

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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PUBLIC attention has been largely directed during the past month to the question of the franchise for women. The annual meeting of the Society held at Manchester, on the 13th of November, and the report then presented, have attracted much notice throughout the country, and have been commented on by the London and provincial Press. The meeting was presided over by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, who, in his opening remarks, drew attention to the fact that the work in which the Society were engaged had, during the last half century, perhaps more than any other, engaged the attention of public men. It referred to the endeavour, again and again renewed, to establish a just representation of the people in the House of Commons. He had been told that he had lost his seat for Manchester because he had undertaken to represent and defend the weaker portion of his constituency. He did not believe, for the credit of the constituency, that that was true. But if it were true, how unfortunate was the position of women. A man might be struck down working in their cause, and there was not one of them who had a vote to give in his defence.

The annual report of the Executive Committee, after referring to the interruption caused by the School Board elections at November, and the general election in February, proceeded to express regret at the loss of so many friends of the cause. Deprived of the services of their able and devoted leader, the promoters of the measure sought to place it in the hands of some member of eminence and ability, under whose auspices it might command a favourable hearing in the new Parliament, and the Committee recorded with pleasure the acceptance of this task by Mr. FORSYTH, Q.C., member for Marylebone. A comparison of the new Parliament with the old, so far as the sentiments of members had been declared, showed that at the time of the dissolution there were 227 members who had voted or declared in favour of the Bill, and 328 against it, a majority against, if they had all voted, of 101. The actual numbers last division were—for the Bill, 155; against, 222; majority, 67. In the new Parliament there are about 234 friends of the Bill, and about 230 supposed to be opponents; the hostile majority

is, therefore, apparently reduced to a nullity. There are about 190 members who are either neutral, or whose views are unknown, and there is here ample margin for turning the present large and powerful minority of declared supporters, which includes the Prime Minister and many of the most influential members of the Cabinet, into a majority. Mr. FORSYTH introduced his Bill on March 19th, but, owing to the short and exceptional character of the session, he was unable to obtain a favourable day for the second reading, and the Bill was withdrawn, by the concurrence of all interested in the matter, on the 16th July. The longer period during which the Bill remained on the order book of the House of Commons, as compared with former sessions, necessitated a corresponding prolongation of the work of petitioning. In former years the Bill has usually been disposed of about the end of April, and the bulk of the petitions have been presented by the first week of May. But this year a constant stream of petitions was kept up until nearly the end of July. During the whole of this period the columns of the *Times* recorded daily a long list of petitions for the Women's Disabilities Bill. There were presented during the past session no fewer than 1,404 petitions, with 430,343 signatures, in favour of the Bill. Of these, 203 petitions were from public meetings or municipal corporations, signed officially or under seal. The petitions last year numbered 919, with 329,206 signatures, showing an increase of 101,137 over the petitioners in 1873. The petitioners for women's suffrage greatly exceed those for any other object.

Mr. FORSYTH, Q.C., M.P., in an able and judicious speech, moved the adoption of the report. He congratulated the meeting on the present position of the movement. He should like to know how it could be made out that a woman had no right to a voice in political questions. The great principle of representation in this country was that taxation and representation were correlative and reciprocal terms, and that principle was admitted already by the victory gained by Mr. BRIGHT in enabling women to exercise the municipal franchise, and that measure contained the germ of the present Bill. In the last session of Parliament, the number of signatures to petitions in favour

of women's suffrage was greater than the number of signatures to petitions in favour of any three other measures upon which the public mind was excited. That fact would not be forgotten or lost sight of by the House of Commons. He thought their prospects were never brighter than they were at the present moment. They had the declaration of the PRIME MINISTER in their favour, and they had his vote, and a considerable number of the members of the present Government were in their favour. It was difficult to predict what Mr. GLADSTONE would do on any question, but he had entirely mis-read Mr. GLADSTONE'S speech on the question if he was not justified in coming to the conclusion that Mr. GLADSTONE'S next speech and vote would be in favour of this Bill. In the meantime he asked them to be prudent and cautious, but at the same time to be resolute and energetic. If he could only get an early day to bring forward this question in the House of Commons, he thought he was not too sanguine in saying that, if they did not succeed, they would be defeated by a very small majority indeed.

The resolution was seconded by Miss LILLIAS ASHWORTH, and other resolutions were spoken to by Dr. PANKHURST, Mr. WHATELEY COOKE TAYLOR, Miss C. A. BIGGS, Miss BEEDY, Mrs. SCATCHERD, Dr. EDMUNDS, and others. The attendance was large and influential, and the proceedings throughout were characterised by great interest and unanimity.

ONE of the most significant events that have occurred since the beginning of the movement was the decision in favour of women's suffrage arrived at by the Conference assembled on the invitation of the Electoral Reform Association on the 17th of November. From the report of the proceedings, which we give elsewhere, it will be seen that the committee which called together the Conference, although in the main composed of men who admit the justice of the claim of women to the suffrage, would not include it among the measures which they desired to press on the immediate attention of the Legislature, and on which they sought to unite the broken ranks of the Liberal party. They further endeavoured to prevent the question being submitted to the Conference in the form of an amendment to their programme, and only after a long and stormy discussion, and a vote to that effect, was Miss BECKER permitted to move her amendment. When at last a division was taken, the majority was decisive in its favour, and in the minority were many who were known to be supporters of women's suffrage, but who

felt bound on this occasion to uphold the original programme of the committee with regard to this particular association. If the division could have been taken purely on the merits of the question, the majority would have been very much larger.

In order to appreciate the full significance of this vote it must be remembered that the Conference comprised representatives of Liberal Associations from all quarters, and that it was fairly typical of the mind of the most advanced Radical party throughout the country. These men found it impossible to resist the claim of women to the suffrage consistently with the principles they profess, and the demands they make for themselves; and, to their honour be it said, they did not hesitate to endorse this claim, irrespective of the consideration of how it might affect the immediate prospect of the reforms which more especially engage their attention. Men like Captain MAXSE and Professor BEESLY, who profess extreme democratic opinions, find themselves unheeded when they exhort the masses of their political associates to shut their ears to the claims of women. Their voices sound strange in using the obsolete cries of extinct Toryism in resisting a demand for an extension of the suffrage which modern Conservatives are prepared to concede, and the chilling blank which follows their utterances fitly expresses the sense of their audience of the ungenerous nature of their exclusive sentiments.

The acceptance of the principle by the public meeting in the evening was, if possible, more encouraging and satisfactory even than the vote in the Conference. It became known that the committee intended to adhere to their original programme, and to ignore the decision arrived at in the morning with respect to women's and adult suffrage. It was therefore resolved to propose a rider, including these proposals, on the first resolution submitted to the public meeting. This was moved by Mr. SHIPTON and seconded by Mr. ODGER, and carried with enthusiasm in the large gathering by an overwhelming majority. From the manner in which the proposal was received, it was evident that the meeting was composed mainly, if not entirely, of extreme Radicals—of men whose principles do not stop at household or rating suffrage, but who desire "manhood suffrage." Yet these men could perceive that on whatever principle the suffrage is demanded for men, that same principle applies equally to women, whether the ground be that men who pay taxes have a right to representation with regard to the imposition and disbursement of such taxes, or that men who are

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in the Mayor's Parlour, at the Manchester Town Hall, on November 13th. Mr. Jacob Bright presided, and there were also present—Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Becker, Miss L. Ashworth, Miss Beedy, Mrs. Gell, Miss Biggs, Mrs. J. P. Thomasson, Miss A. Wilson, Mrs. Moore, Miss Gaskell, Miss Ashworth, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Edmunds, Mrs. Duncan, Rev. S. A. Steintal, Mrs. S. A. Steintal, Mr. Councillor Booth, Mr. Whateley Cooke Taylor, Dr. Pankhurst, Mr. W. J. Williams, Dr. Borchardt, Mr. B. L. Green, Mr. J. Long, Dr. Edmunds, Mr. J. H. Raper, and others.

The annual report of the executive committee was read by Miss BECKER. The report has been published in a separate form.

Miss BECKER also read the following letter, which had been received from the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P. :—

"My dear Miss Becker,—I shall not be able to attend the annual general meeting of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage on 13th November. It is not necessary. My opinion is sufficiently well known, and I shall be prepared to give it practical expression by voice and vote when Mr. Forsyth's Bill comes to debate and division in the House of Commons next year. I trust that the result of your discussion on Friday will be to secure to Mr. Forsyth the aid he will largely need of a growing public opinion, expressed in meetings and by petitions to Parliament. In the House of Commons I will willingly afford him any aid which he may desire and which I can bring. I cannot close my letter without expressing my deep regret, for the sake of many questions, but pre-eminently of this question, that Mr. Jacob Bright is not as yet a member of the present Parliament, and I confidently trust the time is not far distant when he will be able to support the cause he originally made his own in the Legislature of the country."

The treasurer's report was read by the Rev. S. A. STEINTAL. It showed an income amounting to £2,433, including a balance from last year of £766. The balance now in hand was reduced to £452, and was really still further reduced by outstanding liabilities amounting to £336.

The CHAIRMAN said they were met together to assist in a work which, during the last half century, had perhaps more than any other, engrossed the attention of public men. He referred, of course, to the endeavour again and again renewed to establish a just representation of the people in the House of Commons. The struggles for that object had required much labour and many sacrifices from patriotic men. They had from time to time produced much excitement creating absurd alarms on the one hand, and perhaps exaggerated expectations on the other; they had disturbed the public mind by the overthrow of many governments. But to the extent that these struggles had succeeded, they had been the parent of untold blessings to this country. In the year 1832, the men of the middle class obtained representation, and in 1867, the men of the working classes who lived in the towns were admitted to the same privilege. As the result of these changes, nobody would deny that they had had a free national development, and, in consequence of that, internal peace; and, further, those who had been in possession of the vote had had a practical guarantee against any great or prolonged legislative injustice. In the light of this experience the question arose, why did they not go a little further? Why,

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AS REGISTRARS.—The guardians of the poor for the Martley Union, Worcester, have recently nominated Miss M. Lipscombe to be registrar of births and deaths for one of the sub-districts in that union, and the appointment has been approved by the Registrar General. This is the first appointment of a woman as registrar.

upon the moderate basis of household suffrage, could men be so obstinately unwilling to give a general representation to the people? At all times those who had been within the political pale had had a sort of superstitious dread of those who had been without. Men who were perfectly rational in all other respects were the victims of this peculiar superstitious fear. Before 1832 Manchester itself was unfitted to exercise any influence in the British House of Commons. There were then in Manchester pious clergymen, rich bankers, enterprising merchants and manufacturers—men who were sometimes considered the very pillars of the social fabric, but when it was proposed by Lord Grey and others to admit these with men generally of the middle classes of this town to representation in the House of Commons, such was the panic among the monopolisers of political power that few of the present generation could believe how wide and intense it was. When his friend, Mr. Edward Baines, one of the most moderate and, he believed, one of the justest of men, from year to year brought forward his £6 Franchise Bill, it was voted down as inadmissible by both sides of the House. When Mr. Gladstone asked to admit men paying a £7 rent to the franchise, the Government to which he belonged was destroyed, and when his (the speaker's) brother led the movement in favour of household suffrage, such were the fears and such the passions, bred of these fears, that the language which he had heard at the time in railway carriages, and which was written even in respectable newspapers, would scarcely be credited if it were reproduced to-day. (Hear, hear.) That superstitious fear the advocates of woman's suffrage had to confront, and they could only remove it by the force of persuasion and by the influence of time. They had to familiarise the public mind with the extreme moderation and with the justice of their claims, and in a little while the public nerve would be strengthened and their cause would be won; and when it was won they would meet very few men who would admit that they ever had been against them. (Laughter.) The door which admitted to political privileges was to be opened before any very long time in favour of the householder in the county. There was not a single argument used by Mr. Trevelyan and his supporters which did not tell with greater force in respect to the case of women householders. A considerable proportion of the householders in the county were agricultural labourers—poor men getting something from 11s. to 16s. a week. When this question was last debated in the House of Commons he asked whether Parliament intended to admit agricultural labourers and to exclude the farmers. He showed from the returns of the census that there were 22,000 farmers and graziers in England and Wales who were women. When he asked the question nobody answered it; but at the close of the debate there were men of influence in the House of Commons who came to him and said: "Of course, if all this wide enfranchisement is to take place, and we are to have so many who are poor, and who are perhaps ignorant, we must agree to your proposal, because you are asking for the admission of many who have property and education." (Hear, hear.) The practical grounds on which all excluded classes had demanded the franchise were the inequalities of the law, and unfortunately this argument could be used with overwhelming power by women. Some people said that though the law was very unequal between men and women, yet the inequality was just and necessary. He would rather say that, seeing that the laws of God were equal between men and women, when the laws of men were found to be strikingly unequal the presumption was that they were unjust and injurious. We had in England two laws of divorce—one for the man and one for the woman. He should like to know how such a body as the

bench of bishops would defend this distinction, looking at it from their Christian standpoint. With regard to the irregular relationship of the sexes, there was one law for the man and one for the woman. From the woman we had by recent legislation removed every constitutional safeguard, and she was reduced to a degree of degradation which no human ingenuity could surpass. The man was allowed to go boldly through the streets, his pockets lined with gold for the purposes of temptation. He might address freely those on his right hand and on his left, and his own person was sacred; no policeman dared to lay a hand upon him. There were two laws of marriage—one for the man and one for the woman. Marriage greatly extended the property rights of the man. It destroyed the property rights of the woman. Some people supposed that this law had been changed. A great effort was made to change it; and he was bound to say, in justice to the last House of Commons, that that House had sanctioned that change. But the Lords stood in the way, and the law was this: Those married women who earned money were the owners of that money, or at least should be if the law operated universally—how far it did so he did not know, and married women might inherit money in sums not exceeding £200. If the sum exceeded £200, unless specially guarded by the will, the whole went to the husband, though he might be living away from his family and neglecting all duties in regard to it. It seemed to him when the House of Lords shaped the Bill as he had described it, they were establishing a principle that the money earned by labour was more sacred than money inherited; and he confessed that was a curious principle for the House of Lords to establish. (A laugh.) There were two laws in this country on the subject of education—one opened every door to men, and the other subjected women to taxes for the support of institutions from which they were excluded; and when they wanted to obtain learning in the higher branches—in some kinds, at any rate—they had to become temporary exiles from their native country, and to seek that learning elsewhere. With respect to the guardianship of children, women were often subjected to humiliation and distress on the death of their husbands, from the fact that their authority might be to a great degree or altogether removed from the management of their children, with regard especially to education, and even to religious education. In the face of these cruel inequalities of the law, was it matter of wonder that an increasing number of women who were giving attention to public affairs were beginning to look with indifference upon our party politics? They were making the painful discovery that whatever party designations might be—Conservative or Liberal, Whig or Radical—there were many men sitting in every part of the House of Commons, both above and below the gangways, who, so far as women were concerned, were entire strangers to the sense of justice. This would continue until women got votes. He had been told that he had lost his seat in Manchester because he had undertaken to represent and defend the weaker portion of his constituency. He did not believe—he would not believe, for the credit of the constituency, that that was true. He believed that other causes much more general operated to make the changes that were made both in Manchester and elsewhere at the last general election. But if it were true—if any man believed it to be true, then how unfortunate was the position of women. A man might be struck down working in their cause, and there was not one of them who had a vote to give in his defence. (Hear, hear.) But so long as women had not votes members of Parliament would give them little attention, Governments would give them still less; and if he wanted to show them how completely they were—he would not say despised, but forgotten—by Govern-

ments, he would point to some official changes which occurred in the last Government just before its fall. According to his, perhaps, untutored intelligence, it seemed that before a man could be appointed a law officer of the crown he should have given some proof that he had it on his conscience to make the laws just and equal for the whole people. But the last Government appointed men to be law officers of the crown who appeared to be committed to every injustice of which they complained. (Hear, hear.) When one of those officials went down to his constituency for re-election women went there to meet him, to convert him, if possible, and if it were not possible, to defeat him, and when they took this course they were violently attacked by Liberal newspapers, according to it might be to the duty which these newspapers imposed upon themselves. All he would say with regard to what took place at Taunton or at any other contest was this: That he had yet to learn that women, with the whole facts of their case before their minds, were bound to have a profound respect for party lines. Having said that with regard to legal appointments, he would just before sitting down admit that the appointments had not always been of that character. There had been Sir John Coleridge, a Christian gentleman, and Mr. Jessel, a Hebrew gentleman, one, it might be, representing the new, and the other the old order of things; but both these men were just to women, and during the whole time they were in the House they, on many occasions, exerted strenuous influence and able advocacy in the cause of women. In entering upon a new campaign he asked them to give to Mr. Forsyth the support which they had given to him, and all the additional support which they could command. They could command additional support for this reason, that the movement was growing. They could have more petitions if they liked, they could have more public meetings, they might leave no borough that was represented in Parliament without instruction, they might have interviews with members of Parliament both in London and among their constituents. He had himself much faith in the character of his fellow countrymen, and he believed there was no cause which could be shown to be just and necessary, supported by an intelligent advocacy, which Englishmen would in the end refuse to accept. (Cheers.)

Mr. FORSYTH, Q.C., M.P., moved the adoption of the report. He said if women were not entitled to exercise a fractional voice in the choice of those who represented them, it must be on one of two grounds—it must be that they were so intellectually inferior to men, so unfit by their mental constitution to understand political questions, that they could not be safely intrusted with the political franchise, or it must be on the ground that, admitting them to be not intellectually incompetent, their disqualification arose from incompatibility of sex. As to the supposed inferiority as regards brain power of women to men, that objection was now never seriously urged. He did not believe he had a single opponent in the House of Commons who would dare to rise in his place and say he based his opposition on the ground that a woman was intellectually unfit to exercise the franchise. If he did so he would be met with a crushing reply. Was it possible that a sex, in which were included, not to mention living instances, a Madame de Stael and a Mrs. Somerville, was not, as a sex, intellectually fit to exercise the franchise as the other sex, while every drunken, dissipated householder, though half an idiot, was entitled to exercise it? It might be said that he pointed to illustrious exceptions. Of course he did. Were all women Madame de Staels and Mrs. Somervilles, instead of women asking for the suffrage, men would have to sit at their feet and confess their great inferiority. As to the objection that it was incompatible with the position of women in this country, or what ought to

be their position in every civilised community, that they should take an active part in politics, it was in the first place a great mistake to think that if this Bill passed every woman would become a politician. It was not so with men. In his own constituency of Marylebone, at the last election, although the fate of a government was at issue, eleven thousand male voters did not think it worth their while to go to the poll at all. On the other hand, women who were so mentally constituted as to take an interest in politics would do so whether they had the franchise or not. A woman need not go upon the hustings and make a speech. She need not even declare which way she intended to vote. All that she had to do was to take a pen in her hand once in an average of three or five years and mark her voting paper and put it in the ballot box. It was said by a late Minister of the Crown in the last Parliament, that women should not have votes because they were not engaged, and could not be engaged, in the military or naval services. If that argument was of any use at all it ought to show that *par excellence* the military and naval services ought to have votes, whereas men in these services had no vote at all. (Hear, hear.) But women claimed to be represented because their interests were endangered and were being neglected. One characteristic of the present day, and it was likely to be still more a characteristic of the future, was the number of social questions as distinguished from questions of organic change that came before Parliament. He meant questions affecting the social well-being of the people. He referred, for example, to the law on the custody of infants. In former times a dissolute husband, who had himself broken the conjugal relationship, and left his wife almost starving, might deprive her of her children at any age. A moderate instalment of justice had been obtained with great difficulty by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, which enabled the mother to retain the custody of her children to the age of seven years; and now by an Act passed last year the Court of Chancery can order the custody of children to be given to the mother up to the age of sixteen years. Surely, however, this was a matter on which women ought to have a voice. In regard to the law of guardianship, was it just or fair that by the law of England no woman could appoint a guardian? Did not the question of factory legislation and the hours during which adult women should work in mills immediately concern women, and was it not important that their opinion upon that subject should be expressed not merely by articles in newspapers and by platform speeches, but by the voice of women through their representatives in the House of Commons? Was it possible to say that men had a monopoly of interest in the question of education, or the management of reformatories, or in relieving the poor? But then it was said that if they allowed women the franchise, that they might be directly represented upon these and a multitude of other questions which he might name, they would be letting in the thin end of the wedge, and that there was looming in the distance a vast array of questions known as women's rights. It appeared to him to be a very unworthy argument to say that they were to refuse to concede what was right in itself because they might afterwards be called upon to refuse what was wrong. He knew distinctly what he was prepared to grant upon this question, and supposing his Bill passed, and a demand was afterwards made on the part of women which he thought to be unreasonable, he should firmly and, he said, consistently oppose it. With regard to another argument, that politics did not constitute the natural sphere of woman, he said they might depend upon it that the time would come before very long when it would be thought just as absurd to say the natural sphere of woman was subjection and total abstention from taking a practical part in those questions which interested her fellow-citizens, as we now thought it absurd, illogical, and

almost revolting, to use the argument that the negro should be a slave. In order to show the frivolous nature of some of the objections which were raised to the proposal to extend the franchise to women, he mentioned the case of Sir Henry James, who had been supposed to make the best speech in the House of Commons against the measure, which he denounced as revolutionary, and as calculated to change the relation of the sexes and disorganise society; but when he went down to Taunton he confessed that if one half the female population of that small borough asked for the measure he would be prepared to concede it. The principle that women had the same right to vote as men on the footing of being taxpayers was admitted already by the victory gained by Mr. Jacob Bright in giving women the municipal franchise. It was a logical following out of that measure when women were allowed not only to vote for school boards, but to become members of such boards; and it would be a novelty to him when he heard that they had not exercised that franchise with perfect propriety, and in a way beneficial to the country. It was said that if they gave women votes, they might ask to sit in the House of Commons. All he said in reply to that was, that when they did make such a demand it would be time enough for them, if they thought right, to oppose it. He congratulated them upon the progress of the question. Last year there were presented to the House of Commons as many signatures in favour of the Bill as there were in favour of the Intoxicating Liquors Bill, the Public Worship Regulation Bill, and any other Bill they liked to take, added together. The opponents of the measure were represented by petitioners in three small Scotch boroughs. (Laughter.) If people believed that the measure was revolutionary, how came it that England was not alive to the danger? Their prospects were never brighter than they were now. They had the declaration of the Prime Minister and many of his colleagues in their favour; and with regard to Mr. Gladstone—although of course it was difficult to predict what Mr. Gladstone would do upon any question—he had entirely misread the right hon. gentleman's speeches upon this question unless he was justified in coming to the conclusion that his next speech and vote would be in favour of the Bill. He knew that there were a number of members of the House of Commons whose minds were perfectly open to conviction upon the subject, and that they would be determined in giving their votes by the preponderating weight of argument in debate. In such circumstances he thought that an ultimate victory might be counted upon, and in the meantime he trusted all the members of the society throughout the kingdom would be prudent and cautious, but also resolute and energetic. If they were so—if they increased the number of their petitions, and brought all their influence to bear upon members of Parliament—he believed he was not too sanguine in saying that, if they did not succeed in the coming session, they would be defeated by a very small majority indeed.

Miss LILIAS ASHWORTH seconded the motion. She said that since last year they had to deal with a new Parliament and a new Government, and both were supposed to be much more favourable to this question. She was not going to prophesy, after Mr. Forsyth's speech, what would be the result in the next session of Parliament, but she was inclined, after seeing the work which was going on in the country, to think that their success was not altogether uncertain. When the society began its work seven years ago, perhaps few of its members anticipated that the work would be so long and so difficult, but, at any rate they could congratulate themselves on the fact that women had proved themselves equal to the task of carrying forward one of the most difficult questions which perhaps anyone could have on hand at the present time. A few days ago,

one of the members for Lincolnshire—Sir John Astley—received a memorial from his constituents, asking him to vote next session for the Women's Disabilities Bill, and he wrote a letter in reply which was characterised by very great candour. He said that he had a particular objection to women who gave much time and attention to politics, and he went on to say that if such ladies existed in the neighbourhood, why should not they "by their sweet influence move the feelings of their male friends to give utterance and force to their ideas; but better far let them attend to the comfort of the male population." If Sir John Astley admitted that women had got ideas, she should like to know why they should be obliged to go through the difficult and laborious process of giving utterance to them through other people. She knew very well that at parliamentary contests many ladies obliged their menservants, their footmen, coachmen, and gardeners, to vote for those candidates whom they approved; but the majority of women who were asking for the franchise did not possess this means of giving force to their ideas. In regard to the comfort of the male population, she as a representative of what was called women's rights should like to say that they desired that the comfort and happiness of the male population should receive in every way due attention; but they did think it right to give also some thought and attention to the comfort of their own sex. It was probable that Sir John Astley was not aware of the condition of the female population. It was stated that something like one-third of the entire female population of England and Scotland were working for their bread. She did not mean that they were working domestically, or reposing in what was called their sphere, but that they were working hard in order that they might live. If they inquired into the occupations pursued by these women, they would find that for the most part they were the most menial, and the worst paid. The numbers of self-dependent women were not diminishing, but increasing from year to year, and moreover, more and more restrictions were being placed upon their employment. They were asking for the franchise in order to obtain educational advantages to fit women for the work of life, in order that they might obtain industrial freedom, and in order that they might obtain, too, some protection from the laws. She asked in the face of these facts whether it was not the bounden duty of women to study first the needs of their own sex, in order that they might obtain for women some of those comforts and advantages which men had so long enjoyed. They saw just now in the country the Liberal party searching about for what they called a programme, and everybody who had any question on hand of public importance were pressing forward to claim for their particular question a place upon this undefined programme. Lately a large meeting had been held in Manchester upon the Alliance question, and last week another large meeting was held by the Liberation Society; and the speakers at these meetings all told the country that theirs was the question which must be made the question of the hour. They all thought that they had found the missing programme. She was inclined to agree with Mr. Leatham, when in his speech at Huddersfield the other day, he said that his programme for the future consisted chiefly in a desire to give the widest scope and the freest exercise to the popular voice; in the belief that when that was done, and the country woke up again, programmes would not be needed. In a few days there was to be a conference in London on the question of electoral reform, and one of the resolutions which was to be submitted to that meeting was to the effect that no measure of electoral reform would be satisfactory that did not provide for the adequate representation of the views and opinions of every section of the community. A public meeting which could endorse that resolution admitted at once this question of woman's

suffrage as one of the first importance at the present moment. Women were the largest section of the community who were wholly unrepresented, and they were just that portion of the population who were asking most earnestly at this present moment for the removal of electoral disabilities. The largest meetings held during the last few years on the question of electoral reform, and the enormous preponderance of meetings held on that question, had been held by women in support of their claim. More petitions had been presented last session to the House of Commons on this than on any other question, or, as Mr. Forsyth said, than any other three questions at present before the House of Commons.

The resolution was unanimously agreed to.

Dr. PANKHURST moved:—"That this meeting hereby records their sense of the inestimable value of the services rendered to the cause in the late Parliament by Mr. Jacob Bright, by introducing and obtaining the sanction of the Legislature to the amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act giving the municipal franchise to women; by introducing the Women's Disabilities Bill, and by his able, faithful, and constant advocacy of the measure during four successive sessions. This meeting hereby also expresses their deep regret that they are at present deprived of his parliamentary services, and their earnest hope that he may soon be restored to a place in Parliament." He said that no Parliament man had ever had a position to command of more difficulty, delicacy, and complexity than the position entrusted to Mr. Jacob Bright in the leadership of this question, and he would say that no Parliament man in these circumstances, and in so short a time, had fulfilled the office of leadership with more courage, good sense, and tact, than had their esteemed and valuable representative, Mr. Jacob Bright. (Cheers.) Dr. Pankhurst, in further supporting the motion, referred to the declaration of Mr. Goldwin Smith against the movement, on the ground that by giving the franchise to women they would destroy liberty and Liberal institutions in Europe. Now, it was fair to conclude that a case from which so distinguished and competent a man could not escape without presenting one of the most formidable acts of defamation of character that was ever conceived, was surely a case that all men must believe on grounds of reason and justice to be absolutely irresistible. The position assumed by Mr. Goldwin Smith involved a presumption against the character and capacity of women so odious as that it was their resolution to destroy freedom at a stroke if they only got the chance, and that therefore by presumption they were only restrained by not having the parliamentary franchise, from at once, at a great blow, destroying the institutions and the freedom of this country.

Mr. WHATELEY COOKE TAYLOR, inspector of factories, seconded the motion, which was unanimously adopted, and Mr. BRIGHT briefly acknowledged the compliment paid him.

Miss C. A. BIGGS moved:—"That the cordial thanks of this meeting are rendered to Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, the Right Hon. the Recorder of London, and Sir Robert Anstruther, for introducing a measure to remove the electoral disabilities of women, and the meeting respectfully requests them to take steps for the re-introduction of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill at an early period of the forthcoming session, and pledge themselves to support their action by every means in their power."

Miss BEEDY seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

On the motion of Mrs. SCATCHERD (Leeds), seconded by Dr. EDMUNDS (London), the executive committee and office bearers were appointed; and afterwards, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal having taken the chair, on the motion of Miss ALICE WILSON, seconded by Miss BECKER, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Bright for presiding, and to the Mayor for the use of his Parlour,

#### CONVERSAZIONE.

In the evening a conversazione was held in the Town Hall, the following ladies presiding at the tea tables:—Mrs. Blackburn, Mrs. Thomas Dale, Mrs. Gell, Mrs. Abel Heywood, Mrs. S. A. Steinthal, Mrs. J. P. Thomasson, Mrs. Robert Winder, and Mrs. Stephen Winkworth. Tea was served in the Mayor's Parlour, and afterwards an adjournment was made to the large room, where several addresses were delivered. The Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL presided.

Miss BIGGS, in the course of her address, said that in speaking of this movement too much was thought of the women of the upper classes, who were to a certain extent looked after by the customs of society. It was more for the women of the poorer classes that they were asking the suffrage than for women of property; and it was the poorer women who, if they were possessed of the franchise, would be in a better position to protect themselves. If women had had a vote the Factory Laws would not have been passed last session without in any way asking their opinion, and there were many social questions in which women had equal a decision and in a great many cases equal experience with men.

Mrs. OLIVER SCATCHERD (Leeds) gave an account of her work in Leeds and in Yorkshire generally.

Mr. FORSYTH, M.P., said one great reason of the opposition to the movement was because it was not known what was included in the indefinite term, "women's rights," and he advised them, if they wished their measure to pass the two Houses of Parliament, to stick to one thing at a time, and not to embarrass the question with considerations of what they might wish for the future. All they ought to do now was to concentrate their whole energy upon working for one thing, which was this, that female ratepayers and householders who were independent, and who paid their fair contributions to the rates and taxation of the country, should not be prevented from having the same privilege of exercising their vote in the choice of members of Parliament as was allowed to every male householder who paid rates in the kingdom. (Hear, hear.)

Brief addresses were also delivered by Mr. Jacob Bright, Miss Maria Atkinson, Miss Beedy, Miss Liliash Ashworth, Mr. Haslam (Bolton), and Mr. Thomasson (Bolton); and Mr. Thos. Dale expressed the thanks of the committee to the lady speakers and the ladies' committee.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS.

##### CHESTER.

On November 16th, a meeting was held in the Town Hall, Chester. The hall was very nearly filled. Mr. David Roberts occupied the chair, and there were on the platform Miss Beedy, M.A., and Miss Biggs (a deputation from the National Society for Women's Suffrage), Rev. J. K. Montgomery, Mr. Councillor W. Farish, Mr. Councillor T. W. Jones, and Mr. E. Powell. Resolutions in favour of the principle were supported by the above-named ladies and gentlemen, and carried unanimously. The *Chester Chronicle* and the *Cheshire Observer* contained copious reports of the meeting, and the former paper had a leading article admitting the justice of the claim, and suggesting that the members for the city should take care how they persist in their recusancy lest they should have the melancholy satisfaction of telling their constituency that they had fought not only a losing, but an unpopular, because unchivalrous battle.

##### WARRINGTON.

On November 17, a crowded meeting was held in the Public Hall, Warrington. The Mayor of Warrington (Mr. S. Chandley) presided, and read a letter from Mr. Rylands, ex-M.P. for

Warrington, in which he said that the municipal vote was given to women householders by a clause proposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Jacob Bright and seconded by himself, and he saw no reason why they were not equally entitled to the parliamentary franchise. He might say that he had received a communication from Mr. Greenall, the respected member for the borough, who said that in consequence of a previous engagement he could not be present at the meeting. He further stated that had a division been taken when the Bill was before Parliament the last time, he would have voted in its favour. The meeting was addressed by Miss Biggs, Mr. C. Broadbent, Miss Beedy, and the Rev. B. Glover, and resolutions affirming the principle were put and carried.

## SOUTHPORT.

On November 18th, a meeting was held in the Cambridge Hall, Southport. Richard Nicholson, Esq., in the chair. Miss Beedy and Miss Biggs attended as a deputation, and delivered addresses explaining the objects of the society.

## BLACKBURN.

A meeting was held on November 24th, in the Exchange Hall, Blackburn. There was a very large attendance, and the reserved seats were largely occupied by ladies. Mr. Councillor Beads presided, and he was supported on the platform by Miss Becker and Miss Beedy, who attended as a deputation from the National Society for Women's Suffrage, and by the Rev. J. N. Ewan Stott, Councillors Whittaker, Chamberlain, Brooks and Higson; Mr. J. Dean, solicitor, and Mr. J. Waugh. The resolutions were carried amid great applause by the large gathering of nearly 2,000 persons, with only two dissentients.

## MARGATE.

On October 21st a meeting was held in St. John's Hall, Margate. The Mayor (Alderman Reeve) presided. Addresses were delivered by Miss Beedy and Miss Downing, as representing the society, and resolutions were moved by Alderman Knight and Alderman Pickering. The various addresses were listened to with the greatest interest, and there appeared to be a feeling of great unanimity in favour of the movement.

## RAMSGATE.

A public meeting was held on October 26th, in St. James's Hall, Ramsgate. The chair was occupied by Mr. Henderson, and there was a large attendance. Miss Caroline Biggs and Miss Downing were the deputation. The other speakers were Mr. H. Hinds, Mr. W. Jennings, the Rev. J. D. Rodway, and Mr. Dunt. The resolutions were carried unanimously, and several persons signed the petition before leaving the room. A very copious report of the proceedings appeared in the *Kent Coast Times*.

## NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE.

A public meeting was held at the Town Hall, Newport, on October 26th, Mr. Charles Lewis, J.P., in the chair. On the platform were Miss Beedy, Miss Fenwick Miller, and Miss Luke, secretary of the Bristol and West of England branch of the society, who attended as a deputation, and the Rev. F. D. Sellar, Mr. Edward Thomas, and Mr. Pearson, of Newport. Resolutions were spoken to by the above-named ladies and gentlemen, and carried *nem. con.* Votes of thanks concluded the proceedings.

## SWANSEA.

A meeting was held on October 27 in the Music Hall, Swansea. Deputation as at Newport. The Mayor, Thomas Powell, Esq., occupied the chair; and the meeting was also addressed by Mr. Leonard Williams and the Rev. E. Higginson. The spacious hall was well filled by an attentive and orderly assembly, and the resolutions proposed were carried.

## LLANELLY.

On October 28th a meeting was held in the Athenæum, Llanelly. It was crowded and enthusiastic, and attended by nearly all the influential persons of the neighbourhood. Deputation as at Newport. Mr. Buckley, J.P., of Penyfa and Castle Gorfod, chairman of the Llanelly School Board, presided. The meeting was addressed by the ladies of the deputation, by Mr. Alan Greenwell, M.A., the Rev. J. Morgan (in Welsh), Mr. George S. Mee, Mr. Rosser, and the Rev. John James, and the resolutions were carried with only two dissentients. Mr. W. Howell, solicitor, Park-street, was appointed the representative of the Bristol and West of England Society in the Llanelly district.

## HAVERFORDWEST.

A meeting was held in the Masonic Hall, Haverfordwest, on October 29th. The chair was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Davies, and the meeting was addressed by Miss Beedy, Miss Fenwick Miller, Mr. Alderman Phillips, Mr. H. T. Norman, and Mr. James Davies. Miss Miller addressed herself to combat Mr. Scourfield's objections, her criticisms on his last speech in opposition to the Bill being of a most sarcastic and unanswerable nature, and bringing down the house most effectually. The attendance was good, and the speeches of the ladies were listened to with the closest attention. All the resolutions were carried.

## TENBY.

Friday, Oct. 30. A meeting held in the Assembly Rooms, Tenby, Henry Goward, Esq., M.A. presided and opened the meeting by an interesting and effective speech. Miss Fenwick Miller moved the first resolution, seconded by the Rev. John Lewis. Miss Beedy moved the next resolution, that a petition to the House of Commons be forwarded, and memorials to John H. Scourfield, Esq., M.P., and E. J. Reed, Esq., M.P., be presented, requesting them to support Mr. Forsyth's Bill for the Removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women. This resolution was seconded by Alan Greenwell, Esq., M.A., of Bristol. The audience, which was large and influential, manifested much interest in the proceedings of the meeting.

## CARDIFF.

A crowded and enthusiastic meeting was held on November 2nd, in the Town Hall, Cardiff, under the presidency of Mr. R. Corry, junr. Miss Beedy, Miss Miller, and Mr. Alan Greenwell attended as a deputation, and the meeting was also addressed by Mr. Peter Price, the Rev. Joseph Waite, Rev. A. Tilly, Dr. Edwards, Mr. Billups and Mr. Thompson. The resolutions were carried. Votes of thanks concluded the proceedings. A collection was made at the door.

## LONGSIDE.

A lecture was delivered in the Public Hall, Longside, near Aberdeen, on October 21st, by Miss Jessie Craigen. She took for her subject "Woman's rights," and held her audience spell-bound for two hours. The lecture was clear and lucid throughout, spoken in a calm, distinct, and earnest manner, and showed that Miss Craigen was thoroughly acquainted with her subject. A vote of thanks was heartily accorded to her at the close of the meeting.—*Daily Free Press*.

Miss Craigen has also lectured at AMBLE, Northumberland, and at APPLEBY, Westmorland, during the past month. At the latter place the Rev. Geo. Karnes, minister of the Methodist Free Church, occupied the chair. Petitions were adopted at all these meetings.

## ELECTORAL REFORM CONFERENCE.

A conference, convened by the Electoral Reform Association, was held on November 17th, at the Freemasons' Tavern, London. Mr. J. S. WRIGHT, of Birmingham, was, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. James Beal, voted to the chair. A good muster of delegates attended from the various Liberal, reform, labour, and other leagues of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Birkenhead, Bath, Bristol, Sheffield, Nottingham, Liverpool, Bradford, Leeds, and other towns. Letters of apology from Mr. Burt, M.P., Mr. Macdonald, M.P., Mr. Illingworth, and Mr. Lea were read. Amongst those present were Sir John Bennett, Miss Becker, Captain Maxse, Miss Lillias Ashworth, Miss Miller, Sir George Campbell, and Mr. Carvell Williams.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that some were of opinion that the present was not the time for agitation, and that the country was not prepared for it, inasmuch as the cabinet of reform and progress was now out of office. This, however, was a fallacy. He still held the opinion that Parliament must give its attention to reforming itself. The people ought to move earnestly together in seeing that the House of Commons should be the true representative of the people. (Hear.) The conference had been called together by the Electoral Reform Association to discuss certain matters which they believed to be essential to the proper constitution of the Commons House of Parliament. The association went on its own lines and had decided on its platform. He had been directed to state that the association felt it most important that their efforts should be supported. They had put down the different planks of the platform, and he concluded those present were willing to adhere to those planks. Some might have liked other planks to be put down which it might not be expedient to introduce at the present moment. There were such questions as universal suffrage or adult suffrage. (Hear, hear.) Some might think that this should have been one of the planks. The association in London, formed for a definite object, limited their movement to the assimilation of the franchise in counties and boroughs. They say, "We have a distinct household suffrage in boroughs having the franchise recognised," and they say, "it is comparatively easy, and it follows from simple common sense that the people outside the boroughs should have the same franchise." He and those with him in Birmingham would like to go in for manhood suffrage, or, if the ladies liked the term better, adult suffrage. Many of them advocated women suffrage, and thought that where the ladies had to act the part of citizens they ought to be entitled to the privilege of electing members of Parliament; and he was of the same opinion. The association had thought it better to deal with the question of the extension of the suffrage as it now stood in boroughs and counties. There were other important questions, but they had been called together to deal with electoral reform. The association was of opinion that they must first of all make the House of Commons right. When they had made the House of Commons the representative of the people—the just representative—other reforms would come easily enough, and without any considerable amount of effort or difficulty.

Mr. NOBLE then moved the following resolution:—"That this conference hereby records its deliberate conviction that existing electoral arrangements are entirely at variance with sound principles of parliamentary representation, occasion serious practical evils, and prevent legislation upon many important questions now ripe for settlement, and that it is the duty of all earnest reformers to unite to secure the early enactment of the following measures:—The assimilation of the

borough and county franchise; the redistribution of political power, so as to secure for every portion of the electoral body its due weight in Parliament, neither more nor less; the relief of candidates from payment of the legal expense of elections; the improvement of procedure with respect to the registration of electors, especially in the case of lodgers; and the prevention of corrupt practices." Having briefly sketched the origin of the association, he repudiated what seemed to be the only policy suggested by the Liberal party—that of "sticking together." Reformers, he said, wanted to know what they were to stick together for. The only thing which could bind them together was to have some definite principle, some great measures to urge upon the constituencies.

Mr. HOWELL (London) seconded the resolution. The platform of the association had fixed upon a basis that they felt to be unalterable. They had been careful to consider what would be the best platform for uniting the voices of Liberals who desired the extension of reforms stated in the resolution.

Mr. J. C. FIELDEN, representing the Manchester Reform Union, supported the resolution.

So far everything had gone on smoothly; but a hostile feeling was excited by an announcement from the chairman that no amendments could be accepted which were not within the strict line of the resolution, and on that rule he declined to receive an amendment in favour of equal electoral districts.

Miss BECKER said they had heard full explanations of the principle on which they would receive amendments, and she contended that the amendment she had to submit was strictly in order. One of the objects stated in the programme was the assimilation of the borough franchise. The meaning she proposed to give to it was an assimilation of the borough franchise by including all householders. She appealed (if her proposition was not strictly within the resolution) that the meaning might be made more clear if the resolution were varied to the extent of including the words "by the admission of women householders to the vote on the same conditions on which it is granted to men." The object of the conference, as she understood it, was not so much to promote any particular means, but to advance the great end of giving a fair representation of the people in the House of Commons. She submitted that the House of Commons could not fairly represent the people whilst half the people remained under specific electoral disability, and that half, she ventured to say, not the least important half. (Hear, hear.) They claimed to be part of the people; they claimed their share in the representation and electoral privileges. No doubt there were differences of opinion with regard to the representation of women, as there were with regard to the representation of men, whether household suffrage or adult suffrage was the best; but with that the present meeting was not concerned. They had met to deal with practical measures, and not abstract questions. They had a franchise recognised by law as a basis of representation in this country, and the object of the conference was to make that franchise universal among the people. She quoted, in support of her argument, a passage from one of Mr. Bright's Birmingham speeches. Women householders vote in every other election in which their interests are concerned, and they asked that they should vote in the election of members of the House of Commons. The chairman had said in his speech that the society's platform was quite broad enough; she could understand that any section of the community that had the smallest foothold on that platform might think it broad enough for the present, but they could not expect that that great part of the nation that was wholly excluded from that platform would be content. They protested against being so contemptuously ignored as they had been. (Hear, hear.) There were

22,000 women farmers in England, and whilst they sought to enfranchise all their labourers, were they to say that the farmer was not to have a vote? They had come there to decide upon something which the Liberal party could support. She agreed that the mere policy of sticking together would never serve the purpose of the Liberal party, and she also agreed with the policy of not attempting to agitate impracticable questions. (Cheers.) But their programme must be consistent as far as it went. In that particular amendment she asked to introduce she thought she was strictly within their lines, and did not see under what principles they could ask for the extension of the household franchise to labourers in counties whilst it was denied to householders in towns. There were more than 10,000 women householders in Manchester. She herself had exercised the franchise six times, but when the most important election of all came on she was denied the right to vote which was exercised by the drunken man whom she ordered to be prosecuted for not sending his children to school. This was one of the gravest questions that concerned the political future of this country. (Cheers.)

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol) thought they were verging on a danger—the very ordinary danger of bringing in extraneous topics. He himself, for example, believed we should never have purity of election until all public-houses are closed on the day of election, but he was not going to spoil the programme by introducing it, for reform had often been put off by such divergence from a straight line. He appealed to Miss Becker, therefore, to withdraw her amendment, and to others who had favourite schemes of their own not to bring them forward to the weakening of the programme which had been placed before the conference.

The Rev. G. M. MURPHY supported the amendment. He did not agree that it was wise to go for merely what would succeed; we ought to go for what was right. Would the meeting accept, instead of the words "uniformity of suffrage in boroughs and counties," the words "adult suffrage?"

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry we cannot receive this amendment. I dare say my Birmingham friends, for instance, would quite go with Mr. Murphy, but it is not on the platform of this association.

Mr. J. C. COX, of Belper, said we ought to be thankful to anyone who initiated a system of reform, but if it were ruled that no amendments were to be admitted he would feel constrained either to vote against the resolution or to abstain from supporting it.

A long and stormy discussion ensued upon the question as to whether or not amendments should be received, which ultimately drifted into a division of opinion as to whether this gentleman or that gentleman should be heard or not. This necessarily, on the fact of seven or eight gentlemen endeavouring to speak at one time, gave rise to much uproar. After nearly three hours' debate upon the question as to the form which their proceedings should take, the chairman to some extent succeeded in regaining order, when Captain Maxse explained the reason why it would be necessary to adhere to the original programme laid down by the committee, and Mr. Howell, after consultation with the other members of the committee, suggested that in order to avoid "a split in the movement," whilst adhering to the "platform," as laid down as the basis of the association, those who wished to go further might put forward their views in the form of a rider to the resolution. The discussion was continued by Messrs. Leno, Wilson, Odger, Mottershead, and others, and a division was taken as to the right of bringing in amendments, when it was decided to allow them.

Miss BECKER's amendment was accordingly brought forward,

and seconded by Miss L. ASHWORTH, amid great excitement, and ultimately put to the meeting in the form of "the extension of the franchise to women on the same conditions as it is, or may be, given to men."

Captain MAXSE strongly opposed the amendment, contending that the exercise of the school board franchise had conclusively proved that it was undesirable to grant the franchise asked for women.

Mr. CATTRALL supported the amendment, as did Miss MILLER. On a show of hands being taken, the CHAIRMAN declared that there were 49 on each side, and called on the meeting to divide, which was done, the result being that Miss Becker's amendment was carried.

After an adjournment for luncheon, Mr. PINNOCK moved an amendment for inserting in the original resolution a clause affirming the propriety of adult suffrage. A long and occasionally fervid discussion ensued, after which the amended resolution, including women's suffrage and adult suffrage, was put and carried.

Other resolutions in the programme were then discussed and carried.

At the evening meeting, held in the great hall, the chair was taken by Mr. Alexander Brogden, M.P.

Mr. J. S. WRIGHT, the chairman of the morning meeting, moved the first resolution, which, while asserting "That, in the opinion of this meeting, the condition of Parliamentary representation, notwithstanding the recent changes, is eminently unsatisfactory and requires early amendment; that large classes of the community are still entirely unrepresented," did not convey any recognition of the decision of the conference as to women's suffrage and adult suffrage.

Captain MAXSE seconded the resolution, which was supported by Mr. HOPWOOD, Q.C., M.P.

Mr. SHIPTON proposed a rider to the resolution in the sense of the amendment passed in the morning's conference, as follows:—"By recognising the right of all sane law-abiding persons to an equal voice in the election of their representatives." His speech was devoted mainly to supporting the claim of women to the suffrage, which the rider was understood to include.

Mr. ODGER, who was warmly received, seconded the rider. The rider, being put to the vote, was carried by a large majority with loud cheers, and the amended resolution was then carried unanimously.

Other resolutions, including a petition to Parliament embodying the decision arrived at, were then carried, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

ELECTORAL REFORM.—A conference of delegates from organized bodies and of well-known advanced politicians of both sexes was held, a short time ago, in the large room of the Eleusis Club, the object being the formation of a National Adult Suffrage and Equal Representation League for the whole of the United Kingdom. The meeting was fixed for seven o'clock, but the chair was not taken until past eight. Mr. Worley presided. Mr. Knight read letters from Mr. J. C. Cox, Belper; Mr. C. Wells, Kensington; and Mr. J. Boyd, King's Road, all apologising for absence, but concurring in the object of the Conference. Professor Beesly wrote declining as a Positivist to join in any movement in favour of woman suffrage. Mr. Pennock read the address of the Eleusis and Progressive Clubs to the Conference, after which a discussion took place on the topics of the address, and the following resolutions were agreed to. Mr. Beckley moved: "That, in the opinion of this Con-

ference, the time has arrived for an energetic agitation to secure the right of each adult person to an equal share in electing the members of the Legislature." The resolution was seconded by Mr. G. Dean, and was, after a discussion, carried unanimously. Resolutions recommending the establishment of a national league were also discussed and adopted. Speakers from Herefordshire, the West of England, Kent, and other agricultural districts, warmly supported adult suffrage as the only weapon with which the agricultural labourer could obtain his rights. Captain Maxse supported the programme of the club with the exception of woman suffrage, to which he was entirely opposed.—*Daily News*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WOMEN AND FREE INSTITUTIONS.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Madam,—In reference to the Pyrenean republics, I should like to observe that at the Argelès Hotel there was, two or three years ago, a history of the valley of St. Savin, containing some account of an occasion in the records of that republic when its nominal head, the abbot, wished to extend his prerogatives, and a woman named Gualhardine de Fréchon was the only person who by voice and vote opposed him. Some mention of this unusual occurrence, in days when men rarely withstood the dictates of the Church, may be found in Joanné's *Itinéraire des Pyrénées*.—Yours, &c.,

ELIZA M. STURGE.

RIGHT OF WOMEN TO VOTE IN THE ELECTION OF CORONERS.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Madam,—Can you, or any of your readers, tell me why women freeholders may not vote for coroners? In the election of a coroner for Central Middlesex, which took place yesterday, 19th inst., I tendered my vote and it was refused. Women could not vote, said the presiding officer. I inquired his authority; according to Blackstone, the coroner was "chosen by all the freeholders," and I was a "freeholder." Blackstone, he replied, was 300 years ago; he paid no attention to *him*; he could not argue the point; his authority was the sheriff. I could only hand in a written tender of my vote, duly signed and attested, and retire. But I am by no means convinced that the rejection of my vote was lawful. It is acknowledged that in olden times women shared with men the rights of freeholders in counties, and of burgesses in boroughs, and that non-user is no bar to the exercise of a right. The term "freeholders" no more implies distinction of sex than "parishioners" or "ratepayers," and we know that female parishioners and ratepayers do share the local privileges of their male neighbours. The vote for coroner is a local one. If there really is any statute which bars women freeholders from voting for coroner, perhaps you, or some of your legal readers, will kindly enlighten me. It is hard to be denied what one looks upon as a right without being able to ascertain the reason *why*.—I am, madam, yours respectfully,

Nov. 20th.

A WOMAN FREEHOLDER.

The Manchester *Guardian*, describing the recent municipal elections in that city, says: "The female voters evidently appreciate the value of their privilege, for they polled in large numbers, the proportion of women voters to the entire number polled varying at the different booths from 10 to 30 or 40 per cent."

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY, M.P., ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

Mr. Richard O'Shaughnessy, M.P., in his address at the opening of the session of the Limerick Athenæum, on November 5th, spoke as follows:—"This is not an occasion for venturing an opinion on the question of women's rights. But for many callings, the capacities of women are admittedly equal, in some respects superior, to those of men. There are women in every rank of life who are prompted to enter one or other of those callings by the desire of occupation, or of what Burns has called

The glorious privilege  
Of being independent.

It will hardly be denied that women have a right, if they choose, to support themselves or improve their prospects by the suitable employment of their hands or brains. Many a woman might be happier and more prosperous if a part of her energies could be given to some occupation from which she is now practically excluded. The seclusion in which most women pass the prime of life, seclusion, not from society, but from secular pursuits and transactions outside the social circle, often mars the capacity given by ability and education. Perhaps the effects of this exclusion might be, to some extent, removed if ladies took a more active part in the transactions of institutions like our Athenæum.

BEDFORD SCIENCE AND ART CLASSES.—At the distribution of prizes in the Working Men's Institute, Bedford, the Mayor (Alderman Hurst), who presided, said he noticed at all meetings upon intellectual subjects there were more ladies than gentlemen present. He had heard many people discuss upon the desirability of ladies having the same education, precisely, as men, and going in for examination, and so on. He believed if they did so they would take away the greater portion of the prizes. They had a proof of that in these science classes. There were five Queen's prizes given, and of these five two had been taken by a young lady. (Applause.)

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED SINCE AUGUST 1st, 1874.

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Mr. Thomasson ... .. donation	50	0	0
Mrs. Renton ... ..	5	0	0
Mr. Arthur ... ..	5	0	0
A Friend per Miss Stevenson ... ..	5	0	0
Mr. D. R. Macgregor, M.P. ... ..	3	3	0
Mr. Lindsay ... ..	2	2	0
Mr. A. Trevelyan ... ..	2	0	0
Miss Dick Lauder ... ..	2	0	0
Mr. W. Robson ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. D. W. Henderson ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Thorne ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. Simpson ... ..	1	1	0
A Friend in Greenock ... ..	1	0	0
Miss Simpson ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. J. D. Milne ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Hayes ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. Brownlie ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Wigham ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. S. Wellstood ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. J. Wellstood ... ..	1	0	0
Miss M. Smith ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. Warren ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Wigham ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Cook ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Crowe ... ..	0	10	0
Miss Wyld ... ..	0	10	0
Mr. W. Morrison ... ..	0	10	0
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6, Carlton Street.

Miss CRAIG, Treasurer.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING NOVEMBER, 1874.

	£	s.	d.
A Lover of Justice	200	0	0
Mr. Thos. Thomasson	105	0	0
Mrs. Wm. Haslam	10	0	0
Mrs. Hindle	0	5	0
Mrs. Furnival Emits	0	2	6
Mrs. Behrens	2	2	0
Mrs. Abel Heywood	2	0	0
Mr. H. Measham	1	1	0
Mr. J. Hinde Palmer	1	1	0
Mrs. King	1	1	0
Sir Louis Mallet, C.B. ( <i>Journal</i> )	1	1	0
Mr. Geo. Nutt (2 years)	1	0	0
Miss Marshall	0	10	0
Rev. Brooke Lambert	0	5	0
Mr. J. W. Gilbert	0	5	0
Miss Bannerman	0	5	0
Miss Borchardt	0	5	0
Mrs. Thos. Griffiths	0	5	0
Mrs. J. B. Adams	0	3	0
Mr. B. Mellor	0	2	6
Mrs. Annie Brown (Ripon)	0	2	6
Mrs. Roberts (Carnarvon)	0	2	0
Miss Margaret Thorburn	0	2	0

SOUTHPORT.

Mrs. Richard Nicholson	2	0	0
Mr. Thomas Pidduck Griffiths	1	1	0
Mr. W. Smith, Mayor of Southport	0	10	0
Mr. E. Marlin	0	10	0
Mr. E. Marlin Gillett	0	10	0
Mr. Wm. Smith	0	10	0
Mr. John Barron	0	5	0
Mrs. Leach	0	5	0
Mrs. M'Kerrow	0	5	0
Mr. John Lawton	0	2	6
Miss M. Houghton	0	2	6
A Friend	0	2	6
Mr. C. Wadsworth	0	1	0
	£333	5	0

Cheques and Post Office Orders should be made payable to the Treasurer, Rev. S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, and may be sent either direct to him at 107, Upper Brook-street; or to the Secretary, Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

WEST MIDDLESEX BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM OCTOBER 1873, TO OCTOBER 1874.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. King	2	2	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pennington	2	2	0
George Sims, Esq.	2	2	0
Mrs. George Sims	2	2	0
Miss Sims	1	1	0
F. Pope, Esq.	1	1	0
Mr. M'Leod	1	1	0
Mrs. Thomas Taylor	1	0	0
Mrs. King	0	7	0
H. J. Hunter, Esq.	0	10	0
Miss R. Hall	0	5	0
Miss Babb	0	5	0
C. J. Plumtre, Esq.	0	5	0
Miss M. Call	0	2	6
Miss Kerrell	0	2	6
Mr. Franklin	0	2	6
Miss Graham	0	2	6
Miss Chambers	0	2	6
	£15	15	6

48, Hamilton Terrace, London, N. W.

L. A. A. SIMS, Sec.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Contributions to the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 294, Regent Street, London, W., from October 20th, to November 20th, 1874.

	£	s.	d.
Household Suffrage	100	0	0
Impartial Representation	100	0	0
Mr. Walter Thomson	20	0	0
Mrs. Thos. Taylor	5	0	0
Miss Williams	5	0	0
Mrs. Glover	1	1	0
Mr. J. Boyd-Kinnear	1	0	0
Miss Simcox	1	0	0
Mr. R. W. Dixon	0	10	0
Mr. Alfred Spencer, the late	0	5	0
Mr. and Mrs. Lueraft	0	3	0
Dr. Glover	0	2	6

ALFRED W. BENNETT, Treasurer. £234 1 6

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH. SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE OCTOBER 20th, 1874.

	£	s.	d.
The Misses Ashworth	100	0	0
Miss Williams (Swansea)	5	0	0
Mr. Handel Cossham (Bristol)	2	2	0
Received at the Cardiff Meeting	1	2	9
Mr. Thomas Beynon (Newport)	1	1	0
Mr. John Cory (Cardiff)	1	0	0
Mr. Richard Cory	1	0	0
Dr. Edwards	0	10	6
Mr. Wilberforce Tribe (Bristol)	0	10	6
Mr. J. Buckley (Llanely)	0	10	0
Mrs. Higginson (Swansea)	0	10	0
Mr. S. Home (Llanely)	0	7	6
Miss Higginson (Swansea)	0	5	0
Miss E. Brock	0	5	0
Mr. John Batchelor (Cardiff)	0	5	0
Miss E. Thomas (Llanely)	0	5	0
Mrs. Frazer (Cirencester)	0	5	0
Miss J. Venning (Bristol)	0	5	0
Miss Taylor	0	5	0
Miss M. J. Pyne	0	5	0
Mr. Waterman	0	5	0
Mr. Hamilton	0	5	0
Mrs. Hamilton	0	5	0
Mr. H. Thomas (Llanely)	0	4	0
Mr. W. G. Thomas	0	3	0
Mr. Edward Thomas (Newport)	0	2	6
Mr. J. Chapman (Frome)	0	2	6
Mrs. William Sturge (Bristol)	0	2	6
Miss L. A. Howell (Swansea)	0	2	0
Rev. T. Davis (Llanely)	0	1	0
Mrs. Lock	0	1	0

DONATIONS TO SPECIAL FUND FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS.

Mr. Sommerville	5	0	0
Mr. Handel Cossham	3	3	0
Miss Florence Hill	3	3	0
Collected by Mrs. De l'Hoste	2	10	0
Mr. G. P. Armstrong	2	2	0
Mrs. Grenfell	2	2	0
Miss M. Price	1	1	0
Miss Tribe	1	1	0
Mr. Mark Whitwell	1	0	0
Mrs. Beddoe	1	0	0
Mrs. Price	1	0	0
The Misses Priestman	1	0	0
Miss J. E. Metford	1	0	0
Dr. Eliza Walker	1	0	0
Collected by Miss Thompson	0	11	0
Mrs. E. F. Grenfell	0	10	0
Mr. Tribe	0	10	0
Miss Price	0	10	0
Miss Ltonard	0	10	0
Mr. D. Lloyd	0	10	0
Miss Thomas	0	10	0
H. P., per Mrs. Grenfell	0	10	0
Mrs. Colman	0	5	0
Dr. Martyn	0	5	0
Mrs. Warren	0	5	0
Mr. Tucker	0	5	0
Mrs. N. Price	0	5	0
Mr. Greenwell	0	5	0
Mr. W. L. Mullins	0	5	0
Mrs. Boucher	0	2	6
Mrs. Peck	0	2	6
Mr. Beattie	0	2	0

£150 0 9