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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Vol. 5

SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY

FOR

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

*Held in the Hall of the Literary Institute, South Clerk Street,
18th January 1875.*

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HEAVY

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*This Society consists of all friendly to its object, and who
subscribe to its Funds.*

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S
SUFFRAGE.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting of the Edinburgh Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in the large hall of the Literary Institute, on the 18th January. There was a large attendance of both ladies and gentlemen. On and near the platform were Mrs Duncan M'Laren, Newington House; Mrs Hume Rothery (daughter of the late Mr Joseph Hume, M.P.); Miss Sturge, Birmingham; Miss Eliza Wigham; Miss Stuart, Markinch; Mrs Wellstood, Miss Sturge, Miss L. Stevenson, Mrs Wigham, Miss Hunter, Miss Craig, Mrs Macqueen, Miss Taylour, Mrs D. O. Hill, Miss Ramsay, Mrs and Miss Hope, of Bordlands; Mrs Samuel Brown, Miss Ella Burton; Mr James Cowan, M.P.; Mr R. A. Macfie, Mr W. Milne, Bailie Marshall, Councillor Wellstood, Mr Thomas Robertson, Mr D. M'Laren, jun., ex-Councillor Bladworth, Mr Inglis, &c.

On the motion of Mrs NICHOL, Mrs M'Laren was called to preside.

Mrs M'LAREN, on taking the chair, said—The energy and ability women have shewn in advocating their claim to the Suffrage, as well as other questions connected with their welfare, is fast making the phrase, "Woman's sphere," a phrase of the past. Whence have they received the energy and the talent for their work? Not even from the schools, for the Universities are closed against them. It is a God-given power; and it is beginning to be recognised that what God has given must no longer be kept latent, but brought into use.

Changing circumstances are continually throwing fresh light upon this subject. I often remember the words of our Saviour, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," for all His words and all His actions towards women, as related in the New Testament, have a wonderful relation to this increasing light. Each century and each generation has much to unlearn as well as to learn. Hitherto men have had the expounding of the Scriptures almost exclusively to themselves, and the condition of the world shews how much more stress has been laid upon the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth verses of the fourteenth chapter of St Paul's Epistle

to the Corinthians than upon the ninth verse of the eleventh of Ecclesiastes, and other passages both in the Old and New Testaments, of *even* stronger import as to the duties and moral conduct of men. But the apostle, who is always quoted in support of the subjection of women, gladly availed himself of the highest spiritual and intellectual energies of such women as were capable of working with him; and I am sure you will agree with me, that whilst the same apostle's exhortation against much dressing of the hair and the wearing of jewellery is as strong as anything he advised as to the deference women should pay to man's superiority, there has been no great stress laid upon that exhortation. St Paul is quite forgotten when every device is applied to human and manufactured hair for the purpose of adorning or disfiguring the female head; and he is also forgotten when rich men make use of their female relatives to display their own wealth by the quantity of jewellery they give them to wear.

I confess there is much yet to be done to raise in the minds of women a higher standard of what their own position ought to be. From their childhood they are taught to believe they have nothing to do with politics. This has arisen a good deal from the idea of politics being associated with mere party and electioneering proceedings, for in past days the country has generally slumbered quietly on, until the advent of an election, when it has been suddenly awakened by some party-cry, followed too often by tumultuous uproar. This state of things is passing away, and questions full of the deepest interest to us all are coming to the front, in which men need the help of women.

I had a letter the other day from a young friend of mine, in which he says: "I told our foreman about your meeting; he is much against Women's Suffrage. He says he likes to see a woman when she has done her work, sit down and read her Bible. I told him I thought men needed to read their Bible quite as much as women, and that I also liked to see a woman sit down at times to read the newspaper; for if women were more conversant with the topics of the day, men would not go so much to public-houses and reading-rooms to seek companionship there."

I was much struck lately by a remark of one of our Edinburgh citizens—one of those thrifty and sensible men of whom Scotland may be justly proud—such as form the backbone of every nation. He said he thought it quite a mistake to be always thinking of getting up reading and refreshment rooms for the working-men. He thought it would be much better to form good libraries in different parts of the town, and encourage the men to take the books home to read. "Why not encourage them," he said, "to look for comfort at home?" Many will say this is unreasonable. I heard a very distinguished man say, not long ago, when arguing against a decrease of public-houses, "How can you expect a man who has been working all day, to go and sit in a comfortless house with his wife and perhaps half-a-dozen little children huddled up in one corner of the room?" I reply, Property involves responsibility. It was well said by a noble-minded Scotchman, "Property

has its duties as well as its rights." The six little children, whom we can picture in the corner of that miserable home, by the unjust laws of Great Britain, do not legally belong to the mother who bore them. They are exclusively the property of the father; and if fathers were more frequently taught that home was *their sphere*, perhaps we should see less of this squalid misery, and more library books in the dwellings of the poor.

I need not tell you that we do not ask for the suffrage as a mere abstract right. Women feel that they ought to have a voice in the representation of their country, that they may have some influence upon laws which closely affect themselves, as well as the country at large. I believe many women, for want of more political knowledge, are not aware that a married woman has no ownership in her children. It is only unmarried women who are in the unhappy position of mothers whom the laws of our country deem the fit and proper mothers to have the sole custody of their children, shewing clearly that these laws tend not to the benefit of either mothers or children, but to give men all power on the one hand, and immunity from evil doing on the other. There is much yet to unlearn as well as to learn. Men have often, with the best intentions, taken upon themselves more than they could well accomplish, forgetting these words spoken by One who could see the end from the beginning, "It is not good for man to be alone," and which have a much wider meaning than has generally been accorded them.

The Report of the Local Government Board, containing a series of investigations recently made on behalf of the Government by one of their Inspectors, Mrs Nassau Senior (the first of her sex so appointed in Great Britain, and appointed by the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P.), amongst many interesting statistics, shews the good results of boarding out pauper children. Mr Mozeley, another Government inspector, reports that in his district the only failures of the boarding-out system have occurred where it has been managed solely by the guardians, and not, as in many places, by joint-committees of guardians and ladies. I am quite sure that if men and women worked together on more Boards and on more Committees, many things would be better done; and in this opinion I am supported by the most enlightened men of this city, as well as by its press.

What do you think was the admission of the *Times* newspaper within the past year, in a suggestion most unworthy of the leading journal of a Christian country? Why, that the tone of morals was so low at the Epsom Races, that gentlemen ought to encourage ladies to attend them, in order to elevate it. Now, the immorality which prevails on the race-course is of a much more degrading character than that which obtains at Parliamentary elections, so that if ladies are *asked* to purify the moral atmosphere of the race-course, it surely becomes the duty of the *Times*, with its great power, to aid them in their own request to be allowed to assist in purifying the political atmosphere of their country, whether from the platform or through the ballot box.

I repeat again, there is much to unlearn. The best and noblest of our men, from whom we derive so much help, and from whom we learn so much, do not, in their turn, despise the teaching of women. They know that from their own early and close contact with the world, they become apt to see many things as through a glass darkly. Women have mostly been kept in a purer light, and perhaps see some things more clearly than men. I have been told, on good authority, that the eleventh verse of the forty-eighth Psalm ought to be translated, "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of women publishers." I have thought sometimes that the Lord is again giving the word, and calling up a company of women publishers to publish the need of a purer faith and a purer life. This can be done through the ballot-box as well as from the platform. Women have great courage to act upon their convictions. There is one woman at the present moment—delicate, beautiful, obedient to *her* special call, no words of applause invite her onwards—leaning upon the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" she has entered Paris alone, to face the most deadly enemy that can ever destroy any city. She carries no weapon forged by human hands; she hopes to strike the sin of that great city, and of other continental cities, by the force of Truth alone. When apostles are raised up for special work, there are hearts prepared to receive them; and from high and unexpected quarters Mrs Butler hears the words, "We would hear thee again of this matter."

Such is the call going forth, that I saw in the papers a few days ago, that the Baroness Burdett Coutts, who has expressed herself strongly in favour of the doctrine, which I delight to say is in the main part true, respecting woman's sphere being at home, that she herself, impelled by her earnest sympathy with the brute creation, has been addressing a crowded meeting at Exeter on the subject of cruelty to animals. I am sure it would be a most effective appeal on their behalf. I never heard a speech more gracefully delivered, either as to matter or manner, than the one Lady Burdett Coutts made in Edinburgh, to an equally crowded audience, on the occasion of her receiving the freedom of this beautiful city. We are not all called upon to work on the same questions, but we are all called upon to sympathise with suffering everywhere, and to examine how it is that such suffering exists. There are agonies which the spirit, born to an immortal inheritance, has to bear, far beyond any which these dumb creatures can ever know. We would not ask one effort less for them; those faithful friends deserve our every care; but whether the intenser sufferings to which I have alluded be produced by our laws, or could be mitigated by any alteration in our laws, every intelligent woman is bound to examine for herself.

Is there not cruelty in ejecting a widow, in the bitterness of her loneliness, with her fatherless children, from the farm whose produce was their bread, simply because the law refuses her the vote which her husband could have given at a Parliamentary election, and which she could quite as intelligently have given? Is there

no injustice in our legislators proposing to enfranchise the uneducated labourers on such farms, who have scarcely asked to be enfranchised, and turning a deaf ear to the tens of thousands of petitions which intelligent women have for years been sending to Parliament through much patient toil and self-denial? Are there not sufferings borne daily by women too dreadful to contemplate, because our laws teach such men as are cruelly disposed, that their wives are their own property, to be treated as they choose? A most powerful appeal for equal laws as between men and women I read some little time ago in a newspaper report of a man who had ill-used his wife. He said, "Why punish me; make my wife my equal, and I will treat her as such." That man was born in *his* wrong sphere. What a help he would have been to us in the House of Commons with such logical views! Were such reasoning acted upon, we should soon have no more discussions on the virtue of the lash.

In Edinburgh and Leith there are 18,000 more women than men. The disproportion between the sexes is great in most places. In the Burgh of Marylebone, in London, represented in Parliament by our friend Mr Forsyth, there are 20,000 more women than men. It would take volumes to tell the misery, the vice, and the suffering involved in words so easily spoken. What a sphere for our rich and good women, if they would, with the great wealth and influence with which they are endowed, come forward and use their gifts for the higher education of women, many of whom are entirely shut out from family life and its duties, and enable them to be instructed for missionaries and medical missionaries, to seek, if they felt the call, openings for themselves in this and other countries, so that they might become lights in the dark places of the earth; and that thus their lives might be made useful, and honourable, and blessed, instead of being too often marked only by broken hopes and an aimless existence.

Miss WIGHAM then read the Annual Report:—

"The commencement of the year just past, found the country engaged in the bustle of a Parliamentary election, the results of which affected more or less all the important questions of the day, including that of Women's Suffrage. Mr Jacob Bright, and others of the faithful supporters of the cause, were not returned to Parliament, and, consequently, there was a little anxiety as to who should be the leader. But soon, however, this anxiety was removed by Mr Forsyth, Q.C., the Conservative Member for Marylebone, kindly undertaking the leadership of the cause in Parliament. He gave notice of his Bill at a very early period, but the second reading was unavoidably deferred, notwithstanding the efforts of Mr Forsyth to the contrary, and in the short session there was not found an opportunity to proceed with it.

"Mr Forsyth, in communicating this disappointment to the Committee, gave hopes that the Bill would be brought in, under better auspices in the coming session, and promised he would do all he could to promote its success. We feel grateful to Mr Forsyth for his interest and efforts in our cause.

"Although there was thus no division in the House of Commons, the work of sending memorials and petitions by our Committee was

not relaxed; on the contrary, it exceeded that of former years. The number of petitions sent from Scotland was 340, and the number of signatures appended to them was upwards of 50,000. From Scotch Town Councils there were fourteen petitions sent; and besides these expressions of interest, a memorial to Mr Disraeli was forwarded, signed by 10,127 of the women of Scotland, praying for his continued support, and reminding him of the fact that he was the first member of the House of Commons who within its walls conceded the right of women to representation.

"After the dissolution, communication was held with all the Scottish candidates for election, and it is believed that, so far as Scotland is concerned, our friends are not fewer than in former years, there being thirty Scotch members known to be supporters of Women's Suffrage. The number of known friends in Parliament is 229. During the year thirty-three public meetings have been held, nearly all of which passed, unanimously, petitions for the representation of Women Householders.

"During the past year vigorous efforts have also been made in England, making the aggregate of the petitions from the United Kingdom to be upwards of 1000, and the number of signatures to be upwards of 300,000, exceeding by 60,000 those of former years. It is satisfactory that in all these efforts Scotland bears her full and fair proportion of the work. In the fact of municipal expression of sentiment, Scotland exceeds,—there being fourteen Scottish Town Councils and only twelve English and Irish, which have petitioned. The number of public meetings held in England and Ireland is very large, and the influence great and growing.

"Although we have no direct progress to report in Parliamentary action, there are many tokens, that the principle of the recognition of women as allies in the political world is gaining ground. We may refer to the appointment of women to the directorship of various institutions in this country, and to the acknowledged good results wherever electoral rights have been granted to them.

"As in past years, we have to mourn the loss we have sustained, by the removal by death of tried friends. This year the name of Lady Amberley rises before us prominently, her early and unlooked for death filled many hearts with sorrow besides those of her own immediate circle. Women everywhere lost in her a friend; she stood forth boldly to advocate what she believed to be just and true, and her example will, we trust, survive her. Nearer home we have to mention the name of Miss May M'Combie, of Aberdeen, who, though young in years, bravely by speech and pen, and still more by her gentle life of daily performed duty, and intelligent influence, promoted the cause of womanhood everywhere. When we note the gaps made by the loss of these and other workers, we would call on others to come forth to fill them up.

"We have offered in our Report merely the bare details of our work, which but slightly indicate the amount of effort expended. We have not entered into arguments; we conceive that these are not now needed for our cause, its self-evident and strictly logical justice must be accepted by all candid minds. If politics be the relation of the Government to the governed, and the relations of nations to each other, surely women have a great interest in politics, which they are bound religiously to cultivate and to manifest, as they love their country, and wish for it an elevated position of influence towards other countries.

"With these feelings we see no ground to give up our efforts, and we are preparing with vigour for the next session, in the hope that it may see these efforts crowned with success. Meanwhile we present

our Annual Statement to our friends, and again call on them for their sympathy and aid in the advancement of this good and righteous cause."

Mr COWAN, M.P., said he did not know until a short time ago that he was to be asked to move the approval of the report. He thought this was to be a field night for the ladies, and that no gentlemen were to speak at all. (Hear, hear.) He should therefore make his remarks extremely short. The report read by Miss Wigham was very interesting, and shewed the great work and the labour which the committee had had in hand during the past year; at the same time, they would allow him to congratulate them as Scotchmen on the very marked part which Scotland had taken in the agitation, and for the attitude Scotland now shewed in favour of women's rights. (Applause.) The estimate in which women were held in a country was always a mark of the civilisation of a people. Tacitus told them that the old Germans never undertook any serious business without first consulting the women. They knew, furthermore, what a large number there were in our own days of single women, or widows, or women deserted by their husbands, who were occupying houses, who were paying taxes, who were bringing up families, and doing all they possibly could in many cases, as he knew, to keep themselves out of the poorhouse. He asked, Were those women who were paying taxes not entitled to vote for members of Parliament as well as men? (Hear, hear.) Had they not an equal political stake in the country? He was satisfied that the votes of women would be in favour of good government, and that they would choose the best of whichever two candidates appeared for their suffrages. He congratulated the society on the work which had been done last year, and hoped one of the pleasantest sights they might have in the House of Commons this year on the respective benches, would be to see which side turned out the greatest number of members to vote for this measure when it came before them. (Applause.) He had strong hopes that even this year it would meet with success; but if not, they had the assurance that it was certain to be carried in the end. He begged to move the approval of the report.

Mr MACFIE, of Dreghorn Castle, seconded the motion. He hoped the fight which had begun would not be long continued, and that the anticipations of the society would soon be verified.

Mrs HUME ROTHERY, who was received with applause, referred to the link which connected her to Scotland through her father (Joseph Hume, M.P.), who, just fifty years ago, came down to Edinburgh to a great public dinner, which was given to him in compliment for his early exertions in the Liberal cause. He lived to see the result of much of the work he carried through, ere he closed the scene of his earthly labours; but in the years that had elapsed since then, she believed that still greater changes—changes more important from their fundamental nature—had taken place than any of those which took place during the thirty years that preceded them. The most

marked, and she believed the most undoubtedly important, to the future welfare of mankind, was that which was now calling women from one cause or another into the public sphere, and calling them to extend, not to desert, the sphere of their duties. She believed that this call, this change, was what might be called in scientific language a cosmic change; she believed that it was rooted in the gradual development of the race. It was analogous to the development they saw in human individuals. In the childhood of the individual as in the childhood of the race, it was the physical part of the man that ruled. It was the child's growing strength, his senses, his animal powers, which were developed, and which ruled. In the childhood of the nation it was physical strength, rude animal force, which ruled. They advanced a step and they found in the human individual that the love of knowledge, the growth of the understanding, the worship of truth, was the highest object of man's adoration; and corresponding with this, they found a period in the government of nations when the rule of intelligence prevailed. They thus took a step forward—it was not the highest step; if they were to have a grand human being, they must have something beyond the development of the intellect. They must have the moral, voluntary, and spiritual nature of man developed, so that he might use it for the purpose to which it could be applied. Correspondingly, that change was to be, and must be, represented in the government of the nation by the introduction into the sphere of government, of that portion of the population which represented and embodied the strongest moral and religious convictions, sentiments, and powers of the nation. (Applause.)

She need not tell the meeting—she need not even suggest to them as a novelty—it was too well known by all—who it was that practically in life stood closest to religion, to heaven, and to God. It was the privilege of the mother, of the wife, even at times of the daughter, to guide and link the aspirations of the father, the husband, or the son to those undying realities for which their earthly career was but a preparation. (Applause.) When, therefore, she said that the introduction of women into the sphere of government corresponded to that in the development of the individual—when the noblest and highest of the undying faculties of men were developed—she thought they would at once accept it as a fact, that women were needed to bring down religion, not merely as now into daily life, but to bring down the highest moral influences into the sphere of government as well as into the sphere of home. Why was it that they saw so-called Christian nations revelling in all the abominations of the heathen, sending forth their troops of men to butcher their neighbours, performing deeds of spoliation and cruelty which savages performed and Christ forbade? Why was it, but because the moral element, the conscientious element, the religious element, were banished from politics. The curse of this world, at least for centuries back, had been the divorce of conscience from action. Now, if they could once bring into the field those who were acknowledged strong in the courage of their opinions—those

who had been always ready in times of trial, to die as martyrs at the stake, living day by day, week by week, year by year, martyrs to the duties of their position, in spite of hardships, in spite of consequences, in spite of cruelty—if they could bring wives and mothers into the sphere of government, surely the world would have a new chance, and they would have the hope of seeing something like Christian principles recognised in government and in politics.

Politics, she need scarcely say, were the religion of civil life; and if a man would only act in his political sphere as he felt bound—if he was an honourable, God-fearing man—to act in his private sphere, did they think that the scenes could be enacted, that the laws could be passed in this country which they had all groaned under, and veiled their faces in shame before? It was impossible. It was because hitherto it had been an accepted maxim that the men in a Government—men in public positions—were not responsible to the same law, could not in fact carry out in public life that law, which they accepted in private. If that were not so, they would be proclaiming the failure, futility, and worthlessness of that law. It was impossible that that should be good in private for one man, which was not also good for the whole of mankind.

What, after all, constituted all right government and the privileges of which they spoke? These were but the aggregate of the rights of the individuals who composed that State and Government, and it was upon that she herself founded the claim of the suffrage for women. Mrs Rothery went on to remark that men and women were each endowed by the Creator with conscience, self-will, and free-will, and asked how could she govern herself as a member of the community—what right had she to surrender her God-given trust of free-will into the hands of the community? It was her duty, as well as her right, to claim a share in the government of her country, that she might not be called upon to obey laws contrary to her conscientious convictions, which she had no share in passing. They need not distress themselves whether the law passed this year or next year. The time was as surely coming when it would be the law as that the waves of the sea rolled up, in the progress of the flood. (Applause.) Movements like this, which came from a law deep-seated in the human race—the law of progress—could not stop. They were by no means going to propound women's superiority as a whole; what they wished was to have them placed on an equality with men.

As to the statement that women might want to get into Parliament, they need not trouble themselves with it. If they once believed that the principle they were working upon was right, they need not fear that it would lead to any bad consequences. Why should woman neglect her home duties for her Parliamentary and suffrage duties any more than men? There was room in most lives for a great deal more than was put into them, and if so much time were diverted from dress, visiting, and gossiping, for the perusal of the serious realities they saw in the newspapers, and the duties which the suffrage would impose, home

would not be less well-governed and families not less happy. As to the discord that would be introduced into houses—did they think attached friends, who did not quarrel about other things, would quarrel about a member of Parliament? Instead of marring concord, it would increase it, and why? because all first-class men—all the best of men she had ever known—were in favour of the extension of the voting rights to women—were anxious to see women stand by their sides as equals, and did not wish them to be any longer either toys or slaves. (Applause.) In the course of some further remarks, Mrs Rothery spoke of women as having been trained up to believe that it was their duty to subordinate their own consciences, to yield implicit obedience to the men to whom they were married; referred to a “black catalogue” of laws, passed by man for his own behoof at women’s expense, and urged that woman should study to fit herself for the franchise. It would be well to possess, but still better to deserve it. She moved—“Resolved that, in the opinion of this meeting, the true principles of representation require the admission of women to the franchise, on precisely the same footing as men, whatever qualification may be prescribed by Parliament as entitling to the suffrage, and that, while a property qualification is the basis of representation, it is a manifest injustice that women, while subject to all burdens laid on property, should be debarred as now from its corresponding privileges.” (Cheers.)

Miss STUART, in seconding the motion, said—We are continually told that it is a proud and a fortunate fate to be born a native of Great Britain; nor does the saying appear to be without foundation. Ask any man of average information, in what these boasted privileges consist, and he will tell you, of Jury Trial and Magna Charta, of the Bill and Petition of Rights. He will tell you that no man can be deprived of any portion of his property without his consent, expressed by himself or his representative. He will tell you that no Briton is born with a personal disability to fill any estate in the kingdom, short of royalty. He will tell you that the paths of learning and fame are closed against no man. He will tell you of Free Trade and Liberty of Conscience, and will probably conclude by exclaiming, that “Britons never shall be slaves!” Ask him how he is assured of this,—to whom the protection of these privileges is committed? He will reply that they are protected by their *lawful owners*—by himself and every other voter!

The Parliament of Great Britain makes the laws, but the voters make the Parliament. They are the true lawgivers; and the qualification for a voter is now so small, that no man of average industry and abilities need long remain unrepresented. There, he will tell you, is the bulwark of British liberty—the British People! And he will forget, and his hearers will forget, and the whole country forgets, that in fact those privileges belong only to *one-half* of the nation—the men of Britain. *Women* indeed share in these privileges, but they have no power to prevent the infringement

thereof. They want the keystone of the arch of liberty; they are not the protectors of their own rights. The Parliament of Great Britain legislates for them, and they have no voice in the election of that Parliament.

Were I desirous to make a sentimental case of the wrongs of women, I think that I could advance innumerable cases in which their liberties have been infringed. But I speak not of the wrongs of women, but of the wrongs of citizens,—of the wrongs of those who have never been represented. Wrongs similar to those of women have been suffered by every unrepresented class of men. Moreover, I maintain that the political exclusion of women is injurious to the excluders, no less than the excluded. The nation which ignores the opinion and intellect of one-half of its people on subjects concerning the public interest, commits not only an act of injustice, but a political blunder. “There is that which scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that which withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

The principle for which we solicit your approval is not by any means strange to the public ear. It is not because a man is a man, that he has a vote; many men have no votes. It is not because he is wise or strong; many weak men and fools have votes, and many wise and strong men lack them. A man has a vote simply because he pays a certain amount of taxes. His property supports the Government, and he is therefore entitled to a voice in the election thereof. This is the principle for which we are agitating—the principle for which, since the dawn of liberty in Great Britain, men have successfully contended, the principle that those *who pay shall rule*.

It is difficult to see what *can* be advanced against a claim so moderate, so just, and so constitutional. We are told that women are too illogical, emotional, and sentimental, to use votes. It is man alone, with his great logical mind, who is capable of saying what he wants. But when I hear members of the British Senate gravely affirming that if women get votes, men will cease to respect and to be polite to them, I cannot help thinking that a tendency to emotional sentimentality, must be one of the weaknesses of the great masculine mind; for I certainly cannot see the logic of insulting a voter! The course that would recommend itself to my feminine understanding would rather be extra civility, especially about the time of a general election. After this, it is surprising to learn that another reason against enfranchising women is, *not* that men will cease to respect women, *but* that women will cease to respect men.

But the greatest bugbear of all is the “experience of ages.” I protest against such a *misuse* of the word *experience*. When we say that experience is in favour of this or that, we are understood to imply that *several* ways have been tried, and that particular way proved best. Now, when has the enfranchisement of women been tried? What experience is there on the subject? But if blind and persistent continuance in one course *means experience*, then I grant at once, that the experience of ages is in favour of the

depression of women, and opposed to their enfranchisement. But so was it equally opposed to all reform. To Magna Charta, to the House of Commons, to every successive extension of the franchise, to the steam-engine, to railways, to telegraphy—to every discovery in art and science, to every advance in civilisation and virtue; yea, to the Christian religion itself! To all these things the experience of ages stood once opposed, and before all these things, the experience of ages has been compelled to give way! Error and prejudice are strong, but behold a greater than error or prejudice is here. Even-handed justice! This is the leader under whose banner the men of Britain have marched to freedom and independence. This is the leader under whose banner we are now arrayed, confident of ultimate success. For I fear not to say of justice, as Milton did of virtue—

“For if justice feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.”

Mrs M'LAREN having put the motion to the meeting, it was carried without opposition.

Bailie MARSHALL moved—“That a petition, founded on the foregoing resolution, should be prepared for presentation to Parliament, and that it be signed by the president on behalf of the meeting.” He said it always appeared to him that the demand of the ladies was so very reasonable, that it appeared extraordinary that it required any agitation at all to support it. (Cheers.) If taxation meant anything, it certainly meant representation. (Hear, hear.) It had always been the habit of men to ignore women politically; but he was happy to observe that that feeling was beginning to give way, and that the just claims of women would by-and-by be admitted. (Cheers.)

Miss STURGE, who was received with applause, said—It is a pleasure to me to be here to second the resolution. I always like to come to your beautiful city, and I gratefully recognise that if it had rested with your Scotch members, they would have given women-householders the franchise long ago. They know that the disqualification of women is an injury to the community. I recollect reading once of a miller and his wife. He was an overbearing kind of man, and had deeply impressed upon his wife the superiority of masculine judgment. This was all very well, but when the pedlar brought his goods to the door, and pressed them upon her—because he was a man and she was *only* a woman—she believed all that he told her, and her husband had to—pay the bill. Even so, if you will not allow women the virtues of independence, you must put up with the vices of dependence, and—pay the bill.

Our home interests, we are told, will suffer if women participate in political life—

“O, the mass of mankind
Is uncommonly slow

To acknowledge the fact
It behoves them to know,
And to learn that a woman
Is not like a mouse,
Needing nothing but cheese,
And the walls of a house.”

Domestic life has suffered from our being too exclusively ruled by men. I know, from experience in school arrangements, that all the premiums of life are placed upon things in which men are likely to excel. Payment is given by Government upon reading, writing, and arithmetic; nothing is offered for proficiency in cooking and sewing, and yet we are told men desire women to be skilled in domestic arts. Politics come into our home-interests—they may be found in the sugar-basin and the coffee-pot. Does not the price of these articles depend much upon the policy of the Government? Napoleon once told Madame de Stäel that women had no business with politics. She replied—“As the exigencies of politics seem to require our heads, it is natural to ask the reason why?” The tax-collector seems to require money from women-householders, surely they, too, may ask the reason why.

Some one remarked to me to-day, when I spoke of cooking-schools, that it was well to make good wives for working men. I wish some one would turn attention to making good husbands, they seem to be sorely needed. Probably things are better here, but I know I hardly ever take up an English newspaper without seeing some horrible case of cruelty to wives. Gentlemen sometimes tell me, that if women are coming into competition with men, they will lose the politeness with which they have been heretofore treated. I believe women are just as polite to men, as men are to women, yet I never met with a woman so illogical as to say that because she was polite to a man he ought not to have a vote. These same gentlemen are afraid to let their daughters go out alone at night. I never know what they are afraid of, unless it is of men. So long as “old woman” is a term of reproach in our language, not much can be said for the politeness with which women are regarded. Sir Henry James has talked of our Bill as being against nature. So was the Education Bill, for nature brings children into the world ignorant—can we let them remain so? A gentlemen once told me that it was clear women ought not to speak in public, their voices were not adapted for it, they could not be heard. Since then, I have noticed that Mr Glaisher, the aeronaut, reports, as the result of experiments, that a woman's voice can be heard two miles, and a man's only *one*.

I do not desire that women should be a law unto men, any more than men unto women. I long that they may both seek after a higher law, and in unity of purpose there will be harmony. On the subserviency of woman there rests no true harmony. It is, I believe, the basis of all priestcraft. So long as men think they know what is right for women better than women can know for themselves, the habit of exercising spiritual jurisdiction over women will extend itself into the same usurpation of men over men.

In England we have many people who call themselves Liberals; they are not really Liberals, but chameleons. The chameleon, you know, changes colour, and these Liberals change colour when a woman approaches. I have never wished to think my countrymen cowardly, but really they are very much afraid of women; they fear they will get into Parliament. There is no danger; men will hold the preponderance of political power, and no woman will get into Parliament unless the votes of the men send her there. All you say may be true, protest some philosophical objectors, but there remains an underlying difficulty in granting what you ask. It is dangerous to dissociate physical force and political power. Surely this is the oddest objection of all, for physical force and political power have long been dissociated. Soldiers, sailors, and policemen do not have votes. God gave us justice for a common law, men substitute what they call expediency, and then think themselves wise. In the beautiful words of John Bright, "It is not benevolence, but justice, that can deal with giant evils. It was not benevolence that gave the people bread twenty years ago, but it was justice embodied in the abolition of a cruel and a guilty law. But justice is impossible from a class. It is most certain and easy from a nation; and I believe we can only reach the depths of ignorance, and misery, and crime, in this country, by an appeal to the justice, the intelligence, and the virtues of the entire people." Are not women a part of the people? and if God gives us capacity for any work in life, it is profane for men to step in with artificial restrictions, and say, "You shall not do it." Canute, when he wished to reprove his courtiers, said to the sea, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." He knew it was profane, but is it not equally so to attempt to limit the exercise of the powers God has given to woman?

"Woe, woe to all, on safety bent,
Who creep to age from youth,
Failing to grasp their life's intent,
Because they fear the truth."

Mr M'CRIE moved a vote of thanks to the ladies who had come from a distance to address the meeting, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr T. ROBERTSON proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs M'Laren for presiding, which brought the meeting to a termination.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 18th JANUARY 1875.

INCOME.

Balance from last year . . .	£24 9 2
Subscriptions and Donations . . .	349 4 4

EXPENDITURE.

Printing and Publications . . .	£48 13 9
Expenses of Public Meetings . . .	67 7 2
Expenses of getting up Petitions . . .	71 16 5
Expenses of Secretary . . .	100 0 0
Stationery, Postages, &c. . .	19 11 4
Advertisements . . .	8 19 9
Rent of Committee Room . . .	1 14 0
Balance in Treasurer's hands . . .	55 11 1

£373 13 6

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS DURING 1874.

Alloa Committee	£2 5 0	Ferguson, Mrs	£0 2 6
Alston, Miss, Collected by	1 0 6	Frazer, Miss	0 2 6
Anderson, Mr	0 5 0	Friend, A, per Miss Burton	5 0 0
Anderson, Mrs W.	0 5 0	Friend in Fife	2 0 0
Armour, Mr H.	0 10 0	Friend in Greenock	1 0 0
Arthur, Mr	5 0 0	Friends, Two	0 10 0
Ayr Committee	0 15 0	Friend, A	0 5 0
Baird, Mrs	0 2 6	Friend, A	0 5 0
Barber, Mrs	0 10 0	Friend, A	0 5 0
Bartholomew, Misses	2 0 0	Friend, A	0 2 6
Blackie, Mrs	1 0 0	Friend, A	0 2 6
Boyd, Mrs	1 0 0	Gibson, Miss	2 0 0
Brownlie, Mr	1 0 0	Gibson, Mr	0 5 0
Brymner, Mr G.	0 10 0	Gibson, Mr A.	0 2 6
Buchan, Countess Dowager of	2 0 0	Gillen, Mr	0 2 6
Burton, Mrs Hill	1 0 0	Gordon, Mrs	0 2 6
Caird, Mrs	1 0 0	Gordon, Miss	0 1 0
Caldwell, Messrs	1 0 0	Greig, Mr	1 0 0
Caldwell, Miss	1 0 0	Gregan, Mrs	0 10 0
Caldwell, Mrs	0 5 0	Gregan, Miss J.	0 2 0
Callendar, Mr	0 10 0	Grieve, Mr D.	0 5 0
Clark, Mr James	1 0 0	Gunn, Mr W.	0 2 6
Clark, Mrs Stewart	1 0 0	Haddington Committee	1 0 0
Coates, Mr T.	10 0 0	Harvey, Mr W.	0 2 6
Coates, Miss J.	1 0 0	Henderson, Mr D. W.	1 0 0
Coates, Mrs A.	1 0 0	Hodgson, Mrs	1 1 0
Cook, Miss	0 10 0	Home, Mrs Fergusson	1 0 0
Craig, Misses	12 0 0	Hope, Mrs, Bordlands	1 0 0
Craigen, per Miss	0 2 6	Hope, Miss, do.	2 0 10
Crawford, Mrs Caldwell	1 0 0	Hope, Mrs, Drylaw	1 0 0
Crichton, Councillor	0 5 0	Hogg, Mr	0 2 6
Cross, Mr	0 10 0	Hoyes, Mrs	1 0 0
Crowe, Miss	0 10 0	Hunter, Misses	10 0 0
Crowe, Mr A.	0 2 6	Hunter, Mr J. C.	0 10 0
Crudelius, Mrs	1 0 0	Hutchison, Mr J. M.	0 10 0
C. E., Dumfries	0 5 0	Hutcheon, Mr	0 2 6
Davie, Mr	0 10 0	H. A.	0 5 0
Dean, Mr J.	0 2 6	Irvine, Mr G.	0 5 0
Dodd, Mrs	1 0 0	Jeffrey, Mrs	0 5 0
Drew, Miss	0 10 0	Jex-Blake, Miss	5 0 0
Drew, Mrs	0 10 0	Johnstone, Mr J.	1 0 0
Drew, Miss, Collected by	0 9 11	Kemp, Mrs	0 2 0
Drummond, Mrs H.	0 5 0		
Duncan, Mr	1 0 0		
Du Pré, Miss	2 0 0		

Kerr, Miss M.	£1 0 0	Nelson, Messrs	£1 0 0
Kerr, Mrs	0 2 6	Neven, Mr T.	0 5 0
Knott, Miss	1 0 0	Nichol, Mrs	10 0 0
Lade, Mr	0 10 0	Oliver, Mr J. S.	1 1 0
Laidlaw, Miss	0 10 0	Ord, Mr and Mrs	3 3 0
Laird, Mr	0 10 0	Pattison, Mr	0 2 6
Lang, Mr	0 10 0	Peat, Mr R.	0 2 6
Lauder, Miss Dick	2 0 0	Peat, Admiral (don.)	5 0 0
Leatham, Major	1 0 0	Polson, Mr	2 0 0
Lindsay, Mr W.	2 2 0	Pullar, Mr	0 5 0
Lillie, Mrs	0 5 0	Raleigh, Mr	1 0 0
Livingstone, Mr Josiah	0 10 0	Renton, Mrs	5 0 0
Livingstone, Mrs Fenton	0 4 0	Renton, Mr J. H., Muswell Hill	3 0 0
Low, Mr and Mrs	0 10 0	Robertson, Mrs T.	0 10 0
Low, Mr J.	0 2 0	Robson, Mr W.	1 1 0
Macrae, Miss	0 5 0	Rose, Mr Hugh	5 0 0
M'Culloch, Mrs, Dumfries	1 0 0	Ross, Miss J.	0 2 6
Macdougall, Mrs	0 2 6	R—, Miss A.	0 2 6
M'Donald, Mr A.	0 2 6	Scott, Mr	5 0 0
Macfadzean, Mrs	0 5 0	Scott, Mrs	0 2 6
Macfie, Mr R. A.	3 0 0	Simmie, Mrs	0 3 6
Macgregor, Mr D. R., M.P.	3 3 0	Simpson, Miss	1 0 0
Mackay, Mr D.	0 2 6	Simpson, Captain	1 1 0
M'Kean, Mrs	0 10 0	Smith, Miss Ramsay	1 0 0
M'Kean, Mr Muir	0 2 6	Smith, Miss M.	6 0 0
McKenzie, Dr	1 1 0	Somerville, Mr R.	0 2 6
M'Kenzie, Mr Hugh	0 2 6	Spalding, Mrs	0 2 6
Mackillican, Mr	0 2 6	Stevenson, Miss E.	20 0 0
M'Kinnel, Mrs, Dumfries	2 0 0	Steventon, Miss L.	10 0 0
M'Lachlan, Mr A.	0 2 6	Stoddart, Miss	0 10 0
M'Lachlan, Mr P.	0 2 6	Steele, Mr R.	1 0 0
M'Laren, Mrs	10 0 0	Stewart, Mr J. C.	0 2 6
M'Laren, Miss	5 0 0	Swan, Mr A.	0 2 6
M'Laren, Mr D., jun.	2 0 0	Small Sums, Collected	22 12 7
Macleod, Mrs, Ben Rhydding	2 2 0	Taylor, Mr Peter	0 2 6
M'Millan, Miss	0 2 6	Thomasson, Mr T., Bolton (don.)	50 0 0
Macrobie, Miss M. L.	0 5 0	Thomson, Mr J.	0 5 0
M'Tavish, Mr H.	1 0 0	Thorne, Mrs	1 1 0
M'Queen, Mrs	5 0 0	Trevelyan, Mr A.	2 0 0
M'Symon, Mrs	0 5 0	Walls, Mr J.	1 0 0
Manhet, Mr J. L.	0 2 6	Walls, Miss	1 0 0
Masson, Mrs	2 0 0	Warren, Mr	0 10 6
Marshall, Bailie	0 10 0	Wellstood, Mrs S.	1 0 0
Meikle, Rev. G.	0 5 0	Wellstood, Mrs J.	1 0 0
Mein, Mrs B.	0 10 0	Western, Mr	0 5 0
Melrose, Mr	0 10 0	Wigham, Mrs	1 0 0
Middleton, Mr J.	0 2 6	Wigham, Miss	0 10 0
Millar, Mr and Mrs	2 0 0	Williams, Mrs	2 0 0
Millar, Mr Whyte	2 0 0	Williams, Mrs	0 10 0
Miller, Mr & Mrs R., London	5 0 0	Wilson, Bailie	0 10 0
Miller, Mr & Mrs W., Brighton	5 0 0	Wilson, Miss E.	0 10 0
Milne, Mr J. D.	1 0 0	Wotherspoon, Mr W.	1 0 0
Mitchel, Mr Joseph	0 10 0	Wyld, Miss A.	0 10 0
Mitchellhill, Mrs	0 2 0	Yellowlees, Mr D.	0 2 6
Morton, Mr J.	4 0 0		
Morrison, Mr W.	0 10 0		
Murchison, Mr C.	0 2 6		
Murray, Provost	2 0 0		
Murray, Mrs	0 2 0		
Murray, Sir J.	0 10 0		