

# NINTH ANNUAL REPORT 

of the

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of THE

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY EOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 29th, 1876.

MANCHESTER

## REP0RT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. 1875-1876.

$\mathrm{A}^{\mathrm{T}}$the close of another year of their labours your Committee have to report a continuance of the support, both Parliamentary and general, which has been heretofore accorded them, and to record many events having an important bearing on the progress and prospects of the measure which have occurred during their term of office.

Among these events, the re-election for Manchester of the original autbor of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill, Mr. Jacob Bright, is first in order of time, and calls for especial recognition from this committee, who have the honour of numbering him among their members, and the advantage of his personal co-operation in their work.

The lamented and unexpected death of Mr. Callender in the early part of the year, caused a vacancy in the representation of Manchester. The election took place on the 17th of February, when Mr. Jacob Bright was returned by 22,770 votes, against 20,925 polled for his opponent, Mr. F. S. Powell-a majority of 1,785 .

The election of Mr. Jacob Bright occurred a few days after the opening of Parliament, therefore when he took his seat the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill was already before the House of Commons. Mr. Forsyth introduced the measure on February 9th, and the second reading was fixed for Wednesday, April 26th. Sir Robert Anstruther, the Right. Hon. Russell Gurney, and the Right Hon. James Stansfeld again put their names on the Bill.

The debate on the second reading was opened by

Mr. Forsyth in a sound and effective speech. Viscount Folkstone moved and Mr. E. A. Leatham seconded the rejection of the measure. The Bill was ably supported by Mr. Jacob Bright, Dr. Ward, Professor Fawcett, Sir Robert Anstruther, and Sir Charles Legard, and opposed by Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Smollet, Mr. Henry Chaplin, Mr. Egerton Hubbard, and lastly by Mr. John Bright. Up to the rising of Mr. Bright the improved tone of the debate and of the temper in which the House appeard to regard the question justified the expectation of a corresponding improvement in the division list. But, as on a former occasion, when the House of Commons had assented to the principle of the measure, further progress was arrested by the action of a professedly Liberal government, so now when the House again appeared disposed to give favourable consideration to the claim a check was interposed through the agency of a professedly Liberal statesman. The opponents of the Bill appear to have been spurred to desperation by the smallness of their majority last year, and they brought forward the most powerful living advocate of free and representative government for men to contend against the application of the same principle to women. But though they succeeded in increasing the number of votes against the Bill, and in raising their majority from 35 last year to 87 , it is a noteworthy proof of the strength of the movement that the eloquence of the most powerful voice in the House of Commons could not diminish, even by a unit, the numbers of those who stood firm by the principles of political justice without distinction of sex or class. Mr. Bright's speech was a remarkable one; it was characterised throughout by a tone of doubt and hesitation very unusual with the speaker; it contained the admission that the claim might become irresistible some time; it was rather a string of tentative objections than a connected argument ; and it did not appear to contain anything which
need preclude the speaker from reverting to his original vote, should further reflection cause him to perceive the untenable character of most of the objections which he found to urge against the proposal.

The votes for the Bill were the same as last year, namely, 152 ; the votes against, 239 ; majority against the Bill, 87 . The numbers last year were, for the Bill, 152 ; against, 187 ; majority 35.

Counting tellers and pairs in the divisions of 1871, $1872,1873,1875$, and 1876 , there were-

For the bill. against. absent.


 Totals....... $\overline{159} \overline{163} \overline{172} 170161 \overline{228} \overline{242} \overline{239} \overline{205} \overline{246} \overline{289} \overline{253} \overline{247} \overline{274} \overline{245}$

The following table shows the numbers for and against the Bill in six divisions beginning with 1870 :-



The Irish Home Rulers, thirteen of whom voted for and eight against the Bill, are here classed as Liberals. Several changes have taken place in the constituencies since the division, but taking them as they then stood, the following result appears compared with the last Parliament. Those members who took part in the last division, and those who have at any time voted for the Bill, and have not given any indication of a change in their sentiments, are counted as supporters. On this basis six of the three-cornered constituencies - namely, Birmingham, Buckinghamshire, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester-give either their full vote, or each a majority of their vote, in support of the Bill. Thirty-four constituencies, as against twenty-four in the last Parliament, give their full vote of two each in favour of the Bill, namely:-

| Blackburn <br> Bolton | Exeter <br> Edinburgh | Portsmouth <br> Preston |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Brighton | Finsbury | Salford |
| Bristol | Galway | Salisbury |
| Cavan | Kingston-on-Hull | Southampton |
| Cork Co. | Leicester | Stockport |
| Devonport | Macclesfield | Waterford |
| Devon, E. | Mayo | Wenlock |
| Dover | Meath | Wexford Co. |
| Dundee Merthyr$\quad$ Worcester |  |  |
| Durham, N. | Newcastle-on-Tyne York |  |
| Essex, E. |  |  |

Eighty-three constituencies, as against seventy in the last Parliament, give their full voice of one each in favour of the measure, namely :-

| Aberdeen, City | Ennis | Marlborough |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Abingdon | Evesham | Morpeth |
| Ashton-u-Lyne | Falkirk | Newport, I. W. |
| Athlone | Fife | Newry |
| Banbury | Flint Dist. | Northallerton |
| Beaumaris | Forfarshire | Orkney and Shet- |
| Bewdley | Glasgow and | land |
| Burnley | Aberdeen Uni- | Paisley |
| Caithness | versities | Pembroke Dist. |
| Calne | Gravesend | Perth |
| Cardigan Dist. | Greenock | Portarlington |
| Carrickfergus | Grimsby | Richmond |
| Chatham | Haddington Dist. | Rochdale |
| Cheltenham | Haverfordwest | Stockton-on-Tees |
| Chichester | Hawick | Swansea |
| Cirencester | Helston | Tewkesbury |
| Cockermouth | Hythe | Tynemouth |
| Coleraine | Invernessshire | Wakefield |
| Darlington | Inverness Dist. | Wallingford |
| Devizes | Kidderminster | Walsall |
| Dewsbury | Kilkenny | Warrington |
| Droitwich | Kilmarnock | Westbury |
| Dudley | Kinsale | Wexford |
| Dumbarton | Lanark, S. | Wick |
| Dumfries | Launceston | Wigton |
| Dundalk | Leith | Wilton |
| Dungannon | Leominster | Windsor |
| Edinburgh and | Linlithgow | Youghal |
| St andrew's | Maldon |  |

Twenty-two constituencies gave one vote to the Bill, their other vote being neutral on the last division:-

| Carmarthen Co. Hants, N. | Marylebone |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Devon, N. | Ipswich | Queen's Co. |
| Dublin City | Kildare | Southwark |
| Fermanagh | King's Co. | Stoke |
| Galway Co. | Leicester | Yorkshire West |
| Grantham | Limerick Co. | Riding N.D. |
| Greenwich | Londonderry Co. | Yorkshire North |
| Halifax | Louth Co. | Riding |

Twenty-five constituencies gave one vote for and one against the Bill, being twenty-five on each side :-

| Bath | Down | Penryn \&Falmouth |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Bedford | Durham S. | Reading |
| Boston | Gloucester E. | Scarborough |
| Bradford | Hackney | Sheffield |
| BurySt.Edmunds | Leicester N. | Somerset Mid. |
| Cambridge | Northampton | Sunderland |
| Chelsea | Northumberland S. Surrey W. |  |
| Coventry | Oldham | Wolverhampton |

Devon S.
Thus 119 constituencies, as against 94 last Parliament, give clear and full votes for the Bill ; and 26 clear, though not full, votes for it. Therefore 145 constituencies appear as clearly ranged in favour of the Bill.

The changes which have occurred in the representation of several of these constituencies since the division do not seem have a material influence on the calculations. The most noteworthy of these changes is the removal of Mr. Disraeli from the House of Commons to the House of Lords as Earl of Beaconsfield. Your Committee desire here to recognise the services
rendered by Mr. Disraeli to the cause of just and constitutional representation. He was the first member of the House of Commons who declared, during the debates on the Reform question which preceded the Act of 1867, his conviction that political rights were not the sole heritage of men. In April, 1866, Mr. Disraeli is recorded in Hansard to have said:-"If there is to be universal suffrage, women have as much right to vote as men; and more than that, a woman having property ought now to have a vote." In the revised and corrected edition of Mr. Disraeli's speeches on Parliamentary Reform the passage appears thus amplified:"I say that in a country governed by a woman-where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm-peeresses in their own right, for example-where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts-where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor-I do not see, where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote."

Mr. Disraeli consistently acted on the principles here arowed by voting for the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Bill, when that motion was brought forward, whether by Mr. Jacob Bright or Mr. Forsyth. His vote was given in the divisions of 1871, 1873, 1875, and 1876-and in gratefully recognising his past services to their cause, your Committee desire to record their sense of the great loss which they have sustained in the withdrawal from the arena of the next campaign of so powerful and consistent a supporter as the head of Her Majesty's Government.

During the session of 1876 , there were presented to the House of Commons 1,117 petitions, signed by

370,166 persons in favour of the Women's Disabilities Bill. This far exceeds the number of petitioners for any other object during the session. One petition was presented against the Bill. This was from the Town Council of Kilmarnock, and it is conspicuous as a solitary instance of opposition to the measure. The petitions sent through the efforts of members and friends of the Manchester Society were 263 -with 128,174 signatures. The petitions from Manchester received 40,059, and from Salford 20,159 signatures. Huddersfield sent a petition from 2,143 electors, headed by the leading members of both political parties, and containing some of the most influential names in the town. In addition to this, there was a general petition signed by 7,639 men and women, a petition signed by the chairman of one of the largest public meetings ever held in Huddersfield, and last, but not least, a petition in favour of the Bill from the Town Council. From this it is evident that whatever success the objections of Mr. Leatham may meet with in other quarters, he has failed to convince his own constituency that it is either just or wise to mar the recognition of the principle of household suffrage for men, by the confiscation and denial of the rights of thousands of householders whose claims both in equity and conformity with the laws regulating every other representative government in this country, are as good as those which are allowed. Your Committee desire to urge the great importance of the petition and to exhort their friends to continue this mode of action.

The meetings held during the past year have not been so numerous as formerly. Your Committee have proceeded on the principle that it was more desirable to use the resources at their disposal in endeavouring to make every meeting organised hy them thoroughly successful
than to attempt to hold a larger number at the expense of bestowing less pains to render each one effective.

In the month of November, 1875, a great and densely crowded meeting was held in the Armoury, Huddersfield, when resolutions in support of the Bill were carried with hardly any dissentients. The meeting was characterised by the Huddersfield Examiner as one of the largest and most influential ever held in Huddersfield. There was a fair representation of all classes, the speaking was of the highest order, and the interest was fully sustained to the close. Meetings were also held at Stalybridge, York, under the presidency of Lord Houghton ; Kendal, Batley, and Brighouse. Your Secretary has taken part in all these meetings, and has also attended meetings organised by other branches of the National Society at Kings Lynn, Lincoln, Knaresborough, Malton, Bath, Barnstaple, London (three), Ipswich, Edinburgh (three), Glasgow, Belfast, and Dublin. Miss Becker has also delivered lectures at Rhyl, Llandudno, Llanrwst, New Brighton, and Harrogate.

Some of the foregoing meetings were arranged or attended by Miss Beedy, who also arranged and spoke at a meeting at Bangor on behalf of your Committee, and visited the following places with good results:-Shrewsbury, Denbigh, Wrexham, Mold, Welshpool, and Newtown. Miss Beedy's able and energetic services to the Society during the few years of her residence in this country are deserving of the highest praise, and will be gratefully remembered by all interested in the movement.

During the past year your Committee's agent, Mrs. M‘Cormick, has visited the following places:-Ripon (twice), Northallerton (twice), Middlesbrough (twice), Thirsk (twice), Huddersfield, Preston, Stalybridge, Southport (twice), Blackburn, York, Derby, Lichfield,

Hanley, Stafford, Batley, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dadley, Kidderminster, Kendal, Bolton, Wigan, Liverpool, Congleton, Llandudno, Rhyl, Llanrwst, Colne, Harrogate, New Brighton, Carlisle, Grimsby, Hull, Darlington, Redcar, and Seaton Carew. Mrs. M‘Cormick arranged and attended the five meetings organised by your Committee, attended at the five lectures delivered by Miss Becker, and devoted 173 days to office and other work in Manchester.

In the month of March proposals for an amalgamation of the Yorkshire Society with the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage were agreed to by the committees of both Societies. Your Committee believe that this arrangement will conduce to the efficiency and economy of the work in the North of England.
The Society continues to receive an accession of new members, and the Women's Suffrage Journal obtains a wider circulation. The income of the Society has been larger than that received in any previous year, and while a large proportion of the liabilities at the end of the last financial year have been discharged, the balance in hand shows a slight increase over that of the corresponding period of last year. There is urgent need for a continuance and an increase of support of this kind, for which your Committee desire earnestly to appeal to the friends of the cause.

They have to deplore the loss by death of valued friends and supporters. Pre-eminent among the friends thus mourned stands the name of the late Mr. Thomasson, of Bolton. He was one of the earliest and most generous contributors to the funds of the Society, and as his acquaintance with the movement grew his interest in it increased. He was an active member of your Committee, he was constant in his attendance at their meetings, and
ever ready to aid them with his counsels and his support. Your Committee desire to place on record their deep sense of his worth, of the value of his services to the cause of the enfranchisement of women and to political progress generally, and of the incalculable and irreparable loss they have sustained by his sudden and premature death,

Your Committee also have to deplore the death of Miss Mary Anne Humble, of Vicar's Cross, Chester, who for some years was a munificent though anonymous donor to their funds. The death of this esteemed lady, at a ripe age, closed a long life adorned with Christian graces and generous deeds, and sanctified by grateful memories.

Within the year there has likewise passed from among us one who was not only pre-eminently the political woman of the century, but pre-eminent among the political writers and thinkers of the time. Harriet Martineau died on June 25. She was an early and firm adherent and exponent of the necessity for the political representation of women, and though from the infirm condition of her health in her later years she was unable to take an active part in the movement, she signed the petitions year after year, and remained a warm and sympathetic friend of the movement to the close of her long and useful life.

At the Conference of the National Reform Union, held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in December of last year, an amendment was moved by Miss Sturge, and adopted by the Conference by a large majority, which pledged the Union to agitate for an extension of the franchise to all householders in counties, it being understood that the word " all" was intended to include women householders. The recognition of the principle of women's suffrage by so large and representative a
gathering is to be regarded as a mark of the advance of public opinior on the question, and as a proof that the claim cannot be logically resisted by an organisation of men who are putting forth similar claims for themselves.

On the re-election of Mr. Jacob Bright to the House of Commons, Mr. Forsyth intimated his desire to resign the charge of the Bill into the hands of its original author, a decision which he has subsequently carried into effect. Your Committee hereby record their grateful sense of the services rendered to the movement by Mr. Forsyth in taking charge of the Bill in 1874, by his able guidance of the question during the sessions of 1875 and 1876,7 and for his promise of continued support to the measure whenever it shall be again brought forward in the House of Commons. The Bill has passed through two divisions while in Mr . Forsyth's hands, in one it met with the smallest opposition majority it has ever encountered, and if the hostile majority was increased last session, it was by the activity of opponents and not by any lack of energy or loss of support on the part of the supporters of the measure.

It is with feelings of cordial satisfaction that your Committee record the resumption by Mr. Jacob Bright of the charge of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill. Those who have had experience of the earnestness, ability, and prudence which he displayed during the four years of the last Parliament when he had charge of the measure, have a reasonable ground for looking forward with confidence and hope to the renewal of the campaign next session under the auspices of their old and tried leader.

Your Committee feel that the record of the past eventful year marks an era which calls for renewed and increased exertion. The issues are drawing closer, the
struggle is becoming more earnest. The increased activity of the opponents is a tribute to the growing strength of the cause, and demands yet more strenuous efforts to withstand. Much will depend on the result of the next debate and division in the House of Commons. It rests with the friends of the cause and of political justice to give adequate support to the efforts now to be made, and in asking for a renewal of their trust, your Committee earnestly appeal to those friends to sustain them in that persistence in the demand for the measure to which, as well as to its intrinsic justice, is doubtless owing to the fact that the number of its Parliamentary adherents is so large, and the support they give to the measure continues so steady. It is with the earnest conviction that the anomalous political status of women is not only unjust in itself, but injurious to the best interests of the country, that the promoters of this measure of reform press it for consideration and desire to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Of the Society, held in the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Manchester, November 29th, 1876.
The Mayor of Manchester in the Chair
The Secretary read the Report of the Executive Committee.

The Treasurer read the Statement of Accounts
Resolution I.-Moved by Jacob Bright, Esq., M.P. seconded by Rev. S. Alfred Steinthal:

That the Report and Statement of Accounts just read be adopted, and printed for circulation under the direction of the Executive

Resolution II.-Moved by Mrs. Heywood, seconded by Mr. Councillor Booth

That the following persons be the Executive Committee for the ensuing year :-Jacob Bright, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Maria Atkinson, Miss Becker, Mrs. Butler, Jhomas Chorlton,
Esq., Thomas Dale, Esq., Mrs. Gell, Rev. B. Glover, Mrs, Lucas, Esq., Thomas Dale, Esq., Mrs. Gell, Rev. B. Glover, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. R. R. Moore, Dr. Pankhurst, Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd, Rev. S. Thomasson, Miss Alice Wilson, with power to add to their number.
Resolution III.-Moved by Mrs. Oliver Scratcherd, seconded by Dr. John Watts:

That the earnest thanks of this meeting are hereby rendered to Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, the Right Hon. the Recorder of London, Sir Robert Anstruther, Bart., Mr.
Jacob Bright, Dr.Ward, Professor Fawcett, and SirCharle Bart., for introducing and supporting the Women's Disabilities Bill, also to the Members of the House of Commons who voted or paired in its favour in the division on the second reading of
Resolution IV.-Moved by J. P. Thomasson, Esq., seconded by R. D. Rusden, Esq.

That Mr. Forsyth having intimated his desire to resign the charge of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill, this meeting hereby sented to re-introduce the measure in the forthcoming Session of Parliament, and they pledge themselves to support his action
The Chair was taken by the Rev. S. Alfred Steinthal.

Resolution V.-Moved by Miss Becker, seconded by Miss A. Wilson :

That the best thanks of the meeting be given to the Mayor of and for presiding on the present occasion.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FINANCIAL YEAR, 1875-1876



$21$






Tewson, Mrs. Turner, Mr. J. Fox Taylor, Mr. C. T. (Preston)
Taylor, Mr. Wm. (Blackburn)
Talbot, Mr. Wm. ... ...
Talbot, Mr. Wm.
Thompson, Miss (Preston)
Thorne, Mrs. M. A.
Thorpe, Mrs. Fielden
Thorpe, Mr. F. (Preston)
Towle, Miss M. H.
Towle, Miss M. H.
Turnbull, Rev. Dr
Taylor, Mr. John (Blackbrurn) Tanfield, Mr. D
Thomas, Miss (Ashton)
Thompson, Mr. Richard (Yor
Thompson, Mr. J. (Kendal)
Thorpe, Mr. James .
Threlfall, Mrs.
Threlfall, Mrs. J. H.
Todd, Mrs. (Le
Turnbull, Mr. ( H artiep
Turner, Mrs. (Bognor)
Thompson, Mrs. (Ripon) (2 years) Temperley, Mr.
Thomas, Mrs. (Llandyssul)
Thompson, Mr. J. (Blackburn
Thompson, Mrs. (Dudley)
Tod, Miss I
Turner, Mr Thos. (Dudley)
Turton, Mr. G
Thwaites, Mr. Thos. .
Turnbull, M1
Tenby, Mr.

Unwin, Mrs.
villiers, Rt. Hon. C. P., M.P
Villiers, Rt. Hon. C. ., M.P
Vero, Mrs. David
Vero, Mr. Wm. ...
... ...

Vero, Mr. Wm.
Winkworth, Mrs. Stephen
Walker, Mr • J. J. (Hanley)
Whittaker, Mr. W. (Broughton)
Winder, Mrs. R.
Woodall, Mr. W
Woodhead, Mr. (Huädersfielä)
Worthington, Mr. T. (Hanley)
Wright, Mr. Owen (Dudley)
Whitehead, Mr
Wilkinson, Misses (York)...
Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. H. J.
Ward, Mr. A.
Whiteside, Dr
Wintringham, Mr. Joh
Woodruff, Mr. G. W
Worthington, Mr. Thomas (Manchester)
W alton, Mrs


[^0]White, Mr. George ... .... ..
Wilson, Mr. Chas. (Garston) (2 years)
Wilson, Mr. J. Whitwell (Ken
Wright, Mr. B. P. (Stafford)
Watts, Mrs. Alfr
Wayham, Mrs.
Whitelegge, Miss
Wildman, M
Wilkinson \& Airey, Messrs
Wilson, Miss Alice
Woodhead, Mrs. (Manches
Woodhead, Mr. H. (Manchester)
Woodhead, Miss Luc
Worthington, Rev. A. W
Wright, Mr. S. (Middlesbrouster)
iddows, Mr.
Walker, Mr. Tho (Darlington)...
Walmesley, Mr. L. S. Huddersfiela
Waugh, Mr. James
Webster, Mr. J. (Darlington)
Whyte, Mr. James
Wright, Mr. E. A. (Cork)
Walton, M
Wheoler, Mrs.
Walker, Mrs. (Ripois)
Whalley, Mr. J. ...
Withali, Mrs. H. A.
Yates, Mrs. R. V


The following Subscriptions and Donations have been received since
Accounts were made up.
Mc Kerrow Rev. Dr

Lomas, Mr. W., J.P
$\begin{array}{llll}\ldots . . & 0 & 10 & 6 \\ \cdots & 0 & 10 & 0\end{array}$
Lomas, Mr. W., J.P...
Berry, Mr. James
Fletcher, Mr. Peter
Graham, Mr. Joseph.
Uttley, Mr. H., J.P..
$\begin{array}{lll}0 & 10 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 0\end{array}$
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Cowrill, Mr. R. J. ...
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[^0]:    $\begin{array}{lll}\text { £ } & \text { s. } & \text { d. } \\ 0 & 10 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 0\end{array}$
    $\begin{array}{ll}0 & 10 \\ 0 & 10\end{array}$

