

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

VOL. II.—No. 15. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

MANCHESTER, MAY 1, 1871.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

## Contents :

Leading Articles by the Editor.  
Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage :—  
Treasurer's Report for April.  
Town Councils :—Manchester, Salford, and Burnley.

Public Meetings :—Aberdeen, Scotland, Frome, Newport  
(Monmouthshire), Southern Counties, Framlingham,  
Ipswich, Falmouth, Dublin.  
Petitions.

Women's Suffrage Conference.  
Correspondence.  
The Women's Disabilities Bill.  
Proposed Bazaar and Exhibition.

WE approach the period when the judgment of the Legislature will be challenged in regard to the disabilities of women in parliamentary elections, under somewhat different circumstances from those which were present twelve months ago. At that time there was reasonable ground for the supposition that the principle of women's suffrage in representative government, which had existed coeval with men's suffrage in parochial matters, and which had been extended to municipal affairs by the legislation of the previous session, might be considered as established, and that the proposition to extend this admitted principle to parliamentary elections might be accepted with as little opposition as that encountered by the proposal to apply it to municipal elections. We found the House of Commons not unwilling to adopt this view, when left free by the Government to express an unbiassed judgment on the matter, but the unlooked-for declaration of the Administration in favour of despotic government for one sex interposed between the women of this realm and the constitutional right which the House of Commons had consented no longer to withhold.

Our task is therefore now to appeal on behalf of the recognition of this right, and it seems to us that the arguments which were adduced in the law courts by learned gentlemen who represented the claims of women to be placed on the register of electors under the old statutes previous to the Reform Act of 1832, and under the subsequent Act of 1867, though then overruled on technical grounds, are in themselves irrefragable if judged by the spirit rather than the letter of the law. After giving his decision against the claims of women to constitutional rights in the Court of Common Pleas, in November, 1868, Mr. Justice KEATING said that the learned counsel for the appellant (the present Solicitor-General) "had made an eloquent appeal as to the injustice of excluding women from the franchise, but that was not a matter for the consideration of the court. It was for the Legislature to consider whether the existing incapacity

ought to be removed." To the Legislature, therefore, we carry the appeal against the decision of disfranchisement then pronounced for the first time from the judicial bench against one sex. In giving judgment, Mr. Justice WILLES said, "We have *to-day* established the principle of law, and are the final court of appeal, and our decision is that women cannot vote." Justice BYLES said, "We have solemnly decided that every woman is under a personal disqualification." Chief Justice BOVILL : "And legally incapacitated."

In support of this decision no law was produced which declared women incapable of voting in parliamentary elections. Women have every other vote. One would have imagined that in order to exclude them from this some special law or decision would have been required. We believe the judgment which disfranchised the vast numbers of women claimants in 1868, to have been contrary alike to the spirit of the constitution and the principle of just representation of the people, and we now appeal to the House of Commons, on behalf of these claimants, to reverse that judgment.

The principle in obedience to which the franchise is granted to men demands that it shall be granted to women, and that they shall be freely permitted to exercise it. The language of the Great Charter is, "No free man shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseized of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, nor will we pass upon him or condemn him but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny or defer to any man either justice or right." Now the known and acknowledged ruling of the judges and the law of England is, that women are within the intention and within the protection of the Great Charter. Lord COKE says that under the definition "No free man," men and women are included. What greater instance, what more commanding precedent could we cite than the Great Charter of our English liberties? If women are included in the definition and intention of the words "No free man,"

in the Great Charter, it is a case perfectly parallel, and perfectly in point to say that they should be included within the intention and definition of the words "Every man," in the Representation of the People Act, 1867. It might be that the members of the Legislature who passed that Act did not know or intend the full import of the words they employed; but since they discarded the limiting word "male," and fixed upon one which has a comprehensive and generic value in regard to constitutional privileges and personal rights, women had a perfectly justifiable and reasonable ground for claiming the suffrage under the words "every man" in the last Reform Act.

The next question was, whether, supposing the franchise given to women under the terms of the Act of 1867, there was any incompetency in them so far as the law of England is concerned, with respect to their right to exercise it. We say there is no law which disqualifies them. There is no statute—up to 1868 there was no judicial decision—and there is no resolution of the House of Commons which disqualifies women. If they are disqualified, upon what ground is the disqualification maintained? There is no argument for disqualifying women except that reason which disqualifies the insane and infants, the common ground of mental imbecility, the intrinsic, fundamental, and irremovable defect of mental and intellectual power. Why are lunatics, why are infants under legal disability? For this reason, because they are not equal to this intellectual process—first, to know what the law is; next, to know the nature of the conduct which they propose; and lastly, to be able to compare the declaration of the law with nature of their own conduct, so as to be able to decide rationally that their proposed conduct agrees or conflicts with the law. These are the three grounds, and the only grounds, which hinder an infant or an insane person from being capable of all the rights of the law of the land. This is no vague representation. In the case of "OLIVE v. INGRAM," one of the judges declared "women are not allowed to vote for members of Parliament because of the judgment required in it." "The choice requires an improved understanding which women are not supposed to have." "Infants cannot vote, and women are perpetual infants." There is not known to the law of England any reason which renders women incompetent to vote, unless we hold with the judge just quoted, that there is a hopeless, helpless, endless mental defect incident to women which prevent them from exercising this right. Whoever interposes to prevent women having the franchise does, in substance and effect, whether he think it or not, sign a certificate of

perpetual lunacy against the qualified women of England. In respect of what is it that men are enfranchised? On this ground only, that they are human beings possessing intelligence, rationality, and responsibility. It is not because they are men as contradistinguished from women; it is not because they are men of a certain rank or position or education, as contradistinguished from others who have not a certain rank or position. If they have intelligence, rationality, and responsibility, and possess those other statutory qualifications which the law annexes to the right, then they have everything necessary to constitute them voters. It is not, therefore, on the ground of any difference between man and woman that the franchise is given to men; and therefore women as well as men possess all the conditions on which the right is granted to men. The broad and lofty language of the Great Charter, "no free man," is interpreted to include women. We shall have no true conception of what political liberty means until all Acts providing for the representation of the people shall have an equally broad interpretation with that which is the foundation of English freedom, and shall be a great, free, and large declaration, about the entire humanity of this England of ours which shall come within their conditions and within their qualifications. We shall have no true idea of its real power in the world until we see that every sane human being—every intelligent human being—every human being who possesses those qualifications which the law in its wisdom shall prescribe as tests of intelligence and of worth, shall be found to be enfranchised by the law of the land in which he lives. We ask the Legislature now to authorise the broad, comprehensive, and liberal interpretation of the enfranchising statutes, for which we vainly contended in the courts of law, and to resolve, in the terms of the Great Charter which includes both sexes, that it "will not deny or defer to any man either justice or right."

We are inclined to suspect that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in proposing a tax on matches, had a mind to bring home to the consciousness of every woman in the land the fact that women have a strong interest in politics, and that the decisions come to in the House of Commons concern them a good deal. Women and children are largely employed in the manufacture of matches and match-boxes, and the sudden stoppage of the trade means starvation and ruin to thousands. Women are the principal consumers of matches; they are indispensable articles of household economy. The increased cost will have to

be provided for out of the household pence, and we fear that in the majority of cases the amount of the tax will not be allowed for in the estimates for family expenditure by the domestic Chancellor of the Exchequer.

But it is not so much the amount as the manner of the tax which will be felt as vexatious. An extra sixpence per pound on tea would be paid by women without the consciousness that it was a government imposition; it would seem to them an ordinary rise in price akin to that to which bread and meat and other articles of domestic consumption are liable. But the government stamp, and the extravagantly enhanced price of an article which has hitherto cost next to nothing, will reveal to every house-keeper the fact that the government is dipping its hand into her pocket, and giving her nothing in return. If she wants to know why the government cannot go on as heretofore, paying its way without taxing a poor woman's match-box, and hears that it is in order to make huge military preparations just when the state of Europe seems almost to forbid the possibility of the occurrence of international war, she may be tempted to ask whether disputes between peoples are always going to be settled by that bloody and murderous strife which the masculine mind regards as the ultimate and natural issue of vexed questions, and to which it is so terribly prone to resort. Whether the admission of feminine will and intelligence into the guiding counsels of the nations might not temper the savage spirit which flies to arms for greed or "glory," and show to the rulers who now argue with bombshells, mines, and mitrailleuses "a more excellent way." Bad and mischievous and retrograde as is the policy which dictated the tax on matches, we are almost inclined to condone its offences for the sake of the political lesson it will convey to the womanhood of the British nation.

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR APRIL, 1871.

| SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.  |          |
|---|----------|
| Dr. Pankhurst .....                       | £1 1 0   |
| Mr. F. E. Kitchener .....                 | 0 2 6    |
| Mrs. F. E. Kitchener .....                | 0 2 6    |
| Mrs. Royston .....                        | 0 2 0    |
| Mrs. J. P. Thomasson .....                | 20 0 0   |
| Mrs. M'ulloch (for <i>Journal</i> ) ..... | 1 0 0    |
| Miss Pollard .....                        | 0 2 6    |
| Miss E. A. Austin .....                   | 0 2 6    |
| Mrs. Martindale .....                     | 1 0 0    |
| Mrs. W. Hargreaves .....                  | 5 0 0    |
| Mr. H. M. Steintal .....                  | 5 0 0    |
| Mrs. Thomas .....                         | 0 2 6    |
| Miss Humble .....                         | 5 0 0    |
|   | £38 15 6 |

Cheques and post-office orders payable to the Treasurer.

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL.

107, Upper Brook-street, Manchester.

## TOWN COUNCILS.

## MANCHESTER.

The monthly meeting of the city council was held on April 5th, in the council chamber at the Town Hall, King-street, Mr. Alderman NICHOLLS in the chair.

## ELECTORAL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN.

Mr. Alderman BENNETT moved that a petition be presented to Parliament in favour of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women. The Bill which Mr. Jacob Bright had introduced into the House of Commons was precisely the same Bill as was introduced during the last session of Parliament, which passed its second reading, and was rejected on going into committee. He did not take up this matter as a party-political question. He reminded the council that the three members for Manchester on the last occasion had voted for the second reading of the Bill, and in addition to that Mr. Disraeli, the leader of the Opposition, a few years ago had expressed his inability to see the reason why women had not the right to vote. He did not mean to say that Mr. Jacob Bright had taken his cue from the leader of the Opposition in bringing forward his Bill, but it showed that the question was not regarded as a party political question even in the House of Commons. The second reading of the Bill was fixed for the 3rd of May. It was no new thing to propose that women should be admitted to the franchise, for, as they all knew, some two or three years ago a Bill was passed allowing women to vote in municipal elections. They could vote for the election of guardians, and the Education Bill not only permitted women to vote for members of the school boards, but also allowed them the right to sit upon the boards, and there were at the present time, in this country, ten lady representatives on the school boards—some of whom had shown that they had equal if not greater intelligence than some of the male members of the boards. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) If women were therefore allowed to vote in municipal elections, for guardians, and for members of school boards, surely there was no reason why they should be withheld from voting for members of Parliament. Why women were not allowed to vote was not clear to his mind. If manhood suffrage was the law he could account for it; but they had not manhood suffrage; they had household suffrage. Parliament had imposed a test, which was the occupation of a house or the possession of a freehold. In the occupation of a house the head of the house voted, but in the case of the possession of a freehold, the party voted in whom the freehold was vested, but in either case the voting was limited to the male sex. He contended that every one who paid taxes should be allowed to vote, irrespective of sex. (Hear, hear.) Women paid the same rates as men, although their wages were not equal. He asked the council to petition in favour of this Bill.

Mr. BAKER seconded the motion. He contended that if the provisions of the Bill became law, in its operation it would be found that the franchise was exercised by women who had no incumbences, unmarried women and widows. The principle of the Bill was not new in Manchester. It was advocated eighty years ago by Mr.—afterwards Sir—George Phillips, who, in a pamphlet on the necessity of a speedy and effectual reform in Parliament, maintained that the only way of remedying the existing abuses, and to give each citizen justice, was to give everyone the power of voting. "I make no exception," he wrote, "of women, either single or married. They are as well entitled as men to vote for representatives, and have an equal interest in the government of the country. It is objected against them that they are subject to an undue influence from male electors; but if this be a sufficient plea for exclusion, what chance will the men have of retaining their privilege?"

Are not they, to say the least, as liable to undue influence from the other sex?" Why women should not have the privilege he (Mr. Baker) could not see. When a man goes to the poll no inquiry is made as to his moral or intellectual fitness. It is sufficient if he has the property qualification. It is the property which votes, and not the man; the right of voting is not inherent in the man, it would rather seem to be inherent in the property, except when the property has a female owner. A woman might possess a barony or sufficient property to make a thousand voters, and yet she was not to be allowed to vote herself. There was great injustice in this. There was no reason in it. It was the old story again—

I do not love thee, Dr. Fell;  
The reason why I cannot tell,  
But this indeed I know full well,  
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.

(Laughter, and hear, hear.) We may be taught political economy and English history by a woman, and yet we refuse her a direct influence in the government of the country. The M.P. for the district in which she lives may set the highest estimate on her judgment, and yet she is not allowed to exercise that judgment in the choice of a representative in Parliament. This is exactly Miss Martineau's position. We are proud of our great dramatist, and many writers have illustrated his works. Two of the best are women. The Concordance of Mrs. Cowden Clarke was the result of sixteen years' labour, and is a most faithful guide to that rich treasure house of English history. The "Characteristics of Women," by Mrs. Jameson, contains the most instructive and beautiful analysis of Shakspeare's female characters. In this land of ours women may possess mental and moral excellencies—they may be deemed worthy to discuss the policy of senators and sovereigns—and yet may not give a vote for a member of Parliament. This is a monopoly of sex which should be put an end to.

Mr. Alderman LAMB said he had opposed the petition which had been sent up to Parliament last year in favour of the Electoral Disabilities of Women Bill by that Council. It was his earnest conviction that by lifting women out of the sphere God himself had placed them in, and from the duties for which they were admirably fitted, they would be greatly injuring instead of benefiting them. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Bennett had said that as the municipal franchise had been given to women, the parliamentary franchise should also be extended; but had he shown that a single benefit had arisen through the suffrage having been given to women? Since they considered this subject last year they had witnessed in the various polling booths certain scenes—(hear, hear)—and he asked them would any of them have liked their wives, daughters, or sisters to have been actors in these scenes? (Hear, hear.) He would not deny that there were many ladies who held far greater property and had greater intelligence than thousands of men; but before gentlemen recorded their votes he should like to ask them some questions. How far were they prepared to go? It was not difficult to ascertain how far the ladies expected to go, and if they would allow him he would read an extract from a book called "Women's rights," which had been written by a lady. Let them take notice what it was they wanted. (Laughter.) The writer said that it was most necessary that there should be "a simple erasure from the statute book of all distinctions as to sexes"—(laughter)—and that when women had voted for twenty years, "no one could doubt that they would see women sitting as members in Parliament, pleading at the bar, and sitting on juries." (Laughter.) That was exactly what they wanted. (Laughter.) Considering the cases which generally came before juries, he thought it would prove the delicacy of any lady to sit on a

jury. ("Order, order.") He was not going to offend the delicacy of the ladies who were present on that occasion by repeating what some of our judges had said when such cases were tried, and women dressed in the garb of ladies remained in the courts to hear them. (Hear, hear.) It would be well for the council to answer another question: Did they consider that the masculine intellect of the country was insufficient for its government? (Laughter and "hear, hear.") If they did so, then he could understand how it was that they wished to remove some of the responsibility from their own shoulders. If they did not think so, he could not see how they could ask the women, who were called the weaker vessels, to assist in the work. (Laughter.) Mr. Bennett had said that the ladies had been admitted to sit upon the school boards. He should say "sit at" school boards. (Hear, hear.) He was glad to say that there were some ladies on the school boards of great intelligence, and they conducted themselves in the most gentlemanly manner. (Roars of laughter, and hear, hear.) He hoped the council would bear with him, as he was a victim to old prejudices—(laughter)—but he must say that he preferred a womanly woman in her own place to a gentlemanly lady as a colleague in a public office. That there were girls to educate had been quoted as a reason why women ought to be on the school boards. In his opinion, a father who had to bring up and educate a family of daughters was far better fitted as a member of the school board, to discuss questions relating to the training and education of girls, than anybody could possibly be who had no daughters of her own to train. (Laughter.) There was no doubt that as "women's rights" advanced marriages decreased in number. He had read that in America men were beginning to form connections irrespective of marriage, because women were determined to have the actual reign, and would no longer consent to be the helpmeets of men. Great as was the natural impulse of men to women, when a man was so bound down by women's rights—(laughter)—it had come to pass in some American States that unless a man was religious—(laughter and cheers)—the lady who presided over his house was seldom a married one. He had read in the Manchester papers a jest in four words, in the truth of which he quite concurred—"Womens rights—good husbands." That was what he wished for the ladies, accompanied with every blessing that could make their homes happy. A good definition of a good husband had been given to him by a poor woman in Ancoats. "Sir," she said "he was a good husband, he always turned up all his money, and he never 'licked' me in his life." (Laughter.) Now he did not believe even Alderman Bennett could come up to that. (Laughter.) He believed that Alderman Bennett was a good husband, and he was sure it was a pleasure to see him with his family at any time—they always looked so cheerful—but he did not believe that the Alderman "turned up all his money." (Laughter.) He believed that woman stepped out of her own position and the sphere in which God had placed her when she wanted to get into public places, and he contended that the effect of the introduction of female labour into our mills had been greatly to reduce the wages of the men, without conferring any advantage upon the employer. What did we want women pleading at the bar for? Had our barristers too many briefs—(laughter,) or our attorneys too much business? They might talk of the expense of going to law, but he was sure there were many attorneys who did not know very well how to make ends meet. He concluded by moving the following amendment:—"That this Council, having already petitioned Parliament on this question, considers further action is unnecessary and inexpedient."

Mr. Alderman BOOTH seconded the amendment.

Mr. J. FOX TURNER said he did not intend to answer the speech which he had just heard delivered; he should rather be disposed to leave the answer to one of the youngest members of the troops of little children in the streets whom the school board were about to educate, and of whom the gentleman who could deliver such a speech was the last man to be a very appropriate instructor. There was only one question which the alderman had asked to which he would reply. He had asked whether they considered the masculine intellect of England insufficient for our government. Unequivocally we did. Her Majesty, who sat upon the throne and occupied the place at the head of the Government, was a woman, and to that extent we acknowledged that the masculine intellect of the country was insufficient for our government. ("No, no.") He should vote for the motion without offering any further reason than one of those which were called women's reasons. That women should have the suffrage was a good thing, because it was a good thing. Women, they all knew, were the natural protectors of men—"Oh," and a laugh,—and they all knew that the fear of women was the beginning of wisdom. These were two general propositions which, he thought, they might all accept. ("No, no," and laughter.) While he admired the Bill very much, and particularly with regard to its shortness, he considered that it was marred by a cardinal defect—viz., the horrid misdescription given to the people who were to be affected by the Bill, and who, he was sorry to see, were called "females." Now a "female" was not by any means necessarily a woman. A "female" might be a lioness, or might be a shepherdess, or might be a leopardess—(laughter),—just as a "male" might be an alderman or a tom cat. (Laughter.) He regretted that this blot existed in the Bill, but was told that it was necessary to use the word in order to retain for women the privileges which were given to "females" by previous Acts of Parliament. He should be inclined to suggest that the petition to be adopted should ask for the rectification of this misdescription. In supporting the resolution, he thought it might be as well to state that he was only voting upon the question of women's suffrage, and that he was not prepared to go into the other programme indicated by Mr. Alderman Lamb.

Mr. Alderman MURRAY said the women had had the opportunity of exercising the municipal franchise on two occasions. It had been his duty as a member of that corporation to preside at some booth or other, on both occasions, and not only to preside, but to make observations as to how the women acted. On the first occasion he presided at Ardwick, and he confessed that some unseemingly sights and most disgusting scenes took place, such as he had never seen at any other elections before. Several women voters were taken to public-houses, made half drunk, and then brought up to vote. Until these poor creatures were protected by the ballot, he thought it was inexpedient to extend the parliamentary franchise to them. He should support the amendment.

Mr. GEORGE BOOTH supported the resolution.

Mr. Alderman GRUNDY said when this question was previously before the council he gave a vote, after some hesitation, in favour of the petition. Since that time he had paid more attention to the question than previously, and he had had the experience of presiding at one of the polling booths at the municipal elections, and his experience had gone very far indeed to shake the opinions which he mildly held before. He was convinced that since women were allowed to vote under the municipal franchise the tone and character of the constituency had been lowered. (Hear, hear.) He did not mean to say that ultimately the privilege asked for should not be granted, and he hoped the time might come when it might be granted with greater propriety and safety than at present.

He held that politically and socially it was inexpedient at the present time. He also held that it was inexpedient for them to discuss such a question, disapproving of the council being made a propaganda of political opinions. He should support the amendment. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Alderman BENNETT, in replying on the discussion, said he was surprised more than he could tell by the conduct of Mr. Alderman Murray. He had told them that because a few women had misconducted themselves at a municipal election, therefore they should deprive the whole sex of the franchise. But Mr. Murray had not told them how many men had misconducted themselves. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Alderman MURRAY: The same thing applies to the men.

Mr. Alderman BENNETT said there was every probability that the Ballot Bill would pass before Mr. Bright's Bill, and therefore Mr. Murray could not be justified in withholding his support to the petition on that ground. He reminded Mr. Alderman Lamb that at the present time there was no Act of Parliament which prevented a woman from becoming a member of Parliament, if she could find a constituency to elect her. How could they talk about women being unfit to govern when the head of our constitution was a woman? (Applause.)

Mr. Alderman LAMB: She does not govern.

Mr. Alderman BENNETT said he concurred with Mr. Alderman Lamb in his wish that all women might have good husbands, but, as the last census showed that there were 100 women in the country to every 95 men, there were at least 5 per cent who could not get husbands, even if all men married, or even if some, like Mr. Alderman Lamb, married twice. (Laughter and cheers.)

The Council then divided, when there voted for the amendment: Mr. Alderman Murray, Mr. Alderman Booth, Mr. Alderman Grundy, Mr. Alderman Lamb, Mr. Alderman Watkin, Mr. Alderman King, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Woodward, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Kilvert, and Mr. Croston—11. For the motion: Mr. Alderman Bake, Mr. Alderman Bennett, Mr. Alderman Heywood, Mr. Alderman Willert, Mr. Alderman Runney, Mr. Baker, Mr. Neild, Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Hodgkinson, Mr. Hopkinson, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Warburton, Mr. J. W. Whittaker, Mr. Smith, Mr. Cutting, Mr. Ashton, Mr. Townsend, Mr. J. Fox Turner, Mr. Goldschmidt, Mr. Worthington, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Harwood, Mr. Mather, Mr. R. Whittaker, Mr. Porter, Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Batty, Mr. G. Booth, Mr. Clowes, Mr. Ingham, Mr. Walker, Mr. Anderton, Mr. Vickers, Mr. W. Brown, and Mr. Rostron—35.

The amendment was therefore lost. The original resolution was adopted by a large majority.

The announcement of the numbers was received with cheers. The Council then adjourned.

#### SALFORD.

A special meeting of this council was held on April 5th, at the Town-hall, Salford, the Mayor (Alderman Davies) presiding. There was a full attendance of members.

#### ELECTORAL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN.

Alderman POCHIN moved "That a petition to Parliament be adopted in favour of the Bill now before Parliament, entitled a Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women." The council would recollect the part he had taken in this matter formerly, when it was met with more ridicule than argument. He observed with satisfaction the progress the question had made, and it could not now be ridiculed. (Hear, hear.) After mentioning the well known supporters of the Bill, on both sides of the House, he said that looking at the position it now occupied, no man of logical mind could fail to think that it would not long remain in its present position. They had a

woman occupying the highest position in the State. Women were members of the School Board, and enjoyed the municipal franchise. Parliament was now quite prepared to grant what was sought in the Bill if they were only asked. It was no party question. He believed that the Manchester City Council would come to a determination to petition in favour of the Bill by a unanimous vote.

Councillor M'KERROW seconded the motion.

Councillor WALMSLEY considered the subject one that did not fall within the province of the council to give an opinion upon. He objected to the introduction of anything in that council which had a political aspect. He did not say that it was a question of party.

Mr. ROBINSON said it was not a party question, and he had no objection to a woman voting, but he did object on the ground that it was a question that they ought not to deal with. He moved as an amendment, "That it is not desirable that this council should give an expression of opinion as to the electoral disabilities or otherwise of women."

Councillor WALMSLEY seconded the amendment.

Mr. HARRISON would not express his opinion as to the propriety of bringing the matter before that council, but as they had the motion he should vote for it on the ground of economy and simplicity that would result with respect to the overseers' lists.

Alderman POCHIN, in reply, said that at the last election, more than one eighth of the votes recorded were those of women, and he thought it was very nearly the last time they would hear that the political welfare of one-half of the inhabitants was not a matter of concern.

The amendment was then put, when nine voted for it and thirty against. The voting was as follows:—For the amendment: Aldermen Barlow, Pearson, and Radford; Councillors Jenkinson, Richard Johnson, W. Robinson, Walmsley, Whalley, and Winder. Against: Aldermen Bowman, Gendall, Platt, Pochin, and Tysoe; Councillors Ashworth, Brown, Dearden, Dyson, Farmer, Farrar, Faulkner, Grundy, Harrison, Horrocks, Husband, Kitchen, Lightbown, Lee, M'Kerrow, Mottram, Nall, Nosworthy, Nuttall, Ollier, Ridgway, Sewell, Slater, Walker, and Yorston.

The original motion was then put, and carried unanimously, amid slight applause.

The Council then adjourned.

#### BURNLEY.

The monthly meeting of the Council was held in the council-room, on April 5th, the Mayor in the chair.

#### ELECTORAL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN.

The TOWN CLERK reported the receipt of a communication enclosing a copy of a petition in favour of the enfranchising of women.

Alderman ROBINSON said his impression was rather favourable for two reasons,—first, because he thought those who held property and paid taxes and rates ought to have the privileges attaching to that property irrespective of sex. Then he thought it would have the effect of abating that intense political ardour manifested by both ladies and gentlemen (which he thought an evil), which should be a good thing.

Councillor DEAN: Are you speaking of ladies or gentlemen? (Laughter.)

Alderman ROBINSON: I am speaking of both, and move that the petition be sent.

Dr. DEAN seconded the motion, which was carried.

Councillors John Graham, P. Fletcher, and John Whittaker, voted against it.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS, &c.

##### ABERDEEN.

A public meeting of those supporting the claims of women householders to receive the franchise was announced to be held in the Mechanics' Hall, Aberdeen, on April 3rd. As it had been advertised that Mrs. Garrett-Anderson, M.D., was expected to address the meeting, a very lively interest was excited, and long before the time of meeting the hall and passages were quite crammed by an assembly of men and women of various classes of the community. As it was evident that not over half those wishing to be present could get in, an adjournment was made to the Music Hall, which was speedily well filled both in the area and galleries, the orchestra having also been stormed by the audience at an early stage. Amongst those present on the platform were the Lord Provost, Bailies Fraser and Ross, Treasurer Robb, Councillor Esslemont, Professor Bain and Mrs. Bain, Professor Struthers and Mrs. Struthers, Professor Milligan, Mr. Anderson, London, Mrs. Anderson, M.D., Miss Anderson, Chanonry House, Old Aberdeen; Mr. J. D. Milne, of Melgum; Mr. A. D. Milne, President Mechanics' Institution; Rev. F. Ferguson and Mrs. Ferguson, Miss Burton, Edinburgh; Rev. A. Stewart and Mrs. Stewart, Dr. Roger and Miss Roger, Miss F. Stevenson, Edinburgh; Mrs. Spalding, Mr. Cruickshank, Miss M'Combie, Mr. Jamieson, of Rosebank; Mr. G. Brown, auctioneer; Mr. Bruce, manufacturer; Mr. Lewis Smith, Mr. W. C. Angus, Mr. Lindsay, publisher, &c., &c.

On the motion of Councillor ESSELMONT, the Lord Provost was called to the chair.

The LORD PROVOST briefly stated the object of the meeting to be to consider the position of women, which in all nations might be taken as the text and standard of the civilisation and Christianity of the country. In this country much had been done to ameliorate the condition of women, though much yet remained to be done. They were met to-night to consider one peculiar phase in the question of elevating women to their proper position. The subject would be ably enforced by those who were to follow, and it was one which would always have his earnest sympathy and support.

Mr. J. D. MILNE moved "That this meeting is of opinion that the exclusion of women from representation is injurious not only to the welfare of women themselves, but to the interests of the whole community."

Mr. A. D. MILNE seconded the resolution.

Mrs. ANDERSON, who was received with loud and prolonged cheering, moved: "That this meeting approve of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, introduced into Parliament by Mr. Jacob Bright, and resolve to petition both Houses of Parliament in support thereof." She said: In commencing what I have to say to-night, I request silence, as I have no wish to exert myself in any unnecessary degree; and I shall have to take care to speak plainly, or you will not hear; and because, what is much more important, I have always thought if women ventured to come into public life at all, it would be one of their public duties to teach people to behave better. (Applause and laughter.) I venture to-night to speak upon this subject of the electoral franchise of women, because it has a very great bearing upon the larger question in which I am greatly interested, and in which all the intelligent people of this country are as greatly interested as I am; and that is the general upraising of the whole position of women, particularly of the educated classes. And it is because it seems to me that giving women the franchise would be a very great step towards the uplifting of the whole sex, that I take special interest in it. It is not a work in which I have any great experience, or of

which I have any special knowledge; and therefore in combating the arguments ordinarily used against us, I am not perhaps altogether fully acquainted with them. I propose speaking very shortly upon those arguments I have heard myself, and which have been thrust upon me again and again by those who do not approve of women having the franchise. It seems to me, however, they are so feeble and so fanciful that there must be better ones behind them that I have never had the good fortune to hear; and therefore I shall be very glad if any of the opponents that we may have in the hall would bring forward those strong arguments that exist, or that, from the amount of opposition that we receive, may be supposed to exist, when we have finished the regular business of the meeting. We are told, by a curious twisting round of arguments, that it would be of no use to give women votes, because what would really come would be this, that the clergy would have a great many more votes than now—that the woman would be influenced by her clergyman, by her minister, by her parish priest, or she would vote as she was told by her male relatives. There was rather a singular case in point with regard to the London School Board election, at which perhaps you are aware women were allowed to vote, and did vote in very large numbers. In the district in which I live the clergy particularly recommended a set of candidates, and yet in the same district the women organised themselves, without any suggestions from without, into a most active and energetic electioneering body, and the feeling of the district was strongly against the clerical influence, and they decidedly did not go the way in which the clergy would have suggested, if they had had their wish. In the first case in which women had anything like political power they threw over this argument boldly, and showed they were not at all likely to be guided by the clergy in the use of their political functions. Then, again, we are told that it will be of no use giving the franchise to people who are so decidedly inferior to men as women are. It always seems to me a very unnecessary question to enter upon, that of inferiority, because we have no standard—we cannot say there is a standard for men to which all men come up, and there is another and a lower one for women to which they come up. Sometimes the one would be a lower, sometimes the other. There are a good many who have been behaving to-night in a way no woman would behave who was at all decent. (Applause and hear.) Women may do bad things sometimes as well as men; there is no doubt they do. But faults are to be found on both sides, and we have no masculine or feminine standard. There are all sorts of grades and diversities in each of the sexes. There are a great many women who are superior to most men, and again many men superior to most women. Believing, if it were so—if there were a decided inferiority, quite unmistakably and quite accurately defined, it would still be altogether beside the mark to say these inferior creatures have no right to political life. There is no rule that only superior men should have the franchise. We have already carried down the franchise to almost the lowest class of citizens, and to say that one class should be excluded on the ground of sex would be most unreasonable. Then there is another argument which has been very frequently pressed home upon me. Whether the persons who pressed it thought it would meet with a response in me I cannot say, but I have been often told that I could scarcely be aware of what would happen to the health of women if they had this tremendous excitement of the franchise. One gentleman even went so far as to say in print, that the first step that would be necessary after giving women the franchise would be to build a great many lunatic asylums—(laughter and applause)—that women are so delicately

constituted and had so highly strung nervous systems that they would certainly go mad if they voted, and that it was on the ground of the plainest humanity, to say nothing of policy, to keep them from thus losing their reason. This is a very terrible statement, and to any one who believed it for a moment it would be a very weighty one. But I must say that so far as I know anything of women, my conviction would be that it is entirely and ludicrously false; that, so far as an excitement of this kind—an excitement coming up from the domestic side of their nature, but leading them out into larger interests and into a wider range of thought—so far as it had any perceptible influence on their health at all, it would be a decidedly beneficial one, and I would not anticipate any harm at all from giving them the right to vote. So far as this is true, that I believe one of the very greatest hindrances that women have to being really vigorous and healthy is the cramped life that they ordinarily live, and if they had a great deal more to do with large interests, and with things that justly and rightly stir their souls, they would be more healthy and in every way more vigorous. (Applause.) I saw a good many cases of this during that very same election in London to which I alluded just now. One or two ladies who were working very hard at that time, had been almost chronic invalids before that. (Laughter.) I have seen the same thing at the time of the cholera. One or two ladies who went down to the cholera hospitals were so ill—chronically ill—that it was almost madness to sanction their going, but they became quite well the moment they had something to do—(applause)—and I have seen it again and again, that the thing that keeps women in that low state of general health which they so generally have is, in nine cases out of ten, the want of large interests and stirring employments. (Applause.) Then, again, there is very terrible argument which is brought against us very often, which is, that women don't wish for the franchise. We are told frequently that we are only a very small band—and we are usually called enthusiastic people. I don't quite know in what sense the term is used, but that is the way in which we are usually described—and that the average woman, who is not enthusiastic, is very well content to have nothing to do with public life, and to be deprived of the right to vote. I think there is no doubt a certain amount of truth in this. I believe that a very large proportion of ordinary women—women who have been brought up not to desire anything more than they already have—is asked straight off—"Would you care to have the franchise?" would say, "Oh, no; we don't know anything about it, and we don't care anything about it." But I don't think it follows in the least that it is not desirable that these women should have it; it does not even follow that this answer of theirs is not perhaps the best proof that we can have of the injustice that has been done to them by depriving them of the vote—that if you have reduced intelligent human beings to such a low state of intellectual enterprise and activity, that they can think nothing at all about being shut out from the first step of political life, and the first step, I might say, of social life, from working with their fellows for any object beyond their domestic interests, and for the public good—if they can think nothing of being shut out from this large life, which is so interesting to any one who has taken in the idea of it, this shows how hardly they have been dealt with, and how hard it is to perpetuate a state of things which so tends towards their mental injury. But I think it would be unfair to suppose that this condition of apathy is universal. I was much struck during the late elections in London with the reverse of this. I had no conception till the right to vote for the School Board members was given to women, that interest in public life was so real a thing in the

average quiet woman in the middle class, as it appears to be. I stood at that election on purely public grounds, wishing to see whether women did care for women representing them in any way. I accepted the victory these women gave me as the victory of a principle. Before my nomination had been known a week, 300 women had come forward and formed themselves into bands of about 70—one band for each of the four parishes in which the district of Marylebone is divided, and had subdivided each parish on the ordnance map, each woman taking so many streets and courts and mews, and so thoroughly worked that district—worked it in a way that no other district in London was worked. And it was in that way that the enormous majority was brought to me. It was by the enthusiastic interest of that large body of women, most of them unknown to me, and by an amount of electioneering talent and skill that surprised, not only myself, but all the committee who were behind me, and who were much more conversant with electioneering than I was. That was a case in point. For the first time women had a chance of doing something in political life, and they did not despise it. They not only took the trouble to vote, but they spent three weeks in systematic and well planned hard work. And I think that election shows that it is a mistake to say that the apathy of women to political privileges is as great as it is often stated to be. I have been asked what good such an innovation would produce. I do not think it is at all necessary to show what good would come from this change. It is quite enough to show that the injustice exists. In pleading in support of Catholic emancipation, emancipation of the Jews, and so on, the cause was pleaded simply as an act of justice, not in the way of showing what good would result; and so it is in the present case. It is in the faith that all injustices are wrong that I would appeal to every person who cares for justice, right, and fairness, to put aside this great injustice as between men and women, and allow women to develop not only socially but politically, as citizens, in the way that you develop—to give them a fair field and no favour—(loud cheers).

Mr. BRUCE seconded the motion, believing that to give the franchise to women was simply an act of justice.

Mr. LEWIS SMITH proposed, and the Rev. F. FERGUSON seconded the third resolution:—"That the Chairman be requested to sign the petition in name of this meeting, and that copies of said petition, and of these resolutions be transmitted to the Prime Minister, to the Lord Advocate, and to the members for the City and County of Aberdeen."

All the motions were put to the meeting by the Chairman, and carried unanimously.

A vote of thanks having then been proposed for the Chairman by Mr. L. SMITH, the meeting separated.

## SCOTLAND.

Miss TAYLOR has addressed meetings as follows: March 23rd, HAWICK; Rev. J. McEwen in the chair. March 24th, SELKIRK; Sir J. Murray, Bart., in the chair. March 27th, DALBEITH; Rev. Fergus Fergusson in the chair. March 29th, BIGGAR. March 30th, HADDINGTON; George Hope, Esq., Fenton Barns, in the chair. March 31st, PEEBLES; The Provost in the chair. April 3rd, LINLITHGOW; Provost Dawson in the chair. April 4th, ALLOA; Rev. J. Bryson in the chair. April 5th, STIRLING; Provost Christie in the chair. April 6th, JOHNSTONE; John Fraser, Esq., in the chair. April 7th, KILBARCHAN; John Fraser, Esq., in the chair. April 10th, DUNDEE; Rev. David Cook in the chair. April 11th, CUPAR ANGUS; Rev. D. Marshall in the chair. April 12th, BRECHIN; D. D. Black, Esq., in the chair. April 14th, CUPAR FIFE; Bailie Wood in the chair.

## FROME.

Mrs. FAWCETT addressed a meeting at FROME, on March 2nd. A petition in favour of the Women's Disabilities Bill was adopted by the meeting.

## NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Miss CRAIGEN addressed a meeting at Newport, Monmouthshire, on March 25th—Mr. Councillor Fothergill in the chair. A motion for a petition in favour of the Women's Disabilities Bill was carried unanimously.

## SOUTHERN COUNTIES.

Mrs. RONNIGER lectured on Women's Suffrage, on March 21st, at ANDOVER; on March 24th, at MIDHURST; on March 26th, at WORTHING; on March 27th, at HASTINGS; Major Bell in the chair. On March 28th, at LEWES; Lord Lennox in the chair.

## FRAMLINGHAM.

On Friday, April 14th, a public meeting for the advocacy of women's political rights was held in the People's Hall, Framlingham. Mr. LARNER occupied the chair. The meeting was addressed by Miss RHODA GARRETT, Mr. W. BURLEY, Rev. T. COOPER, Mrs. FAWCETT, Miss CLODD, and Miss AGNES GARRETT. A resolution adopting a petition in favour of the Women's Disabilities Bill was carried by an immense majority.

## IPSWICH.

On April 12 a public meeting was held in the Lecture Hall, at which Miss RHODA GARRETT delivered an address on the question of the right of women to the possession of the political franchise. The hall was crammed, and the audience included many ladies. Mr. Edward Grimwade occupied the chair.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said he believed the principle to be right that as ladies were according to the laws of the country capable of being made churchwardens, overseers, guardians, of voting at municipal and other elections, and of becoming members of the school boards, it must not be said they were not competent to vote at the election of a member of parliament.

Miss RHODA GARRETT was received with applause, and her address was listened to with very great attention, her quiet, unaffected style of delivery at once gaining the sympathies of the audience. At its close,

Rev. E. JONES moved that a petition be adopted in favour of the Women's Disabilities Bill.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. W. ALDIS, of Cambridge, and supported by Mrs. FAWCETT. On being put to the vote, it was carried by a majority.

Mr. R. L. EVERETT proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Rhoda Garrett and Mrs. Fawcett, and the motion was carried by acclamation.

After a vote of thanks to the chairman, the meeting broke up.

## FALMOUTH.

A committee has been formed at Falmouth consisting of the following:—

|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs. CORNISH.              | Miss MATTHEWS.          |
| Mrs. GEASE.                | Rev. T. MOSES.          |
| E. B. EASTWICK, Esq., M.P. | JACOB OLVER, Esq., J.P. |
| R. N. FOWLER, Esq., M.P.   | Mrs. EDWARD READ.       |
| Miss KRABBE.               | FREDERICK RENFREE, Esq. |

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. HOWARD FOX.

## DUBLIN.

The following ladies and gentlemen form the Dublin Committee:—

|                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Miss SHARMAN CRAWFURD. | Mrs. ROBERTSON. |
| Rev. W. HANDCOCK.      | Miss ROBERTSON. |
| Mr. RICHARDS.          |                 |

Hon. Secretary: Miss A. I. ROBERTSON, 2, St. James's Place, Blackrock.

## PETITIONS.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.—Thursday, March 30.

The Earl of MINTO presented a petition from a public meeting at Selkirk, in favour of the admission of women who are householders and ratepayers to the franchise.

The Earl of DERBY presented a petition from a public meeting of inhabitants of Rawtenstall, in favour of giving the franchise to women.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

We have not space this month for a detailed list of the petitions presented to the House of Commons since our last issue. The following figures are taken from the Summary of Petitions, February 9—April 18, 1871, appended to the fourteenth Parliamentary report:—

|                                   | No. of Petitions signed Officially or under Seal. | Total No. of Petitions. | Total No. of Signatures. |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Women's Disabilities Bill—Against | 1   | 1                       | 1                        |
| ” ” ” In favour                   | 43  | 215                     | 93,844                   |

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CONFERENCE.

The following circular was issued about the middle of April to friends of the cause throughout the country:—

"Madam,—The Committees of London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Birmingham, and the West of England earnestly invite your presence at a Conference to be held in London, on Friday, the 28th inst. On the 3rd of May Mr. Jacob Bright will propose the second reading of the 'Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women,' and we call this Conference as a means of bringing together the friends of the cause from every part of the United Kingdom, in order to strengthen the hands of our supporters in the House of Commons at this critical time, and to discuss the means to be employed in aid of the progress of the Bill. Last year, in face of petitions from more than 180,000 British subjects, and a considerable Parliamentary majority in favour of the second reading of the Bill, Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons that 'he saw neither desire nor demand for this measure,' and the whole force of the Government was exerted against our cause. We desire to call upon our adherents everywhere to protest against the hostile attitude assumed by a Government professing to be Liberal and to be based on household suffrage. An influential deputation from the Conference will wait upon Mr. Gladstone to present a Memorial pressing for the immediate extension of the electoral franchise to women householders and ratepayers. The Conference will meet at the Langham Hotel, Regent-street. The chair will be taken at two o'clock p.m. precisely. Further information will be given by advertisement.

MENTIA TAYLOR, Hon. Sec., London; AGNES McLAREN, Hon. Sec., Edinburgh; ANNIE ROBERTSON, Hon. Sec., Dublin; LYDIA E. BECKER, Hon. Sec., Manchester; ELIZA M. STURGE, Hon. Sec., Birmingham; LILLIAS S. ASHWORTH and ELIZABETH P. RAMSAY, Hon. Secs., Bristol and West of England.—April 15, 1871."

The date at which we have to go to press precludes the possibility of giving any account of the proceedings of the Conference in this issue of the journal. The following is the copy of the memorial to Mr. Gladstone, which has already received very numerous and influential signatures, and others are constantly flowing in from all parts of the country as we write:—

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.,  
FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.

The Memorial of the undersigned Members of the Executive Committees of the various branches of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, and others interested in the removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women—

## SHEWETH—

That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of Members of Parliament, is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of municipal, parochial, and all other representative governments.

That in former times, as is proved by returns to writs now in existence, women took part in the election of Members of Parliament; that in none of the old laws regulating the qualification of electors is there any mention of the exclusion of women from the right of voting; that the only statute which in terms limits the exercise of the franchise which it confers, to male persons, is the Reform Act of 1832, and that no judicial decision had abrogated or annulled the presumptive right of women to the suffrage, until the Court of Common Pleas in 1868, disallowed the appeal of five thousand women householders who had claimed under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, to be placed on the roll of parliamentary electors for the City of Manchester.

That from time immemorial, up to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, women ratepayers had rights equal and similar to those of men in matters pertaining to local government and expenditure. That women can vote in all parochial matters, can take part in vestry meetings, called for various purposes, such as the election of churchwardens, waywardens, appointment of overseers, and formerly the levying of church rates. They can serve as churchwardens and overseers, and vote in the election of guardians. In none of these ancient voting customs, and in no Act of Parliament prior to 1835, was the sex of the ratepayers taken into account as either a qualification or a disqualification for the right of voting in local affairs. Nor was the precedent introduced by the Municipal Corporations Act followed in subsequent legislation, for the Public Health Act of 1848, and other statutes providing for local government, carefully guard the electoral privileges of the whole body of ratepayers.

That on the foregoing considerations Her Majesty's Government gave its assent in 1869 to the proposal to restore to women ratepayers in corporate districts the rights of which they had been deprived by the Act of 1835, and in consequence of the passing of the Municipal Franchise Act of 1869 large numbers of women were added to the burgess rolls in various districts. In Bath, there were 1,308; in Bolton, 1,534; in Bristol, 2,477; in Chester, 1,048; in Coventry, 1,022; in Derby, 1,270; in Leicester, 1,621; in Manchester, 9,013; in Rochdale, 1,018; in Salford, 2,829; in York, 1,191; and a proportionate number in other places.

That as a direct consequence of the extension of the municipal franchise to women, they obtained the right of voting in the election of Members of School Boards in corporate districts, through those provisions of the Elementary Education Act which confer the franchise in such elections in boroughs, on all persons whose names are on the burgess roll.

That the Elementary Education Act further recognises the right of women to take part in the government of the country, by admitting them to seats at School Boards. That these legislative councils have power to interfere with personal rights, to impose pecuniary penalties, and to deal with questions of the

deepest social and political importance in a manner which has hitherto been beyond the scope of any local legislature, and for these important functions women have been deliberately made eligible by Parliament, and actually chosen by great constituencies in free and popular election.

That the recognition by the Legislature of the fitness of women for the responsible office of Member of a School Board renders anomalous the maintenance of the disability which excludes them from voting in the election of Members of Parliament.

That the Legislature in preserving and restoring the ancient rights of women in local government, and in conferring on them the new franchise created by the Education Act, has pursued a course in regard to the civil and political status of women of which the removal of the only remaining electoral disability is the natural and consistent conclusion.

That the interests of women suffer greatly from the operation of this disability, inasmuch as the denial of representative government to women makes it possible to maintain laws depriving them of property, educational, and personal rights which could not be withheld from any section of the community which had the protection of the suffrage.

Your Memorialists, therefore, pray that you, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, will give your support to the Bill now before the House of Commons, entitled, "A Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women."

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.   | HARRIET MARTINEAU.      |
| MARY CARPENTER.         | FRANCES POWER COBBE.    |
| AUGUSTA WEBSTER.        | ANNA LOUISA CHISHOLM.   |
| ALICE, COUNTESS OF MAR. | ANNA MARIA, COUNTESS    |
| KATHERINE AMBERLEY.     | OF MOUNTCASHEL.         |
| EMLY A. G. SHIRREFF.    | CAROLINE E. LIDDELL.    |
| FLORENCE HILL.          | GERALDINE E. JEWSEBURY. |
| ETC.                    | ETC.                    |

### CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Dear Madam,—In the first sentence of the admirable article, "Woman: her Province and Mission considered," in your Journal for March, the writer appears to have overlooked a notable instance where the social condition of women must have been higher than, alas, as a rule, it is in these degenerate days. I allude to the instance of women following one of the most womanly of occupations, and God so blessing them in it that "He made them houses" (Ex. i., 21), an honour more coveted by the Jewish people than any other that could be bestowed upon them, and which must have raised Shiphrah and Puah above a position of "subserviency." I wonder sometimes how it is that women, ever complaining of want of opportunity for earning money, and charitable ladies, desirous of helping their poorer sisters, do not inquire of themselves, with whom lies the fault of non-occupation, and the difficulty of "making houses" (using these words in the sense of earning a competency) in the present day? Is not the blame with ourselves? Let us begin to consider it as great an honour for a woman to earn wealth by the labour of her head and hands as we now do for her to make a good marriage; let us consider it as honourable to pay her the full worth of her services at the same rate we should were they rendered by a man, and speedily women will rise from the state of "subserviency" in which they now exist.

Is the question ever asked, "Can a woman perform this (any) service as well as a man?" Rather, do not *we—women*—all of us, prove by our practice that the question is, "Can a man perform this service?" if so, let him do it.

Men help each other always, and women help men, but rarely each other.

It is useless to offer any list of employments at which women could work equally with men, but I wish to crave space for a few words concerning the oldest occupation by which it is known that women were enabled to "make houses," i.e., earn an adequate income. Many women have paid large fees for instruction in midwifery; some gentlewomen have devoted their education and intelligence to the study of the theory, as well as to the practice of obstetrics. Thousands of women of the lower classes in England are attended by midwives. The rate of mortality amongst their patients contrasts favourably with that of patients attended by medical men. Occasionally when a second opinion is needed, a physician or surgeon is sent for, but consultation is not required more frequently by women obstetricians than by men. Yet a lady, well instructed in her art, does not find that her services are remunerated half so well as would be those of a general practitioner, who, in this special branch, can never acquire either her skill or her aptitude.

Men-midwives (or accoucheurs as they are now styled, because plain English showed to what a pitiable state of degradation men and women had fallen, when the homely Saxon word of mead-wife was prefixed by the male noun) receive fees of from one to one hundred guineas. The midwife, equally skilful, much more tender, and delicate, and decent, is obliged to be content with, as a daily fact, a fee varying from 2s. 6d. to 15s. For her to be offered a fee of from three to ten guineas is a very exceptional thing.

Speaking recently with a lady whose daughter was expecting her accouchement, and for whom a male obstetrician was engaged at a fee of twenty-five guineas, the mother observed, "I should have been glad to have your attendance for my daughter, for twenty-five guineas is a large sum." "But, madam, your daughter is very wealthy; I should have expected the same sum." "Should you indeed? have you ever taken so high a fee?" "Yes, and a higher one." "But you would nurse the lady also?" "No, I acted as accoucheuse only." The lady could not understand, nor did she think it reasonable that one of her own sex should be paid at as high a rate as would be accorded to a gentleman, even should the service rendered be more efficient. Until all women will determine to encourage and properly pay for female labour, we must be content

For men to work, and women to weep,  
For there's little to earn, and there's many to keep.

—I remain, madam, yours obediently,  
A FOLLOWER OF SHIPRAH'S PROFESSION.

MR. CHARLEY'S BABY-FARMING BILL.—The deputation of promoters of the Bill for the Better Protection of Infant Life have met with scant encouragement from the President of the Poor-Law Board, who told them that there were grave objections to the very extensive system of registration and supervision involved in the licensing of nurses, and in making the system applicable to all women who took children to nurse in order to prevent abuses by bad women. This is so exactly what would occur to the minds of most persons on perusing the Bill, that we can only suppose the willingness of its promoters that it should be referred to a select committee to have arisen from a gradual perception on their parts of the utter hopelessness of attempting to pass the Bill as it stands. A minute registry of names, and frequent periodical reports to a central authority—the Poor-Law Board—are requirements far in excess of what is really necessary, namely, a discretionary power vested in medical officers of health to exercise surveillance over all baby-farms within their respective districts. The notion of compelling everybody who takes a child to nurse to obtain a licence, and to submit to a monthly visit of inspection from the parish doctor, is simply preposterous.—*Lancet*.

### NOTICE.

The second reading of the Women's Disabilities Bill is fixed for Wednesday next, May 3rd. All friends who have been collecting signatures, and who have not yet sent in their petitions, are earnestly requested to despatch them at once. Should the Bill pass the second reading, it will be necessary to continue the work of petitioning with redoubled vigour to help it in the subsequent stages. We beg that our friends will bear this in mind,—that they will look in their newspapers on Thursday morning, and if they see that the Bill has been read a second time, that they will immediately set about promoting petitions in their several localities. The following is the form recommended.

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

The humble Petition of the undersigned

SHEWETH,

That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in the election of Members of Parliament, is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of municipal, parochial, and all other representative governments.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will pass the Bill entitled "A Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women."

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Write out the above form without mistakes, as no word may be scratched out or interlined, and sign it on the same piece of paper, obtaining as many signatures as you can to follow. After the written heading is signed extra sheets of paper may be attached to hold more names. The petition may be signed by men and women of full age, whether householders or otherwise.

Make up the petition as a book-post packet, write on the cover the words "Parliamentary Petition," and post it, addressed to the member who is to present it, at the House of Commons. No stamp is required, as petitions so forwarded go post free.

Write, and send along with the petition, a note (post-paid) asking the member to present it, and to support its prayer. Any member may be asked to present a petition, but it is desirable to select one in whose constituency the petitioners reside. Members of Parliament deem it their duty to present any petition from their constituency, whether they agree with its object or not: and as a rule they are very willing to take charge of any that may be entrusted to their care.

N.B.—The printed forms issued by the Society are used only for collecting signatures. Printed petitions are not received by Parliament, consequently, in using these forms, the printed part must be cut off, and the names attached to a written and signed copy of the petition.

Written headings and printed forms for the collection of additional signatures will be supplied on application to Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

### BAZAAR AND EXHIBITION IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

It is proposed to hold a Bazaar and Exhibition for the above purpose at Manchester in October, 1871. The expenses of the agitation for the Women's Disabilities Bill during the coming session will be necessarily great, and whether it pass into law or not, a large expenditure of funds by the Society will be requisite. To meet this demand the Executive Committee have decided on holding a Bazaar, and earnestly request the aid of their friends in all parts of the country and all parts of the world to render the undertaking successful. The following ladies and gentlemen have already promised to become patrons:—Sir Thomas Bazley, Bart., M.P.; Lady Bazley; Jacob Bright, Esq., M.P.; Mrs. Jacob Bright; Alfred Illingworth, Esq., M.P.; The Hon. Mrs. Thomas Liddell; E. Miall, Esq., M.P.; Peter Rylands, Esq., M.P.; Mrs. Rylands, and others whose names will appear in future announcements.

Contributions of the following nature will be gratefully received:—Articles of plain and fancy work of all descriptions, for sale. Photographs, paintings, engravings, and other works of art, on loan or for sale. Curiosities, antiquities, and articles of *vertu*, on loan or for sale. Ornaments and articles of jewellery, for sale. Banners and decorations of all sorts, on loan. Ornamental plants, on loan. Perishable articles, such as game, fruit, flowers, and refreshments, for sale. Volunteer services in musical performances, and other entertainments. Laces, needlework, fans, and other products of women's artistic and industrial skill, on loan for exhibition, &c., &c., &c.

The following ladies have kindly consented to receive contributions:—Miss Ashworth, Claverton Lodge, Bath; Mrs. Carroll, 13, Kensington Gate, W; Miss Ramsay, 40, Royal York Crescent, Clifton, Bristol; Mrs. Slatter, Battle, Sussex; Mrs. Leech, Fair View, Pemberton, Wigan; Mrs. Feast, Sandwell House, West Bromwich; Mrs. Ashford, Speedwell Road, Birmingham; Miss E. M. Sturge, 17, Frederick Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham; Miss Swaine, 1, the Crescent, York; Miss Rigby, Monk Coniston, Ambleside; Miss Helen Taunton, The Marfords, Bromborough, Cheshire; Mrs. Mc.Kinnel, Hope Place, Maxwelltown, Dumfries; Mrs. Brine, Shaldon, Teignmouth; Mrs. Smith, 4, Walton Crescent, Glasgow; Mrs. W. Hargreaves, 34, Cravenhill Gardens, Hyde Park, London; Mrs. Paulton, 15, Cleveland Square, Hyde Park, London; Mrs. Griffith, Clan Teivi Lodge, Montpellier Grove, Cheltenham. Ladies willing to assist in this way are respectfully requested to notify such willingness to the Secretary. Articles not of a perishable nature may be at once forwarded to Miss Becker, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL. Edited by LYDIA E. BECKER.—Volume I., 1870.—In coloured cover, price 1s.; post free, 1s. 3d.—London: Trübner and Co., Paternoster Row, Manchester: A. Ireland & Co.

Communications for the Editor and orders for the Journal may be addressed to 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester. Price post free for one year, One Shilling and Sixpence.

Printed by A. IRELAND & Co., Pall Mall, Manchester, for the MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, and Published by Messrs. Trübner and Co., Paternoster Row, London.—May 1, 1871.

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