

REPORT

OF THE

Bristol and West of England Society

FOR

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 1880

1881.

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*OBJECT.—To obtain for Women Householders  
and Ratepayers the right of Voting for  
Members of Parliament.*

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BRISTOL :

J. W. ARROWSMITH, PRINTER, 11 QUAY STREET.

71<sup>M</sup>  
HEAVY

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### Committee.

- Chairman* :—Rev. U. R. Thomas.
- |                           |                             |                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Joseph Bartlett       | Rev. J. Temperley Grey      | Miss M. Priestman  |
| Rev. E. S. Bayliffe, B.A. | T. G. P. Hallett, M.A.      | Mrs. Walter Sturge |
| Mrs. Birt                 | Miss Kennedy                | Mr. J. G. Thornton |
| Mrs. Bruce                | Mrs. Linton                 | Miss Eva Tribe     |
| Mr. E. W. Cox             | Rev. A. C. Macpherson, M.A. | Mr. Frank N. Tribe |
| Eliza W. Dunbar, M.D.     | Miss Pass                   | Mr. P. Watson      |
| Mrs. Grenfell             | Miss M. Price               |                    |
| J. G. Grenfell, B.A.      | Miss Priestman              |                    |

### Hon. Secretaries.

- |                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Mrs. Lillas Ashworth Hallett | Miss Sturge |
|------------------------------|-------------|

### Treasurer.

Alan Greenwell, Esq., M.A., 3 Buckingham Vale, Clifton.

*Secretary*—Miss H. BLACKBURN.

*Office*—20 PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

## REPORT, 1880.

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DURING the past year great changes have taken place in the aspects and prospects of the Woman's Suffrage movement. The sudden dissolution of Parliament in March last resulted in the election of a House of Commons pledged to deal with the general question of Electoral Reform. Careful efforts were made at the time of the election to ascertain the opinions of Parliamentary candidates upon the special question of Electoral Reform for Women, but these afforded no certain test of our strength in the new Parliament as compared with the old one. Nor could the question of our strength in the new Parliament be conveniently brought to the test of a division during the session which followed the election. In consequence of the lateness and overburdened character of this session no separate Bill or Resolution was introduced. When the Government brought in a Bill to assimilate the borough franchise in Ireland with that of England, Mr. Blennerhassett and Sir Edward Watkin gave notices of amendments in favour of the inclusion of women householders, but there was no opportunity for a division, the Bill, owing to pressure of business, being ultimately withdrawn. Notwithstanding however the absence of any definite test, the election of many well known supporters of the movement—both men who have already voted for the Bill in Parliament and men who last April took their seats for the first time—gives hope that this Parliament will

reflect that growth of the movement throughout the country of which the last year has afforded unmistakable signs. As no Bill was introduced last session little effort was made in regard to petitions, and only 26, with an aggregate of 591 signatures, were presented to the House of Commons by the friends and members of this Committee.

In the presence of the universally accepted fact that the present Government is pledged to deal with the extension of the Franchise, your Committee has determined that no effort shall be wanting on its part to secure the inclusion of duly qualified women in any measure which the Government may propose. A special appeal has accordingly been made by your Committee to raise a considerable working fund for this purpose. Promises of £1,024, payable in two years, have been the result, and whilst your Committee would take this opportunity of expressing its acknowledgments and hearty thanks to the donors of this fund, it would also ask that the sum already promised may be largely augmented during the present year. By the above generous addition to its ways and means your Committee has been enabled to carry forward important work during the past year. Probably the most remarkable meeting ever held in Bristol was that which took place on the 4th November last, when the Colston Hall was crowded by women, earnest and anxious to hear what women had to tell them of the questions connected with their political emancipation. The chair was taken by Mrs. Beddoe, and when she entered the hall, followed by ladies who had assembled from all parts of the country as delegates to the meeting, no vacant place could be seen. The whole area and galleries of the hall were filled by thousands of women who received with enthusiasm the president and speakers as they came forward to address them. A large number who were unable to find access to the Great Hall assembled in the Arch Room below, where Mrs. Colman was called to the chair, the proceedings being similar to those in the larger meeting. The following

Resolutions were submitted to each meeting and carried with unanimity and earnestness.

I. "That the following Memorial to the Prime Minister be adopted and signed by the President on behalf of this meeting :—

"To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., First Lord of Her Majesty's Treasury.

"The Memorial of Women in Public Meeting assembled in the Colston Hall, Bristol, on Thursday, November 4th, 1880, respectfully sheweth :—

"That there are over five hundred thousand ratepayers in the United Kingdom deprived of the power of voting in the election of members of Parliament on the sole ground that they are women. That this exclusion is directly opposed to the fundamental principle of representative government, and therefore unjust towards such ratepayers. That the exclusion of women ratepayers from the exercise of the parliamentary vote deprives women of that free expression of opinion which is the only guarantee of liberty in the State. Wherefore your memorialists pray that a measure may be introduced by Her Majesty's Ministers to extend the parliamentary franchise to women ratepayers and landowners in boroughs and counties. And your memorialists will ever pray, &c."

II. "That a deputation be appointed from this meeting to wait upon the First Lord of the Treasury, for the purpose of presenting the foregoing memorial. That such deputation consist of the speakers at this meeting, the members of committee and vice-presidents of the West of England Society for Women's Suffrage, and others to be nominated by the London, Manchester, Birmingham, Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh and Glasgow Committees respectively; and that all parliamentary supporters of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill be invited to accompany the deputation."

A full report of the proceedings of the meeting will be found in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* for December, 1880. On the 5th of November a Conference, which was largely attended, was held in the office of the Society, 20 Park Street, to consider the best mode of organising work in the country during the coming year, and the following Resolutions were passed :—

"That Mrs. Beddoe be requested to forward a copy of the memorial adopted last night to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, informing him

that it was intended to request him to receive a deputation to present the memorial after the opening of Parliament."

"That a copy of the memorial be sent to organised bodies throughout the kingdom asking them to appoint a representative from their body on the deputation, and that the Bristol Committee be requested to confer with each of the other Committees."

The President has subsequently forwarded the Resolutions adopted at the public meetings to Mr. Gladstone and has received a formal acknowledgment from his Secretary; but owing to the pressure of ministerial business it has not as yet been considered advisable to ask the Premier to appoint a time for the deputation.

The evening previous to the demonstration Mrs. Beddoe most kindly gave a *Conversazione* to the friends and supporters of women's suffrage at Mortimer House. Her reception-rooms were crowded by distant as well as by local workers in the movement, many of whom were thus afforded an opportunity of meeting together for the first time.

In addition to the Colston Hall meeting the following meetings have been held in Bristol:—a drawing-room meeting, by invitation, at Mortimer House: public meetings at Charlton Hall, Lawrence Hill; Anglesea Rooms, Redland; Temperance Hall, Bedminster; Jewell's Rooms, Stokes' Croft; St. Mark's Schoolroom, Easton; Kingsland Chapel and Broadmead Rooms, with cottage meetings at Stapleton and Cathay. Besides these local meetings, sixteen public meetings and lectures have been held in different towns in the West of England. Two are due to the energy of the Cheltenham Local Committee, the second of the two having taken place on the 17th December, under the presidency of Baron de Ferrieres, M.P. for the borough. Four meetings have been held at Cardiff. Six have been held in the following towns in South Wales; viz., Swansea, during the meeting of the British Association, the Mayor occupying the chair; Tenby, H. Goward, Esq., in the chair; Pembroke, R. George, Esq.,

mayor, in the chair; Ferryside, Aberystwith, P. Jones, Esq., mayor, in the chair, and the Mumbles. The remainder were held at Truro, Ilfracombe, Minehead and Teignmouth, at the last of which Mrs. Brine presided. Your Committee desire to acknowledge the important services rendered to the question by the chairmen of these meetings, and to thank also those friends who, by their assistance in arranging them, have so much contributed to their success.

Within a few days of the opening of the present session of Parliament Mr. Leonard Courtney accepted the office of Under Secretary for the Home Department and was in consequence unable to carry out his intention of again introducing the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill. Acting under Mr. Courtney's advice your Committee have united with the other branches of this Association in a deputation to Mr. Hugh Mason, member for Ashton-under-Lyne, to ask him to move a resolution this Session in favour of the principle of Women's Suffrage. Mr. Morley, M.P., Mr. Lewis Fry, M.P., and Baron de Ferrieres, M.P., most kindly consented, on behalf of your Committee to convey this request to Mr. Mason, and his reply, already made known through the newspapers, is most satisfactory. On January 20th, Mr. Mason gave the following notice in the House of Commons:—

"On an early day to move a resolution in favour of the extension of the parliamentary franchise to women who possess the qualifications which enable men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting.

The question is thus fairly launched in a new Parliament under a new Leader and your Committee call on all the members and friends of this Society throughout the West of England to rally their Parliamentary Representatives to its support.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE

OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY, 20 PARK STREET,

JANUARY 27TH, 1881.

The Rev. U. R. THOMAS in the Chair.

Miss BLACKBURN, Secretary, read the Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of Accounts.

RESOLUTION I.—*Moved by Miss ESTLIN, seconded by Mr. GREENWELL,*

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts just read be adopted and printed for circulation under the direction of the Executive Committee.”

RESOLUTION II.—*Moved by Mr. COX, seconded by Miss STURGE,*

“That this Meeting deeply regrets the loss which the Society has suffered by the resignation of Mr. Courtney of the Parliamentary Leadership of the Women's Suffrage movement, and whilst congratulating him on his acceptance of office under the Government desires to record its sincere and grateful sense of his invaluable past services to the Society's cause.”

RESOLUTION III.—*Moved by Rev. U. R. THOMAS, seconded by Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT,*

“That this Meeting, having learnt with much satisfaction that Mr. Hugh Mason has consented to introduce a

resolution in favour of women's suffrage during the present session of Parliament, pledges itself to support him by every means in its power.”

RESOLUTION IV.—*Moved by Miss COLBY, seconded by Mrs. JOSEPH H. PERRY,*

“That the following persons form the Executive Committee for the ensuing year, with power to add to their number:—Mr. Joseph Bartlett, Rev. E. S. Bayliffe, B.A., Mrs. Birt, Mrs. Bruce, Mr. E. W. Cox, Eliza W. Dunbar, M.D., Mrs. Grenfell, J. G. Grenfell, B.A., T. G. P. Hallett, M.A., Rev. J. Temperley Grey, Miss Kennedy, Mrs. Linton, Rev. A. C. Macpherson, M.A., Miss Pass, Miss Mary Price, Miss Priestman, Miss Mary Priestman, Mrs. Walter Sturge, Mr. J. G. Thornton, Miss Eva Tribe, Mr. Frank N. Tribe, Mr. P. Watson; *Chairman of Committee*, Rev. U. R. Thomas; *Hon. Secretaries*, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Miss Sturge; *Treasurer*, Mr. Alan Greenwell.”

RESOLUTION V.—*Moved by Miss PRIESTMAN, seconded by Rev. J. TEMPERLEY GREY,*

“That a petition in support of Mr. Mason's resolution be adopted and signed by the Chairman on behalf of the meeting.”



