

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

VOL. XX.—No. 232. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

APRIL 1, 1889.

PRICE ONE PENNY.
BY POST THREE HALFPENCE.

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An Appeal from the Women of England ... 1d.
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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

THE WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

A MEETING

Of Friends and Supporters of the Women's Franchise Bill, which will be presented this month for second reading in the House of Commons, will be held in the afternoon of

TUESDAY, APRIL 9TH,

In WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL.

The Chair to be taken at 3-30, by

Mrs. FAWCETT.

Miss BECKER.
Mrs. BEDDOE.

Miss DAVENPORT HILL.
Mrs. HENRY SIDGWICK.

Col. COTTON, M.P.
Sir ALBERT ROLLIT, M.P.

And others are expected to be present.

Tea in the ante-room before and after the meeting.

Admission by Cards of Invitation, to be obtained by application to the Secretary of the Central Committee, 10, Great College-street, Westminster.

ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW.—Published on the 15th of each month. Price 6d., or 6s. per annum.

CONTENTS FOR MARCH 15TH, 1889.

1. Are more Women Guardians Needed?
 2. A Woman's "Story of the War."
 3. The French Act to Regulate Women's Work.
- Notices of Books, Pamphlets, &c.
Correspondence.

Record of Events:—Women's Suffrage—Bill to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to Women; other Bills—Meetings: Further Legislation for Women—Election of Parochial Managers—Edinburgh Meetings for Women Poor Law Guardians—Discussion at the Ruthin Board—The Poor Law and Lady Inspectors—Boarding out of Industrial School Children—County Councils—Political Associations: Women's Liberal; Liberal Unionist—Society for the Employment of Women—Ireland—London University Matriculation, St. Andrew's—The Ladies' Dwellings' Company—Matrons at Police Stations—Temperance—Women and Peace—London School of Medicine—Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association—Obituary—Miscellaneous.

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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.—Communications for the Editor and Orders for the Journal to be addressed to the Office, Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton-street, Manchester.

PARLIAMENTARY PETITIONS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (EXTENSION TO WOMEN) BILL.—In Favour.

FIRST REPORT, 21 February—4 March, 1889.

Table listing petitions from Feb. and Mar. with details of the petitioners and the number of signatures.

SECOND REPORT, 5—11 March, 1889.

Table listing petitions from Mar. with details of the petitioners and the number of signatures.

THIRD REPORT, 12—18 March, 1889.

Table listing petitions from Mar. with details of the petitioners and the number of signatures.

The Petitions marked thus (*) are similar to that from York [APP. 1]. The Petitions marked thus (C) are signed officially.

Obituary.

MR. R. PEACOCK, M.P.—We regret to record the death of Mr. R. Peacock, late member for the Gorton Division of Lancashire.

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.—On March 27th, at One Ash, Rochdale, the lamented death of Mr. Bright took place, after a lingering illness, at the age of 77 years.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, MARCH, 1889.

Table listing subscriptions and donations for Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage in March 1889.

ROBERT ADAMSON, TREASURER, Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton-street, Manchester.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

RECONSTRUCTED UNDER THE OLD RULES.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FROM FEB. 26TH TO MARCH 26TH, 1889.

Table listing subscriptions and donations for Central Committee from Feb 26th to March 26th, 1889.

Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT, TREASURER. Office: 10, Great College-street, Westminster.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FROM FEB. 25TH TO MARCH 26TH, 1889.

Table listing subscriptions and donations for Bristol and West of England Society from Feb 25th to March 26th, 1889.

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT, TREASURER. Office, 69, Park-street, Bristol.

CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED MARCH, 1889.

Table listing subscriptions and donations received for Central National Society for Women's Suffrage in March 1889.

Mrs. FRANK MORRISON, TREASURER, Central Committee Office, 29, Parliament-street, London, S.W.

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WITH the present month comes the turning point of the fortunes for this session of the Women's Franchise Bill. It is set down for second reading on Wednesday the 17th instant, the Wednesday before Good Friday.

It is hoped that all friendly members will make a strong point of remaining in town for the occasion, and it is very desirable that their disposition to do so should be strengthened and encouraged by letters from constituents and other friends who are interested in the success of the Bill.

VERY influential meetings have been held during the month in support of Mr. WOODALL'S Bill. At the Westminster Town Hall on March 7th, a meeting, convened expressly in support of the measure, under the auspices of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, was held under the presidency of Col. COTTON, M.P.

part in the meeting were Mrs. FAWCETT, CLARA Lady RAYLEIGH, Miss BECKER, and Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT. Resolutions in support of the Bill were carried heartily and unanimously.

A large and fashionable drawing-room meeting was held by invitation of LOUISA Lady GOLDSMID at her residence in Portman Square, on March 12th, in which Mrs. FAWCETT, Colonel COTTON, M.P., Mr. PENROSE FITZGERALD, M.P., and Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., took part.

On March 15th a drawing-room meeting was held in Westbourne Terrace, by invitation of Lady ROBERTS. General Sir OWEN ROBERTS presided, and the meeting was addressed by Miss EMILY DAVIES, Mrs. FAWCETT, Mr. E. H. CARBUTT (formerly M.P. for Newport), Mr. JOHN COLES, Miss HART, and Miss KENSINGTON.

THE wilder spirits among the supporters of women's suffrage mustered in force at the meeting in Prince's Hall, on March 21st convened by that section of the Society which has been newly organised under the title of Central National Society for Women's Suffrage. The meeting was summoned to promote the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women on the same conditions as it is, or may be given to men, but a resolution framed even in these wide terms did not satisfy the extremists.

Notwithstanding the able and statesmanlike address of the Chairman, Mr. WOODALL, who explained the difficulties that beset him with regard to his Bill and the additional obstacle in the way of passing it that would be caused by the adoption of the rider, they carried the day, and the resolution with the added clause was adopted by the meeting.

THE incident seems to have been foreshadowed or parodied

in *Punch's* cartoon of that week, which represents Mr. Midshipman UNEASY endeavouring to spike his leader's big gun, regardless of the remonstrances of his more cautious comrade, who observes, "Well, I must confess it isn't *my* idea of a Big Gun, but half a loaf is better than no bread." But no, says mischievous RANDOM, "Burst up this, and then they'll be forced to get another." So say the irreconcilables, Burst up this Bill, and let none pass that does not conform to our own ideas.

If this were the spirit that animates the main body of the women's suffrage societies, the question would be far indeed from the domain of practical politics, but, as will be seen from the reports of meetings which we present, this is by no means the case. The *real* Central Committee and the associated societies, the Manchester National, the Bristol and North of England, the Belfast and Dublin societies, stand firm in support of the Bill in the form in which it has passed second reading in the House of Commons, and has been introduced by Mr. WOODALL this session. But the women's suffrage party, like many other parties, has a left wing, and this extreme left section having in December last cut itself off from the main body by the adoption of a new constitution and new rules has now taken a still wider departure from the original society by going in for the abolition, not only of the legal disqualification of sex as regards Parliamentary elections which is the essence of the women's suffrage movement, but also for the abolition of the common law disqualification of marriage which prevents the legal exercise by wives of those franchises in which the disqualification of sex has been removed, an object which has always been held to be outside the scope of the women's suffrage societies as a matter which relates to the marriage law rather than to the electoral law. It is admitted by those responsible for putting this additional plank into the platform of that particular branch of the society which has adopted the title of the Central National Society, that the result of pressing the demand would probably be the postponement for an indefinite period of the passing of any measure for women's suffrage. It remains therefore for those who object to such indefinite postponement of a question which Parliament appears to be now prepared to take in hand, to join the main body of the National Society for Women's Suffrage in a resolute and determined effort to obtain the passing of Mr. WOODALL'S Bill during the present session.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT could say with a light heart that he

would prefer to wait ten years for a Women's Suffrage Bill which should include wives rather than connect himself with a statute that treated married women in the way this measure proposed to treat them. This is very cheap magnanimity. Mr. BRIGHT is a man, in full possession of electoral rights, it is therefore easy for him to wait for any number of years for the enfranchisement of other people. But the 800,000 unmarried women and widows who are now living in taxed but unrepresented homesteads cannot be expected to be content to postpone the consideration of their just rights until Parliament is prepared to give votes to married women who live in homesteads represented by the votes of their husbands. Moreover, it is by no means certain that even if the unmarried women were so Quixotic as to be content to wait ten years for the votes which to all appearance Parliament is willing to give them now, that at the end of that term the House of Commons would be prepared to enfranchise wives. It is still less clear why the immediate extension of the franchise to unmarried women and widows should be supposed to have a tendency to hinder or retard the consideration of the question of giving votes to wives. Should Parliament at any future time be willing to give votes to married women, the fact that unmarried women had votes would not be an obstacle to their action. Since, therefore, even according to the showing of their advocates, married women must in any case wait for an indefinite period before they can themselves have votes, it would seem altogether uncalled for and gratuitous obstruction if they, or those who profess to be acting on behalf of their claim, were to offer opposition to the immediate enfranchisement of their more or less fortunate sisters who have no husbands to represent their interests, and who must wage the battle of life unaided and alone.

A GOOD deal of confusion appears to exist in the minds of some persons as to the position of married women in those franchises which women enjoy under the present law in local elections. We give in another column a report taken from the law-books of the crucial case of the *QUEEN v. HARRALD*, decided in 1872, which set at rest any doubts that might remain as to the possibility of married women being entitled to vote in municipal and other local elections. A question arose as to the validity of an election for the Council of Sunderland. A Mr. HARRALD was elected by a majority of one over his opponent. Among the votes in the majority were those of two married women. These votes were challenged by

the defeated candidate. The Court decided against the votes.

Lord HERSCHELL, in giving judgment, said "The votes of both the married women are void." "They" (*i.e.*, married women) "are by the common law under two disqualifications as regards voting. First that of sex, secondly that arising from the fact that they have no separate status from that of their husbands. The first has been removed, but the second remains in full force."

Lord Chief Justice COCKBURN said he could not believe that the Municipal Franchise Act was intended to alter the rights of married women. The only way in which it could be argued that such a change was accomplished was by suggesting that the Married Women's Property Act, which gave married women certain privileges with regard to property and contracts, had placed them in the same category with unmarried women in regard to the right to vote. But that Act was passed with a different object, and he could not suppose that it was ever intended by a side wind to confer public and political rights of so important a character.

Mr. Justice MELLOR said the Married Women's Property Act was not intended to affect the right to vote. It would, therefore, seem to follow that the qualification of a single woman was extinguished by her marriage.

Mr. Justice HANNEN said he was of the same opinion.

It appears clear from the judgment in this case, which has governed the action of the registration and revision courts ever since it was delivered, that neither common nor statute law allows the right of voting to married women even in those elections in which the disqualification of sex has been removed. Therefore Mr. WOODALL'S Bill for extending women's suffrage to Parliamentary elections imposes no new conditions and no new disabilities on married women. The proviso to which exception has been taken is not legislative, it is simply declaratory of the intention of the Act not to disturb the existing common law status of married women.

It is absolutely certain that if the Bill were supposed to enfranchise wives, that the majority in its favour would melt like summer snow, and that words distinctly explaining its exact scope are imperatively necessary in order to give it the slightest chance of becoming law.

THE comedy yearly enacted by Lord DENMAN in presenting his Women's Suffrage Bill for rejection by the House of Lords is chiefly noteworthy this year for the

occasion it afforded to Lord SALISBURY for re-affirming his personal opinion in favour of the object of the measure. Usually, in moving the rejection of Lord DENMAN'S well-meant but ill-advised Bill, the Marquis of SALISBURY has contented himself with the explanation that he did so without expressing any opinion on the merits of the question, but this year he took occasion to say that in the main he agreed with its object. But it was an important principle that each House of Parliament should be left to look after its own constitution. A measure dealing with the constitution of the other House ought to be introduced there.

It is obvious that this line of argument, while good against the initiation of Bills in the Lords relating to the election of members of the House of Commons, will tell in favour of the acceptance by the Lords of any such measure which may come to them from the Commons, having been passed by that House. The incident may therefore be regarded as a confirmation of the general belief that should Mr. WOODALL'S Bill pass the Commons this Session, there will be neither difficulty nor delay in the House of Lords.

VERY agreeable intelligence comes from New South Wales. Telegraphic despatches from Sydney state that Sir HENRY PARKES, Premier of New South Wales, delivered an address to his constituents on March 11th, in which he set forth the programme of the new ministry. Sir HENRY PARKES, after enumerating the measures with which the Government proposed to deal during the remainder of the session, said that he hoped the Houses would meet again at the end of May for the session proper to the year, when the Government would introduce measures dealing with local self-government. They would also deal with the reform of the electoral system by the establishment of single electorates and the extension of the franchise to women.

The speech was well received throughout, and a vote of confidence in Sir HENRY PARKES was passed unanimously.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Manchester Examiner* very properly calls attention to the different sentences passed on two men recently convicted of crimes which, in each case, caused the death of their victim: "A man at Bacup, who has been convicted between twenty and thirty times of assaults and offences against the law, kicked his wife with the intention of doing her personal injury. In doing this illegal act his clog does more than he intended, and

the woman dies. Sentence, two months' imprisonment. A young man at Manchester drugs a person with the intention of robbing him whilst under the influence of the drug. The young man in doing this illegal act does more than he intended, and the person dies. Sentence, death."

To the writer of the remonstrance the two sentences appear paradoxical. Both men unintentionally, while engaged in unlawful acts, cause death, yet the sentences are so different that he asks if some one learned in the law will explain them.

Possibly some cause for this difference may be found in the existence of a fellow feeling on the part of judge and juries with the victim of the one crime which is necessarily absent in the case of the other, and the remedy we would suggest would be the admission of women as jurors in all cases where offences against women are concerned.

THE petition against the return of Lady SANDHURST to the London County Council was heard last month, in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, before Mr. Justice HUDDLESTON and Mr. Justice STEPHEN. We give in another column a report of the pleadings taken from the *Daily News*. Their Lordships reserved judgment.

A GREAT historic figure has gone from among us, and, in common with his countrymen and countrywomen of all shades of opinion, we bring our tribute of respect and mourning to the tomb of JOHN BRIGHT. To do justice to the feelings which will be universally awakened by the news of his death would need eloquence akin to his own.

We could not claim Mr. BRIGHT as a supporter of women's suffrage, but it should not be forgotten that he was one of the members who voted with Mr. MILL in 1867, and that his support on that critical occasion gave a decided impetus to the cause. In a letter received by the editor of this *Journal* from Mr. MILL immediately after the division, Mr. MILL said, "But the greatest triumph of all was to get Mr. BRIGHT'S vote." This vote was given, as Mr. BRIGHT afterwards explained, under the influence of the picture drawn by Mr. MILL of the cruel sufferings of women under violent and hideous assaults for which the law provides no adequate penalty.

Subsequently Mr. BRIGHT retrograded as regards women's suffrage; but it always seemed to us as if he were in this actuated by tender though mistaken chivalrous feeling. He was remarkable for a most reverential and devoted loyalty to the QUEEN. Nearly all his

great speeches contain some special reference to Her Majesty, who, among the millions of her subjects, had none more devoted to her person and government, or more earnestly desirous of the welfare of her people, than the great Tribune who has just passed away.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *March 18th.*
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL.

Lord DENMAN moved the second reading of this Bill, contending that widows and spinsters who paid rates and taxes were entitled in fairness to the Parliamentary franchise.

The Marquis of SALISBURY said he was sorry to appear in any way obstructive, especially on a question as to the main points of which he was in general agreement with the noble lord. It was, however, an important principle that each House of Parliament should be left to look after its own constitution. Nothing would encourage the Commons to interfere more with the constitution of the House of Lords than attempts on the part of their lordships to deal with the constitution of the other House. A measure of that kind ought to be introduced there, and he felt compelled to move that it be read a second time that day six months.

Earl GRANVILLE was tempted by the remarks of the noble marquis to say that a Women's Suffrage Bill introduced in the other House would come with greater weight if introduced by the Government. (Hear, hear.)

The Marquis of SALISBURY said when he expressed concurrence with the object of the Bill he only gave his personal opinion. The amendment was agreed to.

ELECTION INTELLIGENCE.

BARNSELEY.

The resignation of Mr. Courtney Kennet caused a vacancy in the representation of Barnsley. The candidates were Mr. Wentworth and Earl Compton. The latter was returned. Since the election, Earl Compton has written a letter in which he says he has the greatest pleasure in giving his name as one favourable to women's suffrage.

KENNINGTON.

A vacancy occurred in Kennington through the retirement of Mr. Gent Davies. Mr. Beresford Hope and Mr. Mark Beaufoy were the candidates. The election was remarkable for the very active part taken in it by ladies in support of both candidates. Mr. Mark Beaufoy was returned by a large majority. He is a supporter of women's suffrage.

GORTON (LANCASHIRE).

The death of Mr. Peacock caused a vacancy here. The election took place on March 23rd, the candidates being Mr. William Mather and Mr. Ernest Hatch. Mr. Mather was returned. The following letters were received from the candidates during the election:—

From Mr. Ernest Hatch:—

"March 13th, 1889.

"My dear Miss Becker,—I have had your question in connection with "women's suffrage" laid before me, and in answer I beg to say I attach the highest possible importance to its being introduced in Parliament, and if I am there I will give it my greatest support.—I remain, yours sincerely,

"ERNEST HATCH."

From Mr. W. Mather:—

"Wood Hill, Prestwich, March 18th, 1889.

"Dear Miss Becker,—You know my views on the principle of women's suffrage. If elected I shall take the same interests in the question that I have hitherto shown. I feel certain that the women voters will not support the Liberal party for a time, but that does not prevent me from giving them the opportunity of being educated to their duties or enjoying their right.—Very truly yours,

"W. MATHER."

THE WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

MEETING AT WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL.

On Thursday evening, the 7th ultimo, a large and influential public meeting was held at Westminster Town Hall, under the auspices of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, in support of the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill. Colonel COTTON, M.P., presided, and among those present were the Earl of Camperdown, Baron Dimsdale, M.P., Sir R. N. Fowler, Bart., M.P., Mr. Walter M'Laren, M.P., Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P., Mr. Byron Reed, M.P., Mr. A. Lafone, M.P., Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., Mr. J. W. Maclure, M.P., Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., Mr. F. B. Grotrian, M.P., Sir F. W. Fitzwygram, M.P., Mr. H. S. Wright, M.P., Viscountess Harberton, Clara, Lady Rayleigh, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Becker, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Hallett, Miss Emily Davies, Miss Reeves, Miss M. H. Hart, Miss Rav, Miss Kensington, Miss Hampden, Mrs. Stephen Spring-Rice, Miss Fitzgerald (Valencia), Mrs. Isaac Pitman (Bath), Mrs. Braikenridge (Bath), Miss Blackburn, secretary, &c. The following letters had been received from friends unable to attend the meeting:—

The Duke of Rutland: "Privy Council Office, Feb. 28th, 1889. Dear Mrs. Fawcett,—You rightly presume that I shall not be able to attend the meeting in support of the Women's Suffrage Bill on March 7th. You are equally right in assuming that my views in respect to that measure have undergone no change whatever, and that I hope to be able this session to support by my vote a measure which I believe to be founded on justice and conducive to the best interests of the community.—Believe me to be, dear Mrs. Fawcett, yours faithfully, RUTLAND."

The Right Hon. C. P. Villiers wrote: "30, Sloane-street, 28th Feb., 1889. Dear Mrs. Fawcett,—I wish it was in my power to attend the meeting which you apprise me will be held on Thursday next in support of the Women's Suffrage Bill, which now stands for the second reading on the 17th of April, but I have been of late such a sufferer from the effects of this very inclement weather, that I am obliged (for a while) to avoid all meetings of this kind which take me away from home. You will not, however, I trust, suppose that my interest is at all diminished in the purpose which your meeting has in view, which I believe to be to enable women of independent means and position equally with men to place themselves on the Parliamentary register of electors. I was, I believe, a very early supporter of this justly equitable extension of the franchise, and I have heard of no reason for changing my opinion, and have viewed with much satisfaction the progress the cause has lately made in public favour. With every wish for the success of the movement you are assisting, I remain, yours very sincerely, C. P. VILLIERS."

Mr. Courtney wrote: "Dear Miss Becker,—I shall be in the chair of the House to-night, and so cannot appear at the meeting. I hope it will be very successful. — Yours, L. COURTNEY."

Letters expressing regret at being unable to attend the meeting and sympathy with its object were also received from the Countess of Portsmouth, Sir John Gorst, M.P., Lord Wolmer, M.P., Sir J. H. Paleston, M.P., Dr. Cameron, M.P., Sir R. Lechmere, M.P., Mr. Lewis Fry, M.P., Mr. J. Addison, M.P., Mr. Agg Gardner, M.P., Sir W. H. Houldsworth, Bart., M.P., Colonel Hughes, M.P., Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, Mrs. S. A. Barnett, Miss A. B. Edwards, Lord Dunsany, M.P., Lady Frances Balfour, and others.

The CHAIRMAN expressed his very great sense of the honour which the society had done him in asking him to preside on that occasion. He felt the honour all the more because he was sure there were not only in that room, but outside it, many warm supporters of the women's suffrage movement who would have been more able and better fitted to take the chair than he was. To use a hackneyed expression, he, in common with many others, only "found salvation" in this matter four years ago, after the passing of the last Reform Bill. With others he then thought that the concession of the Parliamentary franchise to women was only the logical outcome of that very large extension of the franchise to men in the country districts. He would remind the meeting of the real and definite object for which they were gathered together. They were assembled to support, and to ask the Government to give them an opportunity of considering in the House of Commons, a Bill which had been before that House in several previous sessions—a measure

introduced by Mr. Woodall and backed with the names of members on both sides of the House. Having read the second clause of the Bill descriptive of its object, he said the second reading was fixed for Wednesday, the 17th of April, and he sincerely hoped that it might not be requisite to have the Bill read a second time in any future session. Although they were indulging hopes of being on the eve of success, he was quite certain that that was not the time to relax their efforts. On the contrary, having regard to the fact that the Bill would so soon be before the House, it behoved them now to work with the greatest unanimity and harmony in order to secure its success. (Applause.) Dangers there most certainly were from without, for already notices of objection and opposition to the second reading had been placed upon the Order Book of the House of Commons. He, however, trusted there were no dangers from within the camp, but for reasons which he knew not, and upon which he would not even venture to speculate, he had noticed during the last days or weeks when that meeting was mentioned, a certain cooling down—if he might use the expression—on the part of some of those who had been their supporters, although it might be they had been only moderate supporters. This was very undesirable, and should serve to stimulate the earnest supporters to increase their efforts with a view of getting the Bill passed this session. (Hear, hear.) They would remember that Mr. Joseph Surface remarked to Lady Teazle in the course of a celebrated conversation, that she was suffering from a plethora—that was, from too much health. He hoped that all that was amiss with the women's suffrage cause at the present time was that it was suffering from too much health. Whether that were so or not, they must make a bold and determined effort to try to get the Bill passed into law now that it had received, as they knew it had received, the approval and sanction of certainly a majority of the members of the House of Commons. (Applause.)

Baron DIMSDALE, M.P., moved: "That this meeting has learned with great satisfaction that Mr. Woodall has obtained a favourable place for the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill (being the Bill which passed a second reading in 1886), and resolves to use every effort in support of the action of the Parliamentary leaders to secure the success of the measure during the present session." He remarked that he had been an advocate of this cause since 1868, and he had voted for the second reading of the Bill on the two occasions when it passed in the House of Commons, namely, in 1870 and in 1886. They gained a substantial success in the latter year, and he was anxious that there should be a division on the second reading during the present Parliament. Some there were who speculated upon the speedy termination of the life of this Parliament, but he hoped its dissolution would be far distant. At any rate, the possibility of this should stimulate them to raise the question in a Parliament of a very popular kind, representing the feelings of all classes in all parts of the country. He was not sure whether Wednesday, the 17th of April, the day which Mr. Woodall—who had served them so heartily and so long—had secured for the second reading was the best day for the purpose seeing it was in Passion week. If the House adjourned for the Easter holidays on the previous day, he might not have the opportunity of taking a division, but their efforts must be directed to prevent this. Lord Salisbury had recently said he thought the time had come when this question should be settled, and his sympathies were heartily with them. Before Lord Salisbury, the late Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Idlesleigh were heartily in favour of the cause, and, during their life, did their best to promote it. (Hear, hear.) After the Prime Minister's recent declaration of opinion they had good ground for asking him to postpone the adjournment of the House until Wednesday, the 17th, or Thursday, the 18th, in order to admit of a division on the second reading of the Bill. Pressure must be brought to bear by constituents upon members favourable to the measure so that the latter might be in their places when the second reading was taken. He suggested that those members should be memorialised by their constituents to vote on the occasion. The measure was, as had been mentioned, a non-party measure. They regarded the Bill conferring the franchise upon women as a measure of justice, and as a necessary complement to the Reform Bills already passed. (Applause.)

Mr. J. W. MACLURE, M.P., in seconding the motion, said weak-kneed members whom they had in their midst and who had promised to support woman suffrage must be required by their constituents to fulfil their promises. He regarded the extension of

the Parliamentary franchise to women as a matter of right and justice, and went further than the present Bill inasmuch as he held that every woman ratepayer—married or unmarried—should be entitled to vote. In the circumstances, however, he thought it was prudent simply to revive the old Bill. It was ridiculous, in his view, that highly-educated and intelligent women, many of whom were capable of managing large estates and business concerns, while others took a leading and an active part in philanthropic and social movements, should be debarred from exercising a power which their very gardeners, or under-gardeners, or boot-cleaners possessed under a system of household, lodger, and service franchise. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. R. U. PENROSE-FITZGERALD, M.P., who supported the motion, said they realised day by day how women's influence with and work among women were of very great importance to the law makers of this country. He did not go so far as Mr. Maclure, in desiring to give all women votes, as at present the advocates of women's suffrage held a strong and unassailable position in insisting that in the case of women, as in the case of men, taxation and representation should be co-existent.

Mr. MACLURE explained that he would confer the franchise upon married women who paid rates as some did.

Mr. FITZGERALD (continuing) said he adhered to women's suffrage, not for party reasons, but because he believed it was right and just and would be for the benefit of the community at large. He suggested that meetings should be held in different parts of the country, and requests made with a view of arousing to a sense of their duty those members of Parliament who were only half-hearted on this question, and who were induced, perhaps, to pledge themselves to vote for women's suffrage on the eve of election. He cared not whether women when enfranchised returned Radicals or Conservatives. He believed they would return those who represented fairly and justly the interests of women and children in this country. (Hear, hear.)

Sir R. N. FOWLER, M.P., explained that he had for many years been a supporter of women's suffrage. When he was a very small child Parliament conferred the right of voting for poor-law guardians upon ladies, and he thought what had worked thoroughly well as regarded poor-law administration ought to be extended to members of Parliament. He urged upon those present, and, through the press, upon supporters of the cause in all parts of the country, the desirability of getting their Parliamentary representatives to remain in town a little longer on the eve of the Easter recess in order that they might vote for the second reading of the Bill, although their doing so might entail a slight sacrifice on their part. He believed that the Government would be prepared to afford them the desired opportunity of dividing upon the second reading of the Bill, and that the only danger arose from those members who were half-hearted in its support, or who were wholly opposed to it, representing that they wanted to get out of town. He hoped that this would be the last year in which it would be necessary to hold a meeting like that to advocate that important movement. (Applause.)

Mrs. FAWCETT supported the resolution. She thanked the members of Parliament who had spoken for their kind and generous help. She did not forget the old and trusted friends who had been with them from the beginning, and notably Mr. Penrose-Fitzgerald, member for a town in which she took great interest—Cambridge. When he was a candidate for that town he was one of the few who gave the question of women's suffrage a prominent place in his election address. (Hear, hear.) While expressing gratitude to their old friends, she thought an expression of gratitude was also due to their old enemies, and particularly to Mr. Goldwin Smith, for the constant efforts he made to infuse new life into the subject of women's suffrage. He had said that women's suffrage had been tried in Nebraska and had failed, but so far from women's suffrage having been tried and relinquished in Nebraska, it had never been tried there, except the school suffrage, which had been entirely successful. When they were asked by Mr. Goldwin Smith to take heed of the experience of America in regard to women's suffrage, she was reminded of a story of two sisters. The elder sister, Edith, had a parasol whilst walking out, and Ethel, the younger sister, had not. Edith said, "Won't you walk in my shadow, Ethel?" Ethel replied, "No, thank you, Edith, I have a shadow of my own." (Laughter.) Well, as compared with America, they in England had a shadow of their own; they had

more experience of women's suffrage than America possessed. They had long had women's suffrage in poor law guardian, municipal and School Board elections, and they might safely challenge proof that in either of these respects women's suffrage had been in any sense a failure. (Applause.) Mrs. Fawcett then traversed the statements contained in a letter signed an "Englishwoman," which had appeared in the *Times*. The writer urged as an objection to the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women that female crime and intemperance were increasing. So far from this being the fact, both were considerably decreasing. According to a recent official return, the number of women sentenced to penal servitude had decreased in England from 183 in 1883 to eighty-six in 1887. It was a well-known fact that women were far less criminal than men, their crimes being only one-fifth those of men, although they slightly exceeded half the population. (Applause.) She thought when their opponents were driven to these extravagantly false statements, it was evidence that they had a very weak case indeed; people who supported their views by such palpably erroneous assertions, reminded one of the saying of the American moralist: "It is better not to know so much than to know so many things which aint so." (Much laughter.) She would welcome the active participation of women in public affairs, not because it would strengthen one political party or other, but because she felt women would infuse into all parties a better spirit than now prevailed. Mr. Fitzgerald had spoken of the deep interest which women took in the education and welfare of children and in all that tended to make home happy and render character great and noble. When the constituencies of this country had in them a larger number of persons having these interests deeply and truly at heart, and setting them above all party considerations, she thought there could be no doubt that a most favourable influence would thereby be exercised upon the conduct of public affairs. (Applause.)

Mr. GEORGE MITCHELL ("One from the Plough"), who spoke from the body of the hall, asked whether they were as desirous of conferring the franchise upon the poor woman who made their shirts at 11d. the dozen as upon her highly educated sister with the large rent roll of whom so much had been said?

The CHAIRMAN: I think that question is very easily answered, and I believe I shall only be expressing the general opinion of the meeting if I said "certainly, if she fulfils the qualifications." (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was then put and passed unanimously.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN proposed: "That memorials to the Marquis of Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith, praying that they will, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, give their support to the Bill, be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of this meeting, and that petitions to both Houses of Parliament in favour of the Bill be also adopted and forwarded for presentation by the chairman." He said he would read, as a sort of text for the few remarks he had to make, the substance of the memorial it was proposed to send to Lord Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith. The memorial was as follows:—

TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

The Memorial of members and friends of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, in public meeting assembled on March 7th, 1889, in the Town Hall, Westminster, Sheweth,

That your memorialists earnestly desire to urge on the attention of Her Majesty's Government the justice and expediency of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women who possess the statutory qualification for the same.

They respectfully submit that women are entitled to the Parliamentary franchise on the same grounds of justice and expediency as those on which they have been admitted to the municipal, the School Board, and the County Council franchise, and that experience of the manner in which women have used the franchise in the elections in which they are entitled to vote warrants their claim to become Parliamentary voters.

That the principle of women's suffrage has been affirmed by the House of Commons, inasmuch as a Bill to extend the Parliamentary franchise to women passed second reading in 1886, but the forms of the House and the circumstances of the session prevented the further progress of the measure in that year.

That a Bill in the same form as that which passed second reading in 1886 has been introduced this session by Mr. Woodall, and awaits second reading on April 17th. Your memorialists pray that your lordship will, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, take measures to afford the support of the Government in the House of Commons to the said Bill, intitled "A Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women."

The memorial to Mr. W. H. Smith was in similar terms.

It was now, he said, an article of the British constitution that the qualification for a Parliamentary vote should be the possession of an independent and separate home, but the application of the principle was limited, and did not extend to a home in the possession of a woman. Why should that be the question they wished to ask of Parliament. They based their appeal on the ground of justice; and when they were able to show that a thing was thoroughly just, it rested with Parliament and those who opposed them to show reasons to the contrary. They did not merely base their claim on the ground that women ought to have a vote and wished to have one. Justice was of a negative as well as of a positive kind, and they claimed that if their prayer was acceded to, no injustice would be done to any interest or person whatsoever. If it were true, as was sometimes said, that there was no general desire on the part of women to possess the Parliamentary franchise, the answer was perfectly easy—they need not exercise it. If any interest or men stepped forward and said it would be an injury to them to give women the Parliamentary franchise, it would rest with them to show how that would be. Mr. Mitchell asked if the most humble woman had not just as much right to vote as the richest and most intellectual woman. Certainly she had, provided she fulfilled the same test, if she had a separate and independent home, if she had a house or a lodging of her own. They claimed the right of women to vote on the same qualifications as men. Looking back to the earlier debates on this question, he doubted whether the same people would have the face in 1889 to stand up and make the same speeches over again. (Hear, hear.) It was said in former times, when the question was debated in the House of Commons, that women were intellectually inferior to men, and that the giving them a vote would take them away from their domestic duties. They would only necessarily be absent from their domestic duties so long as was required to walk to the polling booth, record their vote, and return home again. Men who used this kind of argument were thinking of women becoming members of Parliament. (Laughter.) Then it was said that women were unacquainted with public business in Parliament. In a representative Parliament he believed there was no such enormous nuisance as the person of universal information. (Laughter.) He thought if they read the papers for a very few days they would perfectly understand what he meant: that there were certain persons who got up and spoke about anything and everything, who appeared regardless of the time of Parliament, and who had still less care for the progress of the general business of the country. Even suppose troops of women found their way into Parliament as members, as a result of female suffrage, he believed they would have the sense which a great many men had not, and that was the sense to know how to hold their tongue. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) A friend of his, a very eminent lawyer, argued that because women could not be soldiers, sailors, special constables, or jurymen, they were not entitled to the franchise. That he gave as a good reason why women possessed of property, paying taxes and having houses of their own, should not be allowed to give a vote in an election of the persons who were to represent what was supposed to be their interest! He (Lord Camperdown) had long been a supporter of the Bill, simply because, after considering the question from all points of view, he could not find any possible reason for voting against it. The resolution declared that not only was the political enfranchisement of women just, but it was also "expedient." When once it was conceded that a thing was just, then there must be some very strong reason of state indeed if it ought not to be done. (Hear, hear.) Expediency, after all, was a matter of very second-rate concern in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred; and, with regard to this particular matter, there can be no reason whatever for its postponement. No one could say it was a question which had not been submitted to the judgment of the country for many years, no one could say the Bill was a difficult Bill requiring a long time to understand. They all knew perfectly well what it meant. It had

been thoroughly considered and voted upon, and it was hoped it would soon be voted upon again. But there were positive reasons of expediency why this measure should be pushed forward. All who read and thought about political affairs must realise how very prominently social questions were coming forward in the political world; and if they looked to the manner in which women had acquitted themselves in reference to improvements affecting the administration of the poor law and education laws, they could not help feeling that it was absolutely necessary in the public interest that women should have the means of expressing and enforcing the adoption of their views in regard to social reforms in relation to such matters as temperance, for instance, and other questions which concerned them deeply. The moderation and the great practical good sense with which women had hitherto expressed their views upon public affairs, and exercised the voting power they already possessed, attested their fitness for the Parliamentary franchise. (Applause.) Some years ago he sat upon a Commission to which was entrusted the consideration of the future of medical education. He could not conceive any question in which the interests and the opinions of women, as distinguished from those of men, could be so strongly pronounced, and in many cases so diametrically opposite to those held by men, as in this matter of medical education. The Commission asked the representatives of the women what, in their opinion, ought to be done. The advice which they gave was given with so much practical good sense, with such moderation, and with so much wisdom, that the whole Commission, without debate, adopted their proposals, and he believed, at the present time those proposals were in practical effect. (Applause.) Adverting to the Women's Franchise Bill, he said there was very much less reason to fear that measure passing the House of Lords than the House of Commons. (Applause.) Whatever might he said about the House of Lords—and he had never said inside that House it was by any means perfect—his impression of that assembly, after twenty years' experience, was this: if they brought a Bill before the House of Lords based upon the grounds of justice and right and showed that they had both on their side, that House was very apt indeed to disregard even the appeals of party—but in this case they must remember they had the Conservative leader with them—and vote upon a question entirely upon its own merits. (Applause.)

CLARA, Lady RAYLEIGH seconded the resolution, remarking that she had a sincere and strong conviction of the importance and necessity of women's suffrage.

Mr. LAFONE, M.P., who supported the motion, said what they wanted to do was not to preach to the converted, but to strengthen the weak-kneed and convert those who had been their opponents. Some there were no doubt who would be only too glad to see their Bill burked either by its being presented to the House of Commons at a time when no immediate decision could be arrived at, or allowed to lapse for want of time altogether. It was for the women of England to see that a division was taken on the second reading of the Bill. There was not a woman in that room or outside it who had not more or less influence over one or more men, and these should be got to support the measure. He saw before him a respected colleague of his and a lady member of the School Board, who was one of the most efficient representatives at that body. This fact, to his mind, was sufficient to settle the question of the suitability of women to receive the Parliamentary franchise, and even to be elected to serve under certain conditions. Women had wisely exercised their voting power in the election of guardians, returning persons who really knew how the poor-law should be administered, and who did the work they were chosen to do. In his own constituency of Bermondsey, a large working-class constituency, if they analysed the votes given and compared many of the male with the female votes they would find that for intelligence and actual knowledge of the affairs which would have to come before those elected, the women were far in advance of the men. He did not mean to say, however, that this was generally the case. When he reflected what the electoral franchise was amongst men, and what it excluded amongst women, he was ashamed of the present position of the law. He had had correspondence with women who were taxpayers, who succeeded to and carried on the business which their husbands previously conducted, and he found that the women showed a greater business capacity than the men had done. Was it to the advantage of the State that such women as these should not have the Parliamentary franchise? He did not want to see them bored by being in the

House of Commons, when the previous night a gentleman took 150 minutes to say what any intelligent lady would have expressed in eight minutes. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Besides, at present, except in the chamber itself, there was no adequate accommodation for ladies. They could not have recourse to the smoke room, although they might avail themselves of the library. He did not desire to see married ladies enfranchised, because then instead of its being one man one vote, it would be one man and one woman two votes. (Laughter.) He, in conclusion, urged them to rouse the kindred societies and friends of the movement throughout the country to activity, so that pressure might be brought to bear upon members of Parliament in order to ensure the second reading of the Bill. They might fairly expect to have the support of Lord Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith although, of course, they could not expect those leaders of the Conservative party to make the question a ministerial one.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON, M.P., in supporting the motion, said the only question upon which the five members for Sheffield were agreed was this question of woman suffrage. (Hear, hear.) Belfast, of which he had the honour to be a representative, was the only town in Ireland where the municipal franchise was conferred upon women; and he did not see why this privilege should not be extended to the sex in other parts of the sister isle. He trusted that the Bill they were met to promote would, on the 17th of next month, pass its second reading by a triumphant majority.

Mr. W. McLAREN, M.P., said he should be glad to get any amount of women's suffrage it was possible to obtain, and he cordially supported the present Bill, although it did not go so far as he should like. He believed it was necessary for the welfare of the community as a whole that women should be fully enfranchised. If they got a division he had not the slightest doubt that they would carry the second reading. His only doubt was lest they should be deprived of the day fixed owing to its being so near Easter, but as to this they must depend upon the goodwill of the Government. In former days some of the most distinguished members of the House of Commons had moved the rejection of the Bill, but now that function was left to Mr. Baumann and Mr. De Lisle, whose Parliamentary position could certainly not be compared with that, for instance, of the late Mr. Beresford Hope. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) A majority of the whole House was pledged in favour of the principle of women's suffrage, and of those who were not known to be in their favour it must not be assumed that they were all hostile. (Hear, hear.) Many of them, he ventured to say, would not vote against the Bill. It was difficult to find a single member of the House of Commons who did not believe that before many years elapsed woman suffrage would come; and Radical friends of his, who wanted manhood suffrage first, were fain to confess that woman suffrage would have the precedence. Their movement was materially helped by the success of Lady Sandhurst and Miss Cobden at the recent county council election, and by the choice since of Miss Cons as an alderman. Even the *Times* said that, assuming women were qualified to sit at the council, Miss Cons' selection as an alderman was desirable, and that she was well qualified for the post. Speaking as one of the two secretaries of the committee of members of Parliament favourable to the Women's Suffrage Bill—Captain Edwards-Heathcote being the other secretary—he should certainly do his utmost to secure success when the second reading was taken. (Applause.)

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., regarded their cause as past argument. Their opponents were reduced to one objection, and that was called the "logical conclusion objection." (Laughter.) He was constantly being asked whether he was prepared to admit women into the House of Commons. His answer was that he was not sure whether he would not be prepared to swop a dozen of men he knew for a dozen of women whom he knew. (Laughter.) Apart from this no one who had attained the age of forty ever dreamt of driving anything to its logical conclusion. Only enthusiastic youths talked about logical conclusions. (Laughter.) He felt sure that the country was ripe for the passing of this Bill, and he should do his best to attain that end. (Applause.)

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

Miss BECKER proposed a vote of thanks to Colonel Cotton for having so ably presided on that occasion. They owed him a very deep debt of gratitude, for it was not without some sacrifice to himself that he consented to take the chair. A debate was then proceeding in the House of Commons in which Colonel Cotton was

deeply interested, and it might be that in attending that meeting he had lost something both of interest and importance to him to hear. She was pleased to know that the hon. and gallant member represented a division of a county (Cheshire) near her own (Lancashire), and she hoped that, through their representatives, both counties would give a hearty support to the Bill on the 17th proximo. They had that evening the most influential meeting which had ever been held upon this question. She had had considerable experience of the women's suffrage movement—more, perhaps, than suited her taste—but she never recollected being present at any meeting where there were so many members of Parliament, and certainly never one when they had a member of the House of Lords to help them. (Applause.)

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT had great pleasure in seconding the resolution, but was sure they should couple with it their thanks to all those members of Parliament who had taken the trouble to support them in that crisis of their movement. Sir Robert Fowler had expressed some doubt as to whether they would be able to retain the 17th of April for the second reading of the Bill, but she thought if anything had been wanting to influence the Government in providing them with a day, that influential meeting supplied the omission. Perhaps many members of Parliament opposed to the Bill, but desirous of an excuse not to vote, would welcome the day as a convenient time for leaving town. (Laughter.) In the counties to a most extraordinary extent members of Parliament had stood as candidates for county councils, and they were obliged to address ladies as well as gentlemen. A Liberal Unionist member of Parliament had sent her a letter saying she would doubtless be glad to hear that many women in his division had voted for him, notwithstanding his heresy with regard to women's suffrage. (Laughter.) She replied that she thought the women who voted for him were totally ignorant of his heresy. What would be the position of that member when the second reading of the Bill came on? Was it possible he could by his action say "Those women shall vote for me as a member of the county council, but they are not fit to vote for me as a member of Parliament." (Applause.) She thought many members of Parliament would be placed in a rather awkward position on account of the county council elections, and she believed that was a strong omen in their favour that those who could not vote for them would not vote against them. (Hear, hear.) Concerning the House of Lords, she had found that House was more just and fair towards women than the House of Commons. In regard to the Women's Property and other Acts they had had to thank the House of Lords from the bottom of their hearts for the help they had rendered to women in passing just legislation, and she had not the slightest doubt that when the Women's Parliamentary Franchise Bill reached that House, it would pass comparatively without any opposition. (Hear, hear.)

Lord CAMPERDOWN put the motion, which was adopted *nem. con.* The CHAIRMAN, in acknowledging the resolution, said it ought rather to have taken the form of a vote of mutual self congratulation on the great success of that meeting, so far as the attendance of members of Parliament was concerned. They had had over a dozen members of Parliament present, besides a member of the House of Lords, and if all of them could not put the screw on those weak-kneed brethren to whom allusion had been made, they would be rather ashamed of themselves. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) The proceedings then terminated.

CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE. ANNUAL MEETING.

That branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage which was newly organised in December last, under the above title, held their annual meeting in Westminster Town Hall on March 21st. Sir R. TEMPLE, Bart., M.P., presided, and was supported by Mr. Walter McLaren, M.P., Dr. Pankhurst, and Mr. Charles H. Hopwood, Q.C. The ladies present included Miss Jane Cobden, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. Ashton Dilke, Mrs. Eva McLaren, Dr. Kate Mitchell, Mrs. Frank Morrison, Mrs. Ransom, Mrs. John Hullab, Mrs. John Holland, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Dr. Julia Mitchell, Mrs. Pennington, Mrs. Larkcom-Jacobs, and Miss F. Balmagne (secretary). Representatives were also present from Bedford, Basingstoke, Edinburgh, Cambridge, and elsewhere.

The committee, in their annual report, referred to the progress of the movement, and stated that since the last meeting in July a

great and necessary work of reorganisation has been accomplished. Although only eight months had elapsed since the last annual meeting it was deemed advisable to summon all subscribers and afford them the opportunity of transferring the conduct of the society to a representative body duly elected under the new rules. The revision of the rules had already borne good financial fruit. Last year the treasurer had to report a deficiency in the annual financial statement of upwards of £100. This year, after paying all liabilities up to the end of February, there was a balance of £676. 3s. 11d.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE, in the course of his opening address, said since they last met he might congratulate them on the progress what they regarded as the good cause had made during the last two general elections. They had secured a clear majority in the House of Commons, and a majority which was not made up of any one political party, but which was composed of influential sections of all political parties, and the names of those who were the adherents of the good cause may be weighed as well as counted, and in the list of their advocates might be found the names of men who were popular in the country and respected and influential in Parliament. The question before them now was this number of their adherents to be utilised so as to secure the passing of the measure within a reasonable time. He believed their patience would ultimately be rewarded, but they were advocating a great Parliamentary and political change, and changes of that kind never came about quickly in an old-established country like this. It was a great thing that the present Prime Minister had publicly declared himself in favour of this measure. He went on to deal with how the question would affect political parties, and considered the distribution of parties would remain absolutely unaffected. He urged them to confine their demands at present, and that their Bill should include only single independent women and widows who might claim the franchise in freehold property, or because of the duties of citizenship they performed. The one thing which induced many opponents to go against them was the idea of extending the suffrage to the entire female population of this country.

The Rev. Canon HADDOCK moved the adoption of the report, which was seconded by Mrs. COWEN (Nottingham), and agreed to.

Subsequently the meeting passed Mrs. Fenwick Miller's motion protesting against excluding duly qualified married women from the operation of Mr. Woodall's Bill, and trusting that the House of Commons will remove the said proviso in committee, should Mr. Woodall's Bill reach that stage.

In the evening a public meeting, convened by the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, to advocate the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women, was held in Princes' Hall, Piccadilly. Mr. W. WOODALL, M.P., took the chair, and amongst the M.P.'s on the platform were Sir W. Lawson, Sir A. Rollit, Messrs. Sydney Gedge, W. McLaren, and Jacob Bright, together with Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Mrs. Ormiston Chant, Miss Jane Cobden, and Miss F. Balmagne (secretary).

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said among many questions which had grown marvellously in public favour in recent times, there were few which showed more steady and triumphant progress than that which had called them together that night. (Cheers.) There were few things upon which they might congratulate themselves more than the important services which had been rendered by women, not merely upon school boards, but in every educational department in the country. The desire of those who advocated the claims of this society was that, with regard to the common-sense conditions of citizenship, the disability attaching merely to sex should disappear. That contention had been practically conceded in every form of local franchise. But we were nothing in this country without anomalies, and it so happened that whatever might have been the intention of Parliament, common law interposed and said that in the election of town councils and other bodies of that kind, a married woman who paid the rates and fulfilled the obligations of citizenship was, under the settled condition of the law of coverture, incapable of voting or being registered to vote. With regard to the particular Bill, with the responsibility of which he was charged in the House of Commons, he asked them to sympathise with an unfortunate man trying to do his duty in legislation, and having to contend with unnumbered difficulties in every direction. (Cheers.) Short of an actual division, which it was practically impossible to take upon abstract questions in the House

of Commons, it was not an easy task for a member of Parliament to ascertain definitely the precise views of those whose votes he desired to secure. There were many members who were pledged to support the principle of women's suffrage in the abstract who said nothing would induce them to listen to proposals which put any slight upon married women. (Cheers.) On the other hand, there were those who were even more demonstratively certain that nothing would induce them to vote for a measure which would enfranchise married women. This latter class were particularly strong with regard to two propositions—one of which was, that the number of married women paying rates and exercising the duties of citizenship in their own name and on their own responsibility was very small, whereas the possibilities of rich men enfranchising their wives by giving them separate property qualification was so large that it would tell unfairly against the poorer classes of the community. (Hear, hear.) The late Lord Idlesleigh, who was one of the kindest and truest friends of their cause, required that the enfranchisement of women should be limited to the ratepaying householders. He should ask on the second reading of the Bill the direct vote of all who were in favour of its cardinal principle, and when the Bill got into Committee it would be only fair that those who voted for the principle should be free to exercise their judgment either in enlarging or limiting the measure as they might think wisest and most expedient, and he asked to be allowed to reserve for himself full plenitude of discretion and judgment, so as to secure the largest amount of enfranchisement possible to be got out of the present Parliament. (Cheers.)

Mr. WALTER McLAREN, M.P., moved, "That in the opinion of this meeting the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women on the same conditions as it is or may be granted to men." He said that one reason why there were so many Liberals in the House of Commons who opposed women's suffrage was the base and low reason that they would lose their seats by it. It was a humiliating thing that members of the Liberal party should take that view. (Hear, hear.) It was a suicidal policy, the necessary result of which would be to drive the women into the arms of their Conservative opponents.

Mrs. WYNFORD PHILIPPS seconded the resolution, and remarked that Conservatives would support the movement because women were supporters of law and order—(applause)—and Liberals would vote for it, because they belonged to the great party of peaceful and constitutional reform. (Renewed applause.)

Mrs. ORMISTON CHANT and Sir ALBERT ROLLIT, M.P., supported the resolution.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P., moved, as a rider, the addition of the words, "And we therefore disapprove of the proviso in the Bill now before the House of Commons, which would specifically exclude from the exercise of the franchise married women possessing the ratepaying or other qualification." He would rather wait ten years for women's suffrage than connect himself with a statute which would treat married women in the way in which this measure proposed to treat them. (Applause.)

Mrs. FENWICK MILLER seconded the proposed addition to the motion.

Mr. S. GEDGE, M.P., supported the rider, which

The CHAIRMAN described as hostile to the present Parliamentary action of the society. His Bill would enfranchise 800,000 women householders.

The resolution, with the addendum, was carried.

On the motion of Sir WILFRID LAWSON, M.P., it was resolved to petition Parliament in favour of the objects of the meeting.

The proceedings, which were very prolonged, concluded with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

KENSINGTON.

A public meeting to consider the subject of women as citizens was held on March 19th, at the Kensington Town Hall, and was largely attended. Mrs. Chas. McLaren occupied the chair, and in opening the meeting said they had met to consider how best to use the privileges they had attained, and to consider the advisability of petitioning Parliament for their extension. Miss Balmagne moved the first resolution: "That this meeting recognises the excellent results of granting the municipal franchise to women, and urges the Government to give every facility for the passing of a measure giving the Parliamentary vote to all duly qualified women"—a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Bryant, and carried unani-

mously. Margaret, Lady Sandhurst, moved the second resolution, warmly approving the election of women as county councillors, poor-law guardians, and members of the school board, and pledging the meeting to use its best endeavours to promote the return of suitable women candidates at future local elections. The resolution was seconded by Commissary-General Downes, and adopted, the proceedings closing with a vote of thanks to the president.

DRAWING-ROOM MEETINGS.

PORTMAN SQUARE.

A well-attended drawing-room meeting was held at the residence of Louisa, Lady Goldsmid, 13, Portman Square, on March 12th. Amongst those present were Colonel Cotton, M.P., Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P., Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., Lady Bloomfield, Lady Boothby, Lady Henley, Lady Jane Taylour, the Hon. Mrs. Ralph Dutton, the Hon. Mrs. Greville Vernon, Mrs. Cyril Flower, Mrs. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mrs. Fawcett, the Hon. Marie Adeane, Miss Emily Davies, the Misses Sellar, &c. Lady Goldsmid first called on Mrs. Fawcett, who moved a resolution to send memorials to Lord Salisbury, and to the members for Marylebone, praying their support to the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill. This was seconded by Colonel Cotton, M.P., who said the reasons why he supported the measure might be summed up in two words, justice and expediency. He believed it would be for the good of the community that the religious influence of women should be brought to bear on returning members of Parliament to make the laws of the country. The resolution was supported by Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., and Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P., and unanimously carried. A vote of thanks to Lady Goldsmid, moved by Miss Emily Davies, brought the meeting to a close.

WESTBOURNE TERRACE.

A drawing-room meeting in support of the women's suffrage movement was held on March 15th, at 48, Westbourne Terrace, W., by permission of Lady Roberts. Sir OWEN ROBERTS presided. There was a large attendance of ladies.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said that the movement had made great strides within the last thirty years, and two ladies were present who would fully explain the subject.

A memorial to Lord Randolph Churchill, the member for the division, asking him to support the Bill, was moved by Miss Emily Davies and seconded by Mrs. Fawcett.

Mr. E. H. CARBUTT, ex-M.P. for Newport, heartily supported the motion, and advised women to make this their one and only question.

Mr. JOHN COLES cordially endorsed what had been said, and expressed his opinion that the limited programme which they now put forward was unanswerable, and did not admit of controversy.

The motion was carried by acclamation, and a vote of thanks was passed to the chairman, on the motion of Miss Hart, seconded by Miss Kensington.

Sir OWEN ROBERTS, in reply, said that if women's suffrage was granted universal suffrage was impossible, because every man could not have a vote unless the same privilege was granted to every woman; but as there was a large majority of women in this country men would never concede that, and, therefore, it was a remedy against manhood suffrage. Men were so jealous of female labour and competition that they would never extend the franchise to every woman. He was not a Conservative, but a Liberal Unionist, though the difference now was very slight, and he believed that there would soon be only one party for sensible people, whose policy should be one of economical and rational progress.

A vote of thanks to Lady Roberts for her entertainment concluded the proceedings.

TOWN COUNCILS.

JARROW.

At the monthly meeting of the Council of Jarrow, held March 13th, a letter was read from the Women's Suffrage Society asking the Council to support the Bill for the political enfranchisement of women, introduced by Mr. Woodall.

Mr. JOHNSTON moved that the Council petition in favour of the Bill.

Mr. PEARSON seconded.

Mr. RUST moved, as an amendment, that the matter be considered by the Parliamentary committee.

The amendment on being put was lost, and the motion to petition in favour of the Bill was carried.

KIDDERMINSTER.

At the monthly meeting of this Council in March, a letter was read from Miss Becker asking the Council to petition in support of the Parliamentary franchise being given to women.

Alderman GROSVENOR said they had petitioned before in its favour, and he moved that they raise their voice again in favour of women having the Parliamentary franchise.

Mr. BENNETT seconded the motion.

Mr. ROLLINGS said he was afraid it would not improve their own position very much to allow women this privilege. (Laughter.)

The motion was carried, Mr. Rollings voting against it.

SOUTHPORT.

At the March meeting of the Council of Southport, the Town Clerk read a letter from Miss Lydia Becker, asking the Council to petition Parliament in support of the Bill to be brought before the House of Commons in April for extending the Parliamentary franchise to women householders.

Councillor BOOCOCK moved that a petition be passed under the Corporate common seal in support of the Bill, and forwarded for presentation to the House of Commons.

Councillor SERGEANT, in seconding, observed that he had great faith in the power and good sense of women. (Hear, hear.)

The motion was carried unanimously.

WAKEFIELD.

At the March meeting of the Council, the Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Miss Lydia Becker, asking the Corporation to petition Parliament in favour of an extension of the franchise to women.

The MAYOR asked if any member had any resolution to move, and Alderman PEACOCK said he was prepared to move that a petition be presented to Parliament in favour of the Bill. In his opinion, so long as representation went with taxation, women who paid the rates ought to have some voice in electing representatives.

The MAYOR (jocularly): Some ladies exercise their voices whether they have a right or not.

Councillor NICHOLSON thought the matter ought to be referred to committee, and Alderman H. LEE said he should like to hear Alderman Peacock in support of his resolution.

A resolution was then prepared, and was moved by Alderman PEACOCK and seconded by Alderman WATSON, that a petition be prepared.

Councillor NICHOLSON hereupon moved an amendment in the terms he had indicated, and Councillor HALL having spoken,

Alderman PEACOCK rose and made a speech in which he said that to refer the matter to committee was only a respectable way of shelving it. He was thoroughly satisfied as to the justice of the petition, believing that anyone who paid a fair share of the taxes ought to have a voice in the matter of selecting representatives to deal with public money.

Councillor BOOTH objected to the suggestion that Councillor Nicholson, whose amendment he seconded, wished to shelve the matter. Personally he was in favour of women's suffrage.

On the amendment and proposition being put to the meeting, the former was carried, and the subject referred to committee for consideration.

YARMOUTH.

At the monthly meeting of the Council, held on March 12th, at the Town Hall, the MAYOR (F. Danby Palmer, Esq.) stated that he had received a petition with regard to extending the Parliamentary franchise to women. He would lay it before the Council, so that if anyone wished to move that the Council should deal with it he could do so.

It was decided, on the motion of Mr. R. MARTINS, seconded by Mr. TOMKINS, to sign the petition.

Petitions have also been adopted by the Councils of Aberavon, Luton, Dunstable, Bootle, Workington, Haverfordwest, and others.

DEBATING SOCIETIES.

MERTHYR TYDFIL.

On March 6th, the usual meeting of the Hope Mutual Improvement Society, Merthyr Tydfil, was held, under the presidency of Mr. W. Edwards, H.M.I.S., when Miss Lloyd, Georgetown, read a paper on "Woman Suffrage," and dealt with this particular and interesting subject in a very able and lucid manner. The paper was listened to with marked attention, and in the debate that followed Messrs. Tyrer, Rhys Davies, E. Howells, Yorwerth, Tait, and the President took part. When the question was put to the vote seventeen were in favour and four against. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to Miss Lloyd for her kindness in favouring the class with her paper.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LIVERPOOL.

At a general united meeting of the Medical Students' Debating Society, Literary and Historical Society, and Women's Literary Society of the above place, when a paper was read and discussed on "Women's Suffrage," a resolution to the effect that the franchise should be extended to women was carried by a large majority, only twelve opposing it.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WESLEYAN CONFERENCE,
ADELAIDE.—TENTH DAY.

The PRESIDENT (Rev. D. S. Wylie) took the chair at 9-30 a.m. on Friday, February 1. There was a large attendance.

Among the subjects discussed, a motion of which the Rev. S. KNIGHT had given notice approving of the object of the Women's Suffrage League was then considered. A petition was received from the Women's Suffrage League of S.A. The petition was signed by Mary Lee, Hector McLennan, joint secretaries.

The Hon. J. CARR seconded.

The Hon. A. CATT objected to the Conference dealing with political questions. It was unwise. What was the result of their action with regard to the Divorce Bill? He was the only member of the Wesleyan body in the House of Assembly who voted against the third reading. Politicians would not be bound down by the opinions of any Church. He was not going to be bound on the questions of women's suffrage by any vote of the Conference. As a Church they should hold aloof from these questions. If they interfered dissensions would be caused in the Church.

The Hon. J. CARR looked at the question not as a political question solely, but as a moral question.

Mr. CHARIDGE supported the Hon. A. Catt.

Mr. SCOTT thought it a proper question for the Conference to discuss.

The Rev. R. M. HUNTER refused to be told that the Church was not to take interest in questions which affected the moral well-being of the community.

Mr. NOCK thought all questions which affected the community morally and socially should be dealt with by the Conference.

The Rev. S. KNIGHT assured them that the question was only raised on account of its bearing on the morals of the people. Women's franchise would assuredly come to pass, and it would have an enormous influence on the people. It was said that in America the future of social life depended on the vote of the women. The line of progress was on the side of women. The Conference did not desire to be political agitators but reformers. They should assist every movement that was on the side of virtue and moral restraint. The motion was carried by forty-four votes against nine.

WOMEN AS COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

THE PETITION AGAINST LADY SANDHURST.

The case of Hope v. Sandhurst came on for hearing on March 15th, in the Queen's Bench Division, before Mr. Baron Huddleston and Mr. Justice Stephen. It was a special case raising the question whether a woman is qualified to be a county councillor. The case stated that the election of councillors of the Brixton Division of the administrative county of London was an election to which the Local Government Act, 1888, and the Acts incorporated with it, applied. On January 17th, 1889, an election of councillors was duly held for the division, and Edmund Hope Verney, Henry Smallman,

Mr. Charles Thomas Beresford Hope, the petitioner, and the respondent, Lady Sandhurst, were nominated as candidates. Lady Sandhurst's nomination was objected to as not being valid, on the ground that being a woman she was disqualified for election. The objection was disallowed, and at the election Mr. Verney polled 2,112 votes, the respondent 1,986, the petitioner 1,686 votes and Mr. Smallman 1,397 votes, the respondent and Mr. Verney being declared elected. On the 25th of January Mr. Beresford Hope duly presented a petition praying that it might be determined that the election was void, and that he was duly elected and ought to have been returned. The respondent was a woman, and was entitled to vote at an election of councillors for the administrative county of London. The fact of the respondent being a woman was a matter of notoriety in the division, and the fact that objection to her nomination as a candidate on the ground of her being a woman had been made and disallowed was published in certain newspapers circulating in the division previous to the day of polling. The question whether women entitled to vote were or were not qualified to be elected as county councillors was publicly raised in certain newspapers circulating in the division as a disputed question of law previous to the day of polling. Assuming that the votes given for the respondent were under these circumstances thrown away, then the petitioner polled the highest number of lawful votes next after Mr. Verney, and the questions for the Court were whether the respondent was a person fit and qualified to be elected, and whether the votes given for her were thrown away.

Mr. Finlay, Q.C., and Mr. Day appeared for the appellant; while Mr. R. T. Reid, Q.C., and Mr. B. F. C. Costelloe represented the respondent.

Mr. Finlay said he had to submit two propositions—first, that the respondent, Lady Sandhurst, was not qualified to be a county councillor; and, secondly, that the votes given for her were thrown away, and that therefore Mr. Beresford Hope must be declared duly elected. The right of a woman to be a county councillor must depend upon the words of the Acts passed last year, viz., the Local Government Act and the County Electors Act, and the Acts incorporated with them. The Local Government Act provided that County Councils should be elected in like manner as the council of a borough, subject to certain provisions to which he wished to call attention, as if a woman had any right to be a county councillor it would be found there in precise terms. For instance, it was provided that clerks in holy orders and ministers of other denominations should not be disqualified, and that peers also should be eligible. The 75th section incorporated certain Acts, and also certain provisos were made in express terms. There was no proviso affecting the present question. He used that as an argument, showing that women had no greater right to County Councils than they had in regard to Town Councils. The Acts passed last year referred them back to the statutes affecting municipal corporations, and he thought it would be convenient if he did not begin with the Act of 1882, but refer in the first place to the statute of William IV., which previously regulated corporations. He apprehended that it would not be contended that at common law, before the passing of the 5th and 6th William IV., chap. 76, a woman could either be a burgess or take part in the government of municipal corporations. The statute of 5th and 6th William IV. adopted that view of the law.

Mr. Reid: It enacts it.

Mr. Finlay went on to say that sect. 8 of that statute provided that "every male person who was qualified in a certain manner should be a burgess, and sect. 28 that no person should be elected town councillor who was not entitled to be a burgess. By the 31st and 32nd Victoria, the 9th section of the Act of William IV. was repealed, and it was enacted that every person of full age, duly qualified, should be burgesses. It was also provided that wherever words occur in that Act or the recited Acts importing the masculine gender, they should be held to include females for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to vote for councillors, &c. The statute of William IV. having conferred the right of voting only on male persons, the later Act extended, he submitted, only the right of voting upon women. It had never been contended that women were qualified to sit upon town councils.

Mr. Baron Huddleston said he had the vaguest recollection of the question being argued or debated, and he rather thought it was in the House of Commons.

Mr. Justice Stephen said that his recollection was that there had been a decision on a woman's right to vote on appeal from a revising

barrister, and that the court decided that women were not entitled to vote.

Mr. Reid said that that had reference to a different Act. The word used was "man," whereas in this Act the word was "person."

Mr. Finlay said it was held that the word was used not in opposition to beasts or angels, but to woman. (Laughter.) The matter was discussed in the case of the Queen v. Harrald, and the point decided was that the Act only removed the disqualification of sex as to the right to vote, but did not remove the disqualification of coverture, and that, therefore, a married woman could not vote. That being the law the Statute of 1882 was passed, which superceded the earlier Acts with regard to municipal corporations. That Act provided that every person possessing certain qualifications should be entitled to be enrolled as a burgess. It also provided that every person should be qualified to be elected a councillor who at the time of the election was qualified to elect to the office, but that could not help the respondent, because the words providing that the masculine gender should include females was expressly confined to the right of the latter as regarded voting. In support of this contention the learned counsel cited the case of Flentham and Roxburgh, where the learned Judges Mathew and Smith adopted a certain construction, because they said if they did not the absurd consequence would follow that a woman might sit on a Town Council. Upon the whole he submitted that, although women had a right to vote as under the Municipal Corporations Act, yet they did not enjoy the right to sit upon County Councils, and there was nothing in the Act of last session which conferred upon them any rights that they had not under the Municipal Corporations Act. The learned counsel also contended that the votes given for Lady Sandhurst were thrown away, and that therefore Mr. Beresford Hope was duly elected, as those who voted for the respondent had notice of the question having been raised.

Mr. Reid said there was nothing in the common law before the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 to prevent a woman being elected as a town councillor.

Mr. Baron Huddleston asked whether the learned counsel could give them a single instance in which a woman had been elected a town councillor, or to any other municipal office.

Mr. Reid said he could show their lordships that women were appointed to certain offices and held them.

Mr. Baron Huddleston: You cannot show any instance in which a woman has been elected a member of Parliament.

Mr. Reid said there was no case upon the subject. It was, however, perfectly likely that women might not have been elected before 1835, although they might have been qualified. There was no law and no presumption one way or another, and he submitted that it was a perfectly open question. The use of the word "he" after person in an Act of Parliament really showed nothing at all, as there were no statutes which spoke of a person and then went on to say he and she.

Mr. Justice Stephen said there was an Act of Parliament which provided for that. It was the one which, to the great benefit of mankind, authorises the insertion of full stops in Acts of Parliament. (Laughter.) Although they had been very sparingly used, still it was not now an unlawful thing that an Act of Parliament should be divided into sentences. It was so some years ago.

Mr. Reid said that by Lord Brougham's Act all words expressing masculine gender should include females unless otherwise specified. Although it was held that the word "man" in the Representation of the People Act did not include women, the case was decided on a different Act of Parliament and upon a different word, which in the present case was "person."

Mr. Finlay said it was also decided that women were subject to a legal incapacity, and he thought that if the word had been person the decision would have been the same.

Mr. Reid said the case decided that there was a legal incapacity on the part of women to vote for members of Parliament, but did not refer to municipal elections. All that was required in regard to the latter was that a town councillor should be a "fit person" elected by the burgesses, and he contended that before a disability of this sort was imposed it should be clearly stated in the Act of Parliament.

Mr. Baron Huddleston: Is not that begging the question by assuming that a fit person may be a female?

Mr. Reid contended that in view of the fact that "male person" had before been used the words "fit person" would include women

if there were fit women unless it was a maxim of law that they could not be fit. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 said that only male persons could vote for councillors, but when they came to the office of councillor it was provided that no person should be qualified to be a councillor or alderman who was not entitled to be a burgess. Inasmuch as it was provided that only a male person could be a burgess, only male persons, therefore, could be elected. If, however, the law were amended so that a female could be on the roll of burgesses that female person would become entitled to be a councillor if elected.

Mr. Justice Stephen: You contend that they are only excluded by incapacity to go on the burgess roll, and if that incapacity had been removed they would be entitled to be members of the Council.

Mr. Reid assented. Section 9 of the Act of 1835 used the term "male person" with regard to the burgess roll, but the statute of 1869 repealed that section, and provided that "every person" of full age, and being otherwise qualified, was entitled to be on the burgess roll. Therefore nothing could be clearer than that "male person" as a description of a burgess ceased to exist, and that being so the question of sex had no reference to the capacity to be elected as a councillor. In reference to the section of the Act of 1869 providing that wherever words are used which import the masculine gender they should be held to include women for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to vote in the election of councillors. The learned counsel contended that the construction put upon it by Mr. Finlay was not the right one, and that it did not apply merely to the voting. But even if it were right it did not affect his contention, Parliament dealt with the term "male person," and it was expressly put aside. If they meant that although they would not allow a woman to be a town councillor, but that they would allow her to be a burgess, why did they not say so in plain terms? Coming to the Act of 1882 it provided that every person qualified as a burgess should be entitled to be put on the roll unless he was an alien or was disentitled under any Act of Parliament. Section 11 provided that councillors should be fit persons elected by the burgesses. If it was intended to say "man," why did they not do it? As to the case of Flentham and Roxburgh, the opinion expressed by the judges was merely incidental on a point which had not been argued, transcending the limits of that before the Court.

Mr. Baron Huddleston, replying to an observation of Mr. Reid, said perhaps the Legislature took it for granted that there was nothing so wild or extravagant in the law as to give the power. What would Mr. Ritchie have said if that question had been put to him in the House?

Mr. Reid: I should be very glad to say what he said, but I have no right to.

Mr. Justice Stephen observed that one could not help thinking about an argument of this kind that there were a great many questions which both parties wished not to raise, and not to be too explicit upon. They must make the best they could of what they had said.

Mr. Baron Huddleston: If there is anything obscure the courts of law, it is said, will settle it all right. (Laughter.)

Mr. Reid said he was only using an old-fashioned argument in courts of law that if it had been intended to state it it would have been done explicitly.

Mr. Justice Stephen was afraid that old-fashioned argument was almost worn out. (Laughter.) They must make the best of what they said, not what they meant to have said or what they thought they said.

Mr. Reid, proceeding with his argument, said the words in the section, "masculine gender," previously referred to, alluded to municipal elections, and not merely to the right to vote. It was the governing clause that councillors should be fit persons elected by the burgesses, and there was nothing in the Act to show that a woman was not fit. It would, he submitted, require authority from the courts to hold that a woman could not be fit to discharge these duties. He also submitted that the votes given to Lady Sandhurst were not wilfully or persistently thrown away, and therefore could not under the authorities be treated as thrown away.

Mr. Finlay submitted that the burden of proof was with his learned friend to produce one single instance in which women had claimed to obtain or fill municipal offices. The presumption was therefore in favour of his contention. His learned friend's argument would lead to extraordinary consequences, because if women were entitled to be councillors they were entitled to be aldermen or

mayors. It was bad on the face of it, as you could not have a lady alderman or a lady mayor. (Laughter.)

Mr. Reid said a lady had been elected alderman by the London County Council.

Mr. Finlay said it did not follow that she was qualified. Their lordships reserved judgment.

MARRIED WOMEN AND THE MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE, REPORT OF THE TEST CASE IN 1872.

1872. Jan. 22.] THE QUEEN v. HARRALD.

Municipal Corporation—Election—Married Women not entitled to vote—32 & 33 Vict. c. 55. ss. 1, 9.—33 & 34 Vict. c. 93.

There is nothing in the Municipal Franchise Act, 1869, 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55, or in the Married Women's Property Act, 1870 (33 & 34 Vict. c. 93), which enables a married woman to be placed on the burgess roll and to vote at the election of town councillors.

Semhle, that a woman who marries after her name has been placed on the burgess roll is also disqualified from voting.

This was a rule calling on C. Harrald to shew cause why an information in the nature of a *quo warranto* should not issue, calling upon him to shew by what authority he exercised the office of town councillor for the borough of Sunderland.

It appeared from the affidavits that on the 1st of November, 1871, there was an election of town councillors for Sunderland, at which the defendant was elected by a majority of one over the next candidate. Amongst the votes which went to make up the majority were those of Anne Thompson, a married woman living separate from her husband, but occupying a house and paying rates as though she were a single woman, and Nancy Storey, who, although a single woman when she was placed on the burgess roll, had married just before the election.

Crompton shewed cause.—It is submitted that no valid objection can be taken to the votes of either of the two married women. With regard to Anne Thompson, by the Municipal Franchise Act, 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55. s. 1 (1), any person who has occupied a house for the prescribed period and paid rates is, if duly enrolled according to 5 & 6 Will. 4, a burgess, and enabled to vote. By section 9 it is provided that in the Act and in 5 & 6 Will. 4. c. 76, words which import the masculine gender shall include females for all purposes having reference to the right to vote in the election of councillors, &c. There is nothing in the Act to prevent these words from applying to married women. Moreover, by the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, 33 & 34 Vict. c. 93, married women are made capable of entering into contracts and acquiring property. The case of *The Queen v. Tugwell* (2) is an authority to shew that where the burgess roll has once been made up under 5 & 6 Will. 4. c. 76, the right of a voter, if a male, cannot be questioned. Therefore, if a male with a property qualification at the time of his enrolment afterwards transferred his property, his title to vote could not be questioned. It follows that Nancy Storey, who had a proper qualification when her name was placed on the roll, cannot be disfranchised by what has since taken place.

Herschell, in support of the rule.—The votes of both the married women were absolutely void. A married woman is not a "person" within the meaning of 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55. s. 1. Being married, her legal existence is merged in that of her husband. Since, therefore, the Act does not apply to married women, they are by the common law under two disqualifications as regards voting. First, that of sex; secondly, that arising from the fact that they have no separate *status* from that of their husbands. The first has been removed, but the second remains in full force.

Cockburn, C.J.—I think the rule must be made absolute. In the case of one of these married women I think it is impossible to say that the vote is good; and the other is probably bad. In the first case the woman was married when her name was placed on the burgess roll, and by the common law, the rights of a woman

respecting any political or public office were upon her marriage merged in those of her husband. It was thought to be a hardship in the case of votes at municipal elections, that unmarried women were not entitled to such votes. Accordingly, by 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55, it was provided that in the acts relating to the municipal franchise wherever words occur which import the masculine gender, they shall be held to include females so far as concerns the right to vote. But this Act, of course, proceeded upon the assumption that the women entitled to vote would be women possessed of the necessary property qualification and paying rates. I cannot believe that it was ever intended to alter the *status* of married women. The only way in which it can be argued that such change was contemplated is by suggesting that the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, which gave married women certain privileges with regard to property and contracts, has placed them in the same category with unmarried women, in regard to the right to vote. But this Act was passed with a different object, and I cannot suppose that it was ever intended by a sidewind to confer public and political rights of so important a nature.

The case of the other married woman is different. At the time when her name was put on the burgess list she was unmarried, and therefore entitled to vote. Shortly before the election she married, and her status thereby becomes changed. It is said that when a voter's name has once been placed on the roll, he cannot, so long as his name appears there, lose his right by anything which subsequently takes place. No doubt this is so, but I cannot but entertain serious doubt whether this rule applies to such an alteration of status as is caused by a woman's marriage. It is, however, unnecessary to decide this point, as the case is, *prima facie*, one for enquiry, and the rule must be made absolute.

Mellor, J.—I am of the same opinion.—In *Bright on the Law of Husband and Wife*, vol. 1, p. 1, it is laid down that marriage, as far as the wife is concerned, is a disqualification, so that with regard to the right to vote, her existence is, as it were, merged in that of her husband. This rule still prevails, with certain exceptions which have been introduced by The Married Women's Property Act, 1870; but this Act was not intended to affect the right to vote. With regard to the case of the woman who married after her name had been placed on the roll, there can be no doubt that her name was properly placed there in the first instance. But I think that the Act 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55, was only intended to remove the disqualification by virtue of sex, and was not intended to affect the relation of husband and wife. It would therefore seem to follow, that the qualification of a single woman is extinguished by her marriage.

Hannen, J.—I am of the same opinion. I think that the Married Women's Property Act (2) was intended to protect married women in relation to property and contracts, but it was not intended to affect their political rights. As to the case of the second woman, I am not so clearly satisfied.

Rule absolute.

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Rock the cradle and bake and brew.

Or, if no cradle your fate afford,

Rock your brother's wife's for your board;

Or live in one room with an invalid cousin,

Or sew shop shirts for a dollar a dozen,

Or please some man by looking sweet,

Or please him by giving him things to eat,

Or please him by asking much advice,

And thinking whatever he does is nice,

Visit the poor (under his supervision);

Doctor the sick who can't pay a physician;

Save men's time by doing their praying,

And other odd jobs there's no present pay in.

But if you presume to usurp employments,

Reserved by them for their special enjoyments,

Or if you succeed when they knew you wouldn't,

Or earn money fast when they said you couldn't,

Or learned to do things they'd proved were above you,

You'll hurt their feelings and then they won't love you.

—*Journal of Woman's Work.*

(1) By the Municipal Franchise Act, 1870, 32 & 33 Vict. c. 55. s. 1, every person of full age who, on the last day of July in every year, shall have occupied, &c., shall, if duly enrolled, &c., be a burgess.

By section 9. In this Act and 5 & 6 Will. 4. c. 76 and the Acts amending the same, wherever words occur which import the masculine gender the same shall be held to include females for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to vote in the election of councillors, auditors, and assessors.

(2) 38 Law J. Rep. (N.S.) Q.B. 12.

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