

THREE CHEERS FOR SUSAN B. ANTHONY

In 1876, the great Universalist Clara Barton was lecturing in a town in Iowa. The Civil War veterans who hosted the lecture advertised that Barton was “not after the style of Susan B. Anthony and her clique; Miss Barton does not belong to that class.” Seeing Anthony and other Unitarian workers for women’s rights so maligned, Universalist Barton addressed the assembled veterans as follows:

“That paragraph...does worse than to misrepresent me as a woman; it maligns my friend. It abuses the highest and bravest work ever done in this land for either you or me. You glorify the women who made their way to the front to reach you in your misery, and nurse you back to life. You called us angels. Who but that detested ‘clique’ who through years of opposition, obloquy, toil and pain had openly claimed that women ha rights, should have the privilege to exercise them. The right to her own property; her own children, her own home, her just claim before the law, to her freedom of action, to her personal liberty. Upon this, other women claimed the right and took the courage, if only to go to an army camp, and drag the wounded men out of the trench, and try to save them for their families and their country.

“And, soldiers, for every woman’s hand that ever cooled your fevered brows, staunched your bleeding wounds, gave food to your famished bodies, or water to your parched lips, and called back life to your perishing bodies, you should bless God for Susan B. Anthony, Cady Stanton, Frances D. Gage, and their followers.

“No one has stood so unhelped, unprotected, so maligned as Susan B. Anthony, no one deserves as well; and, soldiers, I would have the first monument t hat is ever erected to any women in this country reared to her.

“Boys, three cheers for Susan B. Anthony!”

“And,” Clara Barton recalled later, “the very windows shook in their casements.”

Ref: Robert S. Wolley, “Clara Barton: A Biographical Sketch of Compulsion, *The Annual Journal of the Universalist Historical Society*, vol. 1 (1959), pp. 20-21.