

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

VOL. VIII.—No 93. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.  
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

NOVEMBER 1, 1877.

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## MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The Executive Committee of the above Society desire respectfully to call your attention to its object and operations, and earnestly solicit your support for it. The Society is based upon the principle that a woman who has a qualification, the possession of which would enable a man to vote, should herself have the franchise. To gain this object a Bill, which has been introduced in the House of Commons five times by Mr. Jacob Bright and three times by Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., will be again brought forward. Its effect would be to give the right of voting for Members of Parliament to women who, as owners or occupiers of property, already possess the right of voting in parochial and municipal government. In municipal boroughs which are also parliamentary boroughs, those women would obtain votes for the borough members who, by the present law, are on the burgess roll, and vote in the election of town councillors.

The Society seeks to promote its object,

1. By holding public meetings and lectures for discussion of the claim of women to the suffrage, and for the expression of public opinion in regard to it.
2. By promoting Petitions to Parliament in favour of the removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women.
3. By the publication of pamphlets, leaflets, and other literature bearing upon the question, and more especially of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*. This periodical, published monthly, contains information as to the progress of the movement; illustrations of the operations of the laws as they affect the property, personal, and industrial rights of women; and discusses such questions relating to their education and employment as are more or less directly connected with the subject of their political disabilities.

The Society has been in existence ten years, and during that period has been actively engaged in work of the nature above indicated, with an amount of success which is great compared to the means at its disposal. Every year has seen an increase in the work done, and in the support given to the Society. But the work grows faster than the resources of the Committee; they therefore earnestly appeal to those friends of the cause who think that it has been advanced by their past efforts, to manifest their approval by aiding them to continue and extend their operations.

Approval of the object of the Society, and an annual subscription of any amount constitute membership.

Subscribers are entitled to receive the *Women's Suffrage Journal* monthly, and the Annual Report of the Society.

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THE close of the summer brings us to a new season of work, and each autumn it becomes a matter for fresh consideration how the struggle may best be prosecuted, and how the work which lies before us can be organised, so that every one can take a part in it according to his or her means or ability. Mr. GLADSTONE, speaking at Harwarden during the summer upon the extension of the county franchise, said: "I think you know that the time is very near at hand when you will get the matter conceded . . . But, now, don't you go to sleep about it, for if you go to sleep about it, I think the Government will remain asleep also." This advice, so excellent for the movement to extend the county franchise to men, is no less excellent for the women's franchise movement. Our opponents would only be too glad to see us go to sleep. We may take example also from the activity of another political organisation in extending their voting power. The well-combined efforts which have been made and are still making to increase the Irish vote by putting on the register a large number of Irish lodgers and small householders in the metropolitan boroughs and elsewhere, brings before our eyes still more forcibly the importance of balancing, by the votes of educated women, so enormous an increase of the presumably totally-uneducated "residuum." No effort must be spared to keep our question continuously before the attention of the public, and particularly before those representatives who are able to vote or howl the Bill down every session.

But all our friends cannot help in this directly political action. Working-women, women with large households and young children, young women who are not entirely independent, and ladies who, though their husbands may be wealthy, are not allowed any spending-money for other than household purposes. To these may be added a large number of women who, living in the country or in retired villages, have no means of attending public meetings, and never meet a member of Parliament from one year's end to another. It may not be unwelcome if, at the beginning of a new campaign, we point out to these a few of the means by which they can also become soldiers of the good cause, and give no inconsiderable help in a field

where the harvest is so great and the labourers so few.

Foremost among the means of educating the public mind are lectures: we do not mean large meetings which require both money and organisation to assemble, but lectures in schoolrooms or small meetings to women of the working-classes. Many persons are more easily convinced through the ear than the eye; they do not read the newspapers much, but a lecturer who really knows his own subject can impart something which even the dullest can carry away. Women, from their stay-at-home and often solitary life, their fewer opportunities of combination and the scantier means of information they have hitherto enjoyed, are peculiarly in need of political instruction. Popular lectures, explaining to them the laws under which they live, the means of protection they can have recourse to in cases of cruelty and injustice, the injurious tendency of legislation affecting their hours of labour and power of making contracts, the advantages of combination and organisation—these are much needed, and would be greatly valued. Work such as Mrs. BUCKTON and others did in Leeds, and Miss DOWNING has done in other towns last summer, of lecturing systematically to the women of each ward of our large cities, is very necessary, and we wish that more ladies would try this plan of doing good, which sounds formidable only because they have not tried it. The expense would not be great, and clearheadedness and method in explanation are the chief requisites. If they cannot trust themselves to originate, it would be easy to read aloud and explain the pamphlets issued by the Society. Another method would be to lend these pamphlets among the women themselves.

There are petitions to be promoted. We believe that a very large proportion of women householders, who have felt the difficulties with which, as heads of the household, they have to contend, would be glad to sign; but the collection of these signatures from house to house, particularly in a scattered country district, is a slow and laborious task. We need volunteer helpers of all ranks. Every woman, if she is not a householder herself, knows one or two women who are, and could get their signatures.

There are organisations to be established among women;



whether for social or political purposes, for debating societies or for benefit clubs, they are all a most useful means of educating women to think on serious questions, and to form habits of combination and association with each other, which develop into political power.

Any lady who has the power of writing should take a newspaper as her special charge, and keep it well informed upon the woman's question by paragraphs, short letters, and, when able to get them inserted, articles. Editors of newspapers are, as a rule, very willing to admit short sensible letters on subjects of general interest, and not a week passes but some occurrence takes place on which a woman's views would be acceptable. Till women have accustomed themselves by word and pen to express their sense that the suffrage is desirable for them, our opponents will still go on saying they do not want it. It lies a little in the power of every woman to contradict this assertion.

We need drawing-room meetings; not only those in large houses where two hundred or three hundred people can be assembled, and well-known speakers secured, but in drawing-rooms where only twelve or twenty can come together, and where a quiet discussion of the question can take place, or some recent speech or new pamphlet on the franchise be considered. Very many ladies could help us in this manner who are now deterred by thinking that a drawing-room meeting is of no value unless there are large rooms, crowded company, expensive refreshments, and first-class orators. It is the number not the size of the meetings which do good.

Not least comes the collection of money, without which the noblest cause may be delayed for long years. Let such of our friends as cannot themselves give, collect from others, or if they cannot give much, give a little. Impenitency will always be the weak point in a cause which concerns women, so long as women are not purse bearers, but it is a false shame which hesitates about giving a small sum when a larger sum cannot be afforded. Let them give more by all means when possible, but if not, make up in number of subscriptions what they want in magnitude. A woman has done more for the cause if she has persuaded eight friends to give half-a-crown each than if she herself gives one pound and takes no further trouble.

Lastly, we would preach a little courage to every woman—the courage of her own opinions, to show by word if she is unable by action that her heart is with the work, and that she believes it will succeed and wishes well to it. It is only by slow degrees and long effort that a

great political change is accomplished, but the methods we have hinted at would contribute no inconsiderable help to its fulfilment.  
C. A. B.

THE momentous issues involved in the late electoral period in France were regarded with the deepest interest by that half of the nation which will be affected equally with the ruling half, but which is without a voice in determining them. An address from "women to electors" was issued before the election. The purport of the address is not to present to claim electoral rights for women, although these rights are asserted, but to remind men of the duty they owe to the women and the children for whose welfare they are responsible, and to exhort them to be true to the principles of the Republic.

The address sets forth: "The republican idea (*idée republicaine*) excludes the aristocracy of sex as it excludes the aristocracy of caste; but we should be ill-advised to agitate social questions in the face of the present dominant crisis—the elections. All who think, all who speak, from attic to *salon*, have the eye fixed on the day which shall decide the elections. Among these French who are thinking and preparing to declare how they will be governed, there are nine millions of human beings gifted with reason—nine millions of adult women who form a nation of slaves in a nation of free men. They are to be governed, but it will be according to the good pleasure of men, without the power of indicating their own preferences. These nine millions of women are subjected to the same repressive laws as the men, to the same taxes, although they send no representative to guard their interests in preparing the budget. It was thus with men before 1789; it was thus with the proletariat before 1848. This revolting injustice will cease for us as it has ceased for these, but meantime this want of harmony between the voice of humanity (so well personified by woman) and the voice of force retards the march of progress, and precipitates France in grave perturbations. Notwithstanding, then, that we are unable to express our opinions by a vote, we have not the less the duty and the will to endeavour to make our ideas triumph; our status as French women constrains us to occupy ourselves with the government which you ordain for us. We watch, inspired by our Gallic mothers. We dare not leave you alone responsible for the destinies of the Republic and the country. You have been often deceived: your bourgeois when you gave us fifty years of monarchy; you People when you gave us twenty-nine years of Empire

and Moral Order. We would have a republican Republic. We would have Equality." The address concludes with an appeal to the electors to postpone their personal dislikes and preferences to the peace and happiness of all, to vote according to justice and conscience, and to let the triumph of the Republic issue from all the electoral urns.

Such are the sentiments, not only of enlightened French women, but of the most enlightened and patriotic of French men, and England, which is not republican in constitution, and English men and women whose aspirations are rather for practical liberty than theoretical equality, may yet recognise in the French Republic the best if not the only institution by which the permanent welfare and progress of that great nation may be assured, and give their earnest sympathy and moral support to those statesmen who are labouring to strengthen and uphold it.

A MANCHESTER newspaper, in commenting on a recent speech of Mr. LOWE at the Mansion House, expresses some very natural surprise that the right honourable gentleman's mention of the approaching reception of Cleopatra's Needle should have been received with laughter. Our contemporary wants to know what there is that is laughable about the obelisk. Mr. LOWE said that it was cut out of a solid block of marble and transported to the place where it was found, at the cost of he did not know how many thousand lives. During its voyage from Alexandria to Spain, six brave sailors have perished in transporting it. With these associations, and considering the fact that there is nothing comical in the shape or the history of the monolith, it does seem difficult to account for the circumstance that the mention of its name by Mr. LOWE should have excited the risibility of his hearers. We fear that the solution of the puzzle is to be found in the popular name of the obelisk. "Cleopatra's Needle" suggests a woman and womanly industry. Men have got into a habit of laughing at women and their affairs, especially at any mention of them in a public speech. It was the name and not the thing that made Mr. LOWE's audience laugh. Had the obelisk been called "Alexander's Spear," no one would have seen any thing ridiculous in the association.

LORD GIFFORD, in his opening address to the Jurisprudence Section at the Social Science Congress, after sustaining the claim of legislation to scientific treatment, applies this principle to our representative institutions, calling it the greatest problem of all science how to

"secure our noblest, highest, and best men for our noblest, highest, and most needful work;" how to fit the ablest and fittest to the best function, "is the very question of the time, if not of all time."

Without inquiring what views the learned lord may entertain in regard to the claim of women to direct representation, all will admit that this question forms one factor of the great problem.

His lordship compared true legislation in the universal applicability of its principles to the refraction of light in the spectrum, which announces the composition of the minutest fragment or the mightiest star by one and the same universal principle. We will, in like manner, compare the legislator to the man of science reading the teachings of the spectrum. The man of science notes every line of the refracted beam of light, however fine, with equal attention; he passes over no effects, however slight, in his calculation of relations. So should it be with the legislator studying the composition of that very complex beam refracted on his spectrum—the national sentiment, the component parts of which it is his first duty to analyse, estimate, and understand. But since undoubted diversities of temperament and function exist between men and women, the refraction of women's sentiments will cast other lines on the spectrum, and to omit those lines from note or calculation is to fall short of the completeness of scientific methods. Metaphor apart, the omission of the voice of any considerable number of persons possessing distinctive characteristics and functions in the general expression of the national sentiment is not in accordance with a scientific treatment of our electoral system.  
H. B.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Manchester Guardian*, on October 10th, suggests as a means of imposing some prudential checks on strikes that "it would be better to give the married men a preponderating vote, that is, in future disputes between men and master. Ought a man," he asks, "with the numerous burdens pressing upon him as householder and head of a family to have no more influence in such a case than a young man free from care has?" It seems to us that the same end would be as easily and more fairly reached by giving the wives and mothers of the family an equal voice with the men in their disputes. The balance of influence would thus be adjusted conformably with the stake which each household had in the settlement of the difficulty.  
C. A. B.

THE following note, from the pen of Miss F. P. COBBE,



lately appeared in *Truth*:—"A lady sends me, as corroborative of the article on Doctors which appeared in *Truth* last week, a cutting from the report of the Address, on the 1st October, at University College. Dr. JOHN WILLIAMS urged the study of 'Gynecology' on his hearers (as if women were a new and curious kind of scientific 'subject'), and ended by remarking, as an encouraging hint to medical students, that discoveries may be made in this 'ology, which will put a stop to the pretensions of their detested petticoated rivals to compete with them for fees. This, at least, is the only interpretation that can be put on the following phrase:—"Such inquiries, moreover, had a most important bearing upon a social question, lately much discussed—the employment of women. Persistent and strenuous efforts had been made to admit women to professions which demanded from their members strength, energy, and power of continuous efforts and application. . . . It was a physiological and pathological problem, which could be solved on physiological grounds only.' Fair ladies, beware of your gynecological doctors. They will study on you how to prove the unfitness of your sex for any profession which pays."

THE argument used by Professor EVERITT, of the Queen's College, Belfast, at the discussion in Convocation of Queen's University, Ireland, upon the admission of women to medical lectures, was decidedly curious. He advised them to "take warning from the Edinburgh University, and not run the risk of scenes of bustling and riot and tumult which would ultimately turn a prosperous institution into disorder." We had innocently fancied that the chief lesson to be derived from the conduct of the Edinburgh University was how *not* to imitate its feebleness in leaving its disorderly students uncontrolled, or the faintheartedness, to use no stronger term, with which, having made concessions to women desirous of entering the medical profession, it backed out from fulfilling them. It will be remembered that the Senate of the Queen's University granted last year, at the same time as the Council of the King's and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland, the application of ladies to be admitted to medical degrees. The College of Physicians has already fulfilled its promise, admitting, as we know, five ladies as physicians within a few months. But the constitution of the Queen's University requires that a student, however good his previous preparation, shall attend medical or arts classes for *at least one session* at one of the Queen's Colleges. To refuse, therefore, to open classes for women

students in the Queen's Colleges is to nullify the concession made of admitting them to degrees. Professor EVERITT declares that the first duty of a college council is to look after its own self-preservation, and to carry out the special work it was charged with. Self-preservation is a natural instinct which may be elevated sometimes into a laudable object, but it is hardly sufficiently elevated to be the first duty of any council, collegiate or otherwise. The special work of a council is surely to see that the words of promise made by the body it represents cannot, while kept to the ear, be broken to the hope—that they are to be converted to a practical reality, and not remain merely a flourish of trumpets. We have too much confidence in the chivalry of the sons of the green island to believe that of their own accord they would repeat the disgraceful mud-throwings and hootings which took place in Edinburgh; but were they to do so, the speech recorded might almost be considered a justification of such conduct before the fact. We hope the proposal to open medical classes to women in Ireland will not be suffered to rest here, or, at least, that the constitution of the University will be so far altered in their favour, that in their case the proof of a sound medical education received elsewhere shall be esteemed an equivalent. C. A. B.

THE following appeared in the *Globe* of October 11th:—"JOHN HARRIS, a Sheffield shoemaker, has been charged with an abominable outrage. He took his wife downstairs, stripped her naked, and then tried to force her into an oven. Failing in this endeavour, he held his wife close to the fire, turning her round and round 'like a piece of beef.' He paid no attention to her agonised screams, but they served to attract the notice of a policeman, who released her and put the disciple of St. Crispin in a place of safety. Yesterday the brutal fellow was taken before the magistrates, who marked their sense of his offence by binding him over to keep the peace for six months."

The reader would have expected that only extenuating circumstances of the most extraordinary character could have redeemed an outrage, which seems most adequately described as an attempt to murder, from the severest penalty the law allows for aggravated assault, instead of receiving the very mildest. Yet the only extenuating circumstance visible is that the unfortunate victim was the wretch's wife, and as such *one* with him. Was then the only offence the disturbance caused by her cries? If those whose duty it is to interpret the law to the people suggest (however unintentionally) such interpretations

of a woman's status, we cannot wonder that the brutal portion of the community read the law which should restrain them in the sense that best pleases their brutality.

H. B.

It may be profitable from time to time to look forward to some of the minor consequences to be anticipated from woman's possession of the franchise. Among these we may hope to find her influence brought to bear in a practical manner upon the amelioration of the condition of animals. Man has from the earliest ages considered himself the lord of creation; he has thought that all the wonderful array of God's creatures, great and small,—that all the beauties of nature so lavishly displayed throughout the globe, from the sun which gives him light to the glowworm which displays its tiny spark to please his eye, were made for his sole use and pleasure. It has never, or with rare exceptions, entered his mind that the Almighty may have had other ends in view in the creation than man's welfare alone; that he is, perchance, a mere insignificant speck in the ocean of worlds, of one of which he has only attained, after the lapse of thousands of years, to the scantiest knowledge. He has, therefore, but too often, treated what he is pleased to call the inferior animals as having no claims upon his consideration—as being made solely for his use or his abuse.

But woman has been born to suffering. In the earliest ages her lot was one of incessant toil and suffering, and even now she has often but the choice of labour, hard and constant,—of pain which she cannot avoid, and suffering which she must not resist,—or else of utter emptiness and weariness of life. She has not therefore learnt, we may hope, the pride of power, the feeling of being above all the rest of creation, and responsible only to herself for the use which she may make of those animals which minister so largely to the wellbeing of all mankind, and which are so often, alas! so ill-requited for their labours. And surely we may hope that when women are taught to look beyond the narrow circle in which they have for the most part hitherto moved, when they are taught to feel that they, too, have a responsibility cast upon them, to look beyond the household, beyond the family, beyond even the town or country in which their lot may happen to be cast, and to try to leave the world some little better than they found it; we may, perhaps, hope that their gentle natures will commiserate the sufferings which so many of God's dumb creatures now undergo, and that they will strive to instil into society and into our legislators principles of

humanity and consideration towards animals which are now too much wanting; and though it may be, nay indeed, is true, that the human soul must rise from individual to the whole, yet let us share the aspirations of the poet—applying them to woman's love—hope that—

As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake,  
The centre moved, a circle strait succeeds,  
Another still, and still another spreads,  
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace.  
Her country next, and next all human race,  
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind  
Take every creature in, of every kind;  
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
And Heaven beholds its image in her breast.

X. Y. Z.

#### MR. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P.

The friends of Mr. Jacob Bright will be glad to learn that, though he has been suffering for some time from a pretty severe attack of rheumatism, he is now considerably better. It is hoped that a further period of rest will result in his complete restoration to health. The hon. gentleman has been visiting Zurich, Lausanne, and other places since Parliament was prorogued, and he is now at Nice, where he will remain probably for some weeks.—*Manchester Guardian*.

GIRTON COLLEGE.—The number of lady students at Girton College this term is 42. The Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, Cambridge, have just had placed at their disposal an exhibition of £30 for two years, by Mr. James Aikin, of Liverpool, who a few years ago gave £1,000 to the association to promote its objects.

HIGHER MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR WOMEN.—The Council of Trinity College, London, have lately decided to throw open its higher musical examinations to women. The first examination under the new statutes will take place early next year.

WOMEN IN SCIENCE.—The *English Mechanic* says that in the *American Journal of Science and Art* there appears a paper, which it describes as an admirable piece of scientific work, on a new and ready method of estimating nickel in pyrrhotites and matter, by Margaret S. Chevey and Ellen S. Richards, students at the ladies' branch of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

A BRAVE WOMAN.—The *Daily News*, of October 8th, records the following act of gallantry on the part of a lady. A very heavy gale raged at Aldeburgh, Suffolk. As the long-shore herring boats were returning to the beach one of them was upset, one of the crew being underneath her; the other was washed into the surf. Mrs. Basham, of Swiss Cottage, ran into the sea and seized the boat. The next sea turning it up again, both men were saved. But for the bravery displayed by this lady, their lives might have been lost. The tides were very high, rushing over the promenade.

#### Obituary.

On October 11th, at his residence, Manchester, aged 74 years, HANNIBAL LEIGH BECKER, late of Altham, Acrrington, Lancashire, father of the editor of this *Journal*.



## PUBLIC MEETINGS.

## GRIMSBY.

A public meeting in aid of the movement for conferring the parliamentary suffrage on women was held on October 23rd, in the Town Hall, Grimsby. Mr. JOHN WINTRINGHAM, jun., presided, and amongst the other gentlemen on the platform were the Rev. J. Fordyce, Alderman Moody, Councillors H. Mudd and H. Smethurst, and Messrs. G. Pearce, T. M. Gray, T. Stephenson, and G. Alward. The ladies present were Mrs. Ashford (Birmingham), Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd (Leeds), Mrs. M'Cormick, Mrs. J. Winttingham, and Mrs. Fordyce. Miss Becker was expected to be present, but on account of the recent sudden death of her father she was unable to fulfil her engagement. There was a numerous attendance.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, expressed the pleasure which he had in taking the chair at that meeting. In the Act of Parliament which conferred the parliamentary suffrage upon the people the word "male" was inserted, and those ladies who paid rates and took upon themselves the same burdens as men were excluded from voting. He thought, therefore, that those who paid rates should have a voice in the election of those who spent the money, and that ladies who were the heads of households and paid taxes should not be excluded from having their fair share in the representation of the country. (Hear, hear.) He found, taking the householders generally over the country, that one-sixth might be taken as belonging to ladies, who were excluded from the franchise, and therefore it was not merely a sentimental grievance, but one practical in its bearings, and one which they, as men, had no right to keep up. (Applause.)

Mr. H. SMETHURST moved the first resolution, which was as follows:—"That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified for voting in the election of members of Parliament, is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to the law now in force regulating municipal, parochial, and all other representative governments." He expressed his strong sympathy with the ladies in the movement in which they were engaged in endeavouring to obtain the parliamentary franchise. He had been a Radical by cultivation, but his views had been modified, and he now called himself a moderate Liberal. He went in for the extension of the parliamentary suffrage to women upon the great principle that he thought the government of the country was safest when it was in the hands of the majority of the people. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. J. FORDYCE seconded the motion. He said that if it were true that there was something unjust—and on the face of the question it must be unjust to exclude those from the franchise who were entitled to it—and if it were true that ladies were legally qualified to exercise the franchise, he contended that such a law was not only unjust to women, but unjust to the men who would not allow them to be represented. He argued that the Women's Suffrage Bill was a measure which, if made an enactment, would tend to the welfare of this great nation.

Mrs. OLIVER SCATCHERD, in rising to support the motion, was received with cheers. She said that what they had to overcome was not opposition, but the false ideas as to what they were asking for. Their claim was simply this, that all women who were duly qualified to exercise the parliamentary franchise by the payment of rates and taxes, should, when the time came, be allowed to vote for members of Parliament, just as they did now for members of town councils, school boards, and guardians of the poor. Their opponents told them that they were asking for everything, and that there would be no end to their demands, but she asked them to judge them from what

they themselves said, and not from what people said of them. (Applause.) She never yet met anyone who denied the right of women to vote. The law said that householders rated to the relief of the poor should exercise the franchise, but it was only when the question of the inequality of the laws between men and women interfered with the exercise of that right. Their strongest ground was in consequence of the inequality of the laws between men and women. Some people said that this inequality was necessary and just, but surely the presumption was that where great inequality was found, hardship and injustice were to be found also. (Hear, hear.) It was not for her (Mrs. Scatcherd) to enlarge upon the grievances under which women suffered. They were to be found in the matter of education, in the administration of the laws regulating the hours of labour, and in many other departments of the State. Women asked for the franchise, because they believed that, by the influence which they could exercise morally and socially, they might do great good to the country, and it could not be denied that the bulk of the questions now before the country—the education question, the rearing and training of children, sanitary, temperance, and moral questions—upon all of these women and men were equally interested. (Hear, hear.) The only objection to women having the suffrage which seemed to her to have any real weight in it was that the majority of women did not desire it. Her reply to that objection was that they were not asking it for the majority of women, and, if the majority of women did not desire it, it was simply because they had not thought about the question. (Applause.)

Mr. H. MUDD moved that petitions to both Houses of Parliament, based on the foregoing resolution, be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of the meeting, and that a memorial be presented to Mr. Alfred Mellor Watkin, Sir J. D. Astley, and Mr. Rowland Winn, members for the borough of Grimsby and Northern Division of Lincolnshire, to support the bill for the electoral disabilities of women.

Mr. T. STEPHENSON seconded the motion, and said he was very happy to be able to say that the member for Grimsby was thoroughly in favour of the measure. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs. ASHFORD, in rising to support the motion, was received with applause. She remarked that ten years ago, when this subject was debated in the House of Commons, members of Parliament did not believe in it, and said it was a sham and an unreal agitation, and that the ladies did not want the suffrage. It was easy to understand that every woman could not be the wife of a member of Parliament, nor could every woman move in those charmed circles in which members of Parliament revolve. (Laughter and cheers.) Petitions in favour of the measure had been signed by 300,000 persons and presented to Parliament. It had been objected that the petitions were signed by men as well as women, and supposing that were so, she contended that if 150,000 women asked for the suffrage, it would not be easy for men to say that women did not want it; and even if only one woman in England was entitled to a constitutional right, she ought to have the opportunity of exercising it.

The resolutions were carried unanimously, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to Mr. J. Winttingham for presiding.—*Grimsby Herald*.

## YORKSHIRE.

Miss Craigen has addressed meetings on September 25th, in the Wesleyan schoolroom, HAWORTH, Yorkshire; Mr. John William Rhodes in the chair.—On September 26th, in the schoolroom, MARCH, a small village about a mile and a half from Haworth; attendance very good; Mr. Joseph Ogden in the chair.—On September 27th, in the Trevelyan schoolroom, LOWERTON. The large schoolroom was crowded, the people

came in from the mills and farms for miles round; the Rev. Thomas Rae, Wesleyan minister, occupied the chair.—On September 28th, in the Mechanics' Institute, OAKWORTH; Mr. Thomas Oakley in the chair; there was a very good attendance.—On October 1st, in the Wesleyan schoolroom, LEES; Mr. Wallbank in the chair; there was a very excellent meeting. At all these meetings the subject was quite new to nearly all the people, they listened with the deepest interest, and the passing of the petition was voted unanimously, not one hand being held up to the contrary at any of the meetings.—On October 5th, Miss Craigen gave a lecture in the Mechanics' Institute, BINGLEY, after which a collection was made for the Indian Famine Fund; Mr. Charles Dawson occupied the chair. Miss Craigen moved the adoption of the petition, which was seconded by Mrs. Sellars, Mr. Sellars supported it, and said he had felt much opposed to the movement, but he now saw that he had never understood the question before; he now saw the matter in a different light. The petition was carried. The collection amounted to 18s. 2½d., which was handed to the vicar of the parish for the famine fund. Votes of thanks to Miss Craigen for her lecture, to the committee of the institute for granting the use of the room, and to the chairman for presiding, concluded the proceedings.—On October 15th, Miss Craigen lectured at DENHOLME, Mr. Bancroft in the chair.—On October 24th, she addressed a large and crowded meeting at EARBY, Mr. Green in the chair. A great number of women mill-hands attended. Miss Craigen spoke above two hours, as the people would not have her to stop. The petition was proposed, and was seconded by Mrs. Searle, and carried by about 500 to 1. The chairman, however, refused to sign it on behalf of the meeting, and Miss Craigen then proposed that they should depute another person to sign for them. This was agreed to, and the meeting voted that Mrs. Searle should sign for them. The proposal was seconded and carried by acclamation, and Mrs. Searle signed the petition on behalf of the meeting.

## BRISTOL.

On October 18th, a meeting was held at the rooms of the Bristol and West of England branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 16, Park-street, Bristol, to discuss the subject of granting the Parliamentary vote to women ratepayers. The chair was taken shortly after eight o'clock by Dr. Eliza W. Dunbar. The audience was composed chiefly of women. After a few preliminary remarks, Dr. Dunbar said their great object was to make their principles and claims known, and the success they had attained gave them great courage. At a time when a great attempt was made to give the vote to labourers, it was right that they should advocate their claims. The improvements in education were such that women at the present time received as high salaries as men teachers, showing that they were equal. The old argument of excluding women from trade lest men should suffer had failed, and it was admitted that employment must now be found for all. It behoved every woman to consider seriously how she opposed the granting of the voting privilege to her own sex. Miss Mary Price was first called upon to address the meeting, and in the outset combated the idea of Mr. John Bright that the claim of women to the franchise was based upon an unconquerable antagonism. Another objection was that they ought not to have votes because they would not use them, and that political action was outside women's sphere. They might read of the past history, but must not step over the magic circle of present history. The sphere of woman the speaker defined as that work which woman can do best, and gave several examples of what was considered stepping outside the sphere of woman. Another objection combated was that all women were Tories and under the influence of the

clergy. Some two millions and a half of women were at the present time earning their own living, and such persons were entitled to the protection of the suffrage. The Rev. J. B. Spring congratulated the assembly on the successful meeting, and said he would, like the previous speaker, combat some of the objections raised against them. There was no sphere for women more than for men, women being able to take many positions besides those of home. They only claimed votes for those women who were ratepayers. He combated the idea that women could gain all they wanted from the chivalry of man, and gave some amusing instances to the contrary, and concluded by some words of encouragement. Miss Le Geyt next addressed the meeting, dwelling upon the justice of their claim to the vote. No objection was made to a man if he had the proper property qualification, yet they would deny it to the woman possessing the same qualification. Why should the property qualification of women be forgotten by the registrar, yet remembered by the tax collector? The vote was given to women in the election of town councils and school boards, and no ill had come of it. In the latter part of her speech she stated some of the hardships to which women are subjected by being excluded from the franchise, and gave instances of the trades unionism amongst men against the employment of women in professions and trades. At the conclusion of the speeches, a discussion was invited by the chairwoman; but, as no one responded, thanks were proposed and carried by acclamation to Dr. Eliza W. Dunbar for presiding, and a petition to Parliament advocating women's right to the franchise having been adopted unanimously, the meeting separated.—*Bristol Daily Post*.

## SCOTLAND.

## ABERDEEN.

During the month of September an interesting social meeting was held in the house of Mrs. Gerard, Union-street. After having partaken of a social cup of tea, Miss Becker's speech upon "Some Social Aspects of Women's Suffrage," delivered by her at the Social Science Congress, having been read aloud by Miss Ella Burton, and attentively listened to, a lively discussion followed, Mrs. Gerard taking a leading part therein. After an hour or two of pleasant conversation, the ladies present agreed to visit the women ratepayers of the town of Aberdeen, and to inquire into their opinion on this important political matter, stating it as their belief that if the work were thoroughly entered into, an influential petition might be presented by them to Parliament before the question of removing the political disabilities of sex again came before the House. Before the meeting broke up a hearty vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Gerard for her kind invitation to this evening's reunion, one lady suggesting that it would be well if such a social gathering could be held in each town in Britain at this season of the year, as it might serve to strengthen the bond between workers by introducing them to each other, and by leading them to talk over their projects in common.

## IRELAND.

## CARROWDORE.

On July 9th, a lecture was delivered in the Presbyterian Church, Carrowdore, by Miss Isabella M. S. Tod, subject, "Woman's Rights." The chair was taken by William Carmichael, Esq. The house was crowded. Miss Tod delivered an instructive and interesting address, which secured the attention of all present. It was proposed by the Rev. J. Kennedy Elliott, and seconded by Mr. John M'Clure, jun., that the best thanks of the meeting be presented to Miss Tod for her lecture and for the information she had imparted.—*Northern Whig*.



## A LESSON FROM THE PENGE MURDER.

The following letter from Miss Frances Power Cobbe appeared in the *Spectator*, of Oct. 6th:—

Sir,—In commenting on the horrible story of poor Harriet Staunton, the *Times* of the 27th ult. made the following noteworthy observation:—

"She was married in spite of the efforts of the mother to defend her by placing her under the protection of the Court of Chancery, and by the marriage the husband acquired the right not only to receive the income of Harriet Staunton's money, but to apply the principal as he might think fit. Did our law resemble that of many countries which have followed the Civil Law, whatever the motives of this marriage might have been, a certain circumspection in conduct towards the wife would have been necessary, if any advantage was to be derived from her property after her death. The husband might have extorted the enjoyment of her money during her lifetime by violence or terror, but after her death it would have been distributed among her kindred, unless she had made a will in favour of her husband, and such a will in the circumstances would have been liable to a formal legal ordeal, which probably people like the Stauntons would hesitate to face. But under the present law of personal property, there was no such obstacle to the appropriation of the unhappy woman's money. The husband became absolute possessor of Harriet Staunton's money, and on the supposition that the possession of this money was the one object of the marriage, she remained merely an odious incumbrance."

Thus it appears that it is the exceptional privilege of an English-woman—that "favourite of our law," as Blackstone calls her—to remain "merely an odious incumbrance" to any man who has married her (as probably some ten or twenty per cent of men marry their wives) for the sake of obtaining her money; and this is admitted by the great opponent of all the rights of women as just a curious little coincidence, worth a passing observation as a point of comparative national legislation. To how many hundreds of miserable women has it not been a matter literally of life and death? Few, indeed, it is to be hoped and believed, have been the husbands who, like Louis Staunton, have resolvedly and of malice aforethought actually starved their wives; or like De Tourville, have thrown them down a precipice; but in how many cases have they not let them die,—that is, foreborne to provide the change of diet or of scene, the medical care, the household peace, whereon depended the chance of baffling disease and weakness, or the nervous maladies of which an unhappy marriage is so often the fertile source?

In the class to which Harriet Staunton belonged some protection for the wife's interests is commonly obtained by means of settlements, or of relatives in a position to resent any gross misusage. But if a woman inheriting some thousands of pounds is liable to die of hunger under her husband's jailorship, what shall we hope for the poor souls of humbler condition, who have often no surviving parents, and for whom trustees of marriage settlements, not to speak of wardships in Chancery, are things undreamed of? Let us take the commonest of cases, that of a respectable female servant, who, after years of industry and self-denial, allows herself to indulge the dream of a fireside of her own, and listens to the suit of some scamp of a fellow-servant, anxious to finger the hoarded earnings of her life. The man is younger than the woman, and never really loved her at all; and when he has once got possession of her money, has

every motive to wish she were dead, and not a single reason to desire to keep alive his "odious incumbrance." It is vain to say the woman was a fool and the man a scoundrel, and that no law can protect a fool from a scoundrel. The fact (as admitted by the *Times*) is that the *Code Napoléon* and other legal systems do afford a certain protection to every wife—that is to say, they partially remove the temptation of bad husbands to put them out of the way. Does not this afford a very strong argument in favour of further developments of the Married Women's Property Act, and of a complete change in the principle of English law, whereby a woman's inheritance, when unprotected by a costly settlement, is most simply and effectually made over to her husband, no correspondingly simple or effectual security for the bare necessities of life being provided for her in return, but her very life ever afterwards being converted into "merely an odious incumbrance?"—I am, sir, &c.,  
F.

## THE ENGLISH MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

The following letter lately appeared in the *Daily Review* (Edinburgh):—

SIR,—Could I induce you through your columns to ask Episcopalian clergymen if they can give any explanation of that, as it seems to me, extraordinary part of the above ceremony where a man says, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, with all my worldly goods I thee endow," and finishing off with the most tremendous oath? What does the first part mean? what the more extraordinary second? and as to the last, is it not downright perjury for a man to swear that he endows his wife with all, when he has made a settlement limiting her in the use of his means, and very likely intends making a will leaving the bulk of his property to his children, if he has any? Is swearing to what he does not probably understand, as in the two parts, perjury? Is this part obligatory in Scotland?—I am, &c.,  
PUZZLED.

## CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

Mr. L. F. Everest, 8, Highfield Road, Dartford, writes to the *Daily News*, under date September 24th:—"In your impression of this day's date, in the report of the trial of the alleged murder at Penge at the Central Criminal Court, the Attorney-General is made to quote from Sir James Stephen's 'Digest of the Criminal Law' as follows:—'If a married woman commits a theft, or receives stolen goods knowing them to have been stolen, she is presumed to have acted under the coercion of her husband, and such coercion excuses her; but this presumption may be rebutted if all the circumstances of the case show that in point of fact she was not coerced.' I have beside me a copy of the work referred to; the passage quoted is as follows:—'If a married woman commits a theft, or receives stolen goods knowing them to be stolen in the presence of her husband, she is presumed to have acted under his coercion, and such coercion excuses her act; but this presumption may be rebutted if the circumstances of the case show that in point of fact she was not coerced.' The omission in the quotation of the words 'in the presence of her husband' is manifestly an important one. The learned author goes on to state distinctly that this principle does not apply to high treason or murder, and in support of this refers to (i.) Hale P.C., 45, (ii.) Dalton, c. 157, (iii.) 1 Hawk P.C., 4, (iv.) R. v. Buncombe, 1 Cox C.C., 183."

## WOMEN AS EARLY REFORMERS.

On the spot of ground now occupied by the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, there took place in 1819 an event notable in the annals of the district, and which has left an impression never to be altogether obliterated from the memories and traditions of Manchester—that which is known locally as the massacre of "Peterloo," the name being taken from the neighbouring church of St. Peter, mentioned in the memoirs of De Quincey, and a reminiscence of the great battle fought in June. We take the following description from a pamphlet published at the period:—

"Peterloo, August 16, 1819.—100,000 persons were assembled—lawfully and peacefully assembled—in open day—without arms—accompanied by nothing but emblems of peace—dressed as for some village holiday—suspecting no harm—anticipating no danger; this immense assemblage congregated in one mass, men, women, and children, all at once without notice or alarm of any kind was attacked and indiscriminately butchered.

"A number of Female Reformers, amounting to about 150, came from Oldham, and another from Royton. The first bore a white silk banner most elegantly displayed, inscribed 'Major Cartwright's Bill. Annual Parliament. Universal Suffrage. Vote by Ballot.' In one compartment was Justice holding the scales in one hand and a sword in the other—in another a large eye representing the eye of Providence equally watching over the rich and the poor. The females of Royton bore two red flags, one inscribed 'Let us die like men, and not be sold like slaves,' the other 'Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage.'"

## SOJOURNER TRUTH.

The following extract is taken from a letter in the *Boston Women's Journal*:—

Let me recall for the people of these latter days a circumstance connected with the first convention called in the interest of an "Association for the Advancement of Woman," then unpopularly known as Woman's Rights. Though not announced in the programme of the day, Mrs. F. D. Gage speaks of Sojourner Truth as "a tall, gaunt, black woman, in a gray dress and white turban, surmounted by an uncouth sun-bonnet," who walked with the air of a queen up the aisle, and took her seat upon the pulpit steps. In one sense she surely was a "Friend," in that she spoke as the Spirit gave her utterance:—

"Well, chillen, whar dar's so much racket there must be som'thin' out o' kilter. I tink dat dwixt de niggers of de South and women of de Norf, all a-talkin' about rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talkin' 'bout? Dat man ober dar say dat women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place ebery whar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages or ober mud-puddles, or gives me any best place;" and, raising herself to her full height, and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunder, she asked, "And ain't I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm;" and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing its tremendous muscular power. "I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me; and ain't I a woman? I have born thirteen chillen, and seen 'em most all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard, and arn't I a woman? Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head. What's dis dey call it?" "Intellect," whispered some one near. "Dat's it, honey."

What's dat got to do with woman's rights or nigger's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have my little pint measure full?" And she pointed her significant finger and sent a keen glance at the minister who had made the argument. The cheering was long and loud.

"Den dat little man in black dar, he say woman can't have as much right as man, 'cause Christ wa'n't a woman. Whar did your Christ come from?"

Rolling thunder could not have stilled that crowd as did those deep wonderful tones, as she stood there with outstretched arms and eyes of fire. Raising her voice still louder, she repeated:

"Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman. Man had nothing to do with him." Turning to another objector, she took up the defence of mother Eve. It was pointed and witty and solemn, eliciting at almost every sentence deafening applause; and she ended by asserting that "if de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all her one lone, all dese togedder"—and she glanced her eye over us—"ought to be able to turn it back and git it right side up again, and now dey is asking to, de men better let 'em."

As a fitting supplement to the remarks of the African sybil, as she has been sometimes called, I will close by quoting briefly from a report given of a sermon by the Rev. T. M. Griffith, of the 19th Street Methodist Church of Philadelphia.

"To say that man has the power and ought to keep it, is the same kind of reasoning as is employed in the dominions of the Sultan whose seraglios adorn the shores of the Bosphorous. The same self-complacent way of looking at things is employed by the tyrant on his throne, and the master among his slaves. It belongs to Paganism and Mohammedanism, but not to Christianity. The seed of the woman has come to crush the serpent of oppression, the serpent of injustice, and all other serpents that bear the poison of sin in their hissing heads."

"The Christianity for the times demands that all lovers of humanity, of both sexes, should be employed for the world's redemption." H. E. A.

## INADEQUATE PUNISHMENT.

"A West Riding Magistrate" writes as follows to the editor of the *Leeds Mercury*:—

"GENTLEMEN,—On reading the weekly report of the Petty Sessions at Keighley, I am often tempted to exclaim, 'Is it possible?'"

I have just seen an account of last Friday's Court sitting, in which one James Green was charged with assaulting his wife, who appeared to be living apart from him, 'owing to his lazy habits and brutality;' and I cannot help publicly asking whether it is the fact that this poor woman (as the report states) worked at the mill to support her five little children; that her husband demanded her wages; that upon her refusal he threatened to kill her; that on repeating the refusal on the following day, he created a disturbance, and struck her 'two severe blows in the face;' that the Chairman remarked in court 'that the man was worse than a brute;' and thereupon four magistrates proceeded to inflict upon this 'brute' the ridiculous penalty of ten shillings!

Pray, let us hear less of the inadequacy of the law to put down crime and protect woman from 'brutal assaults.' It is the magistrates who administer the law who are to blame; and it is hardly possible to read such cases as the foregoing without a sense of shame."



CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Madam,—In reading your worthy Journal of 1st inst., I observed in article, page 169, that in quoting the title to Lands (Scotland) Consolidation Act, sec. 139, which makes it competent for females to act as instrumentary witnesses in the same manner as males to any deed or writing of whatever nature, that you are led to believe it is necessary that a lease of subjects in Scotland requires still to be tested by male witnesses. Allow me respectfully to inform you that such is not the case, females being, as specified in the section, competent to act as witnesses in all deeds of whatever nature requiring attestation. I know that the practice still exists among Scotch lawyers to have male witnesses in all cases, but it is merely a desire on their part to maintain (stupidly) old formalities, and it is carried so far that many of them still adhere to clauses being put in documents that are rendered unnecessary by the above and many more Acts, although formerly required to be stated to attain the object.

Your obedient servant,

WM. H. RAMSAY,

St. Colme House, Aberdour, Fife, 6th Oct., 1877. Writer.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS IN ITALY.

The movement for obtaining wider civil and political rights for women in Italy is gaining ground. Sig. Saffi, faithfully following the teachings of Mazzini, said lately, at a meeting of his constituents in Cesina: "Our fathers undertook the task of freeing Italy from the yoke of the foreigner. Our task is to make war against vice, prejudice, and ignorance. But how can we make good citizens of Italian men if we continue to look on woman as an inferior being, as an object of amusement? How can children learn to practice civil virtues if the mother, wife, and sister is looked upon only as a slave? Woman ought to be held sacred in the family and the country. She is the instructor of our children, man's comfort in misfortune, his affectionate counsellor, his devoted co-operator in the daily struggles of life, and as such, has a right to all our respect and sympathy. Having a common destiny with man, she should be his companion and equal in rights and in duties, in education and in labour."

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY. SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS SINCE SEPT., 1877.

Table listing names and amounts for Bristol and West of England Society subscriptions, including Mrs. Hallett, Mr. and Mrs. Mills Baker, Rev. E. Harris, etc.

Carried forward... £71 10 0

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS (continued).

Table listing names and amounts for subscriptions and donations, including Brought forward, Mrs. Atkinson, Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Bond, etc.

ALAN GREENWELL, TREASURER. Office, 16, Park-street, Bristol. 4, Arlington Villas, Clifton. £72 12 0

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Contributions to the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 64, Berners-street, London, W., from September 20th, to October 20th, 1877.

Table listing names and amounts for Central Committee contributions, including Mr. E. B. Eastwick, Mr. G. Palmer, Miss A. Swanwick, etc.

ALFRED W. BENNETT, TREASURER. £27 9 6

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, OCTOBER, 1877.

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage subscriptions, including Mrs. Smithson, Miss Rose Hall, Miss Dora Thomson, etc.

Carried forward... £21 17 0

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS (continued).

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage subscriptions, including Brought forward, Mr. Arthur Pease, Mrs. Gurney Pease, etc.

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage subscriptions, including Mr. James Reckets, Mr. Alderman Dowsing, Mr. B. Carill, etc.

Table listing names and amounts for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage subscriptions, including Mrs. J. Awde, Mr. J. Stainsby, Mr. W. A. Hutchence, etc.

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