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Literary Activism for “Mental Equality” in Mary Robinson’s Proto-Feminist Pamphlet *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination with Anecdotes* (1799)

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ABSTRACT This paper presents a critical analysis of a text from Mary Darby Robinson’s longest oeuvre, *A Letter to the Women of England* (A Letter), published in London, England in 1799. A Letter illustrates how an English feminist writer and a follower of Mary Wollstonecraft cleverly managed the paradoxes accompanying the emerging discourses of equality during the revolutionary years, which profoundly influenced the British feminism of that time. Likewise, the paper examines the way Robinson advocated for the recognition of women’s literary legacy in British history, as a strategy to counteract the repercussions of ideologies asserting women’s mental weakness. All these aspects are developed through organic methods of critical thought. This comes from the critique and perspective of a gender researcher intrigued by the way the term ‘equality’ has been used historically, and how women writers’ genealogies have functioned as a form of resistance to social and cultural practices that contributed to women’s subordination.