

Mother's Day Proclamation of 1870



Mother's Peace Day

Arise then... women of this day!

Arise, all women who have hearts!

Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!

Say firmly:

"We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,

Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with 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, the 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 a 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 our dishonor,

Nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plough 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 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 someplace deemed most convenient

And 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.

- Julia Ward Howe



Julia Ward Howe was born in New York City on May 27, 1819.

She was a published poet and author of the words to the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

She was an abolitionist, active in the peace movement and the women's suffrage movement.

In 1870 she penned the Mother's Day Proclamation. In 1872 the Mothers' Peace Day

Observance on the second Sunday in June was held and continued for several years.

Her idea was widely accepted, but she was never able to get the day recognized

as an official holiday. The Mothers' Peace Day was the beginning of the Mothers' Day

holiday in the United States now celebrated in May.