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PRICE ONE PENNY.

WE this month give the full report of the debate on the motion for going into Committee on the Women's Disabilities Bill. The promoters of the Bill, having laid their case before the House on the second reading, relied on the arguments adduced, and on the verdict given on that occasion in favour of the principle of the Bill as a sufficient reason for going into Committee. Consequently, the burden of the debate fell into the hands of the opponents, and the lateness of the hour, combined with the general feeling against a prolongation of the discussion manifested by the reception accorded to Mr. Eastwick's motion for adjournment, prevented any lengthened reply on the part of the advocates of the measure. Taken altogether, the two debates contain almost everything that can be said for or against the Bill, and we commend them to the careful study of those who would master the question. The promoters of the Bill advanced reasons for their demand. The objectors relied chiefly on sentiment. The advocates maintained that it was not just to make laws affecting women, and to refuse to them a voice in the enacting of such laws. The objectors replied by saying that a woman would be subject to personal inconvenience in recording her vote. One side says it is unjust and injurious to govern women despotically. Hon. members on the other side reply in effect that in their opinion women are better off under despotic government, and that it would be a calamity and a curse to them to be allowed a voice in determining their own destiny.

The sentimental objection, however, seemed to have the greatest weight with the audience. It underlies generally the speeches of the Opposition, and crops up perpetually in very odd forms. Thus great stress was laid on the allegation that in passing this Bill "we should be pulling women down to our own coarse and rough level." "If we yielded to these demands, it would be as if the Knight of La Mancha, the impersonation of chivalrous regard for women, had desired to reduce Dulcinea to the level of an ordinary mortal"—"the result would be to take them down from the high pedestal on which we have placed them." If we remember rightly the story of the Knight of La Mancha, the fair Dulcinea was in fact a washer-woman, and we think that if she had put in a claim for

an advance of wages, an extra bunch of garlic for her pottage, or even as an aid to the amelioration of her lot, for such a modicum of political privilege as the constitution of Spain accorded to Sancho Panza, it would have been a very unsatisfactory reply if she had been told that to grant her demands would reduce her to the level of an ordinary mortal, and that chivalrous regard for women forbade that she should be taken down from the high pedestal on which she was placed. To us it appears that the notions regarding women entertained by the opponents of the Bill resemble very closely those of the Knight of La Mancha. They decline to regard women as ordinary mortals, they place them on an ideal pedestal, invest them with imaginary attributes, and base their arguments on the assumption that women are exempted from the rough trials and burdens of life. They refuse to recognise the real Dulcinea at her wash-tub, they see only the ideal creation of the crazy Knight's disordered brain.

We must, however, ask honourable members to come down from the cloudy regions of romance, and to deal with plain prosaic facts. Our Bill does not concern imaginary Dulcineas, but hard-working women, who, by daily toil of hand or brain, earn their daily bread. It directly affects a large proportion of the industrial population of this country, who are, to use a noted expression, "flesh and blood." We have heard a great deal within the last few years of the claims of the working man to the suffrage. Happily these claims have been satisfied, and the working man is now in possession of a vote. But how about the working woman? Has she not as good a claim as a working man to enjoy all the privileges of the wealth created by her labour? The industrial classes, those who live by weekly wages, are not only the numerical majority, but the bone and sinew of the nation. By their toil they lay the basement of the superstructure of wealth, to which is owing much of the power of this country. One of the privileges attaching to a certain amount of wealth is that of political representation. The men whose industry creates that wealth are now in possession of the privilege. We ask it on the same terms for women.

The proportion of women to men among the industrial classes has been too much lost sight of. We give in

another column a table containing a general view of the wages paid at one spinning and weaving factory in Lancashire. From this it appears that out of a total number of 278 persons employed 200 are women. The amount of wages paid weekly is £212; of this sum £81. 7s. is earned by the men and £130. 14s. by women. If this mill be a fair average specimen of the factory system, and we are informed that it may be so considered, it would appear that of the labourers whose industry supports the great cotton manufacture of which Manchester is the centre, more than two-thirds are women; and if the proportion of wealth produced can be measured by the proportionate amount of wages paid to the producers, nearly two-thirds of the wealth of Lancashire, so far as the cotton manufacture is concerned, is the result of the labour of women. Now, we maintain that these two-thirds of the working classes engaged in the cotton trade have as just a claim to representation in the House of Commons as the one-third who have been recently admitted to the vote, and it is no answer to the demand to be told that the "delicacy of their nature" unfits them for the exercise of the privilege, while it does not forbid the toil by which that privilege is gained.

ELECTION OF IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS IN BURY, LANCASHIRE.

DURING the last month an election has taken place which affords a practical refutation of some of the most plausible objections commonly urged against women's suffrage. The town of Bury is governed under a Local Act, by twenty-seven commissioners, nine of whom retire by rotation every year, and their places are supplied by a fresh election; consequently there is an election every year. This has been generally managed without a poll, but for the last two years it has been made use of by both political parties as a trial of strength, and is avowedly conducted on purely political grounds. Each party nominates a list of nine candidates, prints this list in party colours, and the votes are given for the "blue" or "red" list, as much without reference to the voters' opinions of the personal qualifications of the candidates, as if the election was for a member of the Legislature. The qualification for voting is being rated, or claiming to be rated, to the relief of the poor. The votes are given personally and *viva voce*. Women ratepayers vote in these elections, not by recent legislation, but by rights coeval with those of men. They make use of their rights quite as freely as do the men. In the election just concluded, out of 6,074 persons who voted, 1,005 were women. That is one woman to five men; probably a greater proportion than that of women to men on the register.

The contests present the most obnoxious features of ordinary political strife. They are not ended in a single day as in elections for Members of Parliament, but protracted day after day for an indefinite period, after the fashion of county elections in pre-Reform Bill days. The one just concluded occupied nine days, and might have gone on longer. The elections occur, not at long and irregular intervals, during which party spirit has time to cool, but regularly every June. Instead of the commodious polling places provided at parliamentary elections, the accommodation for the voters is of the most limited character. At a parliamentary election no less than thirteen polling booths are required at various points of the town for 5,000 electors, whereas under the Local Act, with more than 7,000 voters, only one polling-place is open. A local paper speaks of the "terrible crush seen at the gates of the Commissioners' offices." There are numbers of persons "who dare not run the risk of passing through the barriers to record their vote, and we do not wonder at this, for the ordeal is a most trying one for either patriotism or partisanship. To be cooped up from one to two hours in a narrow passage with a lot of drunken fellows as your companions; to have your ribs pressed with a horrible pressure against a rough plank of wood, and almost the last breath in your body squeezed out of you, and then, when in sight of the voting-room, to be told that the poll is closed for the night, is positively disgusting; yet this has happened to hundreds and to the same persons many times over." "So difficult is it to get through the crowd that some have given up in despair and resolved not to vote at all. To be compelled to vote under such terribly adverse circumstances is bad enough, but the interruption to business which this turmoil occasions is something serious." Another paper says:—"The contest, especially since Wednesday, has been of a very exciting character. The Radicals have been fighting with might and main; they have not left a stone unturned, and they are seemingly determined to carry everything before them. At the Commissioners Offices, where the polling takes place, the excitement has been intense, but notwithstanding that large crowds daily congregated in the vicinity of the polling booth, fired up with party feeling, there were but few scenes perpetrated. Throughout the town a good deal of public feeling was manifested, and recruiting parties from the ranks of both the Conservatives and the Radicals perambulated the streets and lands to enlist supporters. Cabs, with large placards, 'Vote for the Blues,' 'Vote for the Reds,' prominently affixed, plied through the town to convey voters to the poll, and the Radicals, bent on doing business wholesale, had busses engaged to drive their friends to the Commissioners Offices." Surely if ever the

stock common-places "women ought not to be mixed up with the excitement and turmoil of contested elections," "Polling booths are not fit places for women, etc., etc.," could be considered applicable it would be in this case. But how fared the one thousand women who took part in this election? We are informed that the women electors were not subject to any annoyance whatever. They were not exposed to the crush which the men were content to endure, but had a separate entrance provided for them, and in the words of one of the candidates, "received all that consideration to which they were entitled." It appears therefore that any man who affirms that it is not fit for women to have votes, because of the violence and rudeness to which they would be exposed in recording them, utters a libel on his sex. We rejoice that it has been given to the men of Lancashire to prove the falsity of this allegation, and to show that whatever be the exigencies of party strife "Blues" and "Reds" are heartily agreed on one paramount duty, that of aiding and protecting their countrywomen in the exercise of their constitutional rights.

GENERAL VIEW OF WAGES PAID WEEKLY IN ONE MILL IN LANCASHIRE—JUNE, 1870.

WOMEN.			
			Average Weekly earnings.
Card-room hands ... 23	£13 12 0	...	£0 11 9 ³ / ₄
Winders 19	9 18 5	...	0 10 5 ¹ / ₄
Warpers 4	3 13 0	...	0 18 3
Weavers 154	103 10 10 ¹ / ₂	...	0 13 5 ¹ / ₄
	200	130 14 3 ¹ / ₂	0 13 0 ³ / ₄

Youngest weavers, a little over 14. Average, about 20, or a little over. The youngest hands are weavers. 60 of the women are married; 140 single.

MEN.			
			Average Weekly earnings.
Card-room hands..... 10	£8 16 4	...	£0 17 7 ³ / ₄
Spinners 15	21 5 0	...	1 8 4
Piecers 18	11 14 0	...	0 13 0
Sizers..... 2	3 5 9	...	1 12 10 ¹ / ₂
Twisters, &c. 6	5 15 11	...	0 19 2
Weavers 10	8 1 6 ¹ / ₂	...	0 16 1 ³ / ₄
Labourers 8	7 4 0	...	0 18 0
Overlookers, &c. 9	15 5 5	...	1 13 11
	78	£81 7 11 ¹ / ₂	£1 0 10 ¹ / ₂

Youngest on this list, 19. Average, about 30. Youngest in each case ascertained: average guessed at, but based on the opinion of three well-informed people.

Women 200	£130 14 3 ¹ / ₂	...	£0 13 0 ³ / ₄
Men 78	81 7 11 ¹ / ₂	...	1 0 10 ¹ / ₂
	278	£212 2 3	£0 15 3

During the contest at Bury a woman, whose children worked at the mill of one of the "red" candidates, came to the manager to say that she had voted "blue" and to beg that he would not discharge her children on that account. She explained that she lived among "blues" and had a lot of "blue" washing. Whatever be our own political complexion, we must confess that we do not think "blue" a bad colour for a laundress. Another woman was asked to vote "red," and had an offer that her rate should be paid. She voted red, but would not take the money.

WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

House of Commons, May 12, 1870.

On the motion that the Speaker do leave the chair, Mr. BOUVERIE said: Mr. Speaker,—I will occupy the attention of the House for a very short time in moving the amendment of which I have given notice, that the House go into committee this day six months. (Hear, hear.) I do not think it a proper way of meeting a proposal of such importance by moving the previous question. I consider that a much more straightforward and direct way of meeting it, is by moving a direct negative. (Cheers.) There are two or three points on which I think false notions are entertained respecting this Bill by hon. members who have not paid much attention to the arguments, and to the circumstances under which it has been introduced to our notice, and to the names of those who advocate it, especially out of doors. I think much less importance has been attached to it than it deserves. For my own part, I look upon the Bill as one of the utmost importance, and in its ultimate consequences, if it should form part of the legislation of the country—which I hope it will not—more important even than the Irish Land Bill, which has occupied so large a portion of our time. (Hear, hear.) I believe that it is fraught with consequences which enter into the minuter relations of our social and domestic life—(cheers)—consequences of the most dangerous and fatal description, as regards all that makes these relations enjoyable and happy. (Hear, hear.) But it is not unimportant even in its immediate consequences. My hon. friend, the member for Manchester, proposes to make an enormous addition to the constituencies of the country. He has told us himself that in some large towns—in Bath, for instance—something more than a fourth will be added to the whole constituency of that city. In Manchester, a sixth. In other words, something like 10,000 voters will be added, under the operation of this Bill, to the constituency of Manchester.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT: 7,000.

Mr. BOUVERIE: It is stated in one of the publications connected with this subject at 10,000; but my hon. friend now says 7,000. In Salford the number would be about 2,000; in the city of York it would add one-sixth to the existing electoral body; and in Newcastle, one-seventh would be added to the present number of voters. That is an enormous addition to the present constituency of the country, and therefore, in its most immediate effects, the measure is not without some importance to us who sit in this House, because I apprehend that if this Bill is to become law, it will be absolutely imperative on the government to wind up the business of the session, to dissolve Parliament, and proceed to a new election. ("No," and hear, hear.) That, I think, is a conclusion and a consequence which has not been in the apprehension of many hon. members who are voting for this measure. (Hear, hear.) There is another false notion on this subject which, I think, it is important to correct; and it is this—that this measure is one on behalf and for the advantage of women. (Hear, hear.) Now I beg leave distinctly to take issue on that point. (Cheers.) I beg leave to assert most distinctly that it is not for their advantage; it is not for their behoof; but it will be inflicting a calamity and a curse upon them. (Hear, hear.) And the great bulk of the women of this country have the good sense to know it. (Cheers.) For my part, it has not been my lot to fall in with one sensible woman who is in favour of it. ("Hear," and a laugh.) And I have heard several hon. members who themselves were in favour of, or rather disposed to vote for the Bill, say that their wives had entreated them to support me on this occasion. (Hear, hear.) There is another notion which was started in the previous debate that took place upon this Bill, and which, I think, is entirely erroneous and unfounded; and that was the suggestion of my right hon. friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that this was a matter upon which the government need have no opinion at all. Now I think it is essentially one of those things upon which the government is bound to form an opinion—(cheers)—and having formed that opinion, to express it decidedly to the House. Of course that opinion should be a well-considered and a conscientious one; and whatever it might be, I should attribute to my right hon. friends on the Treasury Bench perfect justice and fairness in coming to their conclusion. But I, for one, must protest, as an independent member of this House, against the government, who are supposed to guide our legislation, to direct the course of business in this House, and to influence for weal or woe the councils of the nation, having no opinion and expressing no opinion

on this measure. (Cheers.) I trust, therefore, we shall not hear again of this erroneous notion. What does my hon. friend propose to do? He says, "you have given the municipal franchise to women by the operation of a Bill which was passed last year, and now I beg you to be good enough to go a step further and give the electoral franchise for Parliament to single women and widows, but not to married women." (Hear, hear.) I must say that I think the precedent that was set by the Act of last year was a very bad one. (Hear, hear.) The clause was slipped in by my hon. friend very adroitly on behalf of his fair clients, in the course of the passage through committee of a Bill which had no direct connection with the subject, except that it was a Bill relating to municipal elections. There was scarcely any debate upon his clause. No one particularly noticed it at the time it was proposed; it was adopted almost without any discussion; and I, for one, and I believe a great many other hon. members, do now very much regret that it passed. (Hear, hear.) But the fact that we have made a slip to that extent is no reason why we should go any further. (Hear, hear.) I wish to draw a moral from this argument of my hon. friend, that we ought to go further because we took that step. The moral is this, that when we have taken the step which we are now invited to take, it will be made an argument by my hon. friend and his friends for going a great deal further. (Hear, hear.) My objection to the direct proposal of my hon. friend, that women should have the electoral franchise for Parliament is, that it at once plunges the women of the country into all the heat and turmoil and trouble and annoyance and dirt of contested elections. (Hear, hear.) The roughest work which any of us has got to do is in connection with elections. (Hear, hear.) Nobody can say it is agreeable work. Let me ask the House to consider in what mode are those who are candidates for elections—supposing this Bill should become an Act of Parliament—to bring under the notice of that portion of their constituents their opinions, their views, and their political intentions? We have but three recognised modes of doing it at present, one of which is about to be knocked on the head, namely, the nomination day. I will not say anything about that, because that, I presume, is at an end. There are then only two modes left in which a candidate can make his opinions known to those whom he aspires to represent. One is by speechifying at public meetings; and the other is by canvassing either through himself or his committee. Well, now, is it intended that the unmarried women and the single women of England with that delicacy of nature which distinguishes the greater number of them, should enter into the rough struggle which takes place at public meetings, and be shouldered and hustled by the male part of the constituency, in order that they may listen to the speeches of candidates? For my part, I must say that having gone through a great many of these public meetings of my constituents, whom I am always ready and glad to meet—(a laugh)—I should be extremely sorry that any woman, in whose comfort or happiness or sense of propriety I was much interested, should come and take a part in that rough struggle and listen to all the noise and turbulence and questioning and agitation that goes on, upon these occasions. (Hear, hear.) I put it to any hon. member whether he would like those in whom he was interested—his daughters and sisters—to take a part in these rough and turbulent proceedings. (Hear, hear.) Well, then, is the candidate to address ladies' meetings? Is he to present himself at meetings specially called by the female part of the constituency? I apprehend that would be ridiculous. Then there remains the question of canvassing. The unmarried women and the widows amongst the women of the country are to be subjected to all the annoyance of solicitation and worry which is attendant upon personal canvassing by a candidate and his committee? I say that is a thing to which you ought not to subject the women of this country. (Hear, hear.) It is a thing which would be most odious to the women of England—(hear, hear)—and again I say it is a thing to which you ought not to expose them to; but my hon. friend and his supporters say, "Oh, but no woman need vote unless she likes." True; but they will be compulsorily put upon the register. It will be the duty of the proper officer to put all their names upon the register. There they will be; and this position of the constituency will in many parts of the country hold the balance of elections in their hands. Do you suppose that those who do so—a thousand or five hundred women as the case may be—will not be annoyed, persecuted, bothered and worried for their votes to a degree which will make their life during a contested election per-

fectly intolerable to them? (Hear, hear.) I say we know from our own experience that women distinguished by the very delicacy of their nurture, such a thing will be utterly intolerable. (Hear, hear.) But, says my hon. friend, "These people have property, and property ought to be represented." (Hear, hear.) Well, if that argument had come from the opposite side of the House, I should have thought that there was some consistency in urging it; but coming from my hon. friend, and those who act with him, who have always upheld the personal right of voting, I cannot admit that that argument has any force. (Hear, hear.) After all, sir, the property which is to give the vote is merely a test of the fitness of the voter to give an independent vote; and if the voter, either from sex or from other causes, cannot be presumed to be independent, then that voter is unfit to enter into the electoral struggle. ("Oh!" and hear, hear.) I say women are unfit to engage in that struggle, and that consequently the argument based upon the rights of property falls to the ground in this case, and there is nothing in that point whatever. (Hear, hear.) If property, as my hon. friend contends, is to give the vote, what are we to say when the Bill now before the House for giving separate property to married women shall become law? (Hear, hear.) Presuming my hon. friend carries his measure to a triumphant issue, conferring upon single women and widows possessed of independent property the right to vote, he will the moment the Bill passes and becomes law, which is to make the property of married women a separate property, over which their husband is to have no control but to be entirely under their own authority and direction, have an unanswerable argument for conferring votes upon our wives as well as upon our daughters and sisters; and then we shall be landed at this point—that all the women of England will have votes. The consequence of this will be that we shall have in every household a dual vote and a dual government. (A laugh.) I must protest against such a system of domestic anarchy. Either the wife will vote with the husband, in which case he will virtually take two votes to the poll, or she will vote in a contrary way, and then there will be domestic discord. (Hear, hear.) I think the House of Commons ought not to be called upon to sanction either alternative. (Hear, hear.) These are objections to the simple proposal of my hon. friend as it is proposed on the face of the Bill; but the principle goes far deeper; and it is to the more remote consequences involved in this Bill that I wish to draw the attention of the House, and upon which I strongly ground my objection to the further progress of this measure. Let me ask my hon. friend whether he himself believes it will be possible, if this Bill should become law, to refuse to women in the course of a short time the right of admission to this House? (Hear, hear.) In point of fact, the real meaning of the proposal of my hon. friend, in all its entirety, is that we are to unsex women altogether—(hear and a laugh);—that the weaker portion of creation—weaker by the laws of God, which you cannot alter—are to come down from the pedestal on which we have placed them and enter into the rough struggle of competition with men—(hear, hear); they are to be members of this House; they are to sit upon these benches; they are, perhaps, to sit upon that (the Treasury) bench—(a laugh); they are to take part in our deliberations; they are to be in all respects as we are. Let me ask the House whether this is a right, reasonable, and proper proposal? (Hear, hear.) But this is not all. The proposal is not merely as regards the electoral franchise and seats in this House, but it is avowed that we are to become a nation of Amazons—(a laugh);—that we are to have women barristers, attornies, jurors, doctors, and for aught I know bishops. (Laughter.) Do not let the House suppose I am exaggerating. I hold in my hands a very clever and able little book of lectures by a lady who certainly writes with great eloquence and power, and with great earnestness and honesty of purpose evidently, in advocacy of what are called woman's rights. (Cries of "Name.") The book is entitled *Woman's Rights*, by Caroline H. Downe. It was published in America, being a lecture delivered in Canada on the subject of woman's rights; and as far as I can make out from the book, she is either a Canadian or an Englishwoman; at all events she shows an intimate acquaintance with English habits. Will the House forgive me even at this late hour if I read an extract or two from her book. (Hear, hear.) She says first of all, as regards the general objects to be attained through the advocacy of woman's rights—

"When society strikes out from the statute book all distinctions of sex, and admits she is a person capable of thinking and acting for herself, she will lay the foundation of a new civilisation." She goes on to say—"The result of a great deal of reading, of a great many law books, is only this, that we are more firmly convinced than ever that the most necessary reform is a simple erasure from the statute book of whatever recognises distinctions of sex." (A laugh.) Then she says in regard to the laws affecting single women—"In the laws which regard single women we object then—1. To the withholding of the elective franchise. 2. To the law's preference of males and the issue of males in the division of estates. 3. We object to the estimate of woman which the law sustains, which shuts her out from all public employment, for many branches of which she is better fitted than man." She goes on in a further passage to explain what those employments are, and continues—"After women have gone on for some twenty years electing members of Parliament," she like a shrewd and sensible woman anticipates, "nobody will be surprised to find some women sitting in that body. But, objects somebody, 'If that ever happens, we shall have women on juries, women pleading at the bar, women as attorneys, and so on.'" And she then adds, "And this is exactly what we want." (Hear, hear.) This is the object of those whose cause my hon. friend so earnestly advocates: but I venture to submit to the House that it is an object of which we should not approve by passing his Bill. (Hear, hear.) It is a fantastical and visionary object, and it is one which, if achieved to any extent or degree, would upset all the domestic and social relations of life. It is the notion of my honourable friend that we are to raise women by this operation. To the best of my judgment, and after a great deal of reflection on the subject, the only result of such an operation would be to degrade them. (Cheers.) My belief is that if we adopt this course we shall be doing much to destroy all that makes our life purer, better, and holier than it is now. (Cheers.) We shall be pulling women down to our own coarse and rough level. Nature seems to provide that the rough work of life should be done by men and not by women, and Parliament and the House of Commons have recognised that distinction. We have actually prohibited women from engaging in some of the coarser works of life, because we believe them unfitted for labour of the harder and severer kind. We do not allow women to go down into coal mines; and the demand now is that nothing of this sort shall be done, and that women shall be treated exactly like men. There was a great authority who existed some century and a half ago who said that an Act of Parliament could do a great many things that were very difficult, but that it could not turn men into women or women into men. That is the very object at which my hon. friend is striving, in which he will fail to succeed, but which in his attempt to accomplish he will do irremediable mischief to the domestic relations of life. I have said that I believe men are best fitted for the rough work of life, and I do maintain, in spite of my hon. friend, that election work is a very rough part of the work of men—that Parliamentary work is rough work—and that women are fitted either for the one or the other. I think that they ought to be satisfied with the great power which they possess indirectly, which is greater than anything that they can ever possess to their own advantage directly. They have great indirect influence at elections, but it is by the use of the gentler influences of their sex, and not by coming and hustling with us at the polling booths, and at public meetings. I remember an honourable gentleman, a member of this House, whom some of the older members must recollect, who went down to a populous borough in the west of England where he was utterly unknown, and which he was anxious to represent in Parliament. He announced that he was an unmarried man, that he had a good fortune, and that he proposed before another election to marry a lady in the borough. (Laughter.) Well, he was returned triumphantly, and he sat on these benches for the rest of that Parliament. (Cries of "Name.") No, I believe he is dead now, and he was a personal acquaintance of my own. Unfortunately he did not keep his promise, and when he went down to his borough at the next general election they would not look at him. He had not the slightest chance of being returned, and never sat again in this House. That is some indication that the indirect influence of ladies in political affairs is powerful, and it is this indirect influence which I would leave them. Without detaining the House further, I must entreat them to pause before they pass this Bill, and beg them not, at the bidding of my hon. friend, to rush in where angels would fear to tread. (Cheers.) I beg to move that the House resolve itself into committee on this Bill this day six months.

Lord ELCHO: I did not come down to the House with the intention of seconding this movement, but I really feel so strongly on the subject that I should like to second it. I was not present at the division the other day because I had some private matters to attend to on that occasion. (Laughter.) It never entered into my head that one vote would be of any consequence on the division, for I could never have conceived it possible that this Bill would have been agreed to. I hope I am the last person in the world who would defraud any woman, be she widow or maid or be she married, of her just rights; but I don't consider that a vote for a member of Parliament and eventually sitting in this House is one of her just rights. Indeed I believe that we could not do a worse service to the women of the country than to give them votes and to bring them into the turmoil and excitement of politics. This is not a question of a vote only. What these ladies want, as we may see from certain publications, is that they may be placed in all respects in the same position as men, and that they shall even attend our anatomical schools. I confess I very much regret it, because I think that a few strong-minded ladies desire these things has the effect of lowering the position of women throughout the country; and if they were conceded the result would be to take them down from the high pedestal on which we have hitherto placed them. It appears to me that, if we yielded these demands, it would be much the same as if the knight of La Mancha, the impersonation though in caricature of chivalrous regard for women, had desired to reduce Dulcinea to the level of an ordinary mortal like Sancho Panza. It would lower the high estimate in which we place women; and, I believe that, if these rights were conceded at the demand of a few strong-minded women, the whole sex might lose the privileges which by common accord are granted to them in every civilised country in the world.

Sir ROBERT ANSTRUTHER: Sir,—When the opposition to this Bill is led by so distinguished a member of this House as the right hon. member for Kilmarnock, it might be expected that we should at least have heard some new arguments in opposition to the Bill. Instead of that, with the exception of a few arguments which are certainly new, but which I cannot, in honesty, say are entitled to the least weight, we have heard only the old stock arguments which were stated with great effect and power by the hon. member for Cambridge last Wednesday. I look upon this as a very important question, and I take a wholly different view of it from my right hon. friend. I demur to his laying down the law as to what the women of England ought or ought not to do. I contend that the women of England are quite as capable of making up their minds as to what they ought or ought not to do as my right hon. friend. (Cheers.) He argues, moreover, as if the passing of this Bill would compel all women to go to the poll whether they wished or not; and he carefully avoided touching the justice of the question because he had not a shadow of an argument to bring forward. The hon. gentleman, the member for Manchester, said that so long as you place the qualification for a vote upon property you had no right to give it to one class and refuse it to another. Will my right hon. friend be kind enough to meet that argument. Nobody can say for a moment that intellectually women are not as capable as men of forming opinions upon matters which affect the social welfare of this country. ("No.") Indeed I am not at all sure that the opinions come to by women upon these matters are not often a great deal more correct than our own. It is said that they would be too much actuated by their feelings; but there are many matters connected with our pauper and criminal population on which we should perhaps find it much better if we were more actuated by those feelings which are supposed to influence women than by those harder and more logical ideas which are supposed to influence us. The right hon. gentleman depicted with great horror the proceedings that might take place at elections. I do not know what he does when he canvasses. (Laughter.) It is very possible that the ladies would not wish to be canvassed by my right hon. friend; but having had the pleasure of his acquaintance for a considerable number of years, I am very much surprised that he should have made that statement against himself. My impression is that a visit from my right hon. friend to any lady at Kilmarnock would be received with great satisfaction—(laughter)—and that he would so comport himself as not to make it all unpleasant for that lady to receive the visit. With regard to his argument about public meetings, I have never been in Kilmarnock. I don't know what the people of Kilmarnock usually do, but I know as regards my own country that public meetings are not unfrequently attended by ladies—(hear,

hear);—and although there may be occasionally a disagreeable question asked, I have seen nothing at these meetings which would render it at all improper for any lady to attend; nor do I know why she should not be present, if she wished it, to hear the views of the candidates expressed. But there is no necessity either for personal canvass or for attendance at the meetings. Every word that that candidate utters is—unfortunately for himself—printed in the newspapers of the following morning; and there are hundreds of men who never go to public meetings who know just as much of the opinions of the candidate, and are just as capable of forming a rational judgment as to his fitness or non-fitness as those whom he personally canvasses or those who attend public meetings. In addition to that, the Bill which was proposed from the Treasury bench the other night by the Postmaster-General materially alters the state of matters, and I hope that after that Bill becomes law elections will be conducted in a much more orderly and quiet manner than they have hitherto been. I hope there will be nothing to prevent timid women or timid men—and I am not sure that women as a general rule are more timid than men—from exercising the right to vote without the least interference. I am unwilling at a quarter-past one o'clock to offer further arguments, but seeing that so distinguished a member of the House led the opposition, I did not think it was fair that his arguments should be allowed to pass without reply, even although they are in my humble judgment of no weight whatever. He argued that women now wished for so many things, and that they ought to be satisfied with the state in which my right hon. friend has chosen in his wisdom to leave them. But they are not satisfied. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) My right hon. friend thinks they ought to be satisfied, but they are not. They reasonably wish to exercise this power. I presented a petition the other day from several ladies in Fifeshire—I wish they were my constituents, because I believe it would make my seat safer—praying that their electoral disabilities may be removed. There are many ladies who come forward to say that they wish to possess this right for the good of the country. I believe that those ladies who wish for admission to that electoral roll are fully as sensible of the views which that noble lord has expressed as he can be, and that it is for the good of the country that they wish to exercise this privilege. I believe that so long as they don't exercise the power for the removal of abuses connected with our social system it will not be accomplished in the way that it ought to be. It is not fair to say that they merely wish an entrance to the House, and to get a few of the good things which men enjoy. They are as capable of forming judgments on these points as ourselves. I entirely differ from my right hon. friend in his views as to their wishing to enter the medical profession. In my judgment it is one for which they are peculiarly qualified, and that it would be a great advantage to society if there were more female practitioners than there are. (Cheers.) As to their serving upon juries my right hon. friend has probably seen a report of a judge of Wycombe, in America, who said that though he had been opposed to women serving upon juries, yet he acknowledged that they had performed their duties with great partiality and fairness, and had proved their fitness to serve upon juries. There was an argument which my right hon. friend only touched, but which I have no doubt influenced him very seriously. It is the effect that this enfranchisement of women would have upon the constituencies of the country. My right hon. friend naturally fears that the influence of women voters would be very materially to strengthen the party opposite, and I have no doubt that my right hon. friend opposite would concur in that view. That is a bad compliment to pay the ladies of England. I don't believe the ladies of England would support gentlemen who sit on the other side any more than the men of England. They might at first do so from not having been accustomed to exercise their minds upon these matters so much as men are, that they would soon find out that the politics of my right hon. friend and honourable gentlemen opposite don't conduce to the general welfare of the country. I have no doubt we would find out that the suffrage of women would be given to the side of the House which brings forward those measures which seem to be best for the welfare of the country. (Cheers.)

Lord GARLIES: I would not have trespassed upon the indulgence of the House except for a special reason; but I hope the House will indulge me for a few minutes when I state the difficult circumstances in which I am placed. Without wishing to say anything disrespectful to that sex for which we are now asked to legislate, I have to state

that a large portion of the constituents whom I have the honour to represent have gone mad as regards the suffrage. A great part of my constituents have, I really believe, gone mad on this subject—(a laugh)—and it is because I do not join in that *favor* that I feel bound to say a few words before the debate closes. I happen to represent a constituency of some sixteen parishes, about half of which have done me the honour to sign, and send up to me for presentation, petitions in favour of the Bill. (Hear, hear.) Well, I cannot conscientiously record my vote in its favour; but seeing the position in which I am placed by the action of a large part of my constituents, I am sure the House will not grudge me its attention for a few minutes. I am ready to admit that two arguments have been employed in favour of the Bill. It has been said that it favours the direct representation of property. That, in itself, is no doubt a Conservative measure, which naturally recommends itself to my principles. Secondly, it has been said by my right hon. friend opposite—though he was rather sneered at by the hon. member for Fifeshire for having said it—that the great preponderance of women in this country have the good sense to hold Conservative opinions. (Hear, hear.) To these arguments I might perhaps parenthetically add a third one—though perhaps the House might think that it involves a point of self-interest—viz., that which my right hon. friend (Mr. Bouverie) implied when he said that the female sex are supposed—perhaps it is only a slander—to take an unusual amount of interest in men who happen to be ranked in the class of bachelors. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) But, on the other hand, it seems to me that there is one argument against the Bill which alone is sufficient to prevent its being carried any further. I am not going to discuss, at this hour of the morning, whether a vote is a right or a duty or a privilege. It has been determined, by recent legislation, that it is a privilege, and I am prepared to maintain, with my right hon. friend, that it is a privilege which we ought not to give to the female sex. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, sir, it is because I believe that the majority of women, for whose special benefit this bill is supposed to be brought forward, would recoil from having to exercise the privilege it proposes to confer on them—a privilege which they consider to be an exclusively masculine one—that I shall support the amendment of my right hon. friend. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. EASTWICK: The right hon. gentleman who moves this amendment has stated very truly that he believes this Bill to be one of great importance. I think so too; and I ask the House whether it be right that it should be discussed at this hour of the night. (It was then half-past one o'clock.) I beg to move the adjournment of the debate. (Loud cries of "No, no.")

Mr. NEWDEGATE: I believe, sir, that the House is perfectly prepared to deal with this question at once—(cheers)—especially after the able speech of the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Bouverie). The real truth is, that the second reading of this Bill was taken at a time when we did not—though, perhaps, we ought to have been better prepared—expect it to come on. (Hear, hear.) Now, I think that when the hon. member for Fifeshire (Sir R. Anstruther) declared that the right hon. gentleman had used no argument in support of his amendment, he must have meant that the arguments used did not reach his understanding—(a laugh)—because I do not think I ever heard a more lucid exposition of sound doctrine against the Bill. (Hear, hear.) But there are still one or two points which I wish to touch upon. It has been argued that because women are allowed to vote at municipal elections, therefore they ought to be permitted to vote also at the election of members of this House. I would say, sir, on the contrary, that I hope the distinction between the functions of this House and the functions of municipal bodies will always be preserved. (Hear, hear.) I have observed lately on several occasions a disposition to mistake this House—which is a constant element, and the most powerful of all, in the constitution—for a great municipality. (Hear, hear.) Sir, you are not a mayor. (Loud laughter.) I hold with the opinion of the greatest female sovereign who ever sat on the English throne, that there is a wide distinction between women voting for municipal and their voting for parliamentary elections; that they have a right to vote for all matters connected with the poor law, that being a system which is locally administered, and which is in itself an extension of the principle of the family. But never have Englishmen determined to allow women to take part in the contests and rough passages of parliamentary elections, or expected them to be qualified by education for the consideration of those great questions of politics

which have to be discussed and decided by this House. (Hear, hear.) Such was the opinion of the most gifted woman who had ever ruled England; and I hold the view to be perfectly sound still. The hon. member for Manchester quoted, the other day, a passage from a speech of the right hon. gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire. But the hon. gentleman laid no stress on the qualification accompanying that passage. The right hon. gentleman, the member for Buckinghamshire, said that if there is to be universal suffrage, then women should vote, but we have not yet arrived at universal suffrage. (Hear, hear.) For my own part, I think that the recent extension of the suffrage has carried it quite far enough; and that I believe to be the opinion of the vast majority of the members of this House. (Hear, hear.) In regard to this measure, I have heard that wherever it is advocated it has been by those who entertain the most ultra-democratic opinions. (Hear, hear.) Even in the United States, it is considered an ultra-democratic measure. That is my answer to the hon. member for Fifeshire, who spoke of it as a Conservative measure. (Hear, hear.) This proposal is one of those exaggerations—one of those concessions to feeling which violate reason and precedent—which I believe to be among the greatest dangers of our time; and, therefore, I am determined to oppose it. It may perhaps be that I am remarkable for my obstinacy among all the members of this House—(cheers, and a laugh)—in my determination that my fellow-countrymen shall suffer no wrong, and no restraint, and shall be debarred from no privilege, or element of freedom. I am less likely, therefore, than any other member to refuse to the women of England any privilege or any trust—for such I consider the franchise—which I believe they could exercise to the advantage of the country or with benefit to themselves. But, entertaining as I do the strongest feelings of respect for my fellow-countrywomen, I refuse to unsex them, or lend myself to doctrines and proposals which was considered to be wild and exaggerated even in the United States. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. GLADSTONE: I hope I may assume that the hon. gentleman who has moved the adjournment of the debate does not intend to press the motion. (Mr. Eastwick intimated his assent.) Well, then, I may address myself for a few minutes to the consideration of this question: and I rise chiefly for the purpose of answering the appeal made to the government by my right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock, who, in no unmeasured language, certainly, but still speaking quite within his right, complained that no part had been taken by the government, as a government, in the discussion on the second reading of this important Bill. Now, I must say the importance of a measure is not the only criterion of the question whether it is the duty of the government, as such, upon all occasions to take part in the debate. (Hear, hear.) The government, whenever it exercises its initiative—whenever it takes part in a debate in its official capacity—is supposed or understood, if not to invade, at least more or less to solicit the private liberties of independent members of the House; and that is a consideration which often makes it desirable to leave even questions of considerable importance outside the direct action of the government, if the cases be of the class where that direct action has a tendency to draw them within the sphere of political party—a result not always to be desired. (Hear, hear.) I think I may be allowed to say that that was, in a marked degree, the view taken by the late government in 1867, at the time when a motion was brought forward by Mr. John Stuart Mill, whose absence from this House we all very much deplore. (Loud cheers, and a few cries of "No, no.") I must beg pardon for my rashness, in venturing to speak in behalf of the few dissentient members who have just signified their disagreement; but I can only say that I did believe that that was the unanimous sentiment of the House—(loud cheers)—and I am very sorry if the time has come when either political or other prejudices can so blind any of us as that we cannot recognise the merits of one who was so great an ornament of this House, even though his opinions should differ from our own. (Loud cheers.) On this occasion, the division to which I refer, the right hon. gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire, who was then the leader of this House, left the House and gave no vote on the subject, although he had been in his seat at the time when the discussion was brought on—(hear, hear);—and I think I may add, that the state of the front bench opposite, at the present moment—so far as the members of the late cabinet are concerned—bears emphatic testimony that they are very much disposed to agree with the doctrine I am now laying down. (Hear, hear.) Now a very important element in the

consideration of the case is this—whether there is a positive necessity for the interference of the government or not; and whether the government is convinced that the matter is one upon which the House is perfectly competent to act for itself. That, undoubtedly, is a consideration that may very naturally influence their conduct. I think I may say, for most of my colleagues as well as for myself, that we felt something more than surprise—that we felt some disappointment—at the result arrived at on Wednesday last. (Cheers.) We do not attempt to limit the freedom of any one on such a subject, either within the official body or elsewhere; but undoubtedly it is an opinion prevailing among us,—and one which I for one strongly entertain, in common with all those now sitting near me, that it would be a very great mistake to carry this Bill into law. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend the member for Fifeshire has made a most chivalrous and gallant defence of the opinions he entertains; but I cannot say that his arguments have prevailed with me. (Hear, hear.) He said, as regarded the interference of women in the turbulent proceedings at elections, that such proceedings are to be done away with by the Bill of my right hon. friend the Postmaster General. Well, in answer to that argument, I may say that I think we had better wait until that Bill becomes law, and until those happy results have been achieved, before we venture to assume, as a fact, such an entire transformation in the character of elections in this country. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend also said, that the property held by women requires to be represented. In the first place I must observe, that if that be the principle on which the Bill is founded, it is my opinion it does not satisfy that principle, because it excludes all married women from the benefit—or evil, as the case may be,—of the Bill. But if women are equally capable with men to exercise the franchise—if it is a function equally suitable for them—then why not recognise in married women that which you recognise in joint proprietorship, in joint trade, in joint tenancy, and allow both husbands and wives to vote in respect of property which is sufficiently valuable to give them the necessary qualification? (Hear, hear.) But again, I must say, if it be true that the property of women ought to be represented, the ingenuity of the legislatures of other countries has discovered a mode of obtaining that end, which is not open to the objections applicable to the present measure. In Italy, widows—and single women, I believe—possessed of the property qualification, are authorised to exercise the franchise, but only through the medium of a relative, whom they designate for the purpose. From all personal intermixture with the proceedings of elections they are wholly cut off. But these, after all, are only particular points of the question. The real matter in issue is the broad one—is there a necessity, and is there even the desire or the demand for this measure? It seems to be proposed to us in connection with some theories of extensive change; and I must say that I recognise neither demand nor desire for such an unsettling—I will not say uprooting—of old landmarks of society—(hear)—landmarks planted far deeper than any of these political distinctions which separate hon. gentlemen on one side of this table from hon. gentlemen on the other side. (Hear, hear.) I am aware of no warrant for such change and for the present I think that the practical matters which the House has in hand are amply sufficient for our energies and our best attention at two o'clock in the morning. I will not, then, attempt to enter into any general argument about the measure; but, having listened to the debate with interest, I am perfectly prepared to give in my adhesion not only to the proposal, but also very generally to the declarations and reasoning of my right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock, and placing my conscience and understanding, for the present purpose, in his hands, I shall contentedly and cheerfully follow him into the lobby. (Cheers.)

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT: Mr. Speaker,—I hope I may be allowed to say a few words before the division is taken. My right hon. friend, the member for Kilmarnock, seems to think that no one in his district at all events cares about this question, and that the women certainly do not want to have the franchise. I do not know how it happens—I know nobody in Kilmarnock myself—but since I came into this House to-night I have received no less than four telegrams from Kilmarnock, telling me that petitions are being forwarded, and that meetings are being held in favour of this Bill. (Cheers and laughter.) Now I think that I have a right to remind the House that we are accustomed to deal with petitions as showing the general feeling of the country upon any question. Since we met this session,

weighted for the battle of life by the ignorance of their mothers. It is for the purpose of giving more solidity to the character of women that I am anxious to see them invested with the responsibility the possible possession of a vote would entail; and I now thank you for having listened to me so long, and ask your attention to the words of my friend, Mr. Moncure Conway, whose kindness in speaking for us on this occasion I feel very much." (Loud and continued cheering.)

The Rev. MONCURE CONWAY then addressed the meeting on the same subject.

Mr. C. H. JAMES, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Conway, enumerated several of the laws of England as affecting women, which he characterised as barbarous. Mr. James was in favour of giving votes to single women and widows holding property, but opposed to the extension of the privilege to married women.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. W. T. CRAWSHAY. Col. WOOD, in complimentary terms, proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Crawshaw for taking the chair, and the admirable manner she had conducted the meeting, which was seconded by a stranger in the body of the hall, and carried by acclamation.

Mrs. CRAWSHAY, in returning thanks, expressed hope that although the subject was perhaps unpalatable to many of them, they would think of what they had heard, and that when she went round for help she would find many ready to second her in endeavouring to secure the suffrage for women.

The meeting then separated.—*Merthyr Telegraph*, June 11.

STROUD.

We are glad to record the formation of a branch of the Women's Suffrage Society at Stroud. The first meeting was held June 16, 1870, at Mrs. Bishop's, Russell-street, Viscount Amberley in the chair. The following were the resolutions carried:—1. That this society shall have for its object the extension of the suffrage to women possessing the same qualification as male voters. 2. That this society shall confine its attention to that object entirely. 3. That the executive committee meet the first Thursday in each month, at six o'clock p.m., at Mrs. Webb's, Lansdown—three to form a quorum. 4. That the members of this society pay 1s. each, and the members of the committee 2s. each annually. 5. That the following persons constitute the executive committee:—

Lady AMBERLEY.	Mr. TRUNDLEY.
Mr. BRAGG.	Mrs. WEBB.
Mrs. BISHOP.	

Secretary: Mrs. P. C. EVANS, Brimscombe Mills, Stroud.
With power to add to their number.

General Committee.

Lord AMBERLEY.	Mr. SIBREE.
Lady AMBERLEY.	Miss SLATTERIE.
Mr. J. B. BAILEY.	Mr. C. STAUNTON.
Mr. P. C. EVANS.	Mr. H. W. WILBERFORCE.
Rev. E. JACOBS.	Miss YATES.
Mr. RUEGG.	

DISABILITIES OF WOMEN.—It is not to be wondered at that the advocates of women's "rights" express themselves indignantly at the way in which women are treated by the law. The way ladies are spoken of by the law ought to be taken up as a grievance. The new Naturalisation Act furnishes a case in point. In the definition of terms, for example, we are informed that "disability" shall mean "the status of being an infant, lunatic, idiot, or married woman." Such is the company which the English married woman is legally presumed to keep.—*Western Daily Press*.

OWENS COLLEGE.—The clause in the bill for the extension and re-organisation of Owens College, authorising the governors to provide for the education of "young persons of either sex," which was struck out in a committee on private bills in the House of Lords, was re-inserted in the House of Commons on the motion of Mr. Jacob Bright, and met with no opposition in either house of Parliament. The Bill, thus amended, awaits only the Royal Assent to become law. At the distribution of prizes, which took place on Friday, June 24, Professor Jack, after distributing the prizes of the natural philosophy class, said that under the new constitution of the college "he believed there was a prospect, amounting almost to a certainty, that it would solve or settle a great question in which Manchester, as usual, had taken the foremost place, viz., the question of the higher education of women." (Hear, hear, and applause.)

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

THIS Bill was read a second time in the House of Lords, on the motion of Lord Cairns, on Tuesday, June 21. There was considerable opposition to the general establishment of the principle of the Bill. But as the crying evils of the existing law are too glaring to be denied, the opponents did not ask the House to reject the Bill altogether, but consented to its being referred to a Select Committee. We fear that this invitation is somewhat like that addressed by the spider to the fly, and that if the Bill comes down again alive out of the Lords' "little parlour," it will have the heart taken out of it. There was a very general indisposition on the part of noble lords to allow to a woman the full rights of a man in respect of property. Even Lord Cairns seemed to limit the principle of the Bill to money earned by the personal industry of a wife, and not to contemplate its application to property acquired in any other way. Instead of the simple justice of vesting property in the hands of its rightful owner, it was proposed to extend the invidious and odious system of "protection" orders. Another favourite device is that of compulsory marriage settlements. These proposals formed the basis of Mr. Raikes' Bill, which was rejected by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons. We trust, that should these objectionable principles be inserted in the Bill by the House of Lords, that the Commons will refuse to agree to them. It would be a less evil to postpone legislation for another year than to accept a Bill which attempts to deal with one injustice by originating another. The friends of the Bill must use every effort to impress on the Legislature and the public generally that no measure can be accepted as a satisfactory solution of the question but that of total and absolute repeal of the principle of the common law which vests the property of a wife in her husband. Petitions to this effect should be prepared and sent immediately, and no effort be spared to present to the House of Lords such facts and arguments as may open their eyes to the necessity of this measure. Three months ago we exhorted the friends of the Property Bill as the best way of helping that question, to concentrate their immediate efforts on the Franchise Bill. We have now to address to the friends of the Suffrage Bill a similar appeal on behalf of the Property Bill. We beg all who have sent petitions to the House of Commons for Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill, to turn their attention to petitioning the House of Lords for the Married Women's Property Bill. The form is given below, and further information will be afforded on application to the hon. secretary, Miss Wolstenholme, Congleton, Cheshire. We trust that our friends will not be slow to respond to this appeal. Let

no one imagine that it is safe to relax our exertions till the bill is fairly through both Houses of Parliament.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY.

List of Subscriptions received during June, 1870.

Miss J. Boucherett	£5 0 0
Miss Ramsay	1 0 0
Mrs. Ramsay	0 10 0
Mr. H. Nicol	0 1 0
Mr. A. Briggs	1 1 0
Mrs. Carroll	5 0 0
Mrs. Nichol	2 0 0
Mrs. Stoehr	1 0 0
Miss Bostock	4 0 0
Miss Thomas	0 5 0
Lady Goldsmid	5 0 0
Mrs. Wakefield	1 0 0
Mr. Charles Buxton, M.P.	2 2 0
Mr. W. M. Rossetti	1 10 0
	£31 9 0

LYDIA E. BECKER, Treasurer.

To the Right Honourable the LORDS SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL, in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the undersigned,

SHEWETH,—That the common law of England which gives the personal property and earnings of a wife to her husband is unjust in principle and injurious in practice.

That in the judgment of your Petitioners 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.

Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Lordships will pass the Bill entitled "A Bill to amend the Law with respect to the Property of Married Women."

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL—SUMMARY OF PETITIONS.

We desire to rectify a mistake as to the petitions respecting the Property of Married Women in the last issue of the "Journal." Misled by an error in the Parliamentary Report, we stated that no petitions had been presented to the House of Commons in favour of Mr. Raikes' Bill. We have since received the Twenty-fourth Report on Public Petitions, wherein the error is amended, and we take the earliest opportunity of amending our own statement in accordance with it. There have been 11 Petitions, with 1,229 signatures, presented against Mr. Gurney's, and in favour of Mr. Raikes' Bill. Below is the summary of Petitions on the subject up to June 17. All the names printed in the Report as signing Petitions against the Married Women's Property Bill are those of men.

	No. of Petitions signed Officially	Total No. of or under Seal.	No. of Petitions.	No. of Signatures.
Married Women's Property Bill (No. 1)—In favour	3	215	43	337
Married Women's Property Bill (No. 2, Mr. Raikes')—Against; and Married Women's Property Bill (No. 1)—In favour	—	4	1	200
Married Women's Property Bill (No. 2)—Against	—	34	3	379
Total	3	253	47	916
Married Women's Property Bill—Against; and Married Women's Property Bill (No. 2)—In favour	1	11	1	229

A LADY'S ANSWER TO MR. BOUVERIE.

We have much pleasure in reprinting the following letter from the columns of a contemporary. We believe that her country-women generally would far rather "place their conscience and their understanding for the present purpose" in the hands of the writer than in those of the honourable member for Kilmarnock. She has at least the advantage of being one of the class in whose behalf she speaks:—

GENTLEMEN,—Is there any case on record of a body of men to whom the franchise has been extended petitioning for its withdrawal? Have such men ever found their interests less guarded by the State, their wishes less considered, their education and bodily welfare less provided for, because they were fairly represented? On what grounds does that Government which has paraded the advantages of the suffrage for working men, dare to assert, through Mr. Bouverie, that the franchise would be a curse to working women? Has Mr. Gladstone repented of his Reform Bill? or have working women some special privileges which working men had not, that would be lost to them by possession of the suffrage? Has the widow of a working man, or the single woman maintaining herself, any exemption from taxation, any facilities for obtaining employment, any special grants for education in consequence of being unrepresented? Does Mr. Gladstone mean to say that he will not admit the property qualification of widows and single women, because the property qualification of some married women would still be unrecognised? Does he believe that a greater injustice nullifies a less? Does he choose to say that a man who destroys a gross anomaly and reproduces a milder form of the same thing creates an anomaly? Has he forgotten he would once have deemed it "an abuse of terms?" Has a Government laid aside its memory or its honour when it avows that women have made no demand for the suffrage, though in the first five weeks after notice had been given of this rejected bill 44,269 signatures had been sent up on petitions to the House praying for its acceptance?

I shall thank you, gentlemen, if you permit me to ask these questions in your columns, and to express the utter indignation with which I regard such mean and miserable statements.

May 14, 1870.

Z.

IGNORANCE IN SALFORD.—Under this heading the following paragraph appears in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* of June 23: "Yesterday, at the Salford Borough Police Court, before Sir J. I. Mantell and Mr. J. F. Mart, a middle-aged man, named Platt, was charged with making an assault upon two girls, in Brown-street, Salford. The girls were 13 and 14 years of age respectively; but they displayed an amount of ignorance that was truly deplorable. They said, in reply to questions, that they had never been to school; they did not know what lying was, nor what would happen to them if they did not speak the truth; they could neither read nor write; they had not heard of heaven or hell; and one of them even said it was wrong to speak the truth, and that she did not know what right or wrong meant. Sir John Mantell said he was frequently quite shocked at the excessive and lamentable ignorance of children in Salford, of the age of the girls now before him, and it was exceedingly desirable that something should be done to alter that state of things. He felt he could not take those girls as witnesses, and that it would be impossible, or at any rate unsafe, to commit the prisoner upon their statements. He would consequently be discharged." Now it seems to us that the Salford magistrates displayed extraordinary ignorance of the nature of children, in dealing with this case. Two young girls were brought before them who complained that they had been assaulted by a ruffian. Instead of entering on the case and kindly and quietly trying to make out the story, they bewildered the children with questions about heaven and hell and the nature of lying. They seemed as incapable as M. Jourdain of comprehending that a child might speak the truth as well as talk prose without knowing it. The poor little things were not prepared to enter on a metaphysical discussion, especially as they had "never been to school," and they had the honesty to confess that they "did not know what would happen to them if they did not speak the truth." The magistrates were so shocked at their "ignorance" that the offence alleged to have been committed against them faded into insignificant proportions. The prisoner was at once discharged, with the moral lesson duly impressed on him, that he need only select as his victims girls who are "excessively and lamentably ignorant," to secure immunity from judicial investigation in Salford.

The *Times* points the moral of the defeat of the Women's Disabilities Bill in the following logical manner. Mrs. Gold, a lady of sixty, recently objected to be appointed overseer of her parish in Montgomeryshire. Her application was refused by the Court of Queen's Bench, but the *Times* concludes that because Mrs. Gold did not wish to be an overseer she is of the "old fashioned way of thinking," and of course an eminent instance of feminine good sense as contrasted with the absurd ambition of other women to obtain the parliamentary franchise. That a rich old lady should not covet an office entailing much trouble and no honour is truly an admirable illustration of the folly of those who desire a privilege conferring honour without trouble. Because Mrs. Gold does not want to be a parish overseer it is ridiculous of Mrs. Grote and Mrs. Somerville to ask for votes. Of course the writer of this brilliant demonstration has never deigned to notice that the point of the plea of Mr. Jacob Bright and his friends lies in this very thing, that women are compelled to bear the burdens without sharing the privileges of citizens. We commend to their consideration the adoption of a brief but significant watchword for their future campaigns—NO RIGHTS NO RATES.—*Echo*.

WOMEN AND THE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION.—In the House of Commons, on Thursday, June 16th, Mr. Taylor asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, whether, by the use of the words "he" and "his" in the clauses of the Elementary Education Bill relating to local boards, he intended to exclude women from sitting on such boards. Mr. W. E. Forster, in reply, said that though the masculine pronoun was used it was not the intention of the act to exclude women from the local boards of education. The particular words referred to by the hon. member were used in order to include women as well as men. (Laughter.) The act passed by Lord Brougham, namely, the 13th and 14th Vic., c. 21, stated that in all acts words importing the masculine gender should be deemed to include females unless the contrary were expressly provided. Under such circumstances it was considered advisable to use the masculine gender throughout the bill, otherwise a vast number of alterations should be made in the various clauses. He himself believed that in some cases women would make the most efficient members of local boards. (Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding the confident tone of Mr. Forster's reply, we understand that the Government is in doubt whether the words used will include women. No wonder they are bewildered. It has been ruled that Lord Brougham's Act does not apply to the voting clauses, while it does to the ratepaying clauses of the Reform Act, although the Act itself contains no provision making the distinction. And it seems to be understood that the Municipal Act is only to apply to women, so far as special provision to that effect is made, although Lord Brougham's Act decrees that in ALL Acts words importing the masculine gender shall include females, unless THE CONTRARY is expressly provided.

WOMEN ON JURIES.—At the Portsmouth Quarter Sessions, on Tuesday week, the *Law Times* remarks, some of the female burgesses were summoned upon the jury in pursuance of the provisions of the Municipal Corporation Act, which requires that "persons" upon the burgess roll shall be impanelled to serve on juries at the quarter sessions for the borough. It was, however, decided by the recorder (Mr. Serjeant Cox), that, inasmuch as the Act of 1868, which admits women to the municipal franchise, declares that words importing the masculine gender shall be held to include the feminine gender, was expressly limited to the purposes of voting at municipal elections, female burgesses could not be required to serve on juries.

INCIDENTS OF THE CANVASS.—A lady who collected signatures to the petitions for women's suffrage in Cheshire reports as follows: One poor woman who kept a little shoe shop wished to put her mark to the petition. She said she wished to sign for all women's rights, because she had been so much wronged. Her husband had gone off with a servant girl and deserted her, so she carried on the business, and had been obliged to put herself under the protection of the magistrates. She brought us her Bible and Prayer Book to show us her name written in by the clergyman, who was also a magistrate. This she deemed a guarantee of her protection. One old woman of eighty-four years, living in a little cottage, made her cross, as she said her time was nearly run out, but she would like for others to have the suffrage, as she thought it would do good to women. Another woman told us she would not sign; she had had sufferings enough without signing for more; but when we entered into a full explanation she was delighted, and added her name with much apparent zeal.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JUNE, 1870.

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Mr. C. Bolton.....	0	1	0
Mr. Holland.....	0	5	0
Miss Holland.....	0	5	0
Mr. Alderman Rumney.....	1	1	0
Miss M. J. Briggs.....	1	0	0
Mrs. Scott.....	0	5	0
Mr. J. Williams.....	0	1	0
Mr. H. Nicol.....	1	1	0
Mrs. Murray.....	0	10	0
Mrs. Brittain.....	0	2	0
Mrs. Brine.....	0	2	6
Mrs. Ord.....	1	0	0
The Misses Ashworth.....	5	0	0
Mr. W. F. Cowell Stepney.....	1	1	0
Mrs. Slatter.....	0	2	6
Mr. E. M. Richards.....	1	0	0
Mrs. Meeke.....	0	2	0
Miss Mactaggart.....	0	2	6
Mrs. Hacking.....	0	5	0
Mr. A. Webb.....	0	5	0
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S. ALFRED STEINTHAL.

The Treasurer of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage respectfully asks for aid in carrying on the operations of the society. The rejection of the Bill this session compels the committee to undertake more active operations in the country, and these cannot be successfully carried on without a large increase of the subscription list. There are very many sympathisers in the movement who have not yet contributed to its funds, and their aid never could be more valuable than at present. The small amount at the committee's disposal has been most economically applied, but very essential work will remain undone if funds are not forthcoming; while so great progress has been already attained that the committee are sanguine of success, if they could command the requisite means. For this special effort the old subscribers to the society are respectfully requested to double their contributions for the present year, or at least to increase them, and to strive to enlarge the number of members. Cheques and Post Office Orders should be made payable to the Treasurer, S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, and may be sent either direct to him at 107, Upper Brook-street; or to the Secretary, Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

107, Upper Brook-street, Manchester, July 1st, 1870.

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