

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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THE dissolution of Parliament which seems to have been so suddenly resolved on takes all parties by surprise, and calls for instant and effective exertion from those who feel that great principles are at stake, and who desire that the questions which engage their attention shall receive due consideration from the Parliament about to be chosen. The question of the removal of the electoral disabilities of women is one that should be earnestly pressed on every candidate who comes forward ; and the experience of recent isolated elections points to the conclusion that in the majority of cases candidates of both political parties will be willing to support the principle that women possessing the household or property qualification ought now to have a vote. At the last general election the subject had received little consideration in Parliament, but it had occupied a prominent position in the Law Courts, and a practical one at the polls. The decision in the Court of Common Pleas, in November, 1868, had disfranchised the women who claimed the suffrage as a common law right, although it did not preclude from the exercise of their votes the numerous women who had been placed by the overseers on the register of various districts, and whose names had been retained thereon by the revising barristers. The last election, therefore, differs from the present one by the circumstance that some hundreds of women householders and freeholders, who had been placed on the Parliamentary register by the duly constituted authorities, exercised the rights of free citizens in 1868, and that in the present election the rights of these persons have been forcibly suppressed, and they have been degraded from citizenship to serfdom. One incident of the last election is worth recording. A lady owning a large estate in South-west Lancashire, who had twenty or thirty women tenants, claimed along with them to be placed on the register, and the claim was allowed by the revising barrister. An appeal against the decision was made in the Court of Common Pleas, and by a strange legal technicality the Judge decided that because they had just

declared women to be disabled from voting, the appeal against them must be dismissed. The consequence was that this lady, who took a very strong interest in one of the political questions on which the issue of the election turned, went to the poll at the head of her women tenantry, and they voted *en masse* for the candidate who represented their principles. But the door is ruthlessly shut upon them now ; and the Lady of the Manor, for whose support the candidates for South-west Lancashire were wont respectfully to sue, would, were she now living, find herself deprived of the vote she exercised in 1868, and disfranchised, as being unworthy to exercise a privilege secured to her footman and her groom. She would also have seen the statesman for whom she had voted consenting to receive a deputation to promote the enfranchisement of the hinds on her estate, and refusing to receive one on behalf of the same right for herself and her co-peers.

The attitude of the leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties towards the electoral disabilities of women is remarkable when compared with that of the bulk of the Parliamentary supporters. It is analogous to that arrangement of the human body by which the right half of the brain governs the left half of the body, and the left half of the brain moves the right half of the body. The heads of the Conservative party are with us, and they are followed by a crowd of truly Liberal supporters ; while the less enlightened masses of slower moving Conservatives, reinforced by a still greater number of professed Liberals sinning against their own principles, are headed by a numerical majority of the members of the existing Administration, though not by the First Minister of the Crown.

The question which the country will have to decide during the present month is whether Mr. GLADSTONE or Mr. DISRAELI shall have the conduct of its affairs. This question is one which will excite the keenest interest among all classes of men. Will any sane person assert

that women do not or ought not to share this feeling? If there were no other reason for the interest which women take in the forthcoming contest, a sufficient one would be found in the utterances of these statesmen on questions directly concerning them.

Mr. DISRAELI has done his best to secure for women representative government and the protection of the Parliamentary suffrage. He spoke in 1866 in the House of Commons in favour of the right of women to vote; he has steadily supported Mr. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill; and last year, in response to a memorial from some thousands of his countrywomen, he addressed the following reply through the late Mr. GORE LANGTON, M.P.—“I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the memorial signed by 11,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.” This document, from the circumstances of its publication, and the position of the author as a statesman who has once been Prime Minister, and who may be so again, assumes the character of a political manifesto, and will be regarded by women as an indication of the policy to be pursued towards them by the next Conservative Administration.

We search in vain for any declaration of an equally satisfactory character from Mr. GLADSTONE. A memorial similar to that to Mr. DISRAELI was at the same time presented to him, but he did not reply publicly. In a letter to Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, acknowledging the receipt of the memorial, he referred to his speech in the House of Commons, and stated that he had not changed the opinions therein expressed. That speech was a remarkable and important one, and contains allegations as to the injustice of the laws affecting women, which deserve more attention from Parliament than they have received, or are likely to receive until members are responsible to women. But the portions referring to electoral disabilities are hard to understand. Mr. DISRAELI writes a simple straightforward letter, and we know what he means. We do not exactly know what Mr. GLADSTONE means. In the speech to which he refers us, he stated that women obtain much less than justice under social arrangements, and that

though he might be told that there was no direct connection between that and the Parliamentary franchise, and he admitted that, at the same time he was by no means sure that these inequalities might not have an indirect connection with a state of the law in which the balance is generally cast too much against women, and too much in favour of men. Then he went on to express a desire for a “safe” and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, which might be carried onward to its consequences in a more just arrangement of other laws bearing on the condition of women. We wonder what Mr. GLADSTONE would consider a “safe” alteration of the law. Mr. DISRAELI considers that it would be safe to give women having the household or property qualification the Parliamentary franchise. Why should Mr. GLADSTONE be more afraid? Since he fears to trust women with political power it would seem as if he doubted their being “flesh and blood.” Women are part and parcel of the nation. Representation is as necessary for them as for others, to secure due regard to their special needs; but these being satisfied, and equality before the law being secured, they can have no interests antagonistic or dangerous to the well-being of those with whom they are united by the closest domestic and social ties. The notion of danger to the State from the enfranchisement of women is one of those allegations by which men insult the understandings of those whom they are depriving of rights.

In an able paper read at the recent conference in Birmingham, Mrs. JACOB BRIGHT illustrates this difficulty which Mr. GLADSTONE seems to feel respecting the improvement of the condition of women, by saying that he wanted to help us but could not find a way, and that it reminded her of an anecdote of an old woman who had lost a sixpence, and who took a candle and groped about her kitchen for a long time vainly to find it. All at once she recollected that she had forgotten to light her candle! Mrs. BRIGHT believes that if Mr. GLADSTONE would allow the women of England to light his candle for him, he would soon find his sixpence.

It will be seen by the announcement in another column that Mr. GLADSTONE declined to receive a deputation of ladies who asked permission to point out to him the justice of their claim to the suffrage, but intimated his willingness to give attention to a written communication on the subject. At the very important and influential conference recently held at Birmingham, a memorial was adopted embodying the principal facts and arguments on which the claim rests, a document which we commend to

the earnest consideration of all who are called upon to take any part by action or influence in determining the character of the new Parliament. It is to be hoped that Mr. GLADSTONE will give to this document the attention which he promised, and that it may call forth a reply calculated to satisfy the just expectations of those who have framed it, and equally explicit with the declaration of his political rival.

In his reply to the deputation which waited upon him respecting the extension of the county franchise, Mr. GLADSTONE asked if the movement was connected exclusively with one political party, and whether Conservative working men desired the extension of the franchise. He said that he wished this question should remain apart from political controversy. Mr. ARCH assured him that the agricultural labourers asked, as their right, for the franchise, irrespective of their political party, which answer appeared to satisfy Mr. GLADSTONE. If he had asked the same question of the ladies whom he might have admitted to an interview, they would have returned him a similar answer to that given by Mr. ARCH. The enfranchisement of women is a question independent of party politics. It appeals to principles acknowledged by both parties; and rests on foundations which underlie all party divisions. Therefore, women who care about this question look upon it as paramount to party considerations. Mr. ARCH'S clients, whether Conservatives or Liberals, who are asking for the franchise, would doubtless coalesce in using what influence a disfranchised class can exercise to promote the return of candidates who would give them votes, irrespective of party colours. At least, if they would not, one would think they were not in earnest in their desire for the suffrage. It is even so with women. It is natural and right that women should desire the election to the ensuing Parliament of those men, whether they be called Tories, Whigs, or Radicals, who are ready to remove the disability which debars them from the exercise of the franchise. The sympathies of women will be given, and deservedly given, in particular constituencies to the candidates, and in the country at large to the party, which shows most willingness to carry into effect this great measure of political justice.

We desire to call attention to the National Memorials of women of the United Kingdom, to be presented to Mr. GLADSTONE and Mr. DISRAELI before the meeting of Parliament, and earnestly beg the help of our friends in collecting signatures. The memorials are headed by

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE and HARRIET MARTINEAU, and women may be proud to follow leaders such as these. The effect of these memorials greatly depends on the numbers of places represented and of signatures attached, and in order to ensure a due number in the very short time at our disposal, it is necessary to engage the help of hosts of volunteer collectors. Many of these are already busily at work, and we receive by every post assurances of interest in the undertaking, and promises of aid. But more workers are needed, and we refer our readers to the announcement on another page for information and particulars.

We also desire earnestly to press on our friends the importance of causing questions to be put to all candidates who come forward in the constituencies in which they reside. They can help us by putting questions publicly at meetings, and also by writing letters asking candidates if they are willing to give the suffrage to women who are householders, and who pay their own rates. Newspapers containing their replies to such questions, and letters in answer to those addressed to them, should be sent to us, that we may be enabled to give authentic information as to the views of candidates on the subject. We are sure that a list of candidates favourable to our principle would be received with great interest to all our friends, and we beg them to assist us by ascertaining and forwarding to us information as to the sentiments of those in their own locality.

Signatures to the petitions to be presented on the opening of the new Parliament should also be diligently collected, and we shall be happy to forward forms to all who will apply for them as directed in the advertisement. We call upon our sisters who care for the interest of freedom and humanity to join their efforts now. Let their wishes and demands be made known by means of the only political privilege women enjoy—the right of petition—and we shall not have long to wait for success in our aim.

As the various societies which form the National Society for Women's Suffrage will be engaged during the next few weeks in distributing petition sheets, and other papers, among their several correspondents, it sometimes happens that friends receive duplicate communications. It is almost impossible to avoid such accidents, though every precaution is taken in arranging and dividing the work, and we must trust to the good nature of our friends to forgive us for the extra trouble thereby caused them, and to believe that it is occasioned by zeal for the cause, and the desire that no one should be left out.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

CONFERENCE IN BIRMINGHAM.

A conference called by the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held on January 22nd, in the Lecture Theatre, Midland Institute. Mrs. William Taylor presided, and amongst the delegates and guests present were:—London, Miss Reeves, Mr. W. H. Ashurst, Miss Fenwick Miller; Edinburgh, Mrs. Wellstood and Miss Wigham; Manchester, Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Becker, and Mrs. Lucas; Birkenhead, Mrs. Binns; Dover, Miss Apps, Miss Dunbar, and Mr. E. T. Wakefield; Bristol, Mr. A. Greenwell, M.A., and Miss M. Price; Worcester, Mr. W. Weaver; Bath, Miss Ashworth; Cirencester, Rev. Henry Austin; Oldbury, Rev. T. G. Crippen; Cheltenham, Rev. J. Robberds; the Mayor of Birmingham and Mrs. Chamberlain, Mrs. G. Dixon, the Revds. G. J. Emanuel, J. J. Brown, J. M'Kerrow, Charles Clarke, C. Williams, H. Morgan, and Brooke Lambert, Mr. R. W. Dale, Mrs. C. E. Mathews, Mrs. Middlemore, Mrs. Tyndall, Mrs. W. Mathews, Miss Wright, Miss Sturge, Miss Impey, Miss Phipson, Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Bartleet, Mrs. Alfred Southall, Mrs. Brown, Alderman Sturge, Mr. J. C. Cox (Belper), Mr. and Mrs. W. Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Mr. Ainge, &c.

The PRESIDENT delivered an opening address, in the course of which she said: In no great town in England has there been of late years a more convincing proof that women can and do take an active and earnest interest in public movements than has been shown by the action of the women of Birmingham in the school board election of last autumn. The difficult work undertaken, organised, and carried out by women in that election, viz., the personal canvass of all the women ratepayers in the town, is a proof of the deep interest felt by them in the political struggle which has been brought to such a successful termination. It is now universally conceded that the education of children is a question in which women have at least an equal interest with men, and that they are therefore as justly entitled to a share in the representation on the governing board. It would seem obvious to any thoughtful mind that the state of the present law of representation, which allows women to participate in the measures which affect the welfare of children, and which denies to them any voice in the formation of the laws which affect themselves, is an anomaly which no argument can uphold or justice sanction.

Mrs. C. E. MATHEWS read an extract from the "Republic of Plato; Book V.," in which it was stated that none of the occupations in the ordering of the State belonged exclusively to men or women; but the necessary natural gifts were to be found here and there in both sexes alike, and so far as woman's end was concerned, she was admissible to all pursuits as well as man.

Mrs. JACOB BRIGHT read the following paper: The other day the member for Bedford was addressing his constituents, and he volunteered a definition of the difference between a "Tory" and a "Liberal." He had been led to consider the matter by a question from his little son, who wanted to know, "What is the difference between a Tory and a Liberal?" As thousands of women have been asking the same question, within the last few years, without getting any reply which seemed reconcilable with the facts within their knowledge, Mr. Howard's answer has excited some interest. He said, "I will tell you, my boy, what I have observed in the House of Commons. The Tory party invariably sticks up for class privileges and exceptional powers; the Liberal party, on the other hand, are for abolishing class privileges and granting equality." This definition was received by the citizens of Bedford with "prolonged applause," so that we may suppose that, whether true or false, the meeting hoped it was true, and wished to believe that the great party name, by which they were called, was a synonym for justice and equality. Some weeks ago another member of the Liberal party wrote a letter to one of his constituents. He had been asked whether he would vote for the Women's Disabilities Bill, and his reply is interesting from its naive candour, indicating a state of mind common among Liberals of a certain type, few of whom, however, are sufficiently simple, or sufficiently courageous to express their views in public. "I am convinced that the admission of widows and spinsters to take part in the choice of members to serve in Parliament would only strengthen the Tory party in the House of Commons, and make all progress and improvement in our legislation more difficult and slow than

"they are already, and would, therefore, be injurious to the best interests of the nation as I understand them. By the admission of women, we should, I feel certain, introduce into our political life that emotional element which has always proved fatal to the successful working of the Parliamentary Government." Whether or no the emotional element can be truly charged with these very serious results, it is at least certain that it does occasionally obscure the reason of sensible men. I am afraid we must confess that we are seeking the suffrage in order to further our own rather than Lord A. Russell's notions of what may be good for the country. He, perhaps, does not always vote as we should like, but we don't want to disfranchise him. Why should he desire to disfranchise us? If the right to vote is not inherent in human nature, at least a strong distrust of irresponsible power would seem to be. If Mr. Howard's definition of Liberalism be the true one, surely Lord Arthur Russell must be a Tory, not a Liberal. Is it or is it not just that women who possess the qualification required by law should have the franchise? The municipal franchise was granted to women that they might share the control of municipal expenditure. On that ground Lord Cairns defended the measure in the House of Lords. On what possible ground then can they who pay imperial taxes be excluded from Parliamentary representation? That we are probably embryo Tories may be a reason large enough to satisfy the intellect and conscience of Liberals like Lord A. Russell, but the Government of this country will have to return us a different answer. The local vote is of little consequence compared with the Parliamentary vote. A Town Council deals with the taxpayer only, without distinction of sex—Parliament, on the contrary, deals with men and women separately. It passes one set of laws for men and one set for women. Even supposing it were a maxim that no law should be made which did not apply equally to both sexes, women would still have the right to aid in the decision of what those laws should consist. How much more necessary is it then that the views and feelings of women should be consulted when they are ruled by laws which differ essentially from those which men have found to be advantageous for the government of their own sex. When men make laws which do not apply to themselves, they may and do unknowingly commit the greatest injustice. What we have to complain of is the entire absence of the sense of responsibility of Parliament in matters concerning the most vital interests of women. Supposing it had just been discovered that a law existed whereby the property of all men was confiscated upon their entering the marriage relation, does any one suppose that 658 members would not assemble in less than no time, and pass a Bill to protect their fellow countrymen in the legal possession of their own? The property of women, however, is exactly in this position which Sir John Coleridge characterises as "barbarous." The House is aware of the fact, and has publicly acknowledged, by passing the second reading of Mr. Hinde Palmer's Bill, its opinion of the injustice and inexpediency of the present state of the Law; yet so faint is the sense of responsibility towards legislation concerning women, that out of 658 M.P.'s, not 40 could be found to take the trouble to come and vote the Bill through Committee, although six separate opportunities were offered to them. So little are questions concerning the position of women discussed in the Cabinet, that, some time after the Contagious Diseases Acts were passed, two prominent members of the present Government were not even aware such Acts were in existence, and a law which has entirely altered the legal status of women, and given the most exceptional power over them into the hands of policemen, was treated as a mere military detail. In the House the same indifference prevailed. I asked an old member of the Liberal party who was present when the Bill was hurried through, "How could you sit in your place when such a Law was being passed, and make no protest?" He answered, "It was such a very disagreeable subject, and there were ladies in the gallery." I think if those ladies in the gallery had had votes in the borough represented by the hon. gentleman, that his sense of modesty would have found expression in an entirely different manner. We find, therefore, what is not surprising and what ought not, when we consider the reason of it, to cause strong indignation, that at present the members of the House are too busy, or too idle, or too careless, or too modest to provide for us those legal safeguards to person and property which they have judged to be necessary for the protection of the stronger sex. There are some conspicuous exceptions to this absence of the sense of responsibility concerning the interests

of women. Two years ago, on the 3rd of May, 1871, Mr. Gladstone's conscience was aroused. The great "woman question," as it is called, appeared before him in a shape that compelled his attention. It perplexed him much. He resolved to devote a whole afternoon to it. He came down to the House, when no one was expecting him, on a Wednesday, to the surprise of the members present. He said that owing to social arrangements "women obtain much less than justice"—that they approach the task of earning a living "under greater difficulties than attach to their more powerful competitors." He complained of the "gross inequality" of the law "against women and in favour of men." He dwelt upon the "mischief, misery, and scandal" which had resulted from the laws concerning the irregular relations of men and women, and he ended a long speech by saying that the man who shall find it possible "to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, and shall see his purpose carried onward to its consequences in a more just arrangement of the provisions of other laws bearing upon the condition and welfare of women will, in his opinion, be a real benefactor to the country." He wanted to help us, but could not find a way. I once heard of an old woman who had lost a sixpence. She took a candle and groped about her kitchen for a long time vainly trying to find it. All at once she recollected that she had forgotten to light her candle! If Mr. Gladstone will allow the women of England to light his candle for him, I venture to predict he will very soon find his sixpence. There is another member of the Cabinet from whom we may hope for some assistance when our Bill comes before Parliament. Your senior member has spent the best years of his life in toiling for the representation of the people, because he is firmly convinced that "no class can legislate for another class." His motto is, "Be just and fear not," his crest is the rising sun, which shines upon the good and evil—without distinction of sex. He was a member of the Cabinet which gave women the municipal franchise, and we know that he has emphatically declared that the municipal franchise ought to be the basis of the parliamentary. Are we not justified, then, in believing that Mr. Bright will give us what help lies in his power to complete the great reform which history will associate with his name? Mr. Stansfeld supports us in the House and speaks for us in his constituency. Though Mr. Forster has not yet voted with us he has been careful never to record his name against us, and it is impossible to suppose that a man who has encouraged women to represent large constituencies on Boards of Education should at the same time hold that women are unfit to vote for representatives in Parliament. How can the question of a reform in the representation be re-opened and satisfactorily dealt with so long as our claims are ignored? I hope I may not be misunderstood and appear unsympathetic towards the claim of the agricultural population to representation. Half that population are women, and suffer, with their male relatives, all the defects of the bad laws of which they complain. They suffer more. They suffer directly, in consequence of the possession of the franchise by men. They are turned out of their farms—because men have votes. If the franchise is still further extended in the counties without including women, there is too much reason to fear that they might be still further injured by this sort of competition. I am anxious to see the counties represented, but I think no claim for representation is more urgent than that which comes from women. If legal grievances exist anywhere, theirs are the most numerous and the most startling. At this very hour in which we are assembled, English ladies are going to foreign lands in search of an education, which is denied them at home in learned institutions which they are taxed to support. Those who are to be admitted by the County Franchise Bill are the poor and the uneducated. I do not object to it on that account, but I have never understood that persons in the possession of education and property were less worthy depositaries of political power than those who have neither. The Women's Disabilities Bill, though admitting poor and uneducated householders, will admit women of every grade up to the highest rank. The County Franchise Bill has been twice before the House. No vote has yet been taken upon it; we are, therefore, ignorant of its Parliamentary strength. The women's franchise Bill has received the votes of upwards of two hundred men in the present House of Commons, including many of its most eminent members. It has been thoroughly debated in successive Sessions, and with each discussion becomes stronger in Parliament and the country. We are strong in petitions. Last year, 322,000 signatures were

presented in favour of our Bill, whilst only about 1,800 were presented in favour of the County Franchise Bill. The large towns recognise the wisdom of our claim. Birmingham and Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Sheffield, Leeds, and Brighton give us an undivided vote. Mr. Gladstone is willing to receive a deputation from the representatives of the agricultural labourers. It is right that they should receive this consideration at his hands. It is difficult to understand, however, why the same consideration should not be extended to those in whose interests we are met to-day; yet to us he refuses a personal interview. Joseph Arch is reported to have threatened to bring 600,000 men up to Palace Yard. This is not the first time that Parliament has been subjected to the menace of physical force. We have to trust to the reasonableness of our demands alone. Shall it be said in England that the Government yields to force what it denies to justice? We know not who will inherit the lasting fame of being what Mr. Gladstone describes as "a benefactor" to his country. As Liberals, some of us could wish that the honour of such a reform might rest with a Liberal Administration. Still, women will not forget that before any member of the present Government publicly adopted our cause, before Mr. J. S. Mill had introduced his amendment on the Reform Bill of 1867, Benjamin Disraeli, at a time when his support could not be imagined to be a stroke of policy, had come forward and spoken for us. Women will always remember with gratitude that Mr. Disraeli was the first member of the British Parliament who advocated their claims to the suffrage within its walls. In conclusion let us adopt a hint, therefore, from Lord A. Russell. Let us banish for a time that "emotional element" which would lead us blindly to build upon such names as Whig or Tory, Liberal or Radical, and looking into the heart of things, let us steadily support those men who are willing to abolish class privileges and exceptional powers, and who are "in favour of granting equality before the law to their fellow subjects."

Miss STURGE proposed the adoption of the following memorial:
To the Right Honourable WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.,
First Lord of Her Majesty's Treasury.

The Memorial of Members and Friends of the National Society for Women's Suffrage in Conference assembled at Birmingham,
January 22, 1874.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialists earnestly desire to urge on the attention of Her Majesty's Government the justice and expediency of abolishing the disability which precludes women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of Members of Parliament.

They submit that the disability is anomalous, inasmuch as it exists only in respect to the Parliamentary franchise. The electoral rights of women have been from time immemorial equal and similar to those of men in parochial and other ancient franchises, and in the year 1869 a measure was passed, with the sanction of the Administration of which you are the head, restoring and confirming the rights of women ratepayers to the exercise of the municipal franchise.

The electoral disability is further anomalous because by the law and constitution of this realm women are not disabled from the exercise of political power. Writs returning members to serve in the House of Commons, signed by women as electors or returning officers, are now in existence, and the validity of such returns has never been disputed. Women who were heirs to peerages and other dignities exercised judicial jurisdiction and enjoyed other privileges appertaining to such offices and lordships without disability of sex. The highest political function known to the constitution may be exercised by a woman. The principle that women may have political power is coeval with the British constitution. On the other hand, the practice of women taking part in voting at popular elections is equally ancient in date, and has been restored and extended by the action of the present Parliament. Your Memorialists therefore submit that to bring existing principle and practice into harmony by removing the disability which prevents women who vote in local elections from voting in the election of Members of Parliament, would be a step in the natural process of development by which institutions, while retaining the strength and authority derived from the traditions of the past, and preserving the continuity of the

national life, continually undergo such modifications as are needed in order to adapt them to the exigencies of the age and the changed conditions of modern life.

They also submit that the old laws regulating the qualifications of electors do not limit the franchise to male persons; that the laws under which women exercised the parochial franchise were couched in the same general terms as those regulating the Parliamentary suffrage, and that while the latter were not expressly limited to men, the former were not expressly extended to women. There is, therefore, a strong presumption that the exclusion of women from the Parliamentary suffrage was an infringement on their ancient, constitutional rights, rendered possible in a barbarous age by the comparative weakness and smallness of the numbers of persons affected by it, and continued until the exclusion had become customary. The franchise of women in local elections has been from time to time under judicial consideration, and their right to take part in such elections has been repeatedly confirmed by the judges. During the arguments in these cases, the question of their right to vote in the election of Members of Parliament was frequently mooted, and conflicting opinions thereon incidentally expressed by various judges, but the matter was never judicially decided, and no authoritative judgment was ever given against the right until the year 1868, after the passing of two modern Acts of Parliament in 1832 and 1867, the former of which, for the first time in English history, in terms limited the franchise created by it to every "male person," and the latter to every "man" qualified under its provisions. Your Memorialists submit that had the question of the right of women to vote in the election of Members of Parliament been raised in the law courts under the old statutes which contain no reference to sex, and before the passing of the limiting Acts of 1862 and 1867, that the precedents which had determined the right in their favour in the construction of the law as to local government must have been held to apply to the case of qualified freeholders or others who claimed the right as regards Parliamentary government.

They submit, also, that even after these limiting Acts, women had reasonable grounds for claiming the suffrage under the existing law. There is an Act of Parliament which declares that "in all Acts, words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, unless the contrary is expressly provided." The Act of 1867 contained clauses imposing personal liabilities and pecuniary burdens on certain classes of ratepayers. In these clauses, as in the enfranchising clauses, and throughout the Act, words importing the masculine gender were alone used. No provision was made that these words should not include females. Accordingly, in enforcing the Act, the extra liabilities and burdens were imposed on women ratepayers, to many of whom they caused grievous hardship. There was, therefore, reason to expect that the enfranchising clauses would bear the same interpretation, inasmuch as they were confessedly offered as an equivalent for the increased liabilities. But when the women who had been subjected to the liabilities claimed their votes, they found that words importing the masculine gender were held to include women in the clauses imposing burdens, and to exclude them in the clauses conferring privileges, in one and the same Act of Parliament.

This kind of injustice was shown in a marked manner in the case of certain women ratepayers of Bridgewater, who, in a Memorial addressed to you in 1871, set forth the grievance of most heavy and unjust taxation which was levied on them, in common with the other householders of that disfranchised borough, for the payment of a prolonged commission respecting political bribery. The Memorialists felt it to be unjust and oppressive, inasmuch as not exercising the franchise, nor being in any way directly or indirectly concerned in the malpractices which led to the commission, they were nevertheless required to pay not less than three shillings in the pound, according to their rental. To that Memorial you caused a reply to be sent through Mr. Secretary Bruce, stating that "it was not in the power of the Secretary of State to exempt

women owning or occupying property from the local and imperial taxation to which that property is liable." While fully admitting this, your Memorialists beg to represent that it is in the power of the Legislature to secure to women the vote which their property would confer, along with its liability to local and imperial taxation, were it owned or occupied by men.

They submit that this concession has recently been granted in respect to local taxation, and that if justice demands that women should have a voice in controlling the municipal expenditure to which their property contributes, justice yet more urgently demands that they should have a voice in controlling the imperial expenditure to which the same property is liable. The local expenditure of the country amounts to about £30,000,000, the imperial expenditure to about £70,000,000 annually; if, therefore, the matter be regarded as one of taxation only, the latter vote is of more importance than the former. Local government deals with men and women alike, and knows no distinction between male and female ratepayers. But imperial government deals with men and women on different principles, and in such a manner that whenever there is any distinction made in the rights, privileges and protection accorded to them respectively, the difference is always against women and always in favour of men. They believe this state of things is a natural result of the exclusion of women from representation, and that it will be found impracticable to amend it until women are admitted to a share in controlling the Legislature.

By the deprivation of the Parliamentary vote, women, in the purchase or renting of property, obtain less for their money than men. In a Bill which passed the House of Commons last session, provision was made for the amalgamation in one list of the municipal and Parliamentary register of electors. In that list it appeared that the same house, the same rent, and the same taxes, conferred on a man the double vote in municipal and Parliamentary government, and on a woman the single vote only, and that the less honourable and important one. When the occupation of a house is transferred from a man to a woman, say to the widow of the former owner, that home loses the privilege of representation in the imperial government, though its relations with the taxgatherer continue unaltered. There have been various societies formed with a view to enable persons to acquire portions of landed or real property, partly for the sake of the vote attached to such property. Should a woman purchase or inherit such an estate, the vote, which has been one important consideration in determining the value, would be lost, through her legal disability to exercise it. The deprivation of the vote is a serious disadvantage to women in the competition for farms. A case is recorded of one estate in Suffolk from which seven widows have been ejected, who, if they had possessed votes, would have been continued as tenants. A sudden ejection often means ruin to a family who have sunk capital in the land, and it is only too probable that no day passes without the occurrence of some such calamity to some unhappy widow, who, but for the electoral disability, might have retained the home and the occupation by which she could have brought up her family in comfort and independence.

Besides this definite manner in which the electoral disability injures women farmers, it has a more or less directly injurious influence on all self-dependent women, who maintain themselves and their families by other than domestic labour. A disability, the basis of which is the presumed mental or moral incapacity of the subject of it to form a rational judgment on matters within the ordinary ken of human intelligence, carries with it a stigma of inferiority calculated to cause impediment to the entrance on, or successful prosecution of, any pursuit demanding recognised ability and energy. This presumed incapacity is probably the origin of the general neglect of the education of women, which is only now beginning to be acknowledged, and the absence of political power in the neglected class renders it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain an adequate share for girls in the application of educational funds and endowments. So long as women are specifically excluded

from control over their Parliamentary representatives, so long will their interests be postponed to the claims of those who have votes to give; and while Parliament shall continue to declare that the voices of women are unfit to be taken into account in choosing members of the Legislature, the masses of men will continue to act as if their wishes, opinions, and interests, were undeserving of serious consideration.

It is now nearly two years since you, in your place in the House of Commons, said that the number of absolutely self-dependent women is increasing from year to year, and that the progressive increase in the number of such women is a very serious fact, because those women are assuming the burdens that belong to men; and you stated your belief that when they are called upon to assume those burdens, and to undertake the responsibility of providing for their own subsistence, they approach the task under greater difficulties than attach to their more powerful competitors. Your Memorialists, therefore, ask you to aid women in overcoming these difficulties, by assisting to place them, politically at least, on a level with those whom you designate as "their more powerful competitors."

One of the greatest hindrances in the path of self-dependent women is the opposition shown by members of many trades and professions to women who attempt to engage in them. The medical and academical authorities of the University of Edinburgh have successfully crushed the attempt of a small band of lady students to qualify themselves for the medical profession, and the same spirit of "trades unionism" is rife in the industrial community. A few months ago the printers of Manchester, learning that a few girls were practising typesetting, and endeavouring to earn a little money thereby, instantly passed a rule ordaining a strike in the shop of any master printer who should allow type set up by women to be sent to his machines to be worked. At the present time, in a manufacturing district in Yorkshire where there are "broad" and "narrow" looms, at the former of which much more money can be earned, the men refuse to allow women to work at the broad looms, though they are quite able to manage them, because the work is considered too remunerative for women. At Nottingham there is a particular machine at which very high wages can be earned, at which women now work, and the men, in order to drive women out of such profitable employment, have insisted on the masters taking no more women on, but as those at present employed leave, supplying their places by men. A master manufacturer reports: "We have machines which women can manage quite as well or better than men, yet are they not permitted by a selfish combination of the strong against the weak." These are only samples of the cases that are constantly occurring of successful attempts to drive women out of remunerative occupations. Your Memorialists submit that women would be more able to resist such attempts if they had the protection of the suffrage; and that men would be less likely to be thus aggressive and oppressive if they had learned to regard women as their political equals.

Besides the restrictions on the industrial liberties of women effected by combinations of men, there are existing and proposed legislative restrictions from which men are exempt, and which exercise a powerful influence on the market for their labour. For the coming session we have the proposal further to limit their hours of paid labour in factories, and to place other restrictions on their labour in shops, also a proposition to place married women on the footing of half-timers. Without here expressing any opinion as to the wisdom of these proposals, we urge that members of the House of Commons would be more capable of dealing with them in a just and appreciative spirit if they were responsible for their votes to the persons whose interests are directly concerned, and whose liberties they are asked to curtail; and, further, that it is a grave question how far it is safe to trust the industrial interests of women as a class, to the irresponsible control of the men who have manifested to individuals and to sections of working women, the spirit indicated by the examples we have cited.

In the same speech you spoke of a state of the law in which the

balance is generally cast too much against women and too much in favour of men. Since you directed your attention to this matter, you have not been able either to introduce or to assist others who have introduced measures to ameliorate the state of the law respecting women, and such proposals have been unable to win consideration from Parliament. Your Memorialists cannot believe that this neglect has arisen from want of a desire on your part to deal with the grievances under which you have admitted that your countrywomen suffer; they are therefore led to the conclusion that you have been unable to take into consideration the affairs of an unrepresented class, owing to the pre-occupation of Parliament with the concerns of those to whom it is directly responsible.

You stated that "the question was to devise a method of enabling women to exercise a sensible influence, without undertaking personal functions, and exposing themselves to personal obligations inconsistent with the fundamental particulars of their condition as women," and that the objection to the personal attendance of women at elections was in your mind an objection of the greatest force. They respectfully submit that the exercise of the municipal franchise involves the personal attendance of women at the polls, and that since your words were uttered changes have been effected which render the process of voting absolutely identical for municipal and Parliamentary elections, and the whole proceeding perfectly decorous and orderly. Experience has proved that women can vote at municipal elections without prejudice to the fundamental particulars of their condition as women, whatever these may be; and this experience shows that they may vote in Parliamentary elections without the smallest personal prejudice or inconvenience. The School Board elections have also shown that women can appeal to large constituencies and go through the ordeal of public meetings, addresses, and questions from electors, to which men must submit who seek the suffrages of a great community, without any sacrifice of womanly dignity, or of the respect and consideration accorded to their position and their sex. They therefore submit that events have obviated the objections you entertained in 1871 to the proposal to give representation to women, and that the course taken by the Administration over which you preside in assenting to the extension of the municipal and School Board franchise to them; in calling them to the public functions of candidates and members of School Boards; and lastly, of securing the passing of a law which renders the process of voting silent and secret, have taken away all reasonable grounds for objecting on the score of practical inconvenience to the admission of women to the exercise of a vote, which they would have to give in precisely the same manner, but not nearly so often, as those votes which they already deliver.

It has been said that there is neither desire nor demand for the measure, and further, that women do not care for and would not use the suffrage if they possessed it. But the demand for the Parliamentary franchise is enormously greater than was the demand for the Municipal franchise, and for the School Board franchise there was no apparent call. Yet these two measures were passed purely on their merits, and it was not held to be necessary to impose on their promoters, over and above the obligation to make out their case, the condition that a majority of the women of England, or of a particular district, should petition for the proposed boon. Experience proved the wisdom and justice of this course, for although women throughout the country had taken no active part in agitating for the Municipal franchise, no sooner was the privilege accorded than they freely availed themselves of it, and statistics obtained from some of the largest boroughs in the kingdom show that from the first year in which women possessed the suffrage, they have voted in about equal proportion with men to the number of each on the register. The Parliamentary vote is more honourable and important than the Municipal vote; it is, therefore, safe to conclude that women who value and use the latter, will appreciate and exercise the former as soon as it shall be bestowed upon them. Your Memorialists submit that great injustice and injury is done by debarring these women from a voting power

which there is such strong presumptive ground for believing that they would freely exercise but for the legal restraint.

Your Memorialists are especially moved to call your attention to the urgency of the claim at the present time, when a Bill extending the application of the principle of household suffrage is about to be proposed to Parliament, which Bill received last year such expressions of approval from members of Her Majesty's Government as to lead to the belief that they are willing to take the proposal into serious consideration. They submit that the claim and the need for representation of women householders is even more pressing than that of agricultural labourers. The grievances under which women suffer are equally great, and the demand for the franchise has been pressed by a much greater number of women, and for a much longer period of time, than in the case of county householders now excluded. The number of persons who petitioned last session for the County Franchise Bill and for the Women's Disabilities Bill respectively were, for the former 1,889, and for the latter 329,206. The latter Bill has received most influential support from both sides of the House, and more votes have been recorded in its favour than have been given for any measure not directly supported as a party measure by one or other of the great parties in the State. Under these circumstances your Memorialists earnestly request that you will use your influence as leader of the House of Commons and of the Government, to secure the passing of the Bill introduced by Mr. Jacob Bright, either as a substantive enactment, or as an integral portion of the next measure that shall be passed dealing with the question of the representation of the people.

Miss REEVES, in seconding the resolution, said she should only call their attention for a few moments to the memorial, which was specially interesting just now. When rumours reached us that household suffrage might be extended to men without any notice being taken of women, what would have been the indignation of the public if it had been unexpectedly discovered that some thousands of educated men were in the position that female householders occupied—highly taxed, their money taken from them, and no voice allowed them as to its expenditure—deprived of the privilege of citizens of this great nation, which was really their birthright. If this were the case with any body of educated men, what wrath would be excited. It would be considered a disgrace in the nineteenth century, and every voice would be raised and every effort made to sweep away the barriers which kept such persons from their just due. Would any one be bold enough to say that if women's influence had been felt against the Ashantee war it would have been disadvantageous to the country? She thought she might venture to assert that the manners and morals of the country were not at all likely to be injured by woman's just and legitimate influence. (Hear, hear.) All must feel that great injustice would be done to the sex to which she belonged if they were any longer deprived of the privilege of having a vote in connection with the great councils of the country. She cordially recommended the memorial to their sympathy and support. (Applause.)

Miss WIGHAM said she was very glad to have an opportunity of supporting the motion. The memorial embodied all the arguments that could be adduced on their behalf, and it was just such a document as they could all desire to be placed in the hands of the Prime Minister. She trusted they would read it and fully appreciate its weight, and she also hoped that they should succeed in securing the support of Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. ASHURST said the memorial so fully expressed their feelings and arguments in favour of the movement that he did not think any one could add much to it. There was one fallacy underlying the whole of the law respecting women, and that was a certain suspicion or feeling that in some way or other women were the property of men. This feeling was expressed in many ways. For instance, there was the offspring of women, in whom it would be thought they would take more interest than their husbands, for they had a good deal more to do with them than their husbands both by nature, by necessity, and custom; and yet their offspring had been considered more the property of the father than the mother, and were regarded so still. He thought they had showed that amendments in the law were required in that direction. Unfortunately the Christian religion had not interfered up to the present to bring about an alteration in the matter. As to the

power of women to take part in electoral matters, and in the business of legislation, every meeting he had attended in which women had taken part had furnished sufficient proof of the great power of the sex in dealing with such matters. (Hear, hear.) He had no doubt that there were thousands and thousands of ladies besides those with whom he had met, who possessed an equal amount of power. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. COX said he was glad to have that opportunity of expressing his hearty sympathy with the movement. He could only hope that when the matter came under the consideration of Mr. Gladstone, and when he was about to reply to it he would give more attention to it, and better weigh his words than he appeared to have done on the previous day, when he gave a very unsatisfactory reply to the agricultural labourers when they were asking his support in their efforts to obtain the county franchise. He certainly thought that all the reason was on their side. He was very glad to hear the extracts which had been given from the celebrated writer, old Plato, who had lived two thousand years ago. He thought that we, in this 19th century, ought not to be behind the writings of a philosopher who lived two thousand years ago. There was no doubt that all our ablest writers had always felt, even in classic times, how very anomalous was the position of women, both with respect to the franchise and the various other disabilities under which they laboured. He could not conceive any speeches weaker than those delivered in the House of Commons when the question was last debated in the House of Commons. He could not help thinking that Mr. Leatham must have felt sorry for the scurrilous and extraordinary remarks he made when he saw them in print next morning. (Hear, hear.) He did not think there was anything creditable to any man in the words Mr. Leatham used on the occasion referred to. He thought, too, that it was very much to the discredit of Sir Henry James, when he tried to get rid of his opponents by means of taunts and satire at Taunton. He had experienced some little of what one might expect when one stood for the representation of a constituency at a time of popular excitement. He thought he should have been treated in a rather more humane manner if ladies had been voters at Bath, instead of the voting being confined to men. (Hear, hear.) He could only feel grateful for the reception he met with from the ladies of Bath. It seemed to him important that they should try and import all the argument and reason they could into every election, in order to raise the people above the rowdyism and beer drinking which generally prevailed, and he was firmly convinced that if ladies were allowed to vote it would be the best means of bringing about all they desired in that direction. In conclusion, he said it seemed to him to be monstrous to say that it was an unfeminine thing for a woman to place a balloting card in a ballot box. It would be just as unfeminine to his mind as if they were to pass a law on the subject to prevent her placing letters in the letter-box. (Laughter and applause.)

Mrs. G. SIMS said she did not mind whether she ever had a vote or not, but she did hope that those who would come after her would have one. She could not understand how it was that men did not say that marriage had been a disability. Before a maiden went to the altar she was herself—(laughter)—and when she came away she was nobody. (Renewed laughter.) She was Miss Someone when she went up to the altar, but when she came back she was only Jack Smith's wife. (Laughter.) She had an individuality before she went there, but she signed it all away in her marriage with her maiden name. (Laughter and applause.) So long as women had no means of livelihood left them but marriage, she thought they must take the advice of the old man to his son, "Get money; honestly if you can; but get money," and say to women, "Get married; well if you can; but get married." (Laughter.) A few years ago men were telling women that their sole end and aim in life was to get married. They had now suddenly taken it into their heads that the franchise was going to deter women from marriage. A doctor said to her the other day, "Mrs. Sims, marriage is the true vocation of woman." She said, "But what are women to do? There is no market in which men are sold." (Laughter.) The doctor replied, "Oh! send them to the Antipodes: there are plenty of men there." (Laughter.) If another Reform Bill were passed, and extended the franchise without including women, the consequences would be most disastrous not only to women, but to men. She knew that there was a great deal of misunderstanding on the question; but she believed that, if their aim were noble, their desires true, and their claims just, they would have courage

to bear, patience to endure, and fortitude to go on to the end, and should succeed. (Applause.) She believed that, after they had gone, others would rise up and take their places in support of the movement, "They will," said the speaker, "go on, and ultimately succeed, for when a woman says she will she will, and when she says she won't she won't." (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. GREENWELL addressed the meeting at some length, expressing his hearty sympathy with the movement, on the grounds of reason and justice.

Miss BECKER supported the resolution.

After a few remarks from the Rev. BROOKE LAMBERT, Mrs. WELLSTOOD addressed the meeting. She referred at some length to the active manner in which the friends of the movement had been working in Edinburgh.

The Rev. J. J. BROWN was the next speaker. He expressed himself warmly in favour of the movement, and said that the greater infusion of woman's influence and action, whether into their social, political or religious life, would be a new spring of wealth, love, and goodness to the community.

The Rev. J. ROBBERS, who addressed the meeting in support of the memorial, in reply to a statement which had appeared in the *Spectator* to the effect that if they had a Parliament opposed to the wishes of the stronger portion of the community the Government would be a sham, he said it was not the majority of the physically strongest in the country who ruled and regulated the Government. It was educated intelligence that must govern for the most part by the legislative assemblies; and why should not women contribute their just and proportionate share to that educated intelligence? (Applause.)

Mr. E. T. WAKEFIELD thought it was man's sense of justice which had led to the abolition of slavery, and he held that to exclude the emotional element from the regulation of State affairs was to place us in the condition of barbarians. He was glad to say that both the members for Dover would vote in favour of the measure, and he believed that their assistance had been procured by the quiet working of the papers which had been sent to them upon the subject. (Applause.)

The Rev. T. G. CRIPPEN held that their objects were thoroughly just; for there were laws in existence which affected the status of women, the rights of property, and the relation of parents to their children; and he contended that these laws grossly abused the simplest principles of right, and that they would not be amended until there was a fair representation of women in the House of Commons. The agricultural labourers were not disfranchised as a class, but they had not a vote simply because they did not possess the necessary property qualification. The case was different with women, who were disfranchised even though they possessed the necessary property qualifications, and they were classed with peers, minors, idiots and lunatics. (Laughter and applause.) He regretted that some friends of the movement were in danger of leading them astray. A writer in the *Beehive* newspaper had suggested that, as the suffrage movement was at present being conducted, they were putting spinsters and widows before matrons. He denied that such was the case, and said he would rather see a vote conferred upon his wife than upon any widow he knew. (Laughter and applause.) But, while the writer he referred to was so earnestly pleading the case of married women, he was really injuring the cause, as he was striking at the foundation of the principle of household suffrage, which, being now admitted on both sides of the House, gave them a good hope of ultimate success.

The Rev. Mr. WAGSTAFF said they had discovered, in connection with Good Templarism, that women were well-qualified to act as officers in the various lodges. It often happened that while many of the men were talking about what was best to be done, the female members of the lodges went and did it. (Laughter and applause.)

Mrs. BINNS addressed the meeting.

Mr. ROGERS thought there was one thing of great importance in arguing with Mr. Gladstone upon that question. The organisation in favour of women's suffrage was generally twitted that the people were not in favour of the movement. He believed, however, that there was a general feeling throughout the country that the question must be settled. Nearly every person admitted that they were forced logically to the conclusion that if the men had a vote for the payment of rates, women who paid the same rates should have a vote also.

Mr. J. C. COX, J.P., had seen and heard enough to convince him

that the agricultural labourers throughout the country, and those who were the leaders of the agricultural labourers' movement, were strongly in favour of women possessing the suffrage. He had often been told that the labourers themselves had frequently been compelled to join the union through the influence of their wives, and he thought that of itself showed women were qualified to take an intelligent interest in public affairs. (Applause.)

Miss FENWICK MILLER supported the resolution. The motion that the memorial should be signed by the President, and forwarded to Mr. Gladstone, was agreed to unanimously.

Miss L. S. ASHWORTH proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Taylor for the able manner in which she had presided.

Mrs. LUCAS seconded the motion, which was carried with applause. The meeting then separated.

EVENING MEETING IN THE TOWN HALL.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Town Hall. The MAYOR (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) presided, and in addition to the ladies and gentlemen present at the Conference there were on the platform Dr. Louisa Atkins, Alderman Goodrick, Councillors Rolason and Perkins, Mr. J. S. Wright, Mr. W. Middlemore, Mr. A. Arnold, Mr. C. E. Matthews, Mr. R. F. Martineau, Mr. Buttress, and others. There was a large attendance, the floor and side galleries being completely filled.

The CHAIRMAN, who was received with cheers, said he took the chair in deference to a request preferred to him as Mayor. (Hear, hear.) He knew that at the present time they, or many of them, were anxiously asking for the franchise for the agricultural labourers. (Applause.) On what grounds did they ask for this concession? So far as he understood, upon three grounds. In the first place, they said it was unfair that men should be called upon to pay taxes, to take their part in the responsibilities of citizenship, to obey laws whilst they were denied any part in making the laws to which they were expected to pay attention. In the second place, they asserted that the labourers suffered from special grievances for which they would never obtain sufficient and satisfactory redress until they had electoral power at their backs. (Hear, hear.) Lastly, they said that the political education of the labourers would never be complete without the vote and the discussions which the possession of it would give rise to. He was inclined to believe that every one of these arguments might be used with equal, or in some cases even greater force in the case of women. (Hear, hear.) Therefore he said that the presumption was in favour of a vote for women in the minds of all true Liberals, and it only remained to consider whether there were arguments on the other side sufficiently strong to prevent their carrying their principles to a logical conclusion. It seemed to him that there were three arguments on the other side. In the first place, it was said that political power should reside where force ultimately will be found, that it was dangerous to give legislative authority where there was no physical strength to enforce its decrees. He said if this idea of a physical-power suffrage were to prevail, they must go backwards, they must eradicate all the cripples and invalids, all the weakly in mind and body, all the old persons, and for his own part he confessed there were some weak-kneed and weak-headed politicians whom he could see disfranchised with the utmost composure. (Laughter.) He had read of a nation of cannibals who had a curious practice. They were accustomed to set their old people to hang on trees by their hands, and those who fell off first was immediately killed and eaten. (Laughter.) It seemed to him that these philosophers were anxious to introduce this practice into our constitution, they wished to introduce us to a new fancy franchise, a new muscular gymnastic test which we had not hitherto recognised. (Hear, hear.) Then they came to the last, and, as it seemed to him, the most serious objection, and that was the statement that if the franchise were given to women they would give their votes on the Conservative side. This objection was always treated with peculiar scorn. He read sometimes the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, and he could say in the presence of Miss Becker, who so ably edited it, that the journal was a truly awful periodical. (Laughter.) It was full of scathing denunciations of his sex, and he never rose from its perusal without a most depressing sense of inferiority. Upon this one point, however, he must confess its powerful advocacy had not convinced him, and in spite of justice, reason, and logic, he said that if he believed the result of giving women a vote would be to place the

Conservatives permanently in power, he would not give them the vote. As intelligence increased, and a sense of popular justice was aroused, this question would come to the front, and it would be settled in the direction desired by the promoters of that meeting. (Applause.)

The Rev. J. JENKIN BROWN moved the first resolution, which was seconded by Miss BEEDY, supported by Mrs. SIMS, the Rev. BROOKE LAMBERT, and Miss BECKER. On being put to the meeting it was carried unanimously.

The Rev. G. J. EMANUEL, moved the adoption of petitions to Parliament, and of memorials to the borough and county members expressing gratification at the support they had given to the principles, and urged its continuance. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. S. WRIGHT, who said the movement ought to receive the hearty support of all Liberals in the country; and was supported Mr. J. C. COX, Miss STURGE, and Miss ASHWORTH, and on being put to the meeting was carried with acclamation.

A cordial vote of thanks to the Mayor, for presiding, proposed by Mr. C. E. MATTHEWS, and seconded by Mrs. ASHFORD, terminated the proceedings.—*Abridged from the Birmingham Morning News*, which contained an extended report of the proceedings at the conference and the meeting.

SHEFFIELD.

A public meeting in support of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women, was held last night, at the Temperance Hall. The large hall was crowded in every part. The Rev. S. Earnshaw, M.A., presided; and there were also on the platform Mrs. Butler, of Liverpool; Miss Becker, of Manchester; Miss Sturge, of Birmingham; Miss Lucy Wilson, of Leeds; Mr. J. C. Cox, J.P., of Belper; Dr. Hume, the Rev. J. Fisher, the Rev. J. M. Stephens, B.A., Mr. Councillor Clegg, Mr. Councillor Robertshaw, Mr. Councillor Skelton, Mr. H. J. Wilson, Mr. Cremer (London), Mr. T. D. Ingham, &c. The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said it was contrary to the feelings of an Englishman that any large portion of his fellow subjects should be subjected to any inequality of the law by which they suffered any privation or hindrance. The first resolution was moved by Dr. Hume, seconded by Mr. Councillor Robertshaw, and supported by Miss Becker.—Mrs. Butler was received with loud cheers on rising to support the resolution. She said when they considered the present political position of women, it was obvious that it was not what it was at the beginning of the century. It was not stationary, it had become worse, and it would become still worse unless their present demands were granted. If half a century ago the claim of women to the suffrage was a claim to an equal right, in claiming it to-day they were pleading for their very existence. In this country men alone were the sovereigns and women were only subjects, and were at the uncontrolled and unchecked disposal of their sovereigns. That was a great change in the position of women, and that change would be more completely brought about when the agricultural labourers were enfranchised. (Cheers.) She had the deepest sympathy with the movement which was now progressing so favourably for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer—(cheers)—and she had spoken in favour of the movement from a cart in a market-place on a moonlight night. She wished her friend Joseph Arch and the agricultural labourers God speed. (Cheers.) She was not one of those who regarded with terror the democratic tendencies of the day, provided that the movement was guided by principles of justice. (Hear, hear.) She wished to point out how deplorable and how hopeless, humanly speaking, would be the position of women in England when the vast extension of the governing power of the country was achieved, if women still remained the only subject portion of the nation. The change for the worse in the political position of women was, that whereas they formerly formed part of a powerfully subject body, they now formed part of a perfectly helpless one; that whereas they were ruled by a sovereign who was strong, but under control, they were now ruled by a sovereign under no control whatever, except their own conscience or convenience. The working men of the country had hitherto shown themselves their warmest friends, the reason being that they were uncorrupted by wealth or power; but as they were admitted to the franchise their sympathy decreased, and, without intending, gradually learnt to do injustice. Thus it was that every extension of the franchise tended to make the residuum of the unenfranchised liable to neglect, if not to outrage. It was said that great men

were always ready to do battle for the rights of women; but great and good men would become more scarce, or would have their own battles to fight for. Man could reign over chattels, but he could not reign over human beings; and women were acknowledged to be human beings, and not chattels. When the working man of England rose up and said, "I also am a man," it was the death-knell of aristocracy of birth; and when the woman said, "I also am a human being," it was the death-knell of aristocracy of sex. (Cheers.) She concluded by reading an extract from a letter of a member of Parliament, who said that, whatever the consequences to himself, nothing would prevent him from opposing any measure bearing upon women, in the preparation of which the voice of women had not been heard. (Hear, hear.) That was all they asked. (Cheers.) The motion was carried unanimously.—The Rev. J. M. Stephens moved the adoption of petitions to Parliament and memorials in favour of the removal of the disabilities of women.—Mr. Rolley, President of the Trades Union Congress, seconded the motion, speaking earnestly in favour of women's suffrage.—Miss Lucy Wilson and Miss Sturge, supported the resolution, which was carried unanimously.—Votes of thanks brought the proceedings, which had been very enthusiastic, to a close.

HEREFORD.

On Tuesday evening, a crowded meeting was held in the Corn Exchange, Hereford, to hear addresses from Miss Beedy, M.A., and Miss Sturge, a member of the Birmingham School Board, in support of the claims of women to the franchise. The Mayor (Mr. E. E. Bosley) presided.—The Rev. J. O. Hill proposed the first resolution, which was seconded by Miss Beedy.—The Mayor then put the resolution to the meeting, when a few hands were held up in favour of it and a few against it, those in favour being in a majority. The Mayor declared the resolution carried, after which he called upon Mr. Stephen Broad to move the next resolution, as follows:—"That a petition to the House of Commons be adopted and signed by the chairman, on behalf of this meeting, and that the two members for the city, Mr. Hoskyns and Major Arbuthnot, be requested to support Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill for the removal of the electoral disabilities of women."—The Mayor said he was requested to suggest that Mr. Broad should add the names of the county members as well as those for the city to his resolution.—Mr. Broad consented to this addition.—Mr. Garrod seconded the resolution, which was supported by Miss Sturge and carried unanimously. Votes of thanks to the ladies and to the chairman concluded the proceedings.

WORCESTER.

UPROARIOUS PROCEEDINGS.

A public meeting was held in the Assembly Room of the Guildhall, on January 14th. The room was crowded to excess, and the proceedings were throughout of the most excited and uproarious nature. With the exception of some reserved seats in the front of the platform, for which a shilling was charged, the admission to the meeting was free, and this circumstance no doubt largely contributed to the turbulence which characterised the gathering. Repeated exclamations were heard that the disturbance was caused by lads, but the blame of interruption could not be fairly said to rest with any one class, the excitement being very general. The chair was taken by Mr. W. Laslett, M.P., who was supported on the platform by Miss Beedy, M.A., Miss Sturge, Miss Caroline Biggs, Mrs. Rogers, Mr. Alan Greenwell, M.A., Mr. John Matthews, and Mr. F. Woodward. It was expected that Mr. A. C. Sherriff, M.P., would have been present, but the following letter was received in explanation of his absence:—

"St. Leonard's, Bournemouth, Jan. 12, 1874.

"Dear Mr. Weaver,—I was compelled to come here on Friday with my eldest daughter, who has for some time been out of health, and was ordered off at very short notice to the sea-side

I cannot, therefore, attend your meeting, which otherwise I should have been glad to do.

"On the subject of your meeting, I can only say that my opinion has been shown by my votes, and that I go on the broad principle that whoever is called upon to pay taxes and rates ought to have a voice in their expenditure.

"It would be useless to discuss the pros and cons of this question in a short note of this kind; they will be dealt with exhaustively I doubt not at your meeting, but I cannot help thinking that the admission of women to the ordinary rights of citizenship is more likely to raise the standard of intelligence than to lower it.—I am, dear Mr. Weaver, yours faithfully,

"A. C. SHERRIFF."

After a few remarks by the Chairman, Mr. John Matthews moved (amidst considerable uproar, and cries of "Going, going, gone") the first resolution. The ladies, he said, were allowed to vote for the election of town councillors and for members of school boards, and he thought that in justice the same privilege should be extended to them in reference to the election of Members of Parliament. (Cries of "Let 'em stop at home and mend their stockings.") Mr. Matthews also pointed out the claims that women had upon the gratitude and consideration of men, and how dependent the latter were upon them. (Laughter.) Miss Beedy, M.A., supported the resolution.—Miss Sturge, who on rising was received with cries of "Hurrah" together with groans, supported the resolution. She combated the objection that if women were permitted to vote they would neglect their duty, and contended that men did not do so although that power was entrusted to them. Her speech was interrupted by groans and cockcrowing, whilst repeated disturbances took place in consequence of the breaking of seats, on which some of the audience were standing. Appeals were repeatedly made from the platform, but eventually Miss Sturge retired in consequence of her inability to obtain a hearing. There were calls for "Airey," and on Mr. Airey mounting the platform he was received with cries of "Quack, quack." He made an appeal for order, and was alternately cheered and hissed. The second resolution was proposed by Mr. A. B. Beaven, M.A., and seconded by Miss Biggs, Mr. Airey also speaking in its favour. Both resolutions, however, when put to the meeting were rejected. A vote of thanks was proposed to the chairman by Mr. Webb, and seconded by Miss Beedy, M.A. After Mr. Laslett, M.P., had acknowledged the vote, the proceedings terminated, the entire meeting having been characterised throughout by great uproar.

LEOMINSTER.

A large meeting took place on January 15th, at the Town Hall. The Rev. Henry Cooper, of Stoke Prior, presided. On the platform were Miss Beedy, Miss C. Biggs, the Misses Cooper, the Misses Southall, Rev. G. Denton, Rev. R. Smith, and Mr. J. T. Southall. The first resolution was proposed by Mr. J. T. Southall, who would cordially support the movement because it was entirely devoid of any "party" nature; if they looked at the names of those who supported the movement they would find the names of all shades of politicians. This was seconded by the Rev. R. Smith, supported by Miss Beedy, who was well received and attentively listened to, and carried very enthusiastically—two hands alone being held up against the resolution. A petition to the House of Commons was ordered to be signed by the chairman, on behalf of the meeting. Also, on the proposition of Miss Eliza Southall, of the Farm, seconded by the Rev. T. Denton, and supported by Miss Caroline Biggs, petitions in favour of the "Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women," were ordered to be forwarded to Mr. Richard Arkwright, M.P., for Leominster, Sir Joseph Bailey, M.P., Sir

Herbert Croft, M.P., and Mr. T. Biddulph, M.P. The meeting throughout was a very favourable one. A vote of thanks on the proposition of Miss Beedy, was passed to the chairman, and carried unanimously, as was a like vote to Miss Beedy and Miss C. Biggs, and to the Misses Southall for arranging the meeting. Many persons were unable to gain admittance.—*Hereford Times*.

HUMAN EQUALITY.

SUPPLEMENTAL TO "A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT."

THERE is no king by right divine
To rule and reign, and a' that;
Nor princely rank, nor lordly line—
Equality for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Dynastic power, and a' that;
A common birthright crowns us all
With liberty for a' that.

Let fools and upstarts claim to find
In ancestry and a' that
A higher post to them assigned—
Mankind are one for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
A pompous air, and a' that;
It matters not how born and bred,
We're of one blood for a' that.

Though woman never can be man,
Nor change her sex, and a' that,
To equal rights, 'gainst class or clan,
Her claim is just for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
"Her proper sphere," and a' that;
In all that makes a living soul
She matches man for a' that.

She asks no favour at his hands,
On bended knee, and a' that;
She is his peer where'er he stands,
In spite of sex, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Fair play for her, and a' that,
In all the grave concerns of life
This is her due, for a' that.

In every land, in every age,
How hard her lot, and a' that;
A vassal grade her heritage,
Dependent, poor, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Most deeply wronged, and a' that,
Though subjugated from her birth,
She still aspires for a' that.

Oh! woe for man, proud arbiter!
And judgments sore, and a' that;
For Heaven's displeasure they incur
Who tyrannize, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Injustice vile, and a' that;
All noble souls will women aid
To gain her cause, for a' that.

Down with all barriers that prevent
Her culture, growth, and a' that—
Her equal place in government,
In church and state, and a' that!

For a' that, and a' that,
The ballot-box, and a' that;
Whatever right a man may claim,
Belongs to her, for a' that.

Soul is the complement of soul,
And sex of sex, for a' that;
Each is included in the whole,
The whole in each for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Full liberty, and a' that;
For manhood and for womanhood.
By grace of God, for a' that!

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will, for a' that,"
When woman's worth, o'er all the earth,
Shall honoured be, for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Co-equal, free, and a' that;
Through her enfranchisement our race
Shall grandly rise, and a' that.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

MISS THACKERAY ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

In a book just published by Miss Thackeray, entitled "Toilers and Spinners," occurs the following note:—"On the ground floor of the Ladies' Club, in Berners-street, there is the office for the Franchise of Women. An uninterested person, not long ago, coming in and receiving a courteous reply to a few passing questions could not help feeling ashamed of a certain conscious and accepted ignorance, as there contrasted with the courage and liberality which has prompted certain ladies to attempt to urge the rights of the lazy uninterested people who have not even cared to take trouble to think out a serious subject. These ladies feel that justice (if justice it is) has nothing to do with that acknowledged apathy of 'half the women of England' who do not care for votes, and whose supineness, in the Attorney-General's eyes, is a good reason for not giving the franchise to those persons who *do* happen to care for it.

"The ideal woman, as one imagines her, is no social failure. She is calm, beautiful, dignified, gentle, not necessarily accomplished, but she must be intelligent, a good administrator, wise and tender by instinct; for my own taste she should perhaps have a gift for music, and a natural feeling for art and suitability in her home, and beyond this home she should have an interest large enough to care for other things, nor should that which affects the world and her own country people be indifferent to her. If she is able to rule her household, to bring up her sons and daughters in love and in truth, and to advise her husband with sense and composure, she may perhaps be trusted in him with the very doubtful privilege of a 5,000th voice in the election of a member for the borough."

MRS. SOMERVILLE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

It is often questionable whether a reviewer has carefully read the book which he professes to criticise. A little "scientific use of the imagination" in lending to an author his critic's thoughts and opinions may somewhere be accounted a venial offence; but it is certainly going too far for a reviewer to describe an eminent person as holding precisely the opposite views to those which he or she has been at pains to maintain for the longer part of a century. The late Mrs. Somerville's

character and achievements have always been stones of stumbling to the *Saturday Review*. But the *Saturday Review*, in the most complete defiance of herself, has now made the lamented lady serve as a rebuke to all feminine dreams of legal equality. "The last person," says the *Saturday*, in a notice of "Mrs. Somerville's Recollections," "to see in herself the genius who was to assert woman's desecrated rights, and win back from men their usurped dominion of the reign of knowledge, she lent no countenance to those of her sisterhood, who shriek against the conventional relations which are supposed to oppress them." We may presume the reviewer had not read the following remarks from Mrs. Somerville's own pen in her "Recollections," pp. 344-346:—"Age has not abated my zeal for the emancipation of my sex from the unreasonable prejudice too prevalent in Britain against a literary and scientific education for women. The British laws are adverse to women, and we are deeply indebted to Mr. Stuart Mill for daring to show their iniquity and injustice. I have frequently signed petitions to Parliament for the female suffrage, and have the honour now to be a member of the general committee for women suffrage in London."—*Echo*.

Obituary.

MISS MARY DOWLING.—We have to record, with great sorrow, the death of the able and accomplished secretary of the Central Committee, Miss Mary Dowling. Although she had laboured but a short time in the work, she had given proofs of capacity and earnestness which led all who knew her to hope for great results from her efforts. She was seized with illness whilst engaged in laborious duty at Petersfield in October last, and died on January 4th at the house of her sister, Mrs. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham.

MRS. ROBERT BONNER FEAST.—With deep regret we record the death of one of the earliest of our workers. The lady whose death we deplore was better known to the friends of women's suffrage as Miss Mary Johnson, secretary to the Birmingham Society, a post to which Miss Sturge succeeded when Miss Johnson's marriage occasioned her removal from the town. She took a warm interest in every movement for the enfranchisement and elevation of women, and showed this by work as well as words. She presided at the National Conference of the Women's Suffrage Society at Birmingham, in February, 1873, and was laid in her last resting-place on January 22nd, the day of the similar gathering which has just taken place.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN GALWAY.—This movement is now gaining some new recruits in places least suspected. At the last meeting of the New Ross Union, Mrs. Catherine Walsh was proposed to collect the rates of the union, at a remuneration of fivepence in the pound. The majority of the guardians were in favour of her, but believed the Local Government Board would not sanction the appointment, and that as the rates were now a long time outstanding, it was better to elect a male. On a division, Mrs. Walsh held a high place—although eight persons were proposed—until the closing vote, when Mr. Bardon was elected.—*Galway Express*.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We have to thank many correspondents for valuable communications, to which we are unable to give due attention, owing to the exigencies of our space and time.

THE PROPERTY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

Mrs Jacob Bright, speaking at Birmingham, on Thursday, January 22nd, said: "Supposing it had just been discovered that a law existed whereby the property of all men was confiscated upon their entering the marriage relation, does anyone suppose that 658 members would not assemble in less than no time and pass a Bill to protect their fellow countrymen in the legal possession of their own?" The property of women, however, is exactly in this position, which Sir John Coleridge described as "barbarous." The House is aware of the fact, and has publicly acknowledged, by passing the second reading of Mr. Hinde Palmer's Bill, its opinion of the injustice and ineptitude of the present state of the law; yet so faint is the sense of responsibility towards legislation concerning women, that out of 658 M.P.'s, not 40 could be found to take the trouble to come and vote the Bill through committee, although six separate opportunities were offered to them."

The sudden arrival of a general election makes it necessary that the Committee to Amend the Law with Respect to the Property of Married Women should appeal to their friends and the public for assistance in securing the full consideration and just settlement of this great question.

The common law of England makes marriage an absolute gift to a husband of the personal property of his wife, unless special and complicated arrangements to the contrary are made; her real property becoming, under certain conditions, his for his life, whilst, until the passing of the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, a wife's earnings, also, were the absolute property of her husband. The law of England conferred a perfect legal right upon every man to deal with the fruit of his wife's labour as he chose, and even, if it should be his pleasure, to spend the whole of it upon his own selfish indulgences or vice; there was for him no possible restraint. The law of England still gives a man the perfect legal right to act in the manner indicated by Mr. Lowe, in his speech in the House of Commons on the 10th of June, 1868, on the second reading of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's Married Women's Property Bill.

"I know," he said, "a case in which a man without a shilling married a woman with landed property. He became tenant for his own life by the courtesy of England. He took a dislike to her, he studied the law of cruelty, and having adopted a course which just prevented her from getting a judicial separation, he drove her from her home, and his children with her, to live in poverty, and almost in need, where they are unknown, while he keeps a great establishment on her estate, and at her expense, and is a great person in the county. And this is done, not through her fault or negligence, but by the iniquity of the law, which puts it in his power to do this, by taking her property from her, and enables him to fatten upon the spoils of her whom he has sworn to love and cherish."

The object of this committee is to abolish this rule of confiscation of a woman's property upon marriage, and to establish for all women the same rights and liabilities as appertain by law to men. The real difficulty in their way—a difficulty hitherto inseparable—has been "that entire absence of the sense of responsibility in Parliament in matters concerning the most vital interests of women," of which Mrs. Bright spoke so forcibly.

The first serious attempt made in this country to remedy this grievous injustice to women was in the year 1857, when a Bill, substantially the same in scope and purpose as the Bill introduced in 1868, by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, was introduced into the House of Commons. It was read a second time on the 15th of July, 1857, by a majority of 120 to 65, and then quietly disappeared.

No further Parliamentary effort to amend the law was made till 1868, when Mr. Shaw-Lefevre introduced the Married Women's Property Bill, which provided that every woman who married after the passing of the measure should hold her property in all respects as if she had continued unmarried. The Bill was read a second time on the 10th of June, 1868, when Mr. Henry C. Lopes, the present candidate for Frome, moved its rejection, and the division resulted in a "tie," the second reading being carried by the casting vote of the Speaker. The Bill was referred to a select committee, which received evidence as to the actual working of the present law at home, and the working of the improved law in those countries—the United States and Canada—whose domestic institutions are most like our own; but where a change has already been effected in the law of husband and wife. The select committee reported strongly in favour of the principle of the Bill, which was not, however, carried any further that session.

During the recess came the general election consequent upon the passing of the Representation of the People Act, and in the session of 1869, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre having joined the administration, felt himself no longer in a position to take charge of the Bill, which was accordingly brought in by Mr. Russell Gurney. It passed the second reading in the House of Commons without a division on Wednesday, April 14th, and was referred to a select committee. By this committee the main provisions of the Bill were again affirmed; but some modifications running counter to its general principles were adopted. The opponents of the measure now took the somewhat unusual course of opposing on the third reading, a Bill the principle of which had been accepted on the second reading, and they thus succeeded in causing considerable delay. When, however, a division was forced on the House, the Bill passed the third reading by an overwhelming majority, both as to numbers and influence.

The Bill was brought into the Upper House by Lord Penzance and passed the second reading without a division, but the Lords refused to proceed further with it that session.

Mr. Russell Gurney accordingly re-introduced the measure in the House of Commons during the first week of the session of 1870. It went through all its stages without a division, being read a third time and passed by the Commons on May 31st.

The conduct of the Bill in the Upper House was entrusted to Lord Cairns, who expressed himself entirely in favour of the principle which it embodied. The greater number of the law lords in the House were, however, hostile to the Bill, and though it was read a second time on the 21st of June, the debate was pre-eminently unsatisfactory, and the result was very fitly described by the *Spectator* of June 25:—"The Lords are trying to improve the Married Women's Property Bill out of the world. As it has passed the House of Commons by large majorities, and is desired by a great majority of Her Majesty's subjects,—namely, by all women, and by all men in whom habit has not stifled the original instinct of justice,—the Peers have not thrown it out on the second reading, but have only sent it up to a select committee, with orders to recast it until it shall affect only the very poor, and shall have no clear principle in it whatever. They refuse altogether to acknowledge that a married woman has as inherent a right to own property as a single one; they have resolved to continue the oppression under which marriage operates as a conviction for felony; they have decided that confiscation, so shocking a crime when committed by the state against the landlord, is no crime at all when committed by a husband against his wife; but just to quiet clamour, and get rid of 'painful cases,' they have agreed that if the wife, while a wife, contrives to earn anything, she may keep the control of it. In their abhorrence of innovation on

the marriage law, they have sanctioned an innovation on the property law of the most dangerous kind, have expressed their willingness to draw a distinction between income derived from industry and income derived from inheritance, thus establishing a precedent which for a century may be quoted to prove that in the eyes of the most conservative and the richest group of men in the world, the moral right to own extends only to the owner's earnings, the right to own inherited property being a mere creation of law. There are philosophers among us who will cordially welcome that admission, but whether the Peers will like the deductions from it which those philosophers will draw is a matter for their calmest consideration. The House of Commons certainly will not, and we earnestly trust that the members who have passed this Bill will allow it to drop sooner than admit any amendment whatever which interferes with its grand principle,—that a woman's right to her own, now fully admitted by the law, which gives to Miss Burdett Coutts exactly the rights it gives to her coachman, is no more forfeited by marriage than a man's. No change in the law short of that can be of any real value, for no change short of it will relieve women from their present position as lawful subjects of permitted plunder. Their property is either theirs or it is not. If it is not, the Legislature has no right to give it them; if it is, it has no right to take it away on the mere charge of being women."—*Spectator*, June 25, 1870.

The *Times* of June 22, commenting on the debate in the Lords, said, "It must be seen that the arguments of the opponents of the Bill really go the length of condemning the principles which have been developed in the course of generations for enlarging the rights of married women. If they are well-founded, the absolute rule of the Common Law ought never to have been modified. All that is sought now is the extension of accepted principles, so as to make them applicable to every rank of life and every kind of property or earning. There can be no doubt of the misery which is continually inflicted by the present law—a law which other nations are generally abandoning. Even the opponents of the measure admit that a remedy is necessary in the case of hard-working women married to drunken and profligate men; and there is at least a difference of opinion on the subject of applications to magistrates or judges. Lord Penzance thinks the practice successful; Lord Shaftesbury, we think with more reason, comes to an opposite conclusion. It must be evident that the machinery of protection orders in any form will only be resorted to in very extreme cases, where the husband is too bad to be endured; but a woman may go through infinite misery and be brought to ultimate beggary by a husband who keeps within tolerable bounds of extravagance and profligacy. The change in the law would at once give a better position to every woman, and not merely to the woman who is sufficiently provoked and sufficiently strong-minded to take an unusual and most hostile proceeding against her husband. It would not supersede marriage settlements, for the settlement is as much to protect the woman from herself as from her husband; but it would in thousands of households give greater moral influence to the wife, and tend to the happiness and prosperity of both her husband and herself. Indeed, the right of women to the possession of and disposal of property being admitted, we cannot believe, until it is shown by arguments stronger than any used in the House of Lords last night, that the ceremony of marriage ought to "act on a woman like a conviction for 'felony,' and reduce a person of independent fortune into a dependent on the bounty of another."—*Times*, June 22, 1874.

Yet, in spite of the strong force of public opinion in favour of the Bill as it passed the Commons, the House of Lords refused to accept Mr. Russell Gurney's Bill, and a select committee was appointed to remodel and amend the

Bill, which it did so effectually as to leave nothing of the original but the title, and one or two minor provisions, which fitted but awkwardly into an entirely new scheme.

The one merit of a measure so anomalous and absurd as the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, is that it establishes, once for all, the principle that married women ought, at least under some circumstances, to possess their own property; and it recognizes the absolute right of married women to their separate earnings and wages. This alone was so great an improvement upon the previous law, that the friends of the measure in the House of Commons agreed that they could not accept the responsibility of rejecting the measure, especially as the outbreak at that moment of the Franco-German war made it seem very uncertain when a chance of securing this relief would be offered them again.

The Married Women's Property Committee, however, though acquiescing in the passing of the Act, declined to accept it as even a temporary settlement of the question, and in their third annual report, wrote as follows:—"Your committee object to the Act, first and chiefly, because instead of recognizing the one only true principle, the principle of justice and freedom, it retains the unjust and barbarous rule of the common law, the confiscation of a woman's property by the act of marriage. It is no measure of protection which they require, but a measure of broad and simple justice between man and woman.

"But even as a measure of protection they object to the present Act, because it is wholly inadequate to the needs of the case; because it applies to the complicated rules and decisions of the equity courts respecting the separate estate of a wife to sums of a most trifling amount; because it frees a husband from liability for his wife's debts contracted before marriage, whilst retaining the principle of confiscation of all her property earned before marriage; because in most of its provisions relating to property it requires a formal process of application on the part of a woman as regards each separate portion of her estate; and because, though professedly designed to benefit the poorest class of women, it is unintelligible without the aid of a lawyer."

The further progress of events has painfully convinced them that no more successful instance can be opposed to a proposal for genuine reform, than some small apparent concession to the demand, and has justified the sagacity of one of the best friends of women, who wrote at this crisis: "I hear that their Lordships are about to cut down the Wives' Property Bill to the most meagre dimensions, making it at best but a Bill for the Protection of Wages.

"If this is true, I feel convinced that the wisest course for your friends in the House of Commons will be to reject it, with a very clear intimation that the measure of justice asked for, and now affirmed twice by large majorities in the House of Commons, will not be abated as time runs on. Mr. Gurney's Bill embodies a very important principle, and would effect a great reform in our law; whereas the other Bill will merely remedy, if it does remedy, a single symptom of the disorder that lies at the root of all. If, however, any Act is passed it will be pretended that the question has been settled; that a satisfactory compromise was come to which ought not to be disturbed, and no further; and our life is so full of business that poor overstrained brains will gladly accept such excuses as these for inaction.

"There is no opportunity for reforming vicious principles so good as when they blossom out into great social scandals; and it is an act not of petulance but of simple prudence, to reject a quack remedy which affects only the external surface, and to insist on having no operation performed which does not go to the root of the matter."

In the session of 1872, Mr. Staveley Hill, one of the most earnest opponents of Mr. Russell Gurney's Bill, introduced a Bill to amend the Married Women's Property Act of 1870. He proposed to do away with the unjust anomaly created by section 12 of that Act, by which, if a woman possessing property and owing money, married without a settlement, her property passed to her husband, but her liability fell to the ground.

Had Mr. Gurney's Bill become law, a woman who married would have retained her liability for her own debts; but then she would have kept her own property to pay them with. Mr. Hill's Bill would have imposed upon the husband joint liability with the wife for her debts to the extent of the property he had taken from her by his marriage. It would thus have protected the creditors of a woman who married whilst in debt, but it would have left unprotected the creditors of a woman carrying on a business separately from her husband.

Feeling the unsatisfactory character of the remedy proposed by Mr. Staveley Hill, the Married Women's Property Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution: "That the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 is radically unsound in principle, and that the introduction by Mr. Staveley Hill of a Bill to amend one of the most glaring anomalies created by that Act, offers a favourable occasion for moving the legislature to remedy the evil complained of, together with all other hardships of the existing law, by passing a comprehensive measure annexing to all women the same rights and liabilities as to property and contract as appertain by law to men." Mr. Russell Gurney being absent in America, the Committee applied to Mr. J. Hinde Palmer, who placed on the notice paper of the House of Commons notice of motion on the second reading of the Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill, that it be read a second time that day three months. The placing of this notice on the paper effectually prevented the further progress of Mr. Hill's Bill. By a rule of the House of Commons, no opposed business can be taken after certain hours, and at that late period of the session every day was so fully occupied that no fresh business put on the paper could be reached within the time during which opposed bills might come on. Had Mr. Hill's Bill been unopposed it might have slipped through its various stages at the end of the afternoon sitting, or in the small hours of the morning, and the opportunity for amending the law in a satisfactory manner, afforded by the attention now given to its most glaring defects, might have been lost. Mr. Hinde Palmer gave notice before the prorogation of Parliament that he would, the next session, move for leave to bring in a Bill on the subject. Accordingly a Bill, based on the principle of that which received the sanction of the House of Commons in 1870, but with such modifications in detail as were rendered necessary by the passing of the Act of that session, was read a first time on the 7th February, 1873, and the second reading was fixed for February 19. Meanwhile Mr. Staveley Hill re-introduced the Bill which stood in his name in 1872, and this was read a second time on February 12. This is the Bill known as the Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill, No. 2. The second reading of the Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill, No. 1, was moved on February 19, by Mr. J. Hinde Palmer, and supported by Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. J. G. Shaw-Lefevre, Mr. W. Fowler, Mr. S. S. Dickinson, Lord Claude Hamilton, and the Attorney-General. It was opposed by Mr. G. B. Gregory, Mr. Lopes, Mr. Bourke, Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Muntz, and Mr. Raikes, but was carried on a division by 124 votes against 103; majority, 21. The further progress of the measure was arrested by various hindrances until a late period of the session, when Mr. Hinde Palmer succeeded in getting the Bill into committee. But the forms of the House, and the rule with regard to opposed busi-

ness, were so successfully used by the opponents of the measure, that they prevented the passing of the Bill through committee until so late a period of the session that further progress was impossible. The following summary shows the Parliamentary history of the measure during the session:—

"Read a Second Time: February 19—Ayes, 124; noes, 103.

"Counted Out: February 21st*, March 20th and 25th, April 4th, May 2nd, and June 24th.

"Progress Reported: March 28th, April 25th, and May 5th.

"Postponed because of the Half-past Twelve o'clock Rule: March 4th†, March 11th and 21st; April 7th, 21st, and 22nd; May 9th, 23rd, and 26th; June 5th and 13th; and July 15th, 22nd, 24th, and 28th.

"Other Postponements: March 13th (ministerial crisis); Wednesdays, May 14th and 21st, June 25th, July 23rd, and August 1st.

"Your committee desire to call attention to the significant fact that the Bill has been six times postponed by a 'count-out.' This indifference to the fate of a measure affecting the property and personal rights of that half of the people which is unrepresented in Parliament illustrates the difficulty of obtaining the attention of members to the interests of a class which has no voice in their election."

In 1869 and 1870 certain cases of flagrant wrong perpetrated with the sanction of the law, had aroused public sympathy and quickened the conscience of the House of Commons. But such a motive-power was soon expended. Women's wrongs, except they have taken the form of a gross and palpable injury, retain little hold on the imagination of a body of men, elected by men, and responsible to men. In consequence of this lack of intelligent sympathy with women, the House of Commons fails to recognize any urgency of duty to women, least of all, when conscience has again been lulled to sleep by the comfortable notion that "something has been done."

Thus it happened that a measure, cordially accepted by the House in 1870, was received with indifference in 1873 by the majority of members; and although some earnest friends of justice to women are to be found in the House of Commons, these proved too few to save the Bill from the repeated ignominy of a "count-out."

To these friends, and in particular to Mr. Hinde Palmer, the thanks of every woman are due, though only those who know the tedious labour of pressing on a Bill which has no strong support in the House can fully appreciate the sacrifices involved in being present early and late on every occasion on which the Bill could be brought forward.

Mr. Hinde Palmer had announced his intention of re-introducing the Bill early next session, and Mr. Russell Gurney had promised his valuable help in the House of Commons. But the general election, which has taken us at unawares, makes it now impossible to say more than that such a Bill will be introduced into the House of Commons early in the forthcoming session of the new Parliament.

In order to secure full consideration by the new Parliament of this measure of justice to women, the committee earnestly entreat all friends of this reform to assist them *at once*:—

I. By questioning (if possible, in public meeting) all candidates for a seat in Parliament, and by writing letters asking their support.

II. By bringing under the notice of parliamentary candidates, or of this committee, cases of hardship, caused by the

* On this day Mr. Lopes gave notice that, on going into committee, he would move the rejection of the Bill.

† On this day, a few minutes before the Bill should have come on, the House agreed that no "opposed" business should be discussed after half-past twelve o'clock. Hence these repeated postponements.

existing law, which have come under their personal observation.

III. By discussing the question in local newspapers.

IV. By establishing local committees, and entering into correspondence with the executive committee.

V. By signing and promoting petitions praying for this amendment of the law.

VI. By contributing to the funds of the committee.

All persons willing to help are requested to communicate at once with the secretary, Elizabeth C. Wolstenholme, 27, Great George-street, London, S.W.

January 26th, 1874.

THE LEGAL LIABILITIES OF MARRIED WOMEN AS TRADERS.

IMPORTANT DECISION IN THE MANCHESTER COUNTY COURT.

(Before Mr. J. A. Russell, Q.C., Judge.)

McGOVERN v. HINKEY.—The plaintiff, John M. Govern, haberdasher, Union-street, Manchester, sued the defendant, Margaret Hinkey, draper, 95, Lord-street, Southport, for a sum of £15. 12s. the balance of a debt of £35, which she had contracted with the plaintiff, and the remainder of which she had paid in instalments.

Mr. W. Mann, who appeared for the plaintiff, said the defendant was a married woman, living apart from her husband, supporting and maintaining herself by her own industry, and receiving no assistance from her husband, whom she had not seen for five years. The question which would arise in the case was whether she was liable for debts apart from her husband. She was carrying on a separate business of her own in Southport, and he might take it that she was carrying on that business in accordance with the first section of the Married Women's Property Act, and that all the property which she had become entitled to since she had been carrying on the business separately would be her separate property, held for her separate use, independently of her husband. She was, therefore, clearly possessed of property independently of her husband, and the 11th section of the Married Women's Property Act gave her the power to sue for any debts that might be owing to her in respect of that property. There was certainly no section in the Act imposing on a wife a liability to be sued in her own name, but he suggested that the fact of the Act having vested property separately in her and given her the exclusive control over it, implied a liability in her to pay debts in respect of that property or the business by which she acquired it. Taking it as a matter of contract, he contended that the fact of a husband allowing a wife to carry on business separate and apart from him impliedly conferred upon her a power to contract debts in her own name. It was clear that in equity a married woman might bind her separate estate by a contract, and it was a question whether she had not power to do so by law. This property in her business was vested in the defendant, and it was only a reasonable inference that a wife should be enabled to bind her separate estate by a contract.

Mr. Smith (of the firm of Smith and Boyer) argued that as far as the Married Women's Property Act was concerned, there was no implied liability such as that contended for, because if there had been any intention to set aside a long-established principle of law, there would have been an expressed provision to that effect. There was no question of separate estate in this case, and no pretence that the wife had pledged her separate estate.

The Judge said he was not aware that this question had ever been raised before. The defendant was a married woman,

living separately from her husband, and carrying on business separately from him, and the goods in respect of which she was sued were goods supplied to her in the way of her trade. Certain payments had been made on account of these goods, and she was now sued for the balance remaining due. In answer to the claim the defendant set up the plea of coverture, and the question was whether that plea was a good defence. It was perfectly clear that in common law it would be a good defence, for a married woman had no power to contract such a debt as that in question by the common law. But it was suggested that under the Married Women's Property Act, sections 1 and 11, the liability contended for in the present case was imposed upon a married woman, not expressly, but by implication. From the language of the 1st section it struck him that it was clearly enabling. It gave a married woman the power to acquire property for her separate use, and it did not impose any liability on her that she was not subject to before. By the 11th section a married woman was empowered to maintain an action in her own name to recover earnings or other property declared by the Act to be her separate property. That was clearly an enabling enactment, and such being the case the question was whether he was to infer that not only had this ability been created, but that a liability had been likewise imposed. Inasmuch as the statute did not impose any liability in respect to the property mentioned in sections 1 and 11, the liability of the woman stood just as it did at common law. But did not the statute itself show that, in expressly making her, in section 12, liable in respect to debts contracted before marriage. He could not, therefore, go beyond the letter or the spirit of the Act, which was clearly enabling to a woman, but not rendering her subject to any liability except such as was expressly imposed upon her. He thought the liability of the defendant stood just as it did in common law, and she was not, therefore, liable in this action. He dismissed the case.

Mr. Smith, on behalf of the defendant, applied for costs, which were granted.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN WYOMING.

Governor Campbell, of Wyoming, in his message to the third Legislative Assembly of Wyoming Territory, makes the following satisfactory statement in reference to the practical working of woman suffrage there:—"The experiment of granting woman a voice in the government, which was inaugurated, for the first time in the history of our country, by the first Legislative Assembly of Wyoming, has now been tried for four years. I have heretofore taken occasion to express my views in regard to the wisdom and justice of this measure, and my conviction that its adoption had been attended only by good results. Two years more of observation of the practical working of the system have only served to deepen my conviction that what we in this territory have done, has been well done, and that our system of impartial suffrage is an unqualified success." *Woman's Journal* (Boston, U.S.).

A LADY APPOINTED ON A DISPENSARY COMMITTEE.—At the weekly meeting of the Thurles Board of Guardians, held on November 11th, George Ryan, Esq., D.L., chairman, the following resolution was unanimously adopted—proposed by the chairman, seconded by Colonel Knox, J.P.: "Resolved, that Miss Pennella Lenigan, of Castlefogarty, be placed on the list of members of the Holycross Dispensary Committee, in room of her father, the late James Lenigan, Esq., D.L."—*Irish Times*.

MEMORIALS TO MR. GLADSTONE AND MR. DISRAELI.

The following Memorials are in course of signature by women in various parts of the country. Friends are earnestly exhorted to aid in the work of collecting signatures. In order to make the Memorials truly national it is necessary that a large number of places in all parts of the United Kingdom should be represented, and that as many signatures as possible should be obtained.

To the Right Honourable WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P., First Lord of Her Majesty's Treasury.

Sir,—

We, the undersigned women of Great Britain and Ireland, respectfully urge on your attention the claim of women who are householders, ratepayers, and owners of property to the exercise of the electoral franchise annexed by law to the qualification which they possess.

We understand that a measure dealing with the conditions of the franchise will shortly be introduced in Parliament, and we submit that no measure can secure adequate representation for the whole people that does not provide for the removal of the statutory disability which precludes women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of members of Parliament.

We are mindful of the circumstance that you have in your place in Parliament stated that there are various important particulars in which women obtain much less than justice under social arrangements, and that since those words were uttered attempts have been made to amend the law in some of these particulars, which attempts have failed either through neglect or opposition. In the same speech you stated that there was a presumptive ground for some change in the law, and that in many cases, such as in the competition for farms, women suffer in a very definite manner for want of the qualification to vote. You stated also that if it should be found possible to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, the man who should attain that object, and should see his purpose carried onward to its consequences in a more just arrangement of the provisions of other laws bearing upon the condition and welfare of women, would be a real benefactor to his country.

We believe that these conditions are exactly fulfilled by the Bill which has been introduced by Mr. Jacob Bright. This Bill is approved and accepted by the most thoughtful and earnest women of the country as a satisfactory solution of the problem how best to bring the special interest and the special knowledge of women to bear in influencing the Legislature, and has been petitioned for, session after session, by many hundreds of thousands of persons.

The Bill has secured an increased support each year that it has been submitted to Parliament, and has received more votes than have been given for any measure which has not been adopted by one or the other of the great parties in the State. No other proposal for the reform of the representation has been so long before Parliament, or has received such extended support. It appears, therefore, to have an equal if not a prior claim for acceptance to that of any other Bill for extending the application of the principle of household suffrage.

We, therefore, earnestly beg that you will on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, give your assent to the Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women, and exert your influence in order to secure its passing into law.

To the Right Honourable BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P.

Sir,—

We, the undersigned women of Great Britain and Ireland, desire to offer you our earnest thanks for the favourable reply you were pleased to give to our Memorial of last year, and for your vote in the House of Commons in favour of the Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women.

We beg to urge on your attention the prospect of a Bill being introduced to assimilate the county with the borough franchise, and the injustice that would be done were the claims of women householders and ratepayers set aside in any future measure dealing with the conditions of the Parliamentary suffrage.

We invoke your aid to avert this injustice, and to secure the boon of representative and constitutional government. We have a grateful remembrance of the fact that you were the first member of the House of Commons to declare within its walls your assent to the justice of the claim of women to representation, and we hold that it would be a fitting and graceful conclusion that you, who were a pioneer of our cause, should bring, as we believe that you have power to bring, such aid as would crown it with success.

We, therefore, respectfully and earnestly entreat you to give your support and influence as leader of the Conservative party, to the measures proposed by Mr. Jacob Bright in the House of Commons for removing the electoral disabilities of women.

The Memorials to be signed by women only, with full

Christian and Surname. Both Memorials may be signed by the same person. Women may sign them who have already signed the petition to the House of Commons, and those who sign them may afterwards sign the Parliamentary petition. Forms for signature will be forwarded by post on application by letter to Miss Becker, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester. As the presentation should take place before Easter, and it will occupy some time to collect and arrange them, the sheets when signed should be returned to Miss Becker, at the above address, as soon as possible.

MR. GLADSTONE AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The following letter has been received in reply to a memorial addressed to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., on Dec. 23, asking him to receive a deputation on the subject of the Electoral Disabilities of Women, and signed by the secretaries of the Central, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, West of England, and Edinburgh and Belfast Women's Suffrage Committees:—"10, Downing-street, Whitehall, December 25, 1873. Madam,—Mr. Gladstone desires me to acknowledge the receipt of a letter signed by yourself and others, and received on the 24th inst., and to state that he will be happy to give his attention to any written communication from the National Society for Women's Suffrage, but that he regrets that he is unable to undertake to receive a deputation for the oral discussion of the subject in question.—I am, madam, your obedient servant, W. B. GURDON. Mrs. Emma A. Paterson, Central Committee."

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE NOVEMBER 20th, 1873.

	£	s.	d.
Miss Jex Blake	5	0	0
Paisley Committee	3	3	0
Misses Kippex	2	10	0
Miss Dick Lauder	2	0	0
Mrs. Thorne	1	1	0
Mr. J. S. Oliver	1	1	0
Mrs. Dodd	1	0	0
Friend per Mrs. McLaren	1	0	0
Mrs. J. Wellstood	1	0	0
Mrs. S. Wellstood	1	0	0
Mrs. Colquhoun	1	0	0
Friend per Mrs. Ord	1	0	0
Mrs. Wigham	1	0	0
Mr. S. Raleigh	1	0	0
Collected by Mrs. Henderson, Leith	1	0	0
Messrs. Nelson & Sons	1	0	0
Mr. D. Greig	1	0	0
Mr. Josiah Livingstone	0	10	0
Mrs. A. Peters	0	10	0
Mr. and Mrs. Low	0	10	0
Miss Wigham	0	10	0
Collected at Lochgilphead	0	10	0
H. Armour & Co.	0	10	2
Mr. J. S. Laurie	0	10	0
Mrs. Murray	0	5	0
Mrs. Panter	0	3	6
Miss Freyer	0	2	6
Mrs. Marr	0	2	6
Mrs. Kerr	0	2	6
Mrs. J. Low	0	2	0

£30 3 2

While gratefully acknowledging past aid, the Committee earnestly appeal to their friends for funds.

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

PETITION! PETITION! PETITION!
 Friends of Women's Suffrage are earnestly exhorted to aid with the work of collecting signatures for the petitions to be presented on the opening of the new Parliament. Written petitions ready for signature will be supplied on application to Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING JANUARY, 1874.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Gell	5	0	0
Mrs. Praed	2	0	0
Mrs. Winkworth	2	0	0
Mr. A. Trevelyan	2	0	0
Miss Edmunds	2	0	0
Mr. H. Nicol	1	1	0
Miss Armstrong	1	1	0
Mr. J. Hinde Palmer	1	1	0
Prof. F. W. Newman	1	1	0
Mrs. Helen Bright-Clark	1	1	0
Mrs. Layton	1	0	0
Mrs. Stephenson	0	10	0
Mr. W. Sherman (San Francisco)	0	10	0
A Friend, per Mr. Stephenson	0	5	0
Mrs. Leech	0	5	0
Mr. F. Hardcastle	0	5	0
Miss Tootal	0	5	0
Misses Oxley	0	5	0
"A. A." per Miss F. A. Trevor	0	5	0
Mrs. B. Blackburn	0	2	6
Total	£20	18	6

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, Treasurer.
 107, Upper Brook-street, Manchester.

The work in connection with the general election has caused a sudden and great increase in the expenses of the committee, and they earnestly request donations to enable them to perform adequately the onerous duties devolving on them.

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.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH OF NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED SINCE JUNE, 1873.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Pennington	3	8	6
Mrs. Alfred Osler	1	1	0
Mr. J. E. Baker	1	0	0
Mrs. E. Sturge	1	0	0
Mrs. Southall	0	10	0
Mrs. Smith	0	10	0
Mrs. Blades	0	10	0
Mrs. W. Kenrick	0	10	0
Mr. Martineau	0	10	0
Mrs. Lewis	0	7	6
Mrs. Bartleet	0	5	0
Mrs. Ashford	0	5	0
Mrs. Crosskey	0	5	0
Mr. T. V. Gardner	0	5	0
Mrs. Feast (deceased)	0	5	0
Mrs. Gore	0	5	0
Mrs. Laxelly	0	2	6
Miss Steadman	0	2	6
Mrs. Evans	0	2	6
Total	£11	4	6

Mrs. ASHFORD, Treasurer.
 4, Broad Street Corner, Birmingham.

Ten of the masters of Marlborough College, including the head master, Rev. Dr. Farrar, F.R.S., have joined the Bristol and West of England Branch of the Women's Suffrage Society, since the meeting held in that town last December.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—The annual general meeting of members and friends of the society will be held in the Victoria Rooms, Clifton, on Monday, February 2nd, 1874. The Rev. J. W. Caldicott, M.A., will preside. Miss Liliash Ashworth and Miss Spender, Bath; Miss Lydia Becker, Manchester; the Right Hon. Sir Walter Crofton, Sholto Vere Hare, Esq., Professor F. W. Newman, Killigrew Wait, Esq., Mark Whitworth, Esq., and others, are expected to take part in the Meeting.

Tickets for reserved seats one shilling each, may be obtained from the Secretary, at the office, 53, Park Street; and from R. W. Bingham, Broad Street, Bristol, and (Branch) 26, Triangle, Clifton Back of the hall, free.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE DECEMBER 16th, 1873.

	£	s.	d.
F. B. per Mrs. R. L. Carpenter	2	0	0
Mrs. Hunt	1	1	0
T. W. Dunn, M.A.	1	1	0
Miss M. Price	1	1	0
Mrs. W. H. Thomas	1	0	0
Rev. E. Harris, M.A.	1	0	0
Mrs. R. L. Carpenter	1	0	0
Mrs. J. Robberds	1	0	0
Miss Briggs	1	0	0
Mrs. Griffith	1	0	0
Mr. Tribe	0	10	6
A Friend	0	10	0
E. B. per Mrs. R. L. C.	0	10	0
Mr. W. Weaver (two years)	0	10	0
Mrs. W. Colfox	0	10	0
Miss M. Gibson (two years)	0	10	0
Miss G. Stephens	0	10	0
Mr. Weir	0	10	0
Mrs. March	0	10	0
Dr. Eliza Walker	0	10	0
Miss Julia Anthony	0	5	0
Mrs. Colman	0	5	0
Miss Bowling	0	5	0
Mrs. Balkwill	0	5	0
Miss Balkwill	0	5	0
Miss Gibson	0	5	0
Mrs. Reynolds	0	5	0
Miss Wansey	0	5	0
Miss Hincks	0	5	0
Mr. Beattie	0	5	0
Mrs. T. Neild	0	5	0
Mr. Howell Davies	0	5	0
Mrs. Davies	0	5	0
Mrs. Rendall	0	5	0
T. Barnwell, M.A.	0	5	0
Rev. Dr. Farrar, F.R.S.	0	5	0
J. B. Gilmore, B.A.	0	5	0
H. B. Horner, M.A.	0	5	0
E. W. Lloyd, M.A.	0	5	0
W. H. Macdonald, M.A.	0	5	0
W. L. Mullins, M.A.	0	5	0
C. Sankey, B.A.	0	5	0
Rev. J. S. Thomas, M.A.	0	5	0
F. Storr, B.A.	0	5	0
Mrs. C. G. Green	0	5	0
Miss A. Jones	0	5	0
Miss Nunan	0	5	0
Miss L. F. March Phillipps	0	5	0
Mrs. Julius Smith	0	5	0
Mrs. Edward Higginson	0	5	0
Miss R. Thomas	0	5	0
Mrs. S. Reid	0	5	0
Total	£24	3	6

ANNE WESTLAND, Secretary.
 Office: 53, Park Street, Bristol.


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

DIPLOMA OF MERIT, VIENNA EXHIBITION, 1873.

GOODALL'S BAKING POWDER.

THE BEST PENNY PACKET IN THE WORLD

For making delicious Bread, Puddings, Pastry, &c., with half the usual quantity of Butter, Lard, or Eggs.



Sold by Druggists, Grocers, and Oilmen, in 1d. Packets, 6d., 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. Tins.

PROPRIETORS:
GOODALL, BACKHOUSE, & CO.,
 Leeds.

DIPLOMA OF MERIT, VIENNA EXHIBITION, 1873.

THE CELEBRATED YORKSHIRE RELISH.

The most delicious and cheapest Sauce in the world.

672,192 Bottles Sold in one Month (August, 1872).

Sold by Grocers, Druggists, and Oilmen, in bottles, at 6d., 1s., and 2s. each.

MANUFACTURERS:
GOODALL, BACKHOUSE, & CO.,
 Leeds.

DIPLOMA OF MERIT, VIENNA EXHIBITION, 1873.

GOODALL'S QUININE WINE

Is an invaluable and agreeable Stomachic to all suffering from General Debility, Indigestion, Nervousness, and Loss of Appetite, and acknowledged to be THE BEST AND CHEAPEST TONIC YET INTRODUCED TO THE PUBLIC.

Recommended for its purity by the *Food Journal*, *Anti-Adulteration Review*, *The Lancet*, *Arthur Hill Hassall, M.D., &c., &c.*

Sold by Grocers, Chemists, &c., in large bottles at 1s. and 2s. each.

PREPARED BY
GOODALL, BACKHOUSE, & CO.,
 Leeds.

PETITIONS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

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

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

The humble Petition of the undersigned

SHEWETH,
 That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of Members of Parliament, is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of municipal, parochial, and all other representative governments.
 Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will pass the Bill entitled "A Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women."
 And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

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

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

WHY WOMEN DESIRE THE FRANCHISE.—By Miss FRANCES POWER COBBE. Price 1d.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. MILL'S "SUBJECTION OF WOMEN." Price 1d.

TOWLE'S CHLORODYNE
 For giving IMMEDIATE RELIEF in Coughs, Consumption, Asthma, Bronchitis, Spasms. Price 1/4, 2/9, and 4/6, of Chemists; also
TOWLE'S CHLORODYNE LOZENGES
TOWLE'S CHLORODYNE JUJUBES.
TOWLE,
 Chlorodyne Manufact., Manchester.

Just Published.
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