

WOMEN'S SER
 FAWCETT
 27, WILFRE
 WESTMINS

EDINBURGH N.S.W.S.
 MILL, J.S.
 COBBE, F.P.
 HIGGINSON, T.W.
 C.C.N.S.W.S.
 SPENCER, H.
 POTTER, T.B.
 MORRISON, W.
 FAWCETT, H.
 PLAYFAIR, L.
 DILKE, C.
 JENKINSON, G.
 BRIGHT, J.
 HENLEY, J.W.
 DISRAELI, B.
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 BRIGHT, J.B.
 NORTHCOTE, S.
 FAWCETT, H.

1873 (VOLUME 3)

5th annual meeting, 1873.
 Speech of J.S. Mill at great meeting in favour of WS, Edinburgh, 1871.
 Why women desire the franchise.
 Ought women to learn the alphabet?
 Opinions of women on women's suffrage;... of the press.
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 Sir E. Dilke, Bart, M.P. on Women's Suffrage
 Sir George Jenkinson, M.P., on Women's Suffrage
 Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., on Women's Suffrage

Central Committee. Rules.
 Woman Suffrage, Printed
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Mr. Fitz James Stephen on the Position of Women
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A Few Words on Women's Suffrage. By D. H. Lynch Dublin 1873.
The Right of Women to Exercise the Elective Franchise.
by Mrs Henry Davis Poolin Manchester 1873.
8th Annual Report Manchester National Society
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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Vol 3

FIFTH ANNUAL
MEETING IN EDINBURGH

IN

QUEEN STREET HALL,

ON 27TH JANUARY 1873.

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

THE EDINBURGH BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY JOHN GREIG & SON.

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HEAVY

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MISS TAYLOUR,

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



FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

IN FAVOUR OF

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

HELD IN

QUEEN STREET HALL, EDINBURGH,

JANUARY 27. 1873.

—:o:—

A PUBLIC MEETING, in favour of Women's Suffrage, was held in Queen Street Hall, on Monday, 27th January. The hall was crowded, the number of ladies present being especially large. On the platform there were—Mr M'Laren, M.P.; Professors Hodgson, Calderwood, and Masson; Councillors Macdougald and Millar; Messrs W. A. Brown, advocate, Ord (Muirhouselaw), Hugh Rose, Wm. M'Crie, J. Crawford, S.S.C., D. Pryde, M.A., and John Burn Murdoch; Mrs Ernestine L. Rose (New York), Miss Robertson (of Dublin), Mrs M'Laren, Miss Wigham, Miss Stevenson, Mrs Ord, Mrs Nichol (Huntly Lodge), Mrs E. Parker (Dundee), Mrs Masson, Miss Taylour, Miss Burton, Miss Agnes M'Laren, &c. The Lord Provost stated that letters of apology had been received from Mr Miller, M.P., Mr Macfie, M.P., Lady Amberley, Rev. Dr Pulsford, Bailie Cousin, &c.

On the motion of Mr M'LAREN, M.P., the Lord Provost was called to the chair.

The LORD PROVOST, on taking the chair, said he was very happy to preside on such an occasion. It was a meeting where really one might say "Ladies and gentlemen," and perhaps it was a little more interesting than the common run of meetings on that account. In addition to that, they were met to deal with a subject which he thought was of paramount importance. It was one of the great questions of the age, and it was one which he thought when solved, as it would be and must be before long, would exercise a very great influence upon society. It had always appeared to him—and he might say so as chairman maintaining a neutrality without giving offence—that, considering that the principle of the British constitution was that no one should be taxed who was not represented, and

who had not a share in the representation, it was the grossest injustice that women who were not as the law classes them, *femmes couvertes*—that was, who had not husbands, or who were not represented by husbands—should not have a right to vote for members of Parliament, and in other matters in which they pay taxes. (Applause.) He was satisfied that the solution would be speedy, seeing the great number of members of Parliament who are now in favour of a change of the law, that when the change did come it would have the most beneficial effect upon public business. (Applause.) He did not speak entirely of choosing members of Parliament. There were many other matters—the municipal institutions, the management of the poor—that especially—(hear, hear)—where it would be a blessing if women had a right to vote and to be represented. (Applause.) He was proud to occupy the chair at a meeting of that kind, where he had an opportunity of testifying his own sense of what was due to women in the matter, and of expressing the hope that a change in the law would not be long in being effected. (Applause.) He would now ask Miss Wigham to read the Report. (Applause.)

MISS WIGHAM then read the Annual Report of the Edinburgh Branch of the Society :—

“The conclusion of our sixth year of work in this cause claims from us a brief summary of proceedings since our last Annual Report was presented to our friends.

“We have occasion to look back upon the intervening period with much satisfaction, as it has been marked by great activity and corresponding progress. The cause of Women’s Suffrage is making rapid strides in the estimation of intelligent persons of all classes. In illustration of this, we may mention that ninety-five public meetings have been held in Scotland during the year, which have mostly been presided over by the chief magistrate or other influential person in the town or district in which they have been held. The attendance has generally been crowded, and on every occasion but one, resolutions have been passed in favour of petitioning Parliament in support of Mr Jacob Bright’s Bill. Besides the petitions thus sent from public meetings, signed by the chairman, and 14 from Town Councils, 172 other petitions went from Scotland, signed in all by 44,749 persons, praying for the removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women; whilst the total number of petitions sent to the House of Commons from the United Kingdom was 829, signed by 350,093 persons, almost double the number of last year. (Applause.)

“Consequent upon the public meetings which have been held, 35 additional committees have been formed, making in all 60 allied committees in Scotland, composed of gentlemen and ladies of good position in the various towns where the importance of the question has been recognised. (Applause.) We have thus reason to appreciate the active services of the ladies who have given their time and talents to advance this cause throughout the country. Our eloquent friend, Miss Taylour, has ad-

dressed most of the meetings; and when we mention that she has addressed within the last three years 123 meetings, and has now been prevailed upon to become Secretary of our Edinburgh Branch of the Association, our friends will agree with us that we owe her much for her willing and powerful service.

“Our agitation has been conducted without a single paid agent, and remembering the work that has been done, it will not be denied, even by those who consider them incompetent to exercise the Franchise, that some executive talent has been accorded to women.

“Mr Jacob Bright moved the second reading of his Bill for the removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women on the 1st of May 1872, in a most able speech. He was supported by Mr Eastwick, Sir Charles Adderley, Mr Heron, the Attorney-General, and the late lamented Member for Cork. We would again record our sincere thanks to Mr Jacob Bright and his supporters for their able advocacy of the principle of this Bill, and for the promise of future help.

“On the last division 163 members of all political opinions voted in favour of, and 242 against, the motion. It was therefore lost on that occasion by a majority of 79; but notwithstanding this result, it is evident that there is an increase of support in the House, for in 1870 119 voted for it; in 1871, 159; and in 1872, 163. These numbers include the tellers and pairs. Although the hostile minority was increased by 10, we shall hope that on the next division the weight of members, as well as of intellect and good sense, will be on our side. The Scotch members were again as two to one on the side of Women’s Suffrage, 25 having voted for the Bill, 14 against, whilst 25 were absent. While expressing our obligations to the 25 Scotch members who voted for us, we would especially thank our own City and University members, who have never been absent from a division, and who have consistently aided the cause of Women’s Suffrage by vote and voice on every occasion of its being brought forward.

“Two very important measures directly connected with according the Franchise to women in Scotland, have passed the House of Commons during the last Session. First, the Ballot Bill, which provides a quiet and dignified mode of voting suitable for women, calculated to protect them from the excitement formerly attendant on elections, which has hitherto been put forward by opponents as their strongest objection against women being allowed to exercise their right to the Franchise. The other measure referred to is the Scotch Education Bill, which not only provides for the voting of women, but also permits the election of women to the School Boards, thus recognising their right to direct representation and action on a matter so important as National Education.

“The trial of voting by Ballot in the municipal elections has proved entirely satisfactory; and to shew how women do appreciate the Franchise (when protected by the Ballot), we may state that in Manchester,

at the first municipal election in which they had the power of voting, the number of women on the electoral roll who exercised their right was proportionately smaller than that of the men; whilst under the Ballot the positions were reversed, and the proportion was in favour of the women. But this need not alarm our timid friends (?), seeing that the proportion of male to female voters is as seven to one.

“During the past year we have had sorrowfully to record the loss of several of our warmest supporters, among these we may mention the names of John Francis Maguire, M.P. for Cork; Col. Skyes, M.P. for Aberdeen; and Matthew Hill, Esq., late Recorder of Birmingham, for whose faithful services we feel a grateful appreciation.

“In looking forward to another year, we would claim the support of all who love impartial justice, and who appreciate the representative character of our national Legislature.

“The late elections have given us two new supporters in Scotland, and we have reason to believe that we shall have more friendly votes recorded when the next division takes place; and we may hope it will not be long before the right of the Franchise will be given to women, and that they will feel bound to exercise it intelligently, conscientiously, and religiously, not only for the benefit of their own sex, but for that of the whole of the body politic of our beloved country.”

✓ Mr BROWN, advocate, moved the approval of the report. He said it appeared from it, on the one hand, that every legitimate means, attended by the most untiring energy, had been put forward to promote the great end of the society; and, on the other hand, that the response of the people of Scotland had not been in the least degree doubtful, but, on the contrary, had been cordial, weighty, sympathetic, and in the last degree encouraging. Whether or not the time had yet come for the complete and final triumph of this movement, one thing at least was quite certain, and that was a great end established—that it had taken its place, and that no mean one, among the great and foremost questions of the day—that it could no longer be pushed aside as the offspring of mere visionary enthusiasm—that it ranked on its side a portion at least of the best intellect of the country, and that the admission was now made universally that very grave arguments indeed were necessary to cope with its invincible pretensions. The report spoke for itself, because it contained a statement of facts that needed no commentary. One of the aids the movement stood imperatively in need of was, that men who interested themselves in public questions should not hesitate to make a frank, candid, and open avowal of their feelings, but should resolve to make every sacrifice of personal convenience, and even of things that were more important, as a pledge of the honesty of their convictions; and, in a special manner, should resolve to run the risk of the unpleasantness and unpopularity of being for a time at least in the minority, and of being denounced, it might be by ridicule, by a great number of people who thought themselves wise, but were

only wise in their own conceit. (Hisses and applause.) Turning to the merits of the question, he said the basis of political representation in this country was property. No distinction was drawn by the State between the property of men and the property of women; on the contrary, the property of men and the property of women played the same common part in promoting government and the prosperity of the country; and, accordingly, to confer political representation on men and withhold it from women was just, in other words, to impose a disability on one section of the people without reason, without any necessity for it, and with the result of operating an act of signal injustice. (Applause.) Strictly speaking, according to accurate conceptions of thought and language, no member of the State was entitled to political privileges or political power. These were distributed by the State amongst its members according as it judged proper and considered to be most conducive to the common good. If the State could shew now that it was not expedient that this privilege should be extended to women—that it could not be extended to women without operating injuriously to the State—he frankly admitted the obligation of the State had been sufficiently discharged. How was it proposed to shew this? It was said that if we admitted women to the political franchise there would be a great social revolution. If by this was meant that when women were admitted to this right there would ensue an internecine war between the sexes—(laughter)—if it was meant that women were immediately to proceed to revenge the injuries which for centuries they had suffered at the hands of men, then he admitted that would be very like a social revolution indeed. (Laughter.) But this assumption was altogether unwarranted, and, moreover, was an assumption which at every turn was contradicted by facts. In regard to that class of women who were in favour of this movement, it was a libel upon them to say that they had done anything in connection with the vindication of their rights, from which a conclusion so sinister could be inferred. No doubt they had been pertinacious, but pertinacity was evidence of a good cause. As editors of newspapers and magazines, as directors of public institutions of every conceivable sort, women had been selected to fill the most responsible offices, and the testimony was everywhere explicit to the effect that the work had been conscientiously and thoroughly done. (Applause.) No doubt, a certain amount of this must be put down to the credit of new-born zeal, but a considerable balance was left, which enabled him to repel the accusation that they were actuated by any but the most worthy motives in their present crusade. As to that class of women who were hostile or indifferent to the movement, all he could say was that he left them in the hands of the men who were so fond of playing them off as their trump cards in this movement. (Laughter.) If it were true that they were not anxious for political power, and were willing that it should continue in the hands of men, they were in no danger of promoting that social revolution of which such a horror was professed. Another revolution might certainly ensue—a revolution in favour of knowledge,

and of reason, and of everything that gives dignity to human character and to human destiny, and for the purpose and end of such a revolution the sooner they were in the strife the better. Another argument used against granting the suffrage to women was that its extension to them would bring into bodily shape and presence a phantom which had been for some years back floating to and fro in the political atmosphere, but of which, so far as he could see, nobody had been able to give a proper account—the Conservative reaction. But he found on inquiry that men arrived at this conclusion by assuming—to which he did not object—that Liberalism is a reasonable thing, but by further assuming—against which he certainly protested—that women would vote with the Tories just because Liberalism was a reasonable thing, and they were incapable of any exercise of the franchise that was not absurd. (Laughter.) Those who maintained this view placed themselves in the position of either begging the whole question, or in the worse of reasoning in a circle. In his concluding remarks Mr Brown urged upon the members of the society the necessity for increased exertion. The vote of the House of Commons last year might have carried a feeling of momentary disappointment, but it had not a hostile significance in the remotest degree. The tide was not receding because each successive wave did not reach the same margin of the shore. They were resisted not by men who had studied this question, but by men and women who calmly told them that to think seriously upon the question was the acme of absurdity. He believed there was a certain amount of honest, sincere, intelligent, and high principled opposition to the cause; but he believed that was the exception and not the rule; and from that consideration they were to gather hope, and not discouragement, because the remainder of the opposition, notwithstanding its high intellectual ability and its social and political position, consisted of men opposed to the cause merely because they believed women would become less attractive to them, less fit companions for the hours of idleness, which was all the attention they thought fit to bestow upon them—(laughter)—men who were desirous to perpetuate the social and political bondage of women, because that was the only condition and these the only circumstances in which their own imperial tastes and habits could be gratified without disturbing—men not devoid of moral feeling, not devoid of moral culture, but whose practical ethics had not been placed higher than the fancy of the poet—“The dream of freedom is a slave’s embrace.” Against such an opposition their cause must triumph at no distant date. No exertion should be spared on the part of the ladies in the way of self-improvement, so that when their kingdom opened up to them they might be able to occupy it with dignity and self-respect, and so at once to make evident the justice of the triumph of their cause. He recommended them, when the school boards came to be elected, to profit by the example shewn by ladies in England who had offered themselves as candidates for the membership of these boards, and who had proved their fitness to sit upon them. He greatly deceived himself if it should prove that prejudice

was stronger here than on the other side of the Tweed. A great field was to be occupied in the question of education; and if the women of Scotland could intervene to allay the ecclesiastical and denominational contentions that had so long disfigured and still embittered their social history, and by the divine rule of love and charity, to guide the people to true issues of life and happiness, they would make a noble return for the calumnies and the injustice under which they had so long suffered.

Mr JOHN BURN MURDOCH seconded the motion, which was carried.

Professor HODGSON, who rose to move the second resolution, said that one thing that encouraged him was the reflection that the hiss they had heard, as it was no doubt masculine in gender was also singular in number. (Laughter.) His resolution was as follows:—“That all women who are owners or occupiers of lands or houses in their own right should be entitled to vote for members of Parliament, in the same circumstances as men who are owners or occupiers of lands or houses of the same description or value.” This resolution explained and vindicated itself, he said. It did not claim any womanhood suffrage, because there was no manhood suffrage. We had at the present time simply household suffrage, and all this resolution contended for was that the women who fulfilled the conditions that were imposed upon men in order to qualify them for the franchise should not be rejected on account of their sex. It did not claim any qualification on account of their sex—it did not insist that sex should be a qualification—but it insisted that it should not be a disqualification. Take the example of the Queen. She was not on the Throne because she was a woman, but she was on it though she was a woman. If on every ground common to men a woman had a claim to vote, she should be permitted to vote. He did not think this was by any means an unreasonable view to take. Some people in opposing the granting of the suffrage to women thought that it was intended that daughters should vote in their fathers’ houses, and wives in their husbands’ houses, and that thus what Mr Brown had called an internecine war would arise. No such thing was intended. All that was intended was that those women, exceptional no doubt, but still numerous, who were the occupiers of lands and houses, should be entitled to vote on that ground. This was a reasonable and just proposition. The arguments that were most commonly urged against the granting of what they asked seemed to be matters rather of feeling than intellect—not to be despised on that account, because we were not merely intellectual beings, but actuated by feeling as well as intellect. The first argument against it was that it was a new thing—an innovation on that which had previously existed. On this point he thought some argument could be raised. This was an innovation, but, fortunately, it was ceasing to be looked at in that light, seeing that there had been so many examples of women being raised to offices of trust and responsibility. The fact that a thing was an innovation and something new was no argument against its adoption whatsoever. All the things that were now old

were once new; and the question was not whether a thing was new, but whether it was true, whether it was just and kind that the thing should be done. If it was right that it should be done, novelty was an argument in its favour, as it shewed that we were doing something better and something more than we had hitherto done. (Applause.) But the more common ground of objection was that which had been alluded to that night—that women were not intellectually qualified to use the franchise. This was obviously an assumption by those who had least right to make it—by men, by those who prided themselves upon gallantry and being exceedingly respectful to the female sex, but who were very apt to shew that their respect was somewhat spurious by speaking of women, and especially behind their backs, as beings of an inferior order of creation altogether. There were many persons whose politeness consisted in first robbing woman of the ground on which she stood, and then politely handing her a chair. As regarded the particular point of women's fitness for the exercise of the franchise, he maintained that so long as no knowledge qualification, no educational qualification, was required for men exercising the franchise, it was an insult to the whole female sex to maintain that they by virtue of their sex should be disqualified, and on that ground alone. It was monstrous that that which was not applied to one human being of one sex, should be applied to every one of the other sex—the whole sex being disqualified upon a ground the application of which to the other sex was not even dreamt of. (Applause.) There was another answer to this objection, and it was that those ladies who would be likely to vote on the ground that this resolution maintained, were precisely most likely to be the *elite* of their own sex in intelligence, in that amount of qualification which was required in practical affairs, in the choice of legislators, and in the management of the business of life—those ladies who had property of their own, and were the heads of households—competent to manage their own affairs, and to regulate their own households. Were they to be told that those persons, exceptional in their own sex, were below the average of the other sex? This was absurd. They were told as a further objection that women had not asked for this privilege or this right. But the fact that many thousands of women *had* petitioned for it affords a very sufficient answer to the objection that ladies did not wish to have this right. That some did not wish for it he was quite prepared to believe; and considering the kind of education that women had up to this time had, the keeping of them in leading strings, the estranging of their minds from the public affairs as beyond their province, it was not to be considered wonderful that the great majority of women were not instructed in this question which so deeply affected them. But it was not desired or intended to make all women vote whether they would or not. From this objection one would think that there was an intention to force them into the polling booth. The vote would only be confined to those who wished to exercise the right, and it was absurd to maintain that because some did not wish to exercise

the right, and did not think it a matter of importance, that they should stand in the way of those who did. (Applause.)

Miss ROBERTSON of Dublin seconded the motion. She said:— I took a long journey to be present at this meeting to-night, partly because I wished to testify in a practical manner my appreciation of the honour done me in inviting me to be here, and partly because I felt that I would like to tell the people of Edinburgh in their own city how much I know that the cause of the enfranchisement of women owes to the talent, the energy, and the perseverance of the ladies who form the Edinburgh Committee for Women's Suffrage. In all parts of the United Kingdom the advance of the movement for obtaining the franchise for women ratepayers has been very remarkable; but I think the progress of the question has been more marked in Scotland than elsewhere, as at first a comparatively small number of Scotch members of parliament were favourable to granting women this suffrage, while now a very large proportion of them support the measure. This encouraging state of things no doubt is owing in a great measure to the judicious manner in which the agitation for procuring the suffrage for women has been carried on, and to the spread of information on the subject throughout the country. In general those who are working in this cause find that want of knowledge of the question, and of the aims of those who advocate it, form the chief reasons of opposition. I have been requested to second the resolution so ably moved by Professor Hodgson, and the words of which you no doubt remember. I think those words suggest a great deal of reflection. The fact that women are permitted to hold property, and to be owners of houses and lands, proves that they are considered capable of filling a very responsible position, and of enjoying very important rights. The fact that women have been allowed to hold property has existed, I may remark, from the earliest period of which we have any record, and, consequently, the power of ownership which is allowed to women in this country is a privilege which has been handed down from the rudest and most ancient times. We are therefore all thoroughly accustomed to women enjoying the rights of property. In the present condition of society in this country, we are indeed familiar that in the case of men, ownership of houses and lands confers a claim to the parliamentary franchise. But although many members of parliament consider that such ownership should equally confer the franchise upon women, and though upwards of three hundred thousand persons petitioned the House of Commons last session to grant the suffrage to such women, still this conviction is of so comparatively recent date, that no one could expect every one universally to adopt it at once as a matter of course without hesitation or without any inquiry. But the simple point to be considered in this question is this: If the interests of men require to be represented, would not representation for women be necessary? No one, I suppose, imagines that women have got no interests to be taken care of, nor could it on the other hand be declared that they would not know

how to use the privilege of getting their interests represented. For when, by the accident of birth or other circumstances, women have been afforded the opportunity of ruling over kingdoms, they have proved themselves fully equal even to that great responsibility, their subjects were quite as prosperous, and their countries quite as well attended to as when under the sway of male sovereigns. All readers of history are well aware of this fact, and even newspaper readers may remember that about three weeks ago, in an account given of China, there was mention made of the wise administration of the Empress Dowager of China who, as regent, governed that vast empire for the last eleven years. I will quote the words of the *Times* correspondent on this subject: "The Chinese government is stronger, the treasury is richer, and the facilities for improvement are greater than when the Empress Dowager set the machinery by which the government goes on; and the object steadily held in view,—the attainment of good order and rule for the millions who inhabit China,—is daily nearer to becoming an established fact." We have all heard that the treatment of women in China is very degrading, and have boasted of the superior manner in which women are regarded in this country; but if, as we see was the case, a Chinese woman was invested with the office of regent, and filled that important office of trust and responsibility in the exemplary way that has been stated, can any Scotchman or any Englishman boast much of his superior civilization to the Chinese, if they would deny to all their fellow-countrywomen the infinitesimal part in the government which a vote would give? But the objection in some minds to women voting is not that they think women are of insufficient capacity, but that they consider there is something masculine about voting, and that if women obtained the suffrage their feminine qualities would desert them, and they would become like men. This mistaken fear arises from the fact that men have monopolized the parliamentary vote for so long a period, that many persons consider that the exercise of the franchise requires peculiarly masculine qualities, inasmuch that some have gone so far as to say that women could not claim the right of the suffrage, because they are not prepared to take up arms in defence of their country. Now nothing could more plainly point out how little thought, how little pains, have been taken by many of our opponents to study this question, when they could for a moment put forth such an insane objection. Let any person ask a British soldier on active service, with his breast covered with medals, if he can exercise the franchise? If he has ever done? Do the people here think that the soldiers they see quartered in Edinburgh have a vote for the city or any other place? If they do think so they are very much mistaken. The qualification for the suffrage is not the capability of fighting battles—it is given on completely other grounds. Our soldiers are not in the class of householders and ratepayers; they occupy quarters provided for them by Government; they do not fulfil the conditions of property and residence which confer the franchise in this country. Since, therefore, the very men whose profession it is to guard us from foreign attack have not got the suffrage

themselves, such a fact proves clearly how misinformed those persons are who say that women are debarred from the privilege of representation because they do not defend the nation. There are other persons who do not assist this movement from being under the impression that women are excluded from the suffrage in order to save them trouble and to preserve their dignity; but an examination into the laws of the country will soon convince any thinking person, that so far from being treated with exceptional indulgence or tenderness, women are legally treated with great harshness and severity as regards their property and the custody and guardianship of their children. Our laws relating to women generally date from very ancient times. What we consider in these days to be advanced civilization and enlightenment have, as yet, very little to do with the legal position of women. The same spirit of tyranny that characterised many of the laws respecting masses of men in the past, no doubt influenced the laws respecting women; but men having got the benefit of the franchise, have been emancipated from a thralldom that they would consider now intolerable; while women being still unrepresented, continue to suffer from the severe laws made in dark ages. We are accustomed to hear from our opponents in this cause a good deal about the wisdom of our ancestors respecting the position of women, but no one would venture to talk of the wisdom of our ancestors respecting the position of men, and that it would be well to return to the practice of keeping masses of men in serfdom, subject to the despotic will of their lords. We must acknowledge that our ancestors' general idea of government was tyranny; their idea of religious zeal, intolerance and persecution; their rewards for scientific research, punishment and torture. If rulers in dark and superstitious times made harsh laws for women, they also made harsh laws for men; but the blessing of parliamentary representation has benefited men, while women are still denied that blessing and protection. The more the franchise is extended to men the worse it will be for women. Even now, women are rapidly becoming the only excluded class—if I might call half the population of the country "a class." Men of every description—educated and uneducated—even if just only a little removed from idiocy—are now receiving the benefit of representation, while women of the highest attainments, and women earning their bread honestly and independently, are still deemed incapable of exercising that privilege. Exclusion from the advantages of political representation has always been deemed a mark of degradation—never a symbol of dignity. If any town disgraces itself by corrupt practices at elections, it is disfranchised as a punishment, and I have just come from a country where the greater part of the male population during the last century were excluded from parliamentary representation owing to their religion. This was not done certainly to increase the happiness of Irish Catholics, or to add to their dignity, but from a very different motive. I shall not here pause to inquire into the merits of the case; it would be foreign to our purpose to do so. It is sufficient to say, that Irishmen for years laboured under disabilities very similar to those under which women all over the

United Kingdom suffer from. They could not vote for members of parliament; they could only be permitted to fill subordinate offices in the State; and even difficulties were devised and created about their guardianship of children—their ability to execute deeds and to purchase lands. Happily all this has now passed away, and I only allude to it as an illustration, to shew how political disabilities were never imposed on any people as a mark of respect or indulgence.

One of the worst results that arise from the exclusion of women from the franchise is, that men who are inclined to be just and kind to women, are, nevertheless, taught by this exclusion, that women must be mentally inferior to men, or wherefore permit them to labour under such disabilities? They cannot believe that this exclusion arises from injustice, because they are so just themselves, and they have been taught to consider our laws and customs as based upon right principles. There are numbers of these men; they are not, of course, deep thinkers—for deep thinkers are rare among either men or women—but they are estimable men, whose opinion is of much consequence to those around them, and who imagine that, however sensible their female relatives and friends may undoubtedly seem, yet still there must be some great general inferiority among women to account for the subordinate position they hold. Those who read and think deeply understand how it was only by great and mighty efforts that men in this country arose from serfdom to a glorious liberty that adds lustre to the name of Great Britain, and makes every man under British rule feel that he inherits a freedom that must ennoble his nature. I may observe that I do not advocate the enfranchisement of women from any utopian idea that the world will suddenly become perfect when women are enfranchised. I believe the country will be improved so far that one great blot upon it now will be removed; but it is precisely because I think women are so like men in their thoughts and aspirations, that I ask this measure of justice for them. If I thought they were either too exalted or too debased to experience humiliation under insult and misery under oppression, I would not endeavour to advance this cause—nor devote all my time to it as I do. I believe that women in every circumstance of life should be represented as women. That in what is called their womanly sphere—in their home-life, as wives and mothers, they especially need representation—as much as in their spheres of industry and worth as bread-winners for themselves and others. The idea that women are all provided for by men must vanish before stern facts. Every one here knows women working or trying to work for their own livelihood, struggling in a hard world under every possible disadvantage—receiving no indulgence anywhere—obliged to pay to the uttermost like every one else for what they buy, yet poorly paid for their work, as all women's work is paid. Realities tell more than fanciful theories, and unfortunately realities let us know that women stand much in need of the power, the privilege, and protection of Parliamentary representation. For this reason I advocate so warmly the enfranchisement of women,—and for this reason at the present time I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution just proposed.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mrs E. ROSE then moved the third resolution, as follows:—"That this meeting desires to thank the twenty-five Scotch members who have voted for Mr Jacob Bright's bill, and especially the members for our own city and university, who have consistently promoted the cause by vote and speech on every occasion; and further resolves to petition both houses of Parliament and to memorialise the Prime Minister and Home Secretary in favour of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women." In supporting the resolution, she said, that in a country which recognised the principle that taxation without representation was tyranny, it certainly did not require a great many arguments to prove the title of women to the franchise; and yet, strange to say, woman is taxed and not represented. There were no arguments that could be brought against this just claim. Two years ago, some opposition was heard in the House of Commons against Mr Jacob Bright's bill, and last year again opposition was made to the same bill. But what were the arguments adduced against it? They were so puerile, so childish, so trifling, that it was really a waste of time to consider them. (Laughter.) One argument against the bill was that woman was not logical. (Laughter.) Now, really she was not standing there to prove that she is logical; she only meant to say that that was an exceedingly illogical argument—(laughter)—for the franchise was not given for logic. (Continued laughter and applause.) Had it been based upon logic, she doubted whether that member of Parliament would ever have been in his place. (Laughter and applause.) Again, some other member adduced the argument against the bill—Mr Beresford Hope; alas! what was in a name! he was exceedingly hopeless—(laughter)—he was afraid if woman got the franchise she would bring sympathy and consolation into Parliament. He said sympathy and consolation were very good in a family, it was very necessary for a man at home; but if woman had the franchise she might bring these qualities into politics, and, bringing them into politics, would increase the expenditure of the country. (Laughter.) How that followed may be very logical, but she could not see it. But, as the franchise is not based upon logic, members of Parliament have a perfect right to be as illogical as they please. (Laughter.) The Attorney-General for Ireland a year ago gave what seemed to be the best reason why he was opposed to the bill, and it was, "Because a woman told him so." (Great laughter and applause.) These were specimens of about all the arguments that had been brought against the motion in Parliament—(laughter)—and if that was in Parliament, what could they expect out of it? (Continued laughter and applause.) One class of opponents to the bill said that woman was inferior to man; she was not going to argue whether she was or not, though she did not believe it. (Laughter and great applause.) But suppose she was inferior in some things, she might be superior in others, and the one balanced the other. (Applause.) Another class of opponents said woman was far superior to man, and that was the very reason why they did not wish to give her the franchise. (Applause and laughter.) She was so superior that they were afraid that her coming in contact

with men at elections would contaminate her. (Laughter.) A writer in a scientific monthly recently went so far as to say that, if woman really had the franchise, she would have to change the mode of her dress, because her clothes would be fairly torn off her back by the mobs at the polling places. She did not believe that either; but supposing it were true, and that men behaved so badly that it would be unsafe for women to go to the ballot boxes with them, what then? Was the misconduct of man a reason why woman should be deprived of her rights? No; on the contrary, she would say—"If it is true that he behaves so badly, that is an additional, and perhaps the greatest, reason why woman should have the franchise and be there, and there, as everywhere, to teach him how to behave." (Loud applause.) It was as self-evident as that two and two make four, that human beings under the same conditions ought to have the same general rights; and where were the conditions so different in this case? Humanity recognises no sex, justice recognises no sex, mind recognises no sex, morality recognises no sex—(hear, hear)—pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, life and death recognise no sex. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence; like him she is subject to all the vicissitudes of life; like him, when she violates the laws of her being, she has to pay the penalty; like him, when she breaks the laws of the land, she has to be punished. Then, in the name of common sense! in the name of justice! why should woman, under the same conditions as man, not have the suffrage the same as he has? She supports the Government; she pays rates and taxes; she has the right to representation. Woman ought to claim the suffrage on the ground simply of justice; but it went much further, far deeper than that. What elevated man will not degrade woman. (Applause.) Man has become elevated by the franchise. How so? By being recognised as a citizen of a great empire; while woman has never yet been recognised as a citizen except to pay taxes. (Laughter and some hisses.) If woman had the franchise it would elevate her in the public mind, and that reacting on her would elevate her in her own estimation. It would make her look upon herself with more respect, with more dignity. Perchance she might not be quite so willing to become the mere toy and plaything of flattering men as she had been—laughter and applause—but she would become instead a better companion for an intelligent man, a better citizen to society. She would take a higher aim and have a higher object in life. She would know that life consists not only in pleasing men, but in endeavouring to make the world better and happier for having lived in it. (Applause.) She would be better capable of fulfilling her duties as a mother who lays the foundation of the infant mind, as a woman who, by some mystic sympathy, rules youth, who councils manhood, and solaces old age. Talk about the superiority of man! (Laughter.) The stream cannot run higher than the source that feeds it. It was the mother who laid the foundation of the male infant mind. (Loud applause.) She urged them to go to the Legislature, to send in petitions to Parliament; and if they once obtained the franchise every one would agree that it was right, and would only wonder why

it had not been given long ago. A final argument against the movement was, that woman was utterly unqualified for the franchise. How did they know that? It reminded her of the good old lady who would not allow her son to go into the water until he had first learned how to swim. Woman has never had a chance to prove what she could do. From childhood to the grave the law had placed woman in the *power of man*, it deprived her of her property and her earnings, deprived her—a mother—of her children; yet these laws were made by men as good as men were now. She did not accuse them of *wilfully* insulting their mothers, but here were the stern facts—in the law-books they found "he and his,"—"he and his," but they never found "she and hers," except when taxes are required. (Great laughter and applause.) Why did they want the suffrage? Because it was the key to unlock the statute-books, and as soon as woman obtained the suffrage, those barbarous laws would have to be changed; and better, more humane, more just laws would have to take their place. (Hear, hear, and applause.) It was a puerile and frivolous argument that woman would cease to be womanly. Did man cease to be manly when he got the franchise? Woman might become stronger in mind, more faithful to convictions; she might become more intellectual; she might take a greater and wider view of the duties and responsibilities of life; but would that unsex her? Would that change her nature? Would she be less a mother, less a sister, less a woman? No! Believe; trust in the right, do justly, and leave all the consequences to themselves. (Loud applause.)

Mr CRAWFORD, S.S.C., seconded the resolution.

The resolution was then put to the meeting, and passed amid applause and some hissing.

Mr HUGH ROSE proposed a vote of thanks to the ladies who had delighted and instructed them by their eloquent addresses. (Loud applause.)

On the motion of Mr MILLAR, a vote of thanks was passed to the Lord Provost for presiding, after which the meeting separated.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT.

INCOME.

Subscriptions and Donations . . .	£336	18	2
From London Central Committee, to aid expenses of Petitions from places where no local Committee existed . . .		25	0
Collections at Public Meetings . . .		33	7
Balance due the Treasurer . . .		10	9
		10	9

£405 14 6

EXPENDITURE.

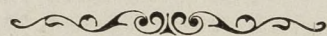
Balance due Treasurer from last year . . .	£12	0	9½
Printing and Publications . . .		50	12
Expenses attendant on getting up Petitions . . .		27	17
Postages and Stationery . . .		32	10
Committee Room . . .		1	7
Expenses of Ninety-five Public Meetings . . .		281	6
		281	6

£405 14 6

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FOR 1872.

A Friend in Fife . . .	£7	0	0	Henderson, Miss H., Glasgow	£0	2	6
A Friend in Lancashire, per Mrs M'Laren . . .		50	0	Hill, Mrs Mitchell . . .		0	1
Alloa Committee . . .		1	4	Hope, Misses . . .		1	1
Ashworth, Misses, Bath . . .		60	0	Hope, Mrs, Drylaw House . . .		0	10
Ayr Committee . . .		2	0	Hoyes, Mr and Mrs . . .		2	0
		2	0	Hunter, Misses . . .		10	0
Black, Mr D. D., Brechin . . .		0	10	Irvine, Mr D'Arcy, Burntisland		0	5
Blackie, Mr S. A. . . .		0	10	Johnstone, Mr Joseph, Montrose		1	0
Brown, Mrs, George Square . . .		0	10	Johnstone, Mr James, do.		1	0
Buchan, Countess Dowager of . . .		3	0	Johnstone, Mr W. Douglas, do.		1	0
Buchanan, Mr R. J., 20 Brighton Pl., Portobello . . .		0	0	Kemp, Mrs, Clerk Street . . .		0	2
Buncle, Mrs . . .		0	2	Kerr, Mrs, Nicolson Street . . .		0	2
Burntisland Committee . . .		1	0	Lamb, Mr David, Brechin . . .		0	10
		1	0	Law, Mr R. . . .		0	10
Caldwell, Messrs, Waterloo Pl. . .		1	1	Lauder, Miss Dick, Melville Cr.		2	0
Caldwell, Miss . . .		1	0	Livingstone, Mr Josiah . . .		0	10
Clapperton, Miss, Drummond Place . . .		0	5	Low, Mr and Mrs, Minto Street		0	11
Cowan, The Rt. Hon. James, Lord Provost, . . .		5	0	Low, Collected by Mrs . . .		0	2
Craig, Misses, 6 Carlton Street		12	0	Low, Mrs, Clerk Street . . .		0	2
Craig, Mr James, Brechin . . .		0	5	Lusk, Alderman, M.P., London		5	5
Cross, Mr, Oxford . . .		0	10				
Crudelius, Mrs . . .		1	0	M. G., Burntisland . . .		1	0
		1	0	M. T. O. . . .		0	2
D., Inverness . . .		0	10	Macfie, R. A., M.P. . . .		2	0
Daniel, Mrs . . .		0	5	M'Culloch, Mrs, Castle St., Dumfries . . .		1	0
Dick, Miss, Burntisland . . .		1	0	M'Kay, Mr E., Crosshill, Glasgow		0	2
Dick, Miss, Hope Terrace . . .		0	2	M'Kinnell, Mrs, Castle Street, Dumfries . . .		1	0
Dixon, Mrs S., Bentwick Villas, Newcastle-on-Tyne . . .		0	2	M'Laren, Mrs, Newington Ho.		10	0
Dodd, Mrs, Nisbet, Kelso . . .		0	10	M'Laren, Miss Agnes, do. . .		2	0
Dollar Committee . . .		1	0	M'Laren, Mr Duncan, do. . .		2	0
Drew, Mrs, Ardencaple Ho., Helensburgh . . .		0	10	M'Leod, Mrs, Ben-Rhydding . . .		2	0
Drew, Miss, Shawfield, Helensburgh . . .		0	10	M'Micking, Mr, Burnbrae, Helensburgh . . .		1	0
		0	10	M'Queen, Mrs, 3 Lansdowne Cr.		5	0
Fleming, Miss J. B., Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow . . .		0	2	Marsh, Mr J., Church Street, St Helens . . .		0	10
Friend . . .		0	5	Marshall, Bailie, Edinburgh . . .		0	10
Friend at Meeting, 13th Feb. . .		1	0	Masson, Mrs, 10 Regent Terrace		1	0
		1	0	Mein, Mrs B. . . .		0	5
Gibson, Miss, 19 Hope Terrace		2	0	Melrose, Mr John . . .		0	10
Gibson, Mr T. . . .		0	5	Millar, Mr W., Lancaster Gate, London . . .		5	0
Gordon, Mrs, Nairn . . .		0	2	Millar, Mrs W., do. . . .		3	0
Graham, Mrs, Penrith . . .		0	5	Millar, Mr Whyte . . .		2	0
Grieve, Mr J. E. . . .		0	5	Miller, Mr, M.P. . . .		5	0
		0	5	Mitchell, James, 59 S. Clerk St.		0	2
Haddington Committee . . .		1	0	Mossman, Mr A. . . .		0	10
Hadwick, Mrs, Cowley Hill, St Helens . . .		0	2	Mudie, Mr Frank, Arbroath . . .		0	2
		0	2	Munro, Dr, Melrose . . .		1	0
Hawick Committee . . .		1	0				

Murray, Mrs, St Catherine's, Dumfries	£0 5 0	Smith, Mrs, Arbroath	£0 2 6
Murray, Sir John, Bart., Philiphaugh	0 10 0	Sorley, Rev. A., Arbroath	0 5 0
Nelson, T., and Sons	1 0 0	Stevenson, Miss E.	10 0 0
Nichol, Mrs, Huntly Lodge	10 0 0	Stevenson, Miss F.	0 10 0
Ord, Mr, Muirhouselaw	1 1 0	Tennant, Mrs, The Glen, Peebles	2 2 0
Ord, Mrs, do.	1 1 0	Thorne, Mrs	0 5 0
Paton, Mr J. W., Montrose	0 5 0	Tilly, Mrs	0 5 0
Peat, Admiral	5 0 0	Tory, A (Melrose)	0 2 6
Peters, Mrs, Dundas Street	0 2 6	Do., do.	0 2 6
Platt, Mr, Denham Hall, Al- tringham, per Mrs M'Laren	10 0 0	Trevelyan, Mr A., Tyneholm	2 0 0
Platt, Mrs, do.	3 0 0	W. E., Melrose	0 2 6
Provost of Inverness	1 0 0	Walker, Mr Alexander, Port- Glasgow	0 2 6
Rendall, Mr Magnus, Leith	0 2 6	Warren, Mr, 4 Mayfield Street	0 10 0
Renton, Mr J. H.	3 0 0	Warren, Mrs, do.	1 0 0
Renton, Mr W., Inverness	1 11 6	Wellstood, Mr	0 5 0
Renton, Mrs Alexander	1 0 0	Wellstood, Mrs	0 5 0
Robertson, Mr David, M.P.	21 0 0	Western, Mr P.	0 5 0
Robertson, Mrs, 29 Buckingham Terrace, Glasgow	0 2 6	Wigham, Mrs, 5 South Gray St.	0 10 0
Robson, Rev. George, Inverness	0 10 0	Wigham, Miss do.	0 5 0
Robson, Mr W., 3 Palmerston Road	1 1 0	Williams, Mr J., The Green, Wishaw	0 12 6
Rose, Mr Hugh	5 0 0	Williams, Mr R., do.	0 2 6
Richardson, Mr James	0 10 0	Wilson, Bailie	0 10 6
Ridley, Mrs, Melrose	0 2 6	Wilson, Miss, Laurel Bank, Helensburgh	0 10 0
S. M., Melrose	0 3 0	Wilson, Mrs, Haylee, Largs	0 5 0
Scott, Bailie, Greenock	10 0 0	Wilson, Mrs, Cowley Bank, St Helens	0 10 0
		Young, Captain, Kirn	1 0 0

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S P E E C H

OF THE LATE

JOHN STUART MILL

AT THE

G R E A T M E E T I N G

IN FAVOUR OF

W O M E N ' S S U F F R A G E ,

HELD IN THE

MUSIC HALL, EDINBURGH, JANUARY 12, 1871.

P R I C E O N E P E N N Y .

EDINBURGH : PRINTED BY JOHN LINDSAY,

FOR THE

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

M D C C C L X X I I I .

S P E E C H
OF THE LATE
JOHN STUART MILL
GREAT MEETING
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
MUSIC HALL, EDINBURGH, JANUARY 12, 1871
PRICE ONE PENNY
EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY JOHN LINDSAY
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

S P E E C H

OF THE LATE

JOHN STUART MILL.

MR JOHN STUART MILL (who was received with great enthusiasm, the audience rising and waving their hats and handkerchiefs,) said—If there is a truth in politics which is fundamental—which is the basis of all free government—it is that when a part of the nation are the sole possessors of power, the interest of that part gets all the serious attention. This does not necessarily imply any active oppression. All that it implies is the natural tendency of the average man to feel what touches self of vastly greater importance than what directly touches only other people. This is the deep-seated and ineradicable reason why women will never be justly treated until they obtain the franchise. They suffer, assuredly, much injustice by the operation of law. But suppose this changed; even then—even if there were no ground of complaint against the laws, there would be a break-down in their execution as long as men alone have a voice in choosing and in removing the officers of Government.

All our recent constitutional reforms, and the whole creed of reformers, are grounded on the fact that the suffrage is needed for self-protection. All experience proves that if one part of the community is held in subjection by another part, it is not trusted with the ordinary means of self-defence, but is left dependent on the goodwill and pleasure of those who are more privileged, the most vital interests of the subject-portion are certain to be, if not recklessly trampled upon, at least postponed to almost anything else.

The treatment of women is certainly no exception to the rule. They have neither equal laws nor an equal administration of them. The laws treat them as they could not long be treated if they had the suffrage; and even if the laws were equal, the administration of the laws is not. Police magistrates and criminal judges cannot be exceptionally bad men; they are not chosen for their bad qualities; they must be thought, by those who appoint them, to represent fairly, or better than fairly, the moral feelings of average men. Yet, what do we see? For an atrocious assault by a man upon a woman, especially if she has the misfortune to be his wife, he is either let off

with an admonition, or he is solemnly told that he has committed a grave offence, for which he must be severely punished, and then he gets as many weeks or months of imprisonment as a man who has taken five pounds' worth of property gets years.

We are told that the good feelings of men are a sufficient protection to women. Those who say so can never, one would suppose, look into the police and law reports. If good feeling does not protect women against being beaten and kicked to death's door every day of their lives, and at last beaten and kicked to actual death, by their special guardians and protectors, can we expect that it will secure them against injuries less revolting to humanity? Most men, it will be said, are incapable of committing such horrible brutality. Perhaps so; but it seems they are quite capable of letting it be committed. If women who are maltreated by their husbands found a defender in every other man who knew of it, they might have some chance of protection without the weapon of the suffrage. But it is never so; slaves did not find it so; serfs did not find it so; conquered nations do not find it so; and neither do women. There are many men who would not consciously do them any wrong; but there must be a great moral improvement in human nature before most men will exert themselves to prevent or to redress wrongs committed by others under the sanction of law. And of these two things—the suffrage for women, and a grand moral improvement in human nature—the suffrage, to my thinking, is likely to be the soonest obtained. (Cheers.) I could afford to stop here. I have made out an ample case. There is a portion of the population, amounting in number to somewhat more than half, to whom the law and its administration do not fulfil their duty, do not afford even the bodily protection due to all—this half happening to be that which is not admitted to the suffrage. Their most important interests are neglected—I do not say from deliberate intention, but simply because their interest is not so near to the feelings of the ruling half as the ruling half's own interest. The remedy is plain: put women in the position which will make their interest the rulers' own interest. Make it as important to politicians to redress the grievances of women as it is to redress those of any class which is largely represented in Parliament.

If nothing more than this could be said in support of their claim to the suffrage, no claim could be more fully made out. (Cheers.) And if the claim is just, so also is it strictly constitutional. One of the recognised doctrines of the British Constitution is that representation is co-extensive with direct taxation. The practice of the Constitution, it is true, for a long time did not correspond with the theory; but it has been made to conform to it at last, in cities and

boroughs, provided the tax-payer is of the male sex; but if a woman, she may be the largest tax-payer in the place, and the person of greatest practical ability besides; no matter, she has no vote. This is something very like punishing her for being a woman. The conditions which in the eye of the law and of the Constitution confer a title to a voice in public affairs are all fulfilled by her, with the single exception of having been born a male. This one deficiency, which I humbly submit she cannot help—(laughter)—is visited on her by the privation of a right as important to her as to any man, and even more important, since those who are physically weakest require protection the most. This is not an injury only, but an indignity. I grant that those who uphold it are in general quite unconscious of its being so; but this comes from the inveterate habit of having one rule and measure for all that concerns women, and another for everything else.

Men are so much accustomed to think of women only as women, that they forget to think of them as human. (Hear, hear.) It is not only for their own sake that women ought to have the suffrage, but also for the sake of the public. It is for the interest of us all, both men and women, and of those who are to come after us. The reasons that may be given for this are many, but I may content myself with two. One, and the strongest, is what we sometimes hear unthinkingly urged as an argument on the other side—because women have so much power already. (Laughter.) It is true they have much power. They have the power which depends on personal influence over men. They have the power of cajolery—(laughter)—and often that of a petted favourite; power sadly inadequate to their own just and necessary protection against wrong, but sufficient at times to produce only too much effect upon the public conduct of the men with whom they are connected. But as this power, instead of being open and avowed, is indirect and unrecognised, no provision is made for its being rightly used. As it is conventionally assumed that women possess no power outside the domestic department, the power which they do and always will possess is exercised without the necessary knowledge, and without the proper responsibility.

It having been decreed that public matters are not a woman's business, her mind is carefully turned away from whatsoever would give her a knowledge of them, and she is taught to care nothing about them—that is, until some private interest or private likings or dislikings come in, when of course these private feelings have it all their own way, there being no public principles or convictions to control them. The power, therefore, which women now have

in public affairs is power without knowledge. It is also power without responsibility. A man's wife is very often the real prompter either of what he does well and nobly, or of what he does foolishly or selfishly; but as she gets no credit for the one, so she is not held accountable for the other; if she is selfish, a very little art suffices to exempt her from censure though she succeeds in compassing her ends; if she is simple and well meaning, she does not feel bound to inform herself, so as to have a reasonable opinion on what is solely the man's business, though all the while her ignorant prepossessions or her natural partialities may be acting as a most pernicious bias on what is supposed to be his better judgment. From this combination of absence of instruction and absence of responsibility, it comes to pass that, though women are acknowledged to have, as a rule, stronger conscientious feelings than men, it is but a very small minority of women who have anything that deserves the name of a public conscience. How great an evil this is, there needs no argument to show. What is the greatest obstacle which the friends of political and social improvement have to struggle with—the drag which is constantly obstructing their efforts and disappointing their hopes? Is it not the weakness of the average citizen's political conscience? Is not this the special danger and failure to which popular institutions are exposed—that the elector does not sufficiently feel his obligations to the public, and either stays away from the poll, or goes there and votes on the prompting of some private interest? And how can we hope that he will learn to postpone private interests to public, while he has beside him, in the person of his closest intimate, one who has been trained to have no feeling whatever of his duties to the public, but who has the keenest feeling of his duties to his family, and who, even without intending it, cannot but sway his mind strongly in the direction of the only interests which she understands and appreciates? (Applause.) It must be remembered, too, that this is a growing evil. Time was when the wife was very little a companion of her husband—their lives were apart; the associates of his leisure and of his recreations were other men. But now the home and its inhabitants are so much to a man, that no other influence can, as a rule, compete with theirs. The time, therefore, is come when, if we would have public virtue in our men, we must have it in our women. (Hear, hear, and applause.) And how can a woman have a conscience about the public good, if she is told, and believes, that it is no business whatever of hers? Give women the same rights as men, and the same obligations will follow. Instead of hanging a dead weight on men's public conscience, their greater

general susceptibility of moral feeling will make their habitual influence a most valuable support to the honest performance of public duty. (Loud applause.) This, then, is one of the reasons why it is for the good of all that women should have an admitted right to take part in public affairs. Another is the vast amount of brain power and practical business talent which now runs to waste for want of an outlet into those great fields of public usefulness, in which no one, I suppose, will pretend that such qualities are not very much wanted. Few men, I suspect, are sufficiently aware of the great amount of administrative ability possessed by women; for want of considering that the essential qualities which lead to practical success are the same in what are called small things as in great.

It is my belief that, in all those parts of the business of life which depend on the vigilant superintendence and accurate estimation of details, women, when they have the necessary special knowledge, are better administrators than men. And I am now speaking, not of women as they might be—not as some improved mode of education would make them—but of women as they now are, and of the capacities which they have already displayed. If an example is wanted of what women's powers of organisation can accomplish in public life, I appeal to one of the most striking facts of modern times, the Sanitary Commission in the late American War. The history of that Commission ought to be as well known all over the world as it is in America. From the beginning, and throughout, it was women's work. It was planned, organised, and worked by women. The Government was jealous of them at first, but the hopeless inferiority of its own arrangements made it soon glad to make over the first place to them. Not only had such work never been so well done, but nobody had ever supposed it possible that it could be so well done. I am aware that this argument would carry us much further than the suffrage; but I suppose it will be acknowledged that those who are themselves eminently capable of practical business, must be fit to take a share in the choosing of those to whom practical business is to be entrusted. The ability which is specially required for the exercise of the suffrage—that of selecting the persons most capable for the work that is to be done—is one of the qualifications for business in which women have always excelled. Great queens have in nothing shown themselves greater than in their choice of Ministers. When the ladies of the Sanitary Commission wanted men to help them, they knew the right men and how to use them; and they distinguished themselves not less by the work which they caused to be done, than

by that which they did in their own persons. (Applause.) These are some of the reasons which make it equally just and expedient that the suffrage should be extended to women. It must, at the same time, be borne in mind that, by admitting them to the suffrage, no other question is in the smallest degree prejudged.

Supposing it true, what some people are so fond of affirming, that women have nothing to complain of, and that the vast majority of them do not desire any change; if so, giving them the suffrage can do nobody harm, and would afford them an opportunity of showing their perfect contentment with their present lot, in a manner beyond the reach of dispute. (Applause.)

If what we are told is true, that women ought to be, and always must and will be, in a state of domestic and social subordination to men, why, then, they require the suffrage so much the more, in order that the sovereignty of men over them may be exercised under the fitting responsibility. None need political protection so much as those who are in domestic dependence, since none are so much exposed to wrong. On every possible supposition, therefore, they have a claim to the suffrage. And we live at a period of human development, when the just claims of large numbers cannot be permanently resisted.

The whole movement of modern society, from the middle ages until now, greatly accelerated in the present century, points in the direction of the political enfranchisement of women. Their exclusion is a last remnant of the old bad state of society—the regimen of privileges and disabilities. All other monopolies are going or gone. The whole spirit of the times is against predetermining by law that one set of people shall be allowed by right of birth to have or to do what another set shall not, by any amount of exertion or superiority of ability, be allowed to attain. (Applause.)

If nature has established an ineradicable and insuperable difference in the capacities and qualifications of the two sexes, nature can take care of itself. What nature has decided may safely be left to nature. But when we find people making themselves uneasy for fear that nature's purposes should be frustrated unless law comes to her assistance, we may be pretty certain that it is not nature they are so careful about, but law pretending to be nature. To all such pretences the growing improvement of mankind is making them more and more adverse.

I do not know how long a time it may require to get rid of women's disabilities. Great changes in the habits and opinions of mankind are always slow. But of one thing I am certain—that when once they have been got rid of—when their true aspect is no longer disguised by the varnish of custom and habit—they will appear in the retrospect so devoid of any rational foundation, and so contradictory to the principles by which society now professes to guide itself, that the difficulty which will be felt will be to conceive how they can ever have been defended, and by what possible arguments they can ever have been made to appear plausible. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

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WHY WOMEN DESIRE THE FRANCHISE.

BY FRANCES POWER COBBE.

POLITICIANS consider that a subject enters an important phase when it becomes publicly recognised as a "Question." During the last five years the proposal to give votes to women has very distinctly grown into the "Question of Female Suffrage." Few of the most sanguine advocates of the cause would have ventured, in 1865, to hope that by the close of 1872, it should stand where it now obviously does in public opinion, or that 355,801 persons should have petitioned in its behalf.

The last Reform Bill, by lowering the franchise for men, has affected the claims of women in several indirect ways. In the first place, by admitting to the exercise of political judgment a class whose education is confessedly of the narrowest, and whose leisure to study politics extremely small, it has virtually silenced for all future time the two favourite arguments against the claims of women; that their understandings are weak, and their time too fully occupied by domestic cares. The most strenuous asserter of the mental and moral inferiority of women cannot urge that the majority of the new voters have more power to understand, or more leisure to attend to, public affairs than even the inferior class of female householders; not to speak of such women as Miss Nightingale and Mrs. Somerville, Miss Martineau and Lady Coutts. Rather, on the contrary, may it be maintained that the picked class of women who would be admitted by Mr. Bright's Bill to the franchise are needed to restore the just balance in favour of an educated constituency against the weight of the illiterate male voters now entrusted with the suffrage.

Again, by the introduction of the ballot the threat of a supposed practical difficulty to be found in the recording of female votes has been permanently set at rest; while the triumphant success of female candidates at the School Board elections has demonstrated how warmly the general feeling of the nation welcomes the accession of women to a share in the guidance of important public affairs.

Lastly, by identifying the duty of ratepaying with the right of voting in the case of men, the Reform Bill has made more glaring than before the inconsistency of enforcing rates upon women while refusing to them the avowedly corresponding right.

At the present moment our proper course appears to be this: to form committees in every town in England for the purpose of directing attention to the

subject, and affording information and aid to all friends of the cause. Local petitions, as numerous as possible, will afford the best machinery for carrying on such a plan; not because of their direct influence on the Legislature, (which is notoriously incommensurate with the labour of their preparation), but from their convenience as tangible methods of enrolling allies and interesting new associates. Already, in this last session, some 843 petitions, with the signatures of 355,801 men and women, were presented. The parable of the unjust Judge will probably not be found inapplicable to a masculine Legislature, when "poor widows" (and also rich ones, and other single women), by their "continual coming," become wearisome. Women are not prepared to break any pailings, material or metaphorical, albeit they have been taunted with the indifference they thus betray for their rights; but it is just possible that keeping the peace and signing petitions to Parliament may eventually be thought almost as well to prove their fitness for a voice in the Legislature of their country.

Women are often asked, Why they desire the franchise? Have they not everything already which they can possibly desire: personal liberty, the right to hold property, and an amount of courtesy and chivalrous regard which (it is broadly hinted) they would bitterly regret were they to exchange them for equality of political rights? Why should those epicurean gods, who dwell in the serene empyrean of drawing-rooms descend to meddle with the sordid affairs of humanity? What a pity and a loss it would be to the toiling world could it never look up and behold afar such a spectacle of repose as a true lady now presents! We can easily dispense with more legislators; but what is the world to do without those mild Belgravian mothers, those innocent young "Girls of the Period," those magnificent *grandes dames* who are the glory of our social life?

Let us briefly answer these questions, once for all. We do not believe that one particle of womanly gentleness and dignity, nay, not even the finest flavour of high-bred grace, will be lost when women are permitted to record their votes for representatives in Parliament. We consider the fear that it might be so among the idlest of chimeras. What *will* be lost, we are persuaded, will be a little of the frivolity, a little of the habit of expressing opinions without having conscientiously weighed them, a little of the practice of underhand and unworthy persuasion, which have been hitherto faults fostered in women by their position. Women can lose nothing, and have much to gain by entering a field of nobler interests than has hitherto been open to them. It was deemed well said of the old Roman, that nothing human was alien to him. It will be well when all women learn to feel that none of the wrongs and sins and sufferings of other women can be alien to *them*. The condition of women of the lower orders is beset with hardships; and it is for the very reason that a lady is freed from those heavy trials, that she should exert every power she possesses or can acquire, first to understand, and then, if possible, to remedy them. How these evils are to be lightened; how the burdens of the poor toilers are to be made less intolerable; how wives are to be protected from brutal husbands; how, above all, the ruin of the hapless thousands of lost ones is to be stopped:—how these things are to be done, may need more wisdom than all the men and women in England together may possess. But it is quite certain that if women had heretofore been represented in Parliament, such evils and wrongs would never have reached, unchecked, their present height, and that whenever women are at last represented, some more earnest efforts will be made to arrest them.

But it is not only for the sake of women of the suffering classes that we seek for female influence on politics; nor for that of happier women whose sphere of usefulness might thereby be enlarged, and their lives supplied with nobler interests. We believe that the recognition of the political rights of women, as it will be a signal act of justice on the part of men, so it will also prove an act beneficial to them no less than to us; and that when a generation has passed after the change, it will be said, by all alike, "What did our fathers mean by forbidding women to have a voice in politics? If it were nothing more, their influence must always be the safest ballast to keep steady the Ship of State."

Finally, to sum up our meaning in the most concise terms we can find, we desire that the political franchise be extended to women of full age, possessed of the requisite property qualification, for the following eight reasons:—

1. Because the possession of property and the payment of rates being the admitted bases of political rights in England, it is unjust that persons who possess such property, and pay such rates, should be excluded from those rights, unless from the clearest and gravest reasons of public interest. Such interest, however, we believe, requires, not the exclusion, but the admission of women into the franchise.
2. Because the denial of the franchise to qualified women entails on the community a serious loss; namely, that of the legislative influence of a numerous class, whose moral sense is commonly highly developed, and whose physical defencelessness attaches them peculiarly to the cause of justice and public order.
3. Because, under a representative Government, the interests of any non-represented class are confessedly liable to be misunderstood and neglected; and nothing but evidence that the interests of women are carefully weighed and faithfully guarded by the Legislature would nullify the presumptive injustice of denying them representation. Such evidence, however, is not forthcoming; but, on the contrary, experience demonstrates that the gravest interests of women are continually postponed by Parliament to the consideration of trifling questions concerning male electors, and, when introduced into debates, are treated by half the House rather as jests than as measures of serious importance.
4. Because, while the natural and artificial disabilities of women demand in their behalf the special aid and protection of the State, no proposal has ever been made to deal with their perils and difficulties; nor even to relieve them of the smallest portion of the burden of taxation, which they are compelled to bear without sharing the privileges attached thereto.

5. Because women, by the denial to them of the franchise, are placed at a serious disadvantage in competition for numerous offices and employments; especially women of the middle class, whose inability to vote tends extensively to deter landlords interested in politics from accepting them as tenants, even in cases where they have long conducted for their deceased male relatives the business of the farms, shops, &c., to whose tenure they seek to succeed.
6. Because the denial to women of the direct exercise of political judgment in the typical act of citizenship, has a generally injurious influence on the minds of men as regards women, leading them to undervalue their opinions on all the graver matters of life, and to treat offences against them with levity, as committed against beings possessed only of inferior rights.
7. Because the denial of the direct exercise of their judgment has a doubly injurious effect upon the minds of women, inclining them to adopt, without conscientious inquiry the opinions which, they are warned, must be always practically inoperative; and beguiling them to exert, through tortuous and ignoble channels, the influence whose open and honest exercise has been refused.
8. Finally, we desire the franchise for women, because, while believing that men and women have different work to do in life, we still hold that, in the choice of political representatives, they have the same task to accomplish; namely, the joint election of a Senate which shall guard with equal care the rights of both sexes, and which shall embody in its laws that true Justice which shall approve itself not only to the strong, but also the weak.

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OUGHT WOMEN TO LEARN THE ALPHABET?

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OUGHT WOMEN TO LEARN THE ALPHABET ?

PARIS smiled, for an hour or two, in the year 1801, when, amidst Napoleon's mighty projects for remodelling the religion and government of his empire, the ironical satirist, Sylvain Maréchal, thrust in his "Plan for a Law prohibiting the Alphabet to Women." Daring, keen, sarcastic, learned, the little tract retains to-day so much of its pungency, that we can hardly wonder at the honest simplicity of the author's friend and biographer, Madame Gacon Dufour, who declared that he must be insane, and proceeded to prove herself so by soberly replying to him.

His proposed statute consists of eighty-two clauses, and is fortified by a "whereas" of a hundred and thirteen weighty reasons. He exhausts the range of history to show the frightful results which have followed this taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; quotes the *Encyclopédie*, to prove that the woman who knows the alphabet has already lost a portion of her innocence; cites the opinion of Molière, that any female who has unhappily learned anything in this line should affect ignorance, when possible; asserts that knowledge rarely makes men attractive, and females never; opines that women have no occasion to peruse Ovid's "Art of Love," since they know it all in advance; remarks that three quarters of female authors are no better than they should be; maintains that Madame Guion would have been far more useful had she been merely pretty and an ignoramus, such as Nature made her,—that Ruth and Naomi could not read, and Boaz probably would never have married into the family, had they possessed that accomplishment,—that the Spartan women did not know the alphabet, nor the Amazons, nor Penelope, nor Andromache, nor Lucretia, nor Joan of Arc, nor Petrarch's Laura, nor the daughters of

Charlemagne, nor the three hundred and sixty-five wives of Mohammed; but that Sappho and Madame de Maintenon could read altogether too well; while the case of Saint Brigitta, who brought forth twelve children and twelve books, was clearly exceptional, and afforded no safe precedent.

It would seem that the brilliant Frenchman touched the root of the matter. Ought women to learn the alphabet? There the whole question lies. Concede this little fulcrum, and Archimæda will move the world before she has done with it: it becomes merely a question of time. Resistance must be made here or nowhere. *Obsta principiis*. Woman must be a subject or an equal: there is no middle ground. What if the Chinese proverb should turn out to be, after all, the summit of wisdom, "For men, to cultivate virtue is knowledge; for women, to renounce knowledge is virtue?"

No doubt, the progress of events is slow, like the working of the laws of gravitation generally. Certainly, there has been but little change in the legal position of women since China was in its prime, until within the last dozen years. Lawyers admit that the fundamental theory of English and Oriental law is the same on this point: Man and wife are one, and that one is the husband. It is the oldest of legal traditions. When Blackstone declares that "the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage," and American Kent echoes that "her legal existence and authority are in a manner lost;" when Petersdorff asserts that "the husband has the right of imposing such corporeal restraints as he may deem necessary," and Bacon that "the husband hath, by law, power and dominion over his wife, and may keep her by force within the bounds of duty, and may beat her, but not in a violent or cruel manner;" when Mr. Justice Coleridge rules that the husband, in certain cases, "has a right to confine his wife in his own dwelling-house, and restrain her from liberty for an indefinite time," and Baron Alderson sums it all up tersely, "The wife is only the *servant* of her husband,"—these high authorities simply reaffirm the dogma of the Gentoo code, four thousand years old and more. "A man, both day and night, must keep his wife so much in subjection that she by no means be mistress of her own actions.

If the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she be of a superior caste, she will behave amiss."

Yet behind these unchanging institutions, a pressure has been for centuries becoming concentrated, which, now that it has begun to act, is threatening to overthrow them all. It has not yet operated very visibly in the Old World, where (even in England) the majority of women have not yet mastered the alphabet, and cannot sign their own names in the marriage-registrar. But in this country, the vast changes of the last few years are already a matter of history. No trumpet has been sounded, no earthquake has been felt, while State after State has ushered into legal existence one-half of the population within its borders. Every free State in the American Union, except, perhaps, Illinois and New Jersey, has conceded to married women, in some form, the separate control of property. Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania have gone further, and given them the control of their own earnings—given it wholly and directly, that is—while New York and other States have given it partially or indirectly. Legislative committees in Ohio and Wisconsin have recommended in printed reports the extension of the right of suffrage to women. Kentucky (like Canada) has actually extended it, in certain educational matters, and a Massachusetts legislative committee has suggested the same thing; while the Kansas Constitutional Convention came within a dozen votes of expunging the word *male* from the State Constitution.* Surely, here and now, might poor M. Maréchal exclaim, the bitter fruits of the original seed appear. The sad question recurs, whether women ought ever to have tasted of the alphabet.

It is true that Eve ruined us all, according to theology, without knowing her letters. Still there is something to be said in defence of that venerable ancestress. The Veronese lady, Isotta Nogarola, five hundred and thirty-six of whose learned epistles were preserved by De Thou, composed a dialogue on the question, Whether Adam or Eve had committed the greater sin? But Ludovico Domenichi, in his "Dialogue on the Nobleness of Women," maintains that Eve did not sin at

* Written in 1858.

all, because she was not even created when Adam was told not to eat the apple. It is "in Adam all died," he shrewdly says; nobody died in Eve: which looks plausible. Be that as it may, Eve's daughters are in danger of swallowing a whole harvest of forbidden fruit, in these revolutionary days, unless something be done to cut off the supply.

It has been seriously asserted, that during the last half-century more books have been written by women and about women than during all the previous uncounted ages. It may be true; although, when we think of the innumerable volumes of *Mémoires* by French women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,—each justifying the existence of her own ten volumes by the remark, that all her contemporaries were writing as many,—we have our doubts. As to the increased multitude of general treatises on the female sex, however,—its education, life, health, diseases, charms, dress, deeds, sphere, rights, wrongs, work, wages, encroachments, and idiosyncrasies generally,—there can be no doubt whatever; and the poorest of these books recognises a condition of public sentiment of which no other age ever dreamed.

Still, literary history preserves the names of some reformers before the Reformation, in this matter. There was Signora Moderata Fonte, the Venetian, who left a book to be published after her death, in 1592, "Dei Meriti delle Donne." There was her townswoman, Lucrezia Marinella, who followed, ten years after, with her essay, "La Nobilità e la Eccellenza delle Donne, con Difetti e Mancamenti degli Uomini,"—a comprehensive theme, truly! Then followed the all-accomplished Anna Maria Schurman, in 1645, with her "Dissertatio de Ingenii Muliebris ad Doctrinam et meliores Literas Aptitudine," with a few miscellaneous letters appended in Greek and Hebrew. At last came boldly Jacqueline Guillaume, in 1665, and threw down the gauntlet in her title-page, "Les Dames Illustres; où par bonnes et fortes Raisons il se prouve que le Sexe Feminin surpasse en toute Sorte de Genre le Sexe Masculin;" and with her came Margaret Boufflet and a host of others; and finally, in England, Mary Wollstonecraft, whose famous book, formidable in its day, would seem rather conservative now; and in America, that

pious and worthy dame, Mrs. H. Mather Crocker, Cotton Mather's grandchild, who, in 1848, published the first book on the "Rights of Woman" ever written on this side the Atlantic.

Meanwhile there have never been wanting men, and strong men, to echo these appeals. From Cornelius Agrippa and his essay (1509) on the excellence of woman and her pre-eminence over man, down to the first youthful thesis of Agassiz, "Mens Feminae Viri Animo superior," there has been a succession of voices crying in the wilderness. In England, Anthony Gibson wrote a book, in 1599, called "A Woman's Woorth, defended against all the Men in the World, proving them to be more Perfect, Excellent, and Absolute in all Vertuous Actions than any Man of what Qualitie soever, *Interlarded with Poetry.*" *Per contra*, the learned Acidalius published a book in Latin, and afterwards in French, to prove that women are not reasonable creatures. Modern theologians are at worst merely sub-acid, and do not always say so, if they think so. Meanwhile most persons have been content to leave the world to go on its old course, in this matter as in others, and have thus acquiesced in that stern judicial decree, with which Timon of Athens sums up all his curses upon womankind—"If there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be—as they are."

Ancient or modern, nothing in any of these discussions is so valuable as the fact of the discussion itself. There is no discussion where there is no wrong. Nothing so indicates wrong as this morbid self-inspection. The complaints are a perpetual protest, the defences a perpetual confession. It is too late to ignore the question; and, once opened, it can be settled only on absolute and permanent principles. There is a wrong; but where? Does woman already know too much, or too little? Was she created for man's subject, or his equal? Shall she have the alphabet, or not?

Ancient mythology, which undertook to explain everything, easily accounted for the social and political disabilities of woman. Goguet quotes the story from St. Augustine, who got it from Varro. Cecrops, building Athens, saw starting from the earth an olive-plant and a fountain, side by side. The Delphic oracle said, that this indicated a strife between Minerva and Neptune

for the honour of giving a name to the city, and that the people must decide between them. Cecrops thereupon assembled the men, and the women also, who then had a right to vote; and the result was, that Minerva carried the election by a glorious majority of one. Then Attica was overflowed and laid waste: of course the citizens attributed the calamity to Neptune, and resolved to punish the women. It was therefore determined that in future they should not vote, nor should any child bear the name of its mother.

Thus easily did mythology explain all troublesome inconsistencies. But it is much that it should even have recognised them, at so early an epoch, as needing explanation. When we ask for a less symbolical elucidation, it lies within our reach. At least, it is not hard to take the first steps into the mystery. There are, to be sure, some flowers of rhetoric in the way. The obstacle to the participation of women in the alphabet, or in any other privilege, has been thought by some to be the fear of impairing her delicacy, or of destroying her domesticity, or of confounding the distinction between the sexes. I doubt it. These have been plausible excuses. They have even been genuine, though minor anxieties. But the whole thing, I take it, had always one simple, intelligible basis—sheer contempt for the supposed intellectual inferiority of woman. She was not to be taught, because she was not worth teaching. The learned Acidalius, aforesaid, was in the majority. According to Aristotle and the Peripatetics, woman was *animal occasionatum*, as if a sort of monster and accidental production. Mediæval councils, charitably asserting her claims to the rank of humanity, still pronounced her unfit for instruction. In the Hindoo dramas, she did not even speak the same language with her master, but used the dialect of slaves. When, in the sixteenth century, Françoise de Saintonges wished to establish girls' schools in France, she was hooted in the streets; and her father called together four doctors, learned in the law, to decide whether she was not possessed by demons, to think of educating women—*pour s'assurer qu'instruire des femmes n'était pas un œuvre du démon*.

It was the same with political rights. The foundation of the

Salic Law was not any sentimental anxiety to guard female delicacy and domesticity. It was, as stated by Froissart, a blunt, hearty contempt: "The kingdom of France being too noble to be ruled by a woman." And the same principle was reaffirmed for our own institutions, in rather softened language, by Theophilus Parsons, in his famous defence of the rights of Massachusetts men (the "Essex Result," in 1778): "Women, what age soever they are of, are not considered as having a sufficient acquired discretion [to exercise the franchise]."

In harmony with this are the various maxims and *bon mots* of eminent men, in respect to women. Niebuhr thought he should not have educated a girl well,—he should have made her know too much. Lessing said, "The woman who thinks is like the man who puts on rouge, ridiculous." Voltaire said, "Ideas are like beards: women and young men have none." And witty Dr. Maginn carries to its extreme the atrocity: "We like to hear a few words of sense from a woman, as we do from a parrot, because they are so unexpected." Yet how can we wonder at these opinions, when the saints have been severer than the sages?—since the pious Fénelon taught that true virgin delicacy was almost as incompatible with learning as with vice; and Dr. Channing complained, in his "Essay on Exclusion and Denunciation," of "women forgetting the tenderness of their sex," and arguing on theology.

Now this impression of feminine inferiority may be right or wrong, but it obviously does a good deal towards explaining the facts it assumes. If contempt does not originally cause failure, it perpetuates it. Systematically discourage any individual, or class, from birth to death, and they learn, in nine cases out of ten, to acquiesce in their degradation, if not to claim it as a crown of glory. If the Abbé Choisi praised the Duchesse de Fontanges for being "beautiful as an angel and silly as a goose," it was natural that all the young ladies of the court should resolve to make up in folly what they wanted in charms. All generations of women having been bred under the shadow of intellectual contempt, they have, of course, done much to justify it. They have often used only for frivolous purposes even the poor opportunities allowed them. They have employed the

alphabet, as Molière said, chiefly in spelling the verb *Amo*. Their use of science has been like that of Mdle. de Launay, who computed the decline in her lover's affection by his abbreviation of their evening walk in the public square, preferring to cross it rather than take the circuit: "From which I inferred," she says, "that his passion had diminished in the ratio between the diagonal of a rectangular parallelogram and the sum of two adjacent sides." And their conception, even of art, has been too often on the scale of Properzia de Rossi, who carved sixty-five heads on a walnut, the smallest of all recorded symbols of women's sphere.

All this might, perhaps, be overcome, if the social prejudice which discourages women would only reward proportionately those who surmount the discouragement. The more obstacles, the more glory, if society would only pay in proportion to the labour; but it does not. Women being denied, not merely the training which prepares for great deeds, but the praise and compensation which follow them, have been weakened in both directions. The career of eminent men ordinarily begins with college and the memories of Miltiades, and ends with fortune and fame: woman begins under discouragement, and ends beneath the same. Single, she works with half preparation and half pay; married, she puts name and wages into the keeping of her husband, shrinks into John Smith's "lady" during life, and John Smith's "relict" on her tombstone; and still the world wonders that her deeds, like her opportunities, are inferior.

Evidently, then, the advocates of woman's claims—those who hold that "the virtues of the man and the woman are the same," with Antisthenes, or that "the talent of the man and the woman is the same," with Socrates in Xenophon's "Banquet"—must be cautious lest they attempt to prove too much. Of course, if women know as much as men, without schools and colleges, there is no need of admitting them to those institutions. If they work as well on half pay, it diminishes the inducement to give them the other half. The safer position is, to claim that they have done just enough to show what they might have done under circumstances less discouraging. Take, for instance, the

common remark, that women have invented nothing. It is a valid answer, that the only implements habitually used by woman have been the needle, the spindle, and the basket; and tradition reports that she herself invented all three. In the same way it may be shown that the departments in which women have equalled men have been the departments in which they have had equal training, equal encouragement, and equal compensation; as, for instance, the theatre. Madame Lagrange, the *prima donna*, after years of costly musical instruction, wins the zenith of professional success. She receives, the newspapers affirm, sixty thousand dollars a year, travelling expenses for ten persons, country houses, stables, and liveries, besides an uncounted revenue of bracelets, bouquets, and *billet-doux*. Of course, every young *débutante* fancies the same thing within her own reach, with only a brief stage-vista between. On the stage there is no deduction for sex, and, therefore, woman has shown in that sphere an equal genius. But every female common-school teacher in the United States finds the enjoyment of her three hundred dollars a year to be secretly embittered by the knowledge that the young college-stripling in the next school-room is paid a thousand dollars for work no harder or more responsible than her own, and that, too, after the whole pathway of education has been obstructed for her, and smoothed for him. These may be gross and carnal considerations; but Faith asks her daily bread, and Fancy must be fed. We deny woman her fair share of training, of encouragement, of remuneration, and then talk fine nonsense about her instincts and intuitions—say sentimentally with the Oriental proverbialist, "Every book of knowledge is implanted by nature in the heart of woman"—and make the compliment a substitute for the alphabet.

Nothing can be more absurd than to impose entirely distinct standards, in this respect, on the two sexes, or to expect that woman, any more than man, will accomplish anything great without due preparation and adequate stimulus. Mrs. Patten, who navigated her husband's ship from Cape Horn to California, would have failed in the effort, for all her heroism, if she had not, unlike most of her sex, been taught to use her Bowditch. Florence Nightingale, when she heard of the distresses in the

Crimea, did not, as most people imagine, rise up and say, "I am a woman, ignorant but intuitive, with very little sense and information, but exceedingly sublime aspirations; my strength lies in my weakness; I can do all things without knowing anything about them." Not at all. During ten years she had been in hard training for precisely such services; had visited all the hospitals in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Paris, Lyons, Rome, Brussels, and Berlin; had studied under the Sisters of Charity, and been twice a nurse in the Protestant Institution at Kaiserswerth. Therefore she did not merely carry to the Crimea a woman's heart, as her stock in trade, but she knew the alphabet of her profession better than the men around her. Of course, genius and enthusiasm are, for both sexes, elements unforeseen and incalculable; but, as a general rule, great achievements imply great preparations and favourable conditions.

To disregard this truth is unreasonable in the abstract, and cruel in its consequences. If an extraordinary male gymnast can clear a height of ten feet with the aid of a spring-board, it would be considered slightly absurd to ask a woman to leap eleven feet without one; yet this is precisely what society and the critics have always done. Training and wages and social approbation are very elastic spring-boards; and the whole course of history has seen these offered bounteously to one sex, and as sedulously withheld from the other. Let woman consent to be a doll, and there was no finery so gorgeous, no baby-house so costly, but she might aspire to share its lavish delights; let her ask simply for an equal chance to learn, to labour, and to live, and it was as if that same doll should open its lips and propound Euclid's forty-seventh proposition. While we have all deplored the helpless position of indigent women, and lamented that they had no alternative beyond the needle, the wash-tub, the schoolroom, and the street, we have yet resisted their admission into every new occupation, denied them training, and cut their compensation down. Like Charles Lamb, who atoned for coming late to the office in the morning by going away early in the afternoon, we have, first, half educated women, and then, to restore the balance, only half paid them. What innumerable obstacles have been placed in the

way of female physicians! what a complication of difficulties has been encountered by female printers, engravers, and designers! In London, Mr. Bennett was recently mobbed for lecturing to women on watchmaking. In this country, we have known grave professors to refuse to address lyceums which thought fit to employ an occasional female lecturer. Mr. Comer states that it was "in the face of ridicule and sneers" that he began to educate women as bookkeepers many years ago; and it was a little contemptible in Miss Muloch to revive the same satire in "A Woman's Thoughts on Women," when she must have known that in half the retail shops in Paris her own sex rules the ledger, and Mammon knows no Salic law.

We find, on investigation, what these considerations would lead us to expect, that eminent women would have commonly been exceptional in training and position, as well as in their genius. They have excelled the average of their own sex because they have had more of the ordinary advantages of the other sex. Take any department of learning or skill; take, for instance, the knowledge of languages, the universal alphabet, philology. On the great stairway at Padua stands the statue of Elena Cornaro, professor of six languages in that once renowned university. But Elena Cornaro was educated like a boy, by her father. On the great door of the University of Bologna is inscribed the epitaph of Clotilda Tambroni, the honoured correspondent of Porson, and the first Greek scholar of Southern Europe in her day. But Clotilda Tambroni was educated like a boy, by Emanuele Aponte. How fine are those prefatory words, "by a Right Reverend Prelate," to that pioneer book in Anglo-Saxon lore, Elizabeth Elstob's grammar: "Our earthly possessions are indeed our patrimony, as derived to us by the industry of our fathers; but the language in which we speak is our mother-tongue, and who so proper to play the critic in this as the females?" But this particular female obtained the rudiments of her rare education from her mother, before she was eight years old, in spite of much opposition from her right reverend guardians. Adelung declares that all modern philology is founded on the translation of a Russian vocabulary into two hundred different dialects by Catherine II. But Catherine

shared, in childhood, the instructors of her brother, Prince Frederick, and was subject to some reproach for learning, though a girl, so much more rapidly than he did. Christina of Sweden ironically reproved Madame Dacier for her translation of Callimachus: "Such a pretty girl as you are, are you not ashamed to be so learned?" But Madame Dacier acquired Greek by contriving to do her embroidery in the room where her father was teaching her stupid brother; and her queenly critic had herself learned to read Thucydides, harder Greek than Callimachus, before she was fourteen. And so down to our own day, who knows how many mute, inglorious Minervas may have perished unenlightened, while Margaret Fuller Ossoli and Elizabeth Barrett Browning were being educated "like boys."

This expression simply means that they had the most solid training which the times afforded. Most persons would instantly take alarm at the very words; that is, they have so little faith in the distinctions which Nature has established, that they think, if you teach the alphabet, or anything else, indiscriminately to both sexes, you annul all difference between them. The common reasoning is thus: "Boys and girls are acknowledged to be very unlike. Now, boys study Greek and algebra, medicine and bookkeeping. Therefore girls should not." As if one should say: "Boys and girls are very unlike. Now, boys eat beef and potatoes. Therefore, obviously, girls should not."

The analogy between physical and spiritual food is precisely in point. The simple truth is, that, amid the vast range of human powers and properties, the fact of sex is but one item. Vital and momentous in itself, it does not constitute the whole organism, but only a part of it. The distinction of male and female is special, aimed at a certain end; and, apart from that end, it is, throughout all the kingdoms of Nature, of minor importance. With but trifling exceptions, from infusorial up to man, the female animal moves, breathes, looks, listens, runs, flies, swims, pursues its food, eats it, digests it, in precisely the same manner as the male: all instincts, all characteristics, are the same, except as to the one solitary fact of parentage. Mr. Ten Broeck's race-horses, Pryor and Prioress, were foaled alike, fed alike, trained alike, and finally ran side by side, competing

for the same prize. The eagle is not checked in soaring by any consciousness of sex, nor asks the sex of the timid hare, its quarry. Nature, for high purposes, creates and guards the sexual distinction, but keeps it subordinate to those still more important.

Now, all this bears directly upon the alphabet. What sort of philosophy is that which says, "John is a fool; Jane is a genius: nevertheless, John being a man, shall learn, lead, make laws, make money; Jane, being a woman, shall be ignorant, dependent, disfranchised, underpaid?" Of course, the time is past when one would state this so frankly, though Comte comes quite near it, to say nothing of the Mormons; but this formula really lies at the bottom of the reasoning one hears every day. The answer is, Soul before sex. Give an equal chance, and let genius and industry do the rest. *La carrière ouverte aux talens*. Every man for himself, every woman for herself, and the alphabet for us all.

Thus far, my whole course of argument has been defensive and explanatory. I have shown that woman's inferiority in special achievements, so far as it exists, is a fact of small importance, because it is merely a corollary from her historic position of degradation. She has not excelled, because she has had no fair chance to excel. Man, placing his foot upon her shoulder, has taunted her with not rising. But the ulterior question remains behind. How came she into this attitude originally? Explain the explanation, the logician fairly demands. Granted that woman is weak because she has been systematically degraded: but why was she degraded? This is a far deeper question,—one to be met only by a profounder philosophy and a positive solution. We are coming on ground almost wholly untrod, and must do the best we can.

I venture to assert, then, that woman's social inferiority in the past has been, to a great extent, a legitimate thing. To all appearance, history would have been impossible without it, just as it would have been impossible without an epoch of war and slavery. It is simply a matter of social progress,—a part of the succession of civilisations. The past has been inevitably a period of ignorance, of engrossing physical necessities, and of

brute force,—not of freedom, of philanthropy, and of culture. During that lower epoch, woman was necessarily an inferior, degraded by abject labour, even in time of peace,—degraded uniformly by war, chivalry to the contrary notwithstanding. Behind all the courtesies of Amadis and the Cid lay the stern fact,—woman a child or a toy. The flattering troubadours chanted her into a poet's paradise; but alas! that kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force. The truth simply was, that her time had not come. Physical strength must rule for a time, and she was the weaker. She was very properly refused a feudal grant, by reason, say "Les Coustumes de Normandie," of her unfitness for war or policy: *C'est l'homme ki se bast et ki conseille*. Other authorities put it still more plainly: "A woman cannot serve the emperor or feudal lord in war, on account of the decorum of her sex; nor assist him with advice, because of her limited intellect; nor keep his counsel, owing to the infirmity of her disposition." All which was, no doubt, in the majority of cases, true; and the degradation of woman was simply a part of a system which has, indeed, had its day, but has bequeathed its associations.

From this reign of force, woman never freed herself by force. She could not fight, or would not. Bohemian annals, to be sure, record the legend of a literal war between the sexes, in which the women's army was led by Libussa and Wlasla, and which finally ended with the capture, by the army of men, of Castle Dzewin, Maiden's Tower, whose ruins are still visible near Prague. The armour of Libussa is still shown at Vienna; and the guide calls attention to the long-peaked toes of steel, with which he avers, the tender Princess was wont to pierce the hearts of her opponents, while careering through the battle. And there are abundant instances in which women have fought side by side with men, and on equal terms. The ancient British women mingled in the wars of their husbands, and their princesses were trained to the use of arms in the Maiden's Castle at Edinburgh, in the Isle of Skye. The Moorish wives and maidens fought in defence of their European peninsula; and the Portuguese women fought on the same soil, against the armies of Philip II. The King of Siam has, at present, a body-

guard of four hundred women: they are armed with lance and rifle, are admirably disciplined, and their commander (appointed after saving the king's life at a tiger-hunt) ranks as one of the royal family, and has ten elephants at her service. When the all-conquering Dahomian army marched upon Abbeokuta, in 1851, they numbered ten thousand men and six thousand women. The women were, as usual, placed foremost in the assault, as being most reliable: and of the eighteen hundred bodies left dead before the walls, the vast majority were of women. The Hospital of the Invalides, in Paris, has sheltered, for half a century, a fine specimen of a female soldier, "Lieutenant Madame Bulan," now eighty-three years old, decorated by Napoleon's own hand with the cross of the Legion of Honour, and credited on the hospital-books with "seven years' service, seven campaigns, three wounds, several times distinguished, especially in Corsica, in defending a fort against the English." But these cases, though interesting to the historian, are still exceptional; and the instinctive repugnance they inspire is a condemnation, not of women, but of war.

The reason, then, for the long subjection of woman has been simply that humanity was passing through its first epoch, and her full career was to be reserved for the second. As the different races of man have appeared successively upon the stage of history, so there has been an order of succession of the sexes. Woman's appointed era, like that of the Teutonic races, was delayed, but not omitted. It is not merely true that the empire of the past has belonged to man, but that it has properly belonged to him; for it was an empire of the muscles, enlisting, at best, but the lower powers of the understanding. There can be no question that the present epoch is initiating an empire of the higher reason of arts, affections, aspirations; and for that epoch the genius of woman has been reserved. The spirit of the age has always kept pace with the facts, and outstripped the statutes. Till the fulness of time came, woman was necessarily kept a slave to the spinning-wheel and the needle; now higher work is ready; peace has brought invention to her aid, and the mechanical means for her emancipation are ready also. No use in releasing her till man, with his strong arm, had worked out

his preliminary share in civilisation. "Earth waits for her queen," was a favourite motto of Margaret Fuller Ossoli; but it would be more correct to say that the queen has waited for her earth, till it could be smoothed and prepared for her occupancy. Now Cinderella may begin to think of putting on her royal robes.

Everybody sees that the times are altering the whole material position of woman; but most people do not appear to see the inevitable social and moral changes which are also involved. As has been already said, the woman of ancient history was a slave to physical necessities, both in war and peace. In war she could do too little; in peace she did too much, under the material compulsions which controlled the world. How could the Jews, for instance, elevate woman? They could not spare her from the wool and the flax, and the candle that goeth not out by night. In Rome, when the bride first stepped across her threshold, they did not ask her, Do you know the alphabet? they asked simply, Can you spin? There was no higher epitaph than Queen Amalasontha's—*Domum servavit, lanam fecit*. In Bœotia, brides were conducted home in vehicles whose wheels were burned at the door, in token that they were never to leave the house again. Pythagoras instituted at Crotona an annual festival for the distaff; Confucius, in China, did the same for the spindle; and these celebrated not the freedom, but the serfdom of woman.

And even into modern days this same tyrannical necessity has lingered. "Go spin, you jades! go spin!" was the only answer vouchsafed by the Earl of Pembroke to the twice-banished nuns of Wilton. Even now, travellers agree that throughout civilised Europe, with the partial exception of England and France, the profound absorption of the mass of women in household labours renders their general elevation impossible. But with us Americans, and in this age, when all these vast labours are being more and more transferred to arms of brass and iron; when Rochester grinds the flour and Lowell weaves the cloth, and the fire on the hearth has gone into black retirement and mourning; when the wiser a virgin is, the less she has to do with oil in her lamp; when the needle has made

its last dying speech and confession in the "Song of the Shirt," and the sewing machine has changed those doleful marches to delightful measures,—how is it possible for the blindest to help seeing that a new era is begun, and that the time has come for woman to learn the alphabet?

Nobody asks for any abolition of domestic labour for women, any more than of outdoor labour for men. Of course, most women will still continue to be mainly occupied with the indoor care of their families, and most men with their external support. All that is desirable for either sex is such an economy of labour, in this respect, as shall leave some spare time to be appropriated in other directions. The argument against each new emancipation of woman is precisely that always made against the liberation of serfs and the enfranchisement of plebeians—that the new position will take them from their legitimate business. "How can he [or she] get wisdom that holdeth the plough [or the broom]—whose talk is of bullocks [or of babies]?" Yet the American farmer has already emancipated himself from these fancied incompatibilities; and so will the farmer's wife. In a nation where there is no leisure-class and no peasantry, this whole theory of exclusion is an absurdity. We all have a little leisure, and we must all make the most of it. If we will confine large interests and duties to those who have nothing else to do, we must go back to monarchy at once. If otherwise, then the alphabet, and its consequences, must be open to woman as to man. Jean Paul says nobly, in his "Levana," that, "before and after being a mother, a woman is a human being, and neither maternal nor conjugal relation can supersede the human responsibility, but must become its means and instrument." And it is good to read the manly speech, on this subject, of John Quincy Adams, quoted at length in Quincy's life of him, in which, after fully defending the political petitions of the women of Plymouth, he declares that "the correct principle is, that women are not only justified, but exhibit the most exalted virtue, when they do depart from the domestic circle, and enter on the concerns of their country, of humanity, and of their God."

There are duties devolving on every human being,—duties

not small nor few, but vast and varied,—which spring from home and private life, and all their sweet relations. The support or care of the humblest household is a function worthy of men, women, and angels, so far as it goes. From these duties none must shrink, neither man nor woman; the loftiest genius cannot ignore them; the sublimest charity must begin with them. They are their own exceeding great reward; their self-sacrifice is infinite joy; and the selfishness which discards them is repaid by loneliness and a desolate old age. Yet these, though the most tender and intimate portion of human life, do not form its whole. It is given to noble souls to crave other interests also, added spheres, not necessarily alien from these; larger knowledge, larger action also; duties, responsibilities, anxieties, dangers, all the aliment that history has given to its heroes. Not home less, but humanity more. When the high-born English lady in the Crimean hospital, ordered to a post of almost certain death, only raised her hands to heaven, and said, "Thank God!" she did not renounce her true position as a woman: she claimed it. When the queen of James I. of Scotland, already immortalised by him in stately verse, won a higher immortality by welcoming to her fair bosom the dagger aimed at his; when the Countess of Buchan hung confined in her iron cage, outside Berwick Castle, in penalty for crowning Robert the Bruce; when the stainless soul of Joan of Arc met God, like Moses, in a burning flame,—these things were as they should be. Man must not monopolise these privileges of peril, birthright of great souls. Serenades and compliments must not replace the nobler hospitality which shares with woman the opportunity of martyrdom. Great administrative duties also, cares of state, for which one should be born gray-headed, how nobly do these sit upon a woman's brow! Each year adds to the storied renown of Elizabeth of England, greatest sovereign of the greatest of historic nations. Christina of Sweden, alone among the crowned heads of Europe (so says Voltaire), sustained the dignity of the throne against Richelieu and Mazarin. And these queens most assuredly did not sacrifice their womanhood in the process; for her Britannic Majesty's wardrobe included four thousand gowns; and Mdle. de Montpensier declares, that when Christina

had put on a wig of the latest fashion, "she really looked extremely pretty."

Les races se féminisent, said Buffon, "The world is growing more feminine." It is a compliment, whether the naturalist intended it or not. Time has brought peace; peace, invention; and the poorest woman of to-day is born to an inheritance such as her ancestors never dreamed of. Previous attempts to confer on women social and political equality—as when Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, made them magistrates, or when the Hungarian revolutionists made them voters, or when our own New Jersey tried the same experiment in a guarded fashion in early times, and then revoked the privilege, because (as in the ancient fable) the women voted the wrong way—these things were premature, and valuable only as recognitions of a principle. But in view of the rapid changes now going on, he is a rash man who asserts the "Woman Question" to be anything but a mere question of time. The fulcrum has been already given, in the alphabet, and we must simply watch, and see whether the earth does not move.

There is the plain fact: woman must be either a subject or an equal; there is no middle ground. Every concession to a supposed principle only involves the necessity of the next concession for which that principle calls. Once yield the alphabet, and we abandon the whole long theory of subjection and coverture: tradition is set aside, and we have nothing but reason to fall back upon. Reasoning abstractly, it must be admitted that the argument has been, thus far, entirely on the women's side, inasmuch as no man has yet seriously tried to meet them with argument. It is an alarming feature of this discussion that it has reversed, very generally, the traditional positions of the sexes: the women have had all the logic; and the most intelligent men, when they have attempted the other side, have limited themselves to satire and gossip. What rational woman can be really convinced by the nonsense which is talked in ordinary society around her,—as, that it is right to admit girls to common schools, and equally right to exclude them from colleges; that it is proper for a woman to sing in public, but indelicate for her to speak in public; that a post-office box is

an unexceptionable place to drop a bit of paper into, but a ballot-box terribly dangerous? No cause in the world can keep above water, sustained by such contradictions as these, too feeble and slight to be dignified by the name of fallacies. Some persons profess to think it impossible to reason with a woman, and such critics certainly show no disposition to try the experiment.

But we must remember that all our American institutions are based on consistency, or on nothing: all claim to be founded on the principles of natural right; and when they quit those, they are lost. In all European monarchies, it is the theory, that the mass of the people are children to be governed, not mature beings to govern themselves. This is clearly stated and consistently applied. In the United States, we have formally abandoned this theory for one half of the human race, while for the other half it still flourishes in full force. The moment the claims of woman are broached, the democrat becomes a monarchist. What Americans commonly criticise in English statesmen, namely, that they habitually evade all arguments based on natural right, and defend every legal wrong on the ground that it works well in practice, is the precise defect in our habitual view of woman. The perplexity must be resolved somehow. Most men admit that a strict adherence to our own principles would place both sexes in precisely equal positions before law and constitution, as well as in school and society. But each has his special quibble to apply, showing that in this case we must abandon all the general maxims to which we have pledged ourselves, and hold only by precedent. Nay, he construes even precedent with the most ingenious rigour; since the exclusion of women from all direct contact with affairs can be made far more perfect in a republic than is possible in a monarchy, where even sex is merged in rank, and the female patrician may have far more power than the male plebeian. But, as matters now stand among us, there is no aristocracy but of sex: all men are born patrician, all women are legally plebeian; all men are equal in having political power, and all women in having none. This is a paradox so evident, and such an anomaly in human progress, that it cannot last for ever, without new discoveries in logic, or else a deliberate return to M. Maréchal's theory concerning the alphabet.

Meanwhile, as the newspapers say, we anxiously await further developments. According to present appearances, the final adjustment lies mainly in the hands of women themselves. Men can hardly be expected to concede either rights or privileges more rapidly than they are claimed, or to be truer to women than women are to each other. True, the worst effect of a condition of inferiority is the weakness it leaves behind it; even when we say, "Hands off!" the sufferer does not rise. In such a case, there is but one counsel worth giving. More depends on determination than even on ability. *Will, not talent*, governs the world. From what pathway of eminence were women more traditionally excluded than from the art of sculpture, in spite of *Non me Praxiteles fecit, sed Anna Damer!*—yet Harriet Hosmer and her sisters have climbed far up its steep ascent. Who believed that a poetess could ever be more than an Annot Lyle of the harp, to soothe with sweet melodies the leisure of her lord, until in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's hands the thing became a trumpet? Where are gone the sneers with which army surgeons and parliamentary orators opposed Mr. Sidney Herbert's first proposition to send Florence Nightingale to the Crimea? In how many towns has the current of popular prejudice against female orators been reversed by one winning speech from Lucy Stone! Where no logic can prevail, success silences. First give woman, if you dare, the alphabet, then summon her to her career: and though men, ignorant and prejudiced, may oppose its beginnings, there is no danger but they will at last fling around her conquering footsteps more lavish praises than ever greeted the opera's idol,—more perfumed flowers than ever wooed, with intoxicating fragrance, the fairest butterfly of the ballroom.

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OPINIONS OF WOMEN

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

LADY ANNA GORE LANGTON.

"I have long held the opinion that, in reason and in justice, those women who have the required qualifications ought to have the political franchise."

MRS. FAWCETT.

"The extension of the Suffrage to women would place them in a position of equality before the law; it would recognise their *status* as citizens of a free country; it would insure the speedy abolition of those laws by which their rights are disregarded and their liberties trampled under foot."

LADY AMBERLEY.

"How can a woman's character be injured by considering such things as the education of the People, the great and never-ending question of Religious Liberty, the State Church, the harmony and good-will of other nations, and, above all, the question of War—with its attendant difficulties of standing armies, increased taxation, and the best way of securing peace?"

MRS. GARRETT-ANDERSON.

"It is because it seems to me that giving women the franchise would be a very great step towards the uplifting of the whole sex, that I take special interest in it."

MRS. WILLIAM GREY.

"Woman is physically weaker than man. This would be a reason for giving her the Suffrage, which is in politics what firearms are in war, a weapon as powerful in a weak hand as in a strong one, levelling the inequalities of individual strength, and giving an even chance to the weakest."

MISS FRANCES POWER COBBE.

"Women can lose nothing, and have much to gain, by entering a field of nobler interests than has hitherto been opened to them. It was deemed well-said of the old Roman, that nothing human was alien to him. It will be well when all women learn to feel that none of the wrongs, and sins, and sufferings of other women can be alien to *them*. . . . It is quite certain that if women had heretofore been represented in Parliament, such evils and wrongs would never have reached, unchecked, their present height, and that whenever women are at last represented, some more earnest efforts will be made to arrest them."

To be obtained of the Secretary, at the Office of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 9, Berner's Street, London, W. Price 1s. per 100.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Times.—"Still it must be considered that a certain number of women already are, and that an increasing number will be, on the whole, better qualified to choose a candidate for Parliament than a considerable portion of male electors."—*June 25th, 1873.*

Daily News.—"The Legislature is asked to set the example, not of special favour for women, but of the removal of special disfavour; it is asked to put women on an equality with men in matters in which both sexes are equally interested."—*May 1st, 1873.*

Standard.—"First and foremost stands the fact that, by the exclusion of women from the exercise of the electoral franchise, property is deprived of a large part of that influence which the Constitution intends it to possess."—*May 1st, 1873.*

Globe.—"Every advance in modern civilisation tends towards the admission of women to equality with men; every improvement in morality and manners renders it more clearly possible."—*April 30th, 1873.*

Examiner.—"What is urgently required is that the whole principle implied in Mr. Disraeli's Reform Act shall be practically enforced. That principle is that every ratepayer shall be a voter, and the next Reform Bill, if it be a bill worth passing, must enforce it in its entirety. The thing to be first done is to give the suffrage to every ratepayer. Towards that, a necessary step is the conferring of the franchise upon all those agricultural labourers who are householders; but hardly less important is it that the lodger franchise, as affecting the working men in towns, shall be changed from a myth into a reality; and certainly as important is it that women ratepayers shall have equal privileges with men."—*August 16th, 1873.*

Daily Telegraph.—"Our only hope of the change, if the change must come, is that the great importance of social over purely political reform would be seen more clearly if women took a larger part in public affairs. The instincts of the sex, as to the management of some of our national problems, are often very sound. We believe that, as regards education and pauperism, and the laws of marriage and children's rights, feminine votes may gradually cause such questions to force themselves more to the front."—*December 3rd, 1872.*

Echo.—"It (the Women's Disabilities Bill) does not, for instance, imply that women are equal to men—it is content to assert that they are equal to the duty of voting honestly and intelligently. Far from drawing with it any wide extension of the suffrage, it would be the great obstacle to manhood suffrage."—*May 1st, 1873.*

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OPINIONS OF WOMEN

ON

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MR. HERBERT SPENCER

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The extension of the law of equal freedom to both sexes will doubtless be objected to on the ground that the political privileges exercised by men must thereby be ceded to women also. Of course they must; and why not? . . . We are told, however, that "woman's mission" is a domestic, that her character and position do not admit of her taking part in the decision of public questions—that politics are beyond her sphere. But this raises the question, Who shall say what her sphere is? . . . As the usages of mankind vary so much, let us hear how it is to be shown that the sphere *we* assign her is the true one—that the limits *we* have set to female activity are just the proper limits. Let us hear why on this point of our social polity we are exactly right, whilst we are wrong on so many others. We must conclude that, being required by that first pre-requisite to greatest happiness, the law of equal freedom, such a concession is unquestionably right and good.

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MR. T. B. POTTER, M.P.,

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

“HE believed that women had a right to the franchise. Great changes were now in progress. The old feudal *regime* was passing away, and all men were called on to exercise public duties. Unless women were to have an interest in those public duties he was sure there would be little chance of their being well exercised. If we were to succeed with free institutions, we required not merely the men but the women to be thoroughly interested in the enactment and carrying out of just and fair laws. For himself, he could only say that, ill as he might have performed his duty, that duty was learnt at his mother's knee, and he believed that the more women took up political matters, and studied the history of past and present times, the better it would be for all of them.”—*Speech at Manchester.*

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9 19

MR. WALTER MORRISON, M.P.

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

IF you ask me for arguments in favour of giving the franchise to women, I do not think I can do better than refer you to any of the good speeches that were delivered during the reform agitation in favour of extending the suffrage to the working classes. Read through either of the speeches that were delivered by Mr. Bright, by Mr. Gladstone, or by Mr. Cobden, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, substitute women for working men, and I think you will have a very fair argument in favour of the proposal."—*Speech at Plymouth.*

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PROFESSOR FAWCETT, M.P.

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

“Women paid taxes as well as men, and the argument that the franchise should be given to working men, in order that their particular interest might be represented, applied with equal force to women. There were no laws on the statute book which so much demanded to be repealed or altered as those which referred to the condition of women; and it was but fair, right, just, and politic, that when they legislated for women, women should be represented in that House.”—*Speech in the House of Commons.*

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(11)

DR. LYON PLAYFAIR, M.P.

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

“There is a wave of political opinion with regard to women's rights rising in height and power, and spreading its impulse all over Europe. Italy, Austria, Sweden, and some of the United States, have already given political suffrage to women more or less effectually. Our own legislature is continually occupying itself with questions to diminish the inequalities of the law with regard to women. There are movements everywhere, even among our universities themselves. The universities, feeling the injustice of the exclusion which they had hitherto practised, are now, in a timid and halting way, opening their examinations to half the race who have hitherto been excluded. This is less the consequence of women's agitation than an awakening of the public conscience to the fact that all capable citizens, whatever their sex, and whatever their position, ought to have equal rights. It is because this Bill completes our sense of national justice that I give my hearty support to it.”—*Speech in the House of Commons*

A. IRELAND AND CO., PRINTERS, MANCHESTER.

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12

✓ MR. MUNTZ, M.P.,
ON
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

“I want to ask honourable gentlemen why ratepayers worth many thousands a year should be prevented from voting for members of Parliament merely because of their difference of sex. I know a lady worth £70,000 or £80,000 a year, who in the election of members of Parliament has no vote at all, while her gardener, her groom, and other male servants, have a vote each. I am not in favour of granting votes to all women, but I think that in some cases they ought to have them. We give them a power to vote for members of town councils, and we have not only given them the power and right to vote in all local and municipal matters, but we have imposed on them very onerous duties which, to say the least of it, I think have been unfairly imposed upon them. We have imposed on them the duties of overseer, and to bear a great and responsible duty. In my own neighbourhood, some years ago, an elderly widow was actually appointed an overseer at the age of 71. (Laughter.) If we are to have this sort of thing, I think we cannot do less than allow them, on the ground of the property they hold, to vote equally with ourselves, and I shall have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.”—*Speech in the House of Commons.*

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SIR C. DILKE, BART., M.P.,

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

"My hon. friend seemed to forget that the highest office in this country is occupied by a woman. If he makes out a case for the absence of political capacity in women, how can he reconcile with it the exercise of the highest political functions in this country by a woman—functions which require that she should continually deliver public addresses. If my hon. friend's argument as to political imbecility fails, then he must show that women labour under some other incapacity. He must show that women labour under an incapacity of such a character that, although they may be queen, that is, may exercise the office of king—that although they may be sheriffs of counties, although they may exercise the offices of overseer and churchwarden, although they used (as my hon. friend the member for Aberdeen reminded us) to vote in the election of directors for the East India Company—that disability is such that they cannot vote for members of this House. My hon. friend has not spoken at any length of the results which might be expected to flow from this measure. I don't think we need speak much of them, because the Bill is a small measure, a practical measure of justice; but if for one moment I may address the House upon that subject, I would say that, while we are looking forward to next session, when we shall be dealing with the great evils of ignorance and intemperance, our deliberations would not be the less valuable if women were represented in this House."—*Speech in the House of Commons.*

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14

COL. SYKES, M.P.

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

THE payment of certain rates entitles persons to vote for a member of parliament, those persons being the rated occupiers of any dwelling house. There are in my city of Aberdeen 185 women householders, from each of whom I have presented a petition to the House. They have fulfilled the legal conditions imposed by Act of Parliament, and therefore they are as much entitled to vote as any of the other 14,000 voters in Aberdeen. I will tell the House what the India Company did. For a hundred years they granted to women having the money qualification a right to vote. And for whom? Why, for 24 men who, in position, dignity, and power, were at all events equal to any members of this House, for they had to govern 200,000,000 of people, whereas each of us here represents only the 658th part of a legislature for governing only 30,000,000. Under these circumstances, I do feel that we are doing a great deal of injustice to the female community. They are as capable of exercising the franchise as we are, and they have a full right and title to exercise it."—*Speech in the House of Commons.*

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SIR GEORGE JENKINSON, M.P.
ON
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

"In this Bill it simply proposes to do away with disabilities. It is intended to give a right of voting to all who possess property. I should like to see all payers of income-tax, no matter what their sex, possessing a vote; because I think a direct taxation, and especially a direct taxation of property, is that which ought to be represented throughout the country. One strong argument has not been used to-day. No one has imputed to female owners of property that they do not manage it well. Wherever you see women possessed of property, they generally manage it quite as well as in many instances their neighbours do; and I do not think you should place disabilities upon women who own property, any more than upon men. For these reasons I shall give my cordial support to the measure, and there is also one higher ground upon which I do so. Women are now in a position in which they are enabled to say that men monopolise all the legislation; that they make the laws for women, to which women are subjected, without having any voice directly or indirectly in making them. They appeal to the justice of men, and that is a great reason why we should not ignore that appeal, but should rather show women that they do not appeal in vain to the justice of men, and especially to the justice of the British House of Commons. (Cheers.)"—

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Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P.,

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

“In the last session of Parliament we took great pains on the subject of illiterate voters. It was interesting to see the two Houses of Parliament spending I do not know how many hours in devising schemes by which men who were too stupid to vote without assistance should, nevertheless, be enabled to record a vote. We devised one scheme, and one scheme was devised in the other Chamber, and I am bound to say that these unfortunate men have taken advantage of the labour which we bestowed upon them. In the recent elections illiterate electors have shown no reluctance whatever to come forward and express a desire to influence the proceedings of this House. Take for example the last election at Pontefract. 1,236 men polled, and out of that number there were 199 persons who declared themselves unable to vote without assistance. That is nearly one-sixth of the whole number of voters polled. Now, sir, am I putting forward an unreasonable claim, or demanding anything very extravagant when I ask the House of Commons which has bestowed so much care in devising means to enable illiterate men to vote not to continue to withhold the suffrage from women of education and property?”—*Speech in the House of Commons, April 30, 1873.*

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(17)¹⁹

Rt. Hon. J. W. Henley, M.P.

ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

I have hitherto voted against this Bill, but I have lately watched carefully the operation of the exercise of the franchise both in Municipal and in School Board Elections by women, and, as I think it has been beneficial in these cases, I do not see any reason why it should not be beneficial in Parliamentary Elections. What my honourable friend has said has confirmed me in the view I have adopted. He says the French revolutionists considered that they would not have the women. Well, I do not want us to be revolutionists, and that is an additional reason why we at all events should give the franchise to women. The principle is that women should have the right of voting. I confess that I have always hitherto voted against the Bill, but for the reasons I have stated I shall now give it my hearty support.—*Speech in the House of Commons, April 30, 1873.*

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REPLY OF

MR. DISRAELI

TO THE MEMORIAL ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Mr. Disraeli has addressed the following reply to a Memorial from upwards of eleven thousand women of Great Britain and Ireland, which was presented through Mr. Gore Langton, M.P., on April 29th, 1873.

“Dear Gore Langton,—I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the Memorial signed by 11,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.

“Yours sincerely,

“B. DISRAELI.”

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19

MR. DISRAELI
ON
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The following Extract is taken from one of Mr. DISRAELI'S Speeches on Parliamentary Reform, delivered in the House of Commons on April 27, 1866, when he said:—

“ I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right, for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see, where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote.”

Hansard's Parliamentary Debates.

Mr. Disraeli voted for the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill in 1871; paired for it in 1872; and voted for it on April 30th, 1873.

REPLY OF
MR. DISRAELI
TO THE MEMORIAL ON
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Mr. Disraeli has addressed the following reply to a Memorial from upwards of seven thousand women of Great Britain and Ireland, which was presented through Mr. Gore Langton, M.P., on April 29th, 1873.

“Dear Gore Langton,—I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the Memorial signed by 11,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.”

Yours sincerely,
“B. DISRAELI.”

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19

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, M.P.,

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The following Letter was addressed by Sir Stafford Northcote in reply to a Memorial adopted at a Public Meeting at Tiverton, asking him to support the Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women :—

Pynes, Exeter, Dec. 1st, 1873.

My Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 29th November, enclosing a copy of the resolution passed at the recent meeting at Tiverton in favour of women's suffrage.

I have long been of opinion that women possessing the necessary qualification as ratepayers ought to be admitted to the franchise; and I have voted and shall continue to vote for such admission.

I remain, faithfully yours,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

R. P. Loosemore, Esq., Tiverton.

MR. DISRAELI
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The following Extract is taken from one of Mr. Disraeli's Speeches on Parliamentary Reform, delivered in the House of Commons on April 27, 1858, when he said :—

"I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right, for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see, where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote."

Mr. Disraeli voted for the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill in 1871; and voted for it in 1873; and voted for it on April 30th, 1878.

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DEBATE ON THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES
BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30TH, 1873.

SPEECH

OF

JACOB BRIGHT, ESQ., M.P.

PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 9, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

1873.
PRICE ONE PENNY.

S P E E C H .

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT said: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill I am the last person to forget that it has already been three times rejected by the House. It might therefore be said, in fact it has already been asked, “why bring it forward again? Why not wait until another election before troubling Parliament again with a discussion upon this measure?” I think that powerful reasons may be given why I should not be influenced by that advice. In the first place it is a mistake to suppose that the same House of Commons which rejects a Bill will never consent to pass it. I could give many instances of greater or less importance to show that that is not the case. The Parliament which placed Sir Robert Peel in power in the year 1841 was a conspicuous example. In that Parliament my right hon. friend, the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. P. Villiers) asked again and again that the Corn Laws might be repealed, and over and over again the House of Commons rejected my right hon. friend’s proposition. But in the year 1846 the same House of Commons which had refused to listen to him passed a measure repealing the Corn Laws. Then again in 1866 the House of Commons which refused to pass the £7 Franchise Bill, in the year 1867 gave us a franchise Bill of a much wider character. It may be said, however, that on the occasions to which I have referred there was an irresistible outside pressure which does not exist in regard to this Bill. It is perfectly true that no such outside pressure does or ever can exist with regard to this Bill, but, sir, there is a pressure before which the House might yield with quite as much dignity as it showed in yielding on the occasions to which I have referred; namely, the pressure of accumulating reasons which receive no answer, the pressure of opinion in favour of this Bill which is gradually growing

in volume, and which I think many hon. members will admit is making itself felt in their constituencies. I see my hon. friend the member for Bath on my left, and if he should speak during the course of this debate, perhaps he will tell the House what is the state of feeling in his constituency upon this question, because I noticed that the two candidates who came forward to contest the vacant seat for that constituency, both the Liberal and the Conservative candidate, have, as I am informed, given in their adhesion to this question—not that they were much if at all in favour of it before they came forward as candidates, but because they found that the opinion in the city of Bath is so strongly in favour of the principle of this Bill that they felt themselves bound to accept it. If, however, in giving notice of the second reading of this Bill I had been perfectly sure that the House would again reject it, I should not have deviated from the course which I have taken. We are accustomed in this House to discuss a Bill, to vote upon it, again and again endeavouring to carry it if we can, but if we fail to carry it we know that we have accomplished something else. We have taken the best means in our power to instruct the people upon a great public question. The substance of this debate will be carefully reported in the newspapers, the report will go to every town and village in the United Kingdom, and to every English-speaking country under British rule, and therefore we shall secure that, for at least one day in the year, there will be a general discussion on a question so deeply affecting the interests and privileges of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. But there is another reason for bringing forward this Bill, and which I think justifies me in again asking the House to discuss it. No year passes by in this country without producing changes which affect the position of a public question; changes which tend either to hasten or to retard the period of its settlement. Well, sir, such a change took place last year when the Ballot Bill was passed, and I think no one will be more willing to admit that than the hon. gentleman opposite, the member for the University of Cambridge. Men are no longer subject to criticism in giving their votes; they are not answerable to the public or to their neighbours. They have complete irresponsibility. Before the passing of the Ballot Act it was said that a vote was held in trust for those who had it not. That doctrine has been swept away. Now, two millions of men vote in secrecy and in silence. Women are driven further than ever into the political shade, and are more thoroughly severed from political influence than they ever were before. And, sir, if I needed any corroboration of this I need only point to the countless speeches which have been made in

this House to show that this view is correct. The passing of the Ballot Bill, then, has strengthened the claim of women to the Parliamentary franchise. But it has also done another thing. It has removed some objections to the proposed change. We were told that there was great turbulence on the day of election, and that there were scenes of such a disreputable character that no right-minded man would desire a woman to partake in them. The Ballot has now been tried in the largest as well as the smallest of the constituencies. It has been tried in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland, and whatever else it may have accomplished we have found that it has succeeded in securing peace and order at the poll. I believe no one will deny that a woman can now go to the polling booth and return from it with far greater ease than she experiences in making her way out of a theatre or a concert room. Anyone having introduced a Bill into this House very naturally looks with interest to the views of the leaders of the House upon that Bill, and although the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister is unfortunately not in his place, I am entitled to make a few remarks upon his altered position in regard to this question. Two years ago the right hon. gentleman acknowledged that women ought to have a share in political representation; he made an objection to the personal attendance of women at the poll. That seemed to me to be the right hon. gentleman's chief difficulty. The Prime Minister also referred to the Ballot, and said he was as yet uncertain what effect it would have, whether it would produce order at elections or not. If the right hon. gentleman was here I think he would admit that the Ballot has had the effect of producing order at elections, and he would be no longer able to object to the personal attendance of women at an election upon that ground. The right hon. gentleman spoke of the representation of women in Italy, where it is understood they vote by proxy, and said if something of the sort could be contrived for this country he should not object to take such a proposal into consideration; but if women were to vote by proxy they would lose the protection of the Ballot; for, so far as I know, no one can vote by proxy and vote in secret. It appears to me, sir, now that the Ballot has become law, that the speech which the Prime Minister made two years ago puts him in such a position with regard to this question as to render it very difficult for him to say a single word against it again. There is another Bill before the House of Commons which deals with the Parliamentary franchise, and which is in the hands of my hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs (Mr. G. O. Trevelyan). That Bill proposes to equalise the county with the borough franchise,

and if it is carried will give an addition of 1,000,000 voters, whereas this Bill will give an addition of from 200,000 to 300,000 voters. I acknowledge the justice of this Bill of my hon. friend, but if justice demands that 1,000,000 of men should be added to the register, which already contains the names of 2,000,000, justice even more urgently demands the admission of 300,000 women, seeing that up to this time women have not a particle of representation. Now there are members in this House—political friends of mine—sitting near me at the present moment, who are pledged to support the Bill of the hon. member for the Border Burghs, but who persistently vote against this Bill, and yet, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there is not a single argument that has ever been used, or that ever will be used with regard to the County Franchise Bill which does not tell even with greater weight with regard to this Bill. The position occupied by those Liberal members who support the one measure and vote against the other seems to me to be one of great inconsistency; I am bound to say that they have not satisfactorily explained their conduct. We have been told that it is a great anomaly to give votes to persons on one side of the borough line and to refuse them to those whose houses are situated on the other side of the borough line; but, sir, I wish to bring about a state of representative equality between persons who are separated by no line whatever, but who are citizens of the same community. My attention was called the other day to a row of 20 substantial houses in a street in Manchester, and I was told that 16 of those houses had votes, 16 of those families were represented in this House. They had control over the taxes which they were called upon to pay, and had an influence in the making of the laws which they were all bound to obey. But four out of those 20 houses had no votes, four of those families were unrepresented, and the only reason why those four families are unrepresented in this House is because the heads of those four families are women. Now, sir, in municipal matters, and with regard to the School Board elections women, so far as voting is concerned, are placed in exactly the same position as men; and I must remind the House that women have been put in that position by Parliament because they have an equal interest with men in municipal and School Board questions. Those votes were given to women with the consent of the Liberal members of this House, and they were given for the reason which I have stated. But a more powerful reason exists why women should be entitled to a Parliamentary vote. We do not deal here simply with local taxation. We deal with the interests of men and women in the widest possible way; their property, their lives and

liberties are under our control, and hence the necessity of that protection which the franchise alone confers. When this County Franchise Bill comes in we shall be told that the vote will have a considerable influence upon the condition of the agricultural labourer, that it will have an effect upon legislation favourable to him. The land laws and the game laws will have to be dealt with; in fact if the County Franchise Bill becomes law the condition of the agricultural labourer will assume an importance hitherto unknown. All this is true, but will any hon. gentleman say that it is not equally true with regard to the Bill which I hold in my hand. I cannot discuss this question without referring to the County Franchise Bill. I am bound to refer to it because I want to know why that Bill is to be supported and this rejected. I do not want to be put off with reasons that will not bear reflection, but I should like to have reasons given that will have some weight with those who are agitating this question out of doors. It is a common belief on this side of the House, that should the Government meet another session of Parliament the County Franchise Bill will be one of their principal measures. Well, sir, how will the Prime Minister be able to accept that Bill and reject this. It has been said that when he once takes up a position he never goes back. I have explained the position which he has taken with regard to this Bill. He said, two years ago, "that the law does less than justice to women," and added, "if it shall be found possible to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, the man who shall attain that object will be a real benefactor to his country." That is the language of the Prime Minister. The Bill before the House is supported by a powerful organization. The petitions and public meetings in its favour grow from year to year. The inequalities in the law between men and women, owing to the fact that women are unrepresented in Parliament, are admitted on every hand. Over 200 members of the present Parliament have supported the Bill. These are considerations which should not be forgotten when the Government again undertakes to improve the representation of the people. There are many landowners in this House. If the County Franchise Bill ever passes through Parliament it must be with the consent of the landowners. If there be any of them present now I would like to ask them whether they think it right to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny a vote to the farmer? The census of 1861 shows that there were about 250,000 farmers and graziers in England and Wales, and one-eleventh part of that number were women. The proportion of women farmers would be still greater if women did not labour under political disabilities. In England and Wales there are no fewer than 22,708 women

who are farmers and graziers. The landowners trust their land to these women, who have to provide the rent, to pay the wages, and to look to the whole economy of their farms. I ask the question whether the landowners intend to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny it to those who direct his work. Perhaps some may doubt whether women are really farmers, and in order to satisfy that doubt I will read a short extract from a back number of *The Field*. *The Field* says: "But it may be said, What business have women with farming? It is nonsense to suppose a woman can farm successfully. In answer to this query, the report of the competition for the 100 guineas prize for the best-managed farm in the central districts of England may be referred to. It is published in the last number of the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*. Twenty-one farms competed for the honour. It was awarded to the tenant of Ash Grove Farm, Ardley, near Bicester, as showing the best example of good general management, productiveness, suitability of live stock, and general cultivation with a view to profit. The farm is one of 890 acres, 820 being arable and 70 pasture. 1,000 sheep and 70 cattle are wintered annually. Cattle to the amount of £1,200 is purchased yearly. The labourers work by piece work as much as possible, and no beer is given. The judges said the farm was an exceedingly good example of a well-managed one. But, though the Royal Agricultural Society have awarded the tenant the first prize, they refuse to second the honour by the advantages of membership, for the simple reason that—she is only a woman." I would like, in consequence of that remark of *The Field*, to refer for a moment to the general injustice with which women are treated, merely because they are women. I will make another quotation from *The Field* on this subject. "The farmers of England include a very considerable proportion of women among their numbers. These not only labour under the disadvantages which are inseparable from their sex, but are most unjustly, not to say ungenerously, deprived of certain advantages which are enjoyed by their masculine competitors. The Royal Agricultural Society of England confers on its members certain valuable privileges. They can have their superphosphates and purchased fertilisers analysed at a nominal rate by the agricultural chemist to the society. They are protected from imposition in the purchase of oilcake. Their soils can be carefully examined. They can exhibit at the annual meeting under more favourable conditions than strangers. These advantages, strange to say, are denied to those women who are farmers." I entertain the belief that if we wish to get rid of this general practice, and it has been shown to be a general practice throughout the country, of

treating women unjustly merely because they are women, we could use no more effective means than to remove the stamp of inferiority which must attach to them as long as their political disability is maintained. In order to show the House how Parliament—no doubt unconsciously—sometimes treats women with intense injustice I will refer to one fact. The trial of election petitions is now a local one, and the locality is rated in order to defray the expenses of the inquiry. Consider for a moment how that affects women. That law was passed in 1868. This question of the political disabilities of women had then only once been brought before the House of Commons. Had the attention been given to the subject which it has since received it is possible that the House would not have legislated in the manner in which it did with regard to the trial of election petitions. Well, sir, there was an election inquiry at Bridgewater under the provisions of the Act of 1868. After that inquiry, when the Bill had to be paid, the women of Bridgewater, that is the widows and unmarried women of Bridgewater, met together and got up a memorial to the Prime Minister, and this is the only part of the memorial which it is necessary to read to the House:—"We, the undersigned widows and unmarried women of the town of Bridgewater, in the county of Somerset, beg to lay before you, as First Lord of the Treasury, an account of a most heavy and unjust taxation which has been levied on us in common with the other householders of this borough for the payment of the expenses of the commission. We feel that it is unjust, inasmuch as we are not exercising the franchise and have not been concerned either directly or indirectly in the illegal practices, that we should be required to pay not less than 3s. in the pound according to our rental." Now I put it to the House whether a portion of Her Majesty's subjects who have no representation in this House should be subjected to such a tax? We all know very well that members might be returned for Bridgewater or anywhere else who on some questions affecting women might vote entirely against their views. Women could not have participated in any of the practices which led to that inquiry. In replying to this memorial, the Secretary of State for the Home Department expressed his regret that the malpractices of a portion of the inhabitants of Bridgewater should have necessitated the expense of a Royal Commission. He regretted it very much, but added that it was not in the power of the Secretary of State to exempt women owning or occupying property from the imperial or local taxation to which such property was liable. It is, however, in the power of Parliament to give to the property of women exactly the same privileges

which are attached to the possession of every other kind of property, and that would remedy the injustice. In the case of Bridgewater it may perhaps be said that the innocent suffer all through with the guilty; that a great many men have to pay this tax who were innocent of bribery or corruption. That is true; but at least it should be borne in mind that the men had some control over the election, and also had the benefit of representation, whereas the women had not. Whilst speaking on this subject I wish to refer for one moment to the proposition of the hon. member for Brighton. The hon. member for Brighton asked the House to enact that the necessary expenses of Parliamentary elections should be defrayed out of the local rates. I have voted for that proposal, although I am constrained to admit that looking at the proposition from a disfranchised woman's point of view, it would be unjust for Parliament to pass such a law, because we have no right to impose such a burden upon persons whom we shut out from representation. In the last session of Parliament we took great pains on the subject of illiterate voters. It was interesting to see the two Houses of Parliament spending I do not know how many hours in devising schemes by which men who were too stupid to vote without assistance should, nevertheless, be enabled to record a vote. We devised one scheme and one scheme was devised in the other Chamber, and I am bound to say that these unfortunate men have taken advantage of the labour which we bestowed upon them. In the recent elections illiterate electors have shown no reluctance whatever to come forward and express a desire to influence the proceedings of this House. Take for example the last election at Pontefract. 1236 men polled, and out of that number there were 199 persons who declared themselves unable to vote without assistance. That is nearly one-sixth of the whole number of voters polled. Now, sir, am I putting forward an unreasonable claim, or demanding anything very extravagant when I ask the House of Commons which has bestowed so much care in devising means to enable illiterate men to vote not to continue to withhold the suffrage from women of education and property? During these discussions it has not unfrequently been mentioned that the highest political functions of the realm were performed by a woman, and in my opinion it is not of slight importance to the question under debate that this is the case, and I am especially reminded of it by the late Ministerial crisis. We outsiders on that occasion obtained a very interesting glimpse as to how the Royal duties were performed. Judging from the statements made to the House by the two right hon. gentlemen those duties were discharged

with the greatest tact and judgment, and with the utmost anxiety to smooth the way to obtain a Government to carry on the business of the country. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the Oppositions, speaking some time ago at Hughenden Manor, made a very remarkable statement with respect to the duties of the Crown. He described them as multifarious, weighty, and increasing, and remarked that no head of any department of the State performed more laborious duties than those which fell to the sovereign of this country. Well, sir, if this is true, and no one can doubt the correctness of such a statement, when it is made by a gentleman who has himself filled the office of Prime Minister, it appears to me to be a very extraordinary thing that the educated women of this country should not be allowed to do so simple a thing as to record their votes for a member of Parliament. There are some countries where the Salic law prevails, under which no woman is permitted to wear the crown. If anybody should make that proposition here, namely, that after Her present Majesty no woman should again wear the crown of England, I venture to assert that there is not a man in the whole British Empire who would hold up his hand in its favour; and when women come to exercise the franchise—and they will come to exercise it sooner or later—it would be just as impossible to go back to the old state of things as it would now be to introduce the Salic law into this country. There is one reason which operates on this side of the House against admitting women to the franchise, to which I wish to refer; the objection that women are too much under the influence of ministers of religion. There are many influences at work during an election. We have the influence of the large landowners, and of the large manufacturers, we have the influence of the trades unions, and we have the influence of that vast trade which supplies intoxicating liquors to the people; and I would say that the influence exercised by ministers of religion is at least not the worst of these various influences. I think moreover that members show a singular inconsistency in advancing such an argument, when they are in favour of planting a minister of religion in every parish in England and Wales, and approve of the Bishops occupying seats in the House of Peers. Supposing that women were a more criminal class than men, it would perhaps be argued that it would be unwise to admit them to the franchise. But what are the facts of the case? Taking the judicial statistics of England and Wales for the year 1871, and looking at the number of summary trials, I find that the total number was 540,000, but only 105,000 out of that 540,000 were women. Therefore women are clearly not a very dangerous class; and if we look at those cases proceeded

against on indictment, we should find the proportions about the same. The hon. Bart., the member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock), intends to bring in a Bill to apply the Factory Laws to shops. Legislation for factories, the limitations put upon the labour of women, have not interfered with their means of gaining a livelihood, because factories cannot be worked without them. Shops can be managed without them, and therefore a proposition to apply the Factory Acts to shops should be carefully considered. In matters so gravely affecting the interests of women there should be some constitutional means of ascertaining their views. In conclusion I may say that no answer has been made to the case—I do not mean the imperfect case which I have from time to time placed before the House. I mean that no answer has been made to the general case which has been placed before the country by scores of women of education and position who have undertaken to win this battle. I say no answer has been made to their claim, and therefore the demand grows and the agitation becomes more powerful. In the debate which occurred on the second reading of this Bill last year, two lawyers spoke. They stated that they had previously voted in favour of the measure, but intended on this occasion to vote against it. They assigned reasons which, had they been given by a woman, would have been referred to as conclusive proofs of the radical defects of the feminine intellect. My right hon. friend the under Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a very fair speech against the Bill, argued that to give women a Parliamentary vote would be “contrary to the experience of mankind.” Most of us who are endeavouring to improve the condition of the people are in search of a state of things contrary to the experience of mankind, because, up to this time, that experience has been very deplorable. We see many things which are contrary to the experience of mankind. The Colonial Empire, with whose affairs my right hon. friend is connected, extending round the world and bound together by ties of affection and not by force, this is contrary to the experience of mankind, but it nevertheless rightly obtains the admiration of my right hon. friend. It is contrary to the experience of mankind that a Government, the Government with which my right hon. friend is connected, should invite the women of this country to present themselves to large constituencies, to issue addresses and attend public meetings in order to be elected members of Education Boards; and it would be contrary to the *reason* of mankind if my right hon. friend, after being a consenting party to that innovation, should continue to resist the claim of women to give a silent vote at the poll. I am very well aware that long before this debate has ended to-day the Bill I am now submit-

ting to the House will be attacked on the ground that it gives a vote to married women and, also, because it does not give a vote to married women. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Both of these charges cannot be true. There is another thing which has always been said by the opponents of this Bill, and which will inevitably be said in the course of this debate—that women do not care for a vote. It ought to be a sufficient answer to this statement to say that whenever women have been allowed to exercise a vote they have made use of the privilege. We know that they have exercised the municipal vote in many of our populous towns, and that in these cases they have used it in equal proportions with men. As the most recent evidence that women do care for the vote, the House will perhaps allow me to quote from a note I have received from a lady in Edinburgh—a lady who for some years has been of the greatest assistance to this cause. Speaking of the votes given by women at School Board elections she says, that, “In Edinburgh one-seventh of the actual voters are women, and in most of the country parishes *every* woman”—the word “every” is underlined—“who was registered voted. We have four women representing Edinburgh—two for the city and two for the county and fourteen for other towns in the country districts—eighteen in all. Of these *six were returned at the head of the poll.*” Then she says, “We expect some half-dozen more women to be returned in the next board elections.” Surely, sir, this should have some weight with those who say that women do not care for a vote. Scotland is not the least intelligent or the least informed of the various portions of Her Majesty’s dominions, and if in that country you find that women are everywhere interested in public matters and anxious to take a reasonable share in them, the fact ought to have some weight with the House. But when hon. members say that women do not care to possess a vote they ought at least to bear this in mind, that they, as a rule, are in the habit of associating with ladies who are favourably situated—who are surrounded by all the blessings of life. Those hon. members associate with ladies belonging to a rank in which they are not likely to feel the pressure of circumstances. (Hear, hear). They should remember, too, that the women of the upper classes have been better cared for than women belonging to humble life. With regard to questions of property, the Court of Chancery has done as much for them as any statute could have done. During the present session of Parliament a Bill has passed this House which will in all probability be of service to women of the higher class. I refer to the measure which relates to the custody of children. That Bill will have the effect of helping

ladies who are able to meet the difficulties and expenses of Chancery, but with regard to the poorer class of women the measure will be of little use. (Hear, hear.) When I am told that women do not care for a vote I am reminded that two or three weeks ago a friend of mine informed me that he had been talking to a lady of high position in this country. He questioned her as to what she thought of the subject of women's rights. Her reply was "All I know is that I have no wrongs." This was told me that I might reflect upon it and see the error of my position. Sir, I did reflect upon it, and I came to this conclusion, that if that lady, instead of being surrounded by all that can make life happy and even brilliant, had been in different circumstances—if she had been seeking to obtain admittance into an educational institution which she was taxed to support but which shut its doors upon her—if she had been the widow of a farmer and had lost her home and her occupation because she could not vote—if her small property had been dissipated because it was too small to bear the expenses of a settlement and the trouble of a trust; or if she had happened to have lost her husband and a stranger had stepped in and deprived her of all authority over her children, requiring that they should be educated in a faith which was not her own—if that lady had been so placed as to have been the victim of any of these circumstances I think that she would not have been able to declare that she had no wrongs. (Cheers.) And if the members of this House were enabled to look at this question through the eyes of the humble classes—those women who have to meet the difficult struggles of life—I believe it would not be necessary year after year to ask that this moderate Bill should be passed into law; but that on the contrary a single session would suffice to bring about the result we desire. (Cheers.) I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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DEBATE ON THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES
BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30TH, 1873.

S P E E C H

OF

✓ PROFESSOR FAWCETT, M.P.

PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 9, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

1873.

PRICE ONE PENNY

SPEECH.

Mr. FAWCETT : As my name is appended to the petition, and as I have not spoken upon the subject since the Bill was first introduced, I trust that the House will allow me to make a few remarks. With regard to the speech of the hon. member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope), it is only necessary for me to say with reference to the petition to which he has very pointedly alluded, that I believe I have authority to state that there is not a single member of the University who signed that petition who is not perfectly satisfied with the way in which it has been got up, and the matter which it contains. He says it is objectionable that the petition should have been sent to him by a lady who called herself secretary of the London Society for promoting this cause. Now as one of those who signed the petition I must say that I do not think it could be entrusted to better hands than the hands of this lady, especially when I know she is the daughter of one of the most distinguished members of the University which the hon. member represents. I have only one other remark to make in reference to his speech. He says that if women had votes they would be withdrawn from their domestic duties, and that it would be impossible for them to devote the time necessary to enable them to study public questions. Now, in the name of common sense, does he wish us to believe that every man who has a vote is drawn away from the pursuits of his life and from his ordinary daily labour—that an artizan working in a mill—a barrister practising in a court—a doctor attending his patients, cannot properly study public questions without neglecting their ordinary employment. Allow me upon this subject to repeat an anecdote which was related to me a few minutes ago by an hon. member sitting near me, who represents a northern borough. It will show that the male electors who have votes, are not often, unfortunately, even in their leisure moments, engaged in

studying public affairs, but that they sometimes occupy themselves with much less honourable pursuits. I think that the anecdote will forcibly illustrate the injustice of the present system. My hon. friend told me that at a recent election, when he was canvassing the borough he represents, he, and a distinguished member of this House, who was then his colleague, in endeavouring to find two of the electors they wished to canvass, discovered them sitting in a public house. In fact they were drunk, and were certainly not devoting their leisure moments to the study of politics. After my hon. friend had had an interview with his two drunken constituents, and was leaving them, a woman came out of her house and said, "I have paid rates for twenty years. How can you say that I ought not to have a vote when you have just been soliciting the votes of these two drunken men?" "Well," my hon. friend said, "I think what you say is very reasonable," and ever since then he has been a consistent supporter of this Bill. I wish now, in a few words, to refer to the speech of the right hon. gentleman, the Home Secretary. I am not going to be drawn into a discussion as to the relative ability of men and women. It is not necessary to assert that men and women are intellectually equal in all respects. Nobody can express an opinion on the point until the experiment has been fairly tried, and it never yet has been fairly tried. Give women the same opportunities for intellectual development as men, and then, and not till then, shall we be able to say what they can do. I was certainly astonished to hear the Home Secretary say that no woman had ever been a great painter. Did he forget Rosa Bonheur? He said further, that no woman had ever been a great musical composer. He is not perhaps aware, I think it came out afterwards by accident, of a story that shows that women do not always receive their due deserts. Women do their work quietly, and many a man who has attained great success would never have filled so distinguished a position if it had not been that some woman had helped him. Upon this very question of musical composition it has come out that one of the most admired pieces attributed to Mendelssohn was entirely the composition of his sister. That great composer also admitted that she had helped him in his other works to an extent which he could not describe. I must confess that the Home Secretary astonished me very considerably by going into an historical argument, in which he seemed to think that he had discovered, as a reason why women should not have votes, that it was men who had always defended the country, and that it was the barons who obtained the Magna Charta from King John. If this argument is worth anything it certainly amounts to this, that no one should have votes

except barons and soldiers. Repeating the argument of the right hon. member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie), the Home Secretary said, the great argument against the Bill of my hon. friend was that if it were carried it would ultimately lead to the giving of votes to married women and to women taking seats in this house. Before I reply to that argument let me say that it is an old one. Never was there a great change proposed, or a great measure of reform brought forward, but that some "bogey" was immediately called up to alarm and terrify us. When Catholic emancipation was proposed and it was advocated that Catholics should have seats in this House, one of the favourite arguments of the opponents of the proposal was, that if the Catholics were admitted to this House there was no reason why a Catholic should not sit upon the throne. One of the favourite arguments used by the opponents of household suffrage was that if household suffrage were granted there was only one other step, and that was manhood suffrage. We have not been intimidated or frightened by arguments such as this, but it seems to me that the Home Secretary and the right hon. member for Kilmarnock are indulging in doctrines which are dangerous, when they assume to think that property is no longer to be the basis of the qualification for a vote in this country. The right hon. member for Kilmarnock quoted with commendation a saying of the democratic Benjamin Franklin, that it is idle to suppose that property possesses the exclusive right to the franchise. Without presuming too confidently to predict what will happen, I have no hesitation in saying that these words of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, will next Easter Monday be quoted with rapturous applause, when 60,000 men gather together on the Town Moor at Newcastle to demand manhood suffrage. There is no logical reason why married women should not have votes if you demand manhood suffrage. But we who support this Bill do not wish to declare that we desire that the franchise should be based upon any other condition than it is based upon at the present moment, namely, property. Unless a woman can obtain a vote by property we do not wish to do anything either to admit her or to exclude her. It is therefore you who, if you throw this argument of property aside, will be lending an assistance to the agitation in favour of manhood suffrage which I believe you will heartily repent. I wish now, as briefly as possible, to go through the leading arguments which have been advanced in the debate upon this Bill. The reasons in its favour have been stated so often, and I am anxious to occupy as little as possible of the time of the House, that it appears to me to be the fairer course to deal with the arguments against rather than those in favour of the Bill. The first argument is that the majority of

women do not ask for this Bill, and that a great number of them are opposed to it. If this Bill contemplated making a woman vote who did not wish to vote, it would not find a more resolute opponent in this House than myself. But when you say that a majority of women are opposed to it, I say that it is impossible to prove it; and I say further, that the same argument, in an analagous case, you did not accept as complete. I remember perfectly well, when I first came into this House, that I heard it stated again and again that the majority of the working classes of this country were not in favour of the extension of the suffrage. It was said that it was only the active politicians among them, just as it is now said that it is only the active women agitators who are in favour of this Bill. Now, what do we observe? No doubt it never could be proved that a majority of the working classes were in favour of the extension of the suffrage, and any more than it can be proved now that a majority of the agricultural labourers are in favour of household suffrage in counties; and yet it was again and again stated that the majority of the working classes were in favour of household suffrage. The House soon after that recognised the justice of the claim for an extension of the suffrage to the artizan class, by having once recognised the abstract justice of the plea. But the argument which no doubt produced the most influence on the House is this, that at the present time the interests of women are far better looked after by men than they would be looked after by themselves; and it is said by the Home Secretary that if you could only prove to him that women's questions of a vitally interesting nature were treated with injustice in this House, it would be a conclusive argument in favour of voting for the Bill. Nothing could be further from my mind than to accuse this House of consciously doing anything which is unjust or wrong to women, but women and men may have very different views of what is best for women, and our position is this, that according to the principles of representative government it is only fair that women should be able to give expression to their wishes on measures likely to affect their interests. Take for instance the case of educational endowments. The Endowed Schools Commissioners have again and again said that one feeling they found prevalent in the towns is, that educational endowments should be so used that the wants of every boy should be satisfied before any attention is paid to the wants of women. What right have we to suppose that this is the opinion of women on this subject, considering their enthusiasm for education? What right have we to suppose that if they could exercise power in this House they would not demand an equal share in the educational endowments of the country? I wish to direct the attention

of the House to what seems to me a most important argument on this subject. Hitherto the question has been treated too much as if it simply concerned women of property. Now, you say that men can be safely entrusted to legislate for women—that men can be safely entrusted in the constituencies to represent the wants of women. I say that any one who studies the industrial history of the country—any one who looks to what trades unions have done—cannot for a moment believe in this conclusion. What are the arguments in favour of trades unions. I am not opposed to trades unions. One of the first speeches I ever made was in their favour, but at the same time I do not conceal their defects. It has been again and again asserted that without the power of combining in trades unions it would be impossible for workmen to obtain a proper reward for their labour, and that it would be impossible to secure their just rights. This is their deliberate conviction asserted a thousand times over. But have they ever admitted a woman to these trade unions? They have almost invariably excluded women, and although they say that without these combinations it is impossible for labour to obtain its just reward, they take very good care to exclude women from them. I have known, on several occasions, when a trades union has organised a strike, that when the women who had had no voice in deciding upon the strike showed themselves anxious to take advantage of the labour market, the trades unionists stood outside the shops to keep women away from doing men's work. What took place in the Potteries? It is perfectly well known that for years and years men were so jealous of the competition of women labourers that they made it a rule in the trades union that the whole force of the union should be used to prevent women from using the hand-rest which the men invariably avail themselves of, and which greatly facilitates the rapidity and precision of the work. Let us look to our legislation for the future, and I ask the House calmly to consider whether looking at some of the measures likely to be brought forward, it is not of essential importance that we should take the opinion of women upon them. Probably there is no social measure existing in connection with the manufacturing districts which is of so much interest at the present time as the Nine Hours Bill, introduced by the hon. member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella). I have no doubt that the hon. member has introduced that Bill with the purest motives; it is a Bill that affects vitally the interests of the unrepresented classes. Now what is this Bill? It is a Bill that limits the labour of women to nine hours a day. What must be the inevitable result of that Bill? It must do one of two things—either impose a legislative limit of nine hours a day over all

the country—and in that case call it a general Nine Hours Bill, or it must inevitably place the most serious restrictions and impediments upon the employment of women. For how can a manufacturer, unless he employs women on the principle of half-time, say that directly the nine hours are up, every woman must leave, and then let the mill go on working for another hour or two without a woman being employed? The inevitable result will be to place grievous impediments in the way of the employment of women, and before we sanction such a measure it certainly seems to me that women should be consulted. It is, in my opinion, of the utmost importance that their opinion should be consulted. I am bound in candour to say—I don't know whether the sentiment is popular or not—that, looking to the past industrial history of the country, and seeing what the trades unionists have sometimes done to women, I am not certain that there is not at the bottom of the movement a feeling which is prompted by the jealousy of men with regard to the labour of women. But there is an argument, perhaps not avowed in this House, that is, nevertheless, producing a great influence upon the Liberal members, and it is one to which I wish particularly to direct the attention of hon. members. I have heard it said again and again, by Liberal friends of mine, that they cannot vote for this Bill because they think one of its consequences would be to hinder the disestablishment of the Church. They are of opinion that the majority of women are opposed to disestablishment, and that if this Bill is passed it will put back that question fifty years. I am anxious to speak on this subject, because I have always been in favour of disestablishment, and I shall always be in favour of it. But although these are my sentiments, it certainly seems to me to be an injustice of the grossest possible kind if we for one moment sanction the exclusion of women simply because we feel that they are so much in favour of the continuance of the Church that if they could exercise their vote the establishment of the Church would continue. Would it not be an injustice, almost amounting to a fraud, if the Church were disestablished on the plea that just a bare majority of the electors were in favour of disestablishment, when, at the same time, we believe that the feeling of women in favour of establishment is so great that the majority of the men would represent only a minority of the whole nation, and that taking men and women together the majority is not in favour of disestablishment but of establishment? It may of course be said that in some questions the opinion of men is more important than that of women, and that the opinion of 100,000 men in favour of a particular proposal represents more weight than the opinion of 100,000 women

against it. But can you say this with regard to such a question as the Church, or the question of the Nine Hours' Bill, or others I might enumerate? Surely you cannot say it with regard to the Church, for the spiritual welfare of women is of just as much importance as the spiritual welfare of men, and in a question whether the Church should be continued as an established Church or not the opinion of women ought to exercise the greatest amount of influence upon us. We ought to endeavour to trace out what is the effect of the Church establishment upon the great mass of the people, and to whom would you go to obtain this opinion? It seems to me that if I wished to ascertain what is the effect which the Church is producing at the present time I should go to those who are most practically acquainted with its working—those who see most clearly its influence among the poor—and I believe they are women and not men. Now, however much I may be in favour of disestablishment, it seems to me that to exclude women from the vote, simply because we think it would delay the reform we desire, is sanctioning a principle which is essentially unfair—essentially unjust—and is just as unreasonable as if the Church party were to try to disfranchise the Nonconformists because the Nonconformists have tried to disestablish them. It seems to me, further, that you cannot rest the exclusion of women upon the ground that they are unfit intellectually for the franchise. Last year you did that which showed conclusively that in your opinion, however unfit intellectually they might be to vote, yet if they possessed a certain property qualification they ought to have a vote. You cast to the winds the idea of anything like intellectual fitness when you were occupied night after night in elaborating various schemes for securing the representation of the illiterate voter. It is evident, I think, that “coming events cast their shadows before.” I infer from the speech of the Home Secretary that the Government are about to join the Liberal members at this end of the House in support of the Bill of my hon. friend the member for the Border Boroughs (Mr. Trevelyan) in favour of giving the agricultural labourer a vote. But if we enfranchise the agricultural labourer, and refuse to give a vote to women, we shall be landed in this dilemma—we shall declare that although the labourer, however ignorant, ought to have a vote, no woman, however intellectual, ought to enjoy it. I will only in conclusion allude to one thing which, no doubt, has greatly prejudiced this Bill. It has so happened that my hon. friend the member for Manchester has been identified with another agitation, and it has also happened that many persons who are advocates of this Bill outside this House have also been identified with that agitation in favour of the repeal of the

Contagious Diseases Acts. It appears to me singularly unfair to let such a consideration as this in the least degree influence our decision. It would be just as unfair as it would be to let our decision be influenced on any question that can be brought forward by my hon. friend the member for Carlisle (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), because he happens to be identified with the Permissive Bill. I can only say that many of those who support this Bill differ fundamentally from the views held by the hon. member for Manchester in reference to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; and many of those who are the strongest advocates of the Women's Disabilities Bill outside the House are also opposed to the manner in which the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts has been conducted. Now I will only say in reply to the argument of the right hon. member for Kilmarnock that he seems to think that those who support this Bill wish to make women less womanly. If the right hon. gentleman can convince me that giving them a vote would make them in any respect less womanly, or men less manly, I would immediately vote against the Bill. He concluded by quoting a sentence from Addison, in which he says that the glory of a state consists in the modesty of women and the courage of men. I have yet to learn that this Bill is calculated to make women less modest; and I have also yet to learn that giving women a vote can in the slightest degree diminish the courage of men. It is probable, nay, almost certain, that this measure will not be accepted on the present occasion. I believe that the feeling in its favour is growing. I believe, if there are no more solid reasons than those which have been advanced against it to-day, it is certain to stand the trial of free discussion. It is possible that women exaggerate the advantages which the passing of this Bill will confer upon them, but I am most firmly convinced that the other consequences which are attributed to it by the opponents of the measure are infinitely more exaggerated.

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NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

REPORT

OF A

PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN THE

HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS, LONDON,

ON MONDAY, APRIL 28th, 1873.

E. B. EASTWICK, Esq., M.P., IN THE CHAIR.



PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, 9, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

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1871

PUBLIC MEETING.

ON Monday evening, April 28th, a public meeting was held in London in the Hanover Square Rooms. Long before the hour at which the chair was taken, the hall was crowded in every part, and when at eight o'clock Mr. Eastwick, M.P., the chairman, came upon the platform, a most enthusiastic demonstration took place. Amongst those present were—R. Ward Jackson, Esq., M.P.; R. N. Fowler, Esq., M.P.; D. C. Heron, Esq., M.P.; Sir Harry Verney, M.P.; Wm. Johnston, Esq., M.P.; Duncan M'Laren, Esq., M.P.; Miss Gurney, Miss Le Geyt, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Arnold, Mrs. Sims, Mrs. Buckton, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. J. Stansfeld, Rev. Dr. Fraser, Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Tod, of Belfast; Lady Belcher, Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, Thos. Webster, Esq.; Mrs. Webster, W. H. Ashurst, Esq.; Mrs. Sheldon Amos, Miss Wolstenholme, Colonel and Mrs. Brine, W. D. Christie, Esq., C.B.; C. H. Hopwood, Esq.; James Hole, Esq.; Sir John Murray, Lady Anna Gore Langton, Professor Newman, Madame Venturi, Mrs. Thomas Taylor, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Mrs. Westlake, Miss Beedy, M.A.; Rev. E. A. Fitzroy, Mrs. Lucas, Miss Hamilton, Mr. Hoskins, Miss Becker, Rev. B. Glover, Miss Crowe, Miss Stevenson, Miss Sturge, of Birmingham; Miss Boucherett, the Provost of Dumbarton, Miss Downing, Col. Richardson Gardner, Mr. Stone, Lewis Morris, Esq.; Mark Marsden, Esq.; Mr. and Mrs. Wakefield, of Dover; Miss Dick, of Burntisland; A. J. Williams, Esq.; Miss C. A. Biggs, Mrs. Eastwick, Mrs. F. Malleson, Miss Agnes Garrett, Miss Rhoda Garrett, F. A. Allen, Esq.; J. S. Symon, Esq.; Miss Apps and Miss Dunbar, of Dover; Miss H. Blackburn, &c.

The CHAIRMAN, after a few prefatory remarks, said this was the sixth anniversary of the great national movement for the promotion of women's suffrage, which began in 1867. It was his conviction that they had no reason to be dissatisfied with the progress they had made, or be doubtful of the ultimate result. One of the most common arguments that had been used by the opponents of the Bill which was now before the House had been cut from under their feet by the Ballot. (Cheers.) It used to be said, at every debate on this question, that the suffrage ought not to be conceded to women because it

would expose them to all the uproar and disturbance attending a contested election. Uproar and disturbance on such occasions were things of the past, thanks to the passing of the Ballot Bill. He never himself thought there was anything in that argument, but it was necessary to lay some stress upon it, because the great leader of debate, Mr. Gladstone, thought so much of it that he suggested, as a means of avoiding the difficulty, the Italian plan of giving women votes by deputy. The next encouraging fact was what had taken place in connection with School Boards. Mrs. Grey, who was a candidate at the School Board, went down when hundreds and thousands of working men were hurrying to the hustings, and they stood aside for her to pass, and took off their hats as they gave her their cordial wishes and support. (Cheers.) Very gratifying was it to reflect upon the great success which had attended the efforts of ladies desiring to obtain seats on the School Boards. Eighteen ladies had been elected on the School Boards for Scotland. Another gratifying fact to be mentioned was that in the great public school at Harrow fifteen of the masters had signed a petition in favour of women's suffrage; and in the University of Cambridge a large proportion of the tutors had subscribed to it, including all the tutors of Trinity College. In the debate of 1871, Mr. Bouverie said that the desire for women's suffrage had died out in America; the right honourable gentleman's expression was, "The women's game is played out." (Laughter.) Was it played out? One of the articles of the convention which nominated General Grant especially called attention to the women's suffrage movement, and urged its great importance. The men who stood at the very summit of literature and oratory in America supported the movement. Such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mr. Higginson, the essayist, Mr. Wendell Phillips, the great orator, and Judge Hoare. Mr. Emerson had said that the women's suffrage movement was an era in civilisation. In the great territory of Wyoming, which would, he hoped, become one of the states of the Union, the suffrage had long been given to women, and had been exercised by them most faithfully and successfully. Mr. John Stuart Mill, in the debate of 1867, said that if the law denied the vote to all but the possessors of £5,000 a year, the poorest men in the nation would now and then acquire the suffrage; but neither birth, nor fortune, nor merit, nor intellect, nor exertion could ever enable a woman's voice to be heard in the Parliament whose laws touched her interests as much as any in creation. (Cheers.) He (Mr. Eastwick) trusted those words would soon be applicable only to the past, and he earnestly appealed to the meeting to go on and maintain the struggle with the same moderation and patience that had characterised it hitherto, and which were the best guarantees of success. (Cheers.)

Mr. R. N. FOWLER, M.P., wished to say why, ever since he had had the honour of voting, he had voted in favour of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill. Sometimes it was said that the proposal was a great innovation in the institutions of the country; this was a proposition he utterly denied. The change, if change it were, had not been made recently, it was made by an Act which was passed as long ago as the year 1835; it was made by the Poor Law Act, under which ladies were allowed to vote in parochial elections, and he would challenge anyone to deny that the exercise of the franchise by ladies at such elections had not been attended with the greatest advantage to the administration of the great Act. We had therefore nearly 40 years' experience, and it had been an experience of a most satisfactory character. More recently we had the experience of the municipal elections, and the result had been equally satisfactory. Taking these facts into consideration it certainly was not now necessary to argue that the time had arrived for going a step further and applying the principle already conceded to Parliamentary elections. (Cheers.) He had not yet heard who was to lead the attack on Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill. On previous occasions it had been Mr. Bouverie, who upon this question had not acted consistently with his own principles or the traditions of his family. The passing of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill he (Mr. Fowler) believed would be a general advantage to the country, and no sound or valid argument could be brought forward against it. The day could not be far distant when a general election would take place. It might be this year, or it might be next, but it could not be far distant. The friends of the woman's suffrage movement could not expect much from the present House of Commons, because, in view of its approaching dissolution, the votes were given more with reference to the hustings than anything else. The great fact to be borne in mind was that the country would soon be appealed to, and he would, therefore, entreat the ladies to use their influence, and the gentlemen to give their votes in favour of the candidates who would pledge themselves to support this great measure. (Cheers.) He moved:—"That to recognise sex as a ground of disqualification for voting in the election of members of Parliament is contrary to the principles of English representation, unjust to those excluded, and injurious to the whole community." (Cheers.)

Miss BECKER, in seconding this motion, said the arguments in favour of the principles it embodied had been so well and so often put before the country that very little more was now necessary for those who had been so long working for the cause than to give some account of the progress made. The agitation had in fact progressed at a rate which could not be surpassed in the history of any other political movement.

With but small means at its disposal it had produced a great effect. Since September last upwards of 150 public meetings had been held in various parts of the country in support of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill. They had all been addressed by ladies, and at all of them resolutions had been passed in support of the Bill. Meetings had been held in Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, and Birmingham, and in every instance the verdict had been the same, namely, a unanimous assent to the justice of the measure. Not only, however, had great public meetings so pronounced, but municipal councils had adopted petitions in favour of the principle. Upwards of 30 town councils had petitioned for the Bill, including such important bodies as the councils of Manchester, Edinburgh, Bath, Dewsbury, Middlesboro', and many other places. The members of these councils had had experience of Women's Suffrage in the election of those bodies, and had therefore recommended the Bill to the House of Commons. There had been in addition memorials to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, praying for their support to the principle of the Bill. They had been signed by upwards of 11,000 women; and it had been sought to have many places represented rather than many names from each place, and the memorials therefore represented a force of public opinion amongst women which ought to have great weight with the gentlemen to whom they were addressed, and with the nation. (Cheers.) The question was felt by women who were working and thinking to be one of deep practical earnestness. It was sometimes said that women had not sufficient political education to fit them for the franchise; she believed the amount of political education among women was greatly underrated by men, and that the political education of both men and women was not so good but that there was room for improvement. (Cheers.) But whilst men had every opportunity of improving their political education, women by the fact of their political disabilities were debarred from much of this educational process. (Cheers.) Sometimes that objection might be made by men who did not think it a desirable thing that women should obtain political education or think intelligently on political matters. She had nothing to say about these, but to those who did believe that women ought to have an influence in the country, whether directly or indirectly, she would ask what opportunities women had of acquiring political education while they were shut out from a vote? (Cheers.) Political education amongst women must be acquired in the same way as amongst men, and when women had more political power there would arise leaders amongst them who would bring to bear upon political matters not only the intelligence which was common to all, but also opinions especially advanced from a woman's point of view. It was

natural that women should speak more effectually to women than men do, but in the present state of affairs the women who thought on political matters were in a manner compelled to be silent on public questions. Women of all shades of political opinion were seeking the franchise; but if any woman who was prominent in this question desired to give effect to her sentiments she was told she must not do so because the suffrage cause would be injured. On this account, thoughtful women were compelled to hide their sentiments lest it should injure the cause. This had had a disastrous effect upon the growth of political life. There were many social questions which were of deep interest to women, and upon which they held strong opinions; amongst others she might mention the Bill to render legal marriage with a deceased wife's sister. A great many women had petitioned for that Bill, as some had petitioned against it; but it was hardly possible for a woman to take an active part on that Bill without giving offence to one or other among the Members of Parliament who are voting for the suffrage. She had even heard it said that certain members refused their support to women's suffrage because women had petitioned against the Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Bill. Such a state of things could not be favourable to a development of political opinions amongst women, and it was a strong reason for removing their disabilities. Again, it had been said that the possession of the suffrage would expose women to various corrupting political influences. That objection applied equally well and with still greater force to the municipal franchise; municipal elections were very distinctly political, but the influences brought to bear upon municipal voters were mostly of the narrow, more degrading, and least elevating kind, whereas in Parliamentary elections we had something higher and broader. Under the existing state of things, therefore, women were exposed to the worst kind of political influence, and shut out from the higher influences of politics; and so long as women had the municipal and not the Parliamentary franchise they were at a disadvantage as compared to men. There was now a Bill before Parliament ostensibly to assimilate the municipal franchise in Ireland to that in England; yet the framer of the Bill had limited the franchise to men. She hoped their Parliamentary friends would take care that this omission was rectified, and that the women ratepayers of Ireland were allowed the same privileges as their sisters in England. (Cheers.) It was very striking to read in the debate on the Ballot Bill the extremely elaborate provisions made to secure the franchise to the illiterate voter. This was the cause of a feeling of shame to many intelligent women, who, though admitted on the School Board, are excluded from the franchise where the poorest and most ignorant of men were admitted. In

old times there was a law called benefit of clergy; reading was so rare an accomplishment that when a man possessed it he could not be hanged, and could save his life by reading a verse. (Laughter.) If something like the converse of that law were adopted among women, and the same provision were made to enable a woman to vote who could prove to the satisfaction of a returning officer that she could read and write, the result would be gratifying. (Laughter and cheers.) Another objection was that the giving of a vote would involve women in considerable publicity and turmoil; but that objection was done away with by the granting of the School Board Franchise and the right of sitting on School Boards. The position of a voter in a constituency was not necessarily one of publicity at all. Any woman could go and give her vote under the Ballot Act with no more publicity than going to a place of amusement. The position of a candidate at a great popular election was, however, one of great publicity, and no person could be elected on a School Board who did not make their views known to the electors, and in some degree become personally acquainted with the great body of the constituency. The constituency that elected the School Board of Manchester was one of the largest in the three kingdoms, and in that constituency women were invited to become candidates; and it was perfectly ridiculous to say that women might do this and yet not be permitted to give a vote for the Parliamentary Members for Manchester. (Cheers.) As to the reluctance which some professed to feel at involving women in the excitement of political discussion, they were already involved in it by the elections to which she had referred; for there was no branch of politics which involved more fierce discussions than that in which the politico-theological element entered, as at School Boards, and to the full force of which women were exposed. It was surprising that the House of Commons should refuse women this vote. In spite of what the hon. member who preceded her had said, she confessed to being one of those who did expect something even from it, for she expected something like logical consistency in the arguments it brought forward. (Cheers.) And she did not see with what consistency the House of Commons could give women as much as it had given and withhold the rest. She had some faith in the logic of men—at least they were very fond of telling us they were guided solely by logic and reason, and not by emotion or prejudice. (Laughter.) The present was a peculiarly fitting time for passing Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill. We were on the eve of a general election. In the earlier years of the present Parliament it was urged as an objection to the passing of the Bill that the addition of so large a body to the constituency would require that Parliament should be dissolved in order that the opinion of the new constituency might be taken.

Now then was the opportunity; before appealing to the country let this new constituency be admitted, and then the next Parliament would represent a very much wider body of opinion. (Cheers.) She would not say that the return of any member to the House of Commons would be influenced by the vote he gave on this question, and she felt very certain that no member would lose a single vote in consequence of having given a vote for this measure of justice. (Cheers.) There was in Lancashire a short time ago an election in a large constituency. There were two candidates before the electors—Conservative and Liberal—and both were questioned as to whether they would, if returned, support Mr. Bright's Bill. The Conservative unhesitatingly replied that he would vote for the Bill; the Liberal returned an evasive answer. A Liberal elector said that ever since he lived in the constituency he had voted Liberal, but if the Liberal candidate did not promise to vote for Mr. Bright's Bill he would vote for the Tory, and there were six or seven others whose votes would follow his. (Cheers.) Now, she did not wish to threaten members. (Laughter.) She would appeal to their sense of justice and right, at the same time reminding them that they might conciliate a great deal of kind feeling amongst the women of their constituencies by voting for this Bill. She for one never believed that any men deliberately intended to do any kind of injustice or wrong to women. If the wrong was done it was through ignorance. Men tried to do what they thought good for women; but women were now beginning to ask that their own voices might be heard in the matter. Finally, she would say that this women's suffrage movement did not proceed from any kind of antagonism or rivalry with men; it proceeded, on the contrary, from the deepest and truest sympathy in their highest hopes and aspirations. (Cheers.)

Miss RHODA GARRETT supported the resolution.*

A gentleman amongst the audience here moved an amendment, the effect of which was that it is contrary to the interests of the State and woman herself that she should be admitted to any share in politics. A young lady in the body of the meeting seconded the amendment, which was supported by Mr. MASON JONES. (We regret that we have not reports of the speeches of these two gentlemen.) On the amendment being put to the meeting it was rejected by an overwhelming majority.

Lady ANNA GORE-LANGTON said: It seems to me, that on this subject, the removal of the political disabilities of women, there exists some misapprehension. When it is mentioned in society, its promoters are accused of wishing to revolutionise

* Owing to an unfortunate omission on the part of the special reporter, notes of Miss Garrett's speech were not taken, and the newspaper reports were too incomplete to make use of here.

domestic life, by setting women in authority over men. This is quite a mistake; we have no such intention. It would be folly, and would make women ridiculous. Speaking for women, I say that we have far too great respect for our husbands and fathers to wish for an instant, if even such a thing were possible, to deprive them of the headship of their families which God has given them. Happy wedded life, where husband and wife mutually aid each other, and share each other's interests and pursuits, is the greatest of earthly blessings, and is far too sacred to be interfered with. But such happiness is not intended for all. We do not ask for the franchise for young girls, or for wives whose hearts and whose hands are filled with domestic duties; but for those women who have the qualification which is required of men. Many circumstances of late years have combined to bring forward this claim. The spread of education and of cheap literature—the quicker circulation of ideas—the more active political life of men, consequent on the lowering of the franchise, which has brought political discussions into the sphere of many more homes—the rapid increase of the population—above all, the surplus of women, who in 1861 were nearly a million in excess of the men—this has obliged many more women to work for their own support. In 1861 there were between two and three millions of women working for wages, or possessed of independent means, and since then the number must have increased. These women contribute by their industry to the well-being of the country; they are taxed the same as men, submit to the same laws. Is it just they should not have the same privileges? In the beginning of the last century, a legal authority said he conceived “that giving a vote for a representative in Parliament is the privilege by which every Englishman protects his property, and that whoever deprives him of such vote deprives him of his birthright.” Englishwomen possess property, how are they to protect it? In old days, when might was right, women for the sake of protection were married very early in life, or consigned to the cloister. Even then, under certain circumstances, they were allowed to choose a champion to fight for them. In these days, when law is paramount, there seems nothing unfeminine in giving a vote for a representative in Parliament. The Ballot Bill has made elections more orderly, and therefore facilitates women voting; but if men dislike seeing their faces at the polling booth, why not allow women voting papers, such as are used at the University elections; they can be sent by post. When women set to work in various ways, they are confronted by a kind of trades union among men, which tends to lower their wages, and keeps them out of many fitting and remunerative employments. When they examine the laws peculiarly affecting their

sex, their property, and their children, they find them partial, one-sided, and more in favour of the men than they would be if the opinion of women was also consulted. Only a few weeks ago, a Bill passed through the House of Commons, though it did not become law, which was entirely one-sided, for while it permitted a man to marry his sister-in-law, it did not permit a woman to marry her brother-in-law. Was that fair? The consequences of any alteration of the marriage law would be so serious to women, that surely none such ought to be made, unless their free and independent opinion on the subject can be arrived at, and that can only be done by giving them the franchise. The objection is made that if women vote they must also sit in Parliament. That is not a necessary consequence. Formerly women voted for directors of the East India Company, as they now vote for railway directors; but we have not yet heard of a woman becoming a director. Besides, clergymen have the franchise, but are prevented by special Act of Parliament from sitting in the House of Commons. Women are now trying to improve their position by obtaining juster laws for their sex, better education, and the removal of many impediments to their work. They are trying by perfectly legitimate means to use that influence which they are said to possess to so great an extent, and of which men seem so fearful, to obtain what is now the dearest wish of many a female heart—the political franchise. Is not this a higher, nobler aim than amusement, dress, or finery? These latter men give them to any extent, even to their ruin. Time will show if they will help them to their higher aims. I quite allow there are many women happy in quiet, domestic life, amply provided and cared for, who say they do not want a vote, for it would be rather a trouble. They are quite content with their position; and so they ought to be, and long may they continue so. They have everything to make life easy and comfortable. But generous and liberal minded women will allow that charity does not consist solely in almsgiving. There is a feeling—sympathy—by which we understand each other's hearts; it does more to bind us together, and to smooth away the distinction of classes, than even the giving of gold. Let us exercise that feeling, and imagine ourselves in the position of our less fortunate sisters, who are toiling on amid difficulties and temptations alone and unaided. In a short time, I think, many will then agree with the opinion I have long held, that in reason and in justice those women who have the required qualification ought to have the political franchise. I, therefore, move the second resolution, “That this meeting approves of the Bill entitled a Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, and authorises its chairman to sign petitions in its favour to both Houses of Parliament.”

Mr. HERON, M.P., seconded the motion. He had always been of opinion that the argument as regarded the property qualification in connection with this question was unanswerable, and that when a woman, either by the descent of property or by hard, earnest, and laborious work in the world, under difficulties and disadvantages that men could not dream of, had acquired property it should entitle her to the franchise in the same way in which it would entitle the possessor to a vote if he were a man. He never could understand the argument which would deprive her of it, unless she was, in the language of the opponents of the movement, physically unfit to exercise that very low privilege, the electoral franchise. By what was called the logical argument it was said that women were the creatures of impulse and passion, and that they were unable to understand the bearing of any logical argument. But if we were to go to logic and make that a test of the electoral qualification, who was there fit to vote, or even to be a member of Parliament. (Laughter.) There had been women, from Mary Wolstencroft downwards, who had been distinguished not merely as creatures of impulse and passion, but as powerful writers, clear and logical thinkers, able to express their opinions upon every subject as well as most men, and better than many. He would ask any opponent why on earth a woman should be deprived of the property qualification for the franchise? Women were allowed to exercise the municipal franchise, and in that way to influence the property of important cities; women not only voted, but sat on the School Boards, and had proved to be not the least influential, and certainly not amongst the worst members of the School Boards. (Laughter and cheers.) In the House of Commons there was an argument known as the pedestal argument: people said women ought to be placed upon so lofty a pedestal as never to be degraded so as to walk through the mire of a contested election—(laughter)—they must be put aloft to be admired, but must never exercise the rights and privileges of a free and free thinking British subject. The pedestal argument, however, had been very nearly exploded, because the gentlemen who used it never reflected, or, if they did think, put the thought aside, that while they said women should be placed upon a lofty pedestal politically, yet as regarded the ordinary daily life there was no domestic drudgery too severe, no work too hard for women. A favourite argument with opponents of this measure was that men were sent to fight and bear the hard burdens which the State imposed, and that women were exempt from them. He would ask that appeal to the common sense of the meeting whether in a great struggle affecting great nations the women did not suffer as much, nay ten times more than the men. (Cheers.) The mere excitement of battle was

nothing compared to the prolonged agony of those at home. In Paris, while the men in the field were receiving their daily rations, in the garrets and cellars of the besieged city the women were perishing of famine. Was not the name of Florence Nightingale embalmed in history as an answer to this peace and war question so often heard. (Cheers.) In every relation of life that he could discover, both as regarded their conduct and judgment, women, if admitted to the franchise, would be amongst the best electors of the British Empire. It was often said that most women were Conservative in politics. He said, if they desire to be Conservative let them, and if they choose to be Liberals let them. (Laughter.) He hoped it was not necessary to spend much time in proving to the meeting that there was no such very tremendous danger to the British Constitution if the few women who, by the descent of property or industry were entitled to the franchise, were allowed to exercise it, even though it involved walking through the mire of a contested election. And he would remind those who were continually speaking of the dangers of a contested election, that we had got rid of a great deal of the excitement and annoyance of the nomination and polling day by the beneficent operations of the Ballot, and there were now none of the scenes which of old discountenanced women from going to the polling booth. (Cheers.)

Miss BEEDY, in supporting this resolution, said: A few years ago the English Parliament gave women the municipal franchise. Now we are asking you to see that the same arguments and same reasons that secured for women the municipal franchise hold with equal force in demanding for them the parliamentary franchise. If men own property on which they are taxed, or occupy houses for which they are rated, if they represent property and bear the burdens attaching to it, you say according to the constitution of the country they have a right to the franchise. No one inquires what their particular tastes or pursuits may be—no one asks whether they study language and history or science and mathematics; no one asks whether they are engineers or artists. These matters are not considered. If they represent property, it is admitted that they have a right to the franchise. Now we are asking you to admit that though the pursuits of women are necessarily somewhat different from those of men, that though their tastes and experience are somewhat different, yet that these facts should have no influence in excluding them from the rights that attach to the property that they represent. Some women are asking for the franchise as a defence to property; women who own large landed estates, or are heavily taxed, feel that they need the franchise to defend their individual rights. But a larger number of women are asking for the franchise as a

means to secure just legislation. (Hear, hear.) They see that wherever the interests of men and women conflict it is impossible for women to get full justice from men, just as it would be impossible for men to get full justice from women—(laughter and cheers)—that wherever the interests of one party is opposed to the interests of another party, it is impossible for either one to determine the strict line of justice between the two. A still larger number of women are asking for the franchise as a means of securing a wider sphere of employment for women, and better opportunities for education. (Cheers.) But I am sure that the demand that women are making is for the most part misunderstood. (Hear, hear.) A very common opinion is that women are putting themselves into antagonism with society—that they are trying to grasp a new range of duties that will necessitate a neglect of the homes and the children—that they are attempting to invade the sphere that nature has appropriated to men. The very reverse of this is true. Women are only trying to get themselves into a position where they can do their half of life's work better than they now do. They are trying to put more competent women in charge of the homes. It is a shame to us that more scientific knowledge is spent on the food and rearing of cattle than on the food and physical habits of children. (Cheers.) But the one is in the hands of men trained to scientific observation and habits of reasoning, and the other is in the hands of women, to whom it is thought to be a mistake to teach science and mathematics. (Laughter and cheers.) It is a small thing that mothers are devoted to their children; they must learn that good intentions can never take the place of wise action. The child is in their hands, and both the length and quality of its life are very largely at the mercy of their wisdom or folly. Mothers need to know more of the world than they do; they need to know what dangers there are, where they lurk, and what paths lead to them, in order to be able to successfully guard their sons and daughters against them. Women are not trying to take the place of men; they only want to come up alongside of them, instead of walking behind them; they want to do their part of the world's work as well as men do theirs; they want to tear down the old notion of the inferiority of women. Some fear that if women are allowed to come into political life that it will make them coarse and unrefined. What is it to come into political life? What is it that women are aiming to do in this respect? Simply to study and examine all the questions that affect the interests of society, and when they have formed opinions upon those questions, to give expression to those opinions in the form of a vote for a man who will advocate those opinions in Parliament. Do you think Lady Burdett Coutts coarse and unrefined for taking just this sort of

interest in the welfare of society? and do you think she would be any less refined if she gave a vote to help a man into Parliament who would urge forward her schemes by wise legislation? I venture to assert, there is scarce a man or woman in the kingdom who would not rejoice to have the franchise conferred upon Lady Burdett Coutts. But I suppose we must admit that the women whom this franchise movement is aiming to produce will not be quite like the typical women of the past. Women who think are different from women who live only in their senses and emotions. They cannot have the same infantile trust, they cannot be the same free-from-care balm. But in considering the desirableness of any exchange, we must compare what is given away with what is received. The American Indians, you know, sold their lands to the white men for glass beads and red paint, and does it not seem as though women, in giving up what they might have for what they do have, are making a somewhat similar bargain? (Laughter.) But you say women do not want the franchise. I believe it is true that the class enfranchised by the Reform Bill of 1832 did not desire the franchise, and that the majority of those enfranchised by the Reform Bill of 1867 did not care for the political privileges that were given them; and it is still more true that the American slaves did not want their freedom. A few of them did—the brighter ones, those who hired their time from their masters and managed their own lives, did want their freedom. But the majority of the slaves did not, and it is not strange that they felt as they did. The slave lost favour by wishing to be independent of his master; and women know that they lose favour with most men by wishing to be more independent of men than they now are. (Cheers.) No, women, as a class, care nothing about the franchise for women; not even the majority of those for whom we are asking it desire it. They have not thought about it; they are accustomed to the leadership of men in all political matters. There are as many men who desire the franchise for women as there are women who desire it; and the majority of women will desire the franchise when the majority of men desire them to have it. There are some men who are so generous as to lament that when women assume a position of political equality they will no longer be able to show them the courtesy they now do. This is a very amiable objection, and I am disposed to think we value the amiability of these men more than their good sense. (Laughter.) When the anti-slavery contest was raging in the American Congress, and the question was being discussed whether slavery should be allowed to go into the new territory of Kansas, a South Carolinian made a touching appeal to the House of Representatives, saying, if he should decide to remove his residence to Kansas he should think it a great hardship and

cruelty not to be permitted to take his dear old nurse with him, the good old woman who had watched his cradle and petted his boyhood. A veteran abolitionist interrupted him, saying, "Take your dear old nurse with you. We do not propose to prevent you from doing that, but we mean you shall not sell her when you get her there." Now women, as I understand it, do not propose to avoid any of the courtesies that it is the pleasure of men to extend to them, but they do think it best to get women into a position where it shall not be in men's power to abuse them, if at any time, by any chance, they should not be in a courteous mood. (Laughter and cheers.) But it is said that women know nothing of politics. It is true that there are many questions before Parliament in which women have little interest, and concerning which they have little knowledge. There are some legislative questions that men understand better than women, and always will understand better than women; and there are other legislative questions which women understand better than men, and always will understand better than men; and it is in favour of these that we wish to utilise the experience and wisdom of women. And what are the questions that are occupying the attention of legislators at the present time? How to prevent disease, how to administer the charities, how to educate the people, how to make men sober and temperate. Are these questions in which women feel no interest? are these questions in which women have no counsel to give? I take great pleasure in supporting this resolution.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON, M.P., supported the resolution briefly. He recommended the supporters of the measure before Parliament to prosecute their movement until what they required was given. He referred to the observations of Miss Becker as to the defect in the Bill which she had mentioned, and he would take care, when the proper time arrived, to move an amendment that would give Irishwomen the same privileges as Englishwomen enjoyed. (Cheers.)

The resolution was carried with acclamation.

Miss STURGE proposed the third resolution, viz.: "That this meeting expresses its best thanks to those Members of Parliament who have voted in favour of the Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, and hopes they will again support the measure when brought forward on Wednesday next." She always, she said, felt the poverty of language when she wished to move with any force a vote of thanks, and she was especially anxious that the present vote should be a cordial one. She wished as forcibly as she could to express her thanks to the gentlemen who had had the courage for so many sessions of Parliament to be in a minority. It did require courage to occupy that position, and perhaps it would require still more

courage to openly change your opinions. She hoped we should find the members who had already voted for this measure, which she so firmly believed was for the benefit of the community, would every one of them record their votes in its favour; she hoped the majority would have the courage to change their opinions, that she might be able to include them in the vote of thanks next time. (Laughter.) Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen last year spoke of the clouded existence of man, and she imagined it was in consequence of that cloud in which the majority of them had hitherto been involved that they were unable to see the question of Women's Suffrage as she would wish them to see it. (Laughter.) One of the gentlemen who had spoken upon the amendment which the meeting had rejected had gone back for an argument as far as Adam and Eve. Perhaps she might have recourse to her Quaker theology and quote the words of George Fox, who on one occasion, when some one wrote to him about the preaching of women, replied that before the fall Eve was equal to Adam, and that the New Testament restored that equality. (Cheers.) She had heard it said that women ought not to be entrusted with a vote, because they were liable to panic; but the conduct of certain opponents of the measure convinced her that panic was not confined to women. She assured the gentleman who had moved the amendment that there was no reason why they should be alarmed. Capacity, she believed, would find its own level anywhere; capacity was a divine law, and that man had little faith who fancied that God's law required bolstering up by the laws of man. (Cheers.) She would remind her hearers that progression was often liable to contract experience. A gentleman once told her that it was quite clear that it was not intended that women should speak in public, because of their voice. That was absurd, for Mr. Glaisher had stated that in a balloon a man's voice could be heard a mile, a woman's could be heard two miles. (Loud laughter.) One was continually hearing what had been termed the peace and war argument. It might be true that women could not go out as soldiers, but this was an argument that always reminded her that Dr. Watts, who was no mean authority, wished to confine fighting to dogs. (Renewed laughter.) She claimed the vote for women householders, who were paying their rates and taxes, on the ground of our common humanity. It all just came to this—either men were infallible or women had no souls. (Loud laughter.) At an old French Council in the thirteenth century the question was discussed whether women had souls, and it was carried by a majority of one. (Laughter.) The same question in a different form would come before Parliament when Mr. Jacob Bright introduced his Bill. (Cheers.) What had hitherto been the majority might again affirm their own infallibility,

and at the same time deny that women had mind and soul. She would remind them of this council of the 13th century which affirmed it by a majority of one; surely the present House of Commons might do as much for us as the French Council did for the women of the thirteenth century. (Laughter.) Liberty of conscience was a mockery without liberty of action; and women ought to be allowed the latter—allowed to act for the best according to their capacity. A gentleman wrote to her not long ago that he objected to women's suffrage because it would increase the power of priestcraft. Surely if a man's sense of right was to override a woman's sense of right that was mancraft and priestcraft too. She cared little for the sentimental pedestalism which was given to ladies, because it was generally taken from the level of womanhood to give to ladyism. (Cheers.)

Mr. W. H. ASHURST seconded the resolution. He referred to the official appointment given to Mrs. Nassau Senior, and said he was able to inform the meeting, on the best authority, that she did her work as well as any of her male competitors could do it. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then carried unanimously, and on the proposition of Mrs. ARTHUR ARNOLD, seconded by Mrs. BUCKTON, a vote of thanks was passed to the chairman.—This compliment Mr. EASTWICK briefly acknowledged, after which the meeting closed.

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SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE

National Society for Women's Suffrage.

PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL MEETING ON MONDAY, JUNE 23RD, 1873.

In presenting their Second Annual Report, your Committee feel that there is much cause for congratulation among the friends of the movement, on account of the solid progress made during the past year, not only in public opinion, but in the House of Commons also. Although the Bill has not yet passed, there is no doubt, from the increased support it has met with everywhere, that a real and lasting advance has been made in the question.

On the first day of the Session, Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P., gave notice to re-introduce the "Women's Disabilities Removal Bill." On February 7th it passed its first reading, and on the 30th of April Mr. BRIGHT rose to move the second reading. He was supported in the debate by Mr. EASTWICK, Serjeant SHERLOCK, Right Hon. LORD JOHN MANNERS, Mr. FAWCETT, Mr. HERON, Right Hon. J. W. HENLEY, and Sir J. TRELAWNEY. The opposition to the Bill was conducted by Mr. BOUVERIE and Mr. SCOURFIELD, and included Right Hon. E. KNATCH-BULL-HUGESSEN, Mr. BERESFORD HOPE, Mr. LEATHAM, Right Hon. H. A. BRUCE, EARL PERCY, Mr. GOLDNEY, and Mr. GREENE. On the division of the House there appeared

For the Second Reading	155
Against " "	222
Majority against the Bill	67

The Bill was therefore lost.

There is much in the analysis of the division list to afford encouragement to the friends of the political enfranchisement of women. The full strength of the opposition appears to be reached by 220 or

222 votes, a number which has been maintained for four successive years; but if tellers and pairs be counted, we shall find that the number of opponents is even diminishing. In 1872 they counted 222 votes, which, with tellers, and 18 pairs, made in all 242. This year there have been again 222 voters, making, with tellers, and 15 pairs, only 239 opponents, or three less than last year. Meanwhile the votes recorded in favour of the Bill have increased from 143 to 155, making, with tellers and pairs, 172—a larger number than had ever before been attained.

The minority of 155 who voted in favour of the Bill included 109 Liberals and 46 Conservatives. Last year 105 Liberals and 38 Conservatives voted. This is a fact of some importance, as showing that the influence of the movement is extending on both sides of the House of Commons. Among the leading Conservatives who voted for it were Mr. DISRAELI, Sir C. ADDERLEY, Mr. GORDON, Mr. WARD HUNT, Lord JOHN MANNERS, Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, and Mr. HENLEY. Of members connected with Mr. GLADSTONE'S Government, Mr. STANSFELD and Mr. HIBBERT supported the Bill. Among the Conservatives who voted against it were Mr. GATHORNE HARDY and Mr. NEWDEGATE, and amongst the Liberals, Mr. BRUCE, Mr. CARDWELL, Mr. CHILDERS, Mr. GRANT DUFF, Mr. GLYN, Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, Mr. LOWE, Sir HENRY STORKS, and Mr. WINTERBOTHAM.

Of the 172 Members who voted or paired this year in favour of the Bill, 27 were Scotch, of whom 23 had supported the Bill before, 2 were new Members, 1 had never voted, and 1 had previously opposed it. Twenty-two were Irish Members, of whom 19 had previously voted for it, 1 was a new Member, and 2 had voted against it. Of the remaining 123 Members belonging to England and Wales, 33 were County Members representing 29 constituencies—of these 6 were new votes; and 90 were Borough Members, representing 74 constituencies, of which 7 were new votes. Your Committee beg to call your attention to the favourable vote of Mr. HENLEY, the Senior Member for Oxfordshire, who had hitherto opposed the Bill, and whose opinions have deservedly great weight in the House.

During the past year the supporters of the Political Enfranchisement of Women have had to lament the death of many warm friends and adherents to the movement; amongst others of COLONEL FRENCH, M.P., Mr. CORRY, M.P., and the following Members of the Central Committee: COLONEL SYKES, M.P., Mr. J. F. MAGUIRE, M.P., Sir JOHN BOWRING, Mrs. SOMERVILLE, Archdeacon SANDFORD, and Mr. COWELL STEPNEY; and lastly, of Mr. JOHN STUART MILL, whose unwearied energy in behalf of this movement first raised it to the rank of a Parliamentary question. At a meeting on May 21st, a resolution was passed by your Committee, "That this Society deploras the death of Mr. JOHN STUART MILL, whose earnest and invaluable devotion to the cause of the Political Enfranchisement of Women led to the first introduction by himself to Parliament of the measure for effecting that object, and has contributed so largely to the very successful

progress of the agitation, and to the present satisfactory position of the question."

During the past Session, memorials in favour of the measure, signed by upwards of 11,500 women of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, were presented to Mr. GLADSTONE and Mr. DISRAELI. The object in collecting names to these memorials was not to obtain a large number from any place, but to make the memorial as general as possible; and every English county, with the exception of Rutland, and most of the large towns, sent representative signatures.

The memorial to Mr. GLADSTONE was forwarded to him by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT; and Mr. GLADSTONE, in acknowledging it, expressed his sense of the importance to be attached to it. The memorial to Mr. DISRAELI was presented by Mr. W. H. GORE-LANGTON, M.P., and has been acknowledged by the following letter:—"DEAR GORE-LANGTON—I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the memorial, signed by 9,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised; though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she enjoys this right. As I believe this anomaly injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.—Yours sincerely,

B. DISRAELI."

Your Committee desire to call your attention to two steps which have been taken in Parliament with reference to the political rights of women. A Bill is before the House for the extension of the household franchise qualification to counties, and otherwise to amend the laws relating to the representation of the people. Mr. JACOB BRIGHT has placed on the notice paper of the House of Commons an amendment in Committee on this Bill in these words:—

"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 be registered as voters, and to vote in the election of members of Parliament, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."

It is scarcely probable that the amendment will be discussed this Session, as the understanding seems to be that the County Franchise Bill will not be pressed further this year than the second reading; but the amendment shows that the Parliamentary supporters of the movement do not intend to allow the question of the extension of the franchise in any direction to be discussed apart from the claims of women to representative government.

A Bill has been introduced by Mr. BUTT, M.P. for Limerick, with the object of assimilating the conditions of the municipal franchise in Ireland to those in England. But Mr. BUTT'S Bill limits the franchise to male ratepayers, and so far fails of its proposed object.

Mr. WM. JOHNSTON, M.P. for Belfast, has placed on the paper amendments in Committee on the Irish Municipal Franchise Bill, similar to those introduced by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT in 1869 into the English Bill.

The number of public meetings held since last summer has been over 160; of these your Committee have the pleasure to announce that 34 have been held in England through their means, namely—at St. Helen's, Lincoln, Great Grimsby, Boston, Grantham, Stamford, Retford, Banbury, Peterborough, Daventry, Wellingborough, Northampton, Lynn, Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds, Harwich, Bedford, Luton, Leighton Buzzard (discussion), Enfield (discussion), Great Marlow, Wallingford, Windsor, Reading, Hastings, Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Sandwich, Maidstone, Canterbury; and, in London, at Islington and Chelsea, and in the Hanover Square Rooms on April 28th. This last was presided over by Mr. E. B. EASTWICK, M.P., and it was addressed by the Lady ANNA GORE-LANGTON, Mr. R. N. FOWLER, M.P., Mr. HERON, M.P., Miss BECKER, Miss RHODA GARRETT, Mr. WM. JOHNSTON, M.P., Miss BEEDY, Miss STURGE, Mr. ASHURST, Mrs. ARTHUR ARNOLD, and Mrs. BUCKTON. Your Committee have also aided in promoting public meetings in the North of Ireland, viz., at Armagh, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Derry, and Dungannon.

Your Committee desire to express their hearty thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who have attended and spoken at public meetings and discussions in behalf of the movement. They consider that these are the best means of enlightening popular opinion upon the subject.

Your Committee have also to record the kindness of Lady ANNA GORE-LANGTON and of Miss C. WILLIAMS, in holding drawing-room meetings at their houses, on May 23rd and June 19th, at which to discuss the question. They would suggest to other friends that in some country towns, where public meetings seem unadvisable, drawing-room meetings might be held with advantage, and that many ladies would attend these who are unable or unwilling to go to public meetings.

Your Committee have pleasure in reporting that during the past year ten new local Committees have been established in England and Wales, and have placed themselves in connection with the Central Committee, namely: Bedford, Cardiff, Congleton, Croydon, Deal and Sandwich, Dover, Grimsby, Hastings, Luton, and Oxford; making a total of 76 Committees and Societies now working in connection with the Central Committee.

Your Committee have published and distributed, during the past year, the following pamphlets:—

“WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,” by Mrs. Arthur Arnold.

“WHY WOMEN DESIRE THE FRANCHISE,” by Miss Cobbe (reprint).

“REASONS FOR AND AGAINST THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN,” by Mrs. Bodichon (reprint).

“THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL” (leaflet).

REPORT OF MEETING IN THE HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS, April 28th, 1873.

LADY ANNA GORE-LANGTON'S SPEECH, April 28th.

MR. MILL'S SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, May 20th, 1867 (reprint).

During the first three months of the Session, petitions in favour of the measure were circulated. 912 petitions (175 of which were under seal), containing 327,915 signatures, have been presented to the House of Commons. Of this number 157 petitions, with 101,935 signatures, were obtained through the efforts of the Central Committee, including 84,883 signatures from inhabitants of the Metropolitan Boroughs. Petitions have also been sent to the House of Lords, but of these no official report can be obtained.

In consequence of a resolution passed by the Executive Committee on October 16th, 1872, “that the work of the Society should be carried on by a permanent Secretary, in the place of the Honorary Secretaries,” your Committee have secured the services of Miss MARY DOWLING as Secretary. From the high testimonials received of this lady's character and ability, they have every reason to believe that the work of the Association will be carried on by her with increased activity. Miss DOWLING will enter on her duties on the 1st of August.

Your Committee regret to state that they will lose the services of Miss E. A. SMITH, who is leaving England on a visit to America. Her zeal and ability during the time she has acted as Secretary have done much to forward the progress of the movement.

Your Committee desire to take this opportunity of thanking the friends of the Society for their liberal aid to the funds during the past season. The total expenditure of the Central Committee has only slightly exceeded £800, with which comparatively small sum much valuable work has been accomplished. It is confidently hoped that the growing interest felt in the question throughout the country will insure a corresponding increase in the support which has hitherto been so generously afforded.

A fund for the purpose of meeting the expenses of the coming year is now being collected, and has already been liberally supported by many of the friends of the movement. It is of urgent importance that funds should be raised, not only by means of a few large contributions, but also by a wide increase in the circle of small subscribers, and an earnest appeal is made to those who sympathise in the question, to manifest their interest by personal co-operation in collecting subscriptions to the funds of the Society.

Your Committee take this opportunity to remind the Members of every Local Committee or Society in connection with the Central Committee, that they are at all times privileged to attend the Committee Meetings at the Central Office; and venture to express the hope that, when in London, they will do so, feeling sure that mutual confidence and co-operation are alone necessary to carry on the work successfully.

It is also earnestly hoped that the friends of the movement will aid the cause by establishing Local Committees, by causing the delivery of Lectures, or the holding of Public Meetings; by procuring the insertion of facts and arguments bearing on the question in the local Press, and by writing to Members of Parliament urging them to consider the matter.

There is one other point to which your Committee would call particular attention. In view of an impending general election, many candidates for election are now holding meetings. They would most strongly urge on all supporters of this movement to aid it by causing questions on the subject of the disfranchisement of women to be put to each candidate in case of an election, asking him whether he will, if returned, vote for the "Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women."

National Society for Women's Suffrage: CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Receipts and Payments from June 30, 1872, to June 20, 1873.

Dr.

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
From Balance in Bank.....	14	17	4			
" " in Secretary's hands	20	0	0			
				34	17	4
" Donations	803	5	0			
" Annual Subscriptions.....	194	3	0			
" Sale of Publications	6	19	2			
" Tickets for Reserved Seats for the Meeting in Hanover Square Rooms, April 28th, 1873	25	18	0			
" Repayment.....	6	6	0			
				1,036	11	2
				£1,071	8	6

Cr.

PAYMENTS.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Printing.....	81	0	4			
" Postage, Carriage, Telegrams, and Omnibus Fares.....	43	16	4			
" General Advertisements.....	23	7	6			
" Secretary's Salary and Payment for Copying	102	7	6			
" Rent of Office (three quarters).....	37	10	0			
" Purchase of "Women's Suffrage Journal" and Newspapers	19	6	10			
" Stationery	7	16	10			
" Coals, Candles, and Attendance	4	16	4			
" Grants to Local Committees.....	30	0	0			
" Expenses of Public Meetings in London, including Hire of Rooms, Printing and Advertising	64	13	8			
" Expenses of Provincial Meetings, including Travelling Expenses and Special Advertisements	170	1	11			
" Organising Agent's Expenses and Salary	48	2	3			
" Grant to Family of late Organising Agent	13	5	0			
" Payments to Agents in London, Portsmouth, Rugby, Boston, Ipswich, Peterborough, Bury St. Edmunds, Berkhampstead, Chelmsford, Norwich, Northampton and Woolwich.....	164	14	5			
				£810	18	11
" Balance in Bank	£240	9	7			
" " Secretary's hands.....	20	0	0			
				260	9	7
				£1,071	8	6

Examined and found Correct,

H. J. TILDEN.

Auditor.

19th June, 1873.

SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Of the Central Committee, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, on Monday,
June 23rd, 1873, at 4 P.M.*

Mr. E. B. Eastwick, M.P., in the Chair.

The Report of the Executive Committee and the statement of accounts were presented, and taken as read.

RESOLUTION I.—Moved by Mr. Arthur Arnold, seconded by Miss Becker:—
“That this meeting adopts the Report and financial statement, as audited, and directs that they be circulated, and pledges itself to continue the most strenuous efforts in furtherance of the movement.”

RESOLUTION II.—Moved by Mrs. Buckton, seconded by Mrs. McLaren:—“That the Executive Committee for the ensuing year consist of the following persons,* and of delegates, the same being members of Local Committees, appointed by Local Associations to represent them.”

RESOLUTION III.—Moved by Mr. A. J. Ellis, F.R.S., seconded by Miss Babb:—
“That this meeting desires to express its warm thanks to the Honorary Secretaries, Miss C. A. Biggs, and Miss Agnes Garrett, and to the Secretary, Miss Emma Smith, for the zeal and ability with which they have, throughout the past year, promoted the cause of the Enfranchisement of Women.”

RESOLUTION IV.—Moved by Mr. Frederic Hill, seconded by Mr. Hodgson Pratt:—
“That the thanks of the meeting are due to the Chairman for presiding, and to the 172 Members of Parliament who voted or paired in the last division in favour of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill.”

* For list of Executive Committee, see pages 14—16.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
Addison, Mrs., Chathill	...	0 5 0
Allen, Miss F., Tenby	...	5 0 0
Amos, Professor and Mrs. Sheldon, London	1 1 0	
Anderson, Miss	0 5 0	
Anderson, Mr. Chas.	0 2 6	
Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur	2 2 0	100 0 0
Ashworth, The Misses; Bath	...	2 0 0
“A. V.” per Mrs. Lucas	...	
Babb, Miss C. E. London	1 1 0	
Babb, John Staines, Esq. ”	1 1 0	
Banks, F., Esq. ”	0 5 0	
Banks, Rev. R., Doncaster	1 1 0	
Bastard, T. H., Esq., Charlton Marshall	1 0 0	
Bennett, A. W., Esq., M.A., London	1 1 0	
Biggs, J., Esq. ”	1 1 0	
Biggs, Miss Ashurst	1 1 0	
Biggs, Miss C. A. ”	1 1 0	
Binney, Rev. Thos., LL.D., Upper Clapton	0 10 6	
Bird, Miss, Sydenham	0 5 0	50 0 0
Blackburn, Mrs., Southport	...	
Blackburn, Miss H., London	0 5 0	
Bolton, Mrs., Torquay	0 5 0	
Bonus, Miss, Penge	0 5 0	
Bostock, Miss, London	1 0 0	
Boucherett, Miss Jessie ”	1 0 0	
Boucherett, Miss L. ”	2 0 0	5 0 0
Bright, Mrs. Jacob ”	...	
Briggs, Miss, Cheltenham	0 10 0	
Brown, Saml., Esq., F.R.G.S. ”	1 0 0	
Browne, Mrs. S. W. London	4 0 0	2 0 0
Browne, Miss ”	...	
Browne, Mrs. H. ”	1 0 0	
Brooke, Rev. Stopford A., M.A. ”	1 1 0	
Bruce, Mrs. ”	1 1 0	
Bunting, Mr. and Mrs. Percy ”	1 1 0	
Burton, Mrs. Hill, Edinburgh	1 0 0	
Cade, Mrs., London	...	0 2 6
Caine, W. S., Esq., Liverpool	2 0 0	3 0 0
Carey, Miss, Guernsey	0 1 0	
Carpenter, Mrs. Russell, Bridport (for 2 years)	2 0 0	
Carslake, Mrs., Sidmouth	...	1 0 0
Cazalet, W. C., Esq., London	5 0 0	10 0 0
Champ, Miss, London	...	0 10 0
Charlesworth, Mr. and Mrs., Sheffield	0 5 0	
Chesson, Mrs. F. W., London	0 10 6	
Cobbe, Miss F. P. ”	1 1 0	
Colfox, Mrs., Sen., Bridport	1 0 0	
Condon, Mrs., London	0 2 6	
Corfield, Miss Emma, London	...	0 5 0
Courtauld, Miss, Clifton	2 2 0	

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations
Courtenay, Miss, London	1 0 0	
Craig, Miss, Edinburgh	1 1 0	
Crook, Joseph, Esq., Bolton	1 1 0	
Curtis, Mr. and Mrs. London	0 2 0	
Davidson, Dr., Mrs., and Miss "	0 3 0	
Davidson, Mrs. W., Braintree	1 1 0	
Dinwiddie, Mrs. London	0 10 0	
Dixon, Miss J.	0 2 6	
Dodds, Miss S. J. V. "	0 5 0	
Donkin, Mrs.	0 10 0	
Donkin, Miss	0 5 0	
Dunlop, Miss M. W. "	0 10 0	
Dunville, Mrs.	1 1 0	
Eiloart, Mrs., Lower Clapton	0 10 0	
Ellis, A. J., Esq., F.R.S., London	1 1 0	
Estlin, Miss, Bristol	1 1 0	
Fawcett, Mrs. Wm., St. Leonards	1 1 0	
Finch, Miss, Rock Ferry	1 0 0	
Fitch, Mr. and Mrs., London	0 2 0	
Fitch, J. G., Esq.	1 1 0	
Fletcher, Mrs. Hamilton, Birkenhead	2 0 0	
Flint, Mrs., Watford	0 2 0	
Foa, Madame, London	0 1 0	
Friend, A, per Mrs. Jacob Bright		100 0 0
Friend, A, Hampstead		0 10 6
Galpin, T. D., Esq., Putney	1 1 0	
Gillman, Robt., Esq., London	1 1 0	
Glover, Mrs. R.	1 1 0	0 10 0
Goldsmid, Lady	2 2 0	
Grece, Clair, Esq., Redhill	0 5 0	0 2 6
Griffiths, Mrs., Cheltenham	0 10 0	
Grimshawe, Mr. and Mrs., Aspley Guise	1 0 0	
Grove, Miss, London	0 5 0	
Gurney, Miss Amy, Wimbledon	0 2 6	
"H. C.," London		0 2 6
Hall, Miss, Edgware	2 2 0	
Hamilton, Miss, London	0 2 6	
Hampson, Mr. R.	0 10 0	
Hampson, Mrs. R.	0 10 0	
Handson, Miss, West Rasen		1 0 0
Hargreaves, Mr. and Mrs. Wm.		40 0 0
Haslam, Mrs., Dublin	0 5 0	
Harvey, Mrs., London	0 10 0	
Haynes, Mr. W. B., Greenwich	0 1 0	
Herbert, Hon. Auberon, M.P., and Lady Florence		2 0 0
Hill, Miss K. London	1 0 0	
Hill, Edwin, Esq.	1 1 0	
Hill, Frederic, Esq.	1 0 0	
Hoare, Henry, Esq.	5 0 0	
Holbrook, Mrs., Edgware	0 2 6	
Holland, Mrs. Charles, London		25 0 0
Holland, Miss	1 0 0	
Hooper, Mrs.	0 2 6	
Hopwood, C. H., Esq.	2 2 0	

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
Hope, Miss C., Drem	...	1 0 0
Hoskins, Mr. and Mrs. J. T., London	5 0 0	
Huggett, Mr., Hastings	...	1 1 0
Hullah, Mrs. John, London	1 1 0	
Hyde, Mr. and Mrs. Barry, London	2 2 0	
Hunt, A. W., Esq.	1 1 0	
Huth, Mrs. Edward, Huddersfield	...	0 10 0
Jackman, Mrs., London	0 2 6	
Jackson, Mrs., Hastings	...	0 10 0
Johnson, Mrs. S. J., Thame	0 2 6	
Jones, Mrs., Shrewsbury	0 2 0	
Jones, Mrs. R. Crompton, Tunbridge Wells	1 1 0	
Justice, Miss Harriet, Croydon	0 2 0	
Kell, Mrs., Spring Grove	5 0 0	
King, Mrs., London	1 1 0	
Kinnear, J. Boyd, Esq., Guernsey	1 0 0	
Kirkpatrick, Miss, London	0 1 0	
"Lady, A"	...	3 0 0
Lambert, Mrs., Tunbridge	1 1 0	
Langton, Lady Anna Gore, Tunbridge	2 0 0	120 0 0
Lascaridi, G. P., Esq., London	0 5 0	
Lascaridi, P. T., Esq.	0 5 0	
"Lawrenny H."	1 0 0	
Leach, Mrs., Yarmouth	0 5 0	
L'Estrange, Rev. A. G., London	1 0 0	
Leon, Mrs., G. T.	1 1 0	
Levy, J. H., Esq.	0 5 0	
Lewen, Miss S.	0 2 0	
Lowe, Mrs.	...	10 0 0
Lucas, Mrs. S.	1 1 0	
McKee, Miss, Shrewsbury	0 5 0	
McLaren, Mrs. D., Edinburgh	...	5 0 0
McLeod, Mr. A., Plumstead	0 1 0	
Makins, Henry, Esq., London	...	5 5 0
Malleson, Mr. and Mrs. Frank, Wimbledon	4 4 0	
Malleson, Mr. and Mrs. Wm., Croydon	3 3 0	
Man, Wm., Esq., Woodford	1 1 0	
Manfield, M.P., Esq., Northampton	1 1 0	
Manfield, Mrs. M.P.	1 1 0	
Marsden, Mark, Esq., London	...	5 0 0
Martineau, Miss Harriet, Ambleside	1 1 0	
Meeting at Wimbledon, March 27th, per Mrs. F. Malleson	...	0 15 6
Milne, Miss, Northampton	...	1 1 0
Morrison, Walter, Esq., M.P.	...	10 0 0
Mouat, Mrs. F., London	1 0 0	
Muller, Mrs., Ingatestone	0 1 0	
Müller, Miss, London	...	0 10 0
Mylne, Mrs.	1 1 0	
M. L.	...	0 2 6
New, Miss Edith, Evesham	0 5 0	
Newcombe, Prout, Esq., East Croydon	1 1 0	
Newman, Professor, Clifton	2 0 0	3 0 0
Newnham, Miss, London	1 0 0	
Nicol, Henry, Esq.	1 1 0	

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
Nichol, Mrs., Edinburgh	...	5 0 0
Nicholls, Mrs. Gough, Dorking	3 0 0	...
Nicholson, Miss, Bourton-on-Hill	...	0 10 0
North London Committee (Proceeds of Meeting)	...	0 10 0
Ogden, Mrs., Windermere	...	1 1 0
Oliviera, Mrs.	...	1 0 0
Palmer, George, Esq., Reading	...	5 0 0
Pare, William, Esq., Putney	0 5 0	...
Paterson, Mr. T., London	0 2 6	...
Paulton, Mrs., Woking	...	4 0 0
Pearson, Mrs. W., Newton-in-Cartmel	1 0 0	...
Pennack, Mrs., London	0 2 6	...
Pennington, Mrs.	...	25 0 0
Plimsant, Mrs., Plymouth	...	0 5 0
Pochin, Mrs., Barnes	10 0 0	...
Praed, Miss E. M., London	2 0 0	2 0 0
Priestman, the Misses, Bristol	1 1 0	...
Rathbone, Wm., Esq., M.P., London	...	5 0 0
Reid, Mrs.	0 5 0	...
Richards, Herbert, Esq., Oxford	...	2 2 0
Rigbye, Miss H., Ambleside	1 1 0	1 1 0
Robberds, Mrs., Cheltenham	1 0 0	...
Roberts, Mrs., London	0 10 0	0 10 0
Rossetti, Wm. Esq.	1 0 0	...
Rutson, Mrs., Thirsk	...	2 0 0
Rylands, Mrs., Warrington	1 1 0	...
Scott, Miss, London	0 10 0	...
Scull, Mrs., Hounslow	0 2 6	0 10 0
Shaen, Wm., Esq., London	1 1 0	...
Sims, George, Esq.	...	5 0 0
Sims, Mrs. George	2 2 0	1 1 0
Sinclair, Sir J. G. Tollemache, M.P.	...	2 2 0
Sinclair, Mr. and Mrs., London	0 3 0	...
Sinclair, the Misses	0 2 0	...
Slatter, Miss, Canterbury	0 2 6	...
Smith, Miss Fanny	1 0 0	...
Smith, Miss Emma A., London	0 5 0	...
Smith, Mrs. G. M.	0 1 0	...
Solly, Miss S., Bath	...	2 0 0
Southall, the Misses, Leominster	0 10 0	...
Spender Edward, Esq., London	1 1 0	...
Sterling, Mrs. Edward Coningham	1 1 0	...
Swanwick, Miss Anna	...	5 0 0
Tally, Wm., Esq., Windsor	1 1 0	...
Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Harry, London	5 0 0	...
Taylor, Mrs. P. A., Senr.	...	5 0 0
Taylor, Mrs. Thomas	2 2 0	...
Taylor, Mrs. H., Manchester	1 1 0	...
Tebb, Wm., Esq., London	1 1 0	...
Tebb, Mrs. Wm.	1 1 0	...
Thomas, Miss R.	1 1 0	...
Thomas, Mrs. Charles, Bristol	1 1 0	...
Thomasson, T., Esq., Bolton	...	150 0 0
Thomasson, Mr. and Mrs. J. P., Alderley Edge	...	50 0 0

	Annual Subscriptions.	Donations.
Travers, Miss, London	...	0 10 0
Trepplin, Mrs., Warwick	1 0 0	...
Trevelyan, A., Esq., J.P., Tranent	2 0 0	2 0 0
Twamley, Mrs., London	0 10 0	...
Tyssen, A. D., Esq.	0 10 0	...
Venturi, Mrs., London	1 1 0	...
Vickery, Miss Alice,	0 5 0	...
Von Sturmer, Miss F.	0 10 0	...
"W. H. C.," per Mrs. Glover, London	0 2 6	...
Wade, Miss	0 1 0	...
Wade, Mrs.	0 1 0	...
Wansey, Miss E., Bridport	1 0 0	...
Warren, Miss, Streatham	0 10 6	...
Wates, Mrs., Woolwich	0 5 0	...
Webster, Edwd., Esq., Ealing	1 1 0	...
Webster, Thomas, Esq., M.A., London	1 0 0	...
Webster, Mrs. Thomas	1 0 0	...
Wedgwood, Mrs. H.	1 1 0	...
Whitehead, Miss M.	0 2 6	...
Whittle, Mrs., Birkenhead	1 0 0	...
Williams, Mrs. J. Carvell, London	0 10 0	...
Williams, A. J., Esq.	1 1 0	...
Williams, Miss C.	5 0 0	10 0 0
Williams, Mrs. Morgan, Swansea	1 1 0	...
Wilson, R. K., Esq., London	0 10 0	...
Wood, Mrs. Samuel	1 1 0	...
Wood, Mrs. Travers, Swansea	1 1 0	...
Yates, Mrs., Birkenhead	1 0 0	...

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

*Members whose names are marked thus * were elected Members of the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting, June 23rd, 1873.*

† Delegate Members of the Executive Committee.

†Anstruther, Sir Robert, Bart., M.P.
 Antrobus, Sir Edmund, Bart., M.P.
 Bazley, Sir Thomas, Bart., M.P.
 *Bright, Jacob, Esq., M.P.
 Brown, Alexander, Esq., M.P.
 Campbell-Bannerman, H., Esq., M.P.
 Carter, Alderman, M.P.
 Charley, W. T., Esq., M.P.
 †Dalglish, Robert, Esq., M.P.
 Dalway, R. M., Esq., M.P.
 Dimsdale, Robert, Esq., M.P.
 Dixon, George, Esq., M.P.
 *Eastwick, E. B., Esq., M.P., C.B.
 †Ewing, H. E. Crum, Esq., M.P.
 Ewing, A. Orr, Esq., M.P.
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond, M.P.
 Fordyce, W. D., Esq., M.P.
 Fowler, R. N., Esq., M.P.
 Grieve, James J., Esq., M.P.
 Gilpin, Charles, Esq., M.P.
 Hanbury, R. W., Esq., M.P.
 Heron, D. C., Esq., Q.C., M.P.
 Howard, James, Esq., M.P.
 Illingworth, A., Esq., M.P.
 †*Johnston, William, Esq., M.P.

Aldis, M. S., Esq., M.A., Newcastle
 Aldis, Mrs.
 Aitken, Miss
 Amberley, Viscount
 Amberley, Viscountess
 *Amos, Professor Sheldon
 *Amos, Mrs. Sheldon
 Anthony, Chas., Esq., jun., Hereford
 Arnold, Rev. C. T., Rugby
 *Arnold, Edwin, Esq.
 *Arnold, Arthur, Esq.
 *Arnold, Mrs. Arthur
 *Ashworth, Miss, Bath
 *Ashworth, Miss L.
 *Ashurst, William, Esq.
 Babb, Miss C. E.
 Balfour, Mrs. Clara
 Banks, Rev. R. Doncaster
 Baxter, R. Dudley, Esq.
 †*Becker, Miss, Manchester
 Bennett, Sir John, Sheriff of London
 Bernays, Dr. A.
 †Biggs, Miss Ashurst, Leicester
 *Biggs, Miss Caroline
 Binney, Rev. T., LL.D.
 Blackburn, Mrs., Southport

Lawson, Sir Wilfrid, Bart., M.P.
 Lush, Dr. J. A., M.P.
 Lusk, Alderman, M.P.
 *Maitland, Sir A. C. R. Gibson, Bart., M.P.
 Miall, Edward, Esq., M.P.
 McCombie, Wm., Esq., M.P.
 McLagan, Peter, Esq., M.P.
 †McLaren, Duncan, Esq., M.P.
 Miller, John, Esq., M.P.
 *Morrison, Walter, Esq., M.P.
 Mundella, A., Esq., M.P.
 Otway, Arthur, Esq., M.P.
 Potter, T. B., Esq., M.P.
 Richard, Henry, Esq., M.P.
 Rylands, Peter, Esq., M.P.
 Samuelson, H. B., Esq., M.P.
 Stansfeld, Right Hon. J., M.P.
 Shaw, Richard, Esq., M.P.
 †Sinclair, Sir J. G. Tollemache, Bart., M.P.
 Smith, J. B., Esq., M.P.
 Straight, Douglas, Esq., M.P.
 Wedderburn, Sir David, Bart., M.P.
 Wingfield, Sir Charles, M.P., C.S.I.

Boucherett, Miss Louisa
 †Boucherett, Miss Jessie, Brighton
 Bowering, Lady
 Bostock, Miss
 *Bright, Mrs. Jacob
 Brown, Samuel, Esq., F.R.G.S.
 Browne, Mrs. Samuel W.
 Brine, Colonel, Teignmouth
 Brine, Mrs.
 Buchan, Jas. S., Esq.
 Burton, Mrs. Hill, Edinburgh
 Butler, Rev. G., Liverpool
 Butler, Mrs. G.
 *Bunting, Percy, Esq.
 Bunting, Mrs.
 Burn, Rev. R., M.A., Cambridge
 Buss, Mrs. Septimus
 Carpenter, Miss Mary
 Chesson, F. W., Esq.
 *Chesson, Mrs. F. W.
 Clark, Helen Bright, Somerset
 Clarke, Thomas Chatfield, Esq.
 *Cobbe, Miss F. Power
 Collier, W. F., Esq., Plymouth
 Colvin, Sidney, Esq., M.A.
 *Courtenay, Miss

Courtauld, Samuel, Esq.
 Cowen, Joseph, Esq.
 Crook, Joseph, Esq., Bolton
 Crook, Mrs.
 Croad, G. H., Esq.
 Cullinan, Max, Esq., M.A.
 Dale, R. W., Esq., Birmingham
 Daniell, Mrs., Melrose
 Darwin, Erasmus, Esq.
 Davies, Rear-Admiral George
 Dicey, Mrs. Edward
 *Drummond, Hon. Mrs. Maurice
 Ellis, Alex. J., Esq., F.R.S.
 †Elmy, B. J., Esq., Congleton
 Elliott, Lady Charlotte St. Andrews
 Exeter, The Lord Bishop of
 Estlin, Miss, Bristol
 Fawcett, W., Esq., Hastings
 Fawcett, Mrs. W.
 Fitch, J. G., Esq.
 Fraser, Rev. Donald
 *Garrett, Miss Rhoda
 *Garrett, Miss Agnes
 †*Glover, Mrs. R.
 Goldsmid, Lady
 Graves, A. P., Esq.
 †Green, Mrs., Monmouth
 Hale, Rev. Edwd., M.A., Eton
 Hargreaves, Wm., Esq.
 Hargreaves, Mrs. W.
 Hardwicke, W., Esq., M.D.
 †Harkness, Miss, Dumfries
 Heywood, James, Esq., F.R.S.
 *Hill, Miss Katherine
 Hill, Edwin, Esq.
 *Hill, Frederic, Esq.
 *Hoare, Henry, Esq.
 Hodgson, Professor W. B.
 Hodgson, Mrs. W. B.
 Holland, Mrs. Charles, Cheshire
 *Hopwood, C. H., Esq.
 Houghton, Lord
 Howell, George, Esq.
 Hughes, Professor
 Hullah, Mrs. John
 Hunt, Alfred W., Esq.
 Hunt, Mrs. A. W.
 †Jacoby, James A., Esq., Nottingham
 Jebb, R. C., Esq., M.A., Cambridge
 Jenner, Miss, Cardiff
 Kane, Sir Robert, M.D., Dublin
 Kane, Lady
 Kell, Mrs. S. C.
 †Kell, Rev. E., Southampton
 Kingsley, Henry, Esq., F.R.G.S.
 Kingsley, Mrs. Henry
 Kinnear, J. Boyd, Esq.
 Kirk, Professor, Edinburgh
 Kitchener, F. E., Esq., Rugby
 Kitchener, Mrs. F. E.

†Knighton, William, Esq., LL.D.,
 Rochester
 †Langton, Lady Anna Gore, Bristol
 Le Geyt, Miss Alice, Bath
 L'Estrange, Rev. A. G.
 Liddell, Hon. Mrs. Thomas
 *Lucas, Mrs. Samuel
 Lucraft, Benjamin, Esq.
 *Lushington, Mrs. Manners
 Mallet, Sir Louis, C.B.
 McCaig, J. S., Esq., Oban
 *McLaren, Mrs. Duncan
 *McLaren, Miss Agnes
 Macmillan, Alexander, Esq.
 Mar, Countess of
 Malleson, Mrs. F.
 Malleson, W. T., Esq.
 Malleson, Mrs. W. T.
 Martineau, Miss Harriet
 Marsden, Mark, Esq.
 Moore, Lady Jane
 Morgan, Miss F., M.D.
 Mount-Cashel, Countess of
 Murphy, Rev. G. M.
 Murray, Sir John, Bt., Philiphaugh
 Mylne, Mrs.
 Ness, G., Esq.
 Newman, Professor
 Nichol, Mrs., Edinburgh
 Nightingale, Miss Florence
 *Pankhurst, Dr.
 Pattison, Rev. Mark, Oxford
 Pattison, Mrs. Mark, Oxford
 Paulton, A. W., Esq.
 Paulton, Mrs. A. W.
 Pears, Edwin, Esq.
 *Pennington, Frederick, Esq.
 *Pennington, Mrs. F.
 Picton, Rev. J. Allanson
 Pochin, Mr. Alderman
 *Pochin, Mrs.
 Pratt, Hodgson, Esq.
 Probyn, J. W., Esq.
 †Ramsay, Miss, Croydon
 *Reeves, Miss
 Rogers, Professor Thorold, Oxford
 Rossetti, William M., Esq.
 Rylands, Mrs. Peter
 Sandwith, Humphrey, Esq., C.B.,
 D.C.L.
 Sessions, Frederick, Esq.
 Shaen, William, Esq.
 Sharpe, Rev. T. W., Croydon
 Shortt, J., Esq.
 Sidgwick, Henry, Esq., M.A., Cam-
 bridge
 *Sims, Mrs. George
 Solly, Miss S., Bath
 *Spender, Miss, Bath
 *Stansfeld, Mrs. James

*Steinthal, Rev. S. A.
Stevenson, Miss Louisa, Edinburgh
Stevenson, Miss Flora C.
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1st.—By constituting itself a central medium of communication between the various Provincial and Local Committees and the Members of Parliament advocating Women's Suffrage, in order to afford them the most energetic and opportune support both in and out of Parliament.

2nd.—By aiding in the formation of new Provincial and Local Committees.

3rd.—By acting as a centre for the collection and diffusion of information with regard to the progress of the movement in all parts of the country.

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2. The Executive Committee shall consist of Members of the Central Committee, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and of single delegates, the same being Members of Local Committees, appointed by Local Associations to represent them; the Executive Committee having power to add to the number of the Central Committee, and to its own number, and to appoint the officers.

3. A subscription of any amount constitutes membership of the National Society.

4. A General Meeting of the Central Committee shall be held once a year, to appoint the Executive Committee, to receive the Annual Report and the Financial Statement, and to transact any other business which may arise.

5. The Executive Committee shall, at its first meeting, appoint the officers.

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WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

It is now seven years since the question of giving votes to Women was first mooted in this country, as one deserving serious public attention, and the proposal has in this short time met with a success which is perhaps without precedent in the case of a movement at once so great and so novel. Nevertheless, many persons have very indistinct and erroneous notions of what "Women's Suffrage" really means, and so many of the objections against which it has to contend are founded on a misconception both of the nature of its object and the limits within which it is confined, that a clear explanation of these points not-unfrequently induces a ready assent to the movement from those, who, on mistaken grounds, were formerly its vigorous opponents. Some suppose that all women are to have a vote, whereas MR. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill in Parliament simply proposes to enfranchise those women, *unmarried or widows*, who are independent householders, or have the same property qualification that is required of men. The fact that married women are strictly excluded, even where they possess property in their own right, on grounds of obvious expediency, at once disposes of a favourite and powerful argument against the whole question. That fear of domestic discord which seems to sit like a nightmare upon the souls of some half-informed opponents of the movement, is a phantom hardly worth conjuring up now, when it can no longer frighten terrified husbands into a defensive alliance against it. There are always timid persons to be found, who are persuaded that if a proposed change is made, the world will immediately come to an end. Experience tells us, that the world generally goes on just as it did before,—perhaps a little more easily,—while the change is of great benefit to society. Four thousand years of history tell us, and every day's experience confirms the unhappy truth, that those who have interests to be looked after, must look after them themselves, or else they will go to the wall; and if any class of persons is both physically weak and politically defenceless, it is certain to suffer at the hands of those who are strong and powerful. The middle classes in England were oppressed until they demanded the power of political self-assertion in 1832; so were the working classes before the Reform Act of 1867. The same arguments were used in Parliament this Session on behalf of the agricultural labourer; and if any one wants stronger illustrations, let him consider the parallel (and perhaps more apposite) cases of serfdom and slavery. Now women, arguing for their own interests exclusively, make the same complaint; and with so much truth, that an English woman is not overstating her case when she says—that in no country in the world is the *legal* position of a female

so degraded, so barbarous, or so cruel, as her own. It is no consolation to her to be told that if she will only keep quiet, men will see that she gets her due. Men do not, and men will not—unless they are compelled to do so; and this is just why women want votes. Englishmen, indeed, are not bad enough to take advantage of the full powers the law allows them; most of them do not know what those powers are. If they did, the shameful nature of that law would shock many who are now ignorant of the injustice it tolerates and commits. A long course of legislation *by* men has produced a legislation *for* men, in which the interests of women are thoroughly ignored. Yet men are found who say, "If women get votes, they will do themselves more harm than good." How insolent such a remark appears, or how flippantly ignorant, when spoken to those who know what facts are; nor could a more cruel irony be uttered, or a more self-condemnatory sophism, when it is made in the presence of any one of that multitude of women, who are silently suffering wrongs which no man will remedy! It is worse than idle, it is more than folly, for men to preach to women what is good for them, when they every day refuse to redress those evils of which women alone feel the sting. It is the same futile nonsense which has been talked to every class of men who have insisted upon helping themselves; and we may well feel surprised that certain men are not ashamed of harping to that old tune, when all the world is tired of it. When it is an accepted principle in modern and enlightened politics, that every class must look after itself, why are women, the very class who must need such a right, to be treated, against their will, according to a different rule?

Compare the legal status of a married woman in Christian England and in polygamous and Mohammedan Persia. The Persian holds her own property, her own children, and her own person, in all circumstances, without being legally liable to her husband. She can demand a separation if he takes a second wife, and the law compels him to support her apart in a comfortable position in life. He is not permitted to treat her in any way contrary to her wishes, much less to abuse her. Such, so far as circumstances are the same, is the case with all lands of western civilization except our own. In this country, before 1870, every penny of the wife's property belonged absolutely to the husband; and, subject to certain exceptions in the case of some kinds of landed estates, if he died the day after it became his, the widow got none of it, for the law gave it to his heir, who might be a distant cousin. He was also at liberty to will all her personalty and leaseholds to whom he pleased; and to this day, a married woman is legally incapable of making a will. Cases have constantly occurred where not only has the husband spent his wife's fortune in profligacy, and treated her with neglect and cruelty, but when she has endeavoured to earn a living by keeping a school or a shop, or by one of the few miserable means of livelihood which are open to her sex, he, with the sanction of the law, has come, time after time, and seized her furniture and savings, in order to provide himself with the means of the grossest dissipation.

Our common law allows him to beat his wife with "reasonable" severity, to restrain her wishes, her movements, nay even her person; and if she, heart-broken by the cruelty and outraged by the infidelity of the man to whose uncontrolled discretion the law confides her every interest and her every hope, leaves her miserable home, she is denied even the consolation of her own children, whom she must suffer to grow up away from her care, with the infamous example of their father as their only guide. How many mothers, rather than suffer this cruel separation, submit in silent suffering to their fate, we may guess, but never know. A woman has literally no rights over that to which both nature and reason declare her to have the strongest and most sacred right—her own offspring. But, if her children are illegitimate, if it is man's interest to abandon them, then the unhappy mother must bear unaided the burden of a shame and sin of which she herself is but too often the injured victim. If, on the other hand, a husband dies without appointing guardians for his infant children, the law, made by that wisdom and that justice on which, we are told, women may trustfully rely, does not allow the mother to educate her own offspring, but hands them over to the husband's heir, to be brought up according to his views and his religion, totally disregarding any wishes of the mother to the contrary. The worst husband can direct the education of his children during his life, or by will after his death, and man-made law will not interfere. In short, there is no amount of injustice which the law does not perpetrate against the wife, who is regarded as a nonentity, incapable of owning herself, her property, or her children, of making a will, even of succeeding to her husband's rights after his death, or of resisting the most tyrannical exercise of them in his lifetime. In 1870 a small change was made regarding her property, chiefly owing to the efforts of a number of determined ladies, who refused to witness the silent slavery of married women, especially amongst the lower classes, without raising their voice against it; but even under this new law the old spirit so strongly prevails, that while a woman is allowed to keep her own earnings, her husband may forbid her to earn anything at all. In other respects the law remains as we have described it, and in divorce, the injustice between man and woman is, perhaps, greater. It is no use to say these cases are exceptional. Perhaps they are. But laws are made not for the good only, but for the bad; and if a law does not protect the good or the weak against the bad or the strong, but permits the most intolerable and heartless injustice to be perpetrated in favour of evil-disposed persons, that law is a wrong one; and he who made it or suffers it to continue, is not fit to be entrusted with absolute and uncontrolled powers of legislation on such a subject. Women therefore say that laws relating to women will never be satisfactory so long as they are excluded from a share in making them, and who will say, in the face of facts, they are not in the right? Take for instance the very insufficient punishments awarded for offences against women and children. In this recently much-discussed question, the legislative assistance of women would be valuable.

On still broader grounds, the desirability of abolishing the electoral disqualification of sex becomes apparent. It is not only for their own interests, but for the interest of the nation, nay of the world, that women ought to have votes. They will infuse a gentler and more philanthropic spirit into our legislation. People say few women want the franchise, or that they are not educated to use it. Then let them learn to want it, by being taught that they have responsibilities for the less favoured of their sex; and because a happy few can pass a life of luxury and ease, those who are in very different circumstances, and those who earnestly desire to perform a great duty and exercise a great right, are not on that account to be deprived of it. If they are not educated for it, why do we put them below the ignorant and miserable labourer, whom we are asked to entrust with the franchise as a *means* of education? Let us then educate our women by giving them something lofty—and politics is the noblest of sciences—to which they may turn their attention, and devote that leisure which is often wasted in a trivial and lamentable way. There are over 600,000 more women than men in these islands, to whom, therefore, married life is not possible. A much larger number is excluded by men's unwillingness to marry. About 1,200,000 women earn their own living, and have in this way a direct stake, not only in their own happiness, but in the general political prosperity of the country, and no stake at all in that "chivalrous protection" by men, about which such feebleness is talked to prove, forsooth, that women don't want "rights." Is it impossible to stop twaddle of this sort, and are the men who employ this kind of reasoning incapable of understanding facts? But those who take a serious view of a great question will admit that in this class of women there is a vast and beneficial power, if it could be utilised politically. As to the proportion of women to men voters, the experience of municipal elections, where voting goes on just as at parliamentary ones, only much more frequently, and where both sexes exercise the franchise as one, tells us that it is but one to nine. But even here, the influence of the female element is strong. Women are generally more moral in life, and more sharp in perception than men; and as they often look at things from a different point of view, the introduction of that influence would be of great service to the State. In private life, too, the change would be eagerly appreciated. There are few men who do not admire a gifted and intelligent woman, and who would not prefer a wife capable of sympathising with their views, understanding their ideas, and interesting herself in all that concerns them. A pedant and a blue stocking are equally objectionable, but a highly educated woman is appreciated as thoroughly as a man of culture. To sneer at a woman because she has "rights," or demands those of which she is deprived, is now an anachronism. To expect she shall make herself truly man's equal, by using the rights which cannot long be withheld from her, will soon become a matter of course.

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MR. FITZJAMES STEPHEN ON THE
POSITION OF WOMEN.

Price Threepence.

MR. FITZJAMES STEPHEN

ON THE

POSITION OF WOMEN.

BY

MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT.



London :
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1873.

become a matter of course.

H. Armour & Co., Printers, Edinburgh.

1873

The following remarks appeared a few weeks ago in the "Examiner," as a review of part of Mr. F. Stephen's book called "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

At the request of some very friendly critics, I have had them reprinted in the form of a pamphlet.

M. G. F.

JULY, 1873.

become a matter of course.

H. Armour & Co., Printers, Edinburgh.

MR. FITZJAMES STEPHEN ON THE
POSITION OF WOMEN.

IN a book entitled "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," consisting chiefly of reprints from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the English-speaking nations of the world have just received the latest revelation of the Gospel according to St. Stephen. Upon nearly all the most important subjects of contemporary politics, upon the gravest questions of religion and metaphysics, we are fully instructed what we ought to do, and how we ought to think. "This is the way, walk ye in it," ought to be printed in letters an inch high on the top of every page. The manner in which the law is laid down on such questions, for instance, as the connection of Church and State, the social position of women, the Parliamentary suffrage, and the right of the State to persecute, strikes one as not only clear, but loud. The reader feels as he studies these passages that the author is shouting in his ear. If, as is probable, he resents being bawled at, he may console himself with the reflection that Mr. Stephen would despise him as one of the bad results of modern civilization, a creature full of nervous sensibility, afraid of pain for

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himself and others. We therefore advise him not to complain of the shock to his nerves, but to provide himself with a little cotton-wool.

It is impossible to consider here one quarter of the subjects dealt with in "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Even if the time and space at our disposal permitted it, our limited faculties render it impossible for us to follow Mr. Stephen into the heights and depths to which he would conduct his readers. We therefore propose to criticise only one portion of Mr. Stephen's book—that which refers to the position of women.

Mr. Stephen's case is this: Men are stronger than women in every shape. They have greater muscular and nervous force, greater intellectual force, greater vigour of character. The physical differences between men and women affect every part of the human body, from the hair of the head to the sole of the foot. This inequality ought to be recognised by the law and by society. Therefore the law and public opinion ought to make the man master; in married life, if differences of opinion arise between husband and wife—on such questions, for instance, as their place of residence or the education of their children—the will of the husband ought to be supreme: the duty of the wife is submission, even although she may disapprove the decision of her husband, and may be better able than he to come to a trustworthy judgment on the matter in hand. Mr. Stephen writes: "I say the wife ought to give way. She ought to obey her husband, and carry out the view at which he deliberately arrives, just as, when the captain gives the word to cut away the masts, the lieutenant carries out his orders at once, though he may be a better seaman and may disapprove them."

Mr. Stephen's theory is the theory of the common law. It will be remembered that this theory was maintained in a very remarkable manner at the trial

of Mrs. Torpey for robbery, and for smothering a jeweller's assistant with chloroform. The facts were proved against Mrs. Torpey, but she was acquitted because, in stupefying a young man and afterwards robbing him, she had done her duty as a wife. She had obeyed her husband, and carried out the view at which he had deliberately arrived. Mrs. Torpey might have been a person with the most delicate sense of honour, but the captain had given the word and the lieutenant had but to obey. Those who maintain the absolute authority of the husband must be prepared to meet cases of this kind. Is the wife to obey the husband when, in obeying him, she does something she believes to be wrong? If the answer is "yes," the possession of a husband may become the screen of all kinds of iniquity, from murder and robbery downwards. If the answer is "no," everything is conceded that the advocates of equality in marriage demand, for many wives may and do think it wrong to encourage a spirit of despotism in their husbands by invariably allowing the husband's authority to be supreme. We are very far, indeed, from wishing to imply that all men or all husbands have the spirit of despotism; but some men have it, and some women too, and we think it the duty of their friends and relations to check it by resistance before it becomes overpoweringly strong. Everyone must know domestic tyrants of both sexes who might have been immensely changed for the better if their disposition to insist invariably on their own way had been nipped in the bud. Mr. Stephen's simile is a great favourite with those who maintain the absolute authority of the husband in married life. The government of a family resembles, they say, the management of a vessel; in which everyone admits that it is necessary to maintain military discipline, and where the captain is entrusted with supreme and unques-

tioned authority, not only over the conduct of the vessel, but also over the liberty, and sometimes even over the lives, of every other person on the ship. There seems, however, to us to be a very remote analogy between the relations subsisting between a captain and lieutenant of a ship, and those between a husband and wife. Except under circumstances of very great emergency, a lieutenant could scarcely venture to offer advice to his captain unsolicited. The security which the officers, passengers, and crew have against abuse of authority on the part of the captain is, that they are able to report any cases of misconduct to the owners of the ship at the end of the voyage, or, as a less extreme measure, to refuse to serve or sail under the same captain on another voyage. We never heard anyone propose to give a similar remedy against oppression to the wives and children of tyrannical husbands.

No true analogy exists between the government of a ship and the government of a family. There is, however, a real resemblance between the government of a family and parliamentary government, as it exists in this country. In constitutional government no one person, no one chamber, has absolute authority; no change can be effected in the law without the consent of the three estates of the realm. We are constantly being told that the State is founded on the family; and we are certainly of the opinion that in the family, as in the State, it should be necessary to obtain the consent of the husband and the wife, who in this case stand for the two chambers, for any change affecting the interests of the whole family. As the children grow up, they too should be admitted to the family parliament, and their advice and consent should be sought before the parents decide any matter of importance. Everyone must know plenty of instances of this kind of family government; and

nearly everyone will admit that in practice it contrasts favourably with the ship-captain kind of family government. The law sanctions the ship-captain theory, but the moral sentiment of many persons is superior to the law, and therefore there are many happy marriages. If the existing state of things were as bad as the laws relating to marriage would permit it to be, society would be, as Mr. Mill has said, "a hell upon earth." From this proposition Mr. Stephen strongly dissents. "I say," . . . he writes, "the law is good, and the people in question (those who have married happily) obey it." And yet he admits in a previous page that in many particulars men have made laws for their own supposed advantage, as husbands, which are in fact greatly to the injury of both men and women; and he goes on to speak of the "stupid coarseness of the laws about the effects of marriage on property." Mr. Stephen has, in fact, made a decided improvement on the spelling-book story, beginning, "I once knew a very nice little girl; she was cross, and told fibs." "The laws regulating the relations between men and women are very good; they are in many important respects injurious to both parties, partial, coarse, and stupid."

To illustrate the necessity of the legal supremacy of the husband, and also, we suppose, the position of a wife in her husband's house, Mr. Stephen describes the position of guests in a well-appointed house, and of clerks in a Government office. An "exact parallel to the case of married life is to be found in the common case of hospitality." "Everyone is anxious to promote the enjoyment of others; the host considers everyone before himself, but he has an undoubted legal right to order all his guests out of the house in the middle of the night—to forbid them to touch an article of furniture, or to eat a crumb of bread. This appears harsh; yet if he were deprived of that

right, if the presence of his guests rendered its existence doubtful for a moment in any particular, not one of them would cross his doors; matters go well, not because the master of the house has no powers, but because no one questions them, and he wishes to use them for the general comfort of the society." Mr. Stephen's other parallel is that of the contract a man makes to serve the Government on certain terms. In this case the employer has complete control over the employed; there is in this contract, as in the contract of marriage, a weaker and a stronger person, and the weaker is subject to the authority of the stronger.

The obvious reply to the argument based on these illustrations is that the guests and that the Government clerk are free to go the moment that the powers possessed by the host or by the employer are unfairly exercised. If the owner of a country-house, unprovoked by any ill-conduct on the part of his guests, availed himself of the powers so graphically described by Mr. Stephen, his guests would instantly take their departure; no one who knew the circumstance would ever stay with him; he would be looked upon as a madman, he would be cut by all his neighbours, and after his death his will would probably be disputed on the ground of his insanity. Even a slight ostentation of his authority as master of the house would probably be sufficient to hasten the departure of his guests, and would prevent their making him another visit. The clerk in a Government office is likewise free to go if there is any abuse of authority on the part of his superiors. Such an abuse of authority would also give the office a bad name, and would tend to prevent men who had any self-respect from becoming clerks in it.

If these parallels are "exact," Mr. Stephen ought to wish a wife to have the same means of escape from an abuse of authority as guests and clerks have. This

means they have not. The indissolubility of marriage renders all these so-called parallels entirely fallacious, and makes it necessary for the protection of the wife that she should not be either actually or legally subjugated to her husband. Every one of Mr. Stephen's parallels, including that of the ship captain, leads to the conclusion from which he would shrink, as much as we do, that the marriage contract should cease to be permanent.

Mr. Stephen is desirous to make his readers believe that the laws regulating the relations of men and women are very advantageous to the latter. Women, it is true, are subjugated to men, but then in return they get the protection of men. "Submission and protection are correlative. Withdraw the one and the other is lost, and force will assert itself a hundred times more harshly through the law of contract than ever it did through the law of status." That is to say, in return for submission married women get the protection of losing all control over their own property; they also have the inestimable advantage of possessing no legal right to the guardianship of their own children even after the death of their husbands. In return for the submissiveness of women, little girls of twelve years old are, for purposes of seduction, legally regarded as women—a most noteworthy instance, this, of the kind of protection the present state of the law affords. With regard to the protection women enjoy through the administration of the law, it is notorious that brutal assaults upon women are often treated with the most extraordinary leniency. In case any of our readers should imagine that we are prejudiced on this subject, we will quote from an article which appeared in the *Times* in April 1872:—"Every day the reports of our police courts and of our criminal tribunals still repeat the tale of savage and cowardly outrages upon women: and every day

we have reason to marvel, not without a mixture of indignation, at the leniency with which some of our judges treat offences of this kind. Let it be remembered that the decisions of our tribunals have much to do in forming the opinion of those who possess but little mental or moral training in regard to the comparative heinousness of crimes. . . . The only moral teaching which at present effectually enters into the conduct of a 'London rough' is that which he learns before the magistrate and the judge. What, then, is likely to be the effect upon his mind of a series of sentences which prove to him that for one in his position it is safer to disfigure or maim, or even trample the life out of a wretched woman who, in her folly, not unmixed with tenderness, may have linked her life to his, than to snatch a watch-chain from an old gentleman in a crowd, or to filch a few pounds of old metal from a workshop? Yet this is the lesson which is taught almost daily in our criminal courts. . . . Cases that were tried last week in our criminal courts might make us doubt whether some of our judges do not still hold to the principle that an Englishman may do what he likes with his own; and, within certain limits, may beat his wife as much as he pleases. Nay, it seems as though, if by accident apparently, he should a little overstep the limits of his manly privilege, and by such a chance relieve himself of an uncongenial companion, the courts will not too harshly scrutinise his conduct." The article then describes in detail cases of the most brutal outrage upon women, in several of which the victim, fortunately for herself, was killed, and for which the culprits received sentences of three or four months' hard labour. The *Times* concludes by demanding why a quasi-legality unrecognised by the law should be given to outrages upon women. In another article in the same journal, in August 1872, the complaint is

reiterated that "recent trials have revealed a prevalent indifference to the maltreatment of women, which is a heinous disgrace to English nature."

The subjects to which reference has just been made indicate the nature of the protection which women receive in return for their submission to men. But Mr. Stephen would probably admit that in these cases women are treated with something less than justice. He would, however, urge upon our consideration the courtesy with which well-bred men always treat well-bred women; he makes special mention of "the cheerful concessions to acknowledged weakness, the obligation to do for women a thousand things which it would be insulting to offer to do for a man." We wish Mr. Stephen had not in this part of his essay employed such general language; he can at times be explicit enough. What are these cheerful concessions to acknowledged weakness, and the thousand things that men do for women which it would be insulting to offer to do for a man? We are convinced that Mr. Stephen must refer to very important and substantial privileges, for he speaks as though their proper price was the subjection of women to men; but for the life of us we cannot think of anything but such matters as being "seen home" from evening parties, being helped first at dinner, having chairs offered, doors opened, umbrellas carried, and the like. For such privileges as these women of the middle class make what we always thought an ample return by sewing on buttons, working slippers, and making puddings for the mankind of their domestic circles. Probably all women give back in small services of some kind the full value of the little attentions they receive as women from men. But even if this is not the case, it is a small consolation for Nancy Jones, in Whitechapel, who is kicked and beaten at discretion by her husband, to know that Lady Jones, in Belgravia, is always assisted

in and out of her carriage as if she were a cripple. It is a small consolation to a widow whose children are taken from her and handed over to the guardianship of a stranger, to know that a gentleman will never pass out of the room before her, and that she may always take the inner side of the pavement. If Sir John Lubbock carries his Bill called "The Shop Hours Regulation Bill," it will be a small consolation to the hundreds of women who will be thrown out of employment thereby, to hear that Anonyma's diamonds are as splendid as a princess's, and that gentlemen of the highest rank would vie with each other for the honour of picking up her fan. If women are to understand that the courtesies they now enjoy are simply yielded to them on condition of their legal and actual subjection to men, there are few women who would not at once declare that they were being grossly overcharged for the article, and also that these small privileges become utterly valueless unless they are completely voluntary in their character. We believe they are entirely voluntary, and that those who assert that they are simply given in exchange for submission make a very unjustifiable charge on the characters of their fellow-men. Old men, and men who are disabled by any physical infirmity, are in the habit of receiving from women the little considerate attentions which men usually show to women. In these cases is there any kind of stipulation, expressed or implied, that these services are to be paid for by submission on the one side and dominion on the other? The very idea would render it almost impossible that the services should ever be given or received. In the same way we believe it to be entirely erroneous to say that when men are polite to women, and anxious to help them in all things in which the superior physical strength of a man is serviceable, they demand in return the submission of women.

In the passage in which Mr. Stephen speaks of "the cheerful concessions" and the "thousand things" that women now obtain on condition of their subjection, he must either mean the politeness and kindness of men to women in social intercourse, or else he must refer to some weighty and substantial advantages of the existence of which we are entirely ignorant. It is quite an appalling thought to a woman in whom the English virtue of resistance to arbitrary authority is strongly developed, that, although she is ignorant of the fact, she is daily receiving concessions and having a thousand things done for her on condition of a submission which she never intends to give. When the settling day comes, she will have nothing to meet the demands of her creditors.

It is in many respects satisfactory that the opponents of the social and legal equality of women should have found so able a spokesman as Mr. Stephen. He advances in support of his view intelligible and honest arguments, to which it is possible to reply; whereas there is an utter impossibility in arguing with a man who says, for instance, that women ought not to have votes because no women came over as soldiers with the Norman army which invaded England in 1066, or because if they had votes they would go into Parliament, would become Attorneys-general, and would be fallen in love with by Solicitors-general. This is the style of argument employed in the House of Commons by the Home Secretary and other opponents of women's suffrage. In contrast with such pea-shooting we welcome the attack of Mr. Stephen's heavy artillery; it is one among the many proofs of the growing importance of the movement for the emancipation of women.

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A FEW WORDS

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

✓ BY E. M. Lynch

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frage to be as a dead letter if it were conferred on them ; but assuming, for one moment, that the majority of women qualified to vote did not care to do so if able, this would be no fit reason for refusing to help those women who desire the franchise in their efforts to obtain it, for the bill for the Removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women is only a *permissive* bill : it will not compel any one to vote ; it is not a coercive measure.

Napoleon I. said to Madame Condorcet (an enthusiastic politician, the widow of the philosopher), "I *hate* women who meddle in politics!" She answered, "Ah, mon Général! You men take a fancy now and then to cut off our heads, and we women have a natural curiosity to know what it is all about!" It has been well said that although women are not led to execution now-a-days in this country for political reasons, yet there are some laws which go very near to breaking their hearts. And this brings me to the second part of the speech I put into the mouths of some objectors, namely, that "women would gain nothing by voting." Now, it is a well-known fact that the demand for seats in Parliament has become excessive in reference to the supply. Men eagerly compete with each other for the honor of membership. Candidates are prone to study, and to strive to satisfy, every wish of the electors, and not only of the electors as a body, but of any small section of the electors. Sir Arthur Helps points out this fact in his "Thoughts upon Government." Its consequences are two-fold : there is an immense pressure of legislative business ; and there is no time for dealing with the affairs of the unenfranchised. Lord Cairns said that the laws that relate to women are "the worst that disgrace the Statute Book," and, unfortunately, the great lawyer's words are in this case no exaggeration. Nor is it to be wondered at, for members owe their seats to the support of their constituents, and the electors exact promises from their representative that he will bring their business—sometimes merely their crotchets—before the House, thus providing a great deal more work for the legislature than can be accomplished within the prescribed limits of time. If women had votes they, too, might demand pledges from any candidate at an election. They would promise their support to a member on condition that he would give his attention to the interests of women whenever any measure came before the House specially affecting the female portion of the community. He would be bound to advocate the reform of the laws that now bear so heavily and unjustly upon women.

It will be natural to ask what are these injurious laws ; and as an answer I cannot do better than quote a passage from an article by Mr. Arthur Arnold, which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*. He says :—"Lately I heard a man—a scholar and a gentleman, the father of children, the husband of a good, virtuous, and intelligent wife—say, in objecting to women's suffrage : 'Why should this talk be made about women? They have nothing to complain of.' I replied to him : 'Put yourself in her place.' I then took the liberty of speaking of his wife, with whom I have had the pleasure of a long acquaintance. I said : 'She loves your children with an affection which we men can hardly estimate ; from early training

and conviction of principle, the strongest sentiment of her mind, next to affection for yourself and your children, is towards her religion. Yet it will not be illegal for you to leave to the sole guardianship of your Irish Roman Catholic cook the education and care of your children without any regard for her agony of heart and mind.' [The opposite case is, of course, equally true. The children of a Catholic mother may be left, by the father's will, to be brought up as Protestants. It has been decided in courts of law that the *supposed* wishes of a dead father are sufficient to make the children anything—"Turks, Jews, or Atheists"—regardless of the living mother's deepest feelings.] Mr. Arnold continues : 'If her uncle were to die to-morrow and his fortune should fall to her, you may bequeath every shilling of it to purposes the most abhorrent to her conscience ; she may not attempt to earn her livelihood without your permission ; if you strike her, and she flies to my house for refuge, you can force her home again and again ; if you starve her, she has no direct claim at law against yourself, and even the Poor Law may refuse her dying appeal for help.' Later Mr. Arnold appealed to his friend : 'If *you* care nothing for your political privileges ; if *you* care nothing for your parental privileges ; if you do not value the advantages which, because you are a man, and for no other nor better reason, you have enjoyed through life in the way of public school or university career, and in all the power to choose for yourself both a career in life and the woman you loved to be your wife—you are a poltroon ; and if you cannot promise that those unjust laws, which I have indicated as yet existing with regard to women, shall, so far as your power extends, be at once set aside, then you are bound, if you wish to escape the suspicion of roguery, to allow, and to assist, women to help themselves.'"

Perhaps, as you read, you have a vague feeling that there is some exaggeration in all this. It is, probably, because you do not hear every day of similar legal injustices. The fact is, men are better, generally, than the laws they have made, though there are thousands of miserable women who have had to bear grievous wrongs such as those of which Mr. Arnold speaks. Mr. Jacob Bright said that the great and oppressive inequalities in the law as between men and women furnish the latter "with a practical motive of the very strongest kind to endeavour to obtain the franchise, from a knowledge of the fact that only those who can influence the legislative body have any chance of getting their grievances redressed."

Baron Bramwell said : "A mother's rights over her children are *nil*." Would that all warm-hearted women understood the full meaning of this short but comprehensive statement! As Miss Robertson says, we often hear that a woman's mission is to be a mother ; that all her hopes should centre upon husband and children ; but, from a legal point of view, a mother has no more claim to her children than has the nurse who helps her to take care of them. As long as her husband lives she is a nonentity in the eyes of the law ; and at his death she is not their legal guardian. Even if a mother be appointed guardian by the father's will, she has no power to appoint a successor for herself in case of her own demise,

Some little time ago a lady wrote an energetic letter to the editor of the *Echo*, calling attention to "the cruel injustice of the law as it now stands," and urging those that are able to do so to "press on an alteration" in those statutes that make a mother's dearest possessions "a mere shadow that may pass from her loving grasp at any moment of her life." This lady writes: "If a man of wealth dies intestate, his children become wards in Chancery, and we all know how often, from some unavoidable delay or sudden illness, a will is not executed. The woman, in such a case, ceases to be wife and mother at the same moment, for the law of England does not recognise the existence of mothers! Any concession that may be made to her by the Court of Chancery of the personal charge of her children is, in my opinion, almost an insult. She is, as it were, engaged as their servant. Surely her children are hers by the gift of God, and when their earthly father is taken away from them, she is alone responsible for them to their Father in Heaven. It is not to be wondered at that, as the law ignores her existence, it should give her husband full power to do the same. With one stroke of his pen he can deprive her of all charge of her children, of their society, and consequently (if they are very young) of their memory and love. What an instrument of torture does the English law here put into the hands of every husband!"

I have given the first place amongst women's wrongs to the terrible injustice of the law towards mothers. I have not said one half of what might profitably be said on this point; but I will pass on to other subjects, begging the reader to bear in mind that there is hardly one law that deals fairly and equally between men and women. I can only touch upon a few points, leaving much that is equally important unsaid.

A married woman can hardly be said to be the actual owner of any property. Even where the expensive form of marriage settlements has been carried out, when certain moneys are allotted to the wife's "sole and separate use," a husband may compel his wife to surrender her money, and the law gives her no means of forcing him to return it to her. It is a curious thing that, legally, the very presents a man makes his bride become his, and are no longer hers, when she marries him. He is the real owner of them, and of everything she possesses, so that she cannot dispose by will of even the smallest article in her jewel box. Blackstone says in his "Commentaries": "A man and his wife are one in the eye of the law;" and that one is the husband. In one case, however, the wife's separate existence is secured to her: in criminal prosecutions she may be indicted and punished separately. With this exception, the very being and legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage. A man may say to his wife with all truth: "What's yours is mine, and what's mine is my own." But he says (most untruthfully): "With all my worldly wealth I thee endow!" It has been well said that: "If it is right that a woman's property should at marriage become absolutely her husband's, then marriage settlements, or settlements after marriage, are an evasion of the law which ought not to be permitted; but if this is wrong, then the law ought

at once to be altered, or at least the means of evading it put equally within the reach of all. As matters now stand, the rule of equity which protects the wife is the privilege of the rich; the rule of common law which gives all to the husband descends in its full harshness on the poor."

I hope I shall be pardoned if I give a somewhat lengthy extract from an essay on "The injustice of the English Law as it bears on the relationship of husband and wife;" by the Rev. Alfred Dewes, B.D., LL.D. He says: "It seems still to be held by the administrators of the law that the husband has the right of correcting his wife. The remark of Blackstone that the lower rank of the people still claim and exert this ancient privilege is unmistakeably true. We see, time after time, cases where a wife has received grievous bodily harm at the hands of a ruffianly husband, who, not considering 'scourges and clubs' (declared by civil law to be allowable instruments for the correction of a wife) "sufficiently efficacious weapons, has beaten her with the poker or fire-shovel. And what is the protection the law affords her? The magistrate, for such an assault, or rather outrage, which is usually but the climax of a long course of cruelty, will gravely sentence him to three months' imprisonment, adding, "with hard labour," if he be in an unusually severe or irritable mood. At the end of that time the man returns to treat his wife with greater cruelty still, though he may, perhaps, have learnt now not to bring himself within the reach of the law. He does not again fiercely assault her, but he may treat her with a cruelty which is even more hard to bear; he may, and often does, keep her, and her children too, in a state of semi-starvation. In theory the law will compel him to provide her with necessaries; but how is the law to be put in operation if he be but a labouring man? He will not give her his wages, and there is no power that can make him do so. She cannot bring him before the magistrates on the charge of neglecting to support her; she is the man's wife, and the magistrate can listen to no such charge from her. When the shops at which she deals cease to trust her, which they will do very soon, all that she can do is to apply to the guardians for admission into the house. They may admit her if they choose, and then prosecute the husband for neglecting her; but they are not bound to admit her; they may refuse to do so on the ground that her husband is receiving wages, if they please. Very often to save themselves the trouble of prosecuting the man, or for other reasons, they do so please; then there seems no resource for her, when the charity of her neighbors is exhausted, but to lie down and die."

Women labor under a great wrong in regard to education. This may seem a small grievance compared with those things of which I have been speaking, but the grievance is a very real and a very widespread one. The standard of female education is very low; indeed, the word education seems altogether misapplied when used in regard to the course of studies pursued in girls' schools. In these days, when the "struggle for existence" is becoming harder and harder, when "knowledge" is more than ever "power," and when, as Mr. Gladstone once said, the number of self-depending, self-sup-

porting women is yearly increasing, it is specially to be desired that a good education should add strength to the weakness of women, so as to enable them to fight the battle of life successfully. It is also much to be deplored that almost all lucrative employments are monopolised by men. Women are allowed to work for bad pay; they may be drudges; but they are forbidden to undertake much honorable work for which they are perfectly suited. The census shows that two out of every three women marry. This leaves one-third of our adult female population single, though very seldom independent. The question of employment for women is a very important one; one that calls imperatively for attention; and one that will not be equitably settled until women enjoy the benefit of representation. The women who are in the position to claim the right of voting,—that is to say, single women and widows possessed of the property qualifications—are in proportion to electors as one to seven.

And, besides the injustice of the laws regarding women, there are various oppressions due more or less directly to their unenfranchised condition. One that I may mention as likely to call forth sympathy in an agricultural country refers to the mothers, widows, and sisters of farmers. These ladies often manage all the farming business during the absence or illness of the male tenant, but when the farmer dies, his relatives are turned out of their holding, not because they cannot pay the rent, but because non-electors are undesirable tenants. The landlord will not let his land unless to those who can strengthen his band of electors in times of political excitement. This grievance is felt all over the country. In boroughs, also, women, at the death of the head of the house—the voter, are turned out of their shops to make room for an elector. This is very hard on them, as their hopes of a home, of independence, and profitable labor, often depend on their being allowed to remain in the same position and locality as heretofore.

Again, when a man buys house or lands, he becomes entitled to a vote as a consequence of his purchase. Most men are agreed in looking upon the vote that so comes to them as a decided advantage. Is it fair that a woman in making such an investment should get less value for her money?

I will now come to the objections made against woman's suffrage. As will be seen, they are not very weighty, for they take their rise in ignorance, and prejudice, and perhaps in jealousy also. According to some, a woman has no business with a vote; she should attend to her domestic affairs. As if electoral duties were so absorbing that everything else would give way to them! Has the possession of the franchise unfitted working men for their usual avocations? Mr. Arnold says that "of male voters, not one in a thousand devotes a single hour in the year to his electoral duties; but some speak as if not only female voters, but every woman besides, would give themselves up to political discussion." We are all taught that those who bear the burdens of citizenship should enjoy the privileges of citizenship, and some men think they make a forcible objection to giving the vote to women when they say that women do not bear the citizen's burdens—that until women go into the army, the navy

and the police, they should be kept away from the polling booth. But how would this principle act with regard to men? Perhaps those who would be excluded by weak health or deficient stature would be amongst those most fit to vote wisely and well. This innovation, this idea of a military qualification for the franchise, is absurd. One lady came to my house to tell me she did not like the notion of women voting; she thought women ought to stay at home. She was not *at home* when she spoke; but it seems to be admitted that women may go about on any and every pretext, except on errands of public usefulness. According to others, the possession of the franchise would be contrary to "woman's natural position," by which we may suppose it is insinuated (to quote again from the *Fortnightly Review*) "that the Creator specially formed women with reference to their perpetual exclusion from voting at parliamentary elections." People wrongly imagine that what is uncustomary is unnatural. They say that voting would unsex women; that to wish for the suffrage is unwomanly; as if a becoming womanliness depended upon the maintenance of political disabilities! Some write and speak as if nature could not get on without crutches made of Acts of Parliament; but it seems to me that not only is nature independent of such aid, but that she will break through and trample upon any such narrow artificialities. Miss Faithful ridicules the notion that "women run in moulds like candles, and that we can make them long threes or short sixes, whichever we please. . . . Women are women," she says, "and men are men, and will remain so till the end of the chapter." In talking about the suffrage, people forget these truisms. Miss Downing said she was "still very sceptical as to Providence having had any hand in the extraordinary mixture of arbitrary laws, and absurd social customs, which go to make up the present position of women."

Others say women are silly creatures, and would not know how to use a vote. To this Anna Dickinson said, "Yes, indeed; some women *are* silly, and it is hard to tell why the Almighty made them, unless it was to match some of the men!" If women are exceptionally silly, how is it that the highest political power sometimes (as now, in the British Empire) devolves upon a woman? Surely if a woman is fit to attain to the highest, she is also fit to stand on the lowest, step of the political ladder. And when I hear that "women are silly creatures," I can hardly refrain from telling over a few names from the list of illustrious women. Is Lady Burdett Coutts too "silly" to give a judicious vote? Is Miss Nightingale? Are they less "liberal and enlightened" than their respective footmen who probably *can* vote? "Silly women"! Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Somerville, Caroline Herschell, George Elliot, the Brontë Sisters, Mdle. de Lézardière, who wrote the most instructive book that exists on old French law, Mdme. Récamier, the Marquise de Créquy, Mdme. de Maintenon, George Sand, St. Theresa (one of the finest, if not the finest, Spanish prose writer); and, in old times, Sappho, Myrtis, Corinna—a host of illustrious women, ancient and modern, rises before my mind's eye!

Others, again, say that women are superior beings, and that they are

too good to have anything to do with the business of the work-a-day world; but women never hear this when there is question of any menial work. If a woman is to be prevented from walking in a crowd on election day because she is too good, it would be only consistent, on the same account, to prevent her from being a kitchenmaid. Several ladies, even before the ballot became law, made the experiment of going from one to another of the polling booths, and found they could face the crowd and yet meet with no incivilities.

Some say they will not help women to obtain the franchise, because all women would be conservatives; and others refuse their support, because they say female politicians would be all for radical measures. Both objections are wholly unworthy. If it be proved that women claim only their due, it is unjust to keep them out of their rights merely because inconvenient consequences are to be feared from granting them. Excluding women from the franchise on such grounds is acting up to the iniquitous maxim that "the end justifies the means"; it is preferring expediency to justice. The French proverb says, "Fais-ce que tu dois, advienne que pourra," and the Latin, "Fiat justitia, ruat cælum." Besides, how can any one who has not polled the 200,000 or 300,000 women, whose property entitles them to a vote, determine what would be their political leanings? Women differ widely from each other in other matters; why not also in politics?

It is a galling and an irritating thought that the exclusion of women from electoral privileges brands the whole of the sex as inferior in capacity to the lowest male elector; for what are the tax-paying classes who are refused the suffrage? They are minors, criminals, idiots, AND WOMEN.

I cannot conclude more appropriately than by quoting from Lady Amberley's pamphlet on the "Claims of Women to the Suffrage." Her words are: "Imagine for a moment the case of a slave woman as she used to be in the Southern States of America, surrounded by the inevitable horrors of that degraded state of society. She may happen to be the petted and pampered darling of a fond master, living in luxury, and sure of his indulgence. When the cry of anguish arising from her fellow-slave strikes on her ear, she is only annoyed that any harsh sound should disturb her peace, and she impatiently exclaims, 'Why cannot that woman be as happy as I am, instead of complaining and trying to change her lot?' Perhaps the lot of that other was to work incessantly for a mere morsel of food. Perhaps she was past work, and was about to be sold off away from her hut and her children. Was it wonderful she should raise her voice and desire some change? Was it not rather wonderful that one woman could enjoy life so selfishly, because the evil she saw working all around her did not touch her individually? That is your case" (lady readers) "if you do not feel roused to help in this movement. It is not for you I urge the change, if you feel no need of it, though the fact of your indifference argues your need of enfranchisement. But though you and I may be happy, it is no reason not to urge it on behalf of the millions of women in England and America who are not living in this blissful state of comfort and content. . . ."

To descend to details: have, for instance, these happy mistresses of comfortable homes ever spared a few moments from their bliss to cast their eyes on a report of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution? It is hardly possible; or we should not hear them urge, as an answer to this movement, that women's work is at home. Home is very well when there is one, but what becomes of the work of the 15,000 governesses who have no money wherewith to get that home?"

Lastly, let me add my urgent entreaty that all will support the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women. Every one can help us so far as signing the petitions to Parliament in favour of the Bill; others can induce their friends also to add their names to the petitions; and some can use their personal influence with Members of Parliament in our favor.

E. M. L.

