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New Castle
Delaware

(April 1, 1872)

Dear Paulina,

Read enclosed and send to Mrs. Hooker as requested. I have just spent a day and night with Lucretia and Mrs. Wright where I met John Bright's sister again and many other pleasant friends as Lucretia invited one sett [sic] to dinner, another to tea and still another to spend the night and breakfast. Mrs. W. and I read all these letters but decided that it was not

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best to suggest any doubt in reference to dear Woodhull in other minds. I question the wisdom of any investigation or comments on Mrs. Woodhull's antecedents, and we did not show this letter even to L. M. There is to me a sacredness in individual experience that seems like profanation to search into or explore. Woodhull stands before us to day, one of the ablest speakers, and writers of the century, sound and radical alike in political and social principles. Her face and form indicate the complete

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triumph of the spiritual over the sensuous. The principles of her education are little to us, the grand result everything. Are our brilliant beautiful flowers less fragrant, our rich luscious fruits less palatable because the debris of filthy streets and barn yards have nourished and enriched them. The nature that can stand every phase of social degradation poverty, vice, temptation in all its' forms

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and yet tower up above all womankind as our Victoria does to day, gives unmistakable proof of its divinity – The Lilium Candidum that magnificent lily so white and pure that looks as if it had never battled with wind or storm. The queen of flowers: flourishes in all soils, braves all wind and weather, heat and cold, and with its feet in frozen clods, it lifts its face white face forever towards the stars.

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Most women like the Fuschia perish in the first rude blast: – faded

and withered, prostrate in the dust they think there must be something wrong, some subtle poison in the hardy plants that grow stronger braver in the battles where they fell.

We have had women enough sacrificed to this sentimental hypocritical prating about purity. This is one of man's most effective engines for our subjugation. He creates the public sentiment builds the gallows and makes us the hangman for our own sex. Women have crucified the Mary Wollstencrafts, Fanny Wrights, George Sands, Fanny Kimbles, of all ages, and now men mock us with the fact and say we are ever cruel to each other. Let us end this ignoble record and if

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Victoria Woodhull is to be crucified let men do the deed, which as her defenders we hedge her record about, ever true to womanhood.

That contemptible puppy referred to in Mrs. Hookers letter, I would not believe under oath. He undoubtedly belongs to that large class of men who imagine themselves so irresistible that all women are melted in their presence

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Of all the stories written and told me I have made one invariable reply to men and women Grant all you say is true: what has crushed most women has been the means of a grand development to her. If Catherine Beecher had ever loved with sufficient devotion, passion, abandon, any of Adam's sons, to have forgotten herself, her God, her family, her property, and endured for a brief space the worlds coldness, ridicule, or scorn, the depths

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and richness of her nature might have been ploughed up and she saved from exhibiting, to the world the narrow, bigoted, arrogant woman she is to day. These cool proper Pharisees that never blunder who thank the lord in their closets, that they are not like other men or women, are invariably the most selfish and unfeeling of all God's creatures

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I had a fine audience in Philadelphia, and Lucretia said I made a good speech. I am now spending a few days in a palace home of one of my southern friends on the banks of Delaware Bay. I go to N.Y. on Monday. Saw Mabel at Swarthmore. I have not time to day to write to Mrs. Hooker so send her this Yours sincerely

E.C.S.

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[typed transcript]

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(Elizabeth Cady Stanton)