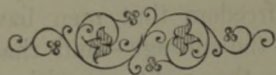


no rights at all, as such. The children have claims on her as their mother. She brings them into the world with pain, she must nurse them, and on her their whole care and charge is thrown while they are in the first weak and helpless condition of their being. But, once she has done for them what nobody else can do, all her claim to them ceases. They belong entirely to their father; or, if the father be dead, to his father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or friend, especially if the religion he "adopted" at the font, when he was an infant of a week old, is not the religion which she professes and would wish to teach them, and if it can be "presumed" that he desired they should be taught his creed.

This is surely one of the wrongs of women which most sorely need redress; and certain it is that, if women had anything to do with making the law, it would not long remain so.—*June 10, 1871.*



National Society for Women's Suffrage,

Central Committee,

9, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

TREASURER—HENRY HOARE, Esq., 37, Fleet Street, E.C.

BANKERS—LONDON AND WESTMINSTER BANK, 217, Strand.

SECRETARY—MISS EMMA A. SMITH.

REPORT of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE presented at the GENERAL MEETING of the CENTRAL COMMITTEE, held at the WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL, on WEDNESDAY, JULY 17th, 1872.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE of THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE was formed in November, 1871. For a long time previous there had been a growing feeling amongst the supporters of Women's Suffrage in London, and the more prominent Committees in the country, that the constantly increasing width and strength of the movement called for a more centralized mode of action than its initial stages rendered necessary, or perhaps possible. Prompted by this feeling a number of friends in London, at the request of Professor SHELDON AMOS, met and formed themselves into a Committee, on the 6th of November, 1871. At their request Mrs. FREDERICK PENNINGTON, Professor AMOS, and Mr. CHARLES H. HOPWOOD undertook to act as Honorary Secretaries. On the Committee being formed it lost no time in putting itself into communication with the leading Provincial Committees, which at once promised co-operation to the fullest extent.

A circular was issued inviting the co-operation of all Committees in the United Kingdom, in which it was stated that the Central Committee would be formed on the broadest possible basis, and that all Members of all Executive Committees, as well as such single delegates as the Committees in connexion with the Central Committee might appoint, should be Members of the Executive of the Central Committee.

The sole aim of the new Committee was declared to be to remove the Political Disabilities of Women.

- 1st. By constituting itself a central medium of communication between the various Provincial and Local Committees, and the Members having charge of the Women's Disabilities Bill, in order to afford them the most energetic and opportune support, both in and out of Parliament.
- 2ndly. By aiding in the formation of new Provincial and Local Committees.
- 3rdly. By acting as a centre for the collection and diffusion of information with regard to the progress of the movement in all parts of the country.

A large amount of correspondence was undertaken, and great exertions made by individual Members of the Committee to make known its objects and the spirit by which it was actuated, but the success which resulted fully compensated them for their labours. Many Members of Parliament added their names to the Committee, and numerous subscriptions were obtained. The existing Committees with only two or three exceptions, promptly responded with expressions of confidence in the Central, and approval of its proposed action.

On the majority of the Provincial Committees having signified their wish to associate themselves with the Central Committee, a General Meeting was held at the Langham Hotel, London, on Wednesday, January 17th, 1872, at which Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P., presided. After a resolution had been passed approving of the previous proceedings, an Executive Committee was appointed, and endowed "with all the necessary powers for promoting the movement, subject to the control of the Central Committee."

The Executive Committee applied itself earnestly to its labours, and spared no efforts by Correspondence, by Printing and Distributing Publications, by Petitions, by Public Meetings and Lectures, by Conferences, by formation of new Committees, by influencing Members of Parliament and the Public Press, to fulfil the promises made at the commencement.

The Committee has reason to believe that, by its formation, a real and lasting impulse has been given to the cause, and that the opponents of Women's Suffrage have been forcibly impressed by the completeness of the organization. It is indisputable that, during the past year, a knowledge of the movement, and an enthusiastic interest in it, have radiated to widely distant parts of the country never reached before. Of this the number of Committees now in connexion with the Central, the new ones formed, the number of petitions signed and the contributions received, are of themselves sufficient proofs. Looking to the future, the Committee may usefully remind itself that, as yet, only a superficial stratum of Society has been stirred. While no opportunity must be omitted of widening the movement, an imme-

diately exertion of energy is needed in deepening and strengthening it, especially by extending it to the working classes of the country.

It is unnecessary to allude further to the proceedings in the House of Commons, as the Members of the Society are already fully acquainted with what passed there; but it is not possible to refrain from expressing admiration and gratitude for the eloquent advocacy of Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P., Mr. EASTWICK, M.P., and other friends in the Debate.

To summarize its proceedings, the Executive has to report that eight Public Meetings have been held by its direction or under its auspices. Of these it is right to notice specially one held on the 29th of April at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, and another at the Hanover Square Rooms, on the 10th of May, both of which were attended by overflowing audiences.

At the suggestion of the Committee several ladies hospitably opened their houses on various occasions for the reception and entertainment of friends of Women's Suffrage.

A Soirée, numerously attended, was held on the 30th of April, and a Conference, presided over by Mr. EASTWICK, M.P., on the 2nd of May, both of which took place at the Westminster Palace Hotel.

Sixty-six Local Committees have connected themselves with the Central, and forty-five Members of Parliament have also joined the Committee.

One hundred and forty-six Petitions, containing 135,738 signatures, have been collected by, or sent to Parliament through the agency of, the Central Committee. Subsidies to a considerable amount have been granted to many Local Committees, and where none existed, the services of paid agents have been secured.

It remains to be mentioned that, deeming it a convenient time for retiring from their office, the Hon. Secs. *pro tem.* placed their resignation in the hands of the Executive Committee, at its meeting on the 12th June, but, at the request of the Committee, they consented to continue their services until the present meeting. With the expression of unabated attachment to the cause of Women's Suffrage, and the hope that their exertions have merited approval, they wish it to be understood that they have no intention of offering themselves for re-election.

In its work the Committee has been latterly assisted by Miss EMMA A. SMITH, who was retained as Secretary under the Hon. Secs., and whose zeal, industry, and intelligence, vouched for by excellent testimonials, have entitled her to the most cordial recognition of her services.

The accounts of the Executive Committee have been duly audited by Mr. HAMILTON HILL.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE: CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Receipts and Payments, from November 1871, to June 30th, 1872.

Dr.	RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.
	FROM DONATIONS	681	15	9
	„ SUBSCRIPTIONS	156	16	0
	„ SALE OF PUBLICATIONS	6	19	8
	„ TICKETS FOR RESERVED SEATS AT MEETING, MAY 10	24	19	6
	„ REPAYMENT by MANCHESTER COMMITTEE for canvassing in Bury, Middleton, and Oldham	4	14	0

£875 4 11

	PAYMENTS.	£	s.	d.	Cr.
	BY PRINTING	71	2	0	
	„ EXPENSES OF PROVINCIAL MEETINGS, including TRAVELLING EXPENSES and SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENTS—(Norwich, Whitby, Midhurst, Lincoln and Derby)	60	18	4	
	„ EXPENSES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS, SOIREE and CONFERENCES in London	137	8	9	
	„ POSTAGE AND CARRIAGE—including Letters with Circulars to all Editors of Newspapers throughout the Kingdom, Letters with Petition Forms to all Local Boards, Boards of Guardians, Working Men's Clubs, and Mechanics' Institutes	42	18	7	
	„ GRANTS TO LOCAL COMMITTEES, (Brighton, Edinburgh, Galloway, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, and South Shields)	£121	3	0½	
	„ PAYMENTS to Agents in other places—Berkhampstead, Bury, Charlton, Chelmsford, Cardiff, Coventry, Croydon, Dartford, Darlington, Devonport, Erith, Greenwich, Hartlepool, Lincoln, Middleton, Middlesborough, Northampton, North Shields, Norwich, Oldham, Peterborough, Plumstead, Portsmouth, Rugby, Scarborough, Sheffield, Stamford, Sunderland, Windsor, Whitby and Woolwich	74	12	3	
	„ PAYMENTS for Collection of Petitions in London	118	2	6	
					313 17 9½
	„ GENERAL ADVERTISEMENTS	58	3	10	
	„ WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL, and other Papers	18	1	10½	
	„ STATIONERY	20	1	3	
	„ RENT—Christmas to Midsummer	25	0	0	
	„ OFFICE FURNITURE AND REPAIRS	53	3	8	
	„ SALARIES	38	6	0	
	„ COALS, WOOD, AND ATTENDANCE	1	5	6	
	„ BALANCE in Bank	£14	17	4	
	„ in Secretary's hands	20	0	0	
					34 17 4
					<u>£875 4 11</u>

Examined and found correct,

H. HAY HILL, Temple, Hon. Auditor.

July 4th, 1872.

LIABILITIES, June 30th:—

Further Printing, Publications, and Advertisements.....£22 0 0

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
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Ashurst, Wm., Esq.	5 0 0
Ashworth, The Misses, Bath	100 0 0
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Babb, John Staines, Esq. ,, ..	1 1 0	
Banks, F., Esq. ,, ..	0 5 0	
Bastard, T. H., Esq., Charlton Marshall ..	1 0 0	
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Bayley, Edric, Esq., London	1 0 0
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Biggs, Miss C. A. ,, ..	1 1 0	
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Blackburn, Mrs., Southport	50 0 0
Blackburn, Miss H., London ..	0 2 6	
Blackwell, Miss Elizabeth, M.D. ..	1 1 0	
Bolton, Mrs., Torquay ..	0 5 0	
Bonus, Miss, Penge ..	0 2 6	
Bostock, Miss, London	2 2 0
Boucherett, Miss Jessie, Brighton ..	1 0 0	
Boucherett, Miss L., ,, ..	2 0 0	
Bowring, Lady, Exeter	1 0 0
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Browne, Mrs. S. W. ,,	5 0 0
Browne, Miss ,,	2 2 0
Brown, Saml., Esq., F.R.G.S., ,, ..	1 0 0	
Bruce, Mrs., ,, ..	1 1 0	
Bunting, Mr. and Mrs. Percy ..	1 1 0	1 1 0
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Carey, Miss, Guernsey ..	0 1 0	
Cazalet, W. C., Esq., London ..	5 0 0	
Charlesworth, Mr. and Mrs., Sheffield ..	0 5 0	
Chesson, Mrs. F. W., London ..	0 10 0	
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Clark, Mrs. Wm. ,, ..	2 2 0	
Clift, Miss, London	0 5 0
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Curtis, Mr. and Mrs., London ..	0 2 0	

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
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Lambert, Mrs., Tunbridge ..	1 1 0	

	Annual Subscription.	Donations.
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Martineau, Miss Jane, "	0 10 6
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Meeting in Cavendish Rooms, April 30th, per Mr. Hoskins	0 13 6
Mellor, J. P., Esq.	50 0 0
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Newcombe, Mrs. Prout, East Croydon	2 2 0
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Thomson, Walter, Esq., London	10 0 0
Travers, Miss, Twyford ...	0 10 0	0 10 0
Trepplin, Mrs., Warwick ...	1 0 0	
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Mrs. Hampson " ...	0 10 0	
Mrs. Dinwiddie " ...	0 10 0	
Mrs. Sinclair " ...	0 2 0	
Mrs. Sinclair " ...	0 1 0	
Miss Sinclair " ...	0 1 0	
Miss Jane Sinclair " ...	0 1 0	
Mr. Fitch " ...	0 1 0	
Mrs. Fitch " ...	0 0 0	
Mrs. Jackson, Hastings	0 10 0
Mr. Huggett, "	1 1 0
J. H. Levy, London ...	0 5 0	

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Members whose names are marked thus * have hitherto formed the Executive Committee.

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 *Bazley, Sir Thomas, Bart., M.P.
 *Bright, Jacob, Esq., M.P.
 *Brown, Alexander, Esq., M.P.
 *Campbell, Henry, Esq., M.P.
 *Carter, Alderman, M.P.
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 *Dalglish, Robert, Esq., M.P.
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 *Ewing, H. E. Crum, Esq., M.P.
 *Ewing, A. Orr, Esq., M.P.
 *Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond, M.P.
 *Fordyce, W. D., Esq., M.P.
 *Fowler, R. N., Esq., M.P.
 *Grieve, James J., Esq., M.P.
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 *Illingworth, A., Esq., M.P.
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 *Lush, Dr. J. A., M.P.

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 Amberley, Viscountess
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 *Amos, Mrs. Sheldon
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 *Arnold, Arthur, Esq.
 *Arnold, Mrs. Arthur
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 *Ashurst, William, Esq.
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 Baxter, R. Dudley, Esq.
 *Becker, Miss
 Bennett, Sir John, Sheriff of London
 Bernays, Dr. A.
 *Biggs, Miss Ashurst
 *Biggs, Miss Caroline
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 Bowring, Sir John
 Bowring, Lady
 Bostock, Miss

*Lusk, Alderman, M.P.
 *Maguire, J. F., Esq., M.P.
 *Maitland, Sir A. C. R. Gibson, Bart., M.P.
 *Miall, Edward, Esq., M.P.
 *McCombie, Wm., Esq., M.P.
 *McLagan, Peter, Esq., M.P.
 *McLaren, Duncan, Esq., M.P.
 *Miller, John, Esq., M.P.
 *Morrison, Walter, Esq., M.P.
 *Mundella, A., Esq., M.P.
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 *Stansfeld, Right Hon. J., M.P.
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 *Sinclair, Sir J. G. Tollemache, Bart., M.P.
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 *Wingfield, Sir Charles, Bart., M.P.

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 Daniell, Mrs., Melrose

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 Dicey, Mrs. Edward
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 Estlin, Miss, Bristol
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 *Hill, Miss Katherine
 Hill, Edwin, Esq.
 *Hill, Frederic, Esq.
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 Hodgson, Mrs. W. B.
 Holland, Mrs. Charles, Cheshire
 Hoskins, James, Esq.
 Hoskins, Mrs. James
 *Hopwood, C. H., Esq.
 Houghton, Lord
 Howell, George, Esq.
 Hughes, Professor
 Hunt, Alfred, Esq.
 Hunt, Mrs. A. W.
 Jebb, R. C., Esq., M.A., Cambridge
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 Kell, Mrs., S. C.
 Kingsley, Henry, Esq., F.R.G.S.
 Kingsley, Mrs. Henry
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 Kirk, Professor, Edinburgh
 Kitchener, F. E., Esq., Rugby
 Kitchener, Mrs. F. E.
 *Knighton, William, Esq., LL.D.
 Rochester
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 Le Geyt, Miss Alice, Bath
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EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN.

A SPEECH

BY

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS,

IN THE

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF NEW YORK,

AT ALBANY, JULY 19, 1867.

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EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN.

The Convention resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the report of the Committee on the Right of Suffrage and the Qualifications to hold Office; Mr. ALVORD of Onondaga in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN announced the question to be on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Cayuga (Mr. C. C. DWIGHT).

Mr. CURTIS offered the following amendment:—

“In the first section, strike out the word ‘male;’ and wherever in that section the word ‘he’ occurs, add ‘or she;’ and wherever the word ‘his’ occurs, add ‘or her.’”

Mr. CURTIS.—In proposing a change so new to our political practice, but so harmonious with the spirit and principles of our government, it is only just that I should attempt to show that it is neither repugnant to reason nor hurtful to the State. Yet I confess some embarrassment; for, while the essential reason of the proposition seems to me to be clearly defined, the objection to it is vague and shadowy. From the formal opening of the general discussion of the question in this country, by the Convention at Seneca Falls, in 1848, down to the present moment, the opposition to the suggestion, so far as I am acquainted with it, has been only the repetition of a traditional prejudice, or the protest of mere sentimentality; and to cope with these is like wrestling with a malaria, or arguing with the east wind. I do not know, indeed, why the Committee have changed the phrase “male inhabitant or citizen,” which is uniformly used in a constitutional clause limiting the elective franchise. Under the circumstances, the word “man” is obscure, and undoubtedly includes women as much as the word “mankind.” But the intention of the clause is evident, and the report of the Committee makes it indisputable. Had they been willing to say directly what they say indirectly, the eighth line, and what follows, would read,

“ Provided that idiots, lunatics, persons under guardianship, felons, women, and persons convicted of bribery, &c., shall not be entitled to vote.” In their report, the Committee omit to tell us why they politically class the women of New York with idiots and criminals. They assert merely, that the general enfranchisement of women would be a novelty, which is true of every step of political progress, and is therefore a presumption in its favor; and they speak of it in a phrase which is intended to stigmatize it as unwomanly, which is simply an assumption and a prejudice. I wish to know, sir, and I ask in the name of the political justice and consistency of this State, why it is that half of the adult population, as vitally interested in good government as the other half, who own property, manage estates, and pay taxes, who discharge all the duties of good citizens, and are perfectly intelligent and capable, are absolutely deprived of political power, and classed with lunatics and felons. The boy will become a man and a voter; the lunatic may emerge from the cloud, and resume his rights; the idiot, plastic under the tender hand of modern science, may be moulded into the full citizen; the criminal, whose hand still drips with the blood of his country and of liberty, may be pardoned and restored: but no age, no wisdom, no peculiar fitness, no public service, no effort, no desire, can remove from women this enormous and extraordinary disability. Upon what reasonable grounds does it rest? Upon none whatever. It is contrary to natural justice, to the acknowledged and traditional principles of the American government, and to the most enlightened political philosophy. The absolute exclusion of women from political power in this State is simply usurpation. “ In every age and country,” says the historian Gibbon, nearly a hundred years ago, “ the wiser or at least the stronger of the two sexes has usurped the powers of the State, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life.”

The historical fact is that the usurping class, as Gibbon calls them, have always regulated the position of women by their own theories and convenience. The barbaric Persian, for instance, punished an insult to the woman with death, not because of her but of himself. She was part of *him*. And the civilized English Blackstone only repeats the barbaric Persian when he says that the wife and husband form but one person—that is the husband. Sir, it would be extremely amusing, if it were not tragical, to trace the consequences of this theory on human society and the unhappy effect upon the progress of civilization of this morbid estimate of the importance of men. Gibbon gives a curious instance of it, and an instance which recalls the spirit of the modern English laws of divorce. There

was a temple in Rome to the Goddess who presided over the peace of marriages. “ But,” says the historian, “ her very name, *Viriplaca*—the appeaser of husbands—shows that repentance and submission were always expected from the wife,”—as if the offence usually came from her. In the “ Lawe’s resolution of Women’s Rights,” published in the year 1632, a book which I have not seen, but of which there are copies in the country, the anonymous and quaint author says and with a sly satire: “ It is true that man and woman are one person, but understand in what manner. When a small brooke or little river incorporateth with Rhodanus, Humber or the Thames, the poor rivulet looseth her name: it is carried and re-carried with the new associate: it beareth no sway—it possesseth nothing during coverture. A woman as soon as she is married is called *covert*: in Latine *nupta*—that is, veiled; as it were overclouded and shadowed; she hath lost her streame. I may more truly, farre away, say to a married woman, her new self is her superior; her companion her master. * * See here the reason of that which I touched before—that women have no voice in Parliament; they make no laws; they consent to none; they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to be married, and their desires are to their husbands.”

From this theory of ancient society, that woman is absorbed in man, that she is a social inferior and a subordinate part of man, springs the system of laws in regard to women which in every civilized country is now in course of such rapid modification, and it is this theory which so tenaciously lingers as a traditional prejudice in our political customs. But a State which like New York recognizes the equal individual rights of all its members, declaring that none of them shall be disfranchised unless by the law of the land or the judgment of his peers, and which acknowledges women as property-holders and taxable, responsible citizens, has wholly renounced the old Feudal and Pagan theory, and has no right to continue the evil condition which springs from it. The honorable and eloquent gentleman from Onondaga said that he favored every enlargement of the franchise consistent with the safety of the State. Sir, I heartily agree with him, and it was the duty of the committee in proposing to continue the exclusion of women, to show that it is necessary to the welfare and safety of the State that the whole sex shall be disfranchised. It is in vain for the Committee to say that I ask for an enlargement of the franchise and must therefore show the reason. Sir, I show the reason upon which this franchise itself rests, and which, in its very nature, forbids arbitrary exclusion;

and I urge the enfranchisement of women on the ground that whatever political rights men have women have equally.

I have no wish to refine curiously upon the origin of government. If any one insists, with the honorable gentlemen from Broome, that there are no such things as natural political rights, and that no man is born a voter, I will not now stop to argue with him; but as I believe the honorable gentleman from Broome is by profession a physician and surgeon, I will suggest to him that if no man is born a voter, so no man is born a man—for every man is born a baby. But he *is* born with the right of becoming a man without hinderance; and I ask the honorable gentleman, as an American citizen and political philosopher, whether, if every man is not born a voter, he is not born with the right of becoming a voter upon equal terms with other men? What else is the meaning of the phrase which I find in the *New-York Tribune* of Monday, and have so often found there: "The radical basis of government is equal rights for all citizens."

There are, as I think we shall all admit, some kinds of natural rights. This summer air that breathes benignant around our national anniversary, is vocal with the traditional eloquence with which those rights were asserted by our fathers. From all the burning words of the time, I quote those of Alexander Hamilton of New York, in reply, as my honorable friend the Chairman of the Committee will remember, to the Tory farmer of Westchester: "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or dusty records. They are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." In the next year, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia summed up the political faith of our fathers in the Great Declaration. Its words vibrate through the history of those days. As the lyre of Amphion raised the walls of the city, so they are the music which sing course after course of the ascending structure of American civilization into its place. Our fathers stood indeed upon technical and legal grounds when the contest with Great Britain began, but as tyranny encroached they rose naturally into the sphere of fundamental truths as into a purer air. Driven by storms beyond sight of land, the sailor steers by the stars; and our fathers, compelled to explore the whole subject of social rights and duties, derived their government from what they called self-evident truths. Despite the brilliant and vehement eloquence of Mr. Choate, they did *not* deal in glittering generalities, and the Declaration of Independence was *not* the pas-

sionate manifesto of a revolutionary war, but the calm and simple statement of a new political philosophy and practice.

The rights which they declared to be inalienable are indeed what are usually called natural, as distinguished from political rights, but they are not limited by sex. A woman has the same right to her life, liberty and property that a man has, and she has consequently the same right to an equality of protection that he has; and this, as I understand it, is what is meant by the phrase, the right of suffrage. If I have a natural right to that hand, I have an equal natural right to every thing that secures to me its use, provided it does not harm the equal right of another; and if I have a natural right to my life and liberty, I have the same right to every thing that protects that life and liberty which any other man enjoys. I should like my honorable friend, the Chairman of this Committee, to show me any right which God gave him which he also gave to me, for which God gave him a claim to any defence which he has not given to me. And I ask the same question for every woman in this State. Have they less natural right to life, liberty and property than my honorable friend the Chairman of the Committee—and is it not, to quote the words of his report, an extremely "defensible theory," that he cannot justly deprive the least of those women of any protection of those rights which he claims for himself? No, sir, the natural, or what we call civil right, and its political defence, go together. This was the impregnable logic of the revolution. Lord Gower sneered in Parliament at the American Colonists a century ago as Mr. Robert Lowe sneers at the English Reformers to-day: "Let the Americans talk about their natural and divine rights. * * * * * I am for enforcing these measures." Dr. Johnson bellowed across the Atlantic, "Taxation, no Tyranny." James Otis spoke for America, for common sense, and for eternal justice, in saying, "No good reason, however, can be given in any country, why every man of a sound mind should not have his vote in the election of a representative. If a man has but little property to protect and defend, yet his life and liberty are things of some importance." And long before James Otis, Lord Somers said to a committee of the House of Commons, that the possession of the vote is the only true security which an Englishman has for the possession of his life and property.

Every person, then, is born with an equal claim to every kind of protection of his natural rights which any other person enjoys. The practical question, therefore, is how shall this protection be best attained? and this is the question of government, which, according to the Declaration, is established for the security of these rights.

The British theory was that they could better be secured by an intelligent few than by the ignorant and passionate multitude. Goldsmith expressed it in singing :—

“For just experience shows in every soil,
That those who think must govern those who toil.”

But nobody denies that the government of the best is the best government ; the only question is how to find the best, and common sense replies :—

“The good, 'tis true, are heaven's peculiar care ;
But who but heaven shall show us who they are ?”

Our fathers answered the question of the best and surest protection of natural right by their famous phrase, “the consent of the governed.” That is to say, since every man is born with equal natural rights, he is entitled to an equal protection of them with all other men ; and since government is that protection, right reason and experience alike demand that every person shall have a voice in the government upon perfectly equal and practicable terms— that is, upon terms which are not necessarily and absolutely insurmountable by any part of the people.

Now these terms cannot rightfully be arbitrary. But the argument of the honorable gentleman from Schenectady, whose lucid and dignified discourse needs no praise of mine, and the arguments of others who have derived government from society, seemed to assume that the political people may exclude and include at their pleasure ; that they may establish purely arbitrary tests, such as height, or weight, or color, or sex. This was substantially the squatter sovereignty of Mr. Douglas, who held that the male white majority of the settlers in a territory might deprive a colored minority of all their rights whatever ; and he declared that they had the right to do it. The same right that this Convention has to hang me at this moment to that chandelier, but no other right. Brute force, sir, may do any thing ; but we are speaking of rights, and of rights under this government, and I deny that the people of the State of New York can rightfully, that is, according to right reason and the principles of this government derived from it, *permanently* exclude any class of persons or any person whatever from a voice in the government, unless it can be clearly established that their participation in political power would be dangerous to the State ; and, therefore, the honorable gentleman from King's was logically correct in opposing the enfranchisement of the colored population, upon the ground that they

were an inferior race, of limited intelligence, a kind of Chimpanzee at best. I think, however, sir, the honorable and scholarly gentleman—even he—will admit, that at Fort Pillow, at Milliken's Bend, at Fort Wagner, the Chimpanzees did uncommonly well ; yes, sir, as gloriously and immortally as our own fathers at Bunker Hill and Saratoga. “There ought to be no Pariahs,” says John Stuart Mill, “in a full grown and civilized nation ; no persons disqualified except through their own default. * * Every one is degraded, whether aware of it or not, when other people, without consulting him, take upon themselves unlimited power to regulate his destiny.” “No arrangement of the suffrage, therefore, can be permanently satisfactory in which any person or class is peremptorily excluded ; in which the electoral privilege is not open to all persons of full age who desire it.” (Rep. G., p. 167.) And Thomas Hare, one of the acutest of living political thinkers, says that in all cases where a woman fulfils the qualification which is imposed upon a man, “there is no sound reason for excluding her from the parliamentary franchise. The exclusion is probably a remnant of the feudal law, and is not in harmony with the other civil institutions of the country. There would be great propriety in celebrating a reign which has been productive of so much moral benefit by the abolition of an anomaly which is so entirely without any justifiable foundation.” (Hare, p. 280.)

The Chairman of the Committee asked Miss Anthony, the other evening, whether, if suffrage were a natural right, it could be denied to children. Her answer seemed to me perfectly satisfactory. She said simply, “All that we ask is an equal and not an arbitrary regulation. If *you* have the right, *we* have it.” The honorable Chairman would hardly deny that to regulate the exercise of a right according to obvious reason and experience is one thing, to deny it absolutely and forever is another. And this is the safe practical rule of our government, as James Madison expressed it, that “it be derived from the great body of the people, not from an inconsiderable portion or favored class of it.” When Mr. Gladstone, in his famous speech that startled England, said, in effect, that no one could be justly excluded from the franchise, except upon grounds of personal unfitness or public danger, he merely echoed the sentiment of Joseph Warren, which is gradually seen to be the wisest and most practical political philosophy : “I would have such a government as should give every man the greatest liberty to do what he chooses, consistent with restraining him from doing any injury to another.” Is not that the kind of government, sir, which we wish to propose

for this State? And if every person in New York has a natural right to life, liberty, and property, and a co-existent claim to a share in the government which defends them, regulated only by perfectly equitable conditions, what are the practical grounds upon which it is proposed to continue the absolute and hopeless disfranchisement of half the adult population?

It is alleged that women are already represented by men. Where are they so represented? and when was the choice made? If I am told that they are virtually represented, I reply, with James Otis, that "no such phrase as virtual representation is known in law or Constitution. It is altogether a subtlety and illusion, wholly unfounded and absurd." I repeat, if they are represented, when was the choice made? Nobody pretends that they have ever been consulted. It is a mere assumption to the effect that the interest and affection of men will lead them to just and wise legislation for women as well as for themselves. But this is merely the old appeal for the political power of a class. It is just what the British parliament said to the colonies a hundred years ago. "We are all under the same government," they said: "our interests are identical; we are all Britons; Britannia rules the wave; God save the King! and down with sedition and Sons of Liberty!" The colonies chafed and indignantly protested, because the assumption that therefore fair laws were made was not true; because they were discovering for themselves what every nation has discovered—the truth that shakes England to-day, and brings Disraeli and the Tory party to their knees, and has already brought this country to blood—that there is no class of citizens, and no single citizen, who can safely be intrusted with the permanent and exclusive possession of political power. "There is no instance on record," says Buckle, in his history of civilization in England, "of any class possessing power without abusing it." It is as true of men as a class as it is of an hereditary nobility, or of a class of property-holders. Men are not wise enough, nor generous enough, nor pure enough, to legislate fairly for women. The laws of the most civilized nations depress and degrade women. The legislation is in favor of the legislating class. In the celebrated debate upon the Marriage Amendment Act in England, Mr. Gladstone said that "when the gospel came into the world woman was elevated to an equality with her stronger companion." Yet, at the very time he was speaking, the English law of divorce, made by men to regulate their domestic relations with women, was denounced by the law lords themselves as "disgusting and demoralizing" in its operation. "barbarous,"

"indecent," "a disgrace to the country," and "shocking to the sense of right." Now, if the equality of which Mr. Gladstone spoke had been political as well as sentimental, does he or any statesman suppose that the law of divorce would have been what it then was, or that the law of England to-day would give all the earnings of a married woman to her husband, or that of France forbid a woman to receive any gift without her husband's permission?

We ask women to confide in us, as having the same interests with them. Did any despot ever say any thing else? And, if it be safe or proper for any intelligent part of the people to relinquish exclusive political power to any class, I ask the Committee, Who proposed that women should be compelled to do this? To what class, however rich, or intelligent, or honest, they would themselves surrender *their* power? and what they would do if any class attempted to usurp that power? They know, as we all know, as our own experience has taught us, that the only security of natural right is the ballot. They know, and the instinct of the whole loyal land knows, that, when we had abolished slavery, the emancipation could be completed and secured only by the ballot in the hands of the emancipated class. Civil rights were a mere mocking name until political power gave them substance. A year ago, Gov. Orr of South Carolina told us that the rights of the freedmen were safest in the hands of their old masters. "Will you walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly?" New Orleans, Memphis, and countless and constant crimes, showed what that safety was. Then, hesitating no longer, the nation handed the ballot to the freedmen, and said, "Protect yourselves!" And now Gov. Orr says that the part of wisdom for South Carolina is to cut loose from all parties, and make a cordial alliance with the colored citizens. Gov. Orr knows that a man with civil rights merely is a blank cartridge. Give him the ballot, and you add a bullet, and make him effective. In that section of the country, seething with old hatreds and wounded pride, and a social system upheaved from the foundation, no other measure could have done for real pacification in a century what the mere promise of the ballot has done in a year. The one formidable peril in the whole subject of reconstruction has been the chance that Congress would continue in the Southern States the political power in the hands of a class, as the report of the Committee proposes that we shall do in New York.

If I am asked what do women want the ballot for, I answer the question with another, What do men want it for? Why do the

British workmen at this moment so urgently demand it? Look into the British laws regulating labor, and you will see why. They want the ballot because the laws affecting labor and capital are made by the capitalist class alone and are therefore unjust. I do not forget the progressive legislation of New York in regard to the rights of women. The Property Bill of 1860, and its supplement, according to "The New-York Tribune," redeemed five thousand women from pauperism. In the next year, Illinois put women in the same position with men, as far as property rights and remedies are concerned. I mention these facts with pleasure, as I read that Louis Napoleon will, under certain conditions, permit the French people to say what they think. But, if such reforms are desirable, they would certainly have been sooner and more wisely effected could women have been a positive political power. Upon this point one honorable gentleman asked Mrs Stanton whether the laws both for men and women were not constantly improving, and whether, therefore, it was not unfair to attribute the character of the laws about women to the fact that men made them. The reply is very evident. If women alone made the laws, legislation for both men and women would undoubtedly be progressive. Does the honorable gentleman think, therefore, that women only should make the laws?

It is not true, Mr. Chairman, that, in the ordinary and honorable sense of the words, women are represented. Laws are made for them by another class, and upon the theories which that class, without the fear of political opposition, may choose to entertain, and in direct violation of the principles upon which, in their own case, they tenaciously insist. I live, sir, in the county of Richmond. It has a population of some 27,000 persons. They own property, and manage it. They are taxed, and pay their taxes; and they fulfil the duties of citizens with average fidelity. But if the Committee had introduced a clause into the section they propose to this effect, "Provided that idiots, lunatics, persons under guardianship, felons, inhabitants of the county of Richmond, and persons convicted of bribery, shall not be entitled to vote," they would not have proposed a more monstrous injustice, nor a grosser inconsistency with every fundamental right and American principle, than in the clause they recommend; and in that case, sir, what do you suppose would have been my reception had I returned to my friends and neighbors, and had said to them, "The Convention thinks that you are virtually represented by the voters of Westchester and Chautauqua"?

Mr. Chairman, I have no superstition about the ballot. I do

not suppose it would immediately right all the wrongs of women, any more than it has righted all those of men. But what political agency has righted so many? Here are thousands of miserable men all around us; but they have every path opened to them. They have their advocates; they have their votes; they make the laws, and, at last and at worst, they have their strong right hands for defence. And here are thousands of miserable women pricking back death and dishonor with a little needle; and now the wily hand of science is stealing that little needle away. The ballot does not make those men happy nor respectable nor rich nor noble; but they guard it for themselves with sleepless jealousy, because they know it is the golden gate to every opportunity; and precisely the *kind* of advantage it gives to one sex, it would give to the other. It would arm it with the most powerful weapon known to political society; it would maintain the natural balance of the sexes in human affairs, and secure to each fair play within its sphere.

But, sir, the Committee tell us that the suffrage of women would be a revolutionary innovation; it would disturb the venerable traditions. Well, sir, about the year 1790, women were first recognized as school-teachers in Massachusetts. At that time, the New-England "schoolmarm" (and I use the word with affectionate respect) was a revolutionary innovation. She has been abroad ever since, and has been by no means the least efficient, but always the most modest and unnoticed, of the great civilizing influences in this country. Innovation!—why, sir, when Sir Samuel Romilly proposed to abolish the death-penalty for stealing a handkerchief, the law officers of the Crown said it would endanger the whole criminal law of England. When the bill abolishing the slave-trade passed the House of Lords, Lord St. Vincent arose and stalked out, declaring that he washed his hands of the ruin of the British empire. When the Greenwich pensioners saw the first steamer upon the Thames, they protested that they did not like the steamer, for it was contrary to nature. When, at the close of the reign of Charles II., London had half a million of people, there was a fierce opposition to street-lamps,—such is the hostility of venerable traditions to an increase of light. When Mr. Jefferson learned that New York had explored the route of a canal, he benignly regarded it, in the spirit of our Committee, as, doubtless, "defensible in theory;" for he said that it was "a very fine project, and might be executed a century hence." And, fifty-six years ago, Chancellor Livingston wrote from 'his city, that the proposition of a railroad, shod with iron, to move heavy weights

four miles an hour, was ingenious, perhaps "theoretically defensible;" but, upon the whole, the road would not be so cheap or convenient as a canal. In this country, sir, the venerable traditions are used to being disturbed. America was clearly designed to be a disturber of traditions, and to leave nobler precedents than she found. So, a few months ago, what the Committee call a revolutionary innovation was proposed by giving the ballot to the freedmen in the District of Columbia. The awful results of such a revolution were duly set forth in one of the myriad veto messages of the President of the United States. But they have voted. If anybody proposed to disturb the election, it was certainly not the new voters. The election was perfectly peaceful, and not one of the presidential pangs has been justified. So with this reform. It is new in the extent proposed. It is as new as the harvest after the sowing, and it is as natural. The resumption of rights long denied or withheld never made a social convulsion: that is produced by refusing them. The West-Indian slaves received their liberty, praying upon their knees; and the influence of the enfranchisement of women will glide into society as noiselessly as the dawn increases into day.

Or shall I be told that women, if not numerically counted at the polls, do yet exert an immense influence upon politics, and do not really need the ballot. If this argument was seriously urged, I should suffer my eyes to rove through this chamber and they would show me many honorable gentlemen of reputed political influence. May they, therefore, be properly and justly disfranchised? I ask the honorable Chairman of the Committee, whether he thinks that a citizen should have no vote because he has influence? What gives influence? Ability, intelligence, honesty. Are these to be excluded from the polls? Is it only stupidity, ignorance and rascality which ought to possess political power?

Or will it be said that women do not want the ballot and ought to be asked? And upon what principle ought they to be asked? When natural rights or their means of defence have been immemorably denied to a large class, does humanity, or justice, or good sense require that they should be registered and called to vote upon their own restoration? Why, Mr. Chairman, it might as well be said that Jack the Giant Killer ought to have gravely asked the captives in the ogre's dungeon whether they wished to be released. It must be assumed that men and women wish to enjoy their natural rights, as that the eyes wish light or the lungs an atmosphere. Did we wait for emancipation until the slaves peti-

tioned to be free? No, sir, all our lives had been passed in ingenious and ignominious efforts to sophisticate and stultify ourselves for keeping them chained; and when war gave us a legal right to snap their bonds, we did not ask them whether they preferred to remain slaves. We knew that they were men, and that men by nature walk upright, and if we find them bent and crawling, we know that the posture is unnatural whether they may think so or not. In the case of women we acknowledge that they have the same natural rights as ourselves—we see that they hold property and pay taxes, and we must of necessity suppose that they wish to enjoy every security of those rights that we possess. So when in this State, every year, thousands of boys come of age, we do not solemnly require them to tell us whether they wish to vote. We assume, of course, that they do, and we say to them, "Go, and upon the same terms with the rest of us, vote as you choose." But gentlemen say that they know a great many women who do not wish to vote, who think it is not ladylike, or whatever the proper term may be. Well, sir, I have known many men who habitually abstained from politics because they were so "ungentlemanly," and who thought that no man could touch pitch without defilement. Now what would the honorable gentlemen who know women who do not wish to vote, have thought of a proposition that I should not vote, because my neighbors did not wish to? There may have been slaves who preferred to remain slaves—was that an argument against freedom? Suppose there are a majority of the women of this State who do not wish to vote—is that a reason for depriving *one* woman who is taxed of her equal representation, or one innocent person of the equal protection of his life and liberty?

Shall nothing ever be done by statesmen until wrongs are so intolerable that they take society by the throat? Did it show the wisdom of British Conservatism that it waited to grant the Reform bill of 1832 until England hung upon the edge of civil war? When women and children were worked sixteen hours a day in English factories, did it show practical good sense to delay a "short-time" bill until hundreds of thousands of starving workmen agreed to starve yet more, if need be, to relieve the overwork of their families, and until the most pitiful procession the sun ever shone upon, that of the factory children, just as they left their work, marched through the streets of Manchester, that burst into sobs and tears at the sight? Yet if, in such instances, where there was so plausible an adverse appeal founded upon vested interests and upon the very theory of the government, it was unwise to

wait until a general public outcry imperatively demanded the reform, how wholly needless to delay in this State a measure which is the natural result of our most cherished principles, and which threatens to disturb or injure nothing whatever. The amendment proposes no compulsion like the old New England law, which fined every voter who did not vote. If there are citizens of the State who think it unladylike or ungentlemanlike to take their part in the government, let them stay at home. But do not, I pray you, give them authority to detain wiser and better citizens from their duty.

But I shall be told, in the language of the Report of the Committee, that the proposition is openly at war with the distribution of functions and duties between the sexes. Translated into English, Mr. Chairman, this means that it is unwomanly to vote. Well, sir, I know that at the very mention of the political rights of women, there arises in many minds a dreadful vision of a mighty exodus of the whole female world, in bloomers and spectacles, from the nursery and kitchen to the polls. It seems to be thought that if women practically took part in politics, the home would be left a howling wilderness of cradles, and a chaos of undarned stockings and buttonless shirts. But how is it with men? Do they desert their workshops, their ploughs and offices, to pass their time at the polls? Is it a credit to a *man* to be called a professional politician? The pursuits of men in the world, to which they are directed by the natural aptitude of sex, and to which they must devote their lives, are as foreign from political functions as those of women. To take an extreme case: there is nothing more incompatible with political duties in cooking and taking care of children than there is in digging ditches or making shoes, or in any other necessary employment, while in every superior interest of society growing out of the family, the stake of women is not less than men, and their knowledge is greater. In England, a woman who owns shares in the East-India Company may vote. In this country she may vote as a stockholder upon a railroad from one end of the country to another. But if she sells her stock, and buys a house with the money, she has no voice in the laying out of the road before her door, which her house is taxed to keep and pay for. And why, in the name of good sense, if a responsible human being may vote upon specific industrial projects, may she not vote upon the industrial regulation of the State? There is no more reason that men should assume to decide participation in politics to be unwomanly than that women should decide for men that it is unmanly. It is not our prerogative to keep women feminine. I think, sir,

they may be trusted to defend the delicacy of their own sex. Our success in managing ours has not been so conspicuous that we should urgently desire more labor of the same kind. Nature is quite as wise as we. Whatever their sex incapacitates women from doing they will not do. Whatever duty is consistent with their sex and their relation to society, they will properly demand to do until they are permitted.

The reply to the assertion that participation in political power is unwomanly, and tends to subvert the family relation, is simple and unanswerable. It is that we cannot know what is womanly until we see the folly of insisting that the theories of men settle the question. We know now what the convenience and feelings of men decide to be womanly. We shall know what is womanly in the same sense that we know what is manly, only when women have the same equality of development and the same liberty of choice as men. The amendment I offer is merely a prayer that you will remove from women a disability, and secure to them the same freedom of choice that we enjoy. If the instincts of sex, of maternity, of domesticity, are not persuasive enough to keep them in the truest sense women, it is the most serious defect yet discovered in the divine order of nature.

When, therefore, the Committee declare that voting is at war with the distribution of functions between the sexes, what do they mean? Are not women as much interested in good government as men? There is fraud in the Legislature; there is corruption in the Courts; there are hospitals, and tenement-houses, and prisons; there are gambling-houses, and billiard-rooms, and brothels; there are grog-shops at every corner, and I know not what enormous proportion of crime in the State proceeds from them; there are forty thousand drunkards in the State, and their hundreds of thousands of children, — all these things are subjects of legislation, and under the exclusive legislation of men the crime associated with all these things becomes vast and complicated. Have the wives and mothers and sisters of New York less vital interest in them, less practical knowledge of them and their proper treatment, than the husbands and fathers? No man is so insane as to pretend it. Is there then any natural incapacity in women to understand politics? It is not asserted. Are they lacking in the necessary intelligence? But the moment that you erect a standard of intelligence which is sufficient to exclude women as a sex, that moment most of the male sex would be disfranchised. Is it that they ought not to go to public political meetings? But we earnestly invite them. Or that they should not go to the polls? Some polls, I allow, in the larger

cities, are dirty and dangerous places; and those it is the duty of the police to reform. But no decent man wishes to vote in a grog shop, nor to have his head broken while he is doing it, while the mere act of dropping a ballot in a box is about the simplest, shortest, and cleanest that can be done. Last winter Senator Frelinghuysen, repeating, I am sure thoughtlessly, the common rhetoric of the question, spoke of the high and holy mission of women. But if people, with a high and holy mission, may innocently sit bare-necked in hot theatres to be studied through pocket-telescopes until midnight by any one who chooses, how can their high and holy mission be harmed by their quietly dropping a ballot in a box? What is the high and holy mission of any woman but to be the best and most efficient human being possible? To enlarge the sphere of duty and the range of responsibility, where there are adequate power and intelligence, is to heighten, not to lessen, the holiness of life.

But if women vote, they must sit on juries. Why not? Nothing is plainer than that thousands of women who are tried every year as criminals are not tried by their peers. And if a woman is bad enough to commit a heinous crime, must we absurdly assume that women are too good to know that there is such a crime? If they may not sit on juries, certainly they ought not to be witnesses. A note in Howell's State Trials, to which my attention was drawn by one of my distinguished colleagues in the Convention, quotes an ancient work, "Probation by Witnesses," by Sir George Mackenzie, in which he says, "The reason why women are excluded from witnessing must be either that they are subject to too much compassion, and so ought not to be more received in criminal cases than in civil cases; or else the law was unwilling to trouble them, and thought it might learn them too much confidence, and make them subject to too much familiarity with men and strangers, if they were necessitated to vague up and down at all Courts upon all occasions." Hume says this rule was held as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century. But if too much familiarity with men be so pernicious, are men so pure that they alone should make laws for women, and so honorable that they alone should try women for breaking them? It is within a very few years at the Liverpool Assizes in a case involving peculiar evidence, that Mr. Russell said: "The evidence of women is, in some respects, superior to that of men. Their power of judging of minute details is better, and when there are more than two facts and something be wanting, their intuitions supply the deficiency." "And precisely the qualities which fit

them to give evidence," says Mrs. Dall, to whom we owe this fact, "fit them to sift and test it."

But, the objectors continue, would you have women hold office? If they are capable and desirous, why not? They hold office now most acceptably. In my immediate neighborhood, a postmistress has been so faithful an officer for seven years, that when there was a rumor of her removal, it was a matter of public concern. This is a familiar instance in this country. Scott's "Antiquary" shows that a similar service was not unknown in Scotland. In Notes and Queries ten years ago (vol. II., sect. 2, 1856, pp. 83, 204), Alexander Andrews says: "It was by no means unusual for females to serve the office of overseer in small rural parishes," and a communication in the same publication (1st series, vol. II., p. 383) speaks of a curious entry in the Harleian Miscellany (MS. 980, fol. 153): "The Countess of Richmond, mother to Henry VII., was a Justice of the Peace. Mr. Attorney said if it was so, it ought to have been by commission, for which he had made many an hower's search for the record, but could never find it, but he had seen many arbitrations that were made by her. Justice Joanes affirmed that he had often heard from his mother of the Lady Bartlett, mother to the Lord Bartlett, that she was a Justice of the Peace, and did set usually upon the bench with the other Justices in Gloucestershire; that she was made so by Queen Mary, upon her complaint to her of the injuries she sustained by some of that county, and desiring for redress thereof; that as she herself, was Chief-Justice of all England, so this lady might be in her own county, which accordingly the Queen granted. Another example was alleged of one — Rowse, in Suffolk, who usually at the assizes and sessions there held, set upon the bench among the Justices *gladio cincta*." The Countess of Pembroke was hereditary sheriff of Westmoreland, and exercised her office. Henry the Eighth granted a commission of inquiry, under the great seal, to Lady Ann Berkeley, who opened it at Gloucester, and passed sentence under it. Henry Eighth's daughter, Elizabeth Tudor, was Queen of England, in name and in fact, during the most illustrious epoch of English history. Was Elizabeth incompetent? Did Elizabeth unsex herself? Or do you say that she was an exceptional woman? So she was, but no more an exceptional woman than Alfred, Marcus Aurelius or Napoleon were exceptional men. It was held by some of the old English writers that a woman might serve in almost any of the great offices of the Kingdom. And, indeed, if Victoria may deliberate in council with her ministers, why may not any intelligent English woman delib-

erate in Parliament, or any such American woman in Congress?

I mention Elizabeth, Maria Theresa, Catharine, and all the famous Empresses and Queens, not to prove the capacity of women for the most arduous and responsible office, for that is undeniable, but to show the hollowness of the assertion that there is an instinctive objection to the fulfilment of such offices by women. Men who say so do not really think so. The whole history of the voting and office-holding of women shows that whenever men's theories of the relation of property to the political franchise, or of the lineal succession of the government, require that women shall vote or hold office, the objection of impropriety and incapacity wholly disappears. If it be unwomanly for a woman to vote, or to hold office, it is unwomanly for Victoria to be Queen of England. Surely if our neighbors had thought they would be better represented in this Convention by certain women, there is no good reason why they should have been compelled to send us. Why should I or any person be forbidden to select the agent whom we think most competent and truly representative of our will? There is no talent or training required in the making of laws which is peculiar to the male sex. What is needed is intelligence and experience. The rest is routine.

The capacity for making laws is necessarily assumed when women are permitted to hold and manage property and to submit to taxation. How often the woman, widowed or married or single, is the guiding genius of the family — educating the children, directing the estate, originating, counselling, deciding. Is there any thing essentially different in such duties and the powers necessary to perform them from the functions of legislation? In New Jersey the Constitution of 1776 admitted to vote all inhabitants of a certain age, residence and property. In 1797, in an act to regulate elections, the ninth section provides: "Every voter shall openly and in full view deliver his or her ballot, which shall be a single written ticket, containing the names of the persons for whom he or she votes." An old citizen of New Jersey says that "the right was recognized and very little said or thought about it in any way." But in 1807 the suffrage was restricted to white male adult citizens of a certain age, residence and property, and in 1844 the property qualification was abolished. At the hearing before the Committee, the other evening, a gentleman asked whether the change of the qualification excluding women did not show that their voting was found to be inconvenient or undesirable. Not at all. It merely showed that the male property-holders

outvoted the female. It certainly showed nothing as to the right or expediency of the voting of women. Mr. Douglas, as I said, had a theory that the white male adult squatters in a territory might decide whether the colored people in the territory should be enslaved. They might, indeed, so decide, and with adequate power they might enforce their decision. But it proved very little as to the right, the expediency, or the constitutionality of slavery in a territory. The truth is that men deal with the practical question of female suffrage to suit their own purposes. About twenty-five years ago the Canadian government by statute rigorously and in terms forbade women to vote. But in 1850, to subserve a sectarian purpose, they were permitted to vote for school trustees. I am ashamed to argue a point so plain. What public affairs need in this State is "conscience," and woman is the conscience of the race. If we in this Convention shall make a wise Constitution, if the Legislatures that follow us in this chamber shall purify the laws and see that they are honorably executed, it will be just in the degree that we shall have accustomed ourselves to the refined moral and mental atmosphere in which women habitually converse.

But would you, seriously, I am asked, would you drag women down into the mire of politics? No, sir, I would have them lift us out of it. The duty of this Convention is to devise means for the improvement of the government of this State. Now the science of government is not an ignoble science, and the practice of politics is not necessarily mean and degrading. If the making and administering of law has become so corrupt as to justify calling politics filthy, and a thing with which no clean hands can meddle without danger, may we not wisely remember, as we begin our work of purification, that politics have been wholly managed by men? How can we purify them? Is there no radical method, no force yet untried, a power not only of skilful checks, which I do not undervalue, but of controlling character? Mr. Chairman, if we sat in this chamber with closed windows until the air became thick and fetid, should we not be fools if we brought in deodorizers — if we sprinkled chloride of lime and burned assafoetida, while we disdained the great purifier? If we would cleanse the foul chamber, let us throw the windows wide open, and the sweet summer air would sweep all impurity away and fill our lungs with fresher life. If we would purge politics let us turn upon them the great stream of the purest human influence we know.

But I hear some one say, if they vote they must do military

duty. Undoubtedly when a nation goes to war it may rightfully claim the service of all its citizens, men and women. But the question of fighting is not the blow merely, but its quality and persistence. The important point is, to make the blow effective. Did any brave Englishman who rode into the jaws of death at Balaklava serve England on the field more truly than Florence Nightingale? That which sustains and serves and repairs the physical force is just as essential as the force itself. Thus the law, in view of the moral service they are supposed to render, excuses clergymen from the field, and in the field it details ten per cent of the army to serve the rest, and they do not carry muskets nor fight. Women, as citizens, have always done, and always will do that work in the public defence for which their sex peculiarly fits them, and men do no more. The care of the young warriors, the nameless and innumerable duties of the hospital and home, are just as essential to the national safety as fighting in the field. A nation of men alone could not carry on a contest any longer than a nation of women. Each would be obliged to divide its forces and delegate half to the duties of the other sex.

But while the physical services of war are equally divided between the sexes, the moral forces are stronger with women. It was the women of the South, we are constantly and doubtless very truly told, who sustained the rebellion, and certainly without the women of the North the government had not been saved. From the first moment to the last, in all the roaring cities, in the remote valleys, in the deep woods, on the country hill-sides, on the open prairie, wherever there were wives, mothers, sisters, lovers, there were the busy fingers which, by day and by night, for four long years, like the great forces of spring-time and harvest, never failed. The mother paused only to bless her sons, eager for the battle; the wife to kiss her children's father, as he went; the sister smiled upon her brother, and prayed for the lover who marched away. Out of how many hundreds of thousands of homes and hearts they went who never returned. But those homes were both the inspiration and the consolation of the field. They nerved the arm that struck for them. When the son and the husband fell in the wild storm of battle, the brave woman-heart broke in silence, but the busy fingers did not falter. When the comely brother and lover were tortured into idiocy and despair, that woman-heart of love kept the man's faith steady, and her unceasing toil repaired his wasted frame. It was not love of the soldier only, great as that was; it was knowledge of the cause. It was that supreme moral force operating through

innumerable channels like the sunshine in nature, without which successful war would have been impossible. There are thousands and thousands of these women who ask for a voice in the government they have so defended. Shall we refuse them?

I appeal again to my honorable friend the Chairman of the Committee. He has made the land ring with his cry of universal suffrage and universal amnesty. Suffrage and amnesty to whom? To those who sought to smother the government in the blood of its noblest citizens, to those who ruined the happy homes and broke the faithful hearts of which I spoke. Sir, I am not condemning his cry. I am not opposing his policy. I have no more thirst for vengeance than he, and quite as anxiously as my honorable friend do I wish to see the harvests of peace waving over the battle-fields. But, sir, here is a New-York mother, who trained her son in fidelity to God and to his country. When that country called, they answered. Mother and son gave, each after his kind, their whole service to defend her. By the sad fate of war the boy is thrown into the ghastly den at Andersonville. Mad with thirst, he crawls in the pitiless sun towards a muddy pool. He reaches the dead-line, and is shot by the guard—murdered for fidelity to his country. "I demand amnesty for that guard, I demand that he shall vote," cries the honorable Chairman of the Committee. I do not say that it is an unwise demand. But I ask him, I ask you, sir, I ask every honorable and patriotic man in this State, upon what conceivable ground of justice, expediency or common sense shall we give the ballot to the New York boy's murderer and refuse it to his mother?

Mr. Chairman, I have thus stated what I conceive to be the essential reasonableness of the amendment which I have offered. It is not good for man to be alone. United with woman in the creation of human society, their rights and interests in its government are identical, nor can the highest and truest development of society be reasonably conceived, so long as one sex assumes to prescribe limits to the scope and functions of the other. The test of civilization is the position of women. Where they are wholly slaves, man is wholly barbarous; and the measure of progress from barbarism to civilization is the recognition of their equal right with man to an unconstrained development. Therefore, when Mr. Mill unrolls his petition in Parliament to secure the political equality of women, it bears the names of those English men and women whose thoughts foretell the course of civilization. The measure which the report of the Committee declares to be radically revolutionary and perilous to the very functions

of sex, is described by the most sagacious of living political philosophers as reasonable, conservative, necessary and inevitable; and he obtains for it seventy-three votes in the same House in which out of about the same whole number of voters Charles James Fox, the idol of the British Whigs, used to be able to rally only forty votes against the policy of Pitt. The dawn in England will soon be day here. Before the American principle of equal rights, barrier after barrier in the path of human progress falls. If we are still far from its full comprehension and further from perfect conformity to its law, it is in that only like the spirit of Christianity, to whose full glory even Christendom but slowly approaches. From the heat and tumult of our politics we can still lift our eyes to the eternal light of that principle; can see that the usurpation of sex is the last form of caste that lingers in our society; that in America the most humane thinker is the most practical man, and the organizer of justice the most sagacious statesman.

MR. CURTIS'S amendment, in Committee of the Whole, received 24 Ayes against 63 Nays; and on the final vote in the Convention, 19 Ayes against 125 Nays.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

American Woman Suffrage Association.

PREAMBLE. — The undersigned, friends of Woman Suffrage, assembled in delegate convention in Cleveland, O., Nov. 24 and 25, 1869, in response to a call widely signed, and after public notice duly given, believing that a truly representative national organization is needed for the orderly and efficient prosecution of the Woman Suffrage movement in America, which shall embody the deliberate action of the State and local organizations, and shall carry with it their united weight, do hereby form The American Woman Suffrage Association.

ARTICLE I.

NAME.

This Association shall be known as The American Woman Suffrage Association.

ARTICLE II.

OBJECT.

Its object shall be to concentrate the efforts of all the advocates of Woman Suffrage in the United States.

SECTION 1. To form auxiliary State Associations in every State where none such now exist, and to co-operate with those already existing which shall declare themselves auxiliary before the first day of March next; the authority of the auxiliary societies being recognized

in their respective localities, and their plans being promoted by every means in our power.

SEC. 2. To hold an annual meeting of delegates for the transaction of business, and the election of officers for the ensuing year; also, one or more national conventions for the advocacy of Woman Suffrage.

SEC. 3. To publish tracts, documents, and other printed matter, for the supply of State and local societies and individuals, at actual cost.

SEC. 4. To prepare and circulate petitions to State and Territorial Legislatures, to Congress, or to Constitutional Conventions, in behalf of the legal and political equality of women; to employ lecturers and agents; and to take any measures the Executive Committee may think fit, to forward the objects of the Association.

ARTICLE III.

ORGANIZATION.

SECTION 1. The officers of this Association shall be a President, eight Vice-Presidents at large, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Foreign Corresponding Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, two Recording Secretaries, and a Treasurer; all of whom shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. Also, one Vice-President, and one member of the Executive Committee from each State and Territory, and from the District of Columbia, as afterward provided.

SEC. 2. Every President of an auxiliary State or Territorial Society shall be *ex officio* a Vice-President of this Association.

SEC. 3. Every Chairman of the Executive Committee of an auxiliary State Society shall be *ex officio* a member of the Executive Committee of this Association.

SEC. 4. In cases where no Auxiliary State Association exists, a suitable person may be selected by the annual meeting, or by the Executive Committee, as Vice-President, or member of the Executive Committee from said State, to serve only until the organization of said State Association.

SEC. 5. The Executive Committee may fill all vacancies that may occur prior to the next annual meeting.

SEC. 6. All officers shall be elected annually at an annual meeting of delegates, on the basis of the Congressional representation of the respective States and Territories, except as above provided.

SEC. 7. No distinction on account of sex shall ever be made in the membership, or in the selection of officers of this Society.

SEC. 8. No money shall be paid by the Treasurer, except under such restrictions as the Executive Committee may provide.

SEC. 9. Five members of the Executive Committee, when convened by the Chairman, after fifteen days' written notice previously mailed to each of its members, shall constitute a quorum; but no action thus taken shall be final, until such proceedings shall have been ratified in writing by at least fifteen members of the Committee.

SEC. 10. The Chairman shall convene a meeting whenever requested to do so by five members of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV.

The Association shall have a branch office in every State and Territory, in connection with the office of the auxiliary State Society therein, and shall have a central office at such place as the Executive Committee may determine.

ARTICLE V.

This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting by a vote of three-fifths of the delegates present therein.

ADDITIONAL CLAUSES.

Any person may become a member of the American Woman Suffrage Association by signing the Constitution, and paying the sum of one dollar annually; or a life-member, by paying the sum of ten dollars, which shall entitle such person to attend the business-meetings of delegates, and participate in their deliberations.

Honorary members may be appointed by the annual meeting, or by the Executive Committee, in consideration of services rendered.

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 1871.

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL,

Devoted to the interests of WOMAN, to her educational, industrial, legal, and political Equality, and especially to her RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

Published every Saturday in Boston.

MARY A. LIVERMORE, EDITOR.

JULIA WARD HOWE, LUCY STONE, HENRY B. BLACKWELL, AND T. W. HIGGINSON, Associate Editors.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL. — The friends of Woman Suffrage who wish to keep the issue clear from entangling alliances with other reforms, and the endless host of individual whims and vagaries, — who would pursue it with the same singleness of aim that marks the movement in England, and the temperance and other special reforms in this country, have established a weekly paper, "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL," published in Boston and Chicago, and edited by Mrs. Livermore, Mrs. Lucy Stone, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, and Mr. T. W. Higginson, assisted by accomplished friends of the cause. "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL" is a fair and attractive paper in appearance; while the variety and spirit of its articles, and the dignity, self-respect, good-humor, and earnestness of its tone, will show how profoundly mistaken are those who suppose that folly and extravagance are necessarily characteristic of the discussion of the question. THE JOURNAL is indispensable to those who would truly understand the character of the movement, and measure its progress. — George William Curtis, in Harper's Weekly.

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WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE TRACTS. NO. 4.

SHOULD WOMEN

TO

LEARN THE ALPHABET?

BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.



BOSTON:

FOR SALE BY C. K. WHIPPLE, 43 BOWDOIN STREET.

1870.

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- No. 2.** GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS: Speech in the New-York Constitutional Convention, July 19, 1867.
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- No. 5.** SAMUEL E. SEWALL: "The Legal Condition of Women in Massachusetts." Prepared in 1869.
- No. 6.** GEORGE F. HOAR: "Woman's Right and the Public Welfare." Speech before a Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature, April 14, 1869.

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OUGHT WOMEN TO LEARN THE ALPHABET?

REPRINTED FROM THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY OF FEBRUARY, 1859.

PARIS smiled, for an hour or two, in the year 1801, when, amidst Napoleon's mighty projects for remodelling the religion and government of his empire, the ironical satirist, Sylvain Maréchal, thrust in his "Plan for a Law prohibiting the Alphabet to Women." Daring, keen, sarcastic, learned, the little tract retains to-day so much of its pungency, that we can hardly wonder at the honest simplicity of the author's friend and biographer, Madame Gacon Dufour, who declared that he must be insane, and proceeded to prove herself so by soberly replying to him.

His proposed statute consists of eighty-two clauses, and is fortified by a "whereas" of a hundred and thirteen weighty reasons. He exhausts the range of history to show the frightful results which have followed this taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; quotes the *Encyclopédie*, to prove that the woman who knows the alphabet has already lost a portion of her innocence; cites the opinion of Molière, that any female who has unhappily learned any thing in this line should affect ignorance, when possible; asserts that knowledge rarely makes men attractive, and females never; opines that women have no occasion to peruse Ovid's "Art of Love," since they know it all in advance; remarks that three-quarters of female authors are no better than they should be; maintains that Madame Guion would have been far more useful had she been merely pretty and an ignoramus, such as Nature made her, — that Ruth and Naomi could not read, and Boaz probably would never have married into the family, had they possessed that accomplishment, — that the Spartan women did not know the alphabet, nor the Ama-

zons, nor Penelope, nor Andromache, nor Lucretia, nor Joan of Arc, nor Petrarch's Laura, nor the daughters of Charlemagne, nor the three hundred and sixty-five wives of Mohammed; but that Sappho and Madame de Maintenon could read altogether too well; while the case of Saint Brigitta, who brought forth twelve children and twelve books, was clearly exceptional, and afforded no safe precedent.

We take it, that the brilliant Frenchman has touched the root of the matter. Ought women to learn the alphabet? There the whole question lies. Concede this little fulcrum, and Archimæda will move the world before she has done with it: it becomes merely a question of time. Resistance must be made here or nowhere. *Obsta principiis.* Woman must be a subject or an equal: there is no middle ground. What if the Chinese proverb should turn out to be, after all, the summit of wisdom, — "For men, to cultivate virtue is knowledge; for women, to renounce knowledge is virtue?"

No doubt, the progress of events is slow, like the working of the laws of gravitation generally. Certainly, there has been but little change in the legal position of women since China was in its prime, until within the last dozen years. Lawyers admit that the fundamental theory of English and Oriental law is the same on this point: Man and wife are one, and that one is the husband. It is the oldest of legal traditions. When Blackstone declares that "the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage," and American Kent echoes that "her legal existence and authority are in a manner lost;" when Petersdorff asserts that "the husband has the right of imposing such corporeal restraints as he may deem necessary," and Bacon that "the husband hath, by law, power and dominion over his wife, and may keep her by force within the bounds of duty, and may beat her, but not in a violent or cruel manner;" when Mr. Justice Coleridge rules that the husband, in certain cases, "has a right to confine his wife in his own dwelling-house, and restrain her from liberty for an indefinite time," and Baron Alderson sums it all up tersely, "The wife is only the *servant* of her husband," — these high authorities simply reaffirm the dogma of the Gentoo code, four thousand years old and more. "A man, both day and night, must keep his wife so much in subjection that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she be of a superior caste, she will behave amiss."

Yet behind these unchanging institutions, a pressure has been for centuries becoming concentrate, which, now that it has begun to

act, is threatening to overthrow them all. It has not yet operated very visibly in the Old World, where (even in England) the majority of women have not yet mastered the alphabet, and cannot sign their own names in the marriage-register. But in this country, the vast changes of the last few years are already a matter of history. No trumpet has been sounded, no earthquake has been felt, while State after State has ushered into legal existence one half of the population within its borders. Every Free State in the American Union, except, perhaps, Illinois and New Jersey, has conceded to married women, in some form, the separate control of property. Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania have gone farther, and given them the control of their own earnings, — given it wholly and directly, that is, — while New York and other States have given it partially or indirectly. Legislative committees in Ohio and Wisconsin have recommended in printed reports the extension of the right of suffrage to women. Kentucky (like Canada) has actually extended it, in certain educational matters, and a Massachusetts legislative committee has suggested the same thing; while the Kansas Constitutional Convention came within a dozen votes of extending it without reserve, and expunging the word *male* from the Constitution. Surely, here and now, might poor M. Maréchal exclaim, the bitter fruits of the original seed appear. The sad question recurs, whether women ought ever to have tasted of the alphabet.

It is true that Eve ruined us all, according to theology, without knowing her letters. Still, there is something to be said in defence of that venerable ancestress. The Veronese lady, Isotta Nogarola, five hundred and thirty-six of whose learned epistles were preserved by De Thou, composed a dialogue on the question, Whether Adam or Eve had committed the greater sin? But Ludovico Domenichi, in his "Dialogue on the Nobleness of Women," maintains that Eve did not sin at all, because she was not even created when Adam was told not to eat the apple. It is "in Adam all died," he shrewdly says; nobody died in Eve: which looks plausible. Be that as it may, Eve's daughters are in danger of swallowing a whole harvest of forbidden fruit, in these revolutionary days, unless something be done to cut off the supply.

It has been seriously asserted, that during the last half-century more books have been written by women and about women than during all the previous uncounted ages. It may be true; although, when we think of the innumerable volumes of *Mémoires* by French women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, — each justifying the existence of her own ten volumes by the remark,

that all her contemporaries were writing as many, — we have our doubts. As to the increased multitude of general treatises on the female sex, however, — its education, life, health, diseases, charms, dress, deeds, sphere, rights, wrongs, work, wages, encroachments, and idiosyncrasies generally, — there can be no doubt whatever; and the poorest of these books recognizes a condition of public sentiment of which no other age ever dreamed.

Still, literary history preserves the names of some reformers before the Reformation, in this matter. There was Signora Moderata Fonte, the Venetian, who left a book to be published after her death, in 1592, “*Dei Meriti delle Donne*.” There was her towns-woman, Lucrezia Marinella, who followed, ten years after, with her essay, “*La Nobilità e la Eccellenza delle Donne, con Difetti e Mancamenti degli Uomini*,” — a comprehensive theme, truly! Then followed the all-accomplished Anna Maria Schurman, in 1645, with her “*Dissertatio de Ingenii Muliebris ad Doctrinam et meliores Literas Aptitudine*,” with a few miscellaneous letters appended in Greek and Hebrew. At last came boldly Jacqueline Guillaume, in 1665, and threw down the gauntlet in her title-page, “*Les Dames Illustres; où par bonnes et fortes Raisons il se prouve que le Sexe Feminin surpasse en toute Sorte de Genre le Sexe Masculin* ;” and with her came Margaret Boufflet and a host of others; and finally, in England, Mary Wollstonecraft, whose famous book, formidable in its day, would seem rather conservative now; and in America, that pious and worthy dame, Mrs. H. Mather Crocker, Cotton Mather’s grandchild, who, in 1848, published the first book on the “*Rights of Woman*” ever written on this side the Atlantic.

Meanwhile there have never been wanting men, and strong men, to echo these appeals. From Cornelius Agrippa and his essay (1509) on the excellence of woman and her pre-eminence over man, down to the first youthful thesis of Agassiz, “*Mens Feminae Viri Animo superior*,” there has been a succession of voices crying in the wilderness. In England, Anthony Gibson wrote a book, in 1599, called “*A Woman’s Worth, defended against all the Men in the World, proving them to be more Perfect, Excellent, and Absolute in all Vertuous Actions than any Man of what Qualitie soever, Interlarded with Poetry*.” *Per contra*, the learned Acidalius published a book in Latin and afterwards in French, to prove that women are not reasonable creatures. Modern theologians are at worst merely sub-acid, and do not always say so, if they think so. Meanwhile most persons have been content to leave the world to go on its old course, in this matter as in others, and have thus acquiesced in that stern judicial decree, with which Timon of

Athens sums up all his curses upon womankind, — “*If there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be — as they are.*”

Ancient or modern, nothing in any of these discussions is so valuable as the fact of the discussion itself. There is no discussion where there is no wrong. Nothing so indicates wrong, as this morbid self-inspection. The complaints are a perpetual protest, the defences a perpetual confession. It is too late to ignore the question; and, once opened, it can be settled only on absolute and permanent principles. There is a wrong; but where? Does woman already know too much, or too little? Was she created for man’s subject, or his equal? Shall she have the alphabet, or not?

Ancient mythology, which undertook to explain every thing, easily accounted for the social and political disabilities of woman. Goguet quotes the story from St. Augustine, who got it from Varro. Cecrops, building Athens, saw starting from the earth an olive-plant and a fountain, side by side. The Delphic oracle said, that this indicated a strife between Minerva and Neptune for the honor of giving a name to the city, and that the people must decide between them. Cecrops thereupon assembled the men, and the women also, who then had a right to vote; and the result was, that Minerva carried the election by a glorious majority of one. Then Attica was overflowed and laid waste: of course the citizens attributed the calamity to Neptune, and resolved to punish the women. It was therefore determined that in future they should not vote, nor should any child bear the name of its mother.

Thus easily did mythology explain all troublesome inconsistencies. But it is much that it should even have recognized them, at so early an epoch, as needing explanation. When we ask for a less symbolical elucidation, it lies within our reach. At least, it is not hard to take the first steps into the mystery. There are, to be sure, some flowers of rhetoric in the way. The obstacle to the participation of women in the alphabet, or in any other privilege, has been thought by some to be the fear of impairing her delicacy, or of destroying her domesticity, or of confounding the distinction between the sexes. I doubt it. These have been plausible excuses. They have even been genuine, though minor anxieties. But the whole thing, I take it, had always one simple, intelligible basis, — sheer contempt for the supposed intellectual inferiority of women. She was not to be taught, because she was not worth teaching. The learned Acidalius, aforesaid, was in the majority. According to Aristotle and the Peripatetics, woman was *animal occasionatum*, as if a sort of monster and accidental production. Mediæval councils, charitably ascertaining her claims to the rank of humanity, still

pronounced her unfit for instruction. In the Hindoo dramas, she did not even speak the same language with her master, but used the dialect of slaves. When, in the sixteenth century, Françoise de Saintonges wished to establish girls' schools in France, she was hooted in the streets; and her father called together four doctors, learned in the law, to decide whether she was not possessed by demons, to think of educating women, — *pour s'assurer qu'instruction des femmes n'était pas un œuvre du démon.*

It was the same with political rights. The foundation of the Salic Law was not any sentimental anxiety to guard female delicacy and domesticity. It was, as stated by Froissart, a blunt, hearty contempt: "The kingdom of France being too noble to be ruled by a woman." And the same principle was reaffirmed for our own institutions, in rather softened language, by Theophilus Parsons, in his famous defence of the rights of Massachusetts men (the "Essex Result," in 1778): "Women, what age soever they are of, are not considered as having a sufficient acquired discretion [to exercise the franchise]."

In harmony with this are the various maxims and *bons mots* of eminent men, in respect to women. Niebuhr thought he should not have educated a girl well, — he should have made her know too much. Lessing said, "The woman who thinks is like the man who puts on rouge, ridiculous." Voltaire said, "Ideas are like beards: women and young men have none." And witty Dr. Maginn carries to its extreme the atrocity: "We like to hear a few words of sense from a woman, as we do from a parrot, because they are so unexpected." Yet how can we wonder at these opinions, when the saints have been severer than the sages? — since the pious Fénelon taught that true virgin delicacy was almost as incompatible with learning as with vice; and Dr. Channing complained, in his "Essay on Exclusion and Denunciation," of "women forgetting the tenderness of their sex," and arguing on theology.

Now this impression of feminine inferiority may be right or wrong, but it obviously does a good deal towards explaining the facts it takes for granted. If contempt does not originally cause failure, it perpetuates it. Systematically discourage any individual, or class, from birth to death, and they learn, in nine cases out of ten, to acquiesce in their degradation, if not to claim it as a crown of glory. If the Abbé Choisi praised the Duchesse de Fontanges for being "beautiful as an angel and silly as a goose," it was natural that all the young ladies of the court should resolve to make up in folly what they wanted in charms. All generations of women having been bred under the shadow of intellectual contempt, they have, of

course, done much to justify it. They have often used only for frivolous purposes even the poor opportunities allowed them. They have employed the alphabet, as Molière said, chiefly in spelling the verb *Amo*. Their use of science has been like that of Mlle. de Launay, who computed the decline in her lover's affection by his abbreviation of their evening walk in the public square, preferring to cross it rather than take the circuit; — "From which I inferred," she says, "that his passion had diminished in the ratio between the diagonal of a rectangular parallelogram and the sum of two adjacent sides." And their conception, even of art, has been too often on the scale of Properzia de Rossi, who carved sixty-five heads on a walnut, the smallest of all recorded symbols of women's sphere.

All this might, perhaps, be overcome, if the social prejudice which discourages women would only reward proportionately those who surmount the discouragement. The more obstacles, the more glory, if society would only pay in proportion to the labor; but it does not. Women being denied, not merely the training which prepares for great deeds, but the praise and compensation which follow them, have been weakened in both directions. The career of eminent men ordinarily begins with colleges and the memories of Miltiades, and ends with fortune and fame: woman begins under discouragement, and ends beneath the same. Single, she works with half-preparation and half-pay; married, she puts name and wages into the keeping of her husband, shrinks into John Smith's "lady" during life, and John Smith's "relict" on her tombstone; and still the world wonders that her deeds, like her opportunities, are inferior.

Evidently, then, the advocates of woman's claims — those who hold that "the virtues of the man and the woman are the same," with Antisthenes, or that "the talent of the man and the woman is the same," with Socrates in Xenophon's "Banquet" — must be cautious lest they attempt to prove too much. Of course, if women know as much as men, without schools and colleges, there is no need of admitting them to those institutions. If they work as well on half-pay, it diminishes the inducement to give them the other half. The safer position is, to claim that they have done just enough to show what they might have done under circumstances less discouraging. Take, for instance, the common remark, that women have invented nothing. It is a valid answer, that the only implements habitually used by woman have been the needle, the spindle, and the basket; and tradition reports that she herself invented all three. In the same way it may be shown that the departments in which women have equalled men, have been the departments in which

they have had equal training, equal encouragement, and equal compensation; as, for instance, the theatre. Madame Lagrange, the *prima donna*, after years of costly musical instruction, wins the zenith of professional success. She receives, the newspapers affirm, sixty thousand dollars a year, travelling expenses for ten persons, country-houses, stables, and liveries, besides an uncounted revenue of bracelets, bouquets and *billet-doux*. Of course, every young *débutante* fancies the same thing within her own reach, with only a brief stage-vista between. On the stage there is no deduction for sex, and, therefore, woman has shown in that sphere an equal genius. But every female common-school teacher in the United States finds the enjoyment of her two hundred dollars a year to be secretly embittered by the knowledge that the young college-stripling in the next school-room is paid a thousand dollars for work no harder or more responsible than her own, and that, too, after the whole pathway of education has been obstructed for her, and smoothed for him. These may be gross and carnal considerations; but Faith asks her daily bread, and Fancy must be fed. We deny woman her fair share of training, of encouragement, of remuneration, and then talk fine nonsense about her instincts and intuitions, — say sentimentally with the Oriental proverbialist, “Every book of knowledge is implanted by nature in the heart of woman,” — and make the compliment a substitute for the alphabet.

Nothing can be more absurd than to impose entirely distinct standards, in this respect, on the two sexes, or to expect that woman, any more than man, will accomplish any thing great without due preparation and adequate stimulus. Mrs. Patten, who navigated her husband's ship from Cape Horn to California, would have failed in the effort, for all her heroism, if she had not, unlike most of her sex, been taught to use her Bowditch. Florence Nightingale, when she heard of the distresses in the Crimea, did not, as most people imagine, rise up and say, “I am a woman, ignorant but intuitive, with very little sense and information, but exceedingly sublime aspirations; my strength lies in my weakness; I can do all things without knowing any thing about them.” Not at all. During ten years she had been in hard training for precisely such services; had visited all the hospitals in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Paris, Lyons, Rome, Brussels, and Berlin; had studied under the Sisters of Charity, and been twice a nurse in the Protestant Institution at Kaisersworth. Therefore she did not merely carry to the Crimea a woman's heart, as her stock in trade, but she knew the alphabet of her profession better than the men around her. Of course, genius and enthusiasm are, for both sexes,

elements unforeseen and incalculable; but, as a general rule, great achievements imply great preparations and favorable conditions.

To disregard this truth is unreasonable in the abstract, and cruel in its consequences. If an extraordinary male gymnast can clear a height of ten feet with the aid of a spring-board, it would be considered slightly absurd to ask a woman to leap eleven feet without one; yet this is precisely what society and the critics have always done. Training and wages and social approbation are very elastic spring-boards; and the whole course of history has seen these offered bounteously to one sex, and as sedulously withheld from the other. Let woman consent to be a doll, and there was no finery so gorgeous, no baby-house so costly, but she might aspire to share its lavish delights; let her ask simply for an equal chance to learn, to labor, and to live, and it was as if that same doll should open its lips, and propound Euclid's forty-seventh proposition. While we have all deplored the helpless position of indigent women, and lamented that they had no alternative beyond the needle, the wash-tub, the school-room, and the street, we have yet resisted their admission into every new occupation, denied them training, and cut their compensation down. Like Charles Lamb, who atoned for coming late to the office in the morning by going away early in the afternoon, we have, first, half educated women, and then, to restore the balance, only half paid them. What innumerable obstacles have been placed in the way of female physicians! what a complication of difficulties has been encountered by female printers, engravers, and designers! In London, Mr. Bennett was recently mobbed for lecturing to women on watchmaking. In this country, we have known grave professors to refuse to address lyceums which thought fit to employ an occasional female lecturer. Mr. Comer states that it was “in the face of ridicule and sneers” that he began to educate women as bookkeepers eight years ago; and it was a little contemptible in Miss Muloch to revive the same satire in “A Woman's Thought on Women,” when she must have known that in half the retail shops in Paris her own sex rules the ledger, and Mammon knows no Salic law.

We find, on investigation, what these considerations would lead us to expect, that eminent women have commonly been exceptional in training and position, as well as in their genius. They have excelled the average of their own sex because they have had more of the ordinary advantages of the other sex. Take any department of learning or skill; take, for instance, the knowledge of languages, the universal alphabet, philology. On the great stairway at Padua, stands the statue of Elena Cornaro, professor of six languages in

that once renowned university. But Elena Cornaro was educated like a boy, by her father. On the great door of the University of Bologna is inscribed the epitaph of Clotilda Tambroni, the honored correspondent of Porson, and the first Greek scholar of Southern Europe in her day. But Clotilda Tambroni was educated like a boy, by Emanuele Aponte. How fine are those prefatory words, "by a Right Reverend Pre'ate," to that pioneer book in Anglo-Saxon lore, Elizabeth Elstob's grammar: "Our earthly possessions are indeed our patrimony, as derived to us by the industry of our fathers; but the language in which we speak is our mother-tongue, and who so proper to play the critic in this as the females?" But this particular female obtained the rudiments of her rare education from her mother, before she was eight years old, in spite of much opposition from her right reverend guardians. Adelung, the highest authority, declares that all modern philology is founded on the translation of a Russian vocabulary into two hundred different dialects by Catherine II. But Catherine shared, in childhood, the instructors of her brother, Prince Frederick, and was subject to some reproach for learning, though a girl, so much more rapidly than he did. Christina of Sweden ironically reproved Madame Dacier for her translation of Callimachus: "Such a pretty girl as you are, are you not ashamed to be so learned?" But Madame Dacier acquired Greek by contriving to do her embroidery in the room where her father was teaching her stupid brother; and her queenly critic had herself learned to read Thucydides, harder Greek than Callimachus, before she was fourteen. And so down to our own day, who knows how many mute, inglorious Minervas may have perished unenlightened, while Margaret Fuller Ossoli and Elizabeth Barrett Browning were being educated "like boys."

This expression simply means that they had the most solid training which the times afforded. Most persons would instantly take alarm at the very words; that is, they have so little faith in the distinctions which Nature has established, that they think, if you teach the alphabet, or any thing else, indiscriminately to both sexes, you annul all difference between them. The common reasoning is thus: "Boys and girls are acknowledged to be distinct beings. Now, boys study Greek and algebra, medicine and bookkeeping. Therefore girls should not." As if one should say: "Boys and girls are distinct beings. Now, boys eat beef and potatoes. Therefore, obviously, girls should not."

The analogy between physical and spiritual food is precisely in point. The simple truth is, that, amid the vast range of human powers and properties, the fact of sex is but one item. Vital and

momentous in itself, it does not constitute the whole organism, but only a small part of it. The distinction of male and female is special, aimed at a certain end; and, apart from that end, it is, throughout all the kingdoms of Nature, of minor importance. With but trifling exceptions, from infusorial up to man, the female animal moves, breathes, looks, listens, runs, flies, swims, pursues its food, eats it, digests it, in precisely the same manner as the male: all instincts, all characteristics, are the same, except as to the one solitary fact of parentage. Mr. Ten Broeck's race-horses, Pryor and Prioress, were foaled alike, fed alike, trained alike, and finally ran side by side, competing for the same prize. The eagle is not checked in soaring by any consciousness of sex, nor asks the sex of the timid hare, its quarry. Nature, for high purposes, creates and guards the sexual distinction, but keeps it humbly subordinate to still more important ones.

Now, all this bears directly upon the alphabet. What sort of philosophy is that which says, "John is a fool; Jane is a genius: nevertheless, John, being a man, shall learn, lead, make laws, make money; Jane, being a woman, shall be ignorant, dependent, disfranchised, underpaid?" Of course, the time is past when one would state this so frankly, though Comte comes quite near it, to say nothing of the Mormons; but this formula really lies at the bottom of the reasoning one hears every day. The answer is, Soul before sex. Give an equal chance, and let genius and industry do the rest. *La carrière ouverte aux talens*. Every man for himself, every woman for herself, and the alphabet for us all.

Thus far, my whole course of argument has been defensive and explanatory. I have shown that woman's inferiority in special achievements, so far as it exists, is a fact of small importance, because it is merely a corollary from her historic position of degradation. She has not excelled, because she has had no fair chance to excel. Man, placing his foot upon her shoulder, has taunted her with not rising. But the ulterior question remains behind. How came she into this attitude originally? Explain the explanation, the logician fairly demands. Granted that woman is weak because she has been systematically degraded: but why was she degraded? This is a far deeper question, — one to be met only by a profounder philosophy and a positive solution. We are coming on ground almost wholly untrod, and must do the best we can.

I venture to assert, then, that woman's social inferiority in the past has been, to a great extent, a legitimate thing. To all appearance, history would have been impossible without it, just as it would have been impossible without an epoch of war and slavery. It is

four miles an hour, was ingenious, perhaps "theoretically defensible;" but, upon the whole, the road would not be so cheap or convenient as a canal. In this country, sir, the venerable traditions are used to being disturbed. America was clearly designed to be a disturber of traditions, and to leave nobler precedents than she found. So, a few months ago, what the Committee call a revolutionary innovation was proposed by giving the ballot to the freedmen in the District of Columbia. The awful results of such a revolution were duly set forth in one of the myriad veto messages of the President of the United States. But they have voted. If anybody proposed to disturb the election, it was certainly not the new voters. The election was perfectly peaceful, and not one of the presidential pangs has been justified. So with this reform. It is new in the extent proposed. It is as new as the harvest after the sowing, and it is as natural. The resumption of rights long denied or withheld never made a social convulsion: that is produced by refusing them. The West-Indian slaves received their liberty, praying upon their knees; and the influence of the enfranchisement of women will glide into society as noiselessly as the dawn increases into day.

Or shall I be told that women, if not numerically counted at the polls, do yet exert an immense influence upon politics, and do not really need the ballot. If this argument was seriously urged, I should suffer my eyes to rove through this chamber and they would show me many honorable gentlemen of reputed political influence. May they, therefore, be properly and justly disfranchised? I ask the honorable Chairman of the Committee, whether he thinks that a citizen should have no vote because he has influence? What gives influence? Ability, intelligence, honesty. Are these to be excluded from the polls? Is it only stupidity, ignorance and rascality which ought to possess political power?

Or will it be said that women do not want the ballot and ought to be asked? And upon what principle ought they to be asked? When natural rights or their means of defence have been immemorably denied to a large class, does humanity, or justice, or good sense require that they should be registered and called to vote upon their own restoration? Why, Mr. Chairman, it might as well be said that Jack the Giant Killer ought to have gravely asked the captives in the ogre's dungeon whether they wished to be released. It must be assumed that men and women wish to enjoy their natural rights, as that the eyes wish light or the lungs an atmosphere. Did we wait for emancipation until the slaves peti-

tioned to be free? No, sir, all our lives had been passed in ingenious and ignominious efforts to sophisticate and stultify ourselves for keeping them chained; and when war gave us a legal right to snap their bonds, we did not ask them whether they preferred to remain slaves. We knew that they were men, and that men by nature walk upright, and if we find them bent and crawling, we know that the posture is unnatural whether they may think so or not. In the case of women we acknowledge that they have the same natural rights as ourselves—we see that they hold property and pay taxes, and we must of necessity suppose that they wish to enjoy every security of those rights that we possess. So when in this State, every year, thousands of boys come of age, we do not solemnly require them to tell us whether they wish to vote. We assume, of course, that they do, and we say to them, "Go, and upon the same terms with the rest of us, vote as you choose." But gentlemen say that they know a great many women who do not wish to vote, who think it is not ladylike, or whatever the proper term may be. Well, sir, I have known many men who habitually abstained from politics because they were so "ungentlemanly," and who thought that no man could touch pitch without defilement. Now what would the honorable gentlemen who know women who do not wish to vote, have thought of a proposition that I should not vote, because my neighbors did not wish to? There may have been slaves who preferred to remain slaves—was that an argument against freedom? Suppose there are a majority of the women of this State who do not wish to vote—is that a reason for depriving *one* woman who is taxed of her equal representation, or one innocent person of the equal protection of his life and liberty?

Shall nothing ever be done by statesmen until wrongs are so intolerable that they take society by the throat? Did it show the wisdom of British Conservatism that it waited to grant the Reform bill of 1832 until England hung upon the edge of civil war? When women and children were worked sixteen hours a day in English factories, did it show practical good sense to delay a "short-time" bill until hundreds of thousands of starving workmen agreed to starve yet more, if need be, to relieve the overwork of their families, and until the most pitiful procession the sun ever shone upon, that of the factory children, just as they left their work, marched through the streets of Manchester, that burst into sobs and tears at the sight? Yet if, in such instances, where there was so plausible an adverse appeal founded upon vested interests and upon the very theory of the government, it was unwise to

sions which controlled the world. How could the Jews, for instance, elevate woman? They could not spare her from the wool and the flax, and the candle that goeth not out by night. In Rome, when the bride first stepped across her threshold, they did not ask her, Do you know the alphabet? they asked simply, Can you spin? There was no higher epitaph than Queen Amalasontha's, — *Domum servavit, lanam fecit*. In Bœotia, brides were conducted home in vehicles whose wheels were burned at the door, in token that they were never to leave the house again. Pythagoras instituted at Crotona an annual festival for the distaff; Confucius, in China, did the same for the spindle; and these celebrated not the freedom, but the serfdom, of woman.

And even into modern days this same tyrannical necessity has lingered. "Go spin, you jades! go spin!" was the only answer vouchsafed by the Earl of Pembroke to the twice-banished nuns of Wilton. Even now, travellers agree that throughout civilized Europe, with the partial exception of England and France, the profound absorption of the mass of women in household labors renders their general elevation impossible. But with us Americans, and in this age, when all these vast labors are being more and more transferred to arms of brass and iron; when Rochester grinds the flour, and Lowell weaves the cloth, and the fire on the hearth has gone into black retirement and mourning; when the wiser a virgin is, the less she has to do with oil in her lamp; when the needle has made its last dying speech and confession in the "Song of the Shirt" and the sewing-machine has changed those doleful marches to delightful measures, — how is it possible for the blindest to help seeing that a new era is begun, and that the time has come for woman to learn the alphabet?

Nobody asks for any abolition of domestic labor for women, any more than of outdoor labor for men. Of course, most women will still continue to be mainly occupied with the indoor care of their families, and most men with their external support. All that is desirable for either sex is such an economy of labor, in this respect, as shall leave some spare time to be appropriated in other directions. The argument against each new emancipation of woman is precisely that always made against the liberation of serfs and the enfranchisement of plebeians, — that the new position will take them from their legitimate business. "How can he [or she] get wisdom that holdeth the plough [or the broom], — whose talk is of bullocks [or of babies]?" Yet the American farmer has already emancipated himself from these fancied incompatibilities; and so will the farmer's wife. In a nation where there is no leisure-class and no peasantry,

this whole theory of exclusion is an absurdity. We all have a little leisure, and we must all make the most of it. If we will confine large interests and duties to those who have nothing else to do, we must go back to monarchy at once. If otherwise, then the alphabet, and its consequences, must be open to woman as to man. Jean Paul says nobly, in his "Levana," that, "before and after being a mother, a woman is a human being, and neither maternal nor conjugal relation can supersede the human responsibility, but must become its means and instrument." And it is good to read the manly speech, on this subject, of John Quincy Adams, quoted at length in Quincy's life of him, in which, after fully defending the political petitions of the women of Plymouth, he declares that "the correct principle is, that women are not only justified, but exhibit the most exalted virtue, when they do depart from the domestic circle, and enter on the concerns of their country, of humanity, and of their God."

There are duties devolving on every human being, — duties not small nor few, but vast and varied, — which spring from home and private life, and all their sweet relations. The support or care of the humblest household is a function worthy of men, women, and angels, so far as it goes. From these duties none must shrink, neither man nor woman; the loftiest genius cannot ignore them; the sublimest charity must begin with them. They are their own exceeding great reward; their self-sacrifice is infinite joy; and the selfishness which discards them is repaid by loneliness and a desolate old age. Yet these, though the most tender and intimate portion of human life, do not form its whole. It is given to noble souls to crave other interests also, added spheres, not necessarily alien from these; larger knowledge, larger action also; duties, responsibilities, anxieties, dangers, all the aliment that history has given to its heroes. Not home less, but humanity more. When the high-born English lady in the Crimean hospital, ordered to a post of almost certain death, only raised her hands to heaven, and said, "Thank God!" she did not renounce her true position as woman: she claimed it. When the queen of James I. of Scotland, already immortalized by him in stately verse, won a higher immortality by welcoming to her fair bosom the dagger aimed at his; when the Countess of Buchan hung confined in her iron cage, outside Berwick Castle, in penalty for crowning Robert the Bruce; when the stainless soul of Joan of Arc met God, like Moses, in a burning flame, — these things were as they should be. Man must not monopolize these privileges of peril, birthright of great souls. Serenades and compliments must not replace the nobler hospitality

which shares with woman the opportunity of martyrdom. Great administrative duties also, cares of state, for which one should be born gray-headed, how nobly do these sit upon a woman's brow! Each year adds to the storied renown of Elizabeth of England, greatest sovereign of the greatest of historic nations. Christina of Sweden, alone among the crowned heads of Europe (so says Voltaire,) sustained the dignity of the throne against Richelieu and Mazarin. And they most assuredly did not sacrifice their womanhood in the process; for her Britannic Majesty's wardrobe included four thousand gowns; and Mlle. de Montpensier declares, that when Christina had put on a wig of the latest fashion, "she really looked extremely pretty." Should this evidence of feminine attributes appear to some sterner intellects frivolous and insufficient, it is, nevertheless, adapted to the level of the style of argument it answers.

Les races se féminisent, said Buffon, — "The world is growing more feminine." It is a compliment, whether the naturalist intended it or not. Time has brought peace; peace, invention; and the poorest woman of to-day is born to an inheritance such as her ancestors never dreamed of. Previous attempts to confer on women social and political equality, — as when Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, made them magistrates, or when the Hungarian revolutionists made them voters, or when our own New Jersey tried the same experiment in a guarded fashion in early times, and then revoked the privilege, because (as in the ancient fable) the women voted the wrong way, — these things were premature, and valuable only as recognitions of a principle. But in view of the rapid changes now going on, he is a rash man who asserts the "Woman Question" to be any thing but a mere question of time. The fulcrum has been already given, in the alphabet, and we must simply watch, and see whether the earth does not move.

There is the plain fact: woman must be either a subject or an equal; there is no middle ground. Every concession to a supposed principle only involves the necessity of the next concession for which that principle calls. Once yield the alphabet, and we abandon the whole long theory of subjection and coverture: the past is set aside, and we have nothing but abstractions to fall back upon. Reasoning abstractly, it must be admitted that the argument has been, thus far, entirely on the women's side, inasmuch as no man has yet seriously tried to meet them with argument. It is an alarming feature of this discussion, that it has reversed, very generally, the traditional positions of the sexes: the women have had all the logic; and the most intelligent men, when they have at-

tempted the other side, have limited themselves to satire and gossip. What rational woman can be really convinced by the nonsense which is talked in ordinary society around her, — as, that it is right to admit girls to common schools, and equally right to exclude them from colleges; that it is proper for a woman to sing in public, but indelicate for her to speak in public; that a post-office box is an unexceptionable place to drop a bit of paper into, but a ballot-box terribly dangerous? No cause in the world can keep above water, sustained by such contradictions as these, too feeble and slight to be dignified by the name of fallacies. Some persons profess to think it impossible to reason with a woman, and such critics certainly show no disposition to try the experiment.

But we must remember that all our American institutions are based on consistency, or on nothing: all claim to be founded on the principles of natural right; and when they quit those, they are lost. In all European monarchies, it is the theory, that the mass of the people are children to be governed, not mature beings to govern themselves. This is clearly stated, and consistently applied. In the free States of this Union, we have formally abandoned this theory for one half of the human race, while for the other half it still flourishes in full force. The moment the claims of woman are broached, the democrat becomes a monarchist. What Americans commonly criticize in English statesman, namely, that they habitually evade all arguments based on natural right, and defend every legal wrong on the ground that it works well in practice, is the precise characteristic of our habitual view of woman. The perplexity must be resolved somehow. Most men admit that a strict adherence to our own principles would place both sexes in precisely equal positions before law and constitution, as well as in school and society. But each has his special quibble to apply, showing that in this case we must abandon all the general maxims to which we have pledged ourselves, and hold only by precedent. Nay, he construes even precedent with the most ingenious rigor; since the exclusion of women from all direct contact with affairs can be made far more perfect in a republic than is possible in a monarchy, where even sex is merged in rank, and the female patrician may have far more power than the male plebeian. But, as matters now stand among us, there is no aristocracy but of sex: all men are born patrician, all women are legally plebeian; all men are equal in having political power, and all women in having none. This is a paradox so evident, and such an anomaly in human progress, that it cannot last forever, without new discov-

eries in logic, or else a deliberate return to M. Maréchal's theory concerning the alphabet.

Meanwhile, as the newspapers say, we anxiously await further developments. According to present appearances, the final adjustment lies mainly in the hands of women themselves. Men can hardly be expected to concede either rights or privileges more rapidly than they are claimed, or to be truer to women than women are to each other. True, the worst effect of a condition of inferiority is the weakness it leaves behind it; even when we say, "Hands off!" the sufferer does not rise. In such a case, there is but one counsel worth giving. More depends on determination than even on ability. Will, not talent, governs the world. From what pathway of eminence were women more traditionally excluded than from the art of sculpture, in spite of *Non me Praxiteles fecit, sed Anna Damer?* — yet Harriet Hosmer and her sisters have climbed far up its steep ascent. Who believed that a poetess could ever be more than an Annot Lyle of the harp, to soothe with sweet melodies the leisure of her lord, until in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's hands the thing became a trumpet? Where are gone the sneers with which army surgeons and parliamentary orators opposed Mr. Sidney Herbert's first proposition to send Florence Nightingale to the Crimea? In how many towns has the current of popular prejudice against female orators been reversed by one winning speech from Lucy Stone! Where no logic can prevail, success silences. First give woman, if you dare, the alphabet, then summon her to her career: and though men, ignorant and prejudiced, may oppose its beginnings, there is no danger but they will at last fling around her conquering footsteps more lavish praises than ever greeted the opera's idol, — more perfumed flowers than ever wooed, with intoxicating fragrance, the fairest butterfly of the ball-room.

Woman's Suffrage Association.

CONSTITUTION.

1. Believing in the natural equality of the two sexes, and that women ought to enjoy the same legal rights and privileges as men; that as long as women are denied the elective franchise they suffer a great wrong, and society a deep and incalculable injury; the undersigned agree to unite in an Association to be called, — "THE NEW ENGLAND WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION."
2. The object of this Association shall be to procure the right of suffrage for women, and to effect such changes in the law as shall place women in all respects on an equal legal footing with men.
3. The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Corresponding and a Recording Secretary, and an Executive Committee of not exceeding fifteen persons, besides the President, Secretaries and Treasurer, who shall be members *ex officio*. All the officers shall be chosen at the annual meeting, to continue

in office for one year, and until others are chosen in their places.

4. Any person may be a member of the Association, by the payment of an annual contribution to its funds, or a life member by the payment of Twenty Dollars.

5. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, or in his or her absence the senior Vice President.

6. The Treasurer shall collect and take charge of the funds, make all payments, and keep regular accounts, to be audited by the Executive Committee.

7. The Recording Secretary shall keep the records; and the Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall manage the business of the Association, may elect honorary members, call meetings of the Society, prepare petitions to the legislature, issue publications, and employ lecturers and agents, and take any measures they think fit to forward the objects of the Association, and may fill all vacancies that occur prior to the annual meeting.

9. The annual meeting of the Association shall be held on such day in the last week in May, in Boston, and at such hour and place, and be called in such manner, as the Executive Committee may appoint.

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NEW WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL,

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Published every Saturday in Boston and Chicago.

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OPINION OF THE PRESS.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL.—The friends of Woman Suffrage who wish to keep the issue clear from entangling alliances with other reforms, and the endless host of individual whims and vagaries,—who would pursue it with the same singleness of aim that marks the movement in England, and the temperance and other special reforms in this country, have established a weekly paper, "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL," published in Boston and Chicago, and edited by Mrs. Livermore, Mrs. Lucy Stone, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, and Mr. T. W. Higginson, assisted by accomplished friends of the cause. "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL" is a fair and attractive paper in appearance; while the variety and spirit of its articles, and the dignity, self-respect, good humor, and earnestness of its tone, will show how profoundly mistaken are those who suppose that folly and extravagance are necessarily characteristic of the discussion of the question. THE JOURNAL is indispensable to those who would truly understand the character of the movement, and measure its progress.—George William Curtis, in Harper's Weekly.

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WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE TRACTS. NO. 6.

WOMAN'S RIGHT

AND

THE PUBLIC WELFARE.

REMARKS OF

HON. GEORGE F. HOAR,

BEFORE A

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE,

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WOMAN'S RIGHT AND THE PUBLIC
WELFARE.

I AM unfortunate, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, that I have to address a committee to whom this subject has lately been presented, not only by the most brilliant orator of the country, but by her who is, by common confession, the ablest advocate of the cause for which she is herself an embodied argument. I have not heard them, and so cannot even tell what topics to omit. But as I have been several times invited by the committee who have this matter in charge to state my views, although I am not vain enough to suppose I can present to you any new arguments, coming as I do from other studies, I thought I ought at least to come here and show my colors.

This age is remarkable for the dispassionate discussion on principle of the great fundamental laws which lie at the bottom of all human society. We have just gone through a struggle which has ended in emancipating, and giving the right of suffrage to, a race. And now, instantly, there comes upon us a renewed consideration of the rightfulness of excluding, by the whole material forces of the government, a little more than one-half of our population.

I suppose this is always so. An individual cannot subject one action to the test of duty, without, from that time forward, finding it difficult to escape the application of the same test to other questions of life. Take any man who has been educated frivolously, thoughtlessly, who has fallen into bad habits, and let there come to him, in a time when he is to act in some important matter, the question, Is it right? and let him experience the luxury of obedience to the law of duty, and, from that time forward, he can govern himself easily and comfortably by no other law. And so, when our fathers began their struggle with England by discussing simply the limitations of parliamentary power, they ended by the immortal

declarations of human rights contained in the opening clauses of the Declaration of Independence. In England, to-day, the party which has just come into power by extending the rights of suffrage to the laboring classes commits itself, as its first public measure, to the enfranchisement, voluntarily, and because it is right, of the people of Ireland from the dominion of an alien and aristocratic church. And therefore it is a fitting sequel to the victory which we have just achieved in this country, that we should turn our attention to the question that is before us to-day. As I have said, a little more than one-half of the population of this Commonwealth is excluded from all share in its government, — kept out by the whole force of the national power. That this is just has been taken for granted, without reflection, by the large majority of all mankind in all ages; or, rather, let me say, that the large majority of all mankind and all ages have established their forms of government without considering the question whether it was right or not. Certainly no graver question than this can present itself to the statesmen of this Commonwealth. It is to be discussed dispassionately, and without heat.

Now, in turning in my own mind what I ought to say to you here to-day, I have failed to think of a single reason which I can give why you or I should have the right of suffrage which does not include women; and I think I may safely challenge any human being to come forward, and state why it is that I am permitted to cast my vote, — to give any general rule which shall define the qualities or capacities or interests which should entitle a person to have a share in the administration of the government, from which women are excluded. I shall assume, as the foundation of my argument, that you believe that every man has this right. I am speaking to the representatives, to the statesmen, of a people who believe that. The framers of our government, Mr. Chairman, understood perfectly the principles of constitutional liberty; but they did what you often see done by the inventor of a new machine, a new principle in mechanism. The idea dawns upon the inventor; he turns it over in his mind until he sees the truth of his newly-discovered principle, the capacity of his newly-discovered force. That he understands and sees clearly. But when he comes to put his machine into actual operation, and to adjust the details of its mechanism, it very often takes the experience and the labor of years to bring to perfection the conception of the workman's brain. Not because there is any error in his principle, but because the mechanism in its details, which he at first tries, is not adjusted, is

not consistent with the principle, and is not symmetrical or harmonious in all its parts. Now, that is precisely what the framers of our Constitution did in regard to the principle of human government. They state in the Bill of Rights a series of comprehensive fundamental principles, no one of which, as far as I am aware, has ever been disputed by anybody from the time of the organization of the Constitution until to-day. There have been changes made, — changes in the details, in the mechanism, of our government. The framers themselves expected these, and provided a simple and convenient method of revising and altering the Constitution. But in the statement of fundamental principles laid down in the Bill of Rights, so far as I have read the history of this Commonwealth, no living person, no person who has lived under them, ever has attempted to make a change. Now, in regard to this matter of the principle which our fathers, using the pen of John Adams, announced as the rightful principle governing us in the adjustment of the government, it is this. They state, let me first observe, in one of the sentences of the Bill of Rights — not that they did not expect that the details would be frequently changed, for, as I said before, they provided a method for a convenient and easy change from time to time — but they state, “A frequent recurrence to these fundamental principles of the Constitution is absolutely necessary to preserve the advantages of liberty, and to maintain a free government. The people ought, consequently, to have particular attention to all these principles, and to require of their lawgivers and magistrates an exact and constant observance of them.” Now, what do they say as a principle, in the ninth article of the Bill of Rights? “All the inhabitants of this Commonwealth, having such qualifications as they [that is, all the inhabitants] shall establish, have an equal right to elect officers, and to be elected to public employment. Each individual of this society has a right to be protected by it in the enjoyment of his life, liberty, and property, according to standing laws. He is consequently to contribute his share to the expense of this protection; and no part of the property of any individual can with justice be taken from him, or applied to public uses, without his own consent, or that of the representative body of the people.” They say also, as another principle, that “No man, or corporation or association of men, have any right to obtain advantages, or particular and exclusive privileges, distinct from those of the whole community;” and that “the idea of a man being born a magistrate, lawgiver, or judge, is absurd and unnatural.” That is the principle; every inhabitant of the Commonwealth has a

right to an equal share in its government. Every inhabitant of this Commonwealth, bound to contribute his or her share to its protection, cannot have his or her property taken away, except by leave. And no man or association of men, whether it be one man or a body of men, have a right to exclusive advantages distinct from those of the entire community. Now, how did our fathers carry out this principle? Let us see. All the inhabitants having an equal right to be eligible to office, no person shall be a senator who is not seized of a freehold in this Commonwealth of the value of two hundred pounds at least, or possessed of personal estate to the value of six hundred pounds. In regard to the election to the House of Representatives (every inhabitant having this equal right as a matter of principle), every male person only, being twenty-one years of age, having a freehold or estate within the town of an annual income of three pounds, shall have a right to vote for representative of said town. No person shall be eligible to the office of governor, unless he shall at the same time be seized of a freehold of the value of one thousand pounds. Having declared this principle fundamental, absolute, that every inhabitant is entitled to an equal share in the administration of the government, they proceed to say that such inhabitant shall only be elected governor if a male person, and possessed of a freehold of a thousand pounds. One generation has stricken out the latter inconsistency, and has so far perfected the machine. Now the question is, what we will do with the other. We are here to say that this declaration of John Adams is not a lie, and that the fundamental principle of the Constitution is right, and the rule and detail of its administration is wrong.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we admit frankly that woman differs from man. Is the difference such as affects her qualification for the vote? Is the difference such as affects her need of the vote? Is the difference such as affects the public's need of her vote? The answer to these three questions exhausts this argument.

What ought the voter to have to entitle him or her to this prerogative? Three things, it seems to me, are essential, and three things only. The voter should have, in the first place, a desire for the public welfare; he should have, in the second place, the capacity to judge of the character of the persons proposed as candidates for public office; he should have, in the third place, the capacity to judge of the effects of proposed measures. I can think of no other test. I have never seen stated by jurist, philosopher, or statesman, any other test, any other requisite or essential, but

these three, — love of country, capacity to select its servants, capacity to appreciate its necessities. These make up, it seems to me, the right to share in its administration. Now, I admit, if we could be quite sure that any class in the community lacked either of these, we should claim the right for the State to exclude it from its administration. We are quite sure that infants have not the two last; and therefore, drawing a line which from the nature of the case must be more or less arbitrary, we exclude them from a share in the government. We have thought, we were quite sure, that citizens of foreign countries could not have that supreme devotion to the interests of ours which would make them willing to live, and, if need be, die, for her service. And so we have claimed the right to impose upon them a term of probation before admitting them to this exalted prerogative. But which of these essentials does woman not possess? In the first place, the desire for the public welfare. Does she not love every thing that is best for the State? She loves peace, she loves quiet, she loves order, she loves the security of the home, she loves and appreciates the principle which distinguishes a republican from an imperial government. The most valuable distinction between this government and most others upon earth in its theory that I know of, is this: that whereas other governments make it their ambition to create national strength, run a career of glory, a brilliant military career, to press with an iron heel upon the weak, and encounter with iron front the strong, the republic seeks and finds its success in the multiplication of happy homes, in the development of individual character, and, to use the simple phrase of the Declaration, in the pursuit of happiness.

I believe that woman will bring to the administration of the State an earnest desire for this, in which the public welfare, on the true American theory, consists. I do not think that it will be claimed by anybody, that our sisters or wives will fall behind us in this first essential requisite to a share in the control of the State, — desire for its welfare. Cannot she equal us in love and devotion to the State who surpasses us in capacity for love and devotion wherever she is permitted to indulge them? Man chiefly values the objects of his affection for the dignity, the comfort, and the happiness they are capable of conferring upon him: woman values herself for the dignity, the comfort, and the happiness she is capable of bestowing on the objects of her affection.

In the next place comes the capacity to judge of character. We all know that that is woman's instinct. If there is any one thing

in which woman may claim to be our superior, it is, that when she sees a person who asks for her confidence or ours, and we are reasoning about it, and speculating about it, the infallible and unerring instinct of the woman gets at the truth. How many times every man who has put his confidence in somebody, and suffers by it, remembers too late the warning that he had received at home!

Now, in the third place, the capacity to judge of the effects of proposed measures. Is it not true, Mr. Chairman, as a matter of fact, that wherever woman has been permitted to appear in the sphere of public life, she has proved herself, in this essential particular, fully equal to the average of men in the same position? Since the Reformation in England, there have been three queens regnant, who have come to the throne by inheritance, — Queen Elizabeth, Queen Anne, and Queen Victoria, — the worst of whom has been fully the equal of any king that has in the same time inherited the English throne, and the other two immeasurably the superior. In the list of great names of the sovereigns of Europe, few in number, there are none brighter than those of Isabella of Spain, Maria Theresa, and Queen Victoria. Then, wherever woman has appeared in the sphere of politics, either as responsible director or as counsellor and companion of man, has not her duty been well performed? In that mighty parliamentary struggle, one of the most interesting chapters in English history, in which, at the age of twenty-four, the genius of the younger Pitt overcame a hostile majority in the House of Commons, and, what was perhaps a more formidable obstacle, the combined antagonism of Burke and Fox and Sheridan, his chief confidant and counsellor was his mother.

Just think, Mr. Chairman, in considering this question of the capacity of woman, of the education which she has had in the duties to which we have confined and consigned her. Do you think, if you had spent your whole life in rocking the cradle and darning stockings, that you would contribute as much as you do now to the administration of the State? I undertake to say that no man whose experience has enabled him to see women who have had an education which has tended to develop their faculties equally with those of men will deny that, in the kind of mental power essential to the administration of the affairs of the State, they have proved themselves fully equal to men. In the studies which require the reasoning powers, the mathematical faculties, woman has often proved herself superior to most men. In the town where I was born and educated, and where we had pretty good schools and pretty good scholars, the girls were always at the head of the classes. My

friend who has preceded me [James Freeman Clarke], and my friend who sits on the committee [A. G. Fay of Concord], perhaps could tell you something of a lady who fitted me for college, of whom it was said by the late President Everett that she could fill any professorship in Harvard College. Under her tuition, the university used to place students who were suspended for a time; and she kept them up with their classes in every study, doing a work which would have been divided among a dozen male teachers in the College. She was one of the few persons in this country who are said to have read the "Mécanique Celeste" in the original, without the assistance of the translation of Dr. Bowditch; a Greek and Latin scholar to whose studies Æschylus and Homer and Virgil were familiar; well acquainted, too, with the languages and literatures of modern Europe; who could tell naturalists, like Tuckerman and Gray, some things about their own studies which they were glad to hear. Yet that instructed brain, that could have taught the best railroad engineer the most difficult principles of his art, could not be permitted in Concord to express a choice for the highway-surveyor who should mend the road past her door! The woman to whose teaching some of the best intellects in the State owed their best accomplishments could not be trusted to attend a town meeting to aid in the selection of a committee-man for the district school to which her grandchild was sent!

Does the difference between man and woman affect her need of the ballot? Now, I do not propose to go over this ground fully. You all know how very unequal the laws have been and still remain, though much improved, regarding the right of husband and wife. The husband still retains the control of his wife's person absolutely as the brutality of the common law ever gave it to him. He can give away all the property which is the proceeds of the joint earnings of both; he can give away his own property from her; while she cannot give away her shares in corporations, or interest in land, without his consent. It used to be said, when we were proposing a man of large property for office, "He has a stake in the country." But what stake in the country is like that which a mother has in her child? But it is said politics is not a woman's business. I do not suppose it is a woman's business. Politics is not anybody's business in this country. It is not a clergyman's business; but you give a clergyman a vote. Politics is not the physician's business; but he is none the worse citizen for that. Politics is not the mechanic's business; but it is the power by which he is enabled to prosecute his business, and to make it safe and

profitable and free. Now, if you give me the ballot to protect my business, to secure just laws and efficient administration of them, that my counting-room or my office may be safe from the burglar, shall not woman have a right to protect her child, to protect her business of educating a citizen and a voter, from the rumseller or tempter, in any form which is proper? Shall she not protect her property from being unjustly taxed? Shall not the eighty per cent of the teachers of our schools who are women be entitled, when they become wives and mothers, to a share in the administration of the school-system which they know infinitely more about than their husbands or their brothers? Shall she not have something to say about an equality of wages between the two sexes? We all know, that, for precisely the same result, the woman gets her \$400 or \$500 a year, while her brother gets his \$800 or \$1000 a year. Now, if you put the ballot into the hands of women, that injustice will be remedied. You got your ten-hour law soon enough, or your ten-hour system without legislation soon enough, when the workingman asked for it with the ballot in his hands; and you will get full compensation for woman when she demands it by the same power.

Then, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me also that society needs that woman should have the ballot. Not only is she capable of it, not only does she need it, but it needs her. This has been said here already better than I can say it. I believe that this thing is true — that, wherever any law is to apply over the largest amount of population, to apply to the largest number of possible instances, the simple natural law generally prevails, and the disturbing forces disappear. The statistics which you will recollect Mr. Buckle collects in one of his volumes, and which he calls to the aid of a vicious and unsound theory, contain statements which are true. The question whether you will drop a letter into the post-office this morning without directing it depends upon the purest accident in the world. But, in the kingdom of Great Britain, the number of persons who will do that year by year, will vary with the population. The question whether a single individual in Paris will commit suicide seems to depend on his temperament, the accidents of his life, or his course in life. But, throughout the French empire, the number of suicides rises and falls with the price of wheat; and so, in this matter of government, the simple law is that the interests of the nation will be the governing motive in the administration of the government. Now, you give the government to one man, and the disturbing cause, personal ambition or want

of capacity, comes in, and you do not get your good government. You give it to twenty men, and you have got twenty interests to control this disturbing cause. Still, these twenty will be liable to have some prejudices and some interests unlike each other; and the larger number you get, the less likely the disturbing causes are to operate, and the more likely to control one another. You add one hundred per cent to the voting population of this country, and you decrease the disturbing forces operating to overcome the simple law of the interests of the nation, which should direct and control its government. You make it harder to buy up voters to corrupt a community. The passion on one side is neutralized by the passion on the other. The rogues do not predominate, because rogues do not agree. One rogue may have one motive of a selfish nature, and another has a different one. I think in this case, Mr. Chairman, the truth of this has been seen in your own experience, when, as the suffrage has extended in this Commonwealth, where it is as extensive as anywhere in the world, public measures have been discussed and decided more and more on the principle of right and wrong, and less and less on other grounds. Do you now hear what you used formerly to hear on our platforms and in our caucuses, an appeal to the prejudices of one class against another, attempts to excite contempt and derision toward poverty or ignorance, or jealousy and envy toward wealth and education? There are exceptions, of course; but the questions which are asked to-day on our political platforms as to the measure which comes there for discussion are Is it right? is it just? is it humane? and no speaker touches a public audience better than the one who appeals to the best, purest, and highest motives in our nature. We need woman for this reason. We need her also to give variety to the interests, to the characters, which are to take a part in the administration of the government. There were two lines of Pope which John Adams loved to quote, which expressed this idea: —

“Jarring Interests, of themselves, create
The according music of a well-tuned state.”

We want woman for that also. And we want the special qualities which woman will bring, which are hers alone. We want her modesty, we want her love and her purity, to help us determine all questions which affect the good order of society, the regulation of the public morals. We want her love of peace to deal with questions where the angry masculine passions are excited, which would

urge the nation into war. So I say, that not only does woman need the ballot, but she is fit for the ballot; and we ask for the change on the ground that society needs that she should have the ballot.

There are two or three objections which I shall ask permission to refer to in this connection. It is said, if a woman votes, of course she must be elected to office; and a great deal of very good wit is expended in holding up to ridicule the incongruity of the duties of the nursery and the bench or the senate-house. Now, I do not understand that the right to vote implies the right to be elected to office. The right to vote implies exactly this: that a voter shall be elected to such office as his business will permit him to discharge the duties of, and his fellow-citizens think he is more capable of than anybody else; and it is not at all likely, because women are elected to office, that women with families demanding their attention at home will be called to preside over the deliberations of our supreme courts, or to lead armies in the field, although, for that matter, when slavery demanded its pound of flesh which was secured to it by our national compact, I think we should have preferred the ruling of Portia to that of Taney. [Laughter.] Perhaps, also, Joan of Arc might have given a few wholesome lessons in generalship even to Gen. McClellan. [Renewed laughter.]

Then it is said, and this applies to that also, that the home duties of women would be neglected. We should expect of our public servants only such attendance to politics as is compatible with such duties. I think you did your duties at home, Mr. Chairman, before you came here, and do not come here unless you can do so consistently with those duties.

Then it is said that the giving of this power to women would create discord in families; that husbands would be found of one political creed, and the wife of another; and an angry, bitter strife, which grows up between neighbors sometimes in this way, would grow up in the family circle. Now, we all know how this thing would work. The husband and wife would be found ordinarily agreeing in political opinions. Brothers, men of the same family, are generally found to belong to the same political party. That community of tastes and similarity of education, that love of the same common objects, which induces the husband to select one woman for his wife, and induces the woman to take him for a husband, will operate in this matter, as in all others. You do not deny your wife the right to her own opinion about matters of religious belief, about which men differ fiercely; and I suppose the cases are rare where the husband is found belonging to one reli-

gious faith, and the wife to another. Still, such cases are frequent enough to show that it creates no discord in the family circle.

But, on the contrary, it seems to me that the admission of the wife to a share in what in a free republic must be the most interesting, the most sacred, and the most absorbing of the husband's interests and pursuits, will in itself unite a family. What a comfort to be able to find at home a trusting, sympathizing counsellor, from whom one-half of your heart shall not be hid! What a comfort to be able to consult with her, with whom you consult about your own interests and the interests of your children, about the interests of the State, dearer to you than your own interests or those of your children! I remember Robert Browning says,—

"God be thanked! the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul sides; one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her."

And Walter Scott said, when Lady Scott died, "What shall I do with that part of my heart which I have been accustomed to show to her, and to nobody else?"

This will tend to enlarge that sacred and tender domain in the husband's heart to which the wife is admitted. It will tend to throw about the national interests a sacredness and tenderness which is associated now only with those of the family. Now the wife has no interest or share in the highest duty of her husband.

It is also said that woman does not ask for the ballot. I thought she did ask for it. I thought the petitions on your table showed that many women asked for it. Certainly this argument cannot be applicable to them. In regard to all women, this argument, which is the one most urged in private and in public, must, it seems to me, stand or fall with the others. If what we have said be true, if it be true that woman is capable of exercising this duty, if it be true that she needs this right, if it be true that the best interests of society require that she should have it,—and, if it is not true, we have nothing to say, because our whole case must fall,—if this be true, then it is the gravest charge that can be made against your existing institutions that she does not ask for it. You do me a great wrong if you deprive me of my vote: you do me a greater wrong, if you deprive me of my wish for my vote. If God has given to woman the love of country, it is her right to indulge that love by laboring for its advancement. If he has given her the capacity to judge of the public weal, it is her right and duty to exercise that judgment; and she is criminal, and you are accomplices in her crime, if you

permit her, even if she will, to refrain from the performance of that duty, and the development of that faculty.

Then it is said, Mr. Chairman, that we seek to expose the State to an incalculable peril; that there is a danger that the ignorant and depraved women will outvote the others. It is the old story. There has not been a step in the history of civil liberty, of human effort, or human education, that we have not been met — that friends of progress have not been met — with that precise argument. You cannot give men the suffrage because the men of the Five Points, or the thieves, or the scoundrels, will outnumber the honest men in voting. You cannot give men light, you cannot teach men to read, because they will read bad books. You cannot allow men to think for themselves, because the tendency to infidelity will develop itself. It is the old story. Now, the ignorant and depraved women bear no greater proportion to the whole of their sex than the ignorant and depraved men do to theirs; yet the experiment of universal suffrage, as applied to our sex, is a complete success. No, Mr. Chairman: the safety of freedom is in movement. I remember a Democratic orator, some few years ago, compared this nation to the Wandering Jew, and said our destiny was, to "March, march, march." Where Gen. Cushing would have had us march to may be somewhat questionable; but there was a profound truth embodied in the statement, that the safety of freedom is in constant movement. The moment you place in a reservoir or a cistern the waters of liberty, that moment they become stagnant and offensive. The love of liberty is a perpetual fountain, which must run free, and will not stay. The safest place for the hero is in the thickest of the fight. What is animal in him will be safer where his soul will rust in ease and security; but that which makes him a hero is safe, the heroism in him burns and glows, when the body and the life are in danger. So the safest place for the nation is when it is on the move in the pursuit of justice. Did you ever hear, or read in history, of a nation perishing from within when it was struggling to do justice and to do right? Now, I say, Mr. Chairman, if there is any truth, either in the lessons of history or the teachings of religion, you cannot put this nation in peril, or this Commonwealth in peril, by any measure you adopt when you are trying to do justice.

Then it is said that women will be unwilling to go to the polls in cities; that the places are not fit for their presence. I think that also is the old argument. You could not admit women to the banqueting-hall of the German nations to which Mr. Clarke has re-

ferred, where there were scenes of revelry and drunkenness. But after the time that women were admitted to the dinner-table, and took its head, the license, the drunkenness, the revelry, disappeared; and in their stead came the festival of the New-England or the English home, graced and refined and purified by her presence. I have seen a great many mean men in my time; but I never yet saw a man mean enough to insult a woman at the polls. And if there were such, I think that would be an argument for excluding the male sex from the franchise, and not the other. [Laughter.] Do you believe that the merchants of New York, the Grinnells and the Astors, would allow the voting to go on in that city just as it does now, and that men would cast their votes in beer-shops, or through a hole in a shutter, if their wives had a share in the elective franchise? It seems to me that it would purify the ballot, and not degrade woman. What comes to woman from without cannot defile her.

Mr. Chairman, we are just on the threshold of constitutional liberty. These last eighty years, crowded with history, crowded with stirring events, full of growth as they have been, how short they are compared with the future to which we are looking forward! The life of a man, a generation, the terms of presidential office — they are but the pulsations of an artery in this mighty national life! And we must not think that we have learned the whole secret of government, or have explored all the treasures which liberty has to bestow upon us. I have always been touched with the familiar sentences, known by heart, I dare say, to almost every one within the sound of my voice, which John Robinson uttered to the departing Pilgrims on the beach at Leyden —

"We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether we are ever to see each other's faces again. I charge you, before God and his blessed angels, to follow me no longer than I have followed Christ. If God shall reveal any thing to you by any other instrument, be as ready to receive it as you have been to receive any truth by my ministry. I am very confident that the Lord has more truth and light to break forth out of his Holy Word."

That sentence, Mr. Chairman, is the key-note of New-England history. "More truth and more light!" More truth is to break out of nature. The new powers of galvanism and electricity, the new adaptations of the mechanical forces, I believe, are to raise up the laborer; so that it will be the fate of no man, in the republic that is to come, to do mere drudgery. Why, already, within the memory

of living men, there has been created a power through the invention of steam-engines, which gives to the people of England to-day a force in their service equal to the entire population of the globe. The work of eight hundred millions of men is accomplished by the machines worked by the forces of steam to-day. More truth and light are to break out of revelation. Instead of the hard texts of the Old Testament, or the chapter where Paul sends back Onesimus, the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule claim their rightful ascendancy over the heart of man.

And so, Mr. Chairman, in civil government I believe more truth is to break out, if we will but see it. We remember the long years in which the whole active forces of this government were on the side of slavery, — when the provisions for human liberty were simply dead restraints, and not active living forces. Our fathers said, in the Declaration of Independence, that, to secure these rights of liberty, equality, &c., governments were instituted among men; and they fought out a seven years' war on that issue. They instituted their government: and the next generation proceeded to show that that government was instituted to secure the rights of slavery, and to expound the Constitution on that hypothesis; and the grand purposes declared in the preamble of the Constitution, and the injunction that Congress should guarantee to every State a republican form of government, were entirely forgotten and ignored. The declarations of rights contained in the Constitution were deemed, at best, but as walls, marking the boundaries of federal legislation, or against which the forces of State power should beat themselves in vain. We are beginning to find out that these great provisions declare objects of affirmative and active exercise of national power and sovereignty, just as much as the regulation of commerce or maintaining the national territory. So, out of our Constitution, out of the principles contained in this Bill of Rights, out of the eternal principles of republican liberty, more truth and more light are still to break forth. And, in the blaze of that light, woman shall come to the side of man, bringing to the administration of government her love, her purity, and her truth!

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

American Woman Suffrage Association.

PREAMBLE. — The undersigned, friends of Woman Suffrage, assembled in delegate convention in Cleveland, O., Nov. 24 and 25, 1869, in response to a call widely signed, and after public notice duly given, believing that a truly representative national organization is needed for the orderly and efficient prosecution of the Woman Suffrage movement in America, which shall embody the deliberate action of the State and local organizations, and shall carry with it their united weight, do hereby form The American Woman Suffrage Association.

ARTICLE I.

NAME.

This Association shall be known as The American Woman Suffrage Association.

ARTICLE II.

OBJECT.

Its object shall be to concentrate the efforts of all the advocates of Woman Suffrage in the United States.

SECTION 1. To form auxiliary State Associations in every State where none such now exist, and to co-operate with those already existing which shall declare themselves auxiliary before the first day of March next; the authority of the auxiliary societies being recognized

in their respective localities, and their plans being promoted by every means in our power.

SEC. 2. To hold an annual meeting of delegates for the transaction of business, and the election of officers for the ensuing year; also, one or more national conventions for the advocacy of Woman Suffrage.

SEC. 3. To publish tracts, documents, and other printed matter, for the supply of State and local societies and individuals, at actual cost.

SEC. 4. To prepare and circulate petitions to State and Territorial Legislatures, to Congress, or to Constitutional Conventions, in behalf of the legal and political equality of women; to employ lecturers and agents; and to take any measures the Executive Committee may think fit, to forward the objects of the Association.

ARTICLE III.

ORGANIZATION.

SECTION 1. The officers of this Association shall be a President, eight Vice-Presidents at large, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Foreign Corresponding Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, two Recording Secretaries, and a Treasurer; all of whom shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. Also, one Vice-President, and one member of the Executive Committee from each State and Territory, and from the District of Columbia, as afterward provided.

SEC. 2. Every President of an auxiliary State or Territorial Society shall be *ex officio* a Vice-President of this Association.

SEC. 3. Every Chairman of the Executive Committee of an auxiliary State Society shall be *ex officio* a member of the Executive Committee of this Association.

SEC. 4. In cases where no Auxiliary State Association exists, a suitable person may be selected by the annual meeting, or by the Executive Committee, as Vice-President, or member of the Executive Committee from said State, to serve only until the organization of said State Association.

SEC. 5. The Executive Committee may fill all vacancies that may occur prior to the next annual meeting.

SEC. 6. All officers shall be elected annually at an annual meeting of delegates, on the basis of the Congressional representation of the respective States and Territories, except as above provided.

SEC. 7. No distinction on account of sex shall ever be made in the membership, or in the selection of officers of this Society.

SEC. 8. No money shall be paid by the Treasurer, except under such restrictions as the Executive Committee may provide.

SEC. 9. Five members of the Executive Committee, when convened by the Chairman, after fifteen days' written notice previously mailed to each of its members, shall constitute a quorum; but no action thus taken shall be final, until such proceedings shall have been ratified in writing by at least fifteen members of the Committee.

SEC. 10. The Chairman shall convene a meeting whenever requested to do so by five members of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV.

The Association shall have a branch office in every State and Territory, in connection with the office of the auxiliary State Society therein, and shall have a central office at such place as the Executive Committee may determine.

ARTICLE V.

This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting by a vote of three-fifths of the delegates present therein.

ADDITIONAL CLAUSES.

Any person may become a member of the American Woman Suffrage Association by signing the Constitution, and paying the sum of one dollar annually; or a life-member, by paying the sum of ten dollars, which shall entitle such person to attend the business-meetings of delegates, and participate in their deliberations.

Honorary members may be appointed by the annual meeting, or by the Executive Committee, in consideration of services rendered.

in their respective localities, and their plans being promoted by every

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 1871.

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL,

Devoted to the interests of WOMAN, to her educational, industrial, legal, and political Equality, and especially to her RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

Published every Saturday in Boston.

MARY A. LIVERMORE, EDITOR.

JULIA WARD HOWE, LUCY STONE, HENRY B. BLACKWELL, AND T. W. HIGGINSON, Associate Editors.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL.—The friends of Woman Suffrage who wish to keep the issue clear from entangling alliances with other reforms, and the endless host of individual whims and vagaries,— who would pursue it with the same singleness of aim that marks the movement in England, and the temperance and other special reforms in this country, have established a weekly paper, "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL," published in Boston and Chicago, and edited by Mrs. Livermore, Mrs. Lucy Stone, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, and Mr. T. W. Higginson, assisted by accomplished friends of the cause. "THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL" is a fair and attractive paper in appearance; while the variety and spirit of its articles, and the dignity, self-respect, good-humor, and earnestness of its tone, will show how profoundly mistaken are those who suppose that folly and extravagance are necessarily characteristic of the discussion of the question. THE JOURNAL is indispensable to those who would truly understand the character of the movement, and measure its progress.— George William Curtis, in Harper's Weekly.

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THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FOR PROMOTING THE

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 1870.

MANCHESTER:
ALEXANDER IRELAND & CO., PRINTERS.
1870.

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY

BILL

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRINTED BY RICHARD CLAY AND COMPANY, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

WHEN, twelve months ago, your committee had the honour of presenting their second annual report, they had some cause to hope that the close of another session would see the close of their agitation, and the victory of their principle.

How it happens that in spite of the passing of a Married Women's Property Act, containing several important provisions, and considerably modifying the action of the common law, they yet feel themselves compelled to continue the agitation, it is now their duty to explain.

The strong support given to Mr. Russell Gurney's Bill by the House of Commons, and especially by members of the present administration in the session of 1869, led your committee to hope that the Government would be prepared to adopt and bring forward the measure in the session of 1870. The importance of the principle at issue, the large interests involved, and the difficulties which hamper private members in the conduct during a busy session of any measure of the first importance, made such adoption by the Government appear to your committee both desirable and natural.

As the session approached, however, it became clear that although the Bill vitally concerned the personal rights of half of Her Majesty's subjects, and affected pecuniary interests to the amount of at least twenty million pounds sterling annually, the Government did not think proper to take official action in

this matter. Mr. Russell Gurney, therefore, in conformity with the notice he had given at the close of the previous session, again brought in his Bill during the first week of the session of 1870.

This Bill, originally prepared by the Law Amendment Society, and introduced the first time by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, proposed to abrogate the rule of the Common Law, which vests the wife's property in the husband, and provided that every woman who married after the passing of the Act should hold her property in all respects as if she had continued unmarried.

A rival Bill, entitled "A Bill to Protect the Property of Married Women," was introduced by Mr. Raikes, Mr. Staveley Hill, and Mr. West. The object of this Bill was to preserve the unjust rule of the Common Law, whilst attempting to mitigate some of its worst abuses by provisions which involved the most extraordinary interference with the rights both of husbands and wives to dispose of their property by mutual consent.

Mr. Raikes proposed to make every husband a trustee for his wife; but he was not to be allowed to sell property or to spend the trust money, even with the full sanction of the wife, without the consent of a County Court judge. As to earnings, the Bill provided that a judge should have power to grant a protection order for a wife's earnings, provided she could show that for the six months immediately previous to her application, she had earned more than half the expenses of the family. Thus a woman with ten children would have had to earn much more than a woman with one child before she could profit by the Bill, and an idle and extravagant husband, by spending twice as much as his wife could possibly earn, would have retained his right of robbery.

The Bill bristled with absurdities. It was difficult to believe that it had been conceived from any point of view but that of supplying the law courts with cases. But as it appeared to your committee that there was some danger lest it should be

carried by the coalition of two sets of persons,—those who desired no change at all, and who valued Mr. Raikes' Bill as a measure sure to be practically inoperative, and those who, though believing that some change in the law was necessary, could not resolve to accept freedom and justice,—they felt themselves bound to offer to the measure the most determined resistance. They circulated upwards of 12,000 pamphlets, amongst these 5,000 copies of two valuable papers by Mr. Arthur Hobhouse, Q.C., one of which comprised a most effective exposure of the true character of Mr. Raikes's Bill. Petitions praying that the House would reject this Bill, and instead thereof pass Bill No. 1, were also circulated by your committee, and received the signatures of many thousands of persons. As soon as the provisions of the Bill became known to Mr. Raikes' own constituents, they joined in its condemnation, and a petition with upwards of 700 signatures, including some of the most influential inhabitants of Chester, was presented by Mr. Raikes, praying for the rejection of his own Bill. Both Bills stood on the orders of the day for second reading in the House of Commons on Wednesday, March 23rd. Unfortunately the Burials Bill had precedence, and the whole of the available time of the House was occupied, so the second reading of the two Bills dealing with the property of married women was postponed till the 18th May. Mr. Gurney's came on first, and the debate on both Bills was taken on this. Mr. Raikes did not oppose the second reading of Mr. Gurney's Bill, but he brought forward his own as an alternative. He pressed the House of Commons to allow both Bills to pass the second reading, and to refer both to a select committee, with a view to passing a measure compounded of the two; but the House marked its sense of the incompatibility of the principle of the two Bills in a most decisive manner. The question was put that Mr. Gurney's Bill be read a second time, and carried without a division; then the same question was put in regard to Mr. Raikes' Bill, and rejected, on the motion of Mr. Jacob Bright, by a majority of 208 to 46.

Mr. Gurney's Bill passed through committee of the House of Commons on May 24th, and was read a third time and passed on May 31st, no division on any of its provisions having been taken during its progress through the Lower House. The number of petitions that had been presented in its favour to the House of Commons in the past session is 250, with 46,199 signatures.

The conduct of the Bill in the Upper House was entrusted to Lord Cairns, who, after carefully examining its clauses, expressed himself entirely in favour of the principle of the measure. The few alterations which he proposed to make did not affect this principle in the slightest degree. But when the Bill was read a second time in the House of Lords, on June 21st, the support which the friends of the Bill anticipated, and on which Lord Cairns relied, was not forthcoming. None of the peers who had declared themselves favourable to the principle of the Bill were at hand at the critical moment to make that declaration on the introduction of the measure to the consideration of the Upper House. One or two peers gave a modified support to some of the objects of the Bill, while others assailed it with determined hostility or undignified jeers. The usual rule among assemblies of men on the first introduction of any matter which concerns the sufferings or wrongs of women, namely, that of regarding it as a subject beneath serious consideration, had no exception when the House of Lords was called upon for the first time to deal with the Married Women's Property Bill. Several peers amused themselves by drawing extraordinary fancy pictures of what might happen should it become law. These were based upon the assumption that married women were, as a rule, indifferent to their husbands and careless as to their children, and that if they had control of their own property they would squander it in selfish indulgences, or bestow it on some imaginary "cousin John." Then the old objections were raked up—the alleged subversion of the principle of subjection in the marriage relation, the risk of introducing discord by the recognition of

separate interests in married life, and the supposed danger to women themselves from leaving them free to control their own property. This chorus of combined hostility and ridicule so disheartened Lord Cairns as to the possibility of carrying a Bill based on the original principle, that he consented to its being referred to a Select Committee with a view to proposing one which he thought would have a chance of passing into law.

As soon as your committee heard of the appointment of the Lords Select Committee, they volunteered to furnish evidence of the evil effects of the existing state of the law, a task which the facts brought before them during their prolonged agitation would have rendered easy; they were, however, given to understand that the committee did not propose to take evidence, but to proceed at once to modify the Bill.

The Select Committee consisted of the following Peers:—The Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Airlie, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of Lichfield, the Earl of Carnarvon, the Earl de Grey and Ripon, the Bishop of Gloucester, Lord Dinevor, Lord Stanley of Alderley, Lord Dufferin, Lord Westbury, Lord Romilly, Lord Cairns, and Lord Penzance. It met twice, first on the 7th July to consider the order of proceedings, and again on July 11th to consider the Bill itself. On this occasion the Bill which had been prepared by Lord Cairns as a substitute for the one he then withdrew was, with some modifications, adopted by the Select Committee, and reported by them to the House of Lords.

The official report of the proceedings of the Select Committee is printed as an appendix to the present report.

When the text of the Bill as amended by the Select Committee of the House of Lords was issued, your committee took into consideration the best course to pursue under the circumstances. The Bill thus reported was the measure of the worst attempts of the opposition. Any principle conceded therein was conceded once for all. Any obstacle to progress not set up in this Bill was swept out of the path for ever. Your

committee observed with the most lively satisfaction that the establishment of compulsory marriage settlements and the extension of the system of protection orders which were strongly advocated by a portion of the press, which formed the basis of Mr. Raikes' Bill, and which they feared might be re-introduced in some modified form by the House of Lords, were now absolutely abandoned. They regard it as a most remarkable proof of the rapid advance of public opinion that these expedients, which only a few weeks ago seemed to offer so plausible an excuse for an imperfect measure, so convenient a halting-place for those who hesitate at accepting a logical deduction, and, consequently, so formidable an obstacle to the passing of a just measure, should be now as extinct as the dodo. Not only has the system embodying this miserable device for protecting a wife's earnings not been extended, it has been altogether abolished by a stroke of Lord Cairns' pen. "Protection orders" are now things of the past—legislative fossils of the transition series—to be wondered at by the curious of future generations.

But their satisfaction at this result did not blind your committee to the radical defects of the new Bill. Their objections were embodied in the following petition, which was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Shaftesbury:—

"That your petitioners, having considered the Bill relating to the property of married women as amended by a select committee of your lordships' house, are of opinion that such amended Bill is essentially wrong in principle.

"The amendments amount to a summary rejection of the Bill as it has been carefully considered by the country, and twice passed by large majorities in the House of Commons, and substitute in its place a totally new Bill, the provisions of which, though effecting great changes in the present law, have never been submitted to the consideration either of the persons directly affected by the proposed changes, or of Parliament.

"The principle of the Bill as it left the House of Commons lay in its first clause, namely:—'A married woman shall

be capable of holding, acquiring, alienating, devising, and bequeathing real and personal estate, of contracting, and of suing, and being sued, as if she were a feme sole.' The rejection of this clause destroys the identity of the Bill.

"Besides keeping up the barbarous and unjust principle of the common law, the Bill, as amended, not only leaves untouched several large departments of flagrant mischief, but introduces a totally new principle, involving an injustice of the most glaring kind.

"1. It does not protect savings of money earned before marriage, unless such savings are placed in a savings bank.

"2. It does not protect property acquired otherwise than through an intestacy.

"3. Even as to such property, it does not protect that which is acquired before marriage.

"4. The limited protection afforded to property does not apply to the case of any woman married before the passing of the Act; the evils of the present system would, therefore, remain wholly uncorrected as regards women already married.

"5. It renders the separate property of a wife liable for debts contracted by her as the agent of her husband for the purposes of the family, thereby inflicting a pecuniary liability on wives who attend to their household affairs.

"Your petitioners desire to express their entire conviction that no measure can be adequate for the protection of the property of wives short of the total repeal of the common law on the subject.

"Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your lordships will not pass the Married Women's Property Bill as amended by the select committee—and that no measure may receive your lordships' sanction which does not enact that 'A married woman shall be capable of holding, acquiring, alienating, devising, and bequeathing real and personal estate, of contracting, and of suing, and being sued, as if she were a feme sole.'"

A printed copy of this petition was sent to every member of

the House of Lords, with a circular calling his attention to it. Great numbers of petitions for the Bill, from various localities, were presented to the House of Lords during the session. But as no official report is issued by their lordships of petitions laid before them, your committee is unable to procure a list of these. They have, however, reason to believe that both as to number of petitions and number of signatures the petitions presented to the House of Lords for the Married Women's Property Bill exceeded those sent to the House of Commons. Of the latter a detailed list, extracted from the parliamentary return, is appended to the present report.

Your committee decided to appoint a deputation to proceed to London to watch the further progress of the Bill, in order either to obtain amendments according to their views, or to procure its postponement to another session. The treasurer and two other ladies were named on this deputation, but only one of them was able to attend.

The treasurer was in the House of Lords while the Bill was passing through committee, and on her representation an attempt was made by the Earl of Shaftesbury to procure the extension of the Act to property earned before marriage by women who might marry after the passing of the Act. This attempt was not successful, but a clause giving permissive protection to such property was introduced at a subsequent stage of the measure. On the representation of your deputation the clause imposing liability for household debts on the separate estate of a wife was struck out of the Bill. On report of committee an amendment moved by Lord Romilly, securing to a woman any sum under £200 which she might receive under any deed or will, was carried by a majority of 29 to 17. The Bill as it passed the third reading was thus improved in some important particulars from the shape in which it left the Select Committee. Had there been more time for consideration it is probable that still greater improvements might have been effected, and that it might have been made practically almost identical with the original Bill.

It now became necessary for the promoters of the measure to consider whether it would be expedient to accept the Lords' Bill, and so secure immediate relief to the wages-earning class of wives at the cost of postponing the claims of the property-owning class for an indefinite period, or to move the rejection of the amendments in the House of Commons at the cost of postponing all relief to any class of sufferers to another session, or until such time as a complete measure could be passed. A meeting of friends and supporters of the Bill was held at the rooms of the Social Science Association on July 27, to consider this question, at which the attendance of your deputation was invited. Mr. Hobhouse, Q.C., occupied the chair, and among the persons present were the Right Hon. Russell Gurney, M.P., Lord Houghton, Mr. Dickinson, M.P., Mr. Herbert Mozley, Mr. F. Hill, Mrs. McLaren, Miss Becker, and others. A resolution to the effect that, although the Bill was not what the supporters of the original measure desired, it would not be wise to reject the concession it offered, was carried unanimously. It was proposed that an amendment securing earnings before marriage should be introduced when the Bill came down from the Commons, if it were thought that such amendment would not at the very late period of the session, endanger by delay the passing of the Bill. The sense of the meeting, in regard to accepting the Bill in its present shape, was in a great measure determined by the outbreak of the continental war. At that juncture there seemed a possibility that this country might be involved in the strife, and that during next session the attention of Parliament might be so fully engaged in providing the most effectual methods for making widows that it would be utterly hopeless to claim any attention for the wrongs of wives. The promoters felt that they could not accept the responsibility of prolonging the injustice suffered by the one million of women engaged in industrial pursuits by rejecting the immediate relief secured to these by the Bill, in view of this uncertainty as to when the chance would be offered them again.

When the Bill as amended by the Lords came before the

House of Commons, it was not deemed desirable to press the amendments regarding earnings before marriage. The only amendment not of a purely technical nature which Mr. Gurney ventured to introduce was one giving immediate operation to the Act. The Bill received the Royal assent on the 9th August, 1870, and at once came into force. Since that date the wages and earnings of every married woman, and all property or investments of such earnings, are secured to her free from the control or disposition of her husband, and remain at her own free disposition and control. Your committee desire to congratulate those concerned on this substantial measure of success in their efforts to procure an amelioration of the law.

Thus it came about that the Act, as it received the royal assent on the 9th August, contains some important amendments upon the Bill of the Select Committee. The unjust provision under which a wife, having earnings or property, became liable for the whole expenses of the family, had been thrown out, and on the motion of the Lord Romilly the provision securing to a married woman's separate use, any sum not exceeding two hundred pounds, accruing to her by will or deed, had been inserted.

But it cannot be considered satisfactory that a principle which had been carefully considered and approved by the most competent lawyers, which was urgently demanded by those most intimately concerned, which had repeatedly received the sanction of overwhelming majorities in the House of Commons, and had even vanquished the prejudices of a portion of the press originally hostile, should be set aside at the bidding of a very small knot of Peers, who, however learned and able some of them may individually be, are not competent alone to decide on questions most closely affecting the daily well-being of the vast majority of the nation. Your committee, moreover, do not believe that the sentiments of Lord Penzance and Lord Westbury are those of the majority even of the House of Lords. The Bill of the Select Committee shows an immense advance upon the tone of the debate on the second reading; the Act

as it passed a further advance upon the Select Committee's Bill; whilst the only division taken (that on Lord Romilly's motion, 29 to 17) shows a considerable majority in favour of an amendment which brought the Bill a step, though a short one, nearer the principle of the original measure. The Lords, like other men these busy times, do not study a question until they need to do so. If this subject had been before them for the same length of time as it has been before the House of Commons, they would no doubt have shown themselves equally capable of appreciating the justice and simplicity of the principle of Mr. Gurney's measure.

Had the Act, therefore, been better than it really is, your committee would still have been justified in pressing this subject again on the attention of the public.

Your committee object to the Act, first and chiefly, because instead of recognising the one only true principle, the principle of justice and freedom, it retains the unjust and barbarous rule of the common law, the confiscation of a woman's property by the act of marriage. It is no measure of *protection* which they require, but a measure of broad and simple justice between man and woman.

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

continued until a thoroughly just and comprehensive measure shall have become law.

Your committee desire to offer their most earnest thanks to all who have aided in procuring this instalment of justice. To the association to whose courtesy they are indebted for the place of meeting to-day; and especially to the members of the Law Amendment Society it is owing that in the first instance any Bill was introduced. To the earnest and persistent efforts of many members of the House of Commons, and especially to Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Russell Gurney, and Mr. Jacob Bright the present gain is due. For in their view of the demerits of the Act your committee do not forget that a real, though a partial success has been achieved. The 1,100,000 married women earning wages in England and Ireland, are now legally, as well as morally, the owners of their own earnings.

Your committee now ask that the support which has hitherto been granted to them may be increased, so that they may be enabled to carry on their efforts until the law of property, however acquired, shall be one and the same for women and men.

In presenting their statement of accounts they desire to call attention to the very small cost, compared with that of agitation for other political objects, at which the results achieved have been attained. The total amount received during the past year has been £152. 11s. 11d. Of this £56. 2s. 6d. was applied to paying off the outstanding account for printing from the previous year, leaving £96. 9s. 5d. available cash. Of this sum £7. 18s. remains in hand, so that the total sum paid during the year is £88. 11s. 5d. The whole of this year's account for printing remains due, and this and other outstanding liabilities are estimated at £100. This sum is immediately needed, in order to clear the committee from debt, and it is highly desirable that a fund should remain after all liabilities are discharged, to serve as a nucleus for the further agitation which will be necessary to obtain a complete measure of justice. The total sum received during the three years over

which the labours of your committee have extended is £328. Were this sum raised to £500 all present needs would be satisfied. When it is remembered that property to the amount of twenty millions sterling annually has been legally secured to the wives of England and Ireland by the passing of the Act, which has been the result of their agitation, it would seem as if there ought to be no difficulty in raising the necessary funds from the contributions of those directly benefited by the change in the law. But though the amount dealt with by the Act is immense collectively, it is small in each individual case, and the sum which a poor woman could afford out of her earnings would be too little to be conveniently collected. We therefore appeal to those whose sense of justice inclines them to rejoice at justice being done to so large and poor a class of their countrywomen, to help us in bearing the cost of what has been accomplished, and in laying a foundation for our efforts in the future.

JOSEPHINE E. BUTLER,
280, South Hill, Park Road,
Liverpool, } *Hon. Secs.*
ELIZABETH C. WOLSTENHOLME,
Moody Hall, Congleton, }

LYDIA E. BECKER,
28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square,
Manchester, } *Hon. Treasurer.*



REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL; WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE. Session 1870.

Ordered to be printed 11th July, 1870.

REPORT BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to consider "THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL; and to report to the House;

ORDERED TO REPORT,

That the Committee have met, and considered the said Bill, and have directed the same to be reported to your lordships, with some amendments.

11 July, 1870.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Die Lunæ, 4^o Julii, 1870.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

Select Committee on: The Lords following were named of the Committee; the Committee to meet on Thursday next, at a quarter to five o'clock, and to appoint their own chairman:

Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

Earl of Shaftesbury.

Earl of Airlie.

Earl of Carnarvon.

Earl of Morley.

Earl of Lichfield.

Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

Lord Dinevor.

Lord Stanley of Alderley.

Lord Clandeboye.

Lord Westbury.

Lord Romilly.

Lord Cairns.

Lord Penzance.

Die Martis, 5^o Julii, 1870.

The Lord President added to the Select Committee.

LORDS PRESENT, & MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT EACH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE.

Die Jovis, 7^o Julii, 1870.

LORDS PRESENT.

Lord President.

Earl of Airlie.

Earl of Carnarvon.

Earl of Morley.

Earl of Lichfield.

Lord Dinevor.

Lord Stanley of Alderley.

Lord Clandeboye.

Lord Romilly.

Lord Cairns.

Lord Penzance.

Order of Reference read.

It is proposed, That the Lord Cairns do take the chair.

The same is agreed to, and the Lord Cairns takes the chair.

The course of proceeding is considered.

Ordered, That the Committee be adjourned to Monday next, at eleven o'clock.

Die Lunæ, 11^o Julii, 1870.

LORDS PRESENT.

Lord President.

Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

Earl of Shaftesbury.

Earl of Airlie.

Earl of Carnarvon.

Earl of Morley.

Earl of Lichfield.

Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

Lord Dinevor.

Lord Stanley of Alderley.

Lord Romilly.

Lord Cairns.

Lord Penzance.

The Lord CAIRNS in the chair.

Order of adjournment read.

The proceedings of the Committee of Thursday last are read.

The Title of the Bill is read, and postponed.

The Preamble of the Bill is read, and postponed.

The Clauses of the Bill are postponed.

The following Draft Clause, proposed by the Chairman, is discussed:

Earnings of Married Women to be deemed their own property.

1. The wages and earnings of any married woman acquired or gained by her after the passing of this Act in any employment, occupation, or trade in which she is engaged, or which she carries on separately from her husband, and also any money or property so acquired by her through the exercise of any literary, artistic, or scientific skill, and all investments of such wages, earnings, money, or property, shall be deemed and taken to be property held and settled to her separate use, independent of any husband to whom she may be married; and her receipts alone shall be a good discharge for such wages, earnings, money, and property.

It is proposed by the Lord Penzance to add the following Proviso, viz.:-

Provided always, that nothing in this Act contained shall be held to confer upon a married woman any other or different right than she now possesses at law or in equity, to carry on, or engage herself in, any employment, trade, or occupation.

The same is negatived.

The clause is again read, and agreed to.

Draft Clause No. 2 is read, and agreed to.

Draft Clause No. 3 is read:

Any married woman, or any woman about to be married and her intended husband, may apply to the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, by a form to be provided by the said governor and company for that purpose, that any sum forming part of the public stocks and funds, and not being less than twenty pounds, to which the person or persons, or either of them, so applying is entitled, or which such person or persons is or are about to acquire, may be transferred to or made to stand in the books of the said governor and company in the name of the woman as a married woman entitled to her separate use; and on such sum being entered in the books of the said governor and company accordingly, the same shall be deemed to be the separate property of such woman, and shall be transferred and the dividends paid as if she were an unmarried woman; provided that if any such investment in the funds is

As to Married Women's Property in the Funds.

made by a married woman by means of moneys of her husband without his consent the Court may, upon application under section eight of this Act, order such investment and the dividends thereof, or any part thereof, to be transferred, and paid to the husband.

In line 2, it is proposed by the Lord Romilly to omit the words "and her intended husband."

On the question, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause:

CONTENTS.

- Lord President.
- Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.
- Earl of Carnarvon.
- Earl of Lichfield.
- Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.
- Lord Dinevor.
- Lord Stanley of Alderley.
- Lord Cairns.
- Lord Penzance.

NOT CONTENTS.

- Earl of Shaftesbury.
- Earl of Airlie.
- Earl of Morley.
- Lord Romilly.

The remaining draft clauses are read, and agreed to.

The clauses of the Bill are then considered.

Clauses 1 to 5, inclusive, are struck out.

Clause 6 is agreed to, with an amendment.

Clauses 7 to 11, inclusive, are struck out.

On the question, that Clause 12 stand part of the Bill:

CONTENTS.

- Lord President.
- Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.
- Earl of Shaftesbury.
- Earl of Airlie.
- Lord Stanley of Alderley.
- Lord Cairns.
- Lord Penzance.

NOT CONTENTS.

- Earl of Carnarvon.
- Earl of Lichfield.
- Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.
- Lord Dinevor.
- Lord Romilly.

Clause 13 is agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 17, inclusive, are struck out.

The remaining clauses are read, and agreed to.

In the Preamble of the Bill it is proposed, by the Lord Stanley of Alderley, to leave out the words "amend the law of property and contract with respect to married women," and to insert the words "secure to married women certain separate rights of property."

On the Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Preamble :

CONTENTS.

Lord President.
Earl of Shaftesbury.
Earl of Airlie.
Lord Bishop of Gloucester
and Bristol.
Lord Dinevor.
Lord Romilly.
Lord Cairns.

NOT CONTENTS.

Duke of Buckingham and
Chandos.
Lord Stanley of Alderley.

The Preamble is again read, and *agreed to*.

The Title is again read, and *agreed to*.

The Draft of a Report having been prepared, the same is read by the Clerk, and *agreed to*. (*Vide Report*.)

Ordered, That the Lord in the Chair do make the said Report to the House, and do also report the Bill, with the Amendments.

THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Of the Married Women's Property Committee was held at the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Friday the 23rd September, at 4-30 p.m.

Lady BOWRING in the Chair.

The Rev. S. A. Steinthal read the Report and Statement of Accounts.

I. Moved by John Hodgkin, Esq., seconded by Miss Tod :

That the report and statement of accounts just read be adopted and printed for circulation, under the direction of the Executive Committee.

II. Moved by Thomas Hare, Esq., seconded by Dr. Pankhurst :

That this meeting, being convinced that the Married Women's Property Act of last session, though effecting an important amendment of the law, is faulty in detail and unsound in principle, urges upon all fellow-workers in this movement continued exertions for the passing of such a measure as shall secure to married women the same rights to their own property and earnings as are enjoyed by married men.

III. Moved by T. Hancock, Esq., seconded by Herbert N. Mozley, Esq. :

That the following persons be appointed the Executive Committee for the ensuing year : Lady Amberley, Jacob Bright, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Becker, Mrs. Butler, Thomas Chorlton, Esq., Miss Cobbe, Sir C. W. Dilke, Bart., M.P., the Rev. Alfred Dewes, B.D., LL.D., Miss Hacking, the Rev. Septimus Hansard, Thomas Hare, Esq., W. B. Hodgson, Esq., LL.D., Mrs. W. B. Hodgson, J. Boyd Kinnear, Esq., Mrs. Moore, Herbert N. Mozley, Esq., Dr. Pankhurst, F. Pennington, Esq., Mrs. Pennington, Mrs. Sutcliffe, Thomas Taylor, Esq., Mrs. Hensley W. Westwood, Miss Wolstenholme ; with power to add to their number.

IV. Moved by Mrs. M'Laren, seconded by Miss Wolstenholme :

That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the officers of the Social Science Association for the use of their rooms.

V. Moved by Dr. Pankhurst, seconded by Miss Tod :

That the cordial thanks of this meeting be presented to Lady Bowring for presiding on the present occasion.

REPORT OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND
COMMITTEE.

THIS committee sent up petitions in support of Mr. R. Gurney's Married Women's Property Bill, from Belfast, Ballymena, and other towns. Though these were largely signed, the number of signatures was no criterion of the amount of interest felt, which was very great and widespread. Much dissatisfaction has been expressed with the alterations made in the Bill in the House of Lords, as it is feared that, though the amount of relief given in many cases may be considerable, yet that it falls far short of that which would have been given by the original Bill. The committee trust that steps may be taken at as early a period as possible, to give legislative effect to the simple and effectual principle of the original Bill, namely, that the property of a married woman shall remain in her own possession, unaffected by the fact of her marriage.

ELIZABETH THOMSON, } *Hon. Secs.*
ISABELLA M. S. TOD, }

REPORT OF THE DUBLIN SOCIETY

For Amending the Law relating to Married Women's Property.

As in 1868 a Bill to Amend the Law relating to Married Women's Property was proposed to be introduced into the House of Commons, it was considered desirable that information on the subject should be spread in Dublin as well as in other parts of the country, in order to obtain the support of petitions to Parliament in favour of the measure. Steps were accordingly at once taken to forward the object in view, and in that year a petition to the House of Commons was forwarded from Dublin, signed

by 2,214 persons of both sexes, and without distinction of class, creed, or party. As the Bill passed only a second reading in the House of Commons in 1868, renewed exertions were necessary the following year, in order to obtain petitions in favour of a similar Bill; and the Dublin Society for Amending the Law relating to Married Women's Property sent in 1869 to the House of Commons fifteen petitions, signed by upwards of 4,000 persons; and five petitions to the House of Lords signed by nearly 5,000 persons. The Bill having been only read a second time in the House of Lords in 1869, it was necessary to make further exertions in 1870, and during this year the Dublin Society sent to the House of Commons 27 petitions from different parts of Ireland, and five to the House of Lords in favour of the Bill introduced by Mr. Russell Gurney; and fifteen petitions were also sent by the Dublin Society from Dublin and other parts of Ireland against a Bill introduced by Mr. Raikes, entitled "The Married Women's Property Bill No. 2," as this latter Bill was believed to be a measure which would be unsatisfactory and incomplete. In this view the House of Commons concurred, and Mr. Raikes's Bill was thrown out by a majority of 208. Mr. Russell Gurney's Bill passed the House of Commons, but so many alterations were made in it, in the House of Lords, that the efficacy of the measure has been seriously impaired. Those friends, however, who have long and carefully considered the question of obtaining justice for women, look forward with hope to obtaining a full and complete measure when the subject is better understood in the House of Lords; and they are the more hopeful in this respect, because some of the noble Lords who supported various alterations, gave contradictory reasons for doing so, and on a calm reconsideration of the matter those noble Lords will no doubt themselves perceive that want of consistency in their arguments, which, in persons of their learning and ability, must have arisen not from confusion of intellect, but merely from not having given the subject the careful consideration it required.

The following ladies and gentlemen kindly contributed during the last two years towards the funds of the Dublin Society for Amending the Law relating to Married Women's Property :—

	£	s.	d.
Jonathan Pim, Esq., M.P.	2	0	0
Mrs. Lloyd, Provost's House	2	0	0
Charles Cobbe, Esq., J.P., D.L.	1	0	0
The Rev. Hope M. Waddell	1	0	0
James Haughton, Esq., J.P.	1	0	0
Mrs. Eustace, Donnybrook	0	10	0
Mrs. Edmundson, Fox Rock	0	10	0
Mrs. Robertson... ..	2	0	0
Miss Robertson... ..	2	0	0
Miss Anne I. Robertson	5	0	0
E. M. Richards, Esq., Grange, County Wexford ...	2	0	0
Professor Moffatt, Galway	0	10	0

ANNE ISABELLA ROBERTSON,
2, St. James's Place, Blackrock, County Dublin,
Honorary Secretary.



FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FOR PROMOTING THE

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
GENERAL COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 22ND, 1871.

MANCHESTER:
ALEXANDER IRELAND & CO., PRINTERS.
1871.

FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING

Of the Married Women's Property Committee held in the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Manchester, on Friday, September the 22nd, 1871.

The Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL in the chair.

The Treasurer read the Report and Statement of Accounts.

I. Moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. J. P. Thomasson :

That the report and statement of accounts just read be adopted and circulated under the direction of the Comitée.

II. Moved by the Rev. Alfred Dewes, B.D., seconded by Dr. Pankhurst, supported by Mr. Thomas Dale :

That this meeting, being convinced that the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 is unsound in principle and unsatisfactory in its working, urges continued exertions for the passing of such a measure as shall secure to women the same rights to their own property and earnings as are enjoyed by men.

III. Moved by Mr. William Birch, junr., seconded by Miss Becker :

That the following persons be appointed a standing committee, with power to renew the agitation for the settlement on a just basis, of the property rights of married women, at whatever time may appear to them most convenient : Lady Amberley, Jacob Bright, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Becker, Mrs. Butler, Thos. Chorlton, Esq., Miss Cobbe, Sir C. W. Dilke, Bart., M.P., the Rev. Alfred Dewes, B.D., LL.D., Miss Hacking, the Rev. Septimus Hansard, Thos. Hare, Esq., W. B. Hodgson, Esq., LL.D., Mrs. W. B. Hodgson, J. Boyd Kinnear, Esq., Mrs. Moore, Herbert N. Mozley, Esq., Dr. Pankhurst, F. Pennington, Esq., Mrs. Pennington, Mrs. Sutcliffe, Thomas Taylor, Esq., Mrs. Hensleigh W. Wedgwood, Miss Alice Wilson ; with power to add to their number.

IV. Moved by Miss Alice Wilson, seconded by Mr. Williams :

That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Mayor of Manchester for allowing the use of the room.

Moved by Mr. Arthur Becker, seconded by Mr. Hampson :

That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Rev. S. Alfred Steintal for presiding on the present occasion.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

AT the time when your Committee presented their last Annual Report the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, had just come into operation.

Your Committee took that opportunity of expressing their many grave objections to a measure, which, unlike the Bill of the same name which they had been endeavouring to promote, rested on no ground of principle, and was, therefore, vexatious, complicated, and obscure in detail.

Though your Committee gratefully admit that even this imperfect measure of protection has alleviated some cruel hardships endured by those married women working for wages in other than domestic industry, who constitute so large a portion of our community, they have seen no cause to modify their original objections. The experience of the year, which has intervened, has but served to point more strongly the absurdity of attempting to base social legislation on any other grounds than the broad principles of justice and freedom.

In one respect they must avow themselves mistaken. They spoke of "protection orders" as a thing of the past, but cases which have come before the magistrates during the last year show that "protection," that miserable compromise of conscience with selfishness, will still be necessary until our legislators shall have made up their minds that justice to women is better, even in the interests of men, than cruel and irresponsible despotism.

The case of Mrs. Counsel, reported in the *Daily News* of June 1st, 1871, shows that "protection orders" are still the only safeguard for women who happen not to be of the wage-receiving class, and who become entitled in certain cases to more than £200 not secured by settlement. Without the protection of a magistrate's order, the property of such a wife may be absolutely at the mercy of the husband, who may rob her from time to time at his pleasure, the law aiding and abetting, and squander her money in vice and folly, whilst, if he judiciously

limit the periods of his absence, so that he cannot be charged with the legal offence of desertion, the wife cannot obtain the protection even of such an order.

The provisions for securing to married women their property and earnings, even to the limited extent conceded by the Act, are defective in operation, and surrounded with complicated and expensive formalities.

The foolish and anomalous character of the measure is further illustrated by the view of a County Court Judge, recently expressed, that in cases in which a wife carries on business "separately" from her husband, she has the right of separate action; but incurs no separate liability. She may, and perhaps must, sue in her own name for wages due to her, but she cannot be sued if wages or other property are due from her.

In the Court of Exchequer, on the 24th of May last, judgment was given in reference to an action against the *husband* of Madame Arabella Goddard, for breach of a contract that *she* should perform at a certain pianoforte recital. It would appear, however, that if the question had been one of non-payment of money due to her in respect of the exercise in general of her artistic skill, Madame Goddard must have sued in her own name. Mr. Gurney's measure proposed consistently to give the right of suing, and to impose the liability of being sued.

A case which has recently come for decision before Mr. Justice Brett in chambers offers a further illustration of the foolish and unjust character of the law. A woman who was in debt, and who owned some furniture, married. Under the old law the marriage would have endowed the husband at once with the liability for the debt and the ownership of the property. Under Mr. Russell Gurney's Bill the wife would have retained both notwithstanding her marriage. In either case the creditors would have had a responsible debtor and a claim on the goods. But under the Lords' Act the husband is freed from the debt and yet owns the goods. The law endows him with his wife's property free from her liabilities and the creditors have no redress. The husband is not liable, the wife cannot be sued, and the goods cannot be touched.

Many cases and decisions under the Act, not only illustrate the defects of the measure; but also demonstrate the necessity of vital changes, affecting both the property and status of married women. The Act professes to give a married woman full possession and control of her earnings, but this will be of little use to her, if her husband chooses to forbid her earning anything, as it would seem he has legal power to do, whilst he may at the same time refuse to maintain her and their children, in which case she has no remedy save through the intervention of the Poor Law.

The Act imposes upon wives who possess separate property the same liability for the maintenance of husband and children imposed by the Poor Law upon husbands for the maintenance of wife and children. But equal duties pre-suppose equal rights, yet a wife has no legal rights over her children, such rights being restricted by English law to unmarried mothers. The husband alone is recognised as a parent by the law when privilege is concerned, the existence of the mother being only admitted when it is thought desirable to impose obligations and duties.

These defects in the law, and others which a longer experience of its operation is sure to bring to light render it possible that at any time an opening may offer for bringing the question again under the consideration of Parliament. Your Committee therefore recommend that a standing committee be appointed with full power to renew the agitation for the settlement on a just basis of the property rights of married women at whatever time may seem to them most convenient.

The past session did not appear to your Committee suitable to this purpose; and they have, therefore, no attempts at legislation in the British Parliament to report. They have, however, the satisfaction of recording that the Legislature of Victoria (Australia), passed on the 29th of December, 1870, a "Married Women's Property Act," which, although adopting much of the complicated machinery invented by the House of Lords, does yet recognise much more fully than the measure passed by the home Parliament, the principle for which your Committee have throughout contended, the equal rights as to property of men and women. This Act is now in force throughout the colony.

A Married Women's Property Bill is also under the consideration of the Swedish Legislature; and that country, in which the position of women is already in some important respects in advance of their position here, may possibly be beforehand with us in heartily accepting those changes in the position of married women which the claims of freedom and justice imperatively demand.

Your Committee, in presenting their statement of accounts have pleasure in announcing that the debt at the close of the last financial year, and all liabilities incurred since, have been discharged. They owe this gratifying state of affairs principally to the generosity of two persons—Miss Ashworth, who contributed £50, and Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., who gave £25 for the purpose of extricating the Committee from its liabilities. There remains a balance in hand of £2. 0s. 4d., but as the expenses connected with the annual meeting and the circulation of the report will more than absorb this amount, and as it

is necessary to have a small sum in hand to afford the means of collecting and disseminating information, and to meet emergencies, they recommend that an appeal be made to raise the sum of £50—which they estimate will suffice for their needs during the coming year, unless occasion should arise for Parliamentary action.

Your Committee cannot conclude this brief summary of their position and prospects without recording their deep sense of the obligations which they owe to their able and indefatigable Honorary Secretary, Miss Wolstenholme. To her untiring zeal and unwearied energy must be attributed whatever success has attended their labours, for although many have been ready to render, when called upon, most valuable, nay, indispensable aid, yet the burden of thought and leadership has mainly been borne by the Secretary. They have learned with deep regret that these services must now be withdrawn from the cause, and they cannot allow Miss Wolstenholme to retire from the post which she has so ably filled without some attempt to acknowledge and record that which none but those who have had the privilege of working as her co-adjutors can appreciate—the intensity of the zeal and the ability with which she has fulfilled the duties of her responsible position.

JOSEPHINE E. BUTLER,	} <i>Hon. Sec.</i>
280, South Hill, Park Road,	
Liverpool.	

LYDIA E. BECKER,	} <i>Hon. Treasurer.</i>
28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square,	
Manchester.	

