

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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VOL. V.—No. 50. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

MANCHESTER, APRIL 1, 1874.

PRICE 1d.—By Post 1½d.

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OUR friends will have learned through the ordinary channels that a Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women has been introduced in the new Parliament by Mr. FORSYTH, Q.C., the Conservative member for Marylebone. Associated with him in sponsorship for the Bill are Sir ROBERT ANSTRUTHER, Mr. RUSSELL GURNEY, and Mr. STANSFELD. The Bill, thus supported by eminent men on both sides of the House of Commons, enters on its course with a fair promise of reaching the haven of success. The second reading is fixed for Tuesday, June twenty-third, a period considerably later than that which has hitherto been customary, but as the dissolution of Parliament and the change of ministry have caused a postponement of about six weeks in the time of commencing the work of the session, the interval between the first and second reading of the measure is but little longer than usual.

One very important change has been introduced this year into the Bill, the text of which will be found in another column. Mr. FORSYTH has added a clause providing that no married woman shall be entitled to vote in a Parliamentary election. The clause makes no difference in the practical operation of the measure. The common law disabilities of married women effectually preclude them from the exercise of the suffrage, and if the Bill as introduced by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT had become law, no married woman would have been entitled to vote. The only difference is that Mr. JACOB BRIGHT was content to leave the matter to the operation of the common law, and did not desire to complicate the general question of the disability of sex with the special question of the disabilities of married women, and Mr. FORSYTH deems it expedient to make an express declaration on the subject. We do not disguise our extreme regret, on grounds of principle, that a statutory penalty on marriage should be introduced into the electoral law, but women have at present no representation at all in the Legislature. The Bill, as introduced by Mr. FORSYTH, would give them a share

in the election of members of the House of Commons equal and similar to that which they would have obtained under the Bill as introduced by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT. The question of the justice or expediency of maintaining the common law disabilities of married women, is not a practical question at the present time. Should measures dealing with the whole or any portion of these disabilities come before Parliament, it would be of great assistance to members in arriving at a just decision if they were responsible to a large body of women constituents, even if all such women were *femes soles*. From the remarks commonly heard, one would imagine that married and single women were distinct species, instead of classes constantly interchanging. By far the largest proportion of women to be enfranchised by Mr. FORSYTH'S Bill would be women who have been married or who contemplate marriage as a possibility. The one class would be qualified by experience, the other interested by expectation in forming and giving effect to opinions respecting the operation of the existing marriage laws, or any proposed alteration therein.

We have made these observations partly with reference to the letter of a correspondent, which we give elsewhere, and which we believe expresses the sentiments of large numbers of the most earnest friends of women's suffrage. We entirely agree with the sentiments expressed by our correspondent, who is herself a wife, that she has no objection to married women being incidentally shut out, but that it is another matter to ask Parliament to enact that they shall, by the fact of their marriage, be a disqualified class. We also sympathise with her scruples as to whether she may in conscience go on working for a Bill containing such a proviso. But there is an easy way out of the difficulty. Let women petition simply for a measure to remove the electoral disabilities of women, without specifying any particular Bill. Parliament will then know what women desire, and it is hoped will accede to their prayer. We do not wish to embarrass Mr.

FORSYTH, although women cannot be expected to petition for special disabilities for wives, and we should rejoice at the passing of *any* measure which removes the disability of *sex*, even if we have to accept this grand deliverance accompanied by conditions which we deem indefensible. If the conditions are unjust, it is more likely that they may be got rid of after so large a proportion of the sex affected by them shall have been admitted to the franchise, than that the feeling which induces the imposition of such conditions should subside while the general electoral disabilities of women are maintained.

A correspondent of the *Times* has suggested an alteration of the wording of Mr. FORSYTH'S proviso, which would lessen some of the objections to it. He proposes the substitution of the words "woman under coverture" for "married woman." As "coverture" is no part of the actual marriage contract, but an artificial legal condition annexed to it, the *sting* would be taken out of the proviso were the electoral disqualification removed from the marriage relation itself, and attached to the technical status added to it by English law.

We therefore earnestly exhort our friends to lay aside for the present all differences of opinion or feeling on the question of removing the special electoral disabilities which attach to married women, and which now preclude them from the exercise of the municipal franchise, and to join heartily and loyally in the endeavour to obtain the extension of the existing electoral law as it affects women in regard to the local vote, to the Parliamentary franchise. It is more practicable to unite all supporters of women's suffrage on this issue than on the broader one. There are many supporters of the principle who believe that marriage ought not to disqualify a woman from the exercise of any suffrage to which she would otherwise be entitled. There are others who believe that it is not expedient that married women should have votes. We could not expect men who entertain this view of the obligations of the marriage relation to join in a demand for the enfranchisement of married women as such. But those who believe that all women who have the Parliamentary qualification should be eligible for the suffrage can join in a movement to obtain it for some of those whom they believe justly entitled to it, and they may well leave the further question to be dealt with when the occasion shall arise. All supporters of women's suffrage agree in the justice of enfranchising *femes soles*, all can join in claiming this, without prejudice to their opinions or action with respect to the franchise for wives.

Should the Bill get into committee, a discussion may arise on the expediency of maintaining the new proviso. This will give to our friends, of what may be termed the more advanced party, an opportunity of recording their sentiments. If their arguments should prevail for the omission of the words we should rejoice, though, as we have before stated, the practical operation of the measure would be unaffected. But if, as is most probable, the proviso should be retained, we should still have obtained the removal from women in general of what Mr. GLADSTONE has termed "the brand of electoral incapacity"—an achievement which might suffice for a generation. It is our present object to obtain the passing of the second reading of the measure, leaving all doubtful or difficult points to be dealt with in committee. We may well ask all friends, within and out of Parliament, to join strenuously in this endeavour, and to aid in obtaining the great victory which would be scored for the cause by a successful division on Mr. FORSYTH'S Bill.

PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT.

The meetings that have been held during the past month have been most interesting and successful. At many of them great numbers were turned away for want of room; and the speeches of the ladies who so eloquently and gracefully pleaded the cause of justice and reason not only convinced the understanding, but touched the sympathies of the hearers. The season for meetings is rapidly drawing to a close, but it is hoped that the interest created in the district where they have been held will find some means of effective expression during the period while such expression can avail to influence the decision of Parliament, and this can best be done by means of petitions.

The petition is, indeed, the very life of the movement. It is easy to use such arguments as will convince people of the justice of the claim, but unless that conviction leads to some practical result, the effort to produce it seems almost thrown away. Unless we can find for those who have been made to think and care for the subject, something to do for the cause, there is danger that their zeal and interest may subside. But those who have done good work in a movement retain a lively interest in its progress. The petition offers a means by which everyone, however feeble, however obscure, can lend a hand to the work; and it may be that some poor hard-working woman who, after her day's toil, or during her brief leisure hours devotes her energies to collecting a few names to the petition may, by such a manifestation of earnestness, carry to

the mind of some wavering member a conviction of an honest and earnest desire on the part of women for the boon now claimed for them, which may determine his vote for the measure.

Every petition sent to the House of Commons is of consequence to the cause. It makes at least one member think on the question, and proves to him that other people are thinking of it too. Some persons fancy that because the petitions do not lead to immediate discussion, and are indiscriminately thrust into the omnivorous black bag at the table of the House of Commons, that they are lost sight of. But this is a great error. In the first place, all petitions are reported in the Parliamentary intelligence of the *Times*, and a long list day after day of petitions in favour of any particular measure is a cumulative demonstration of the strength of the demand for it, which cannot escape consideration. Then all petitions are referred to a committee of the House of Commons, which carefully examines each. They are classified according to the subjects to which they refer, the more important ones are printed in full, and a list of all petitions giving the number of signatures to each is sent to every member. Mr. DISRAELI said on one occasion that opinions expressed in petitions had great influence on the judgment of the House, and Lord JOHN MANNERS, in supporting the Bill in 1871, referred to the Parliamentary report, and avowed that the course he took had been partly determined by the fact that no person had petitioned against the Bill, while great numbers had petitioned for it.

Every member who has a Bill before the House desires to be supported by numerous petitions, and neither Mr. JACOB BRIGHT nor Mr. FORSYTH has been an exception to this rule. Last year the petitions were signed by upwards of 329,000 persons. This was the largest number of petitioners for any one object during the session. It is necessary, in order to give adequate support to our Parliamentary leaders, that this number should be exceeded this year. The time before the second reading of the Bill is not too long for the accomplishment of this object, but it will amply suffice if our friends set earnestly and resolutely to work. We refer them to our advertising columns for further information on the subject.

WE have to thank our friends for their able and efficient services in collecting signatures to the memorials to Mr. DISRAELI and Mr. GLADSTONE. As the sheets must shortly go to the binder, and it will take some days to collect and

arrange them, we beg that all who have not sent them in will do so with as little delay as possible.

THE PROPERTY AND OTHER BILLS AFFECTING WOMEN.

WE must endeavour to disabuse the minds of all persons interested in the subject, of the impression which will naturally arise when they see that a Bill to Amend the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, has been introduced by Mr. MORLEY, that it is identical, either as to its principle or object, with the Bill introduced last session by Mr. HINDE PALMER, or that it is promoted or sanctioned by the Committee for Amending the Law with respect to the Property of Married Women. From the text of the Bill, which we give elsewhere, it will be seen that Mr. MORLEY'S measure is a mere Tradesmen's Bill, designed not to give wives any further claim to their own property, but to give some security to the creditors of a woman who may marry while in debt, by imposing a sort of limited liability on the husband, if he shall have become possessed of his wife's property by marriage. The Bill will probably pass, and the only harm of it may be that it may serve as an excuse for Parliament to decline to consider any fresh proposal that may hereafter be introduced, based on the principle of the measure accepted by the House of Commons in 1870. The Parliamentary friends of the Bill brought in last year by Mr. HINDE PALMER, do not deem it expedient to re-introduce it this session—the movement for a real amendment of the law respecting the property of married women is therefore stopped for the present.

The Bill for the restriction of the hours during which women may work for wages has been introduced by Mr. MUNDELLA, and stands for second reading on Wednesday, May 6th. The objections to this measure, from the point of view of those affected by it, are powerfully set forth in the memorial to the late Home Secretary, adopted at a public meeting of working women in Nottingham, which we print in another column. It seems, however, almost hopeless for an unrepresented section of the working classes to resist the imposition of restrictions urged upon them by the represented section, who decline to submit to such restrictions themselves. Many other Bills, more or less directly affecting women, will come on for discussion during the session, and women will do well to observe the proceedings, and use what efforts they can exert to bring their experience and knowledge to influence the Legislature in determining these questions wisely and rightly.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SATURDAY, MARCH 21st.

Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women ordered to be brought in by Mr. Forsyth, Sir Robert Anstruther, Mr. Russell Gurney, and Mr. Stansfeld.

Women's Disabilities Removal Bill presented and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 23rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 14.]

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE BILL:—

A Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women.

Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. That in all acts relating to the qualification and registration of voters or persons entitled or claiming to be registered and to vote in the election of Members of Parliament, wherever words occur which import the masculine gender, the same shall be held to include females for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to be registered as voters, and to vote in such election, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided that no married woman shall be entitled to vote in such election.

PETITIONS.

The following list of petitions presented to the House of Commons is taken from the *Times*, the Parliamentary report not being as yet issued.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20.

Petitions for the removal of the electoral disabilities of women were presented by Sir James Lawrence, from Lambeth; by Mr. R. M. Carter, from a meeting in Leeds, also from Holbeck and Hunslet; by Mr. Birley (2), from Manchester; by Mr. Charles Turner, from Ashton; by Mr. Saul Isaac, from a meeting at Nottingham; by Mr. James Ashbury, from Brighton; by Mr. Callender (2), from Manchester; by Mr. Christie, from Lewes; by Mr. Tennant, from Burmandtofts; by Mr. Donald R. Macgregor, from Leith; by Mr. Torrens, from 2,000 inhabitants of Finsbury; by Mr. Morley, from Bristol; by Sir C. Russell, from Westminster; by Mr. Cawley, (2), from Salford; by Mr. R. W. Duff, from Buckie; by Sir R. Anstruther, from West Wemyss and Brickhaven; by Mr. Wheelhouse (2), from Leeds; by Sir C. Mills, from Bromley and Beckenham; by Mr. Laird, from a meeting at Birkenhead; and by Mr. A. D. Hayter, from Bath.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21.

Petitions in favour of Women's Suffrage were presented, by Mr. Montgomerie, from a meeting at Ardrossan; by Mr. Charley, from Salford (2); and by Lord Charles Beresford, from Waterford.

MONDAY, MARCH 23.

Petitions in favour of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women were presented by Mr. Charley, from Salford; by Admiral Sir W. Edmonstone, from Lennoxton; by Mr. J. Fortescue Harrison, from a meeting at Port Glasgow; by Sir Thomas Bazley, from 3,285 women of Manchester, and also from a meeting at Manchester; by Sir George Balfour,

from a meeting at Banchory; by Earl Dalkeith, from Newhaven; by Mr. F. Mackintosh, from Forres; by Mr. Pender, from Kirkwall; by Mr. T. Hodgson, from Bristol; by Mr. Callender, from Manchester; by Mr. Stansfeld, from a meeting of the women of Halifax; by the Marquis of Lorne, from Stornoway; by Sir G. Montgomery, from Peebles; by Mr. Heygate, from a meeting in Leicester; by Mr. C. Brooks, from Bredbury and Romiley; and by Sir C. Dilke, from Chelsea.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24.

Petitions in favour of the Bill for removing the electoral disabilities of women were presented by Mr. Gladstone, from Woolwich and Plumstead; by Mr. W. H. Smith, from Westminster; by Lord G. Hamilton, from a meeting at Acton; by Mr. Walter, (2), from Maidenhead; by Mr. Grant Duff, from meetings in Banff and Peterhead; by Mr. Morley, from Clifton; by Mr. J. G. Talbot, from Beckenham; by Mr. Fordyce, from Insch, New Deer, Huntley, Kemnay, and Cuminestown; by Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh, from Fortrose; by Mr. Pell, from Leicester; by Mr. P. A. Taylor (2), from Leicester; by Mr. Boord (2), from Woolwich; by Mr. Holland, from Bala; by Mr. McLaren (4), from meetings in Edinburgh, also from the Strathleven Lodge of Good Templars; by Mr. Birley (2), from Manchester; by Mr. Forsyth, (2), from Marylebone; by Sir G. Montgomery, from West Linton; by Major Bousfield (3), from Bath; by Mr. Callender, from Manchester; by Mr. R. M. Carter, from Leeds; by Mr. J. Fortescue-Harrison, from a meeting at Renfrew; by Mr. Alexander M'Arthur, from inhabitants of Leicester; and by Colonel Mure, from Barrhead.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25.

Petitions in favour of Women's Suffrage were presented, by Mr. Sandford, from a meeting at Maldon; by Mr. Kinnaird, from Perth; by Mr. Callender, from Manchester; and by Mr. Majendie, from Canterbury.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Madam,—I am aghast at the new Women's Suffrage Bill, as reported in the *Times*. I have not the least objection to married women being without exception, and even permanently, *incidentally* shut out, and I should have especially deplored any attempt to bring them in now. But it is another matter to ask Parliament distinctly to enact that married women shall by the fact of their marriage be a disqualified class. It will give a real weight to one set of objections brought forward by certain opponents, those founded on the circumstance that what we were asking would give the suffrage to *femes soles*, and might seem to cast a slur on wives. The arguments were weak though polite, yet they impressed many even among our logical friends. The answer to them, namely, that there was no slur cast by the accidental want of qualification that came from laws as to the tenure of property—the necessity that the husband rather than the wife should be the householder—and so forth, was generally a sufficient answer whether to friend or foe. I believe that the alteration of the Bill will have raised a stumbling block on which many bones will be broken. The change will do little to conciliate our opponents, and will plainly alienate many of our working friends. I have not had time to think whether I may in conscience go on working for Mr. Forsyth's Bill. I own I shall very readily accept any pretext which will enable me to go on working my best; but at the present moment I cannot achieve any casuistry.—Yours faithfully,
A. W.

March 24, 1874.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

GREAT MEETING AT HUDDERSFIELD.

On February 25th, a very large and enthusiastic meeting in favour of the removal of the disabilities under which women labour with regard to voting in the election of a member of Parliament, was held in the Gymnasium Hall. The meeting was timed to commence at eight o'clock, but fully a quarter of an hour before then nearly every seat was occupied, and a little later every available portion of the hall was occupied, and many were unable to obtain admission. Nearly half the audience consisted of women. On the motion of Mr. Alderman J. Woodhead, seconded by Mr. Alderman Denham, Mr. E. Huth, J.P., was elected chairman of the meeting. The ladies forming the deputation from the Women's Suffrage Association were Miss Becker, Miss Liliash Ashworth, and Miss Stuart.

The CHAIRMAN in the course of his address said that many of them had lately been engaged in political and party warfare—that made them wax warm and brought the blood up to fever point—so that it was quite refreshing once more to be able to meet on a platform which neither appealed to their political nor their religious feelings, but solely to their reason, and to that which they considered the right and the justice of their fellow human beings, for the question whether a woman who paid rates and taxes should have the suffrage in respect to the election of a member of Parliament was not a political one. This was shown by the fact that there were many members on either side of the House who were in favour of it, whilst there were others on both sides of the House who had voted against it; it was not, as it now stood, a political question—it might have political consequences, it was true, but with those consequences they had nothing to do at present. It was merely a question of principle as it was brought before them. It had always appeared to him very anomalous that women should have votes for town councillors or for members of school boards, and that they should be deprived of the privilege when it came to a question of electing a member of Parliament. If they could trust the judgment of women in one case, why should they not trust them in the other? It was a well-known fact that in England there was a greater number of women than of men; no doubt a great number of those women had to pay rates and taxes like men had. It was generally assumed that the House of Commons fairly represented the opinions and feelings of all parties in this great kingdom, but he asked them whether it was not fiction to say so, when they knew that a great number of their fellow subjects had no voice in the selection of those who represented them in Parliament. He never could see why women should be placed in the same category with minors and lunatics, who had no votes.

Mr. Alderman T. DENHAM, in rising to move the first resolution, said that it was only because he felt very deeply that a great injustice had been done to the women of England by recent legislation, that he had come forward to declare fearlessly to them the conviction that this injustice had been done, and that it was because the question of women's suffrage had not been fairly and fully considered either in Parliament or in the country. In looking into the history of this district, he would be borne out when he said that whether they took the girls or the women in the sphere in which they moved, they would prove a match for the boys and men in any case in which they were placed in juxtaposition. They found that in the Sunday schools the girls could compare favourably with the boys in that direction; if they took the lady teachers in their Sunday school they would find that they were equal to their work as compared with the men; and the same remarks would apply

to the day schools and to their higher schools. That meeting knew full well that they had in Huddersfield a college in which the best training possible was given to young men intended for commercial life. The question had often agitated their minds why could not similar advantages be given to the girls; and now when they offered such advantages to the girls they were met at the very threshold of their inquiries with this startling fact—that they had to put their girls through the very same standard at the Cambridge Examinations that the boys had to be put through. Boys who had been at college five, six, seven, and eight years had passed through the same examinations as the girls, and he asked where was the justice in asking girls to run a race with boys who had been seven or eight years at it, and the girls had been only three or four? The meeting would doubtless be delighted to see in the papers that the girls had done it; they had won their prizes, and it was surprising to many of those who took an interest in this question. It proved to be a demonstration that the girls having the same kind of advantages would be equal to cope with the men in any duty they had to undertake. The rate collector did not pass the door of a house occupied by a woman because she happened to be a householder and a woman, but he called for the rates and taxes both for borough and parliamentary purposes; and he asked whether they were to forget that principle or they were to carry it out in every district of the country.

Miss STUART was the first lady speaker called upon, and she was well received. She said she desired to ask the audience two questions—the first was, what entitled a man in Great Britain to vote? The qualifications for a voter were positive and negative. The positive qualification was simply that he paid a certain amount of taxes; the negative qualifications were that he neither be so idiotic or so insane as to be incapable of remembering the names of the candidates, of answering a few simple questions, and that he be not then and there suffering sentence as a criminal. The second question she desired to ask was, why were men so anxious to possess the vote, and what was the benefit supposed to accrue from the possession of a vote? The benefit arising from the possession of a vote was positive and negative. A man might use his vote to obtain the return to Parliament of a member who would vote to alter those portions of the law which were injurious to him, or he might use it to prevent the return of a man who would legislate contrary to his interests. Such were the principles and advantages of representative government, and, of course, every successive extension of the franchise by admitting a large number, will bring that government to greater perfection. Her object in calling their attention to the principle and advantage of representative government was to demonstrate to them that in asking that such of them as were neither idiotic nor insane, and who paid the requisite amount of taxes should be admitted to a voice in the government of their country, they were not asking anything unreasonable or absurd, but were simply claiming the rights to which they were entitled, and for the lack of which they suffered inconvenience and oppression. She need hardly recall to them the injustice which the ignorance or the self-interest of masculine legislation had inflicted upon women. They were sometimes told that marriage was the natural state of all women, and then they were represented by their husbands. She did not wish to dispute the truth of that position—(laughter)—but she would simply suggest that if marriage be the proper condition of all women it was a little irrational that the marriage law should treat the commission of matrimony by a woman in much the same way as it treated the commission of felony—by the confiscation of her property to her fellow criminal. (Laughter.) Without referring to many laws that were actually unjust to woman she might point out that the whole

social status of woman had suffered from her political nonentity. Women were excluded from most of the honourable and lucrative trades and professions; and in those in which they were permitted to join, they were accustomed to perform the same amount of work for about half the wages. (Laughter.) The fifth part of the education of a man was sufficient for a woman; and if in spite of the barriers erected against her she succeeded in obtaining it, this tyrant custom forbade her to turn it to profit; and if when a woman succumbed to all these difficulties, and employed herself with the frivolities into which alone she had free access, then those frivolities which injustice had induced were alleged as a reason for continuing in that injustice. Yet no one who considered the question could seriously maintain that the depression of womanhood was not the depression of the whole country. Look, for instance, at all those trades and employments in which women were permitted to join. Imagine for a moment, if they could, that all women ceased from work; that factory girls, maid servants, charwomen, and washerwomen ceased to work, and mounted the pedestal of idleness. How greatly would the wealth and comfort of the whole nation suffer—(applause)—and from that they might imagine how great a loss the country really did sustain from the unjust and irrational exclusion of women from all the higher branches of the national interests. These were losses to the world of action, but there were greater losses in the world of influence. (Hear, hear.)

Miss LILLIAS ASHWORTH (announced by the chairman as the niece of the Right Hon. John Bright) was received with considerable applause, and when it had subsided she said that in advocating the claim of women to some share in the representative government they were not asking for anything that was novel in the history of mankind; neither were they seeking to form precedents, but rather to follow the precedents which other nations had set to us. There were at present several nations of Europe where the women had already obtained the franchise—Italy, Austria, and Sweden; and even in some local governments of Russia women who were duly qualified already exercise the franchise; but in the territory of Wyoming women had obtained womanhood suffrage, and the governor of Wyoming, in his last message to the Legislative Assembly, made a statement in reference to the working of womanhood suffrage. He said:—"Two years more of observation of the practical working of the system has only served to deepen my conviction that what we in this territory have done has been well done, and that our system of impartial suffrage is an unqualified success." They were not, however, seeking for womanhood suffrage in this country; they only asked that women who were householders and who paid rates, that women who held property, should have the privilege attached to property, that women might have household suffrage as well as men. Only a few years had passed since this question began to be discussed in this country, but in that short space of time it had made extraordinary and rapid strides, both in the House of Commons and in the country. Each year that the Women's Suffrage Bill had been brought before Parliament, a greater number of votes had been recorded in its support. Mr. Gladstone, three years ago, made a speech in which he fully admitted the claim of women to the suffrage; but Mr. Disraeli had gone still further—he had voted for the bill every year, and spoken several times upon it. Other members of the present Conservative Government had voted year after year in favour of this question, as well as had a number of the members of Mr. Gladstone's late Government—they were supported on both sides of the House; it was not, therefore, a party question, for both Conservatives and Liberals had given it their support. But she was sorry to tell them that the hon. member for Huddersfield had always

voted against this question. (Hear, hear.) Last year he made a speech at the time when the question was before Parliament; she did not wish to speak with any disrespect of the member for Huddersfield, but she thought that when members made speeches in the House of Commons about women it was only fair that women should reply to them in the country—(applause)—and she had no doubt that the hon. member for Huddersfield, who claimed to be one of those men who were always pressing forward in the path of progress, would be very glad to hear what she had to say about his speech, because it would give him a chance of altering his opinions—(laughter)—or at any rate of telling them he had modified his views. It was a curious thing that when this question had obtained a standing in the House of Commons, which could not be said to be the same with regard to any other question outside of party, at the time when its greatest opponents had given up making those disrespectful speeches which their constituencies did not like to hear—the hon. member for Huddersfield made a speech, which was so scurrilous in its character she was certain that when he saw it reported in the *Times* of the next morning he must have felt a feeling of discomfort akin to shame. (Applause and a voice: "No, no.") But there were some objections to the suffrage which were fit to bring before the notice of the audience. He objected to women's suffrage because, he said, "I ignored the career which the revelation and experience of all ages, and the common consent of mankind, had marked out for woman." What had been the experience of ages? They had found that some of the most remarkable governors in various kingdoms in the world had been women. There had been an Isabella of Spain, our own Elizabeth, and the present Sovereign, whose care for public affairs was so well known; and Mr. John Stuart Mill, whose long experience of Indian affairs gave him an authority which could not be gainsayed, told them that in the East the greatest sovereigns had been women, that in Indian States where men had failed to govern, women had succeeded in bringing that State to a degree of prosperity which was in itself quite remarkable. Well, if they found that women could fill the highest functions of the State in a manner creditable to themselves and to the advantage of the nation, surely the "experience of ages" had shown that women were not altogether incapable of taking part in the government of a country, could fulfil those minor functions of voting for members of Parliament. Mr. Leatham told them "that by the nature of things, generally speaking, the position of women was one of dependence, and it was their (the State's) duty as far as possible to enfranchise, not dependent but independent voters." Well, she was inclined to think that men were quite as dependent upon women as women were upon men. (Loud laughter.) The hon. member did not object to give dependent men votes, and because dependent men were enfranchised, he became a great supporter of the ballot, and he took some trouble to prepare an elaborate machinery to protect those dependent voters. Well then the hon. member for Huddersfield went on to quote the opinions of Mr. Fox, uttered a century ago, upon this question. Were they to pin their faith on a statesman of 100 years ago? (Voices: No, and applause.) The question which they came together to discuss that night was one which would shortly be discussed in the House of Commons, they knew not what would be its fate, they hoped they would have a much larger division in its favour, but whatever might be its fate, women had no reason to be discouraged. They had an association formed throughout the country, carried on chiefly by women, and that association was constantly increasing in numbers and strength, and women were, perhaps, for the first time in the history of this country, united in some degree for one great end, and if there were those who still would doubt the reasonings of women on this

subject, she would have them look to the work and consider the progress of the association. They believed that this cause belonged to the true upward and onward progress of Christianity and civilisation, and just as surely as good would at last conquer ill, and error would be overcome by truth, so must the emancipation of women come into that sure and safe freedom whereby the truth was made free. (Loud cheers.)

The resolution was carried with only one dissentient.

Mr. Alderman WOODHEAD moved a resolution adopting petitions to Parliament, and a memorial to the member for the borough of Huddersfield.

Miss BECKER, who was well received, referred in the course of her speech to the part which Mr. Leatham had taken in the debates upon the measure in the House of Commons. She said—Your member stated that he would not agree to the measure because it had never entered the imagination of Charles James Fox. Now, I think it certainly never entered the imagination of any statesman in those days that you should have a lady candidate for the suffrages of a great popular constituency, and her husband acting as vice-chairman of the election committee. (Laughter and cheers.) I was very much struck with the remarkable speech of your member. I was informed by another member of Parliament that immediately after delivering that speech your member said he had demolished the question altogether. (Laughter.) I take the liberty of saying we have not been demolished. I hope we shall survive many such attacks. There are some attacks which recoil against those who make them; and I shall, without fear of contradiction from anyone who reads the speech, say that that was one of them. (Hear, hear.) I may point out a little inconsistency, if we can allow that anyone of the masculine order of mind can be illogical or inconsistent. Mr. Leatham said he would, if he had an opportunity, support the Bill for extending the household suffrage to counties: and then he went on to say, "I deny the grand fundamental axiom that because women obey the law and pay taxes, therefore they have an abstract right to vote. So long as women accept the protection of the law, so long should they submit to the laws, and their property be made to contribute to the expenses of carrying them out." If some Conservative member were to turn that argument upon Mr. Leatham when he comes to speak for the county franchise, I am at a loss to see how he could refute it consistently with his principle of denying the franchise to the women householders who pay their taxes. (Hear, hear.) Is it not true that the agricultural labourers accept the protection of the law—that is, such protection as the law affords them, which some do not consider adequate to their needs? Do they not obey the law and pay their taxes just as women do? Therefore, on his own principle they have no right to vote. (Hear.) Then Mr. Leatham, in regard to the application we make by saying it would improve the moral and intellectual development of women to invest them with the full rights and the responsibilities of rational beings, says, "This is not a question of moral or intellectual development, it is a question of the rights and the duties of one sex claimed by the other." That is an instance of what I call begging the question. We deny that the right to vote is an exclusive right or duty of the male sex. We say we have an equal right to vote when the State comes upon us for our share of its burdens, and we claim a share in the duty of governing the country, of helping to raise up the poor and oppressed, of raising our voice on behalf of peace and reform, and every good and holy end for which Government is formed. (Cheers.) The most remarkable utterance of Mr. Leatham was that in which he referred to Mr. Charles James Fox. How would that apply to other things besides politics? On that principle

Mr. Leatham ought never to get into a railway train, because it certainly never entered the imagination of Mr. Charles James Fox to travel at the rate of 40 miles an hour. I hold in my hand an eloquent poem, written by your member, called "Discovery," in which he lauds discovery as a wonderful and beneficent power of mankind, and he takes us over the whole world and domain of physical scenery, and praises the discoveries that have been made. I ask him whether discovery is limited to the physical configuration of the globe and the realms of natural science? Will he not allow us a little discovery in the realms of politics? Does he claim discovery as a monopoly of his own sex? Women are beginning to discover that they have been wronged, and that their wrongs need to be righted by the same means which men have found so effectual to right theirs. Men have discovered long ago that representative government alone can give them security for personal and political rights. Women have been a little behind in making the discovery, but when once their eyes are opened, not all the members for Huddersfield can ever shut them. (Cheers.) It is a matter of great regret that the Liberal Government neglected the opportunity they had of carrying this measure of reform into effect. Who knows when they may be in a position to have it again? There seems nothing to prevent Mr. Disraeli passing the measure. We ask you to help us to influence your member, so that if he will not vote for us, at least he shall no longer play the part of an obstructive to a measure for the extension of the franchise among the people. (Cheers.)

Mr. THOMAS FIRTH supported the resolution, which was unanimously carried.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed a vote of thanks to the deputation, which was seconded by Mr. Alderman WOODHEAD, and carried amid loud applause.

Miss ASHWORTH briefly returned thanks, and proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman.

YORK.

A meeting in support of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women was held February 26th, in the Corn Exchange, York, the Lord Mayor presiding. The attendance was large. A resolution affirming the principle was moved by Rev. J. Hunter and supported by Miss Wilson, of Leeds, Miss Stuart, and Miss Lillias Ashworth. On being put to the meeting the Lord Mayor declared it to be carried almost unanimously. The second resolution was proposed by Mr. Lucas, seconded by Miss Becker, and carried in like manner. Mr. Edward Swaine proposed and Mr. E. T. Wilkinson seconded a vote of thanks to the ladies. Miss Lillias Ashworth, of Bath, in returning thanks, said she had a peculiar pleasure in visiting Yorkshire, where she now possessed some property, for which she hoped to live to vote. She concluded by proposing a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor, which was seconded by Miss Lucy Wilson, of Leeds, and acknowledged by his lordship.

OLDHAM.

On March 18th, a public meeting was held at the Town Hall, in support of the Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women. His Worship the Mayor occupied the chair; and there were upon the platform Miss Becker, of Manchester, Miss Fenwick Miller, of London; the Rev. A. Chalmers, Councillor J. Travis, and Mr. T. Dornan. There was a very large attendance. After some remarks by the Mayor, a resolution affirming the principle was moved by Councillor Travis, seconded by the Rev. A. Chalmers, and supported by Miss Fenwick Miller and Miss Becker. On being put to the meeting a perfect forest of hands was held up, and the Mayor declared it

carried unanimously. The second resolution adopting petitions and memorials was moved by Mr. Dornan, seconded by Mr. Dornan, and carried unanimously. Votes of thanks to the deputation and to the Mayor concluded the proceedings. The meeting remained densely crowded up to the last word.

TAUNTON.

A meeting was held in the schoolroom, Bishop's Hull, Taunton, on March 2nd, to discuss the advisability of extending the franchise to women ratepayers. The chair was occupied by the Rev. W. P. Williams, the vicar, who was supported on the platform by the Rev. J. Randall, and Miss Beedy, M.A. Addresses were delivered on the question, after which many of the ladies and gentlemen present affixed their signatures to the petition.

ABINGDON.

A crowded and enthusiastic meeting was held in the County Hall, Abingdon, on March 4th. The chair was taken by E. Harris, Esq., J.P. Miss Beedy addressed the meeting at some length in a good argumentative speech, after which she moved that a petition to the House of Commons, and memorials to J. C. Clarke, Esq., member for the borough, and to the members for the county, be signed by the chairman, on behalf of the meeting, and forwarded by him. And that this meeting ask the chairman to sign a petition to the borough and county members.—Miss Biggs supported the proposition, which was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.—Miss Beedy proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, seconded by the Rev. S. Atkinson, M.A. Mr. Harris responded, and the meeting separated. [We understand that since the meeting Mr. Clarke, M.P. for Abingdon, has promised to support the measure.]

AYLESBURY.

A meeting was held on March 5th, in the Town Hall, Aylesbury. The chair was taken by the mayor (Councillor Gilbert), and there were also on the platform Miss Beedy and Mrs. S. Lucas, of the Women's Suffrage Association, Councillors Thurlow and Wootton, and Mr. T. Lucas. After some remarks by the chairman the usual resolutions were proposed and supported by Miss Beedy, Councillor Thurlow, Councillor Wootton, and Mrs. Lucas, and carried; and after a vote of thanks to the Mayor the meeting separated.

PORTSMOUTH.

A public meeting was held on March 9th, in the Portland Hall, Southsea. General Alexander, C.B., presided, and was supported by Miss Beedy, M.A., Miss Biggs, Miss Spender, Rev. E. P. Grant, Rev. J. Knapp, Major Noot, Messrs. G. Gillman, R. E. Davies, and J. Griffin.—The Chairman expressed his pleasure at having the privilege of introducing a deputation from a society which had been formed for the purpose of advancing a great principle. He advocated the extension of the suffrage to women, because when he looked back upon the world's history he found without exception that the place any people occupied, with respect to civilisation, was measured and marked by the position which women occupied in the social organisation. (Applause.) The position of woman therefore must be constantly changing with the world's progress, and there must be a re-adjustment of her duties, in order that she might be in harmony with the circumstances by which she is surrounded. The usual resolutions, including memorials to Sir James Elphinstone and Mr. Bruce, members for the borough, were proposed and supported by the above-named ladies and gentlemen, and carried with a few dissentients.—Mr. W. B. Robinson suggested that an Association should be formed with a view of agitating for the extension of the suffrage to women. The Chairman said if there were any gentlemen

willing to serve on the committee they could retire to the ante-room. The proceedings then terminated.

CHELMSFORD.

On March 12th a meeting was held at the Chelmsford Institute, with the view of passing resolutions and petitioning parliament in favour of removing the Electoral Disabilities of Women. Miss Mary Beedy and Miss Helena Downing had been announced to address the meeting, and there was a large attendance. Mr. John Copland was called to the chair, and opened the proceedings in a long and characteristic speech. Mr. Hare moved and Mr. S. Turner seconded a resolution affirming the principle, which was supported by Miss Beedy, and carried unanimously. The next resolution, adopting petitions, was moved by Mr. G. Brooks, seconded by Mr. G. W. Golding, and supported by Miss Helena Downing. It was put and carried, after which the meeting separated.

NOTTINGHAM.

A demonstration in favour of women's suffrage was held in the large room of the Mechanics' Institution, Nottingham, on March 12, Joseph Sturge Gilpin, Esq., in the chair. Resolutions in support of women's suffrage were supported by Rev. R. A. Armstrong, Mr. J. S. Ellis, Mrs. Lucas, Miss Becker, Mr. Coleman, and Mr. Hemur, and adopted by the meeting. A vote of thanks to the chairman, moved by Mr. Jacoby, and seconded by Mr. Farmer, terminated the proceedings.

NORTHAMPTON.

A public meeting was held at the Town Hall, Northampton, on March 11th, in support of the Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women. Mr. Alderman Manfield, by request of the Mayor, presided. There were also on the platform Mrs. Lucas, Miss Becker, Miss Biggs, Mrs. Manfield, and a number of other ladies; Mr. Pickering Phipps, M.P., Rev. T. Arnold, Rev. Iden Payne, Mr. Councillor Adkins, Mr. Councillor John Phipps, Mr. Councillor Gurney, Mr. E. F. Law, Mr. H. Harris, Mr. J. H. Blunt, Mr. D. A. Peachey, Mr. John Taylor, and other gentlemen. After some remarks by the Chairman, the usual resolution was moved by Mr. Gurney, seconded by Mr. Adkins, supported by Mrs. Lucas and Miss Caroline Biggs, and carried, with one dissentient. The Rev. T. Arnold moved, and the Rev. Iden Payne seconded the adoption of petitions and memorials. Miss Becker supported the resolution, remarking on the unusual advantage they had on the present occasion of the presence of one of the members to whom the memorial was addressed. The motion was carried unanimously. Mr. Pickering Phipps, M.P., proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, and in doing so expressed the pleasure it had afforded him to be present to hear the addresses delivered by the ladies. The question they had argued was, in his opinion, one of very great importance; would undoubtedly demand the attention of the Legislature, and he assured them that, in his new capacity as member of that Legislature, he would give the subject his most earnest and attentive consideration. That the electoral disabilities affecting women ought to be removed was a matter of plain common sense which they could all understand; and he was quite sure that if the opinion of the Legislature should be that there were wrongs which ought to be removed, then, whichever party was in power, an endeavour would be made to remove these wrongs. (Applause.) Rev. Iden Payne suggested that the motion include a vote of thanks to the Mayor for the use of the hall, and Mr. Gurney added a vote to the ladies. The motion was unanimously adopted, and the Chairman having responded, and presented the memorial to Mr. Phipps, the proceedings terminated.

LEICESTER.

On March 12th a demonstration in support of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, was held in the Temperance Hall, Leicester. The body of the hall was crowded. Rev. A. A. Isaacs presided, and there were also present on the platform, Revs. J. Wood, A. Mackennal, A. F. Macdonald, and W. Evans; Mr. Mott, Mr. Bramley, Mr. Anderson; Mrs. Lucas, Miss Becker, Miss Sturge, Miss Biggs, Miss Gill, Mrs. Livens, and Mrs. Ross.—The Chairman, in his opening remarks, said a great change of opinion was day by day passing over our land, and something had been done in the direction of women's suffrage, as women now voted in the municipal and school board elections. And had they not exercised that privilege as intelligently as males? If this had been for the advantage of the community, would there be any greater danger in entrusting women with the Parliamentary franchise? In their advocacy of this question the women of England had proved that they were mentally capable of exercising their right.—The Rev. A. Mackennal moved a resolution affirming this principle, which was supported by Mrs. Lucas and Miss Biggs, and carried unanimously.—The Rev. J. Wood moved the adoption of petitions and memorials.—Miss Becker, in supporting this resolution, said although there had not yet been any public expression of feeling on the part of the inhabitants of Leicester, they had rendered most important service to this cause through their representative. It would indeed be unbecoming of anyone to be unmindful of the great services rendered to the cause of liberty and independence by Mr. Peter Taylor, and by the lady who so worthily supported him in all his efforts. Mrs. Peter Taylor was one of the first ladies to render active help in this movement; but before then her mind, her heart, and her hands, were active in supporting other measures of freedom. She felt it a great honour to be associated with Mrs. Taylor in the work in which they were engaged.—Miss Sturge supported the resolution, which was carried unanimously.—Mrs. Livens proposed a vote of thanks to the deputation, which was seconded by the Rev. A. F. Macdonald, and heartily accorded.—Mrs. Lucas responded, and moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was seconded by Miss Biggs, and carried.—The Chairman briefly acknowledged, and the meeting terminated.

IRELAND.

BELFAST.

On March 25th, the annual meeting of the North of Ireland Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in the Ulster Minor Hall, at eight o'clock—Marriott R. Dalway, Esq., M.P., in the chair. There was a very large attendance, not only the hall, but the lobbies adjoining being crowded, and many went away, not being within hearing distance of the platform.—The Chairman, who was received with applause, said it was a matter of considerable gratification to himself that he happened to be in this country at the present time, and therefore able to preside at this meeting, for the consideration of the question of women's suffrage. It was a question in which he took considerable interest, as being one which involves the principles of liberty and justice. (Hear, hear.) He must say that, two or three years ago, he did not treat this question as one of very considerable importance, so much so that he remembered voting once or twice against the Women's Disabilities Bill in Parliament. However, when he came to consider the matter more fully, he saw it was a question of simple justice; that no one who was otherwise fully qualified should, on account of sex, be prevented from voting—that is, supposing they were otherwise entitled, being ratepayers. (Hear.) Miss Tod read the report of the society, which stated, among

other things, that at the recent general election, the committee took steps to have the claim of women householders to the franchise brought under the notice of all candidates for Ulster constituencies. In many cases the candidates were communicated with directly; and in all, electors of the constituency to which they offered themselves undertook the task of questioning them on the subject. They are happy to be able to report a very decided gain. Nine of the new members have promised to vote for the Bill, as against three supporters from Ulster in the last Parliament; two others are quite favourable to it, though they decline to give a promise; and several of those defeated candidates who are most likely to stand again have promised to support the cause when opportunity offers. Resolutions in support of the Society were moved and supported by Mr. John Hancock, J.P., Lurgan; Miss Liliash Ashworth, Rev. C. L. Morell, Dungannon; Rev. Robinson Scott, D.D., Miss Tod, Rev. Dr. Glasgow, Rev. Dr. Knox, and adopted.—Mr. Finlay M'Cance, J.P., having been called to the chair, a vote of thanks was, on the motion of Dr. Parker, seconded by Professor Park, enthusiastically passed to the chairman.—Mr. Dalway, M.P., having acknowledged the vote, the meeting separated.

SCOTLAND.

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The annual meeting of this society was held on February 25th, at No. 5, St. Andrew Square. The meeting was principally composed of ladies. On the motion of Professor Kelland, Mrs. M'Laren, the president of the society, was called to the chair. Amongst the gentlemen present were Mr. M'Laren, M.P., the Lord Provost (Mr. Cowan, M.P.), Dr. Donaldson, (rector of the High School), Mr. Fothergill, of Kesswick, Mr. George Hope, Mr. R. A. Macfie. Amongst the ladies there were Mrs. Macfie, Miss F. Stephenson, Miss Wigham, Mrs. Robertson, Mrs. M'Quean, Miss M'Laren, &c.

Mrs. M'LAREN said—Our agitation has arrived at a point where we think we can anticipate the early crowning of our efforts with success. Very large and important meetings are being held in the principal towns in England. Last night there was one in the large Free Trade Hall, Manchester. I think there never was an agitation which has proved more calculated to throw light upon a variety of social questions than the one in whose interests we are here met together. It has thrown a flood of light upon the position of women. It has opened our eyes to a number of questions that concern the wellbeing of both men and women, for whatever affects the one affects the other—for good or evil. I am sorry to see that we have to choose another leader. Manchester has unseated my brother, Jacob Bright, and, although I am his sister, I hope you will pardon me when I say that a nobler man did not sit in the House of Commons. (Applause.) He bore the brunt of the battle in the heat of the day. He was our leader when it required moral courage to lead, and now he has handed the leadership over to another. Having been disappointed in obtaining help from the Liberal Ministry, we have now, owing to the great changes which have taken place, to look to the Conservatives to join those Liberals who had stood fast by us in our movement; and as the Premier is with us, we have more hope of gaining our cause this session. (Applause.) I am sorry Mr. Gladstone, whose high moral nature led him to confess from the Treasury bench how unjust the laws were towards women, had not the moral courage to confess that we ought to have the franchise on the same conditions under which it is given to men. (Hear, hear.) Whether man's intellect be higher than woman's I am not here to dispute. Some say the

spiritual nature of woman is higher than that of man, and it will only be when the fetters which law and custom have wound round her shall be broken that it will be known to what excellence she can rise, or what really are the faculties with which God has endowed her. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Miss WIGHAM read the report for the year ending February, 1874. The treasurer's statement for the year showed that the income had been:—Subscriptions and donations, £473. 16s. 6d.; collections at meetings, £13. 9s. 5d.—total, £487. 5s. 11d. The expenditure had amounted to £465. 16s. 9d., leaving a balance of £21. 9s. 2d. in the treasurer's hands.

Mr. M'LAREN, M.P., said they were now in the peculiar position that Mr. Disraeli, many years ago, distinctly declared himself to be in favour of the principle, and if, as a Minister, he felt at liberty to give effect to the opinions he expressed as a member of Parliament, they might expect that he would give an impetus to the movement, if he did not carry it out at once. He went on to examine the objections offered to granting the suffrage to female householders. One objection many persons had to the admission of ladies to the franchise was that it would be a Conservative measure—that it would strengthen the Tory party in the country and in Parliament. That was a matter that admitted of debate; but it was one with which they had nothing to do. They ought not to let party considerations enter into this subject at all. He held it was a proper thing for every woman who was a householder in her own right to have a vote, or an owner of property in her own right, and though one party in the State might happen to be more strengthened, politically speaking, than another by that right being given them, they had no right to do an act of injustice to prevent this. He moved—"That the report now read be adopted by this meeting, and be printed and circulated under the charge of the committee."

Dr. DONALDSON seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

The LORD PROVOST (Mr. Cowan, M.P.) moved the adoption of a memorial to the Prime Minister. He remarked that the country must congratulate the ladies at the prospect of bringing this movement to a happy conclusion, for the House of Commons must soon grant this act of justice to women. He proceeded to point out that women with the same qualifications as men could be got for about half the money to act as clerks in connection with the Post Office telegraphs. Those female clerks who were employed in the Post Office were so efficient and imbued with the *esprit de corps* that the service was never better performed than at present. He had been told by Mr. Scudamore that in the telegraph service there had never on the part of one of the women been one single breach of secrecy in regard to telegrams. (A laugh.) He hoped they would not look upon that as a joke. It was a fact that out of 2,000 female clerks there had never been one complaint. (Applause.) He went on to remark that there were about 5,000 women in Edinburgh who occupied houses in their own right and had no votes. He asked in vain for a valid reason why they should not have the privilege which their occupancy of houses and payment of taxes entitled them to. He congratulated them on having a Minister in the country who, whatever his politics were, was pledged to endeavour to carry this movement out, and from the great weight and power which he must necessarily have in Parliament they might reasonably expect their efforts to be crowned speedily with success.

Mrs. WELLSWOOD seconded the motion, which was passed.

Miss BURTON moved—"That this meeting warmly thank our members of Parliament for the support they have already given us, and for their promises of future support." She reminded the meeting that they had also their old members to thank, though they might not be able to give them more help,

and particularly their great champion, Mr. Jacob Bright. But coming nearer home, they had much reason to be thankful for the assistance they had got. She expressed her satisfaction that the new member for the city of Edinburgh had come forward so readily on this occasion to their assistance.

The motion was unanimously carried.

On the motion of Mr. GEORGE HOPE, a vote of thanks was then passed to Mrs. M'Laren for presiding, and the meeting separated.

STIRLINGSHIRE.

On the 10th March, a crowded public meeting was held at Bonnybridge, in the Columbian Operatives' Lecture Hall, Geo. Ure, Esq., presiding. After a clearly reasoned and eloquent address from Mrs. Stephen Wellstood, resolutions in favour of women's suffrage were proposed by Mr. Grieve and Mr. Gillespie, duly seconded, and carried by enthusiastic acclamation.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE DISCUSSED BY WORKING MEN.

A meeting was lately held at a working man's institute, in London, in order to discuss the question of women's suffrage. The discussion was opened by an address from one of the ladies connected with the society, who has kindly favoured us with what she calls an actual, not a formal, report of the proceedings. For obvious reasons we do not mention names, but the accuracy of the report may be relied on. The arguments in opposition to the proposition bear a curious resemblance to those with which we are familiar in a more august assembly, though the language in which they are couched may not be altogether parliamentary.

"There were between eighty and one hundred people present, by far the majority men. My address was listened to very attentively; then the chairman called for speakers. After a good pause, there arose a Mr. A., a man of the round-head and short-neck type, with tre-men-dous lungs. He announced at the loudest possible pitch of his vocal powers that women were now-a-days not like their grandmothers and great-grandmothers, aye, and he might even say their great-great-grandmothers! They made too much noise; they (sawing the air with his right arm) want to leave their sphere, and they shan't do it. ('hear, hear,' from admiring brethren.) Why, what would become of MEN (word discharged as from a hand grenade, to signify its overwhelming importance) if women neglected their homes for politics? If women will be quiet, he promised that all the grievances they talked about would be done away with. Why, they would be now if women had kept in their sphere." That was the skeleton, it was very largely padded with eloquence and oratorical adipose tissue. Then arose Mr. W., who made a very admirable speech. He said he thought they ought all to have brought their ladies there to-night, and ought always to take them where they went. Men really said, however: Now, I will be so kind to you; I will make you such a nice palace, and call it home, and shut you up in it like a prison; and I'll be kinder still, for I'll leave it all to yourself, and I'll never stay in it. Then if the poor woman cried the other side the locked door, she was told she was ungrateful and wanted to come out of that nice sphere where she was put quite for her own good.

Mr. B., who is a man of education, not a *bonâ fide* working man like every one of the others, said he was entirely in favour of the suffrage, but he thought the married women's property should remain as it is now, because everything should be discouraged that tended to destroy the feeling of community of interest between husband and wife. I cordially granted this,

but claimed that to take away all from one by force and give it to the other was *not* community of interest; but if Mr. B. thought so, perhaps he would have no objection to having the application of the principle turned the other way, and making "with all my worldly goods I thee endow" a legal fact, instead of a sentimental untruth, from a bridegroom to a bride. Remark also on the inadequacy of the punishment given to wife-beaters, and read a case from that morning's *Times*, where a man was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for having trampled on till she was insensible, the wife to whom he had been twenty years married and who had borne him eight children, because the fire was not good enough when he woke up. An audience of intelligent and respectable working men is always very alive to such things as these.

After Mr. B. came the speech of the evening. A lad of about twenty years, guiltless alike of blushes and whiskers, elevated himself on his feet in a far corner of the room. By his side sat his bosom friend and warmest admirer, a youth of his own age. They might be matchmakers or vulcanite polishers, but they had not the sturdy, embrowned faces of out-door workers, though their dress and speech showed them to be London working men. Our candidate for oratorical honours spoke loudly and clearly for the first three or four lines—about a minute. I thought we had a local Joseph Arch—an ignominiously placed genius of speech. I must premise that the soliloquy of the speaker was always as distinct as the rest of his oration, and that his backer's remarks were more audible still. I report as nearly verbatim as my memory serves—"It is always very unpleasant to oppose a woman, particularly when she is like Miss —; but when she—pouf—she—hum—there, now, I did know what I was going to say—(Friend, beneath: 'keep up, keep up; you'll remember it directly'). I'm sure she didn't ought to have the suffrage, because it isn't her place—pouf. I never made a speech before. (Friend: 'Go on, you *did* know it.') Well, I was a going to say that I left an institution with which I was connected—pouf—I did not like the institution because they—they said—they did—they wished—pouf—(clasping his side locks in agony, while his backer's voice rose sweetly encouraging: 'Keep up, keep up.')—Ha—a—I had some ideas before I stood up! I think it would be a stigma on marriage—matrimony would be—pouf—." Herewith he subsided amid peals of amusement.

Mr. S. spoke in favour of the suffrage for women; and then an old man, in the front seat, who had been most industriously taking notes all the evening, said *he* thought women were too superstitious to be allowed the vote. "She has the *origin* of veneration in her head—a very big *origin*. Besides man is more mental than woman, and woman is more moral than man. There never was a female Omer, or a female what wrote Paradise Lost, or anything else like that. There were some of them Italian women sprang up—I forget their names—if I'd thought of it I'd have looked some of them up, and fetched them along with me. I consider women shouldn't vote, and my old woman never should. What's more, she don't want to, neither doesn't any woman."

I closed my answer by moving the adoption of memorials to the borough members (Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Samuda), asking them to support a measure for women's suffrage. It was decided that only members of the institute should vote, which they did by standing. A large number, including, I was glad to see, four women, stood up for it; and the negative being put obtained the adhesion of Mr. A. and one other man. Mr. W. proposed a vote of thanks to me, and Mr. A. took the words of seconding out of the mouth of another man, and clinched them with two inimitable nods, which expressed his own sense of his magnanimity in being willing to thank me for doing what my great-grandmother would not have done.

WREXHAM.

A crowded meeting was held in the Public Hall, Wrexham, on March 24th. The chair was taken by Mr. W. H. Darby, and there were also on the platform the Mayor (Mr. R. Lloyd), the Rev. T. F. Nathan, Rev. E. Jerman, Mr. Chilton, Mr. R. C. Rawlins, Mr. Pryce-Jones, Mr. Charles Hughes, Mr. Pilkington, Mr. C. E. Darby, Mr. Bradley, Mr. T. E. Minshall, Mr. J. H. Rawlins, Mr. Henry Humphreys, Mr. J. C. Owen, Mr. T. Eyton-Jones, Mr. I. Shone, and Mr. H. Davies. Most of the gentlemen were accompanied by ladies. The deputation consisted of Mrs. Lucas, Miss Beedy, and Miss Sturge. After a few introductory observations from the chairman, Mr. Chilton moved the first resolution, which was seconded by Mr. J. H. Rawlins, supported by Mrs. Lucas and Miss Beedy, and carried unanimously. Mr. Charles Hughes moved the adoption of petitions and memorials. The resolution was seconded by the ex-Mayor (Mr. J. C. Owen), supported by Mr. T. E. Minshall and Miss Sturge. The motion having been carried, the Mayor proposed, and Mr. Eyton-Jones seconded a vote of thanks to the chairman and to the deputation. His Worship said he had come to that meeting opposed to the proposal to enfranchise women, but after hearing the speeches he would support it in future. (Applause.) The vote was appropriately acknowledged, and the meeting separated.

Mrs. Lucas and Miss Beedy addressed meetings at RUTHIN, on March 25th, at DENBIGH, March 26th, at which petitions in favour of the principle were adopted; and at PORTMADOC, on March 30th.

COVERTURE.

Coverture, or the legal condition of women during marriage, is thus defined by Blackstone:—

"By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law, that is, the very being or legal existences of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband, under whose wing, protection, and cover she performs everything, and is, therefore, called in our law French a *feme covert*, *femina viro co-operta*; is said to be *covert-baron*, or under the protection or influence of her husband, her *baron* or lord, and her condition during marriage is called her *coverture*."

MASCULINE AND PARLIAMENTARY LOGIC.

Mr. Ormsby Gore, M.P., writes as follows to a constituent who had questioned him:—"I am opposed to woman franchise, which I think a great many of the female sex would not wish for." We wonder whether this kind of reasoning would be held to apply to subjects affecting men. We think it would sound odd, to say the least of it, if a member of Parliament were to reply to a question regarding education, or the liquor laws, by saying, "I am opposed to compulsory education, or to any restraint on the hours of sale of intoxicating liquors, which I think a great number of the male sex would not wish for." The mere "wishes" of women or men do not always point in the direction of their permanent interests, and it appears to us to be the duty of legislators to determine questions regarding the rights and liberties of the people by carefully weighing the arguments in the balance of reason, and not by reference to vague "wishes" attributed without apparent justification to a portion of the class affected by them.

OUR PARLIAMENTARY LEADER.

From biographical sketches of new members published by the Times, we take the following notice of the mover of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill:—Forsyth, Mr. William, Q.C., LL.D., of the First Mortimer, near Reading, and Rutland Gate, who has been returned at the top of the poll for Marylebone in the place of Mr. Harvey Lewis, is not new to parliamentary life, having been elected for the borough of Cambridge in 1865, though unseated on petition in the following year on account of his holding the post of standing counsel to the Secretary of State in Council for India. He is the eldest son of the late Mr. Thomas Forsyth, of Liverpool, by Jane Campbell, daughter of the late Mr. William Hamilton, of Greenock, North Britain. He was born in the year 1812, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he was a Fellow, and where he took the usual degrees. He was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in Michaelmas Term, 1839, and went the Midland Circuit. He obtained a silk gown in 1857. He is also a Bencher of his Inn. Mr. Forsyth's name is well known as a scholar and a writer, especially by his "Life of Cicero," "Trial by Jury," &c. He is a magistrate for Middlesex and Commissary of the University of Cambridge. He married Mary, daughter of the late Mr. George Lyall, some time M.P. for the city of London. It will be remembered that last year he fought an unsuccessful contest for a seat at Bath. The return of Mr. Forsyth for Marylebone involves the gain of a seat to the Conservative party.

MR. SULLIVAN, M.P., ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Mr. Alexander M. Sullivan, member for Louth county, has addressed the following letter to a lady, who wrote to him respecting this question:—"It is my intention to vote for the Women's Suffrage Bill. I have been mainly brought to this stage by the arguments, or rather by the talk, of the opponents of the measure. With nothing in the world of predilection to incline me to the side of the movement, reading the speeches, articles, and letters of its opponents, and above all the lugubrious jokes and dismally 'funny' pictures of the once witty Punch (as for instance last Thursday), caused my mind to revolt against such a mode of dealing with a grave and serious question. I mean to vote for the Bill, subject to the chance of hearing in the debate, even at this eleventh hour, any really convincing argument against it."

OPINIONS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.—In addition to the members recorded in our last issue as having expressed themselves favourable to women's suffrage, we have to announce the following—Mr. Clarke, Andover; Mr. Freshfield, Dover; Sir J. Elphinstone and Hon. T. C. Bruce, Portsmouth; Mr. Biggar, Cavan County; Mr. Morris, Galway; and Mr. A. M. Sullivan, Louth County. Sir Thomas Chambers, Marylebone, writes:—"Hitherto I have refrained from committing myself on that question, but I think public opinion is maturing upon it; I shall certainly not oppose the Bill. It may be that the debate may induce me to vote for it." There were accidentally omitted from the list of unsuccessful candidates favourable to the measure, the names of Mr. Alderman Hawkes, Tamworth, and Mr. Cosham, Chippenham.

NEW MEMBERS.—The following new members have been returned to Parliament since the general election:—Mr. Hall, Oxford city, and Mr. Clifton, North Lancashire. Mr. Morris was returned at the general election for Galway borough, and not Sir R. Blennerhassett, as stated in our last issue.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT (1870) AMENDMENT.

The following is the text of the Bill brought in by Mr. Morley, Sir John Lubbock, and Sir Charles Mills to amend the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 so far as regards the debts of a wife contracted before marriage.

A Bill to Amend the Married Women's Property Act (1870).

Whereas it is not just that the property which a woman has at the time of her marriage should pass to her husband, and that he should not be liable for her debts contracted before marriage, and the law as to the recovery of such debts requires amendment:

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. So much of the Married Woman's Property Act, 1870, as enacts that a husband shall not be liable for the debts of his wife contracted before marriage is hereby repealed, but a husband shall not, after the passing of this Act, be liable for the debts of his wife contracted before marriage, except by reason of any marriage which shall take place after this Act has come into operation, and then only to the extent of any property to which he shall have become entitled in right of his wife by virtue of such marriage, or otherwise in right of, through, or under her.

2. Where in any action or suit brought against a husband to recover any debt contracted by his wife before marriage he shall plead that he has not received any property by, through, under, or in right of his wife, or that, having so received property, he has paid ante-nuptial debts of his wife to an equal or greater amount than the value of any such property he may have received, the court in which the action or suit shall be pending, or any judge thereof, shall have power to direct any inquiry or proceedings they or he may think proper for the purpose of ascertaining the facts, and to make such order for the payment of the debt sought to be recovered, or any part thereof, or of costs to be paid by either party, as under the circumstances shall seem just; and in all cases where neither of such pleas shall be pleaded, the husband shall be deemed to admit that he has received sufficient assets to pay the debt, if it shall be found to be due.

3. This Act shall come into operation at the time of the passing of the Act.

4. This Act shall not extend to Ireland.

5. This Act may be cited as the "Married Woman's Property Act (1870) Amendment Act."

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY COMMITTEE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE DECEMBER, 1873.

Table listing names and amounts: Mrs. Ogden ... 3 0 0, Mr. James Cropper ... 2 2 0, Mrs. Gell ... 2 2 0, Miss Praed ... 2 0 0, Miss Rosamond Hervey ... 2 0 0, Mr. H. Nicol ... 1 1 0, Mrs. Read ... 0 10 0, Mrs. de Hersant ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Layton ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Whitehead ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Carroll ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Stephenson ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Collimore ... 0 10 0, A Friend per Mrs. de Hersant ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Pogson ... 0 5 0.

£16 10 0 LYDIA E. BECKER, Treasurer. 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

THE WORKING WOMEN'S MEMORIAL.

The following memorial to the late Home Secretary against the restrictions on the hours of paid labour of adult women proposed in the Factory Acts Amendment Bill, was adopted at a meeting of working women of Nottingham, and similar demonstrations have been made in other parts of the country:—

To the Right Honourable ROBERT LOWE, M.P., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department.

The Memorial of the Working Women of Nottingham in Public Meeting Assembled,

Sheweth— That your memorialists view with regret and indignation certain proposed legislative restrictions upon the labour of women. These proposals are:—"The Factory Acts Amendment Bill" for limiting the labour of women in factories to nine hours a day, introduced last session by Mr. Mundella; the projected measure of Mr. Thos. Hughes to make all married women half-timers, thus putting them on the footing of children, and forbidding them to earn more than half wages; and the further proposal to prohibit altogether the employment in factories of mothers of young children, at least for a given period before and after each confinement.

Your memorialists object to all such proposed legislation, because they hold that adult women ought to be entirely free to sell their labour, without further restraint from legislation than is applied to the labour of men, whereas by the proposed legislation working women would be reduced to the condition of children incapable of thinking and acting for themselves.

Because the tendency of all legislation restricting the labour of women is to drive women gradually out of the labour market, by subjecting their labour to unfair competition with that of men.

Because such legislation is needless for its alleged purpose of protecting the health of working women and their children, it being a notorious fact that they are fully as healthy and robust as the women and children of the rich, or idle classes.

Your memorialists wish expressly to say that they heartily sympathise with every legitimate effort for a general reduction of the hours of labour, but they believe that such an end may be best attained by free arrangement between employer and employed, and that by such means a mutual concord would be secured, which could never be the result of arbitrary legislative enactments.

Your memorialists therefore pray that Her Majesty's Government will not introduce, or sanction the introduction of, any measure into parliament in the ensuing session for imposing legislative restrictions upon the labour of women which are not at the same time imposed upon the labour of men.

Signed on behalf of the meeting, Nottingham, Jan. 8th, 1874. MARY ANN BURTT, Chairwoman.

YORKSHIRE SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED SINCE FEBRUARY 23rd, 1874.

Table listing names and amounts: Mr. Daniel Gaskell ... £ s. d. 2 2 0, Mrs. J. Edmondson ... 2 2 0, Mr. J. A. Garth Marshall ... 2 0 0, Mr. J. S. Mathers ... 1 1 0, Miss C. Walker ... 1 0 0, Mr. John Lupton ... 0 10 6, Miss Carbutt ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Balmer ... 0 10 0, Miss Wilson ... 0 10 0, Miss Marshall ... 0 10 0, Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Rowell ... 0 5 0, Mrs. Lawson ... 0 5 0, Mrs. Southall ... 0 5 0, Mrs. Edwin Thorne ... 0 5 0, Mr. E. Bubler ... 0 2 6, Miss Swaine ... 0 2 6.

£13 0 6 Mrs. SCATCHERD, Secretary. Mrs. EDWARD WALKER, Treasurer. Offices: 1, Victoria Chambers, South Parade, Leeds.

PETITIONS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

We earnestly exhort our friends to help the cause by promoting petitions in their several localities. The following is the form recommended:—

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned

SH EWETH,

That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of Members of Parliament, is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of municipal, parochial, and all other representative governments.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will pass a measure to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Write out the above form without mistakes, as no word may be scratched out or interlined, and sign it on the same piece of paper, obtaining as many signatures as you can to follow. After the written heading is signed extra sheets of paper may be attached to hold more names. The petition may be signed by men and women of full age, whether householders or otherwise. Make up the petition as a book-post packet, write on the cover the words "Parliamentary Petition," and post it, addressed to the member who is to present it at the House of Commons. No stamp is required, as petitions so forwarded go post free. Write, and send along with the petition, a note (post paid) asking the member to present it, and to support its prayer.

Written headings will be supplied on application to Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE JANUARY 20th, 1874.

Table listing names and amounts: Mrs. McLaren ... £ s. d. 20 0 0, Mrs. Nichol ... 10 0 0, Miss Bartholemew ... 5 0 0, Mrs. McLaren ... 5 0 0, Mr. Hugh Rose ... 5 0 0, Mr. and Mrs. Ord ... 3 3 0, Mrs. Duncan Morrison ... 3 0 0, Miss Gibson ... 2 0 0, Mrs. Tennant ... 2 0 0, Mrs. Blackie ... 1 0 0, Mrs. McKinnel ... 1 0 0, Mrs. Crudelius ... 1 0 0, Mrs. Walls ... 1 0 0, Miss Laidlaw ... 0 10 6, Mr. Flint ... 0 10 6, Mrs. Williams ... 0 10 0, Miss Drew ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Drew ... 0 10 0, Mr. Wilson ... 0 10 0, Mr. Walls ... 0 10 0, Mrs. Drew (collected by) ... 0 9 11, Miss McCrae ... 0 5 0, Rev. G. Meikle ... 0 5 0, Miss Carfrae ... 0 5 0, Councillor Crighton ... 0 2 0.

£64 0 11

The Committee earnestly appeal to the friends of the cause for more funds, to enable them to meet the increase of work devolving upon them.

Contributions will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, Miss A. Craig, 6, Carlton Street, Edinburgh.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Table listing subscriptions and donations received during March 1874, including names like Mr. Thos. Thomasson, Mrs. Ogdon, Miss Jessie Bouchereit, etc.

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

Table listing subscriptions and donations received since February 18th, 1874, including names like Miss Ashworth, Miss Estlin, Mrs. Coates, etc.

ANNIE WESTLAND, Secretary.

Cheques and Post-office orders may be made payable to the Treasurer, Miss Estlin, 16, Belgrave Road, Clifton, and to the Secretary, 53, Park Street, Bristol; or through Messrs. Stuckey's Banking Company, Clifton.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL. Edited by LYDIA E. BECKER.—Volumes I. to IV., bound in cloth, price 7s. 6d. London: Trübner and Co., 57 and 59, Ludgate Hill. Manchester: A. Ireland and Co.

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