kindness and conversational power broke the crust of our village life and broadened its intellectual horizon. . . . She lifted our civilization out of the ruts of provincialism into a broader field of life. . . . Her Des Moines home will never be forgotten by those who felt its helpful influence and enjoyed its generous hospitality.¹²

Annie Savery was also remembered for her unostentatious generosity to friends and causes. "Her benevolences were extensive, but were almost always in secret," the *Des Moines Register* commented.

She had an open hand and a ready purse for deserving charity and was never without many proteges. Her contributions to educational and charitable institutions were large and numerous. . . . Her relatives and friends who were many, always found Mrs. Savery a generous benefactor.

Although not a member of any church, in later years she was a substantial supporter of religious institutions.¹³

Savery's broad interests in matters of civic concern included education, the welfare of the poor and underprivileged, and especially the advancement of women. She was an ardent advocate of free public education; a generous supporter of the Des Moines Library Association (organized in 1866); and she spearheaded a campaign in 1876 to raise funds to establish the first hospital in Des Moines. She was concerned about conditions at the Polk County jail, located in the unlighted, dank basement of the Court House—a pest hole which was described in January 1867 as having rusty bars and "clammy walls hung with

¹²*Des Moines Capitol*, April 15, 1891; *Des Moines Leader*, April 15, 1891; *Des Moines Register*, April 18, 1891.

¹³*Des Moines Register*, April 15, 1891.

pendent icicles." The following July the *Des Moines Register* noted that Savery "was among the first to visit the jail and after ascertaining the unnecessary discomfort of prisoners, lack of ventilation and ordinary cleanliness, was instrumental in having many changes for the better inaugurated." (At the same time other Des Moines women were using their energies holding religious services for the prisoners.)¹⁴

With the rise of the woman suffrage movement in the late 1860s, Savery became increasingly active in the promotion of women's interests. In 1868 she donated a large sum to Grinnell College to be used for scholarships for women over a twenty-year period. Three years later she organized the Iowa-Italian Bee Company in partnership with Ellen Tupper, an Iowa apiarist, as an example of the kind of business women could successfully operate. Savery supplied the capital for the operation—\$10,000—and Tupper the know-how. The project was located on the grounds of the Savery residence with the hives wintering in the basement of the house. During the first year of operation it was estimated that their forty hives of bees would yield about twelve hundred pounds of honey and make a nice profit for the owners. Despite this auspicious beginning, the Bee Company soon ran into trouble because of loss of bees during shipment from Italy, and it probably came to a sudden end in March 1874 when fire destroyed the Savery home.¹⁵

In 1873, while spending the winter in Washington, Savery created a stir by seeking appointment to the position of United States Consul to LeHavre, France, a position then held by General Glasgow, a Civil War veteran. She sought and received the endorsement of congressional delegations from six states including Iowa, as well as a number of United States senators. Vice-president elect, Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts also gave Savery his support.¹⁶ This was at a time when

¹⁴*Des Moines Register*, May 5, 1867, Notice of First Annual Meeting of Des Moines Library Association. Savery is the only woman listed as a \$100 life member; *Ladies' Bureau* (Marshalltown), Nettie Sanford, Editor, February 29, 1876. Copy deposited in Chicago Historical Society; *Des Moines Register*, January 29 and July 23, 1867.

¹⁵Catalog of Iowa (Grinnell) College, 1868-1869, 23. *Des Moines Register*, April 15, 1891; For information about the Iowa-Italian Bee Co. see: *Woman's Journal* (Boston) September 9, 1871; *Des Moines Register*, November 29, 1871; *Marshall Times* (Marshalltown), November 16, 1871; *The Iowa Progress* (Des Moines), July, August 1872.

¹⁶*Council Bluffs Republican*, February 20, 1873.

the women's rights movement was at low ebb because of the failure of both Congress and state legislatures to grant women the right to vote following the recent enfranchisement of the black male—a failure which public opinion attributed to the association of Victoria Woodhull with the movement. “The interest of the cause demands an advanced step on the part of women instead of being discouraged at theoretical reverses,” Savery wrote in a letter read by her friend, Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, to the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association meeting in Des Moines in March 1873. “Whether or not successful at this time,” Savery said, she could “well afford, in behalf of women, to be used as a test by the heroic men of the Republican party.” She could “endure the assaults and selfishness of its mercenary partisans” because “the individual is nothing; but woman to whom this special recognition of her rights belongs, is *everything*.” Will women continue to take counsel of their fears, she asked, and by their lack of moral courage prove that they are not yet ready to take their proper place in the world?¹⁷

As was to be expected, Savery was not successful in her bid for the consular job. Why should a wealthy woman displace a poor man, the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* asked. This paper found no propriety in removing a man who fought for this country's “rights” to make room for a woman who is fighting for what she terms “woman's rights.”¹⁸

During the winter of 1874-75, following the destruction of her home by fire, Savery attended the University of Iowa Law School in Iowa City where she graduated with high honors. (Law was a one-year course at that time.) According to her friend, Judge Hubbard, she never intended to practice law but wanted to “fully understand the origin of the rights of persons and property and particularly to understand and trace the history of the rights of married women.” Savery's thesis, “Woman's Relation to Civil Government,” delivered at the graduation ceremonies, was published in full in the *Des Moines Register* of June 30, 1875.¹⁹

¹⁷Annie Savery to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, *Des Moines Register*, March 5, 1873.

¹⁸*Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, March 11, 1873.

¹⁹*Des Moines Register*, June 29, 1875; *Des Moines Register*, April 4, 1891; Savery's

ANNIE Savery's activities in behalf of woman suffrage began in January, 1868 when she delivered a lecture entitled "Angels and Politicians" at the Court House. Proceeds amounting to \$50.20 were given to the Des Moines Library Association. This was the first time that any Des Moines woman had publicly declared herself in favor of political rights for women, and her effort was met with cold disapproval by many of her friends and relatives.²⁰ A letter signed V.C.T. to the *Des Moines Register* chided the paper for not printing the substance of the lecture. The writer then went on to say that Savery had been "under the burden of presenting an unpopular subject—a task far more onerous than floating with the tide of universal assent." It was regrettable that such a well-digested argument for the rights of women could not have been listened to by a larger number of ladies, the writer said. "As it was, its inculcations fell upon the stoney ground of the minds of a dissident majority. At all events the question is up for discussion. The revolution is begun."²¹

The revolution was proceeding on a number of fronts in 1868. One of the most significant was the inauguration of the weekly publication, *The Revolution*, which Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony launched in New York in January 1868. This radical paper voiced the concerns of feminists throughout the country. Savery was among those thanked by Anthony in the last issue of the year for securing a large number of subscribers.²²

Savery was in Europe during most of 1869. When she returned in November she found a letter awaiting her from Amelia Bloomer of Council Bluffs written the preceding April. Savery's reputation as a woman's rights advocate had extended to Council Bluffs and Bloomer wrote seeking her help in organizing the movement in Iowa. A lively correspondence ensued.

Bloomer, who is well known because of the reform costume

diploma and certificate of admission to the Iowa Supreme Court are deposited in IHMA.

²⁰*Des Moines Register*, January 23, 1868; Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, April 12, 1870, CBPL.

²¹*Des Moines Register*, January 28, 1868.

²²*The Revolution* (New York), December 31, 1868, p. 411.

which bears her name, had settled in Council Bluffs in 1855 with her lawyer husband, Dexter Bloomer. She was best known in women's rights circles for her temperance and women's rights paper, *The Lily*, which she published in Seneca Falls, New York and Ohio from 1849 until shortly before her move to Iowa. Bloomer had lectured on women's rights while living in the East and had brought her message in behalf of women to the rough, frontier community of Council Bluffs. However, after several lectures soon after her arrival in 1855, the curiosity of the townspeople was satisfied and Bloomer learned that there was no acceptance for her reform ideas in this community. And so she bided her time. Eighteen sixty-nine seemed the auspicious year for action. During the previous year the voters of Iowa had ratified a constitutional amendment extending the right to vote to the black men of the state. Now feminists were pushing for the legislature to begin the process of amending the Iowa Constitution in order to extend the franchise to women. (The amending process requires approval by two successive sessions of the General Assembly and submission of the proposed amendment to a popular referendum.)

Savery and Bloomer agreed that it would be a good idea to have a woman suffrage meeting in Des Moines during the 1870 legislative session and to organize an Iowa woman suffrage association at that time. However, they hesitated to call a meeting unless one of the national leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Lucy Stone could be the featured speaker, and neither of these women was available. Meanwhile, Savery who had no experience with organizational work, was anxious for Bloomer to come to Des Moines to help her plan for the meeting. "I have no experience whatever in forming or organizing associations, and as I should wish to do everything creditably that I undertake, I should not dare—without the advice and instruction of a competent leader—to undertake such a work," Savery wrote on January 25th. "You may not have the health but you certainly have the experience and ability to organize this or any other association," she told Bloomer. "Hence, if you cannot do it because of your health,

if you will come to me and teach me, I will agree to be a willing pupil.”²³

But Bloomer, who was timid about visiting this wealthy urbane society woman, kept giving excuses about why she could not come—i.e. her health was not good or the trip was too costly. When Savery suggested she visit Bloomer in Council Bluffs, Bloomer was hesitant about having her come. Savery did her best to reassure her timid correspondent. “In a former letter you spoke of not entertaining in style,” she wrote Bloomer on February 14.

I should be sorry to hear you disappointed in this respect in my house. We live in a cottage that was built twelve years ago, hence you can readily imagine that it cannot be extra fine. *Au contraire!* It is plain but comfortable. . . . Expect to find a plain house and a plain woman but a warm welcome.²⁴



Courtesy Iowa State Historical Department
Division of Historical Museum and Archives

Amelia Bloomer

Finally, Savery took the opportunity of going to Council Bluffs to visit in the Bloomer home when her husband went

²³Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, January 28, 1871, CBPL.

²⁴Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, February 14, 1871, CBPL.

there on business the third week in March. Bloomer's anxieties about Savery dissipated on personal acquaintance and the following week she returned the visit—a visit planned to coincide with the debate in the General Assembly on a proposed constitutional amendment removing the word “male” from the qualifications for voting in Iowa.

Savery and Bloomer attended the sessions of the House and Senate on March 29th and 30th when the woman suffrage amendment was taken up by these bodies and they were surprised and elated when the measure was approved by both houses. This action was taken without any organized pressure from suffragists. Although the women did not realize it, the action was largely in response to the goading of the Democratic minority in the General Assembly. The Democrats taunted the Republicans for having enfranchised the black man but not their own wives and daughters.²⁵

Following the action of the legislature, Joseph Dugdale of Mt. Pleasant, a Quaker who had been active in the women's rights movement in the East, called a woman suffrage convention which met in Mt. Pleasant in mid-June of 1870. Savery and Bloomer were disappointed that the meeting was not to be held in Des Moines but both women attended and were among the featured speakers. An Iowa Woman Suffrage Association was organized at this meeting with Henry O'Connor, Attorney General of Iowa, president; Amelia Bloomer, one of seven vice-presidents; and Annie Savery, corresponding secretary. Later in the month Savery was instrumental in calling a meeting of suffrage advocates in Des Moines that led to the organization of the Polk County Woman Suffrage Society several months later.²⁶

Savery soon became the leading spokeswoman for the woman suffrage forces in Iowa. During 1871 she lectured in several Iowa communities including Muscatine, Council

²⁵Louise Noun, *Strong-Minded Women. The Emergence of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969), p. 129-133.

²⁶For information about the 1870 Woman Suffrage Convention at Mount Pleasant see: Stanton, Anthony, Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. III, (New York, 1887), Chapter 45; *The Revolution* (New York), June 23, 1870, p. 395; *Woman's Journal* (Boston), June 25, August 13, 1870; Letters of Hannah Tracy Cutler to the editor of the *Woman's Journal*; Amelia Bloomer to Joseph Dugdale, May 7, 1870, IHMA; Noun, *Strong-Minded Women*, 133-149; *Des Moines Register*, July 1, 1870.

Bluffs and Des Moines. She was drafted by the woman suffrage advocates in the capital city to refute the anti-suffrage arguments of Lillian Edgerton, an alluring young blond who had recently lectured under the auspices of the Library Association. Savery's Des Moines speech was so successful that the *Des Moines Register* advised the friends of woman suffrage that they could "not do better than to keep such an able champion in the field as Mrs. Savery." Other accolades came from eastern suffragists who became acquainted with Savery when they visited Des Moines. "Mrs. Savery is a power throughout the State," commented Mary Livermore, noted Civil War relief worker and suffragist who lectured in Iowa in April of 1871. In a letter to the *Woman's Journal*, a women's rights paper published in Boston, Livermore described Savery as "a lady of talent, education, culture, enlarged by travel at home and abroad, a woman of wealth, influence, and position, all of which she has consecrated to the cause of woman. . . . She will never cease her efforts till women are enfranchised."²⁷

Savery also became well known through her letters to the editor of the *Des Moines Register* defending woman suffrage. The following extracts from Savery's lengthy communications give some of the flavor of the lively debate which was going on at that time—and reveal her as an ardent and able defender of the cause.

The Bible and Woman Suffrage

Your paper of January 1st contains a four column lecture or sermon delivered [by the Reverend Rice] at the Central Presbyterian Church, December 26, 1870.

This lecture furnishes another example that there are intelligent, scholarly divines, who are still so far behind the progress of the present age, as to proclaim from the pulpits that the Mosaic laws in respect to women, are applicable to the present condition of society; that the subjection of the wife to the husband, and the injunction to keep silence in the churches, should be interpreted by all men as a denial of her right to the ballot. . . .

The enemy of all good could not do a greater service to the cause of evil, than by leading Christian men blindly to interpose the Bible as a barrier against every social reform, so that when the reform triumphs it shall seem . . . to be not merely the defeat of the opposers of the reform, but the

²⁷For accounts of Savery's speeches see: *Des Moines Register*, January 7, 1871; *Des Moines Register*, February 22, 25, 1871; Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, March 1, 1871, CBPL.

overthrow of the Bible, also. . . . This book is too precious . . . to be thrown in the street to help form a barricade against every attempt to overthrow old dynasties of wrong. . . .

Mr. Rice totally ignores the symbolic fact that woman was the crowning work in that creation which every step had been in an ascending scale from matter to man. That this symbol could possibly mean that woman was intended to be the spiritual, or moral head of man, he would not admit. (January 8, 1871)

Justice and Woman Suffrage

In your paper yesterday I noticed an editorial commenting thus:

Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Miss Susan Anthony appear to have a lively idea that it don't hurt a woman very much to murder two men. They illustrate this idea by visiting and condoling with Mrs. Fair who is in prison in San Francisco for murder . . . With such examples before them it is no wonder . . . that all good wives and mothers of the country do not demand universal suffrage.

Why should the visits of two women suffragists to a woman in prison be construed as detrimental to the cause? What has their visit to do with questions of giving women equal wages for equal work? What has it to do with the question of taxation of women's property without representation, or of the superior right of the woman to the guardianship of her own child, and the scores of other legal injustices in which voting, lawmaking men, discriminate against non-voting women? . . .

Do not misunderstand me as wishing to shield Mrs. Fair from the full penalty of her crime. . . . But justice and mercy are opposite emotions. The one regards only the crime. The other is born of sweet Pity, who remembers our weakness and temptation, and never forgets the kinship of humanity. . . .

Nine tenths of the poor degraded wretches who inhabit our prisons and jails have no respect for the opinions of society, for they know full well that society cares less for the crime than the misfortune of being caught at it and that under different circumstances they would be received and flattered where they are now condemned . . .

I am quite out of patience with the injustice which is dealt to women. . . .

Not long ago a poor fallen creature was dragged up before our courts and made to pay heavy fines for plying a trade in which every man who visited her was as guilty as she. Why did the constable as he watched her door for evidence upon which to convict her, why did he not take down the names of the men who enter there and arrest them with the woman? . . . He would not dare to mete out equal justice to men and women. He would not only lose his office, but it is a question in my mind if the town would not be made too hot to hold him.

And hereon hinges the whole question of woman suffrage. Put the ballot

in the hands of women and how long would it be before the now stupidly blind goddess would be made to hold her scales level. (July 23, 1871)

War and Woman Suffrage Public Office and Woman Suffrage

There seems to be two objections against woman's voting still lurking in your mind. The first one you state as follows: "Women, while they could and perhaps would use the ballot in bringing war on, could not and would not use the sword after war had come."

Objectors to woman's voting cannot, for some reason, divest themselves of the idea that a different rule must apply to woman as a voter than to man as a voter. . . . If woman has the right to vote, why should she be compelled to discharge all the duties for which men are fitted because she is a voter, any more than man is compelled to discharge all the duties for which women are fitted because he is a voter? If the laws compelled all who vote to perform what is voted for, voting . . . would soon be at a discount, and all those who now claim that special privilege, would doubtless avoid the polls, as they did the draft office during the [Civil] war! . . .

If you would not exempt woman, then there could doubtless be found one woman in a thousand [the ratio of men who served in the armed forces since the country was founded] not only qualified, but willing to carry the musket, and even if need be, go as a substitute for a man. . . .

Your second objection is one of the maternity and you put it in this form:

Very few women married, and raising families, could . . . meet . . . the duties of office and the duties of maternity. If there is a way to get over this, and still not interfere with the constant and necessary replenishment of population, our most serious objection would be gone. . . .

You have stated this, your most serious objection, in a most ingenuous manner, and at first thought it strikes the reader as a finishing stroke against woman's voting. But it is a 'delusion and a snare.' For here you would come in with a new rule for women, not now applied to men. . . . At present, not one man in a thousand holds office, and of those who do, not one in a thousand of them but seeks the office instead of the office seeking them. . . . The great majority of men abhor politics as a business. What right have we to assume that women will differ from men in this respect? . . .

When men can look upon women as they do upon men, as equally dignified, as equally fitted with self-respect as equally responsible before God—if not before man—for the deed done in the body, in a word, when men learn to look upon women as they look upon man, as a voter, without changing them in any other particular, then your objection will have been answered. (January 25, 1872)

Maternity and Woman Suffrage

You say that: "We cannot see that Mrs. Savery answers the question how a

woman could at once perform the duties of maternity and the duties of office . . ." Here is a little couplet which some exasperated mother, in self-defense, flung at Horace Greeley . . . on this mother question:

What right has woman, safe from wars alarms, To cast a ballot
when she don't bear arms? For shame! shouts Mrs. Huff in lofty
dudgeon, For shame! Go to! Get out, you old curmudgeon! What
right have you, with all your talk bewilderin, To cast a ballot
when you don't bear children. (January 30, 1872)

As the foregoing correspondence indicates, the *Des Moines Register* gave the suffrage cause a great deal of publicity during 1871 and 1872—much of it disparaging, unreasonable and clearly chauvanistic. At times the paper even stooped to the cruel and caustic. When Susan B. Anthony lectured in Des Moines in February 1871 (where she was the guest of Annie Savery) the *Register* failed to mention the content of her speech—an argument for women's enfranchisement under the equal protection provision of the Fourteenth Amendment. Instead the paper protested the manner in which the "prime movers" of the woman suffrage cause "appear to be grasping money with an avaricious and unsatisfied appetite" because they charged admission to their lectures. The paper thought it was all right to pay to hear beautiful women but "when they possess none of the divine pulchritude which man lives to see and adore, the show ceases to be interesting and the money is spent for little use. . . ." ²⁸

Most destructive to the woman suffrage cause was the continuing insinuation that the movement was inherently immoral, and that the earnest, dignified women of Iowa who were supporting the cause were the tools of a crowd of free-love advocates in the East. The press found affirmation of these charges in the rise of Victoria Woodhull to prominence in the woman suffrage movement in January of 1871 when she became the first person to present a women suffrage memorial before the House Judiciary Committee and was subsequently hailed as a heroine by the convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association which was currently meeting in Washington.

During the ensuing year suffragists over the country became hopelessly divided over the Woodhull-free-love issue.

²⁸*Des Moines Register*, February 11, 1871.



Susan B. Anthony



Courtesy Iowa State University Press

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

The conservatives, led by Lucy Stone, desiring to impress the public with the moral purity of the suffragists, wanted nothing to do with Woodhull because of her free-love theories and her unsavory reputation. The liberals, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, welcomed Woodhull as an able and generous friend of the movement. They refused to join in the campaign against her which reached a crescendo in May of 1871 when Woodhull's irregular manner of living was revealed in a police court hearing in New York. "The present howl is an old trick to divert public thought from the main question," Anthony told the readers of *The Revolution* on May 27 shortly before she left with Stanton on a cross-country trip which took them to Iowa.

Suffragists in Iowa looked on with bewilderment and dismay as the free-love storm swelled. Most of the small band of male supporters and many timid women jumped from the sinking ship. Henry O'Conner, president of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association, quickly faded from view leaving a foundering state organization. In September 1871 Annie Savery went into action to save the Iowa Association by arranging for a convention to meet in Des Moines on October 19. Along with the call for the convention Savery issued a message to the women of Iowa which she said she had prepared at the request of the executive committee but for which

she assumed personal responsibility. She lamented,

The noble men of Iowa who have stood by us complain of our faltering and inactivity while our enemies vanquished in argument have descended to personal scandal for the purpose of poisoning the public judgment against us and are seeking to make the suffrage party responsible for the opinions of fanatical adventurers who always attach themselves to a great reform.

She stated that the women suffrage party of Iowa was neither responsible for the individual opinions of those who in other states were exciting the public mind upon the so-called doctrine of free love; nor was the party connected in any way with other organizations, state or national, leaders or followers, who were seeking to incorporate into its platform the principle of what was interpreted by the public as free love.

The woman suffrage party of Iowa is made up of the mothers, wives, and daughters who believe that the marriage bond is to the social what the Constitution is to the political Union. The individual examples of the women of this State who are identified with the suffrage cause should be sufficient guarantee of their integrity of purpose and the estimate they place upon a well-defined standard of social life. In this respect, they challenge comparison with other political organizations.²⁹

Despite the efforts of Savery and other suffrage leaders to dispel public clamor over the free-love issue, Victoria Woodhull cast a long shadow over the state convention, chaired by Amelia Bloomer, which met at the Court House in Des Moines on October 19.³⁰ Much of the afternoon session was spent in debate over a resolution denouncing the "Woodhull-Claflin free-love clique" which was presented by Nettie Sanford, a prickly feminist from Marshalltown. Savery and Bloomer opposed this resolution because of its personal nature. The meeting finally agreed on a substitute resolution disassociating the suffragists from the opinions or utterances of any party upon questions not related to securing the ballot for women, and stating their belief, "that the ballot is a power to be used only in the interest of virtue and morality."

However, Sanford was not easily silenced. At the evening

²⁹*Woman's Journal* (Boston), October 7, 1871.

³⁰*Des Moines Register*, October 20, 1871; *Iowa Review* (Des Moines), October 21, 1871.

session, when a large audience had gathered to hear Savery and other speakers, she introduced another resolution which proposed that the Iowa Association "denounce the doctrine of free-love, believing that marriage is sacred and binding . . . and that the Bible is the Palladium of our liberties." Savery opposed this so-called "Palladium resolution" on the grounds that denouncing a proposition which nobody suspected its members of believing in only diminished the dignity of the association. At the suggestion of Bloomer, the resolution was tabled.

Savery's speech was the sensation of the evening. She read a letter from Woodhull in which Woodhull stated that she had never attempted to saddle the suffrage party with her own views on moral questions. "Yet," said Savery, "her enemies throughout the country have descended to the malicious trick of using her to poison the public judgment against the woman suffrage cause. But the timid need not quake," declared Savery. Since the early days of the woman suffrage movement,

the party has been charged with endorsing the individual opinions of every fanatical adventurer that has chosen to follow in the wake of this great reform, and the press of the country catch up the words of these self-appointed leaders and ask us to be responsible for their pernicious teachings. Instead of meeting these unjust charges of free-love in the spirit they deserve, women have permitted these idle vapourings to go unrebuked and have allowed the great question at issue to be smothered and pushed to the wall. Our 'on to Richmond' has been checked. Not from any lack of faith in the great principle . . . but for lack of moral courage to face these Quaker guns . . .

"Victoria Woodhull has given to the cause of woman suffrage the devotion of a master mind," Savery declared. Woodhull's private life was neither criticized nor defended by Savery; nor did she care to be apprised of it by those who set a standard of behavior for women which was stricter than that set for men.

Savery reminded her audience that Woodhull had "at one time contributed ten thousand dollars to the National Suffrage Society, and many thousands besides." If it were true that she had come by her money dishonestly, she certainly could never have used it for a better purpose. Savery pointed out that

the Republican and Democratic parties had never been squeamish about accepting funds from dishonest political bosses, nor had Christian churches which had received money from these same sources, "sought to restore to the rightful owners any of these criminal gains." Savery said she mentioned these facts only to show how unjust and uncharitable were the accusations of the opponents of woman suffrage, many of whose private lives were far from unblemished. She reaffirmed the independence of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association and declared that it had "no sympathy with or responsibility for the opinions of any friends in other states, beyond the one question of granting woman the ballot."³¹

The free-love storm reached its peak in Iowa following the Des Moines convention. Savery and other officers of the Iowa Association were bitterly attacked by newspapers throughout the state because the meeting had tabled the Palladium resolution. "The action of the convention in voting down the resolution means that the Woman Suffragists desire the ballot that they may by legal enactment carry out the views of the marriage relation advocated by . . . Woodhull and Co.," declared the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*. The *Cedar Rapids Times* thought the proceedings looked very much like "an attempt to compromise between . . . free-loveism and the good opinion of the Iowa public."³²

"Can any of our friends be made to believe that if we had passed the 'Palladium Resolution' that we should have received any praise or support from those who now denounce us?" Savery asked in an open letter published in the *Des Moines Register* on October 19. "Yet, one would think to hear them discourse upon the sanctity of the marriage tie that they were ready to embrace our cause just as soon as they could be assured that *their spotless purity* would not be tarnished."

Savery declared that in the contest for the ballot she would cooperate with all who were loyal to the principle of political equality, irrespective of any opinion they might have on any other question. But whenever a convention of which she was a

³¹*Des Moines Register*, October 20, 1871.

³²*Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, November 1, 1871; *Cedar Rapids Times*, November 2, 1871.

member was assembled for the purpose of discussing woman's right to the ballot would so far "let down its dignity and self-respect as to descend to personal abuse or interpose the Bible as a condition precedent to membership," she would always be found opposing it.

The Polk County Woman Suffrage Society took issue with Savery. On November 2nd it issued a statement prepared by Martha Callanan, its wealthy treasurer, declaring that, "It is as much a duty to deny that of which we are falsely accused as a privilege to demand a right of which we are unjustly deprived." The Society therefore declared its condemnation of the so-called 'free-love' doctrine as taught by *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* and affirmed its belief that the ballot in the hands of woman would not affect the sanctity of the marriage relationship. It further declared that it did not believe in divorce except for good scriptural reasons.³³

The leaders of the Polk County Society considered Savery too tainted with free love to be tolerated as a spokesperson for the suffrage forces of Iowa. All during the 1872 session of the General Assembly they made a strenuous effort to prevent her from lobbying for the suffrage cause. On February 1, Maria Gray Pitman, president of the Polk County Society, in a speech at the Court House expressed "the earnest hope that when those who hold themselves aloof from us realize that among our real leaders there is *not* a spirit of compromising with error in any form, then we may expect to see thousands rush to our ranks." She expressed the hope that "the wise and skillful ones aboard the suffrage craft would be permitted to guide the helm and bring their charge safely into port."³⁴

By February 22, the campaign against Savery had reached such proportions that the Des Moines correspondent of the *Dubuque Times* was led to comment that "some of the suffrage women are not only disgusting the best friends of the movement but also making foolish virgins of themselves." This writer, obviously an admirer of Savery, said that the quarrel within the suffrage ranks amounted in essence "to a

³³*Iowa Review* (Des Moines), November 4, 1871.

³⁴*Des Moines Register*, February 7, 1872.

contest twixt heads with brains and power and heads otherwise . . .”

As prospects for success of the suffrage amendment in the 1872 General Assembly dwindled, Savery sought permission for herself and Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, a Des Moines friend, to address the Senate in a last ditch effort to persuade this body to submit the suffrage question to the voters of the state. Senator Richards of Dubuque, a leading opponent of woman suffrage, assured Savery that he would not object to her and Harbert speaking; in fact, he agreed to her request to make a motion to allow them to do so. The afternoon of March 22, when the committee on constitutional amendments was scheduled to report on the woman-suffrage amendment, was set as the time for the women to appear. On the appointed day, with the two women standing by, Richards kept his promise by introducing a motion that the two women be allowed to speak, but he followed this by an emotional plea for the senators to vote against his motion. The senators willingly complied and Richards' motion was defeated by a vote of twenty-four to twenty. The action of the Senate was rumored to be due to pressure from the Polk County Society which had persuaded the legislators that they didn't want Savery lobbying for the cause.

On March 24 a letter from Savery appeared in the *Des Moines Register* telling why she had asked Senator Richards to make the motion to hear her.

Several senators—staid friends of the measure—suggested to me that the Senate would be willing, in the committee of the whole, to listen to a woman's reasons for her enfranchisement. It was not thought advisable, however, to make such a request if it was likely to meet with serious opposition, and it was suggested that I should sound certain members among the opposition. I did so, and all those mentioned to me cheerfully assented to our having a hearing. Senator Richards was particularly mentioned as being most prominent in the opposition, and a man who plumed himself as the special champion of free speech; therefore, it was deemed opportune to test his sincerity in this respect by asking not only his consent to our being heard, but that he endorse it by making the motion himself.

When I presented the subject to him, and at the same time remarked, 'That I believed I was addressing a magnanimous opponent, and one who was in favor of 'free speech' he replied, "You are quite right, Madame. I see no objection whatever to your addressing the Senate and will most cheerfully make the motion and support it.' . . .

To show how he 'fulfilled his promise' I have only to refer to the lengthy speech he made in opposition to his own motion. . . . In his argument against woman's enfranchisement the gentleman arrogates to himself a sort of knight-errantry. He is so anxious to save woman from the dishonor of politics that he is ready to sacrifice himself 'in the last ditch' of office rather than subject her to any such temptation. This he has a perfect right to do, but for one woman, I am not willing that this Sir Knight shall break lance over my head in the name of chivalry.

The Polk County Society's part in this affair was explained by Jane Swisshelm, ascerbic pioneer woman's rights advocate, who had been brought to Des Moines to be the spokesperson for that group. In an open letter published in the *Des Moines Register* on March 26, Swisshelm wrote:

The addresses were a measure on which there was a decided difference of opinion among the friends of suffrage. The ladies who proposed to speak are both members of the State Association, whose action in the last convention have generally been understood as endorsing FREE LOVE; or, at least, compromising with it; and those two ladies are believed to have acted with a majority, which made the ugly mistake.

The POLK COUNTY ASSOCIATION, on the contrary, has placed itself squarely on the record as opposed to any weakening of the marriage bond; and was unwilling that the cause should be represented before the legislature by anyone about whose sentiments on this vital question, any doubt could be raised, and for this reason opposed the hearing. . . .

Savery, during this controversy, never stopped to attack or answer any of her sister suffragists. On the other hand she refused to be silenced by them. She expressed her irritation with Senator Richards' romanticized view of women in the following letter published in the *Des Moines Register* on March 26:

The eloquent member from Dubuque, Senator Richards, when speaking in opposition to the pending suffrage resolution said:

'If you vote to submit this measure, Iowa will be disgraced,' and, 'More especially do I desire this for the sake of the family, ordained in Heaven itself to be the source and spring of all good in our Christian civilization.'

Are the women of Iowa so corrupt, so inherently immoral that they cannot be trusted with the ballot? . . .

The newspapers of New York will tell you that forty thousand of the demimonde are supported in that city alone, 'principally by married men.' Are the homes these men represent the 'Heaven appointed homes' of which the Senator speaks so pathetically, where woman's sphere is limited, and where she is taught subordination, according to his beau ideal! If such 'Heaven appointed homes,' beget only angels, why is it that so many married men get

away from them as much as possible? . . .

Away with this sickening sentimentality about 'women angels' who preside over Heavenly homes, until these prating theorists can themselves become saints! For they have yet to learn that it takes something beside a woman—though she be indeed an angel—to make a 'Heaven appointed home' on 'this round world of ours' . . .

This dust that is thrown in the eyes of women is constantly blinding them to the fact that they are nothing but mortals, subject to the same laws that mortal man is, and when robbed of the accident of wealth, they must come down to grapple with practical life the same as any other mortal. Human necessity knows neither sex nor caste.

On the morning of March 29, the day that the Iowa Senate was to vote on the proposed woman suffrage amendment, another letter from Savery, addressed to the members of the senate, appeared in the *Des Moines Register*. She pleaded with the legislators to submit the question to the people of Iowa for a final decision, disputing the contention of some senators that for a member who was opposed to woman suffrage to vote to submit the question would be perjury. Savery argued as follows:

May even a woman be allowed to express the opinion that if it has come to this, that a servant of the people, holding his place by the suffrage of the people, commits perjury in granting a petitioner the right of going to the people with a constitutional question, then if this be so, our boasted constitutional liberty is a farce and '76 must come again!

Savery pointed out that the framers of the Iowa Constitution had provided the present means of amending this document because they believed "that the power to change the fundamental law of the land should be retained by the people. . . .

In the present instance, the people have had the subject under consideration for two years. There is not a newspaper in the State but has discussed the question in all its bearings, and that, too, at a time in history of the 'Woman's cause' when everything but justice has been against her. During a time when the arch enemy of all good seemed to have marshalled his forces for her defeat. And what has been the result? . . . There is not a home in the land that has not discussed this question of woman's right to political equality. But I have yet to learn of a county or state convention saying to their . . . candidates for election, 'That we disapprove of the action of the last legislature, and we command you . . . to stop it before it goes to the people' . . .

Any candid, fair minded man in the legislature will be safe in saying, that the people, by their silence at least have said, 'We are still in doubt upon this question. We would prefer that the people should express their opinion at the ballot box! . . .

We ask you to take down the barrier, and to let us go to those by whose suffrages you are here, that we may say to them . . . 'Come let us reason together upon the question that concerns us all, and if after the people have listened to our petition, they should reject our claims, then, we may at least have the satisfaction of knowing that you, gentlemen, have granted us an impartial hearing.

On the morning of March 29, 1872 the women of Des Moines crowded the small senate chamber in the old Capitol to hear the suffrage debate. The visitor's gallery was jammed; extra chairs were placed in every spare inch of space on the senate floor, and many senators gave their seats to women. As the roll was called, Annie Savery, who sat within three feet of the clerk, colored and paled alternately as each senator voted yes or no. The final tally showed that the measure had lost by a vote of twenty-four to twenty-two. This meant that there could be no referendum on the suffrage question for at least another four years.³⁵

It was generally conceded that the women themselves were responsible for the defeat of the suffrage measure in 1872. " 'The women killed it.' 'The bill was slaughtered by its own friends and advocates.' These are the statements made throughout the country," wrote Boston-based Mary Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert. "The Michigan papers, one of the Chicago papers, and some of the Eastern papers, say plainly that if the Iowa *women* had been content to allow the Iowa *men* in the Legislature friendly to woman suffrage to manage the affair, the cause would have triumphed." Livermore said that an Iowa informant had written her that Annie Savery's determination to address the Senate combined with her savage newspaper attack on Senator Richards "enraged his friendly colleagues, many of whom were pledged to go for the bill, and who then would not—were the beginning of the

³⁵*Woman's Journal* (Boston), April 13, 1872, article reprinted from the *Chicago Post*; Actually, it was not until 1916 that a Referendum on a woman suffrage amendment was finally submitted to the voters of Iowa and the measure lost in a dishonest election. Suffrage for Iowa women did not become a reality until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in 1920.

defeat." The defeat, said Livermore, has "damaged the entire cause everywhere, more even than the infernal Mrs. Woodhull."³⁶

SUFFRAGE leaders of Iowa treated Savery as a pariah for the rest of her life. But her ardor and ability were not soon forgotten by her friends and admirers. At a suffrage rally organized by the Polk County Society at the State House in March of 1874 the audience insisted on hearing from her. In an extemporaneous talk she spoke of the progress made since the suffrage question was first agitated. "It seems but yesterday," she said, "that for woman to stand up publicly and discuss politics was sufficient to exclude her from all fashionable society and almost put her beyond the pale of the church." She took aim at the Anti-Monopolists, who opposed bank monopolies and all other monopolies but failed to discern that the greatest of all monopolies was the ballot monopoly. "The audience [was] bound and determined to hear me," Savery wrote Bloomer. "I finally yielded and made a rather happy extemporaneous address. At any rate I got the applause, at which Mrs. Harbert rejoiced."³⁷

Although Savery continued her efforts in behalf of women on several different fronts after 1872, she never lost the stigma of free love with which she was tarred during the Woodhull furor. "I hope you will not fail to do Mrs. Savery full justice," Susan B. Anthony wrote to Amelia Bloomer concerning the Iowa chapter of the monumental *History of Woman Suffrage* which Bloomer was preparing for Stanton and Anthony in 1882. Anthony said she had always believed that Martha Callanan of Des Moines was at the bottom of Savery's persecution—for it amounted to that."³⁸ Maria Orwig of Des Moines sent material which she hoped Bloomer would use to refute "the accusation of free-loveism" brought against Savery. Orwig thought that Savery, who had been her next-door neighbor,

³⁶Mary Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, undated, Elizabeth Boynton Harbert Collection deposited at Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

³⁷*Des Moines Register*, March 3, 1874; Annie Savery to Amelia Bloomer, April 28, 1874, CBPL.

³⁸Susan B. Anthony to Amelia Bloomer, undated, written at Tenafly, New Jersey, Bloomer Collection deposited at Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York, (hereafter cited as SFHS).

“had been fearfully slandered by our suffragist. . . .”³⁹ Significantly, the *Woman's Standard*, the Iowa woman suffrage paper established by Martha Callanan in 1885, never mentioned the name of Annie Savery—either during her life or at the time of her death.

Judge Hubbard, speaking at Savery's funeral, carefully minimized her suffrage activities. “She believed in and gave some study to woman's suffrage and made some speeches in favor of it, but finally abandoned it as perhaps at present impractical and inexpedient,” he said in what can be looked on as a masterpiece of understatement.

Hubbard also spoke of Savery's belief in life after death, including her belief that she would be present at her funeral listening to all that was said of her. One wonders if she was not again reminded of Homer's words,

Oh, Testorides, do you not know that of the many things hidden from the knowledge of man there is nothing so incomprehensible as the human heart?



Courtesy Iowa State University Press

Martha Callanan

³⁹Maria Orwig to Amelia Bloomer, February 7, 1882, SFHS.

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