

396.11 (41) (06)

With Mrs. McLaren's kind regards.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Edinburgh National

Society for Women's Suffrage.

APRIL 1893.



EDINBURGH:

THE DARIEN PRESS, BRISTO PLACE

1893.

WOMEN'S SERVICE LIBRARY
29 MARSHAM STREET
WESTMINSTER

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

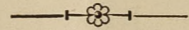
Edinburgh National
Society for Women's Suffrage.

APRIL 1893.



EDINBURGH:
THE DARIEN PRESS, BRISTO PLACE
1893.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.



MRS M'LAREN, Newington House, *President.*

Miss BURTON, Liberton Bank.
Miss FORBES, Drydenbank, Loanhead.
Miss DORA FOSTER, 1 Moredun Crescent.
Mrs HODGSON, Canaan Lodge, Canaan Lane.
Miss HUNTER, 5 Great Stuart Street.
Mrs JARVIS, Elm Cottage, Kirkliston.
Miss EDITH JOHNSTON, 19A Duke Street.
Miss LEES, 8 Wemyss Place.
Miss S. E. S. MAIR, 5 Chester Street.
Miss MARTIN, Clapham, London.
Miss MATHESON, Coates Crescent.
Mrs MILLER MORISON, 3 Douglas Crescent.
Dr AGNES M'LAREN, Bruntsfield Lodge.
Mrs NICHOL, Huntly Lodge.
Mrs ORD of Muirhouselaw.
Mrs PATERSON, 17 Dean Terrace.
Mrs ROBERT PRINGLE, 18 Rutland Square.
Miss SIMPSON, Carlyle House, Haddington.
Miss RAMSAY SMITH, 9 Bruntsfield Crescent.
Miss ELIZA C. STEVENSON, 13 Randolph Crescent.
Miss LOUISA STEVENSON, 13 Randolph Crescent.
Mrs LANG TODD, 50 Great King Street.
Miss URQUHART, 5 St Colme Street.
Mrs WELLSTOOD, 21 Salisbury Road.
Miss WRIGHT, 4 Glengyle Terrace.

Miss A. CRAIG, 6 Carlton Street,
Miss METHVEN, 25 Great King Street, } *Hon. Treasurers.*

Miss WIGHAM, 5 South Gray Street,
Miss E. S. KIRKLAND, 13 Raeburn Place, } *Secretaries.*

**This Society consists of all friendly to its objects, and
who subscribe to its Funds.**

EDINBURGH

National Society for Women's Suffrage.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of this Society was held at Newington House, on 5th April 1893. Among those present were:—Mrs M'Laren, President of the Society, who occupied the chair; Rev. Professor Calderwood, Colonel and Mrs Davidson, Rev. George Jackson, Miss Wigham, Miss S. E. S. Mair, Miss Louisa Stevenson, Miss Flora Stevenson, Mrs Miller Morison, Rev. Mr Morison, Rev. John Baird, Miss Lees, Mrs Gillies, Miss Dora Foster, Miss MacBean, Mrs Whyte, Miss A. Craig, Miss Methven, Mr Thomas Thin, Miss Urquhart, Mr Duncan M'Laren, Miss Darling, Miss E. S. Kirkland.

Miss WIGHAM intimated apologies for absence, among others, from—Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P.; Mr Herbert Paul, M.P.; Countess Alice Kearney, Miss Florence Baggart, Rev. Dr Cameron Lees, Rev. Dr MacGregor, Rev. Dr Whyte, Rev. Dr Matheson, Miss Dick Lauder, Bailie Walcot, Rev. Mr Milligan, Bailie Gulland, Professor and Mrs Copland, &c. &c.

Miss WIGHAM then read the Report as follows:—

“In once more winding up our annual review, we have not much to report for the year just passed of our independent working as a Committee towards the object of our Association, because now the Women's Suffrage question seems borne along by so many other influences,—influences which we ourselves, in the years of the past, have been instrumental in promoting.

“The Women's Liberal Associations, the Conservative Associations, the Temperance organisations, now recognise that Women's Suffrage is an important agency in carrying on their several works, and so the sound principle comes to the front and is upheld.

“Nevertheless, while the legal point has not been attained, it is for us to work and be vigilant. With this conviction, we have

watched the various movements which have affected our question, and have taken opportunities wherever they have occurred of promoting Women's Suffrage.

"In the beginning of the year we sent letters to the friendly Members of Parliament, begging them to be in their places on the 17th of April, when the Bill for the "Enfranchisement of Women" was to be brought before the House of Commons. We also adopted memorials and other methods, in conjunction with kindred societies, to advance the measure.

"The Bill was brought in on the 17th of April, and was ably supported by Mr Rollit, Mr Walter M'Laren, the Hon. A. J. Balfour, and others; and yet it was rejected by a majority of 23.

"Although thus defeated, we could not but accept this small majority in the light of a triumphant victory when we consider the many efforts used against it. The letter from Mr Gladstone, which had preceded it, declaring his hostility to Women's Suffrage, though it might influence some prejudicially, had probably the effect of stimulating votes *for* the Bill in the House, and outside it met with cold reception from many of his own friends.

"It was most ably replied to by Mrs M'Laren and Mrs Gillies, members of our Society; and many other talented argumentative answers were also published, and the discussion was doubtless useful. Petitions were sent in support of the Bill from eleven Town Councils of Scotland, also from the Convention of Royal Burghs. An address of thanks was sent to those Members who supported it in the House.

"A Bill was this year again before Parliament, under the charge of Mr Charles M'Laren, backed by Mr Courtney, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Viscount Wolmer, Mr Webb, Mr Carvell Williams, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr James Stuart, Sir Albert Rollit, and Mr Jebb; and we are confident that whatever could be done was done to promote the success of the measure.

"The Bill was balloted for the second place on the 10th of March, but the discussion on the previous question for that day was so spun out, that again the interests of women were pushed aside, and the Bill for Women's Suffrage once more shelved.

"At the time of the general election, the candidates for election were written to or interviewed on the subject, and the new House of Commons largely declared in favour of Women's Suffrage, and the question has not been ignored when the municipal elections occur. We only regret that women are not found more generally willing to exercise this and other franchises to which they are already entitled,

"The justice of the legal right of women to representation has been maintained by the New York Legislature, which has passed a Bill, by 70 to 34, declaring that every citizen, irrespective of sex, shall be entitled to vote in all elections, and that *any attempt to disqualify on the ground of sex shall be considered illegal*. The action of the New Zealand Legislature had also declared in favour of this justice, and the provisions were most favourable for convenient registration of women's votes. Only by a technical difficulty and a small majority the Bill failed of becoming law.

"In the meantime, the representative qualification of women is increasingly recognised in many directions, as inspectors of the poor, inspectors of parks, members of school boards, &c. &c.

"In Edinburgh we have eight women managers on parochial boards, while in England there are 126 women who are poor law guardians. We much regret that no other Scotch parishes have women managers, for there can scarcely be a more important or legitimate work for women than to care for the poor, so many of whom are women and children, who need the intelligent sympathy of guardians, and this can scarcely be accorded by men.

"The appointment of even two women as inspectors of factories is an opening in the right direction, and will, we hope, be extended.

"The efforts of women for their own political advancement is manifested by their various organisations,—'Women's Industrial Defence Committee,' 'Women's Employment Society,' 'British Women's Emigration Society,' 'Women's Friendly Societies,' 'Women's Insurance Associations,' 'Women's Labour League,' 'Scottish Women's Benefit Society,' &c. &c.

"The Conference of women workers, held in Bristol in November last, brought the various subjects of women's union very forcibly forward.

"The admission of women students to the classes in the Faculty of Arts in the Edinburgh University is a marked fact, and the favourable reception of these matriculated lady students is a very satisfactory token of general advancement in civilisation.

"The degrees obtained by women in the various English collegiate institutions is very remarkable; also, that out of ten scholarships awarded by the Royal University of Ireland, three have been gained by girls. But tokens of the collateral progress of women are too numerous to be recorded in this brief Report; they have, however, a direct bearing on the subject of Women's Suffrage, and as a preparation for the extended powers to which they are entitled, and which we are seeking, and which we know will eventually be

granted, as the municipal and other suffrages have already been granted.

“Preparations are being made to have women’s work in various departments largely represented at the Chicago Exhibition, and we may hope that an impetus will thus be given to women’s social and political progress.

“Since we last met here two of the members of our Committee have passed away—Mrs Garrett Fisher and Mrs Macqueen, the latter one of the earliest and most steadfast members of our Association, which has now been in existence for twenty-five years. This long period may seem discouraging, but we remember many reforms which have not been accomplished without long years of struggle; and while we can point to these, we do not believe that any can show forth so large a number of collateral benefits as have gathered round our course, and marked our progress towards placing women in that position, ‘which’ (to quote the words of our President), ‘if unfettered by unjust laws, women are capable of occupying, and which their aptitude for work shows they were intended to share—helpmeets to men in public as well as in private life,’ and consequently in efforts for the moral and social well-being of our land.

“It will be observed that a change has been made in the office of our Treasurer. We wish to accord to Miss Simpson our thanks for her long-continued and faithful service in connection with our Association.

“We have pleasure in giving the name of Miss Methven, of 25 Great King Street, whom we have appointed her successor, and who has kindly accepted the appointment to this office.”

Miss WIGHAM then read the Treasurer’s Statement, and names of proposed Committee, and added an affectionate tribute to those who had been with the Association since its commencement, and whose earnest work and friendship had bound them closely together. She hoped that some of these original members, with their honoured President, might be permitted to see the satisfactory conclusion of their work.

Mrs M’LAREN, in moving the adoption of the Report, said:—Before proceeding to business, allow me to say how pleased I am to welcome this large gathering, who have so kindly responded to the invitations sent out for this our annual meeting of “The Edinburgh National Society for Women’s Suffrage.”

Two years ago I hardly thought I should be permitted to have another annual gathering in this room. Last year we held no meeting, owing to the heavy cloud of sickness which hung over our city,

and which has caused us to mourn the loss of some faithful and much loved friends of this cause.

I have much pleasure in moving the adoption of the Report, which embraces so admirably the latest events connected with our women’s movements. If there were such a profession as “writer of Reports,” our dear Secretary, Miss Wigham, would stand at the head of it. I have heard her say she has been writing Reports ever since she was twenty years of age. Few can tell of a life so long devoted to good causes. I remember her Annual Reports of the Anti-Slavery Society thirty to forty years ago. If these Reports could be bound together, they would form a valuable history of the great anti-slavery struggle. Our work is a continuation of that struggle, for where the rights of citizenship are denied there is a remnant of slavery. There is one part of that excellent Report which might have been amplified. It might have told how our Women’s Suffrage Bill was not brought on as it ought to have been on the 8th of March. There was a Bill which stood before it—viz., “The Rating of Machinery Bill.” That Bill needed little to be said about it, as it had been discussed and voted upon in the former Parliament. The members did not care to hear about it, and there was a very thin House. There was difficulty in bringing up speakers. Still, one member after another was brought up, and the debate dragged its slow length along until it was past the hour when the Suffrage Bill could come on. This is the way the Liberals treated us women.

It surprises me how any woman can be so biassed by party spirit as to work for any party under the condition that they must put their own emancipation question—the Women’s Suffrage question—in an obscure part of their programme, like the typical poor relation in a rich household.

The Report gives almost a startling array of subjects of deep importance taken up by women. I sometimes think that there was a deeper meaning in the old nursery rhyme than we once supposed, when the old woman with her broomstick ascended so high, as she said, “to sweep the cobwebs off the sky,” promising “to be back again by and bye.” It seemed to be hidden from her, as it happily is from all reformers, to know the magnitude of the work she had undertaken, and how long-enduring her task would be,—the ages had for so long woven their thick cobwebs, obscuring the brightness of God’s clear sky and His truth. The darkness fell most heavily with its appalling effects upon women, and the mission seems to be given to women, through faith and prayer and work, to uplift those clouds of darkness and chase them away. It has often needed the old woman’s courage, and to be raised above the earth and all earthly

considerations, to perform the work that has fallen to their lot. I doubt if there be any mind in which old custom has not woven its cobwebs so as to hide some truths. Mr Gladstone's exalted and wonderful intellect is not free from them; but we do not despair of brushing even these away, which so strangely obstruct his view when women's claims come before him. Fresh life is, however, reaching the Treasury bench. Sir W. Harcourt, who has been one of our most outspoken enemies, after Sir H. James and Mr Labouchere, in introducing his "Local Veto Bill," said very emphatically that women could vote on that question. I fancied I heard the tones of his voice all the way from Westminster here, which meant the Temperance people to understand how far-reaching for good that vote would be. The brewers and distillers, and all interested in the liquor trade, understood it, and they are strongly objecting to women having such a vote, saying it meant their ruin. Could there be a stronger argument to induce all the good and zealous Temperance women to join our suffrage movement?

We had a further glad surprise when Mr Henry Fowler introduced the District and Parish Councils Bill, to find that women, married or single, could be elected without any property qualification. The value of women's help is thus becoming more recognised. You will find a description of these Bills in the *Women's Herald*, which you can receive at the door; as also the Registration Bill, and the services which Lord Wolmer is to render us in connection with it.

I am glad to learn that at another meeting of women, which is being held in Edinburgh to-day, under the distinguished presidency of that devoted, self-denying woman, Lady Aberdeen, our criminal laws are to come under discussion. I am sure our men friends who have kindly joined us here will agree with me that there is nothing which more requires the mind and instincts of women to deal with than our criminal laws. Do you think any woman could have framed a law which sends a young boy or girl, often more sinned against than sinning, to prison before sending them to a Reformatory? thus branding these poor things with the prison mark through all their future lives. Lord Burleigh has just brought in a Bill to the House of Lords to make this law only permissive. I do not think it ought even to be permissive. The day will come, I trust, when homes and asylums will replace our prisons for moral offenders—but there are no places more full of cobwebs than legal chambers.

Things *are* bettering. I remember when a child, nearer seventy than sixty years ago,—so you will perhaps forgive me if I seem a little garrulous,—I used to build castles. We are never too young to build castles, nor, I believe, too old; but the castles we build in age can

only be founded on the hope, that if permitted to enter the higher life, we may have a mission given us to help on the work and the dear workers we have so much loved here.

My childhood's castle, consequent upon hearing my father often tell of the sad tyrannies of his young days, was that I might be the editor of a newspaper, and my leading articles were all to begin with "Let us hope better things." I thought there was something very grand in those words; and so there was, but I did not know quite all they enfolded—work, hopes and fears, faith and prayer. Without these, things cannot be bettered, wrongs cannot be righted, and we have no right to flatter ourselves that we wish wrongs to be righted unless we are willing to take our share in the work which is involved in what is mostly a very up-hill process.

The women who are afraid of being called political are fast diminishing in number. They begin to see how illogical it is to suppose that either prophet or apostle could forbid the exercise of God-given powers in woman. What does Isaiah say when wickedness and wrongdoing pervaded the nation? "Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters . . . ; tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones; strip and gird yourselves with sackcloth." This is very different teaching from what most women receive. There was to be no false modesty—no shrinking from outside duties. Where could these women have been indulging themselves at ease, except in their own comfortable homes? In the 68th Psalm we ought to read the correct translation, which is, "The Lord giveth the word, and great is the help which women give in publishing it." These words seem to extend to all time, and never were they more applicable than just now; and though it has been so much kept back, we know that gifted women helped St Paul in the ministry, prophesying with him.

However full of interest a woman's home life may be, public work often proves a relief and a blessing to her. I saw a beautiful letter lately from Lady Carlisle to a young lady who had lost her baby. She said, "If we had not our public work, how much harder our private sorrows would be." A young friend of mine lost her husband on their way home from Australia. To help herself to bear her trial she joined Octavia Hill in her good work in London. Still sorrow sat upon her brow. She visited me this winter looking quite bright. She explained that she had been led into the political camp, and though she was the last person in the world I should have thought likely to do it, she said, "I canvassed hard at the last election for one of the candidates; it did me a world of good, I feel again that life is worth the living."

Many ladies have told me what suffering invalid lives they led until they engaged in public questions. Medical ladies have told me the same with regard to themselves. Some of these cases have been so remarkable, that I have thought their experience had been something like that of the woman we read of in Scripture, who touched the hem of the garment of Him who went about doing good, and she was made whole.

Perhaps these remarks would have been more fitted for young ladies occupied with the frivolities of life. Most of you here are noble workers for the good of our city, and far beyond its boundaries. Our thanks are greatly due to Mrs Forbes, Miss L. Stevenson, Miss Kirkland, and other ladies, who during the very inclement weather at the close of last month worked with so much zeal to help to elect the four women candidates for the Parochial Board with great odds against them. The women were brought in at the head of the poll. Thus they had their reward. I regretted our press did not take advantage of this contest to urge the women throughout Scotland to follow the example of Edinburgh.

Before sitting down I am tempted to tell of this little incident. A lady asked the other day what distinguished speaker was to address our meeting. On being told that it was to be a "home made" meeting, so that we had not got outside help from any great purveyor, she shrugged her shoulders and went on her way. I trust, my friends, when you have heard from the workers present of the work that has been done, you will say that our meeting has not been a sham, and that on leaving you will feel anything but a disposition to stone your own prophets.

Miss FLORA STEVENSON considered it an honour to address once more a meeting of the Women's Suffrage Association, and congratulated the members on the enormous advance they had made. People wondered a few years ago that women even discussed such questions. She referred to the different schemes of good works mentioned in the Report, which had been forwarded by the Association. Even those who were its enemies, she said, were now helping on their cause. She wished to refer only to one of these in particular,—the result of the untiring efforts of those interested in the higher education of women,—the opening to women of the classes in the Faculty of Arts in the University. She thought the movement had already been justified by the success of the women students, though that, she confessed, was no surprise to her. She concluded by earnestly desiring the success of the Women's Suffrage Bill.

Miss MAIR addressed the meeting on "The necessity of obtaining the Parliamentary Vote being one of the first objects of Women's Associations." She drew a picture of a stranger in a thorny and overhanging wood, where there were many women toiling to cut a path in the tangled undergrowth. The women were much hindered in their occupation by manacles on their wrists,—not unsightly fetters, but dainty ones of gold and silver, which nevertheless prevented them from working properly. Some of them also wore shades over their eyes. The stranger inquired of one young woman, who was manacled, but had no shade on her eyes, what the explanation of this strange scene was—why did the labourers work under such great disadvantages? And learned, in reply, that they were all members of the Women's Liberal Association, toiling in the aid of women's freedom, clearing a path in this tangled forest up to the broad way which leads to the house where men make the laws for the nation. What meant the manacles? asked the stranger. Her companion sighed, and allowed that without them work would be easier, but only the men the women served had the power to take them off. Men were so busy with questions of Home Rule, Church Disestablishment, one man one vote, and the like, that they had no time for the grievances of women. Many, the young woman said, even in the Association, think that for women unfettered hands mean mischief; and the more intelligent fear, that if all were freed at once, the timid members, whom they hoped to educate up to their views, would be lost. While they worked for men, and cleared their paths, those men were not always disposed to grant freedom to women. Some would sooner free rabbits than women. The stranger thought this savoured not of humility, but of abject slavery, and argued that, as Gladstone knew, to obtain constitutional rights a class must strain every nerve. These women, she said, seemed indifferent to their own best interests. She observed another party of women toiling at a smaller bypath, all manacled, and some bleeding at the wrists. These, she was told, were members of the Women's Liberal Unionist Association, and were known by their badge. She thought it should be their first object to free themselves from their fetters: but many of them objected to that, which they said would be turning themselves into men, and contentedly observed, "We can see that men are properly registered, and bring voters to the poll in our carriages." A third band were described as Primrose Leaguers, bent on guarding the ascendancy of the British Empire and the rights of property. When urged to make their freedom their primary object, they said they could do more to help men by keeping their own Bill in the background. Thus (said Miss Mair) do women lose sight of

their own interests. If they would only make their own freedom the first object of their efforts, they would soon be free.

Miss LEES spoke of the part women have played in the great drama of Temperance reform. She reminded her audience that the ballot, if put into the hands of women, would be rightly employed if women continued, as they had done in the past, to make their homes in all countries sober and law-abiding. Men made the laws; but these laws have made a generation of women who cannot quietly sit and witness the evils brought about by unequal representation. Temperance work began in America so long ago as 1651. The first society was formed in Connecticut in 1789, in England in 1830, and shortly before that in Scotland. Up to this time it had been entirely a "moral suasion" movement, but it became apparent that legislative action should be taken. The law-makers said that women must obey the laws, must pay for their upkeep; and if they broke them, must be confined in prisons, madhouses, or perhaps—in the future—in inebriate homes for habitual drunkards. The largest organisation of women only in the world—the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union—had already a membership of five hundred thousand, and two years hence it proposed to take a petition, with two million of names, to every court in Europe, praying for legislation on this subject. Even with tied hands, women had done much to drag iniquity to the light. Miss Lees referred to the Temperance Bill of the present Government, and wished that women could be made responsible for it, for she believed it to be the expression of the conscience of the country. She mentioned the fact that a woman serving behind the bar of a public-house is a thing unknown in America, a law being in force for the prohibition of the hire of women in any saloon in the commonwealth. She thought that if women had a part in framing the laws of the country they would prevent girls working such long hours in such close rooms. Women who had wrought such changes in education, in workhouses, and in many institutions, would effect a radical change here if they had the Parliamentary, as they had the municipal, vote. She argued also that no one with the temperance cause at heart should work for the abolition of public-houses one day, and the next help to put a brewer into Parliament.

Miss DORA FOSTER said, on behalf of the wage-earning class, that it is imperative and important that women should have the vote. No evil from which society suffers, but presses hardest on women, and especially working women, for they suffer both from class domination and sex domination. It is wanted on behalf of women who

work fifteen hours a day in order to earn 1s. 11d., or of women who, worse still, are tricked and hounded to the slavery of the streets. Many of the laws press more hardly on women, and they are often punished more heavily, it being even stated sometimes as a reason that "crime is worse in a woman." She entreated the younger women to use their strength and energy on behalf of the oppressed, as the power of enlisting sympathy does not increase with age.

Miss LOUISA STEVENSON, in speaking of the Registration Bill, said that, thanks to Lord Wolmer, a ruling of the Speaker had been obtained to permit an amendment of the Women's Suffrage Bill to come up for discussion on the 10th of April. She begged every one to use all their strength to induce members to muster in force on that day. Liberal as the present Government was in many respects, in regard to this subject it was very Conservative.

Mrs GILLIES, who spoke of the immense leverage power which the Parliamentary vote would give to women, said—To women in earnest, working hard for the cause we have so much at heart, a meeting like this may well be likened to an oasis in the desert, a green sunny spot of refreshing and inspiration, which enables us to go on our journey with renewed courage. Those of us who have more recently entered on the journey, gratefully and heartily acknowledge our debt of gratitude to those brave pioneers of our sex's advancement, some of whom we see around us this afternoon, and among whom is our honoured and beloved President. You know "it is the first step that costs." Those pioneers took that courageous first step for us; to them we owe in such large measure the ever-increasing freedom our sex enjoys. They have paid the price. Shall not we who have entered into their labours pay our share? Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are joined together as a society for the express purpose of obtaining the vote, and it may not be amiss if I confine my remarks to the best way, in my opinion, for women to do so. We all know the immense leverage power which the Parliamentary vote would bring with it. Our hearts are full of enthusiasm, our heads are full of schemes for the well-being of our fellow-creatures—the amelioration of the woes of mankind. We women are advocates of all the world's great and noble causes; we would stem the tide of the world's great wrongs; and we know, and those of us who are most in earnest know it best, how we are handicapped because we do not possess the vote. I had the good fortune to be present at the great temperance demonstration in London in honour of Miss Willard, and it seemed to me quite as much a suffrage meeting as a temperance meeting. The cry of every speaker

was for the vote for women—and always for the vote—for well they knew that women could work much more to the purpose if they possessed that valuable power. Do we most desire temperance reforms? Then let us work for the vote, and we can elect the temperance reformer. Is social purity our aim? Then work for the vote, that we may have power where social laws are made. Is it the wish of our hearts to see working women earning their living under better conditions, or is it the question of higher education that interests us? Then let us work for the Parliamentary vote, and we will then have a share in legislating for these questions. Or do we long most for the emancipation and advancement of our own sex? Then let us get the vote, for the vote means women's emancipation, and is the surest and shortest road to her advancement. In a country with a government like ours we must come with a vote in our hands if we are to work successfully. We know this; then are we all working actively and earnestly, individually and unitedly, for this great power which means so much? I am afraid it is not so. I speak in the presence of far greater experience than my own, but I think it will not be disputed that women themselves are responsible for two of the chief barriers in the way of their enfranchisement. These barriers are "the apathy of women in general," and "the misdirected energy of political women in particular." So far as active opposition goes, I do not think there seems a great deal to complain of. Now, the way to overcome this apathy which exists among many women is for those who are whole-hearted and in earnest on this matter to work with might and main to break it down. The influence of one small human being is great; the influence of one earnest woman suffragist is a force to be reckoned with. To lay hold of every opportunity which comes in our way of showing what women are capable of, and to make opportunities if none present themselves; to take full advantage of every bit of freedom we already enjoy, and to zealously guard the privileges we already possess; always to have the courage of our convictions, and to strive to be equal to every occasion; to live out our principles, and to live for them,—that is the way to enforce attention to our cause, to dispel prejudice, to strengthen the weak-hearted, and to gain justice. There are, too, I am convinced, vast numbers of men—sensible men—who take an intelligent interest in general politics, who know next to nothing of our question. These only need to be approached in the true missionary spirit; they only need to feel the enthusiasm of women in their own cause to come over to our side, and insist on our getting what we require, and that in spite of Prime Minister's pamphlets and Laboucherean ravings, and letters from the Mr

Samuel Smiths. If, however, we are to break down this apathy, we must pay the price, we must be devoted and self-sacrificing; and this, ladies and gentlemen, brings us to the second barrier which women have raised for themselves,—that is, misdirecting their energies. It is certainly hard to see this most useful quality, which is so greatly needed, dissipated and made unavailing. Now at present, as is freely admitted by leaders and members of all political parties, women have a certain political power. This political power might, if properly directed, be made a most valuable factor in the gaining of our own political rights. But do women use it so? No, as a rule they do not. In almost every constituency in the country there is to be found a body of political women joined together in order to advance the interests of one political party, and another body of women joined together in order to help the opposing party. Thus all working their hardest to neutralise each other's efforts, their own direct interests being meanwhile in many cases ground out of recognition between the upper and nether millstones of party exigencies, or at best tacked to the end of about a dozen questions which have first to be attended to. It is thus hopes are based on the wet sands of expediency, instead of on the firm rock of principle. This I call wasted energy, and "wilful waste makes woeful want." Women cannot yet afford to allow party feelings to predominate. There is at present only one reason why women should enter the field of politics, and that is in order to secure the political rights which are so justly their due; and if any woman, or body of women, helps to put a man in Parliament who is opposed to Woman Suffrage, I say they are deliberately doing all in their power to retard the movement. Let it be known unmistakably that no man who is against Woman Suffrage shall receive help from any woman,—let him belong to what party he may,—and that when one candidate is in favour of the suffrage and the other against it, the whole influence of all the political women in that constituency shall be on the side of the former. But are women acting thus? Not so. On the contrary, we find them deliberately helping a candidate who assures them he is opposed to Woman Suffrage. Witness, for instance, the case of Sir Arthur Hayter, who solicited the aid of the Walsall Women's Liberal Association, and thanked them most heartily after the election for their devoted and zealous services on his behalf; and yet, when asked if he was in favour of granting women the vote, answered that he was opposed to the granting of the Parliamentary Franchise to women. And this is only one instance, among many, of the ungenerous and contemptuous treatment which women meet with at the hands of candidates. But what about the women who work for candidates on these conditions?

I say these women are deliberately wasting their energies. There will be plenty of opportunity after we get the vote—for, be sure we mean to get it—for party cries and party shibboleths. Now, suppose the women have political power enough to turn the votes of say only 5 per cent. of the voters. Think what a wonderful effect that would have on an election. At the last general election very many seats were won by less than 5 per cent. Is it too much to say then that even that power—and I am very far from saying it, is so limited—would, if properly directed, be sufficient so secure a majority in Parliament for our cause? One long, strong, united steady pull on the part of women, and the Franchise is within our grasp. I know the kind of advice political women have to listen to, the kind of flattery that opponents are mean enough to use; and I think it unscrupulous of a politician, and more so if he is a leader, to advise women to lend their aid, and at the same time to do all they can to keep women from their enfranchisement. But whatever may be said about those who give the advice, certainly the women are to blame who take it. They must deliberately shut their eyes to facts before they can believe such advice is meant for their good. When a man says, "If you want Home Rule, or any other question, work for some one in favour of it; and if you want Women Suffrage, work for some one against it," well you know he is talking nonsense. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? No, they do not; and if women try, they will not either; they will only hurt their own hands, and hinder their work. When any one against your cause gives advice, don't take it. Depend upon it, it isn't worth having. If any one professing to be a friend comes to you with advice to help on an opponent's cause, don't take it. There is only one way to get Women's Suffrage, and that is by a vote in Parliament. There is only one way to get a vote in Parliament, and that is by the majority of members being in its favour; and the only way of securing that is to see that, as far as lies in women's power, only those in its favour will be sent to Parliament. I have been told that this is a self-seeking policy, and that it would be much more unselfish of women if they would work for Franchise reforms for men. But am I to be told that women should spend their talents and energies over such subsidiary questions, good enough in themselves it may be, as one man one vote, or one vote one value, and whether non-payment of rates should be a disqualification, or whether a man should, in order to claim his vote, be in possession of his house twelve months, or six months, or three months,—while all the time not one woman has a vote at all, though she may be in possession of her house for twenty years, and pay twenty times the rates that many voters do? It is

anything but fair to those zealous and devoted supporters of our question in Parliament and out of it to be so lukewarm in our own cause. They require, and richly deserve, that women should give them a strong backing. With our united earnestness to inspire them, they can accomplish everything for us. Without it—and these gentlemen, to whom we owe so much, would be the first to admit it,—they must be discouraged in their support, and hampered in their efforts. I take for granted then—for any other is ludicrous assumption—that every woman who enters the field of politics desires the vote for women. If then every political woman would reflect on what she owes, not only to herself individually, but to her sisters all the world over, a new view of her wisest political policy would present itself. She would exercise, if need be, self-denial, by foregoing the pleasure of assisting political movements unless she was guaranteed a proper return from those assisted; and she would learn to see not mere self-seeking, but the truest public spirit, in insisting that the full citizenship of women should invariably form part of every programme she is called upon to support. My sisters, is it too much to ask that you, supported by the example of those women who have already worked so nobly on our behalf,—you who at this present time hold in trust the means for the highest welfare of the women of the future,—is it too much to ask that you will be whole-hearted and sincere and faithful to this high trust? Our destiny is in our own hands: we must place no barrier, and allow no barrier, to be placed in the way of our fullest development, and we must be bold and strong to lay hold of every advantage for the good of our sex. We must pay the price, stretch out our hands, and take our own.

Mrs MILLER MORISON sketched the advances that had so far been made in the way of increased privileges for women, referring especially to literature, higher education, and the professions. She spoke more particularly of the recent opening to women of the Arts Classes at Edinburgh and other Universities. Passing on to discuss the advantages that would accrue to women from possessing the suffrage, she reviewed the reasons usually given by men for wanting a vote, and brought forward counter-reasons to show the desirability of giving it to both sexes on the principle of "even-handed justice." She also spoke of the vast interest taken by women in many of the political questions of the day, and of the help they furnished by their canvassing at election time. She added that the number of women doing so would be increased manifold if they had some personal interest in the issue at stake, and if they could help more directly by their vote. Mrs Morison denied the justice of having questions

relating only to women being settled by men alone ; and spoke of the case of a large proprietrix of house property who cannot vote, although her very servants and tenants may possess the right. Mrs Miller Morison finished her preliminary remarks by saying that "the best work of the world is done when it represents both the masculine and the feminine sides of humanity," and that all our legislation would be improved and ennobled by the blending of woman's mind and voice with man's.

In referring to some of the landmarks of the progress of the Women's Suffrage movement, Mrs Miller Morison mentioned that it was really no new thing, for up to the time of George III. women took a share in electing "Parliament men." It was only on the introduction of the first Reform Bill that the word *men* was used in the allotment of the franchise, the term formerly in use having been "persons." Mr John Stuart Mill was the first champion of the ladies who ventured to introduce a Bill for Women's Suffrage into Parliament, and his proposals found the support of seventy-eight members. He was succeeded in his gallant efforts by Mr Jacob Bright ; and later by Mr Forsyth, Mr Courtney, Mr Mason, and Mr Woodall ; and later still by Mr Walter and Mr Charles M'Laren. The Women's Suffrage agitation has completed its twenty-fifth year, and there are many among its supporters who are already looking forward with something approaching to confidence to the realisation of their hopes in the near future.

Mr PRELOOKER said that he was a member of a country where men and women had equal political rights—for in Russia they had none at all. But in this great country, which boasted its liberty so much, he was much surprised to find it enjoyed only by the masculine sex.

Rev. PROFESSOR CALDERWOOD moved a vote of thanks to Mrs M'Laren for her kindness in receiving the members of the Association, with the aims of which he cordially sympathised.

The large gathering then adjourned to the Dining Room where tea and coffee were served.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

OF

The Edinburgh Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage,

From 31st December 1891 to 31st December 1892.

INCOME.		EXPENDITURE.	
To Balance from last year	£63 13 8½	By Postages, Carriage of Parcels, and other incidental	£7 8 0
„ Subscriptions and Donations for past year	59 3 0	Payments of Secretary and Treasurer	0 8 6
„ Bank Interest	0 8 10	„ Rent of Committee Rooms	5 18 3
		„ Periodicals, Reviews, Leaflets, &c.	4 7 4
		„ Printing and Stationery	1 1 0
		„ Auditor's Fee	40 0 0
		„ Expense of Secretary	64 2 5½
		„ Balance in Bank and Treasurer's hands	£123 5 6½
	£123 5 6½		£123 5 6½

I have examined the above account with books and vouchers, and find the same correct. There is a balance at credit of the Society of Sixty-four pounds two shillings and fivepence halfpenny sterling.

HADDINGTON, 2nd February 1893.

W. THO. FERME, Auditor.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

Balgarnie, Mrs	£0 2 6	M'Kinnel, Mrs, Dumfries	£1 0 0
Bayne, Mrs	0 10 0	M'Laren, Mrs	10 0 0
Birrell, Miss, Cupar ...	0 10 0	M'Laren, Dr Agnes ...	5 0 0
Blackie, Mrs Stuart ...	1 0 0	M'Laren, Duncan, Esq...	2 0 0
Black, Rev. C. M.	0 10 0	M'Laren, Miss B. B. ...	0 2 6
Blair, Mrs, Girvan	0 2 6	Mair, Miss S. E. S. ...	1 0 0
Bruce, James, Esq.	0 10 0	Maughan, Miss	0 2 6
Brunston, Mrs, Berwick-on-		Methven, Mrs	0 10 0
Tweed	0 4 0	Millar, Mrs John	2 0 0
		Mitchellhill, Mrs	0 2 0
Chalmers, Miss	0 3 0	Nairn, Mrs	1 0 0
Clapperton, Miss	0 2 6	Nelson, Thomas, & Sons	1 0 0
Craig, Miss A.	5 0 0	Nichol, Mrs	3 3 0
		Ord, Mrs Nesbit	0 10 0
Drummond, Mrs	0 10 0	Petty, Mrs	0 2 0
Duncan, Miss	0 5 0	Ponton, Misses	0 2 0
Dunn, Mrs, Aberdeen ...	0 2 6	Pringle, Mrs Robert ...	0 10 0
Duthie, Mrs, do.	0 2 6	Pringle, Mrs James ...	0 5 0
Edington, Miss	0 10 0	Raeburn, Mrs	0 2 6
Fisher, Mrs Garrett	0 2 0	Robertson, Miss	0 2 6
Forbes, Mrs Lindsay ...	0 10 0	Robson, William, Esq. ...	1 1 0
Foster, Miss Dora	0 1 6	Rose, Mrs	0 10 0
		Rose, Mrs Kinnaird	0 2 6
Gillies, John, Esq., Chirn-		Simpson, Mrs, Portobello	0 3 0
side	0 10 0	Simpson, Miss, Dunfermline	0 5 0
Gillies, Mrs, Chirnside ...	0 5 0	Simpson, F. J., Esq. ...	0 2 6
Graham, Mrs	0 5 0	Smith, Miss Ramsay	1 0 0
Greenock, Miss A.	0 5 0	Somerville, Mrs, Dalkeith	0 5 0
Hargraves, Mrs	0 4 0	Somerville, Ex-Councillor	0 2 6
Harvey, Misses	0 5 0	Stevenson, Miss Louisa ...	4 0 0
Hodgson, Mrs	1 1 0	Stevenson, Miss Flora ...	1 0 0
Houldsworth, Miss	1 1 0	Stewart, Miss, Ashcraig ...	0 10 0
Jarvis, Mrs	0 4 0	Tait, Mrs W. M.	0 2 6
Kemp, Mrs	0 2 0	Walcot, Bailie	0 10 0
Lauder, Miss Dick	1 0 0	Walls, Miss	0 5 0
Lees, Miss, Aberlady ...	0 2 6	Wellstood, Mrs S.	0 5 0
Lewis, Mrs	0 2 0	Wellstood, Mrs J.	0 2 6
Livingston, Josiah, Esq. (two		White, Miss	0 5 0
years)	1 0 0	Williams, Mrs	0 5 0
Lockie, Miss	0 2 6	Wigham, Miss	0 10 0
Low, Miss	0 5 0	Wright, Miss	0 4 0
Macdowall, Miss	0 2 6	Wyld, Miss	0 5 0
Macfie, R. A., Esq.	1 0 0		

