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spoken with much authority.

Mine was the only speech on that side & in the vote we were defeated by about 30 to 6.

On Thursday I went to tea with the Hamiltons at Bedford College. The boarding house has been revolutionized. There are nine or ten little rooms fitted up something like ours here where the owners are actually allowed to study in private. It was such an astonishing change I could scarcely realize it. I stayed some time & talked a good deal, but as the Irishman said I never opened my mouth without putting my foot into it, - so the occasion is not one on which I look back with much pleasure!

On Friday I heroically resisted

the temptation to go & see the tennis-match between the School of Medicine champions & those of Miss Maynard's College at Westfield, but in the evening some tickets for a Royal Institution lecture were going a. begging, & as it was on the Sympathetic Nervous system, & would come into my work I felt justified in going. It was a very interesting lecture, for Dr. Gaskell, the lecturer, though he dropped all his *gs* in present participles, & made some rather vulgar jokes, told of most important & interesting discoveries he has made on the subject.

But yesterday was the nicest thing of all. Miss Collet invited me to accompany her to a debate of the National Political Union on

the Irish Question. This is a newly formed union for ~~women~~ men & women who wish to consider & discuss political matters as questions of principle & not of party. They ~~have ideas~~ It is to be for people of any party & is not to commit itself to any views at all. Nevertheless it has ideas of working & helping at Elections. I don't suppose that will come to anything, but as a Debating Society I think it ought to do well.

The meeting was at Kensington Town Hall. Mr. Shaen presided & said he had one qualification for the post, - he was quite impartial on the question.

The debate was opened by a man called Kelke, of the British Home Rule Ass<sup>n</sup>. He was an awful duffer who took half an hour to say nothing: when

they stamped & thumped to put him down, he thought it was applause & went on happier than ever.

Then Miss Dod gave the other side; she delivered a very eloquent though slightly illogical address declaring that the Irish were not ready for Home Rule because they had not been prepared by centuries of local government, & because they had not such a system of national education as the English. She ~~then~~ pointed out all the Ulster Liberals had done for the general good of Ireland, <sup>& denounced the Castle</sup> ~~and~~. But I don't think she mentioned a single evil that she expected to follow Home Rule. She said one thing that surprised me, — that the Orange party was until lately almost entirely confined to the working men, & that one reason why "her friend, Mrs. Johnston of Ballykilbeg" was

so popular was ~~that~~ he had been for years almost the only gentleman of position who was an Orangeman. She said also that in the Ulster manufacturing districts the people were nearly all Conservative, & regarded Radicalism as a fad of the upper classes.

She was followed by Michael Davitt. He made a good point when referring to Miss Jod's declaration that she was descended from a long line of northern & Presbyterian ancestors or something of that sort, - he said he was the son of an Irish peasant & ~~spoke~~ <sup>felt</sup> what the people of Ireland felt. I was rather disappointed in him: perhaps he really was, as he said, embarrassed at having to reply to a lady, - at any rate he did not speak so readily or vigorously as I

expected. He made a bull, & answered some parts of Miss Dod's speech very well.

The next speaker was Mr. John Holland who seemed to be an ex-Liberal M.P. but his remarks (against the Irish Bill) were extremely common-place, & I don't remember any of them.

Then came the best speech of the evening, from Mrs. Bryant, D.Sc., who had been exchanging confidences with Davitt for a good while. Her speech was what you might expect from a clever Irishwoman who has lived long in ~~the~~ England & has had a philosophic training. She laughed at Chamberlain's declaration that this bill was humiliating to Ireland. One fancied objection was that Ireland could not have a foreign policy, - but the Irish had too much sense to want a foreign policy: the tendency of the day was against foreign policies

& if the Irish did not want one now they would be still less likely to want one in a hundred years.

That was the last of the pre-arranged speeches, & Mr. Shaen began to call on those of the audience who had sent up their names to speak, - but as it was getting late, we came away, just as Canon Mac Coll was beginning.

On the table outside was arrayed a large quantity of literature on both sides, whereof we were invited to partake. Miss Collet made an impartial selection but I fear I can't read it.

I've said nothing about the audience. I suppose there were about 200 people including perhaps a dozen men. I saw a good many people whom I know

at least by sight, — Miss Lidgett, Miss  
Brown, Miss Buss, Mrs. Fawcett &  
her daughter, Miss Biggs, & others.

It has struck eleven, so I  
must stop.

Yours very lovingly  
Helen M. Wilson.

I am going to dissipate one  
night this week, but I can't make  
up my mind where. On Thursday  
Mrs. Garrett Anderson is going to give  
the Diplomas at Bedford Colley, & on  
the same evening we are invited to  
a Debate at University Hall: Subject  
"That government by average opinion  
is a circuitious mode of going to the  
devil. (Quotation from letter by Prof. Max ley)." <sup>1</sup>  
It is a splendid subject, — & I think  
I shall end by going ~~there~~ to the debate.