

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

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JUNE 1, 1887.

PRICE ONE PENNY.
By Post THREE HALFPENCE.

Contents:

Leading Articles:—The Approaching Jubilee Anniversary; Meetings during May; Mr. Baumann's Proposed Return of Women Electors; The Miners' Attempt to Suppress Women's Work; The Pit-brow Women at the Home Office; Restraints on the Work of Adult Women; The Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour and the Queen of Madagascar.

Public Meetings:—Stratford-upon-Avon, Kidderminster, Cardiff, Southport.
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Summary of Public Petitions presented to the House of Commons.

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MARRIAGE LAW DEFENCE UNION TRACTS.—Vol. 1, third edition, containing Tracts 1 to 43; also Historical Preface. Cloth, 2s. 6d., post free 3s., at the Office, 20, Cockspur-street, Charing Cross, S.W.; Messrs. SMITH AND SON'S Railway Bookstalls; or E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, E.C.

HISTORY OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE. Vol. III. Edited by ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, SUSAN B. ANTHONY, and MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE. Paris: G. Fischbacher, 33, Rue de Seine.

THE room with furniture and decorations recently shown at the Edinburgh Exhibition by RHODA and AGNES GARRETT (of 2, Gower-street, Bedford Square), will be on view at their warehouse, 4, Morwell-street, Bedford Square, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, June 6, 7, 8, and 9, from three o'clock to six.

L'ÉGALITÉ DES SEXES EN ANGLETERRE (Equality of Sexes). By FELIX REMO. Women's Suffrage, Women's Rights, Education, Provident Societies, Marriage, etc. Published by Mme. Adam, of the *Nouvelle Revue*, and received by the Académie Française. London: Martin and Hubert, 5, Prince's Buildings, Coventry-street. Price, 2s. 6d.

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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.—Volume XVII. January to December, 1886. With coloured cover, price, post free, Two Shillings.—London: Trübner and Co.; Manchester: John Heywood, Deansgate; or at the office of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton-street, Manchester.

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A COMTIST LOVER, AND OTHER STUDIES. By ELIZABETH RACHEL CHAPMAN, author of a "Tourist Idyll." London: T. FISHER UNWIN, Paternoster Square, 1886.

"A Comtist Lover," just imported to this country by Messrs. Scribner and Welford, is new and of singular value, being one of the most powerful impeachments of Positivism which has appeared in recent literature. In its discussion of the attitude of Comtism toward women, it attacks it from a new side, and shows the real weakness of that system."—*American paper.*

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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.—Communications for the Editor and Orders for the Journal to be addressed to the Office, Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton-street, Manchester.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, MAY, 1887.

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage, including Miss H. Rigbye, Miss Bertha Mason, Messrs. A. Ireland and Co., etc.

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage, including Mr. Edward Bannister, J.P., Mr. John Wintringham, Mr. H. Smethurst, J.P., etc.

ROBERT ADAMSON, TREASURER, Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton-street, Manchester.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, MAY, 1887.

Table listing names and amounts for Central Committee, including Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Paulton, Mrs. Melnertzhagen, etc.

LAURA M'LAREN, TREASURER, 29, Parliament-street, S.W.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FROM APRIL 23RD TO MAY 23RD, 1887.

Table listing names and amounts for Bristol and West of England Society, including Miss A. E. Bell, Mr. Herbert Thomas, Miss Schaw Protheroe, etc.

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT, TREASURER pro tem., 69, Park-street, Bristol.

WOMEN GUARDIANS AT HINCKLEY.

Three ladies, Mrs. Argyle, Mrs. Goode, and Mrs. Murcott, have been returned as guardians for the parish of Hinckley, over the heads of gentlemen who have for many years filled the office.

PETITION! PETITION! PETITION!

Friends of Women's Suffrage are earnestly exhorted to aid the cause by collecting signatures for Petitions to both Houses of Parliament, in support of the Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women.

CONCERT IN PRINCES' HALL, PICCADILLY.

A very interesting concert, given on behalf of the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, took place at the Princes' Hall, Piccadilly, London, on the afternoon of Saturday, May 21st.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, FROM 27TH JANUARY TO 9TH MAY, 1887.

Table with columns: Subject, No. of Petitions signed Officially, Total No. of Petitions, Total No. of Signatures.

* From Corporation of Middlesborough.

We are compelled to postpone detailed report of petitions.

ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW.—Published on the 15th of each month. Price 6d., or 6s. per annum.

CONTENTS FOR MAY 14TH, 1887.

- 1. Midwifery as a Profession for Educated Women. 2. The Police Matron Bill in Massachusetts. 3. Rice Pudding and Red Tape. Notices of Books and Magazines. Record of Events.—Further Poor Law Guardian Elections: Scarborough, Brighton, Croydon, King's Norton—List of Women Guardians for 1887—University Extension of Teaching—Irish Schoolmistresses, Giron—Women on School Boards—Parochial Councils—Women's Liberal Associations: Peckham, Bristol, Nottingham—Suffrage—Moral Reform Union—Temperance Societies: Church of England, National Temperance League, British Women's Temperance Association—London School of Medicine for Women, Expenses of Medical Education—Pit-brow Women—Manchester Jubilee Exhibition—Kensington Nursing Association—Women's Protective and Provident League—Industrial Position of Women—Jubilee Offering—Science and Art Examinations—Miss Muller's Lectures—Miscellaneous.

Foreign Notes and News. Published by Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill, and at 22, Berners-street, London, W.

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BEFORE the next issue of this journal reaches the hands of our readers, fifty full years will have elapsed since the accession of QUEEN VICTORIA to the throne of her ancestors.

The most essential considerations as regards the special subject of this journal is the fact that during the whole of this period the highest political function of the State has been in the hands of a woman.

MEETINGS have been held during May at Bath, addressed by the COUNTESS OF PORTSMOUTH, Mrs. HALLETT, Miss EMILY STURGE, and Mrs. EMMA MARSHALL; at Cardiff, by Mrs. BEDDOE and Miss BECKER; at Stratford-on-Avon, by Mrs. FENWICK MILLER and Miss BALGARNIE; at Southport, by Mrs. SHERBROOKE and Mrs. EVA M'LAREN.

As the month of July approaches the friends of women's suffrage should hold themselves in readiness to take advantage of the hoped-for opportunity of a decisive debate and division on the second reading of the Women's Franchise Bill, on the 20th of July.

declared themselves in favour of the measure. No member should have it in his power to say that no one in his constituency has sent him a petition in support of the Bill.

MR. BAUMANN, M.P., who is one of the most determined opponents of women's suffrage that the House of Commons contains, has given notice to move for a return of the number of women entitled to vote at elections of Boards of Guardians in England and at School Boards in Scotland.

It is difficult to comprehend the grounds on which the information contained in the proposed return could be supposed to be injurious to the Bill. Two years ago Mr. WOODALL obtained a similar return of the number of women entitled to vote in municipal elections in England and Scotland, which has been of the greatest service to the advocates of the measure.

WHEN, a few months ago, a deputation from the Miners' Conference waited on the HOME SECRETARY to explain their views in respect to the Mines Regulation Bill about to be introduced, they demanded, among other provisions, that the labour of women in connection with mining should be prohibited.

dented rejoinder, "I should like to hear what the women have to say about it." He also expressed his readiness to receive a deputation from them on the subject. But as the men had failed to convince him of the justice of depriving the women of their means of livelihood, he, without finding it necessary to hear the women, declined to introduce the proposed prohibitory clauses in the Mines Bill.

NOT content with this rebuff, the Durham and Northumberland miners placed in the hands of their respective representatives, Mr. ATHERLEY JONES and Mr. BURT, amendments to be proposed in Committee on the Bill, the effect of which would be to cause the immediate or nearly immediate cessation of women labour on pit banks, and to throw many thousands of women out of employment, besides closing for the women resident in mining districts their principal avenue of employment.

The appearance of these amendments was the signal for the revival of the project of a deputation. The HOME SECRETARY expressed his willingness to receive one, and steps were immediately taken in the districts concerned to arrange the deputation. The women in each colliery selected by ballot one or more of their number to represent them, and they were supported by men delegates from the Miners' Association in the district. The deputation was most cordially received by Mr. MATTHEWS, and was entirely successful in its object. Mr. MATTHEWS promised on behalf of the Government to resist the obnoxious amendments, and said that he trusted that this large and representative deputation would influence public opinion so decisively that they would hear no more of this attempt to hamper and interfere with the honest and praiseworthy industry of girls who address themselves to work of this kind.

BUT although the immediate object of the deputation was accomplished and the women's industry is probably safe for the present, there are one or two points in connection with the proceedings that should not be passed over in silence. The first of these refers to the clause in the Government Bill which prohibits the employment of women in moving railway waggons. Mr. MATTHEWS explained that this clause had been introduced at the suggestion of the Inspector on the ground that the work was dangerous for women. He inquired very particularly from the members of the deputation if they objected to this prohibition. None of the women present appeared to be

affected by the operation of the proposed clause, and some of the men expressed approval of it. The clause will therefore be incorporated in the Bill, and though the practical hardship of the new restriction may be small, or even *nil*, the evil principle of legislative interference with the liberty of adult women will have received fresh legislative sanction, and an evil principle may be trusted sooner or later to bring forth evil fruits.

THE HOME SECRETARY, in giving his reason for not interfering with the particular industry represented by the deputation before him, said that the only thing which, in his opinion, would justify legislative interference with women who choose to undertake a certain class of work, would be proof that it was prejudicial to their character or morals, or that it was prejudicial to their health.

This expression would seem to imply that in his opinion legislative interference with the employment of women would be justifiable, if proof satisfactory to his mind were offered as to the alleged prejudicial effect. This appears to us an unsound and dangerous principle. We believe that women are quite as capable as men of taking care of their own health, character, and morals, without Government interference, and that there is no kind of remunerative labour within the power of women to undertake which is so prejudicial to any or all of the three as inability to obtain the means of subsistence.

It would be unjust to deprive women of any employment offered to them on the ground that a HOME SECRETARY considered the labour prejudicial to their health or morals. It is not every such official who shares Mr. MATTHEWS' manly instincts against meddling. Government interference with grown people; but even if it were certain that a similar enlightened rule would always prevail, the interests of working women, as well as those of working men, would be in the end best served by freedom to carry their labour into the best market.

WE learn from *La Citoyenne* that the French Resident in Madagascar, with a view to facilitate French influence at the Court of Antananarivo, had promised to the Queen of Madagascar the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour. This promise was given without apprehension that there would be the smallest difficulty in carrying it out. But the Chancellerie of the Legion of Honour have refused to redeem the pledge to the Queen. They have decreed that the Grand Cordon has never been given to a woman even though a Sovereign Queen, and that to accord it to

Queen RANAVALONA would be to break the rules and precedent, and trench on the prerogatives of men. The refusal has placed M. LE MYRE DE VILLERS in the embarrassing position of a man who has broken his word, and has caused considerable friction in French relations with the Malagasy Court. But such considerations appear in the eyes of the authorities concerned to be not worth putting in the balance against the sacred principle of masculine exclusiveness.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

On May 3rd a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon, in support of the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to duly qualified women. There was a large and influential attendance, consisting principally of ladies. Sir ARTHUR HODGSON, K.C.M.G. (Mayor), presided, and he was supported on the platform by Mrs. Fenwick Miller and Miss Florence Baggart (London), who attended as a deputation, the Rev. R. S. de C. Laffan and Mrs. Laffan. Amongst the audience were Lady and Miss Hodgson, Mr. C. E. and Mrs. Flower, Miss Harding, Miss McGrigor, Mrs. Lewes-Gibbs, Mrs. Hastings, the Rev. P. N. and Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. A. E. Park, Councillor Hawkes, Councillor and Mrs. Eaves, Councillor Inns, Mr. J. J. Nason, Mr. F. and Mrs. Winter, Mrs. Morgan, Rev. J. Mark, Mrs. Samman, Miss Lydia L. M. Smith, &c.

The CHAIRMAN, in the course of his opening remarks, said that although he posed as a non-political Mayor he had no difficulty in acceding to the request that he should take the chair that evening. He fully understood that it was a political question, and it was a very important one, which would come to the surface from day to day and year to year, but he maintained that it was a question free from all party. (Applause.) And it was on those grounds that he had pleasure in addressing them that evening from that position. He had come there, like many of them, to listen and to learn. He confessed he did not know much of that question. Women had the right to vote in all matters of local government. They voted upon all municipal questions. He was indebted to twenty per cent of his municipal constituents for being a member of the corporation, as no less than twenty per cent of the voters in the Guild Ward belonged to the fair sex. Again, they exercised their votes at School Board elections, and he knew to his cost, some three years ago, that they did not exercise them in the direction he could have wished. (Laughter.) Then, again, they had got a parochial council, just budding into the second year of its existence, and he noticed on the door of the parish church on Sunday some few names of ladies, members of that council. They had the privilege of being taxed, if it were a privilege, and all he could say was why should they not have the privilege of administering that taxation? It was the Parliamentary franchise they wanted. (Applause.) He said it was not a party question. Only the previous day he received papers from Australia, and he noticed that Sir Henry Parkes, who in his opinion was the most able statesman in Greater Britain, who paid him a visit at Clopton some three years ago, and with whom he never voted when he was in the Sydney Legislature, for he always voted on the other side, had declared that he, as a Liberal, considered that the time had now arrived when the franchise should be given to women. Those were his words. Then, on the other hand, he found that Mr. Henry Chaplin, whom they could not consider as an advanced Radical—(laughter)—recanted his opinion a short time ago, admitted the error of his ways, and said he should advocate as strongly as he could Parliamentary franchise for women. (Applause.) Therefore, he said there was no party in that question, and he believed he might say that when it came before the House of Commons last year the numbers were very equally divided. He begged to call on Mr. Laffan to be good enough to move the first resolution.

The Rev. R. S. de C. LAFFAN proposed the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this meeting the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women who possess the qualifications which

entitle men to vote, and who, in all matters of local government, have the right of voting."

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. R. S. de C. LAFFAN and supported by Mrs. FENWICK MILLER.

The resolution was carried almost unanimously, one hand only being held up in opposition.

Mr. C. E. FLOWER proposed: "That a petition to the House of Commons, based on the foregoing resolution, be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of this meeting, and forwarded to Mr. Frederick Townsend, M.P., for presentation to the House of Commons."

The resolution was seconded by Miss BALGARNIE and adopted unanimously.

Mrs. FENWICK MILLER proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor for presiding, which Miss BALGARNIE seconded, acknowledging the ready assistance she had received from Sir Arthur and others in connection with the meeting, and asking to be allowed to include in the vote of thanks the Editor of the *Herald*.

The meeting concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

KIDDERMINSTER.

On May 4th, a meeting in support of the women's suffrage movement was held in the Town Hall, Kidderminster, when there was a large attendance, a fair proportion being ladies. The meeting was strictly non-political, and there were prominent representatives of both parties present. The proceedings were orderly and enthusiastic. The chair was taken by Mr. WILFRID S. BLUNT (late Liberal candidate for the borough), who was supported by Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Miss Florence Baggart (London), and Miss Sturge (Bewdley), who attended as a deputation, and also by Lady Anne Blunt, Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Wm. Talbot, Mrs. H. R. Willis, Miss Stooke, and Messrs. W. H. Talbot, G. Isaacs, C. Isaacs, M. Corbet, E. Parry, G. Holloway, G. W. Naylor, J. C. Batten, &c.

The CHAIRMAN said he had received several letters of apology from various residents in the town, and one he proposed to read *in extenso*. It was from Mr. Grosvenor—(cheers)—and was as follows:

"Dear Sir,—I regret that an unavoidable previous engagement prevents my attending the meeting this evening. I cordially agree with the object of the society, and should have been pleased to show by my presence that though our political opinions generally differ widely, yet that the question of the justice of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women is one in support of which Tories and Liberals may be to a great extent of one mind.—Yours truly,
"GEORGE W. GROSVENOR."

Letters of excuse and sympathy had also been received from the Rev. G. A. K. Simpson, Messrs. J. Chambers and Bennie, Rev. A. Johnson, Mrs. Green, and Alderman Green.

The CHAIRMAN then said it was always a great pleasure to him to come back to Kidderminster, for he was glad to say his recollections of Kidderminster were always of the most agreeable kind. (Laughter.) Certain circumstances might be supposed to cast a little shadow upon his agreeable recollections, but that had not been the case. He felt he succeeded in winning a great deal of sympathy, and he was sure the people of Kidderminster succeeded in winning his very deep regard. In the second place he was glad to be present because the subject to be placed before them was not exactly a party question. (Cheers.) In the present day there was so much bitterness in all party questions that it was a relief to get out of the atmosphere of strife into the atmosphere of social problems upon which they could all agree. The extension of the franchise to women was at one time a purely Liberal measure—(hear, hear)—but of late years it appeared that many Conservatives had joined the movement, and those who desired to see the matter pushed forward might congratulate themselves on having the support of both parties, and thus their desires were more likely to be accomplished. There was another reason which made him more than very glad to be present, and that was that the measure for extending the franchise to women was a measure of justice. One might say it was theoretical justice, but it certainly was justice. The whole course of political development had been to gradually extend the representative system throughout the country, and it would be only extending this one step further to confer the franchise on women. In Kidderminster the privilege would be largely appreciated by those to whom it was granted, for in intelligence the ladies of Kidderminster stood exceedingly high. (Cheers.) If he

was to judge from the experience gained during the short canvass last year, he should say they had ladies amongst them of the highest political intelligence. Their presence that evening alone would prove the case. He did not intend to speak at any length upon the question of women's suffrage, as that would doubtless be thoroughly explained by the ladies who were to follow. As he understood the question, the practical value of women's votes would be to help legislation on social matters, which were really and truly the most important of all matters. On social matters there was always great necessity for progress, and it was to those matters women's independent judgment would be of immense value. Intemperance might be quoted as an example, for it was the women who suffered from the drunkenness of the men. Then there were other questions which especially affected women, the law on the subject of marriage and divorce; the protection of women's property under the marriage bond. Then women, too, were deeply interested in the disastrous wars into which the country was often being led, and in that matter he hoped great support would be given by the women to stop such wars. On those and cognate questions the opinions of the women of England would be of great service to the country. (Cheers.)

Mr. TOMKINSON, who was warmly received, was called upon to move the first resolution, which was as follows: "That in the opinion of this meeting the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting."

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. FENWICK MILLER, and supported by Miss ELIZA STURGE, and was then put and carried with one or two dissentients.

Mr. PARRY proposed the second resolution, which was as follows: "That a petition to the House of Commons, based on the foregoing resolution, be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of this meeting, and forwarded to Mr. Augustus F. Godson, M.P., member for Kidderminster, for presentation to the House of Commons."

Miss BALGARNIE seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously, and Mrs. TALBOT then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. In the course of a rather long speech, Mrs. Talbot said she was very pleased to see Mr. Blunt in Kidderminster again with Lady Anne, after their recent visit abroad on account of their health. Ladies who would have to exercise the franchise must prepare themselves to do so properly, by studying the public questions and putting themselves in the place of those for whom the laws were to be made. (Cheers.) They must do to others as they would wish others to do unto them. (Cheers.)

Mrs. WILLIS seconded, and the resolution having been carried, Mr. BLUNT suitably replied, and proposed a vote of thanks to the three ladies who had so eloquently addressed the meeting.

The resolution having been passed with acclamation, Mrs. MILLER briefly replied and the proceedings terminated.

CARDIFF.

A meeting of ladies for the promotion of women's suffrage, held under the auspices of the Bristol and West of England Society, was held in the Crown Court, Town Hall, Cardiff, on the afternoon of May 25th. The Rev. C. J. THOMPSON, vicar of Cardiff, presided, and was accompanied by Mrs. Beddoe, of Clifton, Miss Becker, of Manchester, and Miss Blackburn, of Bristol.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said there were two strong grounds on which the claim of women to the exercise of the Parliamentary franchise could be based. First, their present disability was utterly indefensible and absurd. Then there were many social questions, such as educational, sanitary, and other questions, which would never have a proper amount of attention so long as the legislative power remained in the hands of men.

Mrs. BEDDOE, of Clifton, then addressed the meeting, and pointed out that the ridicule which attached to the movement in its early days had passed away. For this, in a great measure, they had to thank the ladies of the Primrose League and Liberal Associations, who had taken a much more prominent place in politics than had the members of the Women's Suffrage Society. These had nothing to do with politics; it was not a political question at all, and they numbered among the friends and supporters of their cause members of all parties.

Miss BECKER followed, after which

The CHAIRMAN proposed: "That this meeting, being of opinion that the Parliamentary franchise should no longer be denied to

women, earnestly desires the speedy passing of the Bill for extending the Parliamentary franchise to women, and adopts petitions to both Houses of Parliament in its support."

Professor ROBERTS seconded this, and it was agreed to unanimously. A vote of thanks to the chairman concluded the proceedings.

SOUTHPORT.

A meeting, under the auspices of the Southport Guild of the Unrepresented, was held in Albany Galleries on May 4th, when amongst those present were Mrs. Sherbrooke (in the chair), Mrs. MacMillen, Mrs. Dale, Mrs. Eva M'Laren, wife of the member for Crewe; Mrs. Scott, Miss Smithers, Mrs. Tatham, Mrs. Teschemacher, Miss Banks, Miss Nicholson, and Miss Feugh. Mrs. Sherbrooke introduced Mrs. M'Laren, who delivered an address, after which Mrs. Dale proposed and Miss Tatham seconded a vote of thanks to the lecturer. A vote of thanks to Mrs. Sherbrooke for presiding concluded the proceedings.

DRAWING-ROOM MEETINGS.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

MEETING IN BATH.

In connection with this Society a drawing-room meeting was held on May 13th, at Russell House, Russell-street, Bath. The COUNTESS OF PORTSMOUTH presided over an everflowing attendance. The company included the Earl of Portsmouth, Lady Camilla Wallop, Sir John Bunbury, Rev. E. Lascelles (Newton St. Loe), Rev. G. L. Hallett (Dunkerton), Rev. F. J. Poynton (Kelston), Rev. F. O'Melia (Northstoke), Captain Lysaght, R.N., Messrs. T. G. Palmer Hallett, Sholto Skrine, J. Reynolds, C. Milsom, S. Hayward, J. Dyke, and the following ladies: Hon. Mrs. Smith, Mrs. T. G. Palmer Hallett, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Beddoe, Mrs. W. Hale, Mrs. Thirlwall, Mrs. Jeffery, Mrs. Tucker, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Bartrum, Mrs. Braikneridge, Mrs. Brenton von Donop, Mrs. Heath, Mrs. King Smith, Mrs. V. Bunbury, Mrs. Grame, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Trelawny, Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Utterson, Mrs. Gibbons, Mrs. Brooke, Miss C. Evans, Miss Carrington, Miss Hollis, Miss Tucker, Miss Horton, Miss Harkness, Miss V. Johnston, Miss Cornwall, Miss Firth, Miss Dodswoth, Miss Abby, Miss Wickham, Misses Crawford, Misses Page, Misses Edgumbe, Miss Chappell, Miss Lakeman, the Misses Brooke, Miss Stothert, Miss von Donop, Misses Grame, Miss Haigh, Miss Bright, Miss Dunn, Miss Kilvert, Miss Cardew, Miss E. Wickham, Miss Cook, Miss King, Miss Theresa Scott, Miss Sturge, and Miss Blackburn (secretary). Letters regretting absence had been received from General Sir Charles von Straubenzee, Surgeon-General Beatson, Mrs. J. K. Spender, Mr. Mundy, and many others.

The COUNTESS OF PORTSMOUTH said she was much obliged and honoured by the large number that had met together that afternoon. She considered she was a stranger, or almost a stranger, to most of them present, though she could not quite say she was a stranger to Bath. They knew that in the history of all causes, of all ideas that had established themselves in the world and made themselves acceptable by it, there had been periods in which the supporters of that cause or that idea met year after year, and season after season, to reiterate old arguments, not less weighty because they were old, supposing them to be based on justice and in accordance with reason, but lacking that charm of novelty which was so pleasing to the speaker who brought them forward and so seductive to the hearer for the first time. To the enthusiast or to those who had fallen back into that cold life which distinguished half-hearted and half-believing members, to the young as well as to the experienced adherent, there must always be a certain sense that they were meeting together to mark time, and to mark time it might be in view of the goal, but yet far beyond its touch. And some such expression, or some such description of their present position, might be brought forward by an opponent. She confessed she could not wholly gainsay him, and yet she thought that he would be misleading himself, and he would certainly mislead them, if he lured them into negligence or alarmed them into despair. But the cause of securing a privilege—let her call it by the proper name, a constitutional right—(applause)—was certainly to her mind, and she thought to the minds of most who were engaged in the warfare, a

living one, a growing one, and a gaining one. (Applause.) It was not only the avenging gods that were shod with wool. As the winter stole into spring and as the spring melted into summer, as the trees grew while they were asleep, so many causes progressed most truly when the ear and eye detected them least. That, she thought, they would find had been the case with the cause which they were then met to do their utmost to promote. They had now no more got women's suffrage than they had twenty years ago, and they were no more met that day to celebrate success or non-success than at the last meeting. But the cause of women's suffrage had passed from a feeble, tottering, and she thought she might say a sickly childhood into a vigorous, healthy, and she hoped promising youth. (Applause.) She believed, and she spoke with the greatest diffidence remembering those splendid-hearted women, some of whom had passed away, who through years of failure and defeat never knew one moment's vacillation, and never lost one grain of faith, that notwithstanding all the marking of time, continual disappointments, incessant defeat and failure, the cause had grown as the cause ought to grow. (Applause.) It had passed through attacks of the most violent kind, opprobrium had been thrown upon it, it had known depression and oppression, but yet it had held its ground, though it had had to fight inch by inch for bare life, it had become hardened, it was moulded into form, into a solid shape, and it had gradually, but very certainly, become a powerful engine among women themselves, and that for good, distinctly for good—it had reached this climax before it had attained fulfilment. Would it not be better for many causes that they should grow like that? Would it not be far happier, far safer, far wiser for the partisans of many causes, and many ideas that were springing up in this remarkable period of the nineteenth century, if sometimes those partisans were to think that the sum must be done before it could be proved? After all what was the fate of trees of rapid development? They were second-growth timber, and had to make room for the better and stronger. A forester had said "The tree must take hold of the ground, it must go deep into the earth, before it can rise and flourish in the air." She thought that they had evidenced that process going on, and now they saw the process of assimilation, of combination, and of reciprocity, between the cause itself and the conditions of life and positions of women outside that cause, what she would almost call an inter-influence. She firmly believed they could have no better proof of the inherent vitality of the cause, no more positive assurance that time was working slowly, and stealthily perhaps, but very surely on their side. (Applause.) Let them think of the roll of names that could be presented now of adherents within the last fifteen years. They would find among them some of the ablest statesmen, men respected, men who had been occupied not only in suggesting great ideas, but in governing the world. No such list could have been presented fifty years ago. There was no doubt they had lost some very good friends whom they could very ill spare, including the late Lord Iddesleigh—(applause)—a man whom to know was a privilege, because not only was he talented, but he had sweetness of character, and that high-mindedness which would ennoble any cause on which his name was to be found; they had lost opponents whom they respected, though opposition coming from them was doubly trying. But notwithstanding this, she did not think anyone who was at all candid, even the most reluctant, upon calm reflection, could come to any other decision than that the tide of opinion had changed. She remembered once that very wise and equal-minded man Mr. Fawcett—his death was one of the greatest losses they ever experienced—marking to her with what incredulity, astonishment, and dismay, all persons a generation ago would have heard of the fact that in making some important change at the Post Office, the opinion most valued was that of a lady on the executive staff. After referring to the part Miss Octavia Hill took in public affairs, her ladyship said they could not watch the current of life without being aware that women were moving, treading paths not only untrodden, but almost unknown to women two or three generations ago. She would not say they always trod them with ease; competition did not make it easier for them than for men, but they often trod with success, with patience, and courage, and so far as she knew, always with rectitude and uprightness of conduct. The women of England were conscientiously, accurately, and courageously doing the sum, and the proof of the sum, she believed, would be in time the entrusting to them of that honourable trust which she was perfectly certain they would honourably

carry out, the franchise. (Applause.) They sought to obtain for women householders the right to vote on exactly the same terms that men had now, nothing more, nothing less. They paid rates and taxes, and they ought fairly to be entitled to have a voice in the expenditure of what they helped to pay. She did not believe that there was any class anywhere in which they would find so large a majority worthy to be entrusted with the franchise. If they took the poorer members of that class, or the householders who were not so rich, they would find that not only did they maintain their position as householders through their industry, thrift, and rectitude but that they actually gained that position through those qualities. And they would find, respecting the richer class of women householders, that there were no persons in England more ready to spend for their fellow-country-men, more generous, and more grateful as it were that God had put it into their hands to be able to succour distress, and to do all that was best, noblest, and most worthy. (Applause.) In conclusion, she wished to say one little word of advice, to strike one note of warning, and she hoped they would not think it presumptuous. They must, men and women who were attached to that cause, remember that in this world there was for everything (some great person said for every man, but she said thing) a price to be paid. They knew it had been very well said that the price of liberty was eternal vigilance, and the price they must pay for their success she was convinced was this—adherence to strict justice and sound common sense. (Loud applause.)

Mrs. (EMMA) MARSHALL delivered an earnest speech in support of the extension of the franchise to women, and was followed by Miss EMILY STURGE and Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT.

On the motion of Miss ABBY, seconded by Mrs. JEFFERY, a resolution was passed directing that a petition should be forwarded to both Houses of Parliament in favour of the Bill; also memorials to the Prime Minister and to Mr. W. H. Smith, leader of the House of Commons.

A cordial vote of thanks to the Countess of Portsmouth for presiding was carried on the motion of Mrs. BEDDOE, seconded by Mrs. WM. HALE.

LECTURES.

HATCHAM.

On May 15th, Mrs. Fawcett lectured at the Hatcham Working Men's Club, Mr. Gardiner in the chair. The meeting was well attended, and there was a good discussion.

LEEDS.

On May 15th, Mrs. Fawcett gave a lecture at Leeds on the social progress of women to a large and appreciative audience.

PENGE.

On May 13th, Miss Balgarnie delivered a lecture on the franchise for women at the Penge and Beckenham Liberal and Radical Club. Mr. J. E. Jones presided, and a petition was adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of the meeting.

ILFRACOMBE.

A meeting in connection with the Young People's Association was held in the Congregational classroom on May 6th, when Mr. F. Tuck presided. After the usual devotions, Mr. Featherstone read a paper on women's suffrage, and expressed himself as entirely opposed to women voting in Parliamentary elections. Mrs. MacRoberts moved an amendment in favour of women's suffrage, and a discussion followed. On the motion being put to the meeting, the amendment was carried by a majority of three.

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES AND THE PIT-BROW WOMEN.

Memorials protesting against legislation restricting the work of women who are denied the protection of the Parliamentary franchise were adopted and forwarded to the Home Secretary by the Committees of London, Manchester, Bristol and Edinburgh.

The Bradford Women's Electoral Association has passed a resolution supporting the claims of the pit-brow women, and has communicated on the matter with the borough members. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre has promised to give every attention to the subject, and Mr. Byron Reed states that he will vote against the proposal to abolish pit-brow labour.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AT THE PIT BROW.

THE DEPUTATION AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(From the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.)

The pit-brow women arrived in London on May 16th, about half-past four, and at the Houses of Parliament shortly before seven. The deputation was thus composed:—From Whitehaven: Sarah M'Gorian, 21; Sarah Ray, 26; and Elizabeth Blaney, 29. From Bryan Colliery: Annie Beswick, 19. From New Boston Colliery, Haydock: Mary Jane Haselden, 16. From Ravenhead Colliery, St. Helens: Mary Pennington, 18. From Messrs. Burns and Robinson's Colliery, St. Helens: Ann Foley, 19. From the Garswood Coal and Iron Company's Park Lane Collieries: Mary Lowe, 21; and Mary Gore, 25. From Messrs. Blundell's Pemberton Colliery: Mary Smalley, 25; Elizabeth Parker, 21; Elizabeth Halliwell, 22; and Margaret Winstanley, 28. From the Wigan Coal and Iron Company's Collieries: Annie Smith, 23; Jane Gibson, 21; and Ruth Hilton, 23. From the Orrell Colliery: Mary Ashcroft, 17; and Mary Rigby, 35. From the Atherton Collieries, near Manchester: Catherine Kennedy, 35; Martha Seddon, 33; Mary Cope, 21; and Elizabeth Halton, 20. These twenty-three women were accompanied by William Ray, President of the St. Helens Miners' Association; Thomas Oakes, miners' agent, &c. They are staying under the care of Mrs. Park, Mayoress of Wigan, at the Girls' Home, Greek-street, Soho. As the girls sat in a row at the entrance door of the Houses of Parliament, much wondered at by a rigidly polite policeman, and waiting for Mr. M'Laren, M.P. for Crewe, who was to conduct them to the members' lobby, one could hardly help thinking how difficult it would be to select from the working women of London twenty-three lasses so healthy, so comely, so *douce*, so simply mannered, so homely, so representative of all that makes labouring womanhood sweet and wholesome. All looked quietly happy, as if conscious that they had only to tell their tale in their own quaint Doric to the Parliamentary gentlemen and that all would then be right. On their entrance they were met by Miss Lydia Becker, who has from the outset of the agitation warmly espoused their cause. When they were taken inside they stood for some time in a row against the wall of the central octagon, answering with simplicity and directness all the questions that were put to them. Here they were introduced by Mr. M'Laren to Mr. J. E. Spencer, M.P. for West Bromwich. After a short interval of waiting, one half of the party—the rules of the House not allowing the whole party to pass—were taken into the inner or members' lobby, where they were immediately interviewed by, *inter alia*, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Baumann, and Mr. Broadhurst. The last-named gentleman was immediately the centre of an eager group expounding their case, not with the clamour and discursiveness of London women, but with quiet and pointed emphasis. Each girl, as far as I could hear, answered directly and in the fewest possible words—"an excellent thing in woman"—to the questions put to her. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett was introduced to one with the remark, "This gentleman is a member of the Government." "Oh," placidly replied the girl with that indescribable Lancashire intonation which seemed to say, "I'm sure I've no objection to the gentleman on that account." After the party had been questioned and interviewed for some ten minutes they were conducted, pleasantly wondering but by no means dismayed, by Mr. Broadhurst and Sir Algernon Borthwick through the library of the House, and then the other half of the party were taken through in the same way. Nothing could have been more successful than this visit. Those members of Parliament who saw the girls were evidently most favourably impressed with their self-possessed and womanly demeanour, and by their obviously strong belief in the justice and rightness of their case.

PIT-BROW WOMEN AT THE HOME OFFICE.

A deputation of twenty-four women who are employed overground at collieries in Lancashire and Cumberland in picking, dressing, and screening coal, with whose employment it is now proposed to interfere by legislation, waited upon the Home Secretary, Mr. H. Matthews, Q.C., on May 17th. A preliminary meeting was held in the morning at the Westminster Palace Hotel, which was very largely attended, the delegates—who in their non-working dress differed very little in appearance, except being rather more sturdy and stalwart, from working girls and women in other classes—being

present, and exciting a great deal of interest. Some of the pit women put on clean working dresses at the hotel, to give the Home Secretary an idea of their working appearance. The pit women then proceeded two by two to the Home Office, followed by miners and the ladies and gentlemen interested in the subject. The girls and women who are actually employed at the pit-brow were provided with seats arranged in front of the table where the Home Secretary sat. Mr. Walter M'Laren, M.P., introduced the deputation, and among the ladies and gentlemen present were the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, the Countess of Lathom, Lord Fortescue, Sir George Elliott, M.P., Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., Colonel Blundell, M.P., Mr. Lees Knowles, M.P., Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, M.P. (Whitehaven), Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., Mrs. Park (Mayoress of Wigan), Mrs. Burrows (Atherton), Mrs. Duncan M'Laren, Mrs. Josephine Butler, Mrs. Bright Lucas, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Mrs. Walter M'Laren, Mrs. Ashton Dilke, Miss Jane Cobden, Miss Becker, Mrs. Beddoe, Miss Helen Blackburn, Mr. Schloss (Women's Protection League), Miss Biggs, Mrs. P. Smith, Miss A. Larkcom, Miss Balfour, Mrs. Thos. Taylor, Mrs. O. Chant, &c. Mr. Matthews was accompanied by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, M.P.

Mr. W. M'LAREN, M.P., in introducing the deputation, invited the pit-bank women to stand up. He said some of the pit-bank workers had been asked to attend in their working dress in order that the Home Secretary might judge for himself as to the suitability of the costume they wore. Nothing, he submitted, could be more modest or more desirable in every way for the work the girls and women had to do. The women came from nine different towns and villages in Lancashire, including Wigan, St. Helens, Pemberton, and Orrell, and from Whitehaven, and was therefore representative of a considerable area. They had been deputed to attend by their fellow workers, and were to a large extent paying their own expenses—good evidence, he thought, of the interest they took in the matter. (Hear, hear.) The deputation did not consist merely of women working at the pit brow, but there were men miners also, one being the president of the Miners' Association of St. Helens. It was therefore of a thoroughly representative character. They wished to explain their objections to the amendments proposed by Mr. Burt and Mr. Atherley-Jones to the Mines Regulation Bill introduced by the Government. Mr. Burt's amendment provided that after the passing of the proposed Act no woman should be engaged to work in connection with a mine, but he did not propose to interfere with women at present so employed. Mr. Atherley-Jones proposed to forbid the employment of women altogether.

Mrs. PARK, Mayoress of Wigan, said that, having resided many years in Wigan, and her husband having been during the last five years Mayor of that town, she had had abundant opportunities of mixing with the women of all classes, and could therefore speak on this subject from her own observation. Having felt much sympathy with the pit-brow women in the attack made upon them, she felt that, as wife of the Mayor of the chief town in the coal trade of South-west Lancashire, she was in her right place as leader in the movement for the preservation of their claim to earn an honest living in the way that suited them best in their circumstances—(cheers)—and which had by this time become a tradition in their families. More than a year ago, when Mr. Childers was about to bring forward his Mines Regulation Bill, he fought the cause of the pit-bow women, and fought it successfully, and they were there was an end to the matter. They now felt much aggrieved that such a fresh and determined effort to displace the women from the pit-brow work should have been made—(hear, hear)—especially coming as it did from those who practically knew nothing about the matter—(cheers)—namely, from the men of Northumberland, in which county no women worked on the pit brow, and from the men of Durham, where only five women were thus employed throughout the whole of the county. Had the men in Lancashire and other districts complained, the question would have borne a different aspect. As it was, they felt that the interference was unwarrantable, cruel, and unjust. (Cheers.) Should these poor women be deprived of their present mode of livelihood, what was to become of them? (Hear, hear.) There were no other openings for them, as most of the collieries were outside the towns, and the class of women who worked at them preferred remaining at home to going to domestic service. The work of the women in mills, moreover, was very much overstocked. For every vacancy in Wigan there were always several applications. There was one special point in favour of colliery work for women, which was that, in con-

sequence of the terrible uncertainty of life amongst the miners, the widows were always able to work at the pit-brow to keep themselves and families—(hear, hear)—and also in case of accident to the husband the wife often nobly took his place as breadwinner of the family. (Hear, hear.) The question of morality had been raised in connection with this matter. She knew well that the women on the pit-brow were in every way as pure and good as their sisters engaged in other work—(hear, hear)—and they have the testimony of many clergymen and ministers who laboured amongst them that the pit-brow women were in no way inferior morally to any other class of working women. (Hear, hear.) The dress which had been so much spoken against as improper was absolutely necessary to their safety and comfort during work. Petticoats of the ordinary length ran the risk of being drawn in by the machinery, thus endangering the women's lives, and the pit-brows being much exposed to the wind and weather, the more closely fitting garment was warmer and more decent. In the colliery districts, as the women went to and from their work their costume excited no attention, being so frequently met with. She had often visited the women on the brows for one purpose or another, and she found them intelligent, bright, open-faced, contented looking women, and she had frequently said that for anyone in whom she was interested she would much prefer the work of the pit-brow to that of the mills or the fields. (Cheers.) They all looked plump and healthy; the outdoor work made them strong and vigorous, and many girls who had had to leave the mills through delicate health had become strong on the pit-brow. It was well known that these women were very domesticated; their daily work being out of doors, they were glad when it was over to stay indoors and attend to home duties; while those poor girls who were all day amongst the heat and smells and din of machinery in mills were so glad to be out of doors at night that they ran a much greater risk of the immorality that was so wrongly attributed to the work at the pit-brow—work which was carried on in open daylight, and in sight of everyone, and which usually terminated at five in the afternoon, or even earlier. In the present endeavour to maintain the right of these women to continue to obtain an honest livelihood in this way they had the almost universal sympathy of the general public, and the cordial support of the press throughout the country. (Hear, hear.) Both London and provincial papers and magazines, secular and religious, representing every shade of political opinion, and including also one of the most prominent of the working-men's newspapers, joined in giving them their decided and surprisingly unanimous support. (Cheers.)

The Rev. HARRY MITCHELL, Vicar of Prescot, said he was very glad of an opportunity of attending this deputation. He considered it a monstrous shame that 6,000 women like those who sat before him should be exposed to the risk of being dependent for their daily bread upon a chance vote of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) He hoped this deputation would put an end for ever to the agitation against the women. (Cheers.) He did not see what the men in Northumberland and Durham had to do with it. He did not know that all their own quarrels were so settled that they need desire to interfere with neighbours at so great a distance. (Laughter and cheers.) He hoped the Home Secretary would interfere to protect these women. With regard to the amendments on the bill against which they had come to protest there was little difference, although that of Mr. Atherley-Jones was the more brutally direct. Mr. Atherley-Jones proposed to cast these 6,000 women out of employment all at once without any compensation. That was worse than the Liberationists, for although the Liberationists wanted to disestablish him, he must say for them that they desired to protect his life-interest in his income. (Laughter.) Mr. Burt's amendment would be more gentle in its operation, but the result would be the same, for in two years it would not leave a woman on the pit-brow. Students of history knew that there used to be a statute *De Hæretico Comburendo*. In the uncertain Reformation times it was used alternately by both sides, and both believed that it was out of sincere love they burned the heretics on the other side. So gentle Izaak Walton, in his "Compleat Angler," advised his pupil to put the worm gently on the hook, as if he loved it. (Laughter.) So it was out of sincere love and in a spirit of the greatest tenderness that Mr. Burt proposed his amendment, but he would take away the women's bread all the same.

Mr. MITCHELL then presented to the Home Secretary a number of photographs of women in their ordinary working costume. These pictures showed the dress worn at the different Lancashire collieries.

He explained that by an error on the part of the photographer spades and riddles had been thrown in as picturesque accessories, but the women nowadays neither used spades nor riddles. He mentioned that he had tried in vain to induce the girls to let down their skirts lower over their working trousers as they walked home, but they answered, "No; if we do, everybody laughs at us."

Mr. THOMAS OAKES, Hindley, said he was glad, as a representative of the working miners of Hindley and Westthoughton, to come on this deputation. There had been a deal said in the press about the character and habits of the pit girls. He could speak plainly on the subject, since he had lived thirty years among them—five years as a miner and five years as an agent. He was besides an agent for an insurance society, and it was part of his duty to visit the people in their homes and to know something of their circumstances. They were modest and industrious. Their ways were honest and straightforward, and he did not know anything that could be said against their morals. He saw them on Sundays at churches and at schools—(hear, hear)—or he saw them at home in their houses, and he could speak to the respectability of the houses when he went into them. They were in every respect equal to any other class of female workers in Lancashire. He desired to remind the Home Secretary that female labour on the pit bank was not so laborious now as it was twenty years ago. The employment was consistent with the greatest cheerfulness. He had been delighted last week when he approached a pit brow to find the women singing hymns and shouting psalms as comfortable as if they had been at church. (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. W. KAY, president of the St. Helens Miners' Association, stated the circumstances under which the deputation had been got up, as has already been explained in the newspapers, and testified to the earnestness of the miners in the St. Helens district in protesting against the action of Mr. Burt, who represented the Northumberland and Durham men. Comparing the work of the pit-brow women with that of the women employed in the glassworks at St. Helens, he said the latter was the more laborious and the more dangerous, since the women in that case had to carry large sheets of glass up and down great heights. This pit-brow work for women enabled many poor widows suddenly deprived of their husbands to support themselves and their orphan children. If this work were stopped, the result would be to fill the workhouses, and increase the rates, and it would inflict great damage on the community.

In reply to the Home Secretary, Mr. Kay explained particularly the kind of work in which the women were employed in "tipping" and "screening" the coal, and the precautions taken to secure their safety. The Home Secretary particularly pressed the question whether it was the practice of the women in any case to move the railway waggons, and Mr. Kay answered that this was not the practice in the St. Helens district, nor as far as he knew elsewhere, except perhaps upon some rare occasions when the man whose duty it was to do this might be absent. Mr. Matthews asked if the men and women worked together in the same employment, and Mr. Kay replied in the negative. The man who moved the railway waggons was not engaged on the pit-brow at all. Mr. Matthews asked if there were married women employed, and the answer was, "Both married and single, but the single women in much greater proportion."

Mr. WILLIAM WOGAN also explained the nature of the work in which the women are employed. He stated that the "tubs" which the women rolled from the pit-mouth to the tippler on iron plates weighed only from five to six cwt., and were easily pushed over the smooth surface. He stated that in Lancashire, to the best of his belief, the feeling was unanimous that the work of the pit-brow women was healthy, and was not attended with evil consequences to the women employed, and that there was no occasion for its being interfered with. The appearance of the women who attended the deputation gave the lie—if the expression was not unparliamentary—to the statements made by the Northumberland miners who wished to interfere with them. The Lancashire miners protested against the proposed encroachment upon the rights of women—(cheers)—and the contemplated narrowing of the field of industry, which was already too limited. (Cheers.)

Here the Home Secretary put a few questions to the women before him.—Q. You do not fill the waggons? A. No.—Q. Who moves about the railway waggons? A. The men do.—Q. Is that generally the case? A. Yes, that is so.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: In Whitehaven the men fill the waggons.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Then there is no feeling on the part of any member of the deputation against the clause of the bill which says that women shall not move heavy waggons?

Mr. WOGAN: Not at all. (Several voices: "That is quite right, sir; let that clause remain," and cheers.)

Mr. M'LAREN: But it should be specified that the clause applies to the railway waggons and not to the tubs on the pit-brow. (Cheers.)

Mr. KAY explained that in one case where a woman had moved the railway waggons it had proved too much for her, and she had been injured. The inspector then objected to that.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I may say that clause was inserted on the suggestion of the inspector. (Cheers.) In the clause relating to railway waggons you see no disadvantage. (Cheers.) I do not want to pry into secrets, but can you tell me what wages you get?

To this question various answers were given. One girl said 9s. a week, a sum which at first created some surprise. One elderly woman said she got 2s. 6d. a day, and worked six days a week. Others said they got 11s. a week, and others 1s. 8d. per day. It was afterwards explained that there was a difference in the nature of the work done at different pits and in different districts. Mr. Matthews then asked what wages were earned by women and girls employed in mills. The answers given were to the effect that for the heavy unskilled work of the mill wages might begin at 5s. and go up to 7s. 6d. or 8s. 6d. per week. In the case of weavers and skilled persons the wages, beginning at 5s., might go up to 15s. or 16s. a week, but it was impossible for those present to give precise information since the payment was made by the piece.

Mr. MATTHEWS asked if the pit-brow women had any grievances. One girl answered boldly, "No, sir," at which there was much laughter.

Mrs. PARK said her experience was that the girls were very happy in their work. The women all said that they liked their work.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK, M.P., speaking on behalf of the Cumberland mine owners and the miners as well, strongly supported the views of the deputation. He stated that on an average about 400 women were employed on the pit-brows in Cumberland, and out of these 400 there were 378 who had signed a memorial asking that the law should not be altered. In the Whitehaven district the women worked about eight hours, and they had an hour and a half for meals out of that, so that practically they worked only 6½ hours.

Mr. HOOD, representing the miners of South Wales, strongly supported the views of the deputation, and said that if there had been time to arrange it a deputation of working women from South Wales would have attended. He stated that the opinion prevailed in South Wales that the work the women did at the pit-head could be done much better by women than men. (Cheers.)

Mrs. JOSEPHINE BUTLER felt that the proposed restriction on the employment of women would be a retrograde step. The industries at present open to women were far too much restricted, and if Mr. Burt's lead were to be followed, not only would great hardship be inflicted on many hundreds of working women, but an evil precedent would be set. (Hear, hear.)

Miss MULLER read a letter from Mrs. Eleanor Lewis, 103 years of age, who was employed at the Welsh iron mines until she was forty years of age, and bore testimony to the healthfulness of the occupation. There were now 1,600 women employed at the iron mines in Wales, and they were strongly opposed to any interference with their labour.

In answer to Mr. Matthews, Miss MULLER said these women tapped the ore to discover whether it was pure or was mixed with earth.

Mrs. BURROWS of Atherton, said she always stood up for the women and always meant to do so. (Laughter and cheers.) She was glad the Home Secretary seemed to take a practical view of the question. She approved of the suggestion that women should not be allowed to push railway waggons, and added that at the Atherton colliery the women worked in a covered shed and were very comfortable.

A woman employed at this colliery stated that she had worked twelve years on the pit brow and eleven years in the mill, and she preferred the pit brow, having in fact gone back to it. There was no danger in the employment. About fifty-seven of them worked in a large shed, and there was no man to interfere with them. (Laughter.)

The Earl of CRAWFORD and BALCARRES cordially endorsed all that had been said by previous speakers. The women who worked at the pit brow were among the first women in Lancashire, and for morality and good behaviour none stood higher. (Cheers.) He hoped the Government would exercise a wise discretion in this matter, and decline to accept the proposed amendment. (Cheers.)

Earl FORTESCUE, as president of the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women, supported the views of the deputation, and expressed his objection to any unnecessary Government meddling with the labour of adults, who were able to look after their own interests.

Mrs. PARK informed the Home Secretary that the women were stated to do the "screening" more conscientiously than the men. (Laughter and cheers.)

The Countess of LATHOM briefly expressed her sympathy with the objects of the deputation.

The HOME SECRETARY, speaking in reply, said: I will say but a very few words. It gives me the greatest possible gratification to receive this deputation. My own instincts are and have all along been strongly in opposition to what some of you have described as meddling Government interference with grown people, who must know their own business best. I also feel strongly the force of what Mrs. Burrows said about us in London attempting to decide what Lancashire girls shall do or not do, being a very unwise proceeding; and therefore when I framed this Consolidating Code Bill first—as you see by the draft of it, which, no doubt, many of you have read—I declined to interfere at all with the labour of women and girls, except in the solitary case of preventing their moving railway waggons, which may be a work of danger, and of too great difficulty for the strength of girls. (Hear, hear.)

At this point a good-looking pit-brow woman of forty years arose from among the sisterhood, and with great earnestness and volubility, and in a strong Lancashire dialect, interpolated a little story to the effect that she had worked on the pit brow for twenty-one years; that soon after taking up the employment an old gentleman tempted her, by the offer of giving her wages equivalent to her highest earnings, to go into domestic service; but that a very short experience of domestic service had induced her to go back to the pit brow.

The HOME SECRETARY, who was much amused by the interruption, waited until this episode had terminated and then said: To resume—(laughter)—I am very much obliged to the lady for her experience, and for the assurance of her preference for pit work over domestic service. I can myself perfectly understand the matter. But the only thing which, in my opinion, would justify legislative interference with women who choose to undertake a certain class of work would be proof that it was prejudicial to their character and morals, or that it was prejudicial to their health. (Hear, hear.)

The evidence I have heard to day from those who are interested in this work, and from those who are personally acquainted with the women, has satisfied me that pit-brow work is not open to either of those charges. (Hear, hear.) As for the work being hard, I do not think hard work hurts anybody really—man, woman, or child—and, so long as it is not prejudicial to the health of these girls, I don't think any kind of interference can be justified. (Cheers.)

Then as regards the character of the women, the only thing I can imagine as alleged against it is this costume, which I am bound to say looks rather Bulgarian than English; but it is perfectly modest, respectable, and decent, and for the work it seems to be a very proper costume. (Hear, hear.) Strong testimony has been borne to the high character and to the eminently praiseworthy industry of these pit-brow girls, some of whom, we are told, support their families and relations, their younger brothers and sisters—(hear)—by their labour. That, it seems to me, speaks volumes in their praise, and I can only say that, so far as my influence in the House of Commons goes, I shall resist both these amendments. (Cheers.) I trust, as Mr. M'Laren has said, that this large and representative deputation will influence public opinion so decisively, that we shall hear no more of this attempt to hamper and interfere with the honest and praiseworthy kind of industry exercised by girls in Lancashire, in Wales, or wherever else they address themselves to work of this kind. I am glad you have come here, for it strengthens my hands very much. My instincts and opinions have always been on the side of the pit-brow women, as you observe by the draft of the Bill, and you have confirmed me in that opinion by what you have said to-day. I am obliged to you

THE LATE MISS MARIA ATKINSON.

for having taken the trouble, at great inconvenience and expense to yourselves, to come all this way to give me this information.

Mr. M'LAREN, M.P., on behalf of the pit women, conveyed their warm thanks to the right hon. gentleman for the sympathy he had shown, assuring him that it repaid the women of the deputation for all their trouble and expense, and that they would always retain a lively recollection of the kindness they had received.

WHITEHAVEN.

On May 14th, a public meeting was held in the Market Hall, Whitehaven, to protest against amendments to the Coal Mines Regulation Bill, whereby it has been proposed to prohibit women being employed on the pit tops.

Mr. J. G. DEES presided, and said there had been a great deal of agitation lately on the subject of female labour at the pit tops, and the Home Secretary had consented to receive a deputation on Tuesday, who desired to protest against the introduction of clauses into the Mines Bill which proposed preventing female labour at the pit tops. It was proposed, and he hoped the meeting would approve of the proposition, to send a deputation from Whitehaven, part of the deputation to be some of our screen girls, in order that the Home Secretary might see for himself what sort of women they were; and he was sure the Home Secretary, after seeing the sample of women from Whitehaven, would have all doubt he had removed in regard to the continuance of the employment of women on the pit tops. A letter had been received from the member for the borough, which he would read:—

"May 13, 1887.

"My Dear Sir,—I am very glad to hear that you are sending a deputation of our screen girls to London, and I shall have great pleasure in meeting them at the Home Office on Tuesday, when I am sure they will make a favourable impression upon Mr. Matthews. I think this movement to prevent the reasonable employment of women at collieries is entirely dictated by selfish motives and not by considerations of humanity, and I intend to oppose it to the best of my ability. If I am allowed I shall be most happy to contribute towards the expenses which will necessarily be incurred by sending the deputation to London.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

"Mr. R. W. MOORE." "G. C. BENTINCK.

The Rev. R. DUNCAN proposed, Mr. E. ATTER seconded, and Mr. LIDDELL supported: "That this public meeting strongly condemns the attempt that is being made to deprive women of their right to work above ground at collieries, being of opinion that their work though hard is healthy, that they are industrious and moral, and that when it is now so difficult for them to earn an honest livelihood, it would be cruel and wrong to shut them out from any employment they now find suitable."

Mr. John Pearson, Dr. Harris, Mr. R. Johnston, Mr. Cant, Mr. R. W. Moore, Mr. A. M'Gill, Mr. T. F. Braithwaite, the Rev. J. Anderson, Mr. W. R. Kelly, Dr. Irwin, Mr. Baird, Mr. W. Harker, Mr. T. Bowman, Mr. W. J. Tyson, and Dr. Muriel also took part in the meeting.

It was stated that a deputation of screen girls from Maryport would accompany the Whitehaven deputation, and that the Cumberland Colliery managers condemned the proposed amendments. A petition was signed by 350 screen girls of Cumberland protesting against the amendments of Mr. Burt and Mr. A. Jones.

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