

arrange for constituents to make an appeal to their Member to support the Bill. The sympathy of every County Councillor should also be sought, for petitions from County Councils in favour of the Bill for Women County Councillors must necessarily carry weight ; and it should always be remembered that the London County Council, the only Council on which women have served, has more than once petitioned in favour of their eligibility. Some corresponding members have furnished our hon. sec. with valuable information as to local arrangements by the County Councils for Technical Education, and with a record of the women members of the local District and Parish Councils. It is also most useful to report to our society should any legal difficulty be alleged in the way of a woman's candidature. The committee would like to have a corresponding member in every Parliamentary division.

In conclusion, let me earnestly invite, on behalf of my society, the co-operation of all men and women who take a broad view of local government. For the maintenance of a secretary and an office increased support is necessary, and we think that our reports, which we shall be glad to furnish, show that we deserve it, for they explain how much has been done with a small income, and with little paid help.

I would like to add that I trust these articles will be understood as not exclusively addressed to women. It is true that one object is to place the experience of some women Councillors at the service of others, but another object is to present to readers of both sexes some outline, however imperfect, of the work that "Women in Council" are doing, and some facts from a woman's point of view ; and, though it is natural that to some points I should specially invite the attention of women, yet even in respect to these the co-operation of men is essential.

MARY STEWART KILGOUR,

[(Women's Local Government Society.)]

Office: 4, ~~Sanctuary,~~ 17, Tothill Street,
Westminster, S.W.

PAPER

READ AT THE BRISTOL MEETING

OF THE

Central Conference of Women Workers

AMONG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

NOVEMBER, 1892.

BY

MRS. HENRY FAWCETT

ON THE

Amendments Required in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885.

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AMENDMENTS REQUIRED IN THE CRIMINAL
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1885.

I IMAGINE that all workers in the field which embraces the subject of this paper are aware of its special difficulties and dangers. The workers are in danger of getting coarsened and sullied by the foulness of the things with which they have to deal.

“ Thence comes it that my name receives a brand
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.”

It is best that we should recognise this as a fact and face the danger; take precautions to minimise it but not run away from it.

We should not greatly admire the immaculate whiteness of the most beautiful pair of hands in the world, if their owner had seen a child smothering in black slime and had made no effort to pull him out. Better black hands than a black heart: better risk some danger of getting our minds coarsened than leave human beings to wallow in the filthy ways of criminal vice without doing anything to amend the law and make these ways more difficult of access.

Another moral danger to ourselves connected with this work, I will just glance at. We are in danger of assuming a too hortatory attitude, a state of mind prone to condemn, rather than to help and understand. This danger too we shall best save ourselves from, I think, by a frank recognition of its reality. Mr. R. L. Stevenson, from whose essays we may get much help in this and other things, says: “ There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make

their neighbours good. One person I have to make good—myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may." Pursuing the same thought, however, he also says this wise word: "We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right. Christ would never hear of negative morality: *thou shalt* was always His word, by which he superseded *thou shalt not*." It is this inexorable "thou shalt" which has nerved many a timid heart to heroic effort. *Thou shalt* work to make innocence safer, to make childhood secure, to break down the subterfuges and shams by which human devices have endeavoured to obscure the Divine Word:—"The wages of sin is death."

"It may be right to suffer patiently wrongs inflicted on ourselves, but it is no part of our duty patiently to endure the wrongs inflicted on others." To quote Mr. Stevenson again: "It is *our* cheek we are to turn, *our* coat we are to give away to the man who has taken *our* cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured and stand by is not conceivable and surely not desirable." It is especially for those who have been injured by man and are again doubly injured by the present state of the law, whose case I shall put before you to-day in urging on you the amendments necessary in the Criminal Law Amendment Act. I will assume that my hearers are conversant with the subject in its main features, and the first point to which I shall draw your attention is the iniquitous provision known as "the three months' limit." Legal proceedings cannot be taken against the man who has connection with a child between thirteen and sixteen unless they are commenced within three months of the offence. The age of consent was raised by the Act of 1885 from thirteen to sixteen, but this three months' limit often makes this ostensible raising of the age a dead letter. A child of thirteen or fourteen is frequently intimidated or

bribed by the man who has wronged her, and thereby induced to say nothing to her parents or anyone else about what has taken place till after the three months has elapsed. The operations of the National Vigilance Society in bringing to justice the wretches who have no respect for the childhood and innocence even of their own daughters, are frequently frustrated by this clause in the Act. I can tell you of a case where a man wronged his own daughter, a child of fourteen, threatened to kill her and her mother too if she said a word to anyone about what had occurred. Nothing was discovered until the girl, a child herself, was obviously going to give birth to a child. The three months' limit had then passed, and *nothing* could be done. Another case came before the Society last spring. A child of fourteen was seduced, if you can use the word; but I should say with Marian Erle in *Aurora Leigh*, not seduced so much as murdered, by a married man aged forty-five. In this case the whole of the parties were in a respectable position in life; the girl's father was a County Councillor. The wretch who ruined her, induced her by presents and money to give him a sort of promise not to tell her parents what had occurred. She had been up to that time a healthy, happy, active child: from this time a great change came over her, for which, for a long time, her parents were wholly unable to account. She became languid and miserable, bursting into tears with no apparent cause and losing all her childish ways. At last a friend of her mother's drew the truth from her. The matter was brought into Court. Had not the Act of 1885 raised the age of consent to sixteen? But more than three months had elapsed since the offence, which had been committed in February and April, and Mr. Justice Hawkins said: "The matter does not seem to have been laid before the Public Prosecutor till August, and therefore, as then more than three months had elapsed, no proceedings could be taken under the Statute."

This "three months' limit" is confined in the Act to cases between thirteen and sixteen, and where the girl consents to her own ruin. But the principle of the Act is to raise the legal age of consent to sixteen. It assumes very properly that a child between thirteen and sixteen is not in a position to appreciate the true significance of the act to which she is being tempted, and it is obvious that this clause tends very largely to make the raising of the age of consent nominal only. It does not seem to me to minimise the offence, that the man who has persuaded the girl to her ruin, can also persuade her to say nothing about it. Unless all feeling of shame is dead within her, she is only too likely to say nothing. There is nothing like this, as far as I know, in the whole of the rest of our criminal law. Seven years is the limit of time within which you can take legal proceedings to recover a debt. There is no statute of limitations for felony; a murderer is always liable to be proceeded against for his crime, no matter if fifty years have elapsed since it was committed. But three months is the limit of time within which a prosecution must be commenced for one of the worst of wrongs, if not *the* worst, to which childhood is liable.

Mr. North, the Stipendiary magistrate at Merthyr, said not long ago, when he had been obliged to dismiss a case of this kind, that he could not understand why the exception had been put into the Act. "The Legislature had said in its wisdom that if a man was not found out in three months, he might go scot free." Nothing, however, is done, nor as far as I can judge is likely to be done, to amend the law. The House of Commons is too fully occupied with redressing the grievances of people who have votes, and can therefore decide the fate of members and ministries, to have time to attend to the wrongs and injuries of those who have no votes. It took something like a moral earthquake to get the Act of 1885 passed. The House of Lords Committee on these subjects, sat in 1881-2. The Bill was passed in the House

of Lords in 1883 and in 1884; but till the sensation caused by Mr. Stead's publication, the Bill was talked out, blocked, and abandoned by the Government in the House of Commons. I do not see now without women's suffrage, where the motive force is to come from to get the necessary amendments which the Act requires, passed.

The next point to which I will draw your attention is usually known by the words "*reasonable cause to suppose.*" The age of consent, as I before remarked, was raised by the Act of 1885 from thirteen to sixteen. But if a man who has wronged a child under the age of sixteen swears that he had "reasonable cause to suppose" her to be sixteen or above sixteen, he escapes punishment. Here again I contend that such a provision is entirely exceptional in our law for the protection of minors. The age of consent for parting with property, as we all know, is for both sexes twenty-one. A money-lender who makes advances, or a tradesman who supplies goods, other than necessaries, to young persons under that age, has no legal power of recovery. It would be of no avail for Messrs. Moses and Harpy to plead that in advancing money at 60% to a boy at college the development of his moustache or the blackness of his pipe gave them "reasonable cause to suppose" that he was over twenty-one. Yet this is the sort of plea that is urged in almost innumerable cases, and urged effectively, so that the culprit escapes over and over again unpunished. The jury are invited to look at the girl, and if they think it not unreasonable for a casual observer to guess her age at sixteen, this is considered to acquit the man who has robbed her of what no tears nor repentance can restore, of all blame or responsibility. Cases in which the man gets off on this miserable pretext are reckoned not by tens but by hundreds.

I now come to my third point, in some respects the most painful, and the most incredible of all: there is no punishment in our law as it stands for incest as such. Hideous and

loathsome as it is, so that it is a shame even to speak of it, it is by no means extremely uncommon. It not unfrequently happens that clergymen and others come to the office of the National Vigilance Association, 267, Strand, and narrate to the Secretary, Mr. Coote, some terrible case of this kind, generally as between father and daughter, and ask him to put the law in motion. *There is no law to put in motion.* If the girl is over sixteen there is absolutely nothing legally that can be done. Take the case of a girl between sixteen and eighteen. If she had been led astray and taken away from her home by a stranger, the father could proceed against the man for abduction and for depriving him of his daughter's services. But if he himself is guilty of the abnormal and hideous crime of incest with his own child, nothing can be done; the law does not recognise it as an offence. I hardly expect you to believe me: Mr. Coote tells me that the people who come to ask his help in these cases often cannot believe him when he tells them that the law affords no remedy and provides no punishment. Now this may very probably be a survival of the old evil doctrine of the subjection of women and the absolute supremacy of the head of the family over all members of it. In patriarchal government the subordinate members of the family group were absolutely subject to the head of the family: he had power of life and death over them; they had no rights; their one duty was comprised in the word "obedience." In all nations of progressive civilisation the history of their progress has consisted in the gradual emancipation of sons, servants, daughters and wives from their former subjection. In our own country the process has been completed with regard to servants and sons and has gone a great way as far as women are concerned; but with regard to women it is not complete, and if we can hasten its completion we shall have done the State some service and helped to make men and women freer and happier than they have been heretofore. I may possibly be misunderstood

if I do not say that in my judgment children of both sexes up to a certain age ought to be in legal and actual subjection to the authority of their parents. I believe this to be both just and wholesome: but I also think that wherever the law gives authority it ought also to enforce special obligations and provide special punishments for the abuse of that authority; and when a father towards a child, a guardian towards a ward, a master towards a servant, is guilty of using the position of authority the law gives him to induce the child or servant to commit immoral actions, the offence ought to be recognised and punished as having a special degree of gravity.

The next and last point to which I will ask your attention, is the unsatisfactory state of the law with regard to affiliation cases. In the first place, although a summons may be applied for, no practical proceedings can be taken till the child is born, and if the man in the meantime has left the country, nothing can be done at all. Now, if you take the case of a girl under sixteen who is about to give birth to an illegitimate child, you are first met by the "three months' limit," which gives a very short period of time within which it is possible to institute legal proceedings, and then if this period has elapsed, the law gives the man the additional privilege of about six months' run, during which he may go abroad or absent himself by removing to a distant part of the country, so that to find him may be a difficult and costly undertaking. The French law under the Code Napoleon, is worse than ours: it forbids categorically all enquiry into the paternity of illegitimate children. Our law is not as cynically and openly wicked as this, but it puts all manner of difficulties in the way of establishing the paternity. A case came before the Preventive Committee of the National Vigilance Association in which a rather well-known artist, then living in Glasgow, had taken one of his models as his mistress. Their connection lasted some time and was well known by

several of his and her friends. When she told him that she was going to have a child, he said she was to come to London and enter some hospital or infirmary. She came; only of course to discover that, six months before the birth of the child, no institution of the kind would take her in. She wrote to him in Glasgow to tell him this, and that she, an ignorant Scotch girl, was alone in London, penniless. He replied "Then go to the devil." To escape her importunity he went abroad and left her in London—as far as he knew—to starve or go on the streets. Fortunately there was another alternative: she applied for help to the National Vigilance Association; no affiliation proceedings could be instituted because the man had left the country, but the man's letters incriminated him so deeply that the Committee were able to extract 3s. a week from him. The activity of the man's conscience on the subject was manifested in the following year's Academy, when he exhibited a picture called "Deserted." It represented a desolate attic room with a solitary woman in it, in an attitude of despair. The conduct that was ruin to her, was to him useful from the professional point of view, in stimulating his rather sluggish imagination. We are apt to treat these questions too much as women's questions. The injustice of the law to the wronged woman is far more deeply injurious to the man than to the woman. Who, knowing all, would not be that deserted mother who had loved the father of her child and who had also strong mother's love for her baby, rather than the man who never knew what real love was either for his child or the mother of his child, who exploited her miseries, made a picture of them and hung it up in a public exhibition for sale? There is degradation if you like. Men suffer from these bad laws more than women.

This was a case, no doubt, out of the common run. I will now ask you to look at an ordinary affiliation case. Guardians of the poor, benevolent persons, and charitable societies are nearly always very reluctant to institute proceedings for

an affiliation order. The process is difficult, it is not very costly, but it costs something, and when all the difficulties had been overcome and the expense met, and an order of the Court obtained that the man is to contribute, say 3s. a week till the child is thirteen years old, the result very frequently is—absolutely nothing! He may possibly pay for a week or two, but after that the order of the Court is a dead letter: no means are taken to ensure its being carried out. It is true that payments may be enforced by warrant or distress upon his goods, but his plan is to disappear, and no security is taken against this. In other cases when the accused person is under temptation to disregard an order of the Court, he is obliged to find bail. No machinery of this kind to secure the actual carrying out of the order of the Court exists in affiliation cases. If a man against whom an affiliation order had been granted to pay 3s. a week till the infant was thirteen, were obliged to give bail himself and to find also two sureties in £100 each for the actual carrying out of the order, it would only be the employment of a precaution with which our law courts are perfectly familiar in other cases. In case the bail were forfeited, the 3s. a week would be paid out of the sum provided by the estreated bail. The necessity of giving bail and the possible difficulty in finding two sureties to give bail, would, I believe, prove a wholesome check upon the number of illegitimate births. Another evil in connection with these cases is said to be an increasing one. I refer to the crime of perjury on the part of fathers of illegitimate children. Mr. Ferguson, Chairman of Quarter Sessions in Cumberland, referred to this subject in charging the Grand Jury in October, 1892, and said that in a long and painful experience of twenty years he could recollect many cases of perjury by the putative father, and he also recollected one or two on the part of the woman. "This class of crime," he said, "seemed to be on the increase, and it was committed with more and more audacity every day." The foreman of

the jury, on behalf of his fellow jurors, corroborated what the Chairman had said about the prevalence of perjury in these cases, and hoped that publicity would be given to his remarks, so that the question might be taken up by the Public Prosecutor. A few prosecutions for perjury would have a very wholesome effect.

To conclude and sum up; we ought to keep constantly in view the necessity of the following amendments of the law, and its more vigorous administration:—

1. The abolition of the three months' limit within which, in the case of girls between thirteen and sixteen, a prosecution can be instituted.
2. The abolition of the "reasonable cause to suppose" a girl to be sixteen as an excuse for ruining her.
3. To provide legal punishment for incest, and, as a corollary to this, to visit with special severity all abuse of the authority which the law vests with the father, guardian, or employer.
4. In affiliation cases the provision of machinery, through the giving and finding of bail, so that the order of Court should not be—as it now so frequently is—a dead letter.

5. A more vigorous effort to check perjury, by prosecution.

As I said before, I do not now see in the present state of the electorate where the motive power to secure these changes in the law and its administration is to come from. Women's Suffrage would make the outlook immeasurably clearer. But we must work with what weapons we have and not fold our hands and do nothing because the most effective and most constitutional weapon is denied to us. If all the amendments of the law that we aim at are carried out, I do not flatter myself that we shall have succeeded in making either ourselves or our neighbours good and happy. Something more than just laws will be needed for that. But I think we shall have succeeded in reducing not a little the misery and heart-break of some of them.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION.

TO WOMEN ELECTORS.

WE, the undersigned, having deeply at heart the true interests of the citizens of London, venture to call your attention to the very important duty which now lies before you. The privilege of the vote for the election of County Councillors is yours. The responsibility for its right and wise exercise rests upon you.

The chief issue before the Electors in 1898 is the attack that is being made on the very existence of the Council; the attempt to destroy, or at any rate to weaken, London's central representative authority, and to rule the capital City of the Empire, not as a whole, but as ten or more separate municipalities.

The Powers of the Council at present have to do with—

THE HOUSING OF THE PEOPLE,
THE WORK OF MAIN DRAINAGE,
THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES,
LONDON IMPROVEMENTS,
REGULATION OF BUILDING,
THE CARE OF THE INSANE,
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS,
THE PROTECTION OF INFANT LIFE,
TECHNICAL EDUCATION,
MUSIC HALLS AND THEATRES,
PROTECTION OF LONDON AGAINST FIRE,
PROTECTION AGAINST FRAUDULENT WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

The whole work of the Council is as important to women as to men. That families should have decent houses to live in, open spaces for air and exercise, and (in the future, let us hope) pure

and sufficient water—all must admit these to be women's questions. Further, the Asylums controlled by the Council, with more than 8,000 women patients, must enlist the strongest sympathies of women, as also must the children in the Industrial Schools.

These are matters vital to the community, and are such as can only be effectively administered by a powerful representative Metropolitan authority—an authority which we have in the County Council. Will you suffer the Council's powers to be curtailed? Rather are additional powers needed.

The Progressive policy would place under the control of the Council the Water Supply, the Tramways, and the Markets. Thus we in this overcrowded Metropolis should gain facilities of locomotion such as are possessed in provincial towns; our poor districts would be saved the hardships arising from scarcity of water; and market accommodation would be brought to our very doors.

The Progressive Policy further aims at better schemes for the Housing of the People. It is known that 400,000 Londoners have no more than one room to live in, and that 37,000 live five in a room! See that you return to the Council men who will strive to remedy such evils.

The powers of the Council need for their proper execution the joint work of men and women. The Progressives on the London County Council have in the past three times petitioned for such a change in the law as would render possible the election of women to the Council—women to visit the Industrial Schools and the women's wards in the great Asylums, and to interest themselves in the inspection of Baby Farms. The Progressives support the Bill for Women as County Councillors. They have appointed women as doctors for the Female Lunatics, and a woman as the inspector of Baby Farms.

In concluding our appeal to you we must call your attention to the share taken by women in London Government, which share the Progressive policy would enlarge rather than diminish. Since 1894 women have served on London Vestries. By the creation of separate Municipal Corporations in the place of the Vestries, and the application to these of the Municipal Corporation Act, as

has been proposed, women would be deprived of this privilege. Moreover, the right of married women to vote might also be taken away. Let us resist to the utmost this retrograde policy.

Women Electors! There are in the County of London nearly 100,000 women who have the vote. The women can win the elections. The vote of each one is of equal value, be she poor or rich. Let none, therefore, be indifferent. Go to the poll on the 3rd of March, and Vote for the Progressive Candidates, who will promote the welfare of the community.

Signed,

ROSALIND CARLISLE.
 FANNY TWEEDMOUTH.
 MARY HOBHOUSE.
 CONSTANCE BATTERSEA.
 CAROLINE TREVELYAN.
 HENRIETTA HAYTER.
 CAROLINE STEVENSON.
 ANNA SWANWICK.
 MARIA G. GREY.
 E. K. MAITLAND, M.L.S.B.
 RUTH HOMAN, M.L.S.B.
 HENRIETTA O. BARNETT.
 MARY BEALE.
 ANNIE LEIGH BROWNE.
 E. MARION BRYCE.
 MARY H. L. BUNTING.
 JANE COBDEN UNWIN.
 EMMA CONS.
 LUCY E. GUINNESS.

[P.T.O.]

AMIE HICKS.
M. KATHERINE H. PRICE HUGHES.
ELIZABETH S. LIDGETT, P.L.G.
EVA McLAREN.
FRANCES MENDEL.
EMILIA MONCK.
M. L. REID.
EMILY SHAW-LEFEVRE.
JESSIE STEWART SPICER.
MARY F. STEER.
LAURA E. STUART.
SARAH M. SHELDON AMOS.
EVELINE SOAMES.
BEATRICE WEBB.
HELEN WEBB, M.B.

STANSFELD TRUST.

REPORT FOR 1897.

Notice.

The new Officers for 1898 are :—

Hon. Treasurer (*pro tem.*) :

W. S. B. McLAREN, Esq., 56, Ashley Gardens, London.

Scrutineer of Parliamentary Bills :

MISS CHAMNEY, 3, Chenies Street Chambers,
London, W.C.

Stansfeld Trust.

Trustees.

Miss LEIGH BROWNE.	G. W. JOHNSON, Esq.
P. W. BUNTING, Esq.	W. S. B. McLAREN, Esq.
Mrs. E. O. FORDHAM.	Mrs. F. PENNINGTON.
CORRIE GRANT, Esq.	Miss M. J. SHAEN, <i>Hon. Treasurer.</i>
Dr. HELEN WILSON.	

Scrutineer.—Mrs. E. H. BUSK, B.Sc.

Objects.

The objects of the trust shall be to promote the equality of men and women before the law of the land; to diffuse a knowledge of the position of women as compared with men under that law, and as it might become under any suggested alterations of it; and in regard to the relation of the sexes to maintain their equal responsibility to one and the same moral law.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE SESSION OF 1897.

THE work of the Stansfeld Trust, which was initiated soon after the commencement of the Parliamentary Session of 1896, has been continued on the same lines, and on a somewhat larger scale, the Trustees having been so fortunate as to secure the services of Mrs. E. H. BUSK, B.Sc., as Scrutineer of Parliamentary Bills for the Session of 1897. Miss SHAEN kindly fulfilled the duties of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer till October, when she resigned as she was leaving England for a considerable time.

The Scrutineer has read all the public bills laid before Parliament, whether introduced into the House of Lords or into the House of Commons, and also such of the private bills as were deemed at all likely to contain provisions bearing on the objects of the Trust.

Reports were made on all Bills or parts of Bills which involved the enactment of any difference between the legal positions of men and women or the express recognition or removal of any existing difference. Only six private Bills required notice, and reports of these were issued at the beginning of the Session, and were supplemented later on as the Bills proceeded through Parliament. The public Bills to which attention was drawn numbered sixty-two; reports on all of these were made as soon as the Bills were printed. The proportion of Bills reported to the number read was roughly about a seventh. The reports were issued at the following times:—five in January, eleven in February, eight in March, three in April, five in May, two in June, six in July, and one in August.

Thirty-five Societies and several private individuals subscribed for copies of the reports. The copies were type-written, revised and posted without delay, and it is hoped that even greater expedition may be ensured next session by some modifications in this department of the work.

The names of the Members of Parliament who backed each Bill, the parties to which they belonged, and the constituencies they represented were given in the reports, and whenever it was possible to give notice of the various stages of a Bill such notice was also included, the dates of second readings in the House of Commons being almost invariably given. Notice of amendments was also given, when practicable, if they were of a nature to affect the objects of the Trust. This part of the Scrutineer's functions can, however, only be looked upon as

supplementary to, and not as superseding, the closer watch kept on any particular Bill by a Society which, from the Scrutineer's report upon it, has decided that the measure is one of especial interest to the Society in question.

The case of the Mason University College Bill may be cited as an instance wherein successful results ensued upon action taken as a direct consequence of the attention drawn to the Bill by the Scrutineer's report upon it. The first report on this private Bill was issued on January 19th. The Hon. Sec. of the Women's Local Government Society, to whom a copy was sent, communicated with residents in the neighbourhood of the College and supplied them with the draft of certain amendments in favour of women. These amendments were brought by the residents before the Trustees of the College and some of the most important were adopted in the House of Lords and were reported by the Scrutineer on April 3rd. A third report on the Bill, including notice of the second reading in the House of Commons, was issued on April 11th. The Bill ultimately passed the Lower House as amended and received the Royal Assent.

Another important example was the City of London (inclusion of Southwark) Bill, which was taken up by the Women's Local Government Society upon their receiving the Stansfeld reports upon it.

Special interest was also aroused in the Infant Life Protection Bill, the Dublin Corporation Bill, the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act (1896) Amendment Bill, the two Accountants' Bills and others.

Of the points affecting women raised by the Bills reported on fifteen had to do with local government, thirteen with property or inheritance, thirteen with professions or trades, eight with pensions, four with children, three with education, three with marriage (including two respecting evidence of married

persons), three with parliamentary franchise, three with taxation, two with poor relief, and one with procedure. The last mentioned subject was not one coming strictly within the scope of the Trust; but, inasmuch as women have no share in legislation, alterations in procedure may more gravely affect the possibility of their bringing their opinions before the authorities than would be the case if they had the same privileges as men.

The Trustees entertain strong hopes that the experience gained each Session will enable them to make their undertaking increasingly useful to the Societies and persons who receive the reports. With this view they welcome suggestions from the subscribers, and endeavour to give effect to them. It will be readily understood that any considerable extension of the work must depend on a proportionate increase in the support accorded to it; for at present the secured income is small as compared with the necessary expenses, which include the Scrutineer's fee, payments for Bills and other parliamentary papers, and expenses of type-writing or printing and of posting the reports. It has been decided to discontinue the half guinea subscription for special portions of the reports, as it involves a disproportionate labour of selection. The subscription for a complete copy of every report will be one guinea for the Session as hitherto, and the Trustees will be very grateful for any help on the part of their present subscribers tending to the enrolment of additional Societies or persons amongst their number.

CLASSIFIED LIST OF BILLS REPORTED.

Children.

DANGEROUS PERFORMANCES.	[Royal Assent].
INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.	[Royal Assent].
POOR LAW ACT (1889) AMENDMENT.	[No progress].
POOR RELIEF (Ireland).	[Withdrawn].

Education.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (Continuation Schools).	[Dropped].
LONDON UNIVERSITY COMMISSION.	[Withdrawn].
MASON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.	[Royal Assent].

Local Government.

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS AND LABOURERS (Ireland).	[Dropped].
CITY OF LONDON (Inclusion of Southwark).	[Defeated on 2nd Reading].
COUNTY COUNCILLORS (Qualification of Women). (Scotland).	[Withdrawn].
COUNTY COUNCILS (Qualification of Women).	[Dropped].
COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Ireland).	[Dropped].
CRICHTON ROYAL INSTITUTION.	
DUBLIN CORPORATION.	[Royal Assent].
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD PROVISIONAL, Orders, Nos. 7, 11, 17.	[Royal Assent].
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (Ireland). (Women).	[Withdrawn].
MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (Ireland).	[Dropped].
SCHOOL BOARD FOR LONDON ELECTIONS.	[Second Reading negatived].

Marriage (Including Evidence of Married Persons).

CHAFF CUTTING MACHINES (Accidents). (containing Clause on Evidence).	[Royal Assent].
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LAW OF EVIDENCE (Criminal Cases). [Withdrawn].
 MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER. [Dropped].

Pensions.

LUNACY [H. L.]. [Withdrawn].
 OLD AGE PROVIDENT PENSIONS. [No progress].
 PENSIONS (Old Age). [No progress].
 POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT (1896) AMENDMENT. [Royal Assent].
 POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (Ireland). [Dropped].
 POLICE (Scotland) LAW AMENDMENT. [Withdrawn].
 POLICE PENSIONS AND SERVICE. [Withdrawn].
 REGULAR AND ELDERS' WIDOW FUNDS. [Royal Assent].

Parliamentary Franchise.

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES. [Dropped].
 PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (Extension to Women). [Withdrawn].
 PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (Women) [H. L.]. [Withdrawn].

Poor Relief.

COTTAGE HOMES. [Withdrawn].
 OUT-DOOR PROVIDENT RELIEF. [No progress].

Procedure.

PROVISIONAL ORDER (Scotland).

Professions and Trades.

ACCOUNTANTS. [Withdrawn].
 ACCOUNTANTS (Scotland). [Withdrawn].
 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE (Marks). [Reported from Select Committee].
 COAL MINES REGULATION. [No progress].
 COTTON, CLOTH, AND OTHER FACTORIES. [Second Reading only].

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY FOR INJURIES TO WORKMEN. [Dropped].
 INJURIES TO WORKMEN (Employers' Liability). [Dropped].
 MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION. [Dropped].
 SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS. [Dropped].
 SHOPS. [Dropped].
 SOLICITORS (Ireland). [Dropped].
 TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT. [Dropped].
 WORKMEN (Compensation for Accidents). [Royal Assent].

Property and Inheritance.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS. [Dropped].
 CONVEYANCING. [Dropped].
 INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT AND INCORPORATED BUILDING SOCIETIES (Purchase of Fee Simple). [Dropped].
 LAND TRANSFER. [Royal Assent].
 LEASEHOLDERS (Purchase of Fee Simple). [Dropped].
 LEASEHOLDERS (Purchase of Fee Simple, No. 2). [Dropped].
 OCCUPYING TENANTS ENFRANCHISEMENT (Purchase of Fee Simple). [Dropped].
 SUCCESSION (Scotland). [Dropped].
 TENANT RIGHT IN TOWNS (Ireland). [Dropped].
 TOWN HOLDINGS (Tenants' Compensation). [Dropped].
 WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS. [Withdrawn].
 WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS (No. 2). [Dropped].
 WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS [H. L.]. [Passed Lords only].

Taxation.

EXCISE LICENSES.
 FINANCE. [Royal Assent].
 MARRIED PERSONS' SMALL INDUSTRIAL INCOMES (Tax Relief). [Dropped; but the object achieved by amendment of the Finance Bill].

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS,
1896-7.

	Subscriptions.		Donations.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Boucherett, Miss J.	1	1 0		
Brodhurst, Mrs.			1	0 0
Browne, Mrs. S. W.			50	0 0
Browne, Miss A. L.	1	1 0	1	1 0
Busk, Mrs. E. H.			10	0 0
Busk, Miss H.	1	1 0		
Central and East of England N.S.W.S.	1	1 0		
Central and West of England N.S.W.S.	0	10 6		
Davies, Miss Llewelyn	1	1 0		
Dawson, Miss H.			0	10 0
Eccles, Miss.			5	0 0
Edinburgh Nat. Soc. W. S.	1	1 0		
Farrer, The Lady, 1st of 5 years promised	5	0 0		
Women's Industrial Council	1	6 0		
Meredith, Mrs.			0	5 0
Miers, Mrs.	1	0 0		
National Union of Women Workers (including 11 Associations)	3	11 0		
Pennington, Mrs. Frederick	1	1 0		
Scottish Women's Liberal Federation	1	6 0		
" " " " 11 Societies	2	15 0		
Shaen, Miss M. J.	1	1 0	1	5 11
Trevelyan, Lady	1	1 0		
Women's Liberal Federation	1	1 0		
Women's Liberal Unionist Association	1	1 0		
Women's Suffrage Society, Nottingham ...	0	10 6		
	£27	10 0	£69	1 11

THE STANSFELD MEMORIAL TRUST.

Statement of Accounts for the year ending October 31st, 1897.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Dr.						
To Balance from last Account			23			18 6
To General Receipts:—						
Donations	69	1	11			
Subscriptions	27	10	0			
Sale of Reports	0	1	4			
Dividends on £642 1s. 9d. India 3½% Stock	22	5	2			
	118	18	5			
By General Expenditure:—						
Scrutineer's Fee	50	0	0			
Printing	6	4	8			
Stamps and Stationery	3	0	6			
Parliamentary Papers	4	15	0			
Typing Scrutineer's Reports	12	14	3			
	76	14	5			
By Investment:—						
£42 1s. 9d. India 3½% Stock				50	0	0
By Balance:—						
Cash at London and County Bank ...				16	2	6
				142	16	11

Including the Investment made this year, the Stansfeld Memorial Trustees now hold £642 1s. 9d. India 3½% Stock.

Examined, and found correct,

JESSIE CONNAH, Auditor,

9, VICTORIA ROAD, KENSINGTON, W.

November 4th, 1897.

This Leaflet, issued in April, 1894, continues to accurately represent the work.

New

Office of the Society:—17, TOTHILL STREET, WESTMINSTER.

Women's Work in England and Wales,

(NOT INCLUDING LONDON)

UNDER THE

Local Government Act, 1894,

POPULARLY KNOWN AS

THE PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCILS ACT.

The coming elections under the Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1894, are the beginning of a new life in the nation. It has been well said by Dr. Spence Watson that "into villages where for centuries men and women have lived, toiled, and died, without real control of their local affairs, there will be introduced the new and stirring sense of citizenship with all its hopes and possibilities."

The object and scope of the Act is to give to rural Parishes and to Rural and Urban Districts powers such as those by which our towns have governed themselves since the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. But the new Act goes far beyond the Municipal Corporations Act in the area which it affects, and moreover has wider possibilities, for on the new local governing Bodies it is expressly provided that women may serve, and in the electorate married women have their rightful place. In addition to making provision for Parish Meetings, and Parish and District Councils, the Act reforms the constitution of Boards of Guardians everywhere.

It is now for women to look to it that they as well as men are alive to the greatness of the occasion, and that they take part in the Parish Meetings, and, in respect to the Councils and Boards of Guardians, take steps to secure the election of candidates of high character who will carry on the Local Administration on sound and honest principles.

But although it is the duty of women to see that the men elected are fit and proper persons, their duty does not end there. Not only must women offer themselves as Guardians, as heretofore, but for the Council in every Parish and in every District * one or more suitable women should be induced to let themselves be nominated as candidates,—women of some firmness of character, determined to learn the new work patiently, to co-operate with their colleagues with goodwill

* Other than a Borough.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY A. NAPIER, SEYMOUR STREET,
RUSTON SQUARE, N.W.

and tact, and capable when principle is involved of making a stand even if unsupported by others.

And what is the new work that has to be learnt and that demands the co-operation of women?

WORK OF PARISH COUNCILS.

The Powers of a Parish Council cannot here be given fully, but they include—

- (i) The appointment of overseers and assistant overseers, whose duty it will be to collect the poor-rates, levy the rate required for education, put every person qualified to vote on the proper register, and in cases of "sudden" and "urgent" emergency, to give relief to the poor. (A woman can be an overseer.)
- (ii) The holding of property for the benefit of the Parish.
- (iii) The purchase and hiring of land for allotments and other purposes (under certain conditions compulsorily).
- (iv) The entire or partial control of Parish Charities (generally not ecclesiastical) by the appointment of Charity Trustees.
- (v) The removal of nuisances.
- (vi) The obtaining, by agreement, of a proper water supply and bringing it to the houses.
- (vii) The erection of a village hall.
- (viii) The protection of village greens, rights of way, and roadside wastes, and the repair of footpaths.
- (ix) The carrying out of any of the "Adoptive Acts" if they be adopted by the Parish Meeting:—
 - (a) The Lighting and Watching Act;
 - (b) The Baths and Wash-houses Acts*;
 - (c) The Burial Acts;
 - (d) The Public Improvements Act;
 - (e) The Public Libraries Act.
- (x) The power of appeal if the Rural District Council does not fulfil its duty as local sanitary authority, or its duty of protecting public rights of way, &c.

WORK OF RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS.

The Rural District Council is the **local sanitary authority** for all that part of the area of a union which is not "urban." It will be its duty to maintain (and if necessary make) sufficient sewers, to ensure a proper supply of wholesome

* Low charges must be made for baths for the labouring classes, and for the use by them of the public laundry. Covered swimming baths may be provided and used in the Winter months for gymnasiums, or otherwise for recreation, or for parish meetings or other parochial purposes.

water (when such can be obtained at a reasonable cost), to enforce the drainage and purification of houses and the provision of proper closet accommodation, to put a stop to nuisances, to make rules as to the cleaning and ventilation, etc., of common lodging houses, to inspect meat and other kinds of food for sale, and otherwise to carry out various provisions of the Public Health Acts. It will also be in its power to supply means of nursing the sick.

In addition to the above all the powers of an urban sanitary authority may by order of the Local Government Board be conferred on a Rural District Council.

The Rural District Council will be the **highway authority**, and it will be its duty to maintain and repair the highways in a good and substantial manner, and to protect all public rights of way and road-side wastes, and it may, with the consent of the County Council, aid in maintaining rights of common.

To Rural District Councils, as to all District Councils, the powers of Justices out of Session in relation to the following matters are transferred:—

- (a) The administration of the Infant Life Protection Act;*

The Infant Life Protection Act of 1897 has replaced the earlier Act referred to in the text and foot-note on page 3. The administration of the new Act throughout England and Wales (not including London), has been entrusted to the *Boards of Guardians*.

an unfortunate heritage, it must be left by all good women of their time, talents and labour may worthily be devoted to the work here briefly indicated, and that it will be deplorable if women do not come forward when so greatly needed.

WORK OF URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS IN URBAN DISTRICTS WHICH ARE NOT BOROUGHES.

In Urban Districts which are not Boroughs the Sanitary Authority existing before the passing of the Act is transformed into the Urban District Council. It retains all its former powers, the application of which should be studied in the local

* The "Act for the better Protection of Infant Life" aims at securing that children farmed out, if under one year old, shall not suffer "serious neglect," shall be kept in "suitable" houses, and shall be provided with "proper food and attention." Even the House of Lords acknowledged that women might properly concern themselves about infant life protection.

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- (iv) The entire or partial control of Parish Charities

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To Rural District Councils, as to all District Councils, the powers of Justices out of Session in relation to the following matters are transferred:—

- (a) The administration of the Infant Life Protection Act;*
- (b) The licensing of gang masters, pawnbrokers, dealers in game, passage brokers, and emigrant runners;
- (c) The abolition of fairs and alteration of days of holding fairs;
- (d) The carrying out of the Acts relating to petroleum.

The powers of Quarter Sessions in relation to the licensing of knackers' yards are also transferred.

When it is further realised that the members of the Rural District Council are **Guardians** for the Union in which the Rural District is, and that in administering the Poor Law it is their duty to provide kindly for the sick and aged poor, to help back to self-dependence those who are capable of it, and to rear into strong and good citizens children, many of whom have an unfortunate heritage, it must be felt by all good women that time, talents and labour may worthily be devoted to the work here briefly indicated, and that it will be deplorable if women do not come forward when so greatly needed.

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* The "Act for the better Protection of Infant Life" aims at securing that children farmed out, if under one year old, shall not suffer "serious neglect," shall be kept in "suitable" houses, and shall be provided with "proper food and attention." Even the House of Lords acknowledged that women might properly concern themselves about infant life protection.

Reports. In addition to these there are transferred to it those powers of Justices out of Session and of Quarter Sessions already mentioned as being transferred in Rural Districts to Rural District Councils. The Act also confers on such Councils the right to administer any of the adoptive Acts that have been adopted in the District, and the power to purchase land, compulsorily in some cases, and imposes on such Councils the duty of protecting rights of way and roadside wastes. Further, and this provision is most important, the Act provides that the Local Government Board may confer on the Council of any Urban District all or any of the following,—the appointment of overseers and assistant overseers, the revocation of appointment of assistant overseers, and any powers, duties, and liabilities of a Parish Council.

Urban District Councillors are not, as such, Guardians, Guardians being elected separately in Urban Districts. This is well, for, without the administration of the Poor Law, the work of these Councils is ample.

Now that the eligibility of women is clear, and the qualification no difficulty, women should be found ready to act as Councillors.

WORK OF URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS IN BOROUGHES.

All Town Councils, other than the Councils of the sixty-one large Boroughs that are County Boroughs, are classed as "Urban District Councils," and it would seem natural that the work of these Councils should form the next portion of this leaflet. But, as the Act does not deal with the constitution of Town Councils, women remain ineligible for these Councils, owing to the disability imposed on them by the Municipal Corporations Act. The work of these Councils, therefore, important and interesting as it is, cannot properly be described in a leaflet entitled "Women's Work." Women voters in Boroughs should, however, obtain the information for themselves, by reading the Reports issued by their local Town Councils, with a view to using their votes with judgment.

In Boroughs there is a separate election of Guardians, so that women can serve as Guardians.

CONCLUSION.

In the first elections under the new Act, it is greatly to be hoped that women will

- (1) Poll in large numbers and for the best candidates;
- (2) Offer themselves for election.

For the former, active work in registering qualified women is a necessary preliminary; and, as preparation for the latter, careful study of the needs of localities is strongly recommended.

Published by the Women's Local Government Society. Hon. Sec., Miss Browne, 58, Porchester Terrace, W., from whom copies may be purchased at 1/9 a hundred, or 3d. a dozen, postage extra.

Leaflets in the same series are "Women's Work in London under the Local Government Act, 1894," and "Position of Women under the Local Government Act, 1894," the latter of which gives the qualifications of electors and candidates under the Act.

Leaflet of 1896, of which only the first and last paragraphs are out of date. ✓

New Office:—17, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.

Reprinted from the Penny Weekly Paper, the "Parish Councillor," January 3rd, 1896, being the 21st Weekly Article supplied on behalf of the Women's Local Government Society, under the heading "Women in Council." (Offices of the "Parish Councillor," 11, Palace Chambers, Westminster.)

THE WOMEN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOCIETY.

THE Women's Local Government Society begins the New Year well by increasing its means of activity. The energy that has already been put into the society has had the natural effect of augmenting the work that from day to day has to be done on its behalf. One consequence of this is that the assistance which has hitherto been granted to the hon. secretary now proves inadequate. To meet this difficulty a special effort has been made, and Miss Julia Cameron has been appointed as secretary, so that her services will be available in addition to those of the hon. sec., Miss Browne. An office has also been taken at Dean's Gate, Westminster (in the same building as the office of the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians), and it will be opened immediately after the holidays.

At the beginning of the New Year a re-statement of the position of the society is appropriate.

The society, which is independent of political parties, has for its function the promotion of the legal eligibility of women (i.) to elect to (ii.) to serve on all local governing bodies. It is clear that, viewed narrowly, its work is sharply defined, and it may be well to note that it does not include the promotion of the candidature of individuals. It is the business of the society to call the attention of the public to the anomalous disabilities imposed upon women in local government. Although two have already been mentioned in this series of articles, I will append the following memorandum of

Succeeded by Miss Lindsay.

the principal disabilities, as it will be found convenient for reference :—

DISABILITIES OF WOMEN IN RESPECT TO VOTING.

1. Before the Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1894, became law, women owners had votes in the election of Poor Law Guardians. That Act disfranchised them, without any reason having been offered in the House for such disfranchisement. As the law now stands, qualified women occupiers may be placed on the Parochial Register, and thereby become entitled to vote in the election of Parish Councils, District Councils (with the exception of Town Councils) and Poor Law Guardians. What is wanted is that women owners shall have the same rights as are enjoyed both by women occupiers and men owners.

2. Men who have the lodger or service qualification are, in virtue of being on the Parliamentary Register, placed on the Parochial Register, and are thereby entitled to vote in the elections under the Local Government (Eng. and W.) Act, 1894, but the two classes of women occupying the same positions in life have not votes in these elections. [If no sex disability were imposed a large number of laundry women, and some women lodge-keepers, governesses, and others would have the service qualification.]

3. A married woman, having a qualification distinct from her husband's, is entitled to vote in elections under the Local Government Act, 1894, but not in County Council, Town Council and School Board elections. What is wanted is a bill, or clause in a bill, providing that a woman shall not be disqualified by marriage for being on any local government register of electors, or for being an elector of any local authority, provided that a husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property.

4. No woman is entitled to vote in the School Board elections in the City of London. The number of women suffering under this disability is not inconsiderable.

DISABILITIES OF WOMEN IN RESPECT TO ELIGIBILITY.

A. No woman is eligible as a County Councillor.

B. No woman is eligible as a Town Councillor.

It is, of course, the business of the committee to endeavour to get enabling Bills introduced, and to promote their adoption by Parliament.

But if the question be asked, "By what *indirect* means may the society fitly promote its object?" then at once it is seen that the hitherto clearly defined marge of the scope of the society vanishes and the field is limitless. The object of the society is promoted by everything that helps women engaged in the work of local government to do that work well, by everything that helps any woman to take an intelligent interest in local government, and by everything that promotes the friendly co-operation of men and women citizens. Is it thirty, or more, years since Mill said as follows?—

"Is there so great a superfluity of men fit for high duties that society can afford to reject the service of any competent person? Are we so certain of always finding a man made to our hands for any duty or function of social importance that we lose nothing by putting a ban upon one half of mankind and refusing beforehand to make their faculties available, however distinguished they may be?"

And then, again, with the beauty of exact truth :—

"Any limitation of the field of selection deprives society of some chances of being served by the competent, without ever saving it from the incompetent."

The constitution of the society is of the simplest. It consists of all men and women who signify approval of its object, and pay a subscription of any amount. There is an annual meeting of members to receive the annual report and statement of accounts, and to elect the president, vice-presidents, and executive committee. The council of supporters is also elected by the society. The committee elects the hon. secretary and the hon. treasurer. Associations may affiliate and may send representatives to the annual meeting. All leaflets, &c., published by the society are sent to every member and to every affiliated association.

The society has 65 corresponding members, mostly women. Corresponding members ascertain (through an elector when possible) the opinions of the local Member of Parliament touching our cause, and, when an enabling Bill is coming on, endeavour to

arrange for constituents to make an appeal to their Member to support the Bill. The sympathy of every County Councillor should also be sought, for petitions from County Councils in favour of the Bill for Women County Councillors must necessarily carry weight; and it should always be remembered that the London County Council, the only Council on which women have served, has more than once petitioned in favour of their eligibility. Some corresponding members have furnished our hon. sec. with valuable information as to local arrangements by the County Councils for Technical Education, and with a record of the women members of the local District and Parish Councils. It is also most useful to report to our society should any legal difficulty be alleged in the way of a woman's candidature. The committee would like to have a corresponding member in every Parliamentary division.

In conclusion, let me earnestly invite, on behalf of my society, the co-operation of all men and women who take a broad view of local government. For the maintenance of a secretary and an office increased support is necessary, and we think that our reports, which we shall be glad to furnish, show that we deserve it, for they explain how much has been done with a small income, and with little paid help.

I would like to add that I trust these articles will be understood as not exclusively addressed to women. It is true that one object is to place the experience of some women Councillors at the service of others, but another object is to present to readers of both sexes some outline, however imperfect, of the work that "Women in Council" are doing, and some facts from a woman's point of view; and, though it is natural that to some points I should specially invite the attention of women, yet even in respect to these the co-operation of men is essential.

MARY STEWART KILGOUR,

(*Women's Local Government Society.*)

Office: 4, ~~Sanctuary,~~ 17, Tothill Street,
Westminster, S.W.

New

Women & the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882.

WOMEN have special disabilities under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882.

The Courts have decided that under that Act women are not eligible as Members of Town Councils, and married women cannot vote in the election of Town Councils.

The Local Government Act, 1894, secured to Women the right to serve as Members of Parish Councils, and as Members of District Councils (Rural and Urban), other than Town Councils.

The same Act of 1894 decreed that the fact of being married shall not prevent a properly qualified married woman from voting in the election of Parish and District Councils,—provided that the same property shall not qualify both husband and wife.

The Act of 1894 did not make any alteration in the electorate of Town Councils, nor in the eligibility of persons to serve on Town Councils; and consequently, until a new Act amends the Municipal Corporations Act, no woman within a borough is eligible to serve on the Council, and no married woman can vote in the election of that Council.

Now, when the population of an Urban District grows large, the townspeople are apt to get up a petition for a Charter which shall give the town the status of a borough, and shall make its local Council into a Town Council.

If the application for a "Charter of Incorporation" is successful, those **married women** who have previously had the right to vote in the election of the Urban District Council are **disfranchised**, and henceforth **only men are eligible to serve on the Council.**

From the above, it is clear that the prosperity of a town which entitles it to be raised to the status of a Municipal Corporation brings **loss of rights to women.**

If this does not approve itself to you, will you use your influence in favour of such amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act as will remove the disabilities referred to?

This leaflet can be obtained at 8d. a hundred, postage extra, from the Office of the Women's Local Government Society, 17, Tothill Street, Westminster.

May, 1897.

100

WOMEN ON SCHOOL BOARDS.

BY MISS DAVENPORT HILL, M.L.S.B.

WOMEN are now engaged in various occupations, which thirty or forty years ago no one dreamed they would be able to undertake, and have entered upon professions and trades held only a few years since to be the exclusive property of men. No one will deny that women have attained to a large measure of success in the several callings to which they have gained admission. It might, therefore, seem a work of supererogation to put forward arguments in support of women taking their place on School Boards, especially when we remember that about two-thirds of School Board teachers are women, while more than half the pupils are girls; added to this there are the infant boys, who as much as the girls need a woman's influence in legislating for them. The London School Board has recognised (and doubtless the large provincial Boards have also) the necessity for the presence of women on its Boards of Local Managers; it has made a rule that a certain proportion of the members on these Boards must be women. But so much prejudice yet remains against women entering into public work, that it lessens the number of those who are willing to sit on School Boards. It has as yet prevented an alteration in the law necessary to enable them to sit on County Councils, notwithstanding that these bodies have to deal with Baby-farming Establishments, Industrial Schools, Female Lunatics, etc. Therefore a few words urging the advantage of the presence of women on School Boards are not out of place.

Women naturally understand the needs of children better than men can do. Education does not mean book-learning alone, but includes the formation of character; thus the friendly intercourse of the woman member with the woman teacher,—allowing as it does opportunities for discussion of various matters in connection with the children, which for obvious reasons can be much more free than with a male member,—forms a strong reason for women sitting on School Boards.

The teaching of technical subjects, such as Cooking, Laundry-work, and Housewifery, which now forms an important part of the education of girls, requires a power of entering into detail, and the patience necessary for the exercise of that power is a feminine rather than a masculine quality. Also, the women who do become Members of School Boards generally possess leisure—a mother with a family of children has no right to undertake such work—

leisure which enables them to devote time to their duties as Members, which are arduous and continuous, and require their constant attention. The male members on the other hand have most frequently their profession or their business to occupy a great part of their time. To them the larger undertakings of the Board are naturally more important, and details appear insignificant and unnecessary, though they are equally essential to success.

The presence of educated and refined women on Public Bodies not only tends to soften the acerbities of debate, but what is of far higher importance helps to raise their moral tone.

Committees of the London School Board on which Women served, 1894-7.

PREPARED FROM NOTES BY MRS. MAITLAND, M.L.S.B.,
MRS. HOMAN, M.L.S.B., and MISS EVE, M.L.S.B.

There are six grand Committees under the L.S.B., viz. :—

- I. **The School Accommodation and Attendance Committee.**
- II. **The Works Committee.**
- III. **The School Management Committee.**
- IV. **The Finance Committee.**
- V. **The General Purposes Committee.**
- VI. **The Industrial Schools Committee.**

The work of these Committees has to be shared amongst the 55 Members of the Board, and women members are as free as men in choosing the Committees on which they will serve.

During the period 1894—7 women served on Committees I, II, III, and VI, and on 20 out of 27 of the Sub-Committees among which the work is divided.

I. **The Committee on School Accommodation and Attendance** has to enforce the Bye-Laws dealing with the attendance at school of all the children, including the Blind, Deaf, Difficult, and Crippled children; it watches the growth and shifting of population, decides on the districts in which additional School provision is needed, and decides where a new site should be acquired or an old one disposed of; it also watches all Bills in Parliament which affect the Board's work, and conducts *most* of the Board's correspondence with the Education Department. Miss DAVENPORT HILL and Mrs. HOMAN were on this Committee.

II. With regard to the work of the **Works Committee** on which Mrs. MAITLAND served, its duties are to select Contractors

to build all schools and to carry out enlargements; to see to all repairs, either to buildings or apparatus; to attend to the sanitary and warming arrangements of all schools, and to make such interior alterations as may be desired; the school-keepers and cleaners are all appointed by this Committee; and all Contractors are selected by it; also all Clerks of Work and men employed direct by the Board for minor repairs are under it; all the water supply, gas, and coals for the schools and the electric lighting of the head office are arranged for by it.

There are four Sub-Committees, dealing with,—

Contracts, Coals, Gas and Water. Mrs. MAITLAND.

This Committee has to arrange for the Tenders of all Works being advertised, and the Tenders being opened, etc.

Furniture and Repairs.

Sanitation and Warming.

Sites and Plans. Mrs. MAITLAND. The business is to see all plans before they are sent to the Department for sanction; also to consult with Architect and Surveyor with regard to best utilisation of Sites and Buildings, etc.

III. **The School Management Committee.** Miss EVE and Mrs. MAITLAND, and until 1896 Miss DAVENPORT HILL and Mrs. HOMAN.

This Committee has eleven Sub-Committees, eight of which deal with the following matters :—

Evening Continuation Schools. Miss EVE.

This has to do with the organisation and management of all evening schools, work which is constantly growing.

Domestic Subjects. The four Women of the Board were on this Committee, which manages the Needlework, Cookery, Laundry and Housewifery (this last quite a new development).

Pupil Teachers. Miss EVE. All questions affecting Pupil Teachers and Pupil Teacher Centres.

Requisitions and Stocktaking. Mrs. MAITLAND.

The work is to go into all requisitions of School Material.

Royal Normal College for the Blind, lately acquired by the Board for the boarding and training of the Blind, both girls and boys, up to 16 years of age. Mrs. HOMAN.

Special Instruction, the Deaf, the Dumb, and the Blind. The selection of Teachers for this work is of great importance. Mrs. HOMAN and Mrs. MAITLAND

were on this Sub-Committee, and in addition to watching the instruction given to the deficient children, etc., they had also Local Committees under them who board out children whose homes are too far from special centres for them to go to and fro; this branch of work is increasing.

Special Subjects of Instruction. Miss DAVENPORT HILL and Mrs. MAITLAND. The work is the watching of Classes under the Science and Art Department, Manual Training, Hand and Eye Training, Physical Education, Kindergarten, and Music.

Teaching Staff. Miss DAVENPORT HILL and Mrs. MAITLAND. This Sub-Committee has the appointment of Teachers, and the nomination for Headships; and all complaints and difficulties in connection with Teachers come before it.

VI. With regard to the **Committee on Industrial Schools**, the Board find Industrial Schools for about 2,000 children yearly, all under magistrates' orders. The Women Members of the Committee make a point of enquiring into the present and future welfare of these children. The Board have only six such Schools of their own, and send a large number of children to Schools not under their own jurisdiction, having agreements with 66 Schools under Voluntary Managers throughout the country. Of this Committee, Miss DAVENPORT HILL, Miss EVE, and Mrs. HOMAN were members, and also served on one or more of the six Sub-Committees, of one of which Miss DAVENPORT HILL was Chairman.

It should also be mentioned that Miss DAVENPORT HILL and Mrs. HOMAN served on the **Special Committee on Manual Training**.

ATTENDANCES.

The attendances of Members at Board Meetings and at Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings have been tabulated for the years 1894—5 and 1895—6, from November to November—"actual attendances" side by side with "possible attendances." The Women Members have attended as under:—

	1894—5.		1895—6.	
	Possible.	Actual.	Possible.	Actual.
Miss EVE	253	226	238	202
Miss DAVENPORT HILL ...	273	206	268	250
Mrs. HOMAN	269	236	262	248
Mrs. MAITLAND	228	212	250	235

The above record shows a considerable amount of work as the share of 4 members of the London School Board out of a total of 55, and it must be remembered that on many Provincial School Boards women are doing good work.

LEAFLET I.

Women & Parish Councils.

It is of great importance that women should take their due share of the steady unobtrusive work that has to be done on Parish Councils.

Something like a hundred women have already served as Parish Councillors, and there is strong reason for believing that their work is thoroughly appreciated by their men colleagues, as well as by those whom they represent.

POWERS OF PARISH COUNCILS.

The Powers of the Parish Council cannot here be given fully, but they include—

- (i) The appointment of overseers and assistant overseers, whose duty it will be to collect the poor-rates, levy the rate required for education, put every person qualified to vote on the proper register, and in cases of "sudden" and "urgent" emergency, to give relief to the poor. (A woman can be an overseer.)
- (ii) The holding of property for the benefit of the Parish.
- (iii) The purchase and hiring of land for allotments and other purposes (under certain conditions compulsorily).
- (iv) The entire or partial control of Parish Charities (in general not of ecclesiastical Charities) by the appointment of Charity Trustees.
- (v) The removal of nuisances.
- (vi) The obtaining, by agreement, of a proper water supply and bringing it to the houses.
- (vii) The erection of a village hall.
- (viii) The protection of village greens, rights of way, and roadside wastes, and the repair of footpaths, not being footpaths at the side of a public road.

(ix) The carrying out of any of the "Adoptive Acts," if they be adopted by the Parish Meeting:—

- (a) The Lighting and Watching Act;
- (b) The Baths and Wash-houses Acts*;
- (c) The Burial Acts;
- (d) The Public Improvements Act;
- (e) The Public Libraries Act.

(x) The power of appeal if the Rural District Council does not fulfil its duty as local sanitary authority, or its duty of protecting public rights of way, &c.

SOME NOTES FROM WOMEN PARISH COUNCILLORS.

There should be at least one woman on every Parish Council. There are persons of experience, as Miss Jane Escombe, Penshurst P.C., who urge that it is woman's appreciation of detail that is wanted, her appreciation of the importance of small sums of money, her power of getting into touch with her neighbours over questions of the home. Others, equally experienced, as Miss Isabella Ford, P.C., say that it is simply the best qualities of the human being that are wanted, rather than those supposed to be specially womanly.

Though the functions of all Parish Councils are the same (or may be if the Parish Meeting so wills it), yet the work done by one Parish Council is often unlike that done by another.

The Parish Council has the right to utilise the supply of water within the Parish, and one woman Parish Councillor writes of a fight for cottage water supply and supply for schools, and the same Councillor tells of success in preserving "roadside eatage" to the public, and that, in the cases of certain guilty landlords, her Council has been successful in getting stolen land restored. The ownership of the village pound is another important question.

* Low charges must be made for baths for the labouring classes, and for the use by them of the public laundry. Covered swimming baths may be provided and used in the Winter months for gymnasiums, or otherwise for recreation, or for parish meetings or other parochial purposes.

Another Councillor, Mrs. Barker, of Sherfield-on-Loddon, who was Chairman of her Council, writes sympathetically of the difficulties of the people whose homes become almost inaccessible in winter-time to tradesmen and doctor, for want of repair of footpath or stile, and points out that when repairs are needed it is first necessary to know whose duty it is to do them. Mrs. Barker, in her own Parish, induced her Council to take the effective step (satisfactory alike to the public and the landowner) of getting all acknowledged rights of way marked on an ordnance map, one copy to be kept in the parish chest, and other copies publicly displayed.

The relief that can be given by an Overseer in "sudden" and "urgent" cases, includes the attendance of the parish doctor. With this in view, Mrs. McIlquham, when Chairman of the Council of Staverton, a Parish 4 miles from the nearest town, moved that the best of the village midwives be appointed as one of five Overseers. Her colleagues were well aware of cases in the village in which medical assistance had proved to be essential and was yet unattainable by the husband, which cases had consequently ended fatally: and the appointment was made by a unanimous vote.

There are women Parish Councillors who have been appointed as Trustees to parochial charities; and there are some who are Parish Clerks, as, for example, Miss Jenkins (now Mrs. Freeman), who at the first meeting of the Council of Trecefel, was elected Clerk. Miss Jane Escombe, of the Penshurst Parish Council has been appointed Secretary of a Special Committee, chosen from members of the Parish Council and the Rural District Council, to deal with the Housing question in the village.

CANDIDATURE.

In order to be able to stand for election to the Parish Council, a woman must fulfil one or other of two conditions: either her name must be on the List of

Parochial Electors, or she must have resided within the Parish for a full year.

No one should be deterred from Candidature by finding that in her Parish there are some who are prejudiced against the election of a woman. Such prejudice quickly passes away when good work is done quietly. A village might be mentioned where the prejudice against having any woman on the Council was so strong that several men walked long distances "to save the Parish the disgrace of being represented by a woman"! But the woman was elected, and after she had served for a year, the men of the adjoining village begged her to serve on their Council too!

CONCLUSION.

It is now for women to look to it that they as well as men are alive to their public duty, and that they help to make the Parish Council a power for good in every village. It has been well said "*for even a few to act effectively, how many must be feeling, thinking, wishing in the same direction!*" And again,—of women,—*they have a work in society as truly as in the home. To break through the apathy, the aloofness, which hinders so many good women from feeling this, is the first thing; so that each may say,—'I am not excused from knowing and caring about this greater life around me because I am a woman. I must feel that I have a concern in it, that it is my affair, that I have a special office and work in relation to it.' To be a mother in England—surely that is an ideal not less noble than to be a mother in Israel!*"

LEAFLET 2.

Women & Parish Councils.

By Mrs. E. O. FORDHAM
(Parish Councillor for Guilden Morden).

Every Woman who takes a real interest in the village where she lives has seen the need of the work and influence of Women in various ways, and must have rejoiced when the elections under the "Local Government Act, 1894," for the newly created Parish Councils, gave Women an equal chance with men to stand for and be elected to the "Village Parliament." I was invited to become a Candidate for the Parish Council in a village where I have worked for many years, and after a stormy time, which is old history now, I was elected—one woman with eight men.

In my village, the need for allotments was great, the land the men had was poor, far from their homes, and too high a price. This was the first matter we tackled, and I was elected Chairman of the "Allotments Committee." We exhausted every means in our power to obtain the necessary land, and were just deciding to apply for Compulsory Powers, when two pieces were offered to us. We accepted the offer, and the men now have land in the centre of the village, in which they take the greatest pride, and work to the best advantage. Now, this matter of Allotments is a question in which women take just as much interest as men, for the wives of the tenants are often to be seen working upon them, and the produce, the corn, potatoes, the pig, mean food for the family when bad weather brings little work and less money. I found the women just as anxious for the land as the men.

The question of the Cottages and Water Supply appeals to men and women alike, and no better work can be done by women than bringing the matter before the public and making a representation from the Parish Council to the Rural District Council. I know a village a few miles away where the water supply was so bad and insufficient that the children were continually suffering from skin eruption. A woman deeply interested

in the life of the village was returned to the Council, and almost alone and unaided, she has, after two years' work and determination, managed to get a proper and sufficient supply of water for the people. When the new well was sunk, the villagers crowded round with the deepest interest, and a few days later, when I went up to see it, the women flocked out of their cottages to show me what meant in a large measure health to them and their families.

Then the Charities; how many have been unearthed, new schemes adopted, and money or kind distributed fairly to those for whom it was intended! We need men and women to look into these matters and bring their different qualities to bear upon all the questions which touch equally the lives of both. In the larger villages, the Councils, through the Parish Meeting, may put in force the Adoptive acts, and improve the life of the people by erecting Public Libraries and Washhouses, and laying out Burial Grounds.

One of the first matters the Council upon which I sit went into, was the question of a Burial Ground; the Churchyard was full, and the Nonconformists had no burying place. The Parish Meeting gave its consent, and we now have a prettily planted ground with a lych gate, and hope to have the Churchyard closed before long.

In conclusion, let me impress upon all men and women who read this, the real necessity for women upon these Councils; let none say, "there are first-rate men standing, and they can do the work as well as women." **That is not the question.** We must have **both**; women are needed to work with men, to make life better and purer for the men, women, and children living in the villages of this country. There is no definite work for women apart from men, but as both are necessary in the home to secure good management and happiness, both are equally necessary in the government of the village by the Parish Council, if it is to be of the use it was intended by the "Local Government Act, 1894."

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