

Mother's Day Proclamation (1870)

by Julia Ward Howe

Arise, then, women of this day!
Arise all women who have hearts,
Whether your baptism be that of water or of tears
Say firmly:

"We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies,
Our husbands shall not come to us reeking of carnage,
For caresses and applause.
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn
All that we have been able to teach them of
charity, mercy and patience.

"We women of one country
Will be too tender of those of another country
To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with
Our own. It says, "Disarm, Disarm!"
The sword of murder is not the balance of justice!
Blood does not wipe out dishonor
Nor violence indicate possession.
As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of
war.

Let women now leave all that may be left of home
For a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.

Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means
Whereby the great human family can live in peace,
Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,
But of God.

In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality
May be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient
And at the earliest period consistent with its objects
To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,
The amicable settlement of international questions.
The great and general interests of peace.

