

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

VOL. VI.—No. 65. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.  
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

JULY 1, 1875.

PRICE ONE PENNY.  
BY POST THREE HALFPENCE.

THE meeting in St. George's Hall, on May 29th, was an interesting and instructive demonstration of the strength of the Women's Suffrage movement, and of the amount of public attention it commands. Nearly all the tickets were disposed of beforehand, and numbers were unable to obtain admission to the hall, which was crowded in every part. The audience, to begin with, was by no means unanimous in favour of the principle. Not only was there an organised opposition, but a large number of persons appeared to have come rather to listen to the arguments of the speakers than predetermined to support their propositions. But the graceful, powerful and intelligent advocacy of the ladies selected to represent the woman's side of the question so recently discussed in the House of Commons, carried the sense of the meeting along with them, and the resolutions were adopted with acclamation.

The chair was occupied by Mr. GEORGE DIXON, M.P., a gentleman whose fearless and outspoken Liberalism on this as on other questions should be a guarantee to the more timid members of his party that sound principles of popular government are not likely to be endangered by the admission of women's suffrage into the programme of Reform, and an additional manifestation of the truth that ours is a question of pure political justice above and apart from party strife.

Mr. DIXON said there were many thousands of men who were in the frequent habit of getting drunk, and there were many thousands of widows maintaining their families respectably, and showing examples of self-denial and good moral conduct, yet, though the men alluded to had the vote, it was not allowed to these widows, though possessed of an experience in life which gave value to their opinions. There were laws to prevent women from working more than a certain number of hours, yet women had no voice in making them. It was said that it would be more difficult to carry liberal measures if women had the franchise, but if the agricultural labourer had the franchise it would be more difficult to carry liberal measures. Some said women did not want the vote, but when the municipal franchise was given first to women the principal man in Bristol was unseated because he had

left this element out of his calculation, and all knew how they flocked to vote at the School Board elections. As to women not being soldiers, policemen, or judges, he himself was by no means prepared to fill such posts, and hundreds of men resembled him in this respect.

Miss BECKER proposed the first resolution, and answered some of the objections of Mr. CHAPLIN. She said that the objection that it was an attempt to disturb and enlarge the existing franchise would have been equally valid against any Reform Bill that ever was introduced. If the existing franchise is too narrow to represent all sections of the community, the basis ought to be enlarged.

Mrs. FAWCETT followed. She dealt with the question from the point of view of practical justice and political and social convenience. She quoted with effect Mr. FITZJAMES STEPHEN'S admission that there are many laws framed by men for their own supposed advantage, which are greatly to the injury both of men and women; and said that if we look at the history of English politics, we find that the unrepresented classes cannot ensure an amelioration of the laws that press hardly on them. It was denied that women were a separate class; but they were constantly subject to class legislation. They are treated for legislative purposes as a separate class, and as such they feel the need of representation. Look at the exclusion of women from medical degrees. A certain number of women wish to study medicine, a large number of women wish to be attended by persons of their own sex, yet every door into the profession is resolutely kept shut in the face of women. In Dulwich Hospital that part of the scheme which provided a high school for girls has been discarded by the Government, and the money is to be appropriated to building a gymnasium for boys. A session hardly ever passes without new illustrations of cases of practical injustice suffered by women through their want of representation.

Mrs. M'LAREN defended the proposition that women should be declared the political equals of men by asking whether the ladies on that platform and those she saw before her were not able to give a political vote as intelli-

gently as the thousands of men enfranchised by the last Reform Bill, many of whom could neither read nor write; and whether those men ought in truth to be considered the political equals of these women. While all would admit that men and women were created with different characteristics, they never were so created that justice was to accord with the nature of one sex and injustice with the other. The demand for women's suffrage was no egotistical or aggressive movement on the part of women, but had arisen in the natural course of events. When women stepped forth to aid the anti-slavery movement WILBERFORCE was startled, and at first objected, saying it would ultimately lead them to seek political rights for themselves. Women learned another lesson in the great Anti-Corn Law struggle, they followed with their sympathies those noble men who taught that monopolies were not divine institutions. They heard thrilling words in those days which are bearing fruit now. Imperative as these questions seemed this was no less imperative, for until women are declared the political equals of men, the avenues of learning and remunerative employment will continue to be closed against them. We have to prevail against the greatest monopoly ever known, the monopoly which men hold over education and political rights.

Since those words were uttered we have been reminded by the illustrious brother of the speaker, whose life has been spent in the battle, that "Monopoly is hard to teach;" and in these words of Mr. BRIGHT, addressed to the trades unionists of Glasgow, we find at once an admonition of the gravity of our enterprise, and an encouragement to persevere in it.

Miss RHODA GARRETT referred with just and becoming indignation to the tone of some of the speeches in opposition to the measure. She asked if women could hear those coarse jokes and those insulting jeers without feeling that a most unworthy reflection was cast upon their feelings as women. Men must think women either too childish to understand or too apathetic to resent insult, if they can believe it possible that they could hear such speeches without feelings of strong indignation. Such speeches do more than anything else to tear the veil from women's eyes, and make them see clearly the true light in which they are regarded by some men, and they have the effect of rousing many women hitherto apathetic, and of teaching them that however willing men may be to flatter them, they not only refuse their claim to the freedom which is granted to every man, however debased or brutal, but they refuse it in terms at once humiliating and insulting.

She referred to the eulogium passed by Sir HENRY JAMES on the career of FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, but said that she well remembered, when FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE first publicly announced her intention of stepping out of her proper sphere, and set out to the Crimea to nurse the sick and wounded in that terrible war, the opprobrium that was cast upon her motives, and the scorn that was expressed at her undertaking. She ventured to say that he who praised and many of those who cheered the name of FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE in 1875, would have been among the first to revile her in 1854, and to condemn a courageous originality which they could neither understand nor reconcile with their narrow and false ideas of womanly purity and modesty. Seen now by the light of the sequel how eagerly we all acknowledge the noble work that was done by our countrywoman, and if it was noble to incur contumely and scorn in order to succour the soldier wounded in battle, is it a less noble aim to strengthen and to uphold women who, in fighting the battle of life, are in too many instances fighting against terrible odds and in the face of determined opposition?

We are sure that the memories of all who can recall that date will bear out Miss GARRETT's assertion, and we have the published record of Miss NIGHTINGALE'S own experiences to the same effect. From her description of the opposition she encountered, it must have been much more painful and trying than any which meets us in the present day; and if women who are striving for enfranchisement with all its concomitant blessings needed any encouragement to persevere beyond their own sense of the duty and sacredness of their undertaking, they might find it in the past experience and present recognition of the gentle yet devoted heroines who were their predecessors in the ever-recurring strife with selfishness, neglect, and wrong.

Miss TOD, in a comprehensive address, touched, among other topics, on the argument drawn from the supposed novelty of the claim, and said there were two fallacies in it—one that there was any greater novelty than in the case of any other class whose claims were first presented, and the other that novelty was in itself a cause of suspicion in political affairs. It was not possible for any man to be more startled at the claims of women than the great barons were when the commoners first insisted on being heard. When Convocation ceased to have the power of taxing itself, the clergy, being then taxed by Parliament, insisted on having votes at elections, which up to that time they had not had, and some Members of Parliament

were as much scandalised at men in so sacred a profession wishing for such a thing, as any of them now are at women wishing for it. We are not asking wholly new power, but old power under new conditions. Women have always had some share in it; when the governing classes were much restricted the women of those classes often held a conspicuous place. Now when power has changed its basis they have actually less of it than before. But we ask for more now than could have been had in former days, because the progress of society both needs it and renders it possible. In the new circumstances of society we cannot perform some most important duties so long as we have no direct and responsible means of influencing the Legislature. A real conviction of duty is a moral force that never yet was conquered. This has been the origin of most of the efforts by which the liberties of this country were gained.

Miss WILKINSON, representing and being herself a working woman, said women did earnestly desire the franchise, and urged those gentlemen who undertook the cause to do so again, and respectfully intimating that delays were dangerous, besought them to bring the matter as early as possible before the notice of Parliament.

Miss STURGE devoted her wit to the confutation of Sir HENRY JAMES, and in reference to some rather unguarded assertions of the learned gentleman as to the presumed inaction or incapacity of women, turned on him with amusing effect his own quotation,

— The good man little knew  
What the wily sex can do,

and urged that their political disabilities should be removed, and then they would show him. Miss DOWNING regarded the present movement as affording the chief means by which many of the evils complained of by women could be remedied.

The meeting by this time had become so well pleased with the ladies that when the redoubtable "Captain JONES, of London," attempted to speak in opposition, they would have none of his utterances, and they carried the original resolutions all but unanimously. A vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Mrs. T. TAYLOR, and seconded by Miss LILIAS ASHWORTH, brought the meeting to a successful close.

We have endeavoured in the above summary to give a sample of the quality of the several speeches, and we refer our readers to the full report, with the assurance that it will repay and deserve most careful and attentive consideration.

THE annual meeting of the Central Committee took place at their offices, 294, Regent-street, London, on the afternoon of May 29th. Mr. FORSYTH, M.P., who presided, said the words he should utter from the chair would be words of encouragement and hope. He then reviewed the events of the session, and concluded by saying that he did not believe granting the suffrage to women would lead to further organic change, but they would have fairer legislation, and the rights and feelings and wishes of women would be more attentively and judiciously considered. So long as he remained in the House of Commons his services would be heartily at their disposal, and he should esteem it a great honour hereafter to have his name associated with their success.

THE Royal Commission to inquire into the operation of the Factory and Workshops Act has been sitting at Birmingham during the past month. Mr. ARTHUR CHAMBERLAIN, representing a firm of brass founders and gas fitting manufacturers, said that the firm expected before long to employ a large number of women, and thus to a large extent dispense with the labour of men. None of the work in their establishment was injurious to health or too heavy for women. He considered that it would be better that women should have free choice of all their occupations, and not be bound to certain kinds of employment by legislative restrictions. It was in consequence of the numerous restrictions that were imposed upon them—for their benefit, it was contended—that women were shut out from many occupations, and were forced to take to others that were not suitable to them. If there had been no Factory Acts, the women would have been more profitably employed. Women had not the benefit of the same rise in the rate of wages that men had. In the case of women, the rise had not been five per cent, while men's wages had risen from 25 to 100 per cent, and boys' from 50 to 100 per cent. Women's work, as a rule, was the hardest and the dirtiest and very often the least paid. They had work to do which the men had given up from time to time. If they would remove all restrictions they would find that during the next ten years the wages of women would greatly increase. Miss SLOANE, manager of the gas fitting department in Messrs. SMITH and CHAMBERLAIN'S works, said that the feeling of the women at the works was that they should be allowed to work as many hours as they desired. In reply to Lord F. CAVENDISH she said that there was a general opinion among the factory women of Birmingham that the pre-

sent laws were doing them harm, and that they were in a happier state before legislation interfered with them.

Working women have no votes and no voice in the legislation which interferes with them, and confiscates that which is their sole property—their labour, and their right to sell it in the dearest market. They are subjected to class legislation, whereby they are driven out of the better paid employments, and crowded into the hardest and worst paid occupations. But working men have votes, and may use their political power to force these restrictions on women, in order that they may be relieved from competition with them. The representatives of the chainmakers' association informed the Commissioners that before the restrictive Acts came into operation men were compelled to work at the same low rates as women, owing to the competition of the women; the excessive employment of female labour in the Walsall trade was disastrous, and they appealed to the Commissioners to use their influence to secure its limitation. Working women, as well as working men, need the protection of the suffrage to guard their industrial rights.

THOSE opponents who make light of the functions of the Sovereign in order to discredit the political capacities of women; that they may maintain that a woman may be fit to be a reigning Queen, and yet not fit to give a vote in the election of a member of the House of Commons, have just received another signal rebuke. Mr. DISRAELI not very long ago publicly stated that no person living had such complete control over the political condition of England as the SOVEREIGN herself; and now, in the *Contemporary Review* for last month, we have a substantially similar declaration in an article understood to be from the pen of one who is entitled to speak with the same authority on the subject as the present PRIME MINISTER. This testimony should be accepted as a conclusive answer in the affirmative to the question contemptuously asked in the recent debate, "Is the QUEEN a politician?" The following is the extract:—

"Although the admirable arrangements of the Constitution have now completely shielded the Sovereign from personal responsibility, they have left ample scope for the exercise of a direct and personal influence in the whole work of government. The amount of that influence must vary greatly, according to character, to capacity, to experience in affairs, to tact in the application of a pressure which never is to be carried to extremes, to patience in keeping up the continuity of a multitudinous

"supervision, and, lastly, to close presence at the seat of government; for, in many of its necessary operations, time is the most essential of all elements, and the most scarce. Subject to the range of these variations, the Sovereign, as compared with her Ministers, has, because she is the Sovereign, the advantages of long experience, wide survey, elevated position, and entire disconnection from the bias of party. Further, personal and domestic relations with the ruling families abroad give openings, in delicate cases, for saying more, and saying it at once more gently and more efficaciously, than could be ventured in the more formal correspondence, and ruder contacts, of Governments. . . . There is not a doubt that the aggregate of direct influence normally exercised by the Sovereign upon the counsels and proceedings of her Ministers is considerable in amount, tends to permanence and solidity of action, and confers much benefit on the country, without in the smallest degree relieving the advisers of the Crown from their undivided responsibility. . . . The acts, the wishes, the example, of the Sovereign in this country are a real power. An immense reverence, and a tender affection, wait upon the person of the one permanent and ever faithful guardian of the fundamental conditions of the Constitution. She is the symbol of law; she is by law, and setting apart the metaphysics, and the abnormal incidents, of revolution, the source of power. Parliaments and ministries pass, but she abides in life-long duty; and she is to them, as the oak in the forest is to the annual harvest in the field."

#### PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
June 15th, 1875.

##### MEDICAL ACTS AMENDMENT (COLLEGE OF SURGEONS) BILL.

On the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate on going into Committee on this Bill,

Mr. STANSFELD said he wished to obtain from his noble friend some statement as to the views of the Government on the right of women to study and practise medicine in this country.

Viscount SANDON replied that that great question would not be prejudiced by the Bill of the hon. member for Maidstone; but, nevertheless, he had given notice of an amendment which would show beyond all doubt that the *status quo* was in no way affected by the present measure, the sole object of which was to enable the College of Surgeons to do what the Act of 1858 was intended to enable them to do. The subject of the medical education of women had only very lately been submitted to the attention of the Government, and they could pronounce no opinion upon it. The Government would, however, consider the matter carefully during the recess, so as to be able to express an opinion next year as to whether legislation was desirable or not. The Bill then passed through Committee.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS.

##### NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

###### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

The annual meeting of the Central Committee of this society was held on Saturday, May 29th, at the offices in Regent Street. The chair was taken by Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C., M.P.

Mr. FORSYTH said: Ladies and gentlemen, before proceeding to the formal business of the meeting, perhaps you would wish me to make a very few remarks, and the words I shall address to you from the chair will be words of encouragement and hope. There is nothing whatever in the position and prospects of the cause which you have at heart to justify the least despondency or the slightest fear. It is true that the Bill which I introduced into the House of Commons this session was lost, but I did not expect to carry it this session; and I am by no means dissatisfied with the smallness of the majority against me. Just consider how very short a time the question which you advocate has been before the public. It is hardly ten years ago that the idea of giving the political franchise to your sex was first broached, and we know that in England it takes some time to remove deep-rooted prejudices, and to forget old traditions. Therefore, I think if you will contrast the state of public opinion upon this question ten years ago with what it now is, you will discern a marked degree of progress. With reference to my Bill, I was, of course, entirely in the dark as to what the strength of the majority against it would be, but let no person suppose that the members who voted in its favour are by any means an index to the number of members of the House of Commons who are favourable to the Bill. It is also a matter for congratulation that the tone of the debate, with one exception, to which I will not more particularly refer, was much improved. I was glad to find that some of the old stock arguments against the measure had entirely disappeared, and were not even alluded to in the course of the debate. To quote one, namely, the unfitness of woman for the franchise on the ground of intellectual inferiority—to man—it was not, so far as I can recollect, referred to as a particular reason for excluding the sex from the privileges which they seek to obtain. The opponents I had to encounter seemed to think it was a matter to be determined by the weight of argument, and not to be pooh-poohed, ridiculed, or laughed down. I think I may also congratulate you upon the very different tone of the public press, as shown by its comments upon the debate. The fashion formerly was to pass the whole thing over in silence, to consider it a crotchet, or to indulge in ridicule and sneers. It is now considered, however, as a matter for fair discussion, and that is just what the advocates of the movement wanted, namely, to have it fairly debated, and to let right ultimately prevail. I have alluded to the absence of some of the old stock arguments against the measure for giving unmarried women votes for members of Parliament. The only two arguments that were really relied upon, and the only two that you need have the least fear of are these. The first is an argument of sentiment or of feeling, and that sentiment is summed up in the one expression, that the possession of the franchise is unfeminine. The other is, that it is introducing the thin end of the wedge. Now, I am one of those who clearly recognise the distinction between feminine and unfeminine occupations, and the difference created by God himself between the two sexes. A great deal of harm might be done were we to seek to obliterate that dissimilarity. Of course it is not for women to enter the army or the navy, and I should be very sorry to see them members of the

turf. But in what possible sense of the word can it be said that giving a woman a right to exercise her choice in the selection of a representative is unfeminine? Elections take place at long intervals, and all that a woman need do is to go quietly to the polling booth, and having recorded her vote, to return home without more fuss or turmoil than if she had been engaged in buying a pair of gloves. In the matter of politics women are not a whit less interested in the legislation of the country than the other sex. Take for instance the subjects of this session—the Artisans' Dwelling Bill, which has passed the second reading; the Public Health Bill, which has passed through committee; and the Adulteration of Food and Drugs Bill, are matters with which every woman who regards the health and well-being of her fellow-creatures is as much interested as any man can be. If all this be admitted, what possible objection is left which can be fairly urged against making this change? Well then, the only other objection is that it is introducing the thin end of the wedge, and that by giving single women the franchise, their married sisters will be induced to claim it. Then it is said that they will claim to sit in the House of Commons, and peeresses in the House of Lords. With regard to women sitting in the House of Commons, does it follow necessarily that because you give them a right to vote, they ought to have a seat, side by side with men engaged in making laws? The clergy were formerly denied a vote because they were represented in Convocation, but for many years past they have been possessed of the privilege of voting, although they are prevented by law from sitting in Parliament. It is my opinion, therefore, that there is no basis whereon to maintain such an argument. I do not believe that granting the franchise to women will lead to any other organic change than that which I hope to see brought about. That is, that certain measures touching the well-being of the female portion of the community will be brought forward, and more attentively considered; and that we shall have more equitable legislation in the matters of property, the custody of infants, &c. You are going to-night to another meeting, and if some of my opponents could be present, they would come to the conclusion that there are some very much better speakers there than some which are to be met with in the House of Commons. It is possible that they would hear some speeches commented upon and criticised in a way that would somewhat surprise them. In concluding an address that was listened to with marked attention, Mr. Forsyth said: All the advice that I have to give you is simply to persevere. I think nothing can be more gratifying than the way in which this movement has taken root, not in one particular section of the community. Successful meetings have been held in the three kingdoms, and two or three former opponents of the measure in the House of Commons have intimated their intention to withdraw their opposition. I feel sure if you go on as you have hitherto been doing that success will ultimately crown your efforts. Of that success let me say:

'Tis not the hasty product of a day,  
But the well-ripened fruit of long delay.

Perhaps it is better for you to reach the goal after a long, calm, dispassionate consideration of this question, allowing it to sink deep into the hearts of your fellow-creatures, rather than by any sudden stroke of fortune or unexpected surprise. All I say again is, persevere, and I can only add that as long as I remain in the House of Commons, all my services will be freely at your disposal. I shall esteem it a great honour hereafter if my name is associated with your success. (Cheers.)

The annual report of the Central Committee having been taken as read, its adoption was moved by Mrs. LUCAS,

seconded by Miss C. A. BIGGS, and supported by Miss REEVES. The motion was carried unanimously.

The second resolution, appointing the executive committee for the ensuing year, was moved by Miss WILLIAMS, seconded by Miss BABB, and carried *nem. con.*

A vote of thanks to the chairman was proposed by Mr. A. W. BENNETT, and carried. Mr. FORSYTH having briefly replied the meeting separated.

#### PUBLIC MEETING AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

A public meeting, under the auspices of the society, was held in the evening, at St. George's Hall, Langham Place. The hall was crowded in every part. Mr. Dixon, M.P., presided, and on the platform with him were many ladies and gentlemen whose names are well known in connection with the women's suffrage movement.

The CHAIRMAN said that the evening was to be devoted to the discussion of that political question which, of all others, was most interesting to women. Therefore, the principal speakers would be ladies; in fact, he believed all save himself, but as all had not yet assembled, he would occupy the intervening time in explaining what was to be discussed. On the 7th of April last, the Bill for the Removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women was rejected in the House of Commons by the narrow majority of 35, the numbers being 152 for, and 187 against the Bill, and this small majority was considered very satisfactory by the promoters of the measure, and the present position of the question was very hopeful. This Bill was not in general accurately understood. It was not to give the vote to all women, neither would it give the vote to married women, but was simply to give them votes based upon occupation or property. It was that any occupier or owner of property, if otherwise qualified to vote, should not be deprived of the exercise of the franchise on account of sex. In order to illustrate the question he would note one or two contrasts. There were many thousands of men in England who were in the frequent, if not constant, habit of getting drunk; and there were many thousands of widows in England maintaining their families respectably, and showing examples of self-denial and good moral conduct; yet, though the men alluded to had the vote, it was not allowed to these widows, though possessed of an experience in life which gave value to their opinions. There were many thousands of men who could neither read nor write who had the franchise, while it was denied to women whose education was equal to the highest in the land, and to whom this Bill would have given it. What would have been the result of passing this measure? In Birmingham about one-ninth of the municipal electors were women, and this was probably the case in most places. This was a proportion not to be disregarded in any constituency, and if the women had the vote they would be able to bring to bear upon their members a degree of influence which they could not exercise at present, and this not only upon general questions, but upon questions in which they were specially interested. No portion of the community was more interested in the liquor question than were women, for he believed they suffered more from the evils of drunkenness than the other portion of the community. Then there was the labour question. There were laws to prevent women from working more than a certain number of hours (cries of "no, no"), an infringement of the liberties of women, but women had no voice in making them. A case brought up from Kidderminster illustrated the law with regard to women. A woman was prosecuted before the magistrates for breach of contract, and the magistrates dismissed the case on the ground that the woman could not be made liable to a penalty for breach

of contract, even if the contract had been entered into with the consent of her husband. Mr. Justice Blackburn said this view was right. While this was the state of the law (a voice, "it is not the state of the law") there was a serious abridgment of women's rights. A married woman could not hold property, and it was difficult for married women to obtain the guardianship of their own children. Thus the education of women had not its right place, for endowments, and the schemes for dealing with endowments, gave a most undue preponderance to the education of boys, who were considered before girls in this important matter. What objection could there be to carrying a simple Bill of this kind? It was said that it would be more difficult to carry liberal measures if women had the franchise; but if the vote were given to the agricultural labourer, it would also be more difficult to carry liberal measures. To give the vote to these men and to women was to give them an educational advantage and a training of far more importance than the question as to the use they might make of it. If woman had the vote certain phases of thought and feeling would be represented which could not be got in any other way, and the broader the basis on which representation rested the safer was it for the country. (Cheers.) Some said that women did not want the vote. (Hear, hear.) Well, he had once been on a slave plantation in Cuba, and had been shown a woman who would not buy her freedom, though possessed of abundant means to do so, and Byron represents the prisoner of Chillon as regaining his freedom with a sigh. But when the municipal franchise was given first to women, the principal man in Bristol was unseated because he had left this element out of his calculation, and all knew how they flocked to vote at the School Board elections. Three great speeches had been made against the Bill; but they neither said the Bill was unjust nor inexpedient. They urged that the logical conclusion from passing it would be that married women would have also to get the vote, and that women would seek seats in Parliament. He had sat on a school board, and did not think it was any the worse for having a lady on it, nor did he think the House of Commons would be any the worse for lady members. As to women being soldiers, policemen, or judges, he himself was by no means prepared to fill such posts, and hundreds of men resembled him in this respect. In conclusion, he encouraged the promoters to go on with the measure which was now before the country, a measure which he believed must redound to the credit of the promoters and the benefit of the community. (Cheers.)

A gentleman in the body of the hall, who said that he had come to the meeting especially for the purpose of opposing the object the society had in view, wished to know whether both sides of the question were to be heard.

The CHAIRMAN informed the gentleman that a certain programme had been prepared for the occasion, and that, if the meeting permitted, an opportunity would be given to any person present who disapproved of the object of the meeting to express his views.

The gentleman expressed himself satisfied with the statement of the chairman.

Miss BECKER proposed the first resolution:—

That this meeting cordially approves of the object of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, and of the course it has hitherto pursued, and pledges itself to support its future efforts by all practical and constitutional means.

After some observations explanatory of the objects of the society, she said Mr. Chaplin based his opposition to the Bill—first, because, he said, in giving political power to women, we should be making an experiment for which in history, so far, not one single precedent is to be found. I wonder where the honour-

able gentleman learned history? Judging from this assertion one would suppose that the History of England used in his school was compiled on the principle adopted by the authorities of Stonyhurst in arranging their Christmas plays—viz., that of cutting out all the female characters. When they act "Macbeth" at Stonyhurst they leave out Lady Macbeth, and in Mr. Chaplin's history they must have omitted all the Queens, and other noble ladies who bore their part in shaping their country's destiny. Mr. Chaplin objected to the Bill, because it is an attempt to disturb and enlarge the existing franchise. We might reply that it is an attempt to apply the existing franchise impartially; but Mr. Chaplin's objection, if valid at all, is equally so against any Reform Bill that ever was introduced, and should have prevented the passing of the Acts of 1832 and 1867. If the existing franchise is too narrow to represent all sections of the community, the basis ought to be extended and enlarged. Mr. Chaplin says that to pass this Bill would be to say that the united experience of the whole civilised world, from the very commencement of time, is altogether erroneous. That argument would have just as much force against mail coaches, railways, steamships, and electric telegraphs, which have effected greater changes in the civilised world within the last fifty years than occurred during the 1,000 years before them. The world did not become civilised by standing still, and the Chaplins of to-day have no more power than the Popes of a former age to stop it from moving. Mr. Chaplin objects to the stress which has been laid on petitions, and contrasts the thousands of women who do petition for the Bill with the millions who do not, and thence infers that the preponderance is against the Bill. But it is most absurd and unjust to argue as if all who did not petition for the Bill were unfavourable to it. If the whole population were to sign petitions the House of Commons could not contain them. Petitions have a representative character, and when they are numerous, and there are none on the other side, it must be assumed that the preponderance of public opinion is shown by the petition. Otherwise to petition for any proposal, unless by a majority of the people, would be to create a presumption against it, which is absurd. Mr. Chaplin says that if there was a shadow of a foundation for the notion that the law as between men and women is unequal, and that it is hopeless for women to expect justice from a Parliament elected solely by men, he would be the first to admit that there were strong *prima facie* grounds for the demand, but he denied that it was so. But if women feel the law to be unequal, and Mr. Chaplin says it is equal, who is to be the judge between him and them? The universal experience of the human race shows that men, even of the best intentions, are not to be implicitly trusted as judges in their own cause, and that a tribunal, in which both parties are represented, affords the best guarantee for an impartial decision. The gentleman who spoke at the beginning of this meeting said that the sense of the meeting would not be fairly represented unless men as well as women were heard. That is exactly what we are saying, the sense of the country is not fairly represented unless the votes of women as well as men are received. All men do not agree with Mr. Chaplin in his estimate of the law respecting women. Mr. Gladstone has condemned it in the strongest terms, and Lord Coleridge declares that it is more worthy of a barbarian than of a Christian country. In 1873 the House of Commons passed the second reading of a Bill to amend the law, but the further progress was stayed by nine successive counts out. Mr. Disraeli said, a short time ago, that he had never known a count out on a question of public interest, and as that sentiment met with general assent, we may assume that the question of amending the laws affecting women was not deemed of public interest

by a Parliament elected solely by men. The objections raised by Mr. Chaplin and others are not new. They are the same which come up time after time on every proposal to improve the condition of the people, and when they have temporarily served their purpose of obstruction to one measure, they are furnished up to meet the next, and come out as good as new. It is curious to look back and observe the shape they assume in resisting some changes which have since been accepted. The late Sir Robert Peel made some observations on women's suffrage in opposing Mr. Grote's motion for vote by ballot, which seem almost prophetic now. He said, "The theoretical arguments in favour of women's suffrage were at least as strong as those in favour of vote by ballot. There were arguments in favour of extending the franchise to women to which it was no easy matter to find any logical answer. Other and more important duties were entrusted to women; women were allowed to hold property, to vote on many occasions in right of that property, nay, a woman might inherit the throne, and perform all the functions of the first office of the state, why should they not vote for a member of Parliament?" Such was the question asked by Sir Robert Peel in 1833, and he found no answer. That is the question women are asking to-day, and it does not appear that Mr. Chaplin and his compeers have as yet succeeded in solving the problem which baffled the intellect of Peel.

Mrs. FAWCETT seconded the motion. After some preliminary observations in reply to various objections against the Women's Disabilities Bill, she said: We ask for women's suffrage because we believe that women have a practical grievance and suffer practical hardship in consequence of their want of representation. I need not go into particulars; everyone who knows the subject knows that there are many laws which are specially injurious to women. Even so stern an opponent of women's rights as Mr. Fitzjames Stephen admits that there are many laws framed by men for their own supposed advantage which are greatly to the injury of both men and women. We look not merely to the history of this session or that session, but if we look at the history of English politics we find that the unrepresented classes cannot ensure an amelioration of the laws that press hardly upon them. They cannot even be sure that new laws and new legislative arrangements will not be made which will prove injurious to them. I know it is denied that women form a separate class in the way in which farmers and artisans are separate classes. But the fallacy of this assertion is obvious when we remember that women are constantly subject to class legislation. Whatever may be their natural position they are constantly treated for legislative purposes as a separate class, and as such they feel the need of representation. Look at the case of the exclusion of women from medical degrees. A certain number of women wish to study medicine; a much larger number of women wish to be attended in sickness by persons of their own sex; and yet every door into the profession is kept resolutely closed in the face of women. Such a state of things would be absolutely impossible if women were represented in Parliament. And, then, again in the matter of education, what is being done? I most gratefully acknowledge the services of the late Endowed Schools Commission to girls' education. But that is one of the things that belong to the past. The Government has apparently discovered that little popularity is to be gained in constituencies, as at present constituted, by devoting endowments to girls' education. In the Dulwich Hospital, although the original foundation was for the maintenance of a warden, fellows, and a certain number of poor brothers and poor sisters, I hear on good authority, that that part of the scheme which provided a high school for girls has been discarded by

the Government, and the money which it would have cost is proposed to be appropriated to fencing the playing fields, and to building a gymnasium for the boys. I need not go on any longer enumerating the practical cases of injustice which women suffer through their want of representation. A session hardly ever passes without new illustrations of it. Now, these practical hardships and this practical grievance would, I believe, disappear if Mr. Forsyth's Bill is carried. And if I am right in believing that the enfranchisement of single women and widows would lead to the gradual removal of laws oppressive to women, and would ensure to women fair play in future legislation, I really don't care whether married women have votes or not. I cannot enter into the feelings of those who violently object to married women having votes. I do not think that there would be an end to domestic virtue and domestic affection if they had votes; but I do recognise that there is a strong feeling in the country against married women's suffrage, and that there is not a strong feeling against the suffrage being exercised by single women and widows who possess the necessary qualifications; and believing, as I do, that all practical grievances will be removed by the enfranchisement of single women, I, for one, should be perfectly contented with a Women's Suffrage Bill which did not enfranchise married women. Mr. Leatham made one remark in his speech with which I cordially agree. He said that the reason why the English people possessed permanent institutions, established on a popular basis, was because of all nations they were the least sentimental and the most practical. I have said that I cordially agree with Mr. Leatham; and one proof, I take it, of the truth of his remark is the position which the question of women's suffrage occupies in England, compared with the position it occupies in all other countries. In no other country can it be said to have any recognised position as a public question, whereas in England the moderate and constitutional measure now in the hands of Mr. Forsyth has met with constantly increasing support, and with constantly diminishing opposition, both in and out of Parliament. It is an instance of the unsentimental and practical character of the English people that the majority against this Bill has been reduced to the moderate number of thirty-five votes, when five years ago the majority against it was 126. It is because we are making an unsentimental and practical request of an unsentimental and practical people that we believe our request will in time be granted. I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution. (Cheers.)

Miss RHODA GARRETT said: We have been lately informed by Sir Wilfrid Lawson that such is the pitch of civilisation to which the world has attained that now, for the first time in her history, England has only need to guard her shores against the invasion of two foreign enemies—the Pope and the Colorado beetle. The injuries, however, which might be inflicted upon our country by the two first of these foes sink into insignificance when compared with the ravages that would certainly be wrought by the third. The Pope, it is true, might overturn our established religion and overthrow the bench of bishops. The Colorado beetle might destroy the hopes of the agriculturist, and injure the vegetable produce of the country; but the third, the female voter, I am almost afraid to tell you what terrible evils would be wrought by her presence at the polling booth. When wise, and learned, and logical members of the House of Commons tell us so, must we not believe that if women (weak, ignorant, and ill-intentioned as they are), were allowed to vote for members of Parliament, they would upset the laws of nature and reverse the decrees of Providence and of the House of Commons? Sir, I was in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons when this memorable debate took place, and I can assure you so bewildered and so horrified was

I by the picture then drawn of myself and my countrymen, that, like Artemus Ward, "I felt that I would give any one five dollars who would tell me who I was and where I was going to." I paused to wonder whether this was really the fate which I was trying to bring upon my unhappy country. I tried to imagine myself in the possession of a vote for a member of Parliament, and that after due consideration I decided to give it to Mr. Disraeli instead of to Mr. Smollett. I tried to discover which of the laws of nature I should be upsetting by this act. Should I really, as Mr. Chaplin says I should, bring about a complete revolution in all the social relations? Should I repudiate the collective wisdom of ages, and impugn the teaching of all religions in every form and the instincts of the whole human race? I speak thus solemnly, for I feel solemnly; for although Mr. Leatham assumes that women care for no question of public interest beyond the legislation affecting the custody of infants, yet I am sure no woman could hear unmoved of all the manifold and great dangers which, by the possession of a vote, she would bring upon her country. In his speech in this debate Sir Henry James referred, in terms of graceful sanction and approbation, to the name of Florence Nightingale, expressing his belief that if she had passed her early life in preparing for political strife, she would never have gained, as she did, more than the glory of a hero, and more than a statesman's renown. The House of Commons loudly cheered this well-deserved eulogium; but, sir, I well remember, and many of those here will recollect too, when Florence Nightingale first publicly announced her intention of stepping out of her proper sphere, and (repudiating the collective wisdom of ages) set out to the Crimea to nurse the sick and wounded in that terrible war; I well remember the opprobrium that was cast upon her motives, and the scorn that was expressed of her daring undertaking. And, sir, I venture to say that he who praised, and many of those who cheered, the name of Florence Nightingale in 1875 would have been the first in 1854 to revile her, and to condemn a courageous originality which they could neither understand nor reconcile with their narrow and false ideas of womanly purity and modesty. Seen now, by the light of the sequel, how eagerly we all acknowledge the noble work that was done by our countrywoman; and if it was noble to incur contumely and scorn in order to help and succour the soldier wounded in battle, is it a less noble aim to brave a still bitterer opposition by seeking to strengthen and uphold women, who, in fighting the battle of life are, in too many instances, fighting against terrible odds, and in face of a determined opposition? I do not think it is worth while to try and persuade those who doubt it, that the women who are spoken of by some of our opponents in the House of Commons in terms more or less insulting, are honest in their conviction that this for which they are working will really benefit their country; but time and the hour will, we hope, put all these mistakes right, and it will be shown one day that a woman can vote for a member of Parliament without losing either her head or heart during the brief interval in which she is dropping her paper into the ballot-box, and that after going unscathed through that trying ordeal she can return quietly home to cook the family dinner, if need be, or she might even buy it with money earned in one of those trades or professions for which women are considered by some people to be so eminently unfit. One of our opponents in the House of Commons ended his speech against Mr. Forsyth's Bill by declaring that it cast a most unjust reflection upon the feelings of men and of gentlemen, and a most unworthy reflection upon the views and intentions of the House of Commons. I fail to clearly understand the real meaning of this sentence; but until I heard it I did not know that the House of Commons looked upon the

desire for political enfranchisement on the part of any section of Her Majesty's subjects as in any way an unworthy reflection upon the views and intentions of the legislators of the country. But, sir, in a sense not intended by the honourable members, I can interpret these words. It was not the Bill in which Mr. Forsyth urged the enfranchisement of women householders that cast an unworthy reflection upon the feelings of men and of gentlemen; it was the speeches of some of those members who opposed the measure that certainly did cast such a reflection. The speech for example, of the member for Cambridge, which I am sure no gentleman—no man of right feeling—could hear without shame and indignation. If such speeches reflect unworthily upon the feelings of men and of gentlemen, what think you were the feelings of the women who listened to them, or who read them afterwards in the newspapers? Do you think, gentlemen, that women could hear those coarse jokes and those insulting jeers without feeling that a most unworthy reflection was cast upon their feelings as women? You must think women either too childish to understand, or else too apathetic to resent insult, if you can believe it possible that they could hear such speeches as Mr. Smollett's or Mr. Leatham's without feeling of strong indignation. Depend upon it speeches such as these do more than anything else to tear the veil from women's eyes, and to make them see clearly the true light in which they are regarded by some men, and I would have the member for Cambridge and the member for Huddersfield know that their speeches have had an effect never intended by them. They have had the effect of rousing many women who have hitherto been either antagonistic or indifferent to this question, and of teaching them that however willing men may be to flatter and to play with them, they not only refuse them their claim to the same freedom which is granted to every man, however debased, or however brutal, but they refuse those claims in terms at once humiliating and insulting. Now, sir, I hope that although I have spoken strongly, I have not spoken more strongly than you think I ought to have done. Of one thing I am certain, that every gentleman and every man of just and right feeling who read that debate, will not only justify us in the course we have taken to-night, but will furthermore feel that if we had been slow to resent the manner in which this serious claim of ours is dealt with in the House of Commons, if we had been too cowardly or too indifferent to resent these things, we should show ourselves not only unfit for the franchise, but unworthy of our country, and unworthy of those great traditions of freedom, of which, equally with yourselves, we are the inheritors. (Cheers.)

Mrs. M'LAREN, in support of the resolution, said: Mr. Leatham, in his speech against Mr. Forsyth's Bill for removing the Disabilities of Women, put the question into a nutshell when he said, "It is not whether a few spinsters and widows shall be admitted to the franchise, but whether women shall be declared the political equals of men." It is this simple proposition that has filled the minds of our opponents in the House of Commons with that confusion which fear always creates, and they have resorted to arguments of the most illogical kind to prevent a favourable vote on this question. Does the hon. member mean that the ladies on this platform and those I see before me are not able to give a political vote as intelligently as the thousands of men whom the last Reform Bill enfranchised, many of whom can neither read nor write? I would ask, should those men be considered the political equals of these women? To suit his purpose, Mr. Leatham cites professional and technical questions which come before the House of Commons as beyond the ken of women, knowing quite well that no one member of Parliament understands all those questions. Mr. Leatham the other day said that "in our time religion seems to be allying

herself more and more openly, more and more closely, with politics." Surely, then, it may be the right time that women should enter the political arena, for religion has been very much left to them. I should think there are few men in that House who do not believe that women could give as good, and as wise, and as intelligent votes as men give. They know this has been proved in the School Board elections, where women have voted as untrammelled by priest or by prejudice as any men in the country. Mr. Leatham tells us that nature has denied to woman the faculty of close reasoning, but has given her another faculty which, perhaps, in her circumstances is equally important—and that is, the innate unreasoning sense of what is womanly, which makes women rebel against the principle of this Bill. Doubtless he thought this pretty expression would charm and delude the weaker portion of his sex, if not of ours. How have they rebelled against this Bill?—by sending more petitions to Parliament in its favour than have been sent in favour of any question whatever. At Keighley, which is not far from the constituency of the hon. member, there was a School Board contest the other day, where the women came out to vote freely and conscientiously. So educational was the contest that they convened a meeting of ladies to promote the cause which has called us here to-night; and so strong was their reasoning sense of what was just towards their sex that within twenty-four hours afterwards they got up one of the best public meetings ever seen in that town. The men came nobly to the platform to express their sympathy with the object of the meeting, and their admiration of the way in which the women had fulfilled their obligations to themselves and their country. The enthusiasm of the meeting showed that whilst all would admit that men and women were created with different characteristics, they never were so created that justice was to accord with the nature of one sex and injustice with that of the other. There was one old man at that meeting who had witnessed and sympathised with every struggle for freedom during this century. In his younger days he used to walk in the early morning many miles over the Yorkshire hills to fetch for the village unstamped newspapers, which he carried concealed in the crown of his hat, made double for that purpose; so oppressive were the taxes on knowledge in those days. He came to the meeting, though he said his heart had been that morning well-nigh crushed by domestic trial; and that, having felt for many years that the cause we advocated was the last of the great anti-slavery battle, he felt he must come to express his entire sympathy with it. In our large manufacturing towns machinery is levelling distinctions regardless of the fears of any Legislature, when men and women work together, surrounded by the same associations, and earning the same wages. There are forces at work which none can check. Neither learning nor talents, however great, can arrest the progress of that moral and spiritual element which is destined to take the place of physical force; and even our opponents grant that women especially represent that element, though they do not perceive to what length this admission would lead them. This demand for women's suffrage is no mere egotistical or aggressive movement on the part of women. It has arisen in the natural order of events. Physical force has ruled for ages. The agitations which have of later years been carried by moral suasion have opened the eyes of women to their just claims to share in the moral government of the world. When women stepped forth to aid the anti-slavery movement Wilberforce was startled and at first objected, saying it would ultimately lead them to seek political rights for themselves. It was like the inspiration of a prophet, and yet he spoke it with fear—

Oh place! O form!  
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,  
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls  
To thy false seeming!

Where would the anti-slavery cause have been now if the women had not helped? Ask that veteran friend of the slave, George Thompson! Boldly did they work from the day Wilberforce objected to those sad days when the struggle culminated in blood on the battle fields of America, counting nothing too sacred to sacrifice on the altar of freedom. Women learned another lesson in the great Anti-Corn Law struggle; they followed with their sympathies those noble men who taught that monopolies were not Divine institutions. They helped in that cause. They heard thrilling words in those days which are bearing fruit now. Yet none could be more startled at the thought of women being declared the political equals of men than were the rulers of that day at the thought of the British people buying their food in the cheapest and selling the fruits of their industry in the dearest markets. Imperative as that question then seemed, we feel that this is no less imperative; for until women are declared the political equals of men, the avenues of learning and remunerative employments will continue to be closed against them. We have to prevail against the greatest monopoly ever known—the monopoly which men hold over education and political rights. We do not blame them; they have inherited their positions as we have inherited ours; and it is woman's duty to show that she deserves a higher position by striving to obtain it. In those efforts we have met with the most generous sympathy from men, and although "the immemorial usages of mankind" bind down some minds longer than others in their rusty chains, we know that reason will ultimately overcome prejudice, and our cause meet with the same success which has crowned the faith and perseverance of others. There is no royal road for women to obtain justice any more than for men. The ear of the nation can only be reached from the platform, and I would ask Mr. Leatham how, with his Quaker education, he can call that a false position for women to occupy? "The Lord gave the word. Great was the company of women publishers," is the correct translation of a verse in the Psalms, and the Quaker doctrine holds what the New Testament clearly says, that God would pour out His spirit upon sons and daughters alike; and in the offices of prophecy and of teaching the Quakers permit men and women to stand side by side. Does Mr. Leatham so limit the power of the Most High that He can only authorise a woman to teach within the four walls of a Quaker's meeting-house? I assure him there are those who advocate this cause as serving Him, whose attribute is justice, and who is, I believe, calling up "women publishers" to publish truths which too many men have forgotten. The meeting will, I hope, bear with me, since I am only answering the speeches made against us in the House of Commons. I use a strong word when I say that the cloven-foot appeared in some of those speeches. There was an apprehension that if women obtained the franchise they would exercise it against those laws which "the innate unreasoning sense of what is womanly," aye, and of what is base and cowardly, did not require "in her circumstances" that she should stop to reason whether it was her duty to "rebel" against legislation which was an indignity to the whole womanhood of the country. Well do we know, as Mr. Leatham quoted, that "Beauty provoketh thieves as well as gold," and in the light of that unconstitutional legislation which has been framed to meet such robbery as the hon. member hints at, how can he say that women receive the protection of the law far "beyond that which is extended to men." If my voice could reach the tens of thousands who have been engaged in the work of revivalism in this country, I would ask them to join our cause and help to teach that there is but one law for men and women alike, self-denial and a pure life being in the Scriptures enjoined upon all, so that one could no longer say

That the stones of every street,  
Know the tread of the outcast's feet.

Mr. Leatham felt himself somewhat muzzled by his Quaker profession, and merely ventured to fling upon the pet argument that to be able to fight is the sum of human virtue, and very adroitly left it to be inferred that as women were relieved from the duty of defending their country, they ought not to object to being deprived of the rights of citizenship, whilst he himself and the other members of the "Society of Friends" in that House who have given their votes against us, not only vote, but sit there, exempt from the duty of defending their country on professedly Christian grounds. Had the Quakers in that House been true to their principles they could neither have gently hinted at nor sat quiescent whilst the doctrine was being promulgated that only those who could use the sword should be entitled to political justice. It was not so George Fox hid light under a bushel when he learnt those great truths which he took direct from the New Testament. The Quakers suffered martyrdom to prove that moral force was the only power Christians should wield, and it was in the light of that doctrine that George Fox was again able to place women on an equality with men. Mr. Leatham resorts to the terrorism of high-sounding words, which he knows so well how to use when logic fails him. He affects great indignation that the name of the Queen should have been "dragged" into a discussion concerning the political rights of women, and he denies, by an interrogation, that the Queen is a politician. Now, the country has always been assured that one great virtue of the Queen is that she will not sign any political document without understanding its nature and purport. Can it be any compliment to Her Majesty to suppose that she desires her female subjects to be less intelligent and well-informed than herself? Women have not sympathised less with the Queen in her great sorrow than the men of this nation, though we would not admit that this sorrow was the Queen's absorbing virtue. The holy life which was written in the face of the Prince Consort won him a place in the heart of every woman who recognises and values that purity which beautifies a man equally as it does a woman. Amongst all the memories which will surround the name of Queen Victoria, none could endear her more to an ever-enlightening posterity than that she should leave her great name and her great influence in favour of the emancipation of her sex. (Cheers.)

Miss Tod proposed the second resolution:—

That this meeting hereby expresses its earnest thanks to Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., the Rt. Hon. James Stansfeld, Mr. O'Sullivan, and Mr. Jackson for introducing and supporting the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill; also to the 170 Members of the House of Commons who voted or paired in its favour in the division on the second reading of the measure on April 7th, 1875, and respectfully requests Mr. Forsyth and his coadjutors to take steps for the re-introduction of the Bill at an early period next session.

I suppose it would be in accordance with the fitness of things for me to answer any objections raised by Irish members. But I am happy to say that no Irish member spoke against the Bill in the recent debate, and that a larger proportion of them voted for us this year than ever before; although many of our best friends were unable to return to London after the Easter holidays in time for the second reading. The only Irishman who spoke was on our side, and others would willingly have advocated our claims, if time had permitted. Indeed, the growth of public opinion on this subject in Ireland has been quite remarkable. A gentleman said to me some time ago, with reference to a certain district, "You will not find many people there to sympathise with you; they know nothing about women's suffrage." Well, on visiting the place, I found indeed that they knew nothing of the Women's Disabilities Bill; but they did know a great deal about the mistakes and hardships

which are possible under the present state of things, and which our Bill would remedy; and they felt keenly many things in the position of women which belonged to the domain of custom rather than law, but which higher political status would greatly improve. They saw at once that representation was the key to the problem with which they had long vexed themselves, and accepted the Bill with as much alacrity as if they had had a long familiarity with political affairs. This is quite a typical instance of the way in which the country—all parts of it—is preparing for legislation on the subject. These things do not happen by chance. When a real conviction respecting certain social mischiefs to be cured, and certain social benefits to be gained, takes wide possession of the public mind, and when one line of action is adopted by those most interested, it is a pretty strong proof that they are right, and, moreover, that the change they strive for is coming. Some members of Parliament, among them Mr. Smollett, whose speech was described by the *Pall Mall Gazette* as characterised by "incredible coarseness," profess to think that the wish for representation is entertained by but a small number of women. They can only come to that conclusion by ignoring all the ordinary methods of judging of the growth of public opinion; and taking the chance expressions of a few ladies in drawing-rooms as the feeling of all women, in all ranks. Yet, would they look to the light and lively conversation in hours and places of amusement for information on any other grave subject? Would they judge of the religion of the women of these countries by the careless chat of idle hours? Is it at parties, and concerts, and flower shows, that they would learn anything of the self-denying charities, the anxious and personal philanthropic work of ladies? or of the trials and toils of poor women? And yet, if in such light talk the subject of women's suffrage is treated with gay disdain, these gentlemen think that almost all women are indifferent to it. Let them, if they want to know the truth, go where they would go if they wanted to see the religious convictions of women in action—let them study this as they would study the charitable work to which so many women devote themselves,—let them try to learn what good and true women, in all ranks and relationships, think of the innumerable social matters in which Parliament interferes,—how they are helped and hindered in their daily life by the wisdom, or folly, or apathy of the Legislature,—let them learn what women feel when facing, with little help, the dangers, and difficulties, and anxieties of life,—and they will be astonished how different an aspect the claims of women to the suffrage will present to them. They will discover that a large number of women do see that the right of voting, though not a panacea for all woes, can remove the sources of a good many of them. They will discover that very many women, who are too much crushed down by care to pay attention to public affairs, or too little educated to understand them, nevertheless feel that the time has come when the conditions which hampered or oppressed them could be altered for the better. They will discover that there is a serious discontent among the best young people, not of their own creating; and a conviction that more freedom to act according to their own consciences is a necessary condition of doing their duty in the present circumstances of the world and society. Many people forget that one change involves more; and if you could to-morrow, by the stroke of a magician's wand, extinguish all aspirations for advancement in the hearts of all the women of the land, that would not avail to put them back into the position of the women of fifty years ago. As there is no such magician, this righteous discontent cannot be repressed, it will work its way into daylight, and transmute itself into active exertions to obtain its just ends. Mr. Smollett, like many other people, either forgets, or more likely knows

nothing about this wide-spread, grave and rooted feeling in its various manifestations. Being therefore at a loss to account for the agitation for a share of political influence which has sprung out of it, he asserts that it is an importation from America. Nothing could be more untrue. Ideas are the common inheritance of all God's rational creatures, and no idea ever takes root where it has no soil to grow in. There are excellent women everywhere engaged in agitations similar to ours. But we may speak for the ladies in this country, at any rate, that it is precisely those who are the most actively engaged in useful and benevolent work who have taken up this question. Perhaps the honourable member does not move much in such circles. But it is precisely those who have the time, and the means, and the heart, to care personally for the poor, the ignorant, and the suffering, who do work for the franchise, and are sustained in that work by the sympathy of many who have the will but not the opportunity for equal exertion. Of course every great cause has a fringe of foolish followers, whose sayings and doings are seized upon by opponents as if they were characteristic, which they are not. Some people see nothing but good, others see nothing but evil, according to

The instinctive theorising, whence a fact  
Looks to the eye, as the eye likes the look.

It is instructive as regards the nature of the minds that look at the facts. But no single word spoken or written by any woman in this country, affords any justification for the language used by this gentleman. If he is incapable of comprehending how and why high-minded and conscientious women wish for the franchise, at least common decency should make him abstain from throwing mud at them. They have been told before now that they should keep out of the way of being targets for mud. That is, when a madman rushes through the streets with a knife in his hand, blame the passengers for being in the way, if any of them are hurt. But that advice is only offered to ladies of position, whom a man can't well bespatter without somebody crying "shame." Suppose the ladies do stand out of the way! Behind them is a great host of toiling women, the most tried and suffering half of "the dim common populations." Suppose the ladies do stand out of the way, does the volley of mud fall harmless? No, it falls on those least able to resent it, but most sure to suffer from it,—the friendless, who are neglected,—the young, who are tempted,—the toil-worn, who are too weak to right themselves,—the ignorant, who are dumb and cannot plead their own cause. It is they who suffer from the refusal of justice here. If the refined and educated women who lead this agitation were thinking of themselves, they could gain anything they want with much less trouble. But they have too many sorrowful clients behind them to let them falter, even when they are met with the poisoned weapons of coarseness and blind abuse. We don't look for consistency in our opponents, but I do think the very oddest argument against the Women's Disabilities Bill is, that by giving the franchise to women who are heads of households or independent persons, and therefore widows or spinsters, it throws a slur upon married women, whose households are represented by their husbands. Mr. Smollett has heard, what nobody else has heard, that it is a main proposition in our meetings, that married women ought to have votes. That will be news to most persons on this platform. But in the same breath he accuses us of wishing to put them on a lower level than other women. The Bill only follows the existing lines of the Constitution, both in small things and in great. We might as well say that it throws a slur on marriage to allow bachelors and widowers to have votes. It would only be consistent that our opponents should try to prevent unmarried women

and widows from having a right to have houses of their own, and the management of their own property, and an independent life of any kind, or from exercising any of the local franchises in their possession already. If it would be making little of a married lady that her unmarried or widowed sister should be able to vote for a member of Parliament while she could not, then it must equally be making little of her now that her sister can now take a house in her own name, buy or sell property, arrange her own establishment to suit herself, choose her own society, and her own charitable and other duties, select what church she pleases to attend, and vote for poor-law guardians, for municipal authorities, and for the school board, while she can only do some of these things with her husband's consent, and others she cannot do at all. But we look round upon society and see that this feeling of indignity *does not exist*. There are many ways in which better laws, and a higher state of public feeling, could improve the position of married women, in all ranks. But it is *not* one of their grievances that they are represented in the legal and formal part of the business of the world by their husbands. That is part of the compact involved in the relationship, and brings with it, in all ordinary cases, the power of influencing their husbands' actions. That influence, indeed, is in some cases not as great as it should be, and in others not as wise as it should be, but still it exists. But some married ladies are among the most keenly interested in the success of this Bill, being assured that, while what belongs to the welfare of the household may be fully represented by the husband, there is much belonging to the general life of women under a great variety of circumstances, which is never likely to be understood, until our legislators have a more direct and immediate interest in understanding the convictions and interests of women. To make out any kind of case, classes as utterly opposed as light and darkness are grouped together by this gentleman. But by what strange fatality is it that the self-elected champion of married women speaks so scornfully of widows? To hear him one would think that a woman ceased to be a useful member of society, nay, to be a human being—to have any faculties, any rights, almost any existence—when her husband dies. To be sure, that is in accordance with heathen and savage ideas. The Hindoo woman was decorously invited to burn herself on such occasions—the negroes of Old Calabar flog a man's wives all round for the crime of letting him die—while the milder Abyssinians are content with making them sit in ashes and rags, and denying them all luxuries for the remainder of their lives. I thought this was a Christian and civilised country. It seems that some gentlemen don't think so, but choose to throw a stigma where Providence sends only a sorrow. Does a woman lose her knowledge of the world, her sympathy with others, when her husband dies? Is she less active, less intelligent, less self-denying, when she has to fill the place of both parents towards her children? An eminent lawyer once said that the highest type of industry, patience, and thoughtful resolution he knew, was a widow with young children, and some property to manage for them. Is this a class whose unfitness for political power is supposed to be proved by the mere mention of their name? In this contemptuous tone towards widows, the member for Cambridge is almost alone. But he is not alone in using the argument drawn from the supposed novelty of our claims. There are two fallacies in it,—one, that there is any greater novelty in our claims now than there was in those of other classes when they were first presented; and the other, that novelty is itself a cause of suspicion in political affairs. The whole history of the country disproves both. The British Constitution stands on a height above criticism. But the *practice* of the State is anything but perfect. The very fact of

Parliament sitting for the half of every year, and finding plenty of work to do in that time, *not* to administer the laws, but to make, alter, amend, repeal, bringing them to fit either the changing circumstances of the day, or the keener moral sense of the day, is sufficient to show that our normal state is one of change, and that it is both the business and the right of all thinking people to see that the changes are improvements. It is not possible for any man to be more startled or annoyed at the claims of women, than the great barons were when the Commons first insisted on being heard with regard to their own share of public affairs. When Convocation ceased to have the power of taxing itself, the clergy being then taxed by Parliament, insisted upon having votes at elections, which up till that time they had not had; and some members of Parliament were as much scandalised at men in so sacred a profession wishing for such a thing as any of them are now at women wishing for it. Nor is it in any sense a greater novelty than the claims of the members of different religious bodies, and of different classes of society, which have been successively and successfully presented to the Legislature, as the intelligence of the country increased, and its moral insight grew more penetrating. Lord Plunket declared, on one of these occasions, "In the same sense in which religious toleration is a right, a due share of political power is a right." No view of our system of Government could be more unsound than to represent it as complete from the first, or indeed at any period. The State aims at caring for all, in all those departments of life which belong to it, and it is continually taking possession of new departments, and for that reason needs continual re-adjustment. It is not infallible. At present, while legislating specially for women in some few cases (not always wisely), it seems in the main to conclude that the men of each class will care for the interests of the women of each class. And members tell us that since the State was satisfied with this during all the past centuries, we ought to be satisfied with it now. Once upon a time the Attorney-General of a king who believed in personal government answered questionings not unlike ours by the lofty announcement, "Where the law trusts we ought not to distrust." But those who dreaded arbitrary power considered, as we do, that the law is not infallible, nor its expositors either, and thought liberty not too dearly bought by revolution. We live in more peaceful times, and have to win our freedom, not from one pair of unwilling hands, but from six hundred convinced minds; and we are proceeding so rapidly with the convincing process that we know the day of triumph is not far off. But our opponents ask irritably, "If the admission of women to political status is so good for both them and for the country, why was not the claim made sooner?" Why, is it a new thing? We answer that we are not asking wholly new power, but old power under new conditions. Women have always had some share in it; especially when the governing classes were much restricted, the women of those classes often held a conspicuous place. Now, when power has changed its basis, they have actually less of it than before. But we ask more now than could have been either asked or taken in those days, because the progress of society both needs it and renders it possible. Many other good things have not been asked for till lately, and have been opposed on the same grounds, of "novelty," and "opposition to the experience of mankind." When for instance a provision for the education of the people was first discussed in Parliament, within the lifetime of some present, it was met with the same kind of objections. People asked why, if education was needful for the poorest and lowest, that was only now discovered? They said that it was lifting the poor out of their proper sphere. They asked ironically would educated men dig, or plough, or toil at

the furnace, or do the rough and dirty work of life. They emphatically begged that the poor might be left to the valuable education of work, and not led into positions for which they were unfit. It took about a generation to make people ashamed of the selfishness underlying these fallacies, and to make an Education Act possible. The same sort of thing, exactly, is said to us. Political status for women is as new a thing as general education for the people, and not a whit newer. Something of both has been aspired after for a long time, under great difficulties. We have to meet the same assumption that what is convenient for one class must be for the interest of all—the same notion, on the part of those who possess any kind of power, that they know so well what is good for those who have not that power, that it would be silly to share it with them. Let us make allowance for those who believe that they understand what is good for women better than women themselves do. It is often a genuine belief, though a supremely absurd one, and we need not accuse all who hold it of intentional tyranny. We are in many respects unjustly treated—let us never stoop to be unjust ourselves. Every reform is opposed, but reforms are necessary to existence. The late Augustus Hare wisely said, "Thank God, no perpetual motion has ever been discovered for free governments. They need the ever-renewed impulse of the people's wants." Such an impulse we bring now,—the wants of a large section of the community, and the earnest enthusiasm for good which belongs to a portion of them. But again, although this claim of women to vote may be a new thing in its outward aspect, it must be remembered that the true political spirit has never been wanting among some women. In spite of all the disadvantages under which women labour and have always laboured as to education, personal freedom, and social position, we can trace their influence from the earliest period of civilised history. Most strikingly this is the case in all the great movements which spring from moral causes, and with still widening force in Christian times and Christian lands. Has there ever been a great effort for civil or religious liberty, from the time of the early Christian martyrs down to the last struggle for the extinction of slavery, to which women did not bring their toils, their tears, their prayers, their lives as freely as men? And that, with few or no marks of external honour or appreciation, few or no external props to sustain the sinking spirit, when the cause which they believed divine was in danger of defeat. "The old order changes, giving place to new." The lovers of freedom have still to fight battles as fierce and full of anguish as those of the past, and as momentous in their consequences; but all the warfare is carried on under the formal conditions of every-day life, and with the careful observance of all usual etiquette. If ever women cease to care for liberty, the star of this country's glory will have set for ever. But that they may continue to care, they desire that those among them who are duly qualified shall have the means of carrying their own and their sisters' views into effect. The real revolutionists, the really dangerous advisers of the State, are those who shut their eyes to the changes going on around them, and insist that what has been sufficient provision for the necessities of past time shall supply all the varied wants, and solve all the complicated problems of this. To be sure there are some of these immovable people who dread new thoughts with a pardonable instinct of self-preservation.

"For surely they, whose stock of wits is small,  
Do well to hold it with resolved rigidity;  
For if you take from them their own stupidity,  
You leave them nothing of their own at all."

There is quite as strong an instinct on our side, however,—the conviction that, in the new circumstances of society, we cannot

perform some of the most important duties that fall to our lot, as long as we have no direct and responsible means of influencing legislation. A real conviction of duty is a moral force that never yet was conquered. We explain the reasons for our claim to a share of political power to you who already possess it, and we ask your consideration of them. We ask friendly consideration, for we are fellow citizens of one great empire, bound together by a thousand sacred ties. We ask a fair consideration, for you are our co-assessors, not our judges. The great philosopher of statesmanship, Edmund Burke, once said:—"The citizens of a State are a partnership, a partnership in all science, in all art, in every virtue, in all perfection." An arbitrary division of this great partnership, which excludes one-half its members from one most important and ever-expanding means of usefulness, will be, so long as it lasts, an increasing danger to the State, and the removal of it will prove an increasing source of strength. We have been told that we don't know what all the results of our success would be. It is quite true. But we know one thing, that they will be utterly unlike what those gentlemen suppose, who draw upon their imagination for their ideas of ladies who want the franchise. And we know another thing, that we are perfectly safe in trusting to sound principles. If we were fighting for personal or class aggrandisement, we might be alarmed. But we are fighting for justice, and we trust ourselves on the current of the great stream of Truth, and we are not afraid whither it may lead us. For myself, I have an unshaken conviction that this work of ours is the natural outgrowth of the spirit of Christianity in the present age and circumstances of this country; and that, like all other advances in bringing the life of the nation into harmony with the highest law, it will, in turn, do much to advance the prosperity of every other form of Christian work. Shall I be thought to speak too solemnly, if I say to our opponents what was said of certain inspired innovators of yore,—"If this counsel or work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

Miss WILKINSON, in seconding the proposition, said:—Mr. Forsyth and his coadjutors deserve the most hearty thanks of this meeting for the manner in which they have done battle in our cause. They have had to contend against deep seated prejudices and insulting ridicule. They have been accused of desiring to uproot the whole framework of domestic society. It has been pointed out that if the suffrage were extended to women they might even presume to think for themselves. The opponents of the measure say women have got on very well in the past without suffrage. Why should they have it now? Why should men not legislate for them, as they have always done, without the women having the slightest voice in the matter? Is the outcome of this legislation all that it should be? The Contagious Diseases Act—an Act that disgraces our present civilisation—is one of its fruits. The argument, if it may be called by that name, that women would be unsexed, that they would lose that interest in the home circle which they have now, is one that turns against those who use it. How comes it that, after so many years of training under this domestic influence, the interest of women in home matters should rest upon so frail a tenure that the slightest extension of liberty is liable to destroy it? If this is really so, it is indeed that women should be educated under different auspices. Besides, those who advocate that women should still be kept in this state of dependence are not consistent, for they allow them to pay rates and taxes. As far as these go, women are entitled to the full rights of citizenship; and considering that when women rent a house they are admitted to all the responsibilities of the position, it is really absurd that they should

desire to share in its privileges. But we do desire it, absurd as it may seem, and therefore earnestly request those gentlemen who undertook the cause before to do so again, assuring them that we will help them to the utmost of our power, and most respectfully intimating that delays are dangerous, and beseeching them to bring this matter as early as possible before the notice of Parliament.

Miss STURGE supported the motion. She said: when I think of the domestic discord, social strife, and imperial ruin skilfully conjured up, and called "women's suffrage" by certain members of the House of Commons, I respect the courage of the hon. gentlemen who remain undaunted by spectres, and I am glad to have this opportunity of thanking them. If I understand Sir Henry James aright, he gets his information by the perusal of invisible type, and I am, therefore, not surprised at his belief in apparitions, and consequent alarm. The perusal of the invisible is an unearthly study, which savours of the spiritualistic *séances* described by Robert Dale Owen. However, Sir H. James appears to acknowledge that the perusal of the invisible is a failure as regards women's suffrage, for he adds—

The good man little knew  
What the wily sex can do.

This quotation evidently conveys the admission that the member for Taunton is a good man who does not know what women can do. If he does not know what we can do, surely he might diminish his ignorance by voting for the removal of disabilities, and then we will show him. By dint of a metaphor Sir H. James desires us to consider the consequences. I suppose he means imagine them; for he proceeds to tell us that the consequences of granting the municipal franchise to women was the demand for the Parliamentary franchise. I call this a mistake, for I believe the Parliamentary franchise was first claimed. When the Reform Bill was passed, in 1832, Sir Robert Peel considered the consequences; one of them was "destruction, by bowing down the pillars of the edifice of liberty." This would establish "one of the worst despotisms that ever existed—a Parliament of mob demagogues," &c. In opposing the extension of the franchise in '67 Mr. Lowe felt, as Sir Henry James does about women's suffrage, that it would endanger "permanent stability." Mr. Lowe said then that "the bag which holds the winds had been untied, and we should be in one perpetual whirl of change, innovation, alteration, revolution." Fortunately no one now seems "a penny the worse." If all these horrors are coming through the extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women householders, how is it that the municipal and School Board franchise have brought none of them upon us? Arguments and assertions that have failed in the past look suspicious when reproduced as evidence. Mr. Leatham and Sir Henry James concur in telling us that women don't care for the franchise. The slaveholders used to say that the slaves did not want their freedom; recently I travelled with an Englishman who persisted that they were better off in slavery. Now, I am not by any means saying that the women of England are slaves; I am merely remarking that the arguments used in support of that peculiar institution are brought out to prevent the removal of the disabilities of women. A member who votes against us lately asserted that our movement "was founded on the erroneous supposition that women are depressed by men, whereas women really owe all that they are to men." Slaveholders said just the same thing about the negro. Had they not brought him within reach of Christianity and civilisation from the darkness and ignorance of his own land? Sir Henry James charges women with caring little for these things, but at the end of his address he says the "great mass of the population" also care little which party is

in power. If the men are also indifferent to political principle, is not this—to use Mr. Leatham's words—a crushing condemnation for Mr. Trevelyan's Bill? Perhaps those on whose behalf it is designed, have an innate sense of its impropriety. I think it may be proved that the women are not as indifferent to these things as Sir Henry James and Mr. Leatham wish us to think. The member for Taunton says women have not held meetings for the repeal of the 25th Clause; but at the last School Board election at Birmingham meetings were held and conducted by women, in which the repeal of the 25th Clause was a part of the programme.

Yes, the good man little knew  
What the wily sex can do.

If he will kindly turn to Erskine May's *Constitutional History* he will find it recorded that as long ago as 1818 "there were numerous public meetings in favour of universal suffrage, and Reform associations—not only of men, but of women—engaged in advancing the same cause." Mr. Molesworth alludes to "a Female Reform Society at Blackburn." Sir H. James asserts that women are physically inadaptable for a political career. If he had said for a physical career I should have understood him. I am quite willing that he and Mr. Leatham should do all the fighting, but as I gazed upon the luxurious fittings of the House of Commons I was unable to detect the physical requirements of his political position. The cushions appeared soft; I knew that the very air he breathed was refined through cambrie. Shakspeare may think women weak, but if he did he would have been more consistent than the members of Parliament, and not have given them all those stairs to the Ladies Gallery, "into which the honest light of Heaven is hardly permitted to look." If women's hearts are weak they should be allowed a little more air when they get there. Shakspeare certainly said women were weak. Shakspeare said a good many things. One is:

Men were deceivers ever,  
To one thing constant never.

A member of Parliament surprised me one day by virtually endorsing this sentiment, for he tried to prove that none of the members who vote and speak for the Bill believe in it. France is certainly an indication of the inconstancy of men. I believe that woman's work in the world is of equal value with man's, and therefore equally worthy of representation in the House of Commons. Though I do not profess to read invisible type, I have yet a firm conviction that in the free and prosperous institutions of our country the daughters of England will yet be "as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace."

Miss DOWNING also supported the resolution, remarking that she was especially pleased to have the opportunity, in the name of all the ladies advocating this movement, of thanking the members of the House of Commons who had supported the Women's Disabilities Bill. Without drawing any invidious comparisons, she hoped she might be permitted, as an Irish-woman, like Miss Tod, to return special thanks to the Irish members who had supported them on that occasion. She regarded the present movement as affording the chief means by which many of the evils of which women complained could be remedied and removed.

A Captain JONES, amid considerable interruption and hisses, vainly essayed to address the meeting in opposition to the resolutions; after which the resolution was carried almost unanimously.

A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman, and the meeting, which had lasted over three hours, broke up.

## MEETING IN ST. PANCRAS VESTRY HALL.

On May the 28th, a meeting of the St. Pancras Branch was held at the Vestry Hall, under the presidency of the Rev. L. L. Bevan, LL.B., who read letters of apology for absence from Mr. John Morley and Mr. E. J. Reed, M.P.

The CHAIRMAN said he was glad that this question was being discussed now without any of the passion and prejudice which too often marked political assemblies.

Miss HELEN TAYLOR moved the first resolution:—"That the exclusion to women of political rights, by strengthening in them a sense of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, would be conducive to the highest welfare of the state." She said: Of all the changes which are taking place in modern life none are more marked, more evident and distinct, than the changes in the position of women. These changes meet us in every direction. You cannot single out any one of them and say that it stands alone. If we are assembled here to-night to ask for the admission of women to political rights, it seems to me we are not asking for something which stands quite by itself; we are asking for something that follows naturally from what has already been done—from what is being done day by day. The natural current of events, the course of social life in an active civilized community like our own, has brought us to this state of things—that every day women are asking to be admitted to new ways of earning their bread—to receive an education that shall better fit them to earn it. And those women who have not to earn their bread, the prosperous and fortunate among us, are day by day opening their eyes more and more to the sufferings and the difficulties of our less happy sisters. (Hear.) Now, I repeat it; it seems to me that this tendency is of natural growth. It cannot be stopped. It may be checked, or it may be misdirected; and I do not deny that the Radical party among us, to which I have the honour to belong, may have contributed to encourage women to a sense of their own responsibility and importance in human life, and to stimulate them to make an active use of their faculties; but I do maintain that this modern disposition of women to put themselves forward in the world, is the natural and necessary consequence of the growth of society. Why are women getting so dissatisfied with their own position, so ambitious to put themselves forward in new ones? I believe it is for the very same reason that men are getting discontented with their own position. Men are taking up new places in the world; men are asking for new rights; women are the daughters of men, and very like their fathers—(hear, hear, and laughter);—they are the mothers of men; they are their wives, and they are their sisters; and the consequence is that whatever interests men interests women too. You cannot have progress that shall be altogether one-sided. As the level of ambition and of intelligence rises among men; as men get the time to care and think about politics more than they used to do, so do the women. As the breath of political liberty stirs among the nation, it touches the women too with something of its glow. As a sense of justice,—as the noble ambition to do, to be, to live and to dare, thrills through a people, it awakes an answering chord from the depths of the women's hearts; as a possibility of a freer, and larger, and higher life is opened out in the future, thank God, for men, the women too begin to turn their eyes to that land of promise in the future, and to hope that they too some day may enter in. (Hear, hear.) There are some who will say that it is all very well for women to be intelligent, and patriotic, and ambitious, and so on, but why should they not be so for the men's sake; why should they not exert themselves for the greatness and for the liberty of men; why should they not value learning, but resign it to the men; why should they not love liberty, but leave it

to the men? (Laughter.) Well, there are two reasons why not. One is, that they won't; and the other is that they ought not! They won't. It is not in human nature to do it, and there is a great deal of human nature in women. They ought not. The best men don't want it of them; the best men—the men most worthy of such devotion—are the very last who would ask it or would accept it of them. It seems to me that it is an unmanly thing for strong men to come to weak women and say "You ought to be patriotic on our account; you ought to estimate learning at its true value, but leave it to us; you ought to love liberty, but our liberty; it is all that we men can do to win these blessings for ourselves, and it is necessary that you women should help us and encourage us." Why surely men are not so very weak that they must needs ask women to spend their whole lives in taking care of the men. One of two things must be true. Either women are selfish or they are generous. If they are selfish, they will care for themselves. If they are generous, shall generous and warm-hearted women remain cold and indifferent to the sufferings and the difficulties of their fellow-women only. Shall all the difficulties and the sufferings of women, as women, known intimately and closely to women only—shall these be the only ones that shall awaken no chord of sympathy in a woman's heart, nor arouse her to one word in generous aid? The question answers itself. The brave and warm-hearted among women, whose help will be most valued by men, will certainly hold out a helping hand to their fellow-women, and for that purpose they will value the suffrage which will enable them to make that helping hand more effectual. If the women are to be educated; if they are to read history, and to think of politics ever so little, they must come to value the rights of suffrage. If women are even philanthropists, they must by degrees come to value those political rights by which alone, in civilized society, the interests of any class can be secured. If, therefore, any class has attained to that degree of education which is now getting common among English women, it is impossible that it should remain long indifferent to politics, for as, without political life, the highest type of intelligence has never yet in history been generated, so wherever there is a great step in intelligence it is followed by a great step in political liberty. In asking, therefore, that the increasing intelligence of Englishmen shall now receive its natural outlet in politics, we are asking only that the course of English history shall not be interrupted; we are asking that our country shall remain in our own days, as in all preceding centuries, the leader of the advanced guard of human freedom; and we ask this certain, that, as the freedom of its men, early granted and steadfastly maintained, has, by diffusing light throughout the whole nation, enabled this little country of ours to take its stand among the greatest nations of the world, so the application of these same principles to the other half of its population will, by diffusing fresh vigour into the whole of our political and social life, give to our country a fresh lease of energy and greatness.

Mr. HOFFEY seconded the resolution, which was carried with a few dissentients.

Miss ORME moved a resolution adopting petitions to the Houses of Parliament, which was seconded by Professor HUNTER, and supported by Mrs. HOGAN.

Two gentlemen in the room, who announced themselves as members of a local debating society, but declined to give their names, moved and seconded an amendment:—"That the result of the extension of the franchise to women is of so doubtful a nature, that the chairman be requested not to sign the petition to Parliament."

The amendment was put and lost, and the original motion was carried by a large majority.

A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings.



MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING JUNE, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. William Hargreaves (Lecture Fund) ... ..	10	0	0
Mr. Joseph Crook ... ..	10	0	0
Mrs. Abel Heywood... ..	5	0	0
Mrs. Oates... ..	5	0	0
Mr. Edwin Barton ... ..	2	2	0
Mrs. Long ... ..	2	0	0
Miss Praed (Lecture Fund) ... ..	2	0	0
Mr. Thos. Chorlton ... ..	1	11	6
Mr. Garnett Bennett ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. F. Eastwood ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. T. B. Potter, M.P. ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. E. W. Binney, F.R.S. ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. Henry Taylor ... ..	1	1	0
Miss Mary Dick ... ..	1	0	6
Mrs. Ord (Lecture Fund) ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. G. Woodruff ... ..	0	10	6
Mr. C. Rowley, junr. ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. J. Pattinson ... ..	0	10	0
J. A. B. ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Moore... ..	0	10	0
Miss Corney ... ..	0	10	0
Mr. W. Allan ... ..	0	5	0
Mrs. Fox ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. Geo. Peck ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Frances Hickes ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. P. T. Lascaridi... ..	0	5	0
Mr. James Smith (Manchester) ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. R. Husband ... ..	0	5	0
Miss M. E. Cheetham ... ..	0	5	0
Dr. Latham ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. Geo. White ... ..	0	2	6
Miss S. Mackie ... ..	0	2	6
Mr. P. L. Rawson ... ..	0	2	6
Mr. Joseph Briggs ... ..	0	2	6
Mrs. Dunn ... ..	0	2	0
Collected in small sums ... ..	0	14	8
	£51	10	8

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL.

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

YORKSHIRE SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Central Office: 1, Victoria Chambers, South Parade, Leeds.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, JUNE, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Seatcherd ... ..	5	0	0
Miss C. Walker... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Rhodes ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Holland ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. Ed. Pulleyn ... ..	0	2	6
Mrs. Neville ... ..	0	2	6
A Friend per Miss Holland ... ..	0	2	6
	£6	17	6

CELIA WALKER, Treasurer.

Springfield Mount, Leeds.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

MR. P. MARTIN, M.P.

23, Fitzwilliam Street, March 30th, 1875.

My dear Sullivan,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of the petition forwarded by post. My views as to the right of women to vote coincide with your own, and I shall have great pleasure in being enabled to support a measure conferring on them privileges in my opinion too long withheld.—Yours most truly,  
P. MARTIN.

To Frank Sullivan, Esq.,  
High Sheriff, Kilkenny.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Contributions to the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 294, Regent Street, London, W., from May 20th to June 20th, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. J. P. Thomasson ... ..	50	0	0
Lady Goldsmid ... ..	5	5	0
Mrs. Stansfeld ... ..	5	0	0
Mr. Arthur Mills ... ..	2	2	0
Miss Courtenay... ..	2	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Webster ... ..	2	0	0
Mr. A. J. Ellis ... ..	1	1	0
Rev. A. G. L'Estrange ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Askey... ..	1	0	0
Honourable Emmeline Canning ... ..	1	0	0
Miss Finch ... ..	1	0	0
Lady Molyneux ... ..	1	0	0
Miss Newnham ... ..	1	0	0
Miss A. R. Dunlop ... ..	0	10	0
Messrs. G. and P. Lascaridi ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Turner ... ..	0	10	0
Anonymous ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Chambers ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Hamilton ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Fanny Fitzgerald ... ..	0	2	6
Mrs. G. Hooper... ..	0	2	6
Miss Webster ... ..	0	2	0

ALFRED W. BENNETT, Treasurer. £76 1 0

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS TO JUNE 20th, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Mr. W. Mills Baker... .. (Donation)	5	0	0
A Friend ... ..	2	0	0
Mr. W. Mills Baker... .. (Subscription)	1	1	0
Mr. Sholto Vere Hare ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. J. A. Baines ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. J. A. Baines ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Holroyd ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Norris ... ..	1	0	0
Miss E. J. Metford ... ..	1	0	0
T. W. ... ..	0	12	0
Mr. Bartlett ... ..	0	10	6
Mrs. Bartlett ... ..	0	10	6
The Rev. T. E. Brown, M.A. ... ..	0	10	0
Mr. John Bill ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Chappell ... ..	0	10	0
Mr. H. F. Lawes, junr. ... ..	0	10	0
The Rev. Prebendary Percival, D.D. ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. F. J. Thompson ... ..	0	10	0
Miss R. Evans ... ..	0	6	6
Miss Bowling ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Brewin ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. William Brewin... ..	0	5	0
Mrs. W. L. Carpenter ... ..	0	5	0
Miss Calnady ... ..	0	5	0
Dr. Lynes ... ..	0	5	0
Miss G. Thomas ... ..	0	5	0
Mrs. Travers Wood... ..	0	5	0
Mrs. Geary... ..	0	2	6
Mrs. William Thompson... ..	0	2	6
Miss Thompson... ..	0	2	6
Mrs. Adams ... ..	0	2	0
Mr. Glover... ..	0	2	0
The Rev. Alfred Norris ... ..	0	1	0

£21 14 0

ALICE GRENFELL, 5, Albert Villas, Clifton,

Office: 53, Park Street, Bristol.

Treasurer.

Madame Bres, who lately read a thesis before the Paris Faculty of Medicine and obtained a doctor's degree, is reported to have been appointed physician to the Sultan's harem at Constantinople.

The remainder of the Petitions will be given in our next issue.

SUMMARY OF PETITIONS UP TO JUNE 22nd, 1875.

	No. of Petitions signed Officially	Total No. of Petitions or under Seal.	Total No. of Signatures.
Women's Disabilities Bill—In favour	78	1,271	415,600