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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Eighth Annual Meeting

OF THE

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY

FOR

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

Held in the Hall of the Literary Institute, South Clerk Street,

15th February

1876.

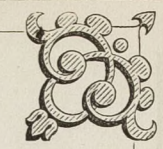
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

MRS M'LAREN, Newington House, PRESIDENT.

Miss BURTON, Liberton Bank.

Miss CALDWELL, 2 Victoria Terrace, Portobello.

Miss CAMERON.

Miss CRAIG, 6 Carlton Street.

Mrs CRUDELIUS, 14 Inverleith Terrace.

Mrs FERGUSON HOME of Bassendean.

Miss HUNTER, 5 Great Stuart Street.

Miss M. HUNTER, 5 Great Stuart Street.

Mrs LOW, 30 Minto Street.

Mrs MASSON, 10 Regent Terrace.

Mrs M'QUEEN of Braxfield.

Mrs NICHOL, Huntly Lodge.

Mrs ORD of Muirhouselaw.

Mrs ROBERTSON, 25 Blacket Place.

Miss SIMPSON, Portobello.

Miss RAMSAY SMITH, 3 Bruntsfield Crescent.

Miss E. STEVENSON, 13 Randolph Crescent.

Mrs WELLSTOOD, 14 Duncan Street.

Mrs WIGHAM, 5 South Gray Street.

MISS A. CRAIG, 6 Carlton Street, TREASURER.

MISS WIGHAM, 5 South Gray Street,

MISS AGNES M'LAREN, Newington House, } SECRETARIES.

MISS E. KIRKLAND, 13 Raeburn Place, }

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

EDINBURGH NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting of the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in the Literary Institute, on 15th February 1876. There was a large attendance. Amongst others present were—Professor Masson, Professor Hodgson, Mr Macfie of Dreghorn, Councillor Wellstood, Councillor Durham, Ex-Bailie Lewis, the Rev. Mr Seton, Ex-Councillor Robertson, Mr Duncan M'Laren, jun., Mrs Duncan M'Laren, Miss Becker, Manchester; Miss Beedy, Miss Wigham, Mrs Wellstood, Misses Stevenson, Mrs Macqueen, Miss Craig, Miss Caldwell, Mrs and Miss Hope of Bordlands, Mrs Nichol, Mrs Masson, Mrs Lucas, Mrs Hodgson, Mrs Richardson, and Miss E. Kirkland.

On the motion of Councillor DURHAM, Professor Masson was called to the chair.

The CHAIRMAN, who was received with applause, said—It is not for me, in the place to which you have done me the honour to call me, to argue the question at large. That naturally will be left to the proposers and seconders of the resolutions. It falls to me rather to bring before you in a general way the question, its history and its present state. The exact question is this:—We live now, as regards Parliamentary suffrage, under the Act passed in the year 1867. By that Act it was settled that the Parliamentary suffrage should be vested in certain persons, defined by a kind of property qualification—householders and ratepayers—very distinctly defined, though with some differences between the burghs and the counties. That is the Act we live under as regards voting for Members of Parliament. But the operation of that Act is peculiar in this way, that, whenever a woman comes into the very definite position of a voter, as settled by the Act, then, though she is qualified in all other respects, simply because she is a woman, she cannot exercise the franchise. (Applause.) However wealthy she may be, however hard-working and respected, however cultivated, however well-known among her neighbours for sense, judiciousness, and prudence, she must be passed over, and the vote goes on to the next man, although he should be in all moral and

intellectual respects her direct opposite. Now, it is thought that this is wrong—that those persons who are excluded from the power to vote on this mere account that they are women should be brought into the constituency. It is not very easy to say definitely what addition that would make to the present entire constituency of Great Britain, because in various burghs and in various districts the proportion of the excluded varies—in some the women householders being more numerous than in others. But the conclusion is that about 300,000 persons would be added to the voting constituency of Great Britain. As things are, very curious consequences arise. For example, I have read this statement—and I have no doubt as to its accuracy—that in one English town some years ago, in consequence of bribery and corrupt voting in the town, there was a Bribery Commission appointed to inquire into the facts and circumstances. The result was that to pay for the expenses of this there was imposed a rate of three shillings per pound on the rental of householders in that town. Now, here the curious contradiction came out. The Act of 1867, when it came to be a question of voting, did not allow the favourable construction—did not regard women-householders as coming into the definition of persons entitled to vote. But, when it came to be the question who should pay the rate imposed to pay the expense brought about by corrupt voting, it was held that those very excluded women-householders strictly came within the definition of those who had to pay—(Hear, hear)—that is to say, women who were debarred from voting, who were thought not fit to vote, had to pay for the corruption of the men voters. (Applause.) I define the question thus, because I wish it to be understood that our question is not the question whether all women whatsoever should vote. It is only the question whether those who are in the circumstances, in the precise position, settled by the Act, and who happen to be women, should be excluded on that account. It is not the proposition that all women—married women, and so on—shall come in for the right to vote. It is sometimes objected that it is not logical not to go on to that. But it is strictly logical; because, you will observe, we are not striving for a revolution, for a change in the whole system of voting: we are accepting the present system, and only requiring that women shall have the full benefit of that system. (Applause.) It may be that some time or other there may be a question originated otherwise about the present franchise system altogether; and, if ever it comes to be a question of personal voting, and not voting on property or ratepaying, then a larger question as regards women may become proper. But we at present are perfectly logical and practical in restricting ourselves to what I have now stated to you. With regard to the recent history of the question, here are a few facts:—The question became a practical one only, I may say, in 1867—about the time of the passing of that Act. There were speculations on the subject before; but the great increase of the voting constituency

of the country brought about by that Act made it then a very practical question. Now, the question since 1867 has been growing and gaining ground on our side. In that year the petitions in favour of what we ask contained 13,000 signatures. In the next year—1868—there were 50,000 petitioners. In 1870 the number rose to 109,000; in 1872 to 350,000; and last year—in 1875—to 415,000. (Applause.) The same growth is represented in the votes in the House. In 1867, 75 in the House signified themselves to be in favour of giving women householders votes. In 1870, in a House of 215, 124 voted in favour of women—winning by a majority of 33. But that vote was quashed afterwards in committee. The House since then, whenever the question has come up, has been larger. Thus, in 1873 there were 411 present in the House, and the division was 172 for, to 239 against; that is, our cause lost by 67. Last session 375 were present, and the division was 170 for, to 205 against: that is, our cause lost by 35—the Scottish members in the cause being equally divided—22 to 22; and I believe all over—counting those absent as well as those present on that occasion—the vote is about equally balanced there. But the fact that so many Scottish Town Councils—including the Town Council of Edinburgh—have petitioned in favour gives a preponderance to our side. Then, it has come out curiously in these votes all along that we have supporters eminent on both sides of the present political world. The recent chief of the question on our side of the House was Mr Jacob Bright—(Cheers and hisses)—a most unflinching and zealous advocate of our cause, and a distinguished member of the Liberal party. The present leader and representative of this cause in the House is Mr Forsyth, a thoughtful and eminent member of the Conservative party. (Cheers and hisses.) It so chances, also, that, while we can name among late Cabinet Ministers of the Liberal side Mr Stansfeld as one who has voted in our favour on several occasions, we can name among eminent Conservatives who have voted in our favour, the present Prime Minister, Mr Disraeli (cheers and hisses), Lord John Manners, Sir Stafford Northcote, and also, I am glad to add—and it is not the only case in which we have had to admire his wisdom and thoughtfulness—the chief, as you may say, of Scottish Conservatism, the Lord Advocate. (Cheers.) Then, again, there has been recently the fact that the votes of women have been admitted in School Board elections, and that the results have been entirely in favour of the extension of the vote to other subjects; also, that in the Municipalities in England women exercise a vote, though not in the Municipalities of Scotland yet. Also, by the Ballot Act, the act of voting has been made a much more human, easy, and quiet thing than before. Parties, however, are so nearly balanced on the question that it comes back to the public in meetings like the present. We know that there is a very definite opposition, and we know on what that opposition has come to found itself—on a certain notion of women and their possibilities and powers—a very extraordinary notion, expressed again and

again in various forms, sometimes in the form of great adoration, and sometimes in the form of ridicule and contempt. In that notion there is a curious contrariety between theory and fact. The theory is that all women are supported and maintained by men, and so that they stand aside and occupy a peculiar ground by themselves where they are to be protected and worshipped. The fact is that between three and four millions of women, in spite of all this, are at present working for their daily bread in this country—working in all varieties of ways, and some of them very hard and very trying. The theory is that men are arranged on one side of a room and women on the other; that the men know about politics and take an interest in them, and that the women do not, and have no concern in public affairs. The fact is that the sexes are intermingled all through wherever you choose to look, engaged in the same or similiar occupations, and that the women do care about most things as much as the men. Now, as to the indifference and apathy on the subject. These arise from various causes. Partly it is from the common feeling, Why should people trouble themselves about politics? The view is as if politics were a kind of dabbling in the mire; which is a very low and insufficient view of politics. Politics means all that is going on; and, though people need not engage in all questions, yet, any person who does not know what is going on, and choose things to like and to dislike, is not acting up to the full privilege of a citizen or human being. (Applause.) I have great faith that those who are apathetic, when they look into the question, will gradually yield to the force of argument; and I may just ask those among women who are apathetic or indifferent, or partly opposed at present, whether it may not turn out to be a blunder in households to train up sons to professions and definite capabilities of self-exercise and self-support, and to all that interest in things around them which consorts with the same, and, on the other hand, unless there is superabundant wealth to make up the defect, to train up daughters on a totally different principle. Then, if ladies say for other ladies that they should not interest themselves in politics, let them consider this, that any lady who professes the opinion that the vote ought not to be given to her own sex is in that act a very definite politician, and that any lady who publicly expresses that opinion in a way to act on the public mind is doing a very strong political act indeed. (Applause.) Without detaining you longer, and without going into the argument on the question in a minute way, I may say that we hold this to be an important and pressing question, because we think that it is wrong that many burdens should be imposed on women without their having any voice in the decision whether they should be imposed; because we think it wrong that in a great many questions of legislation affecting the daily lives and interests of women, women themselves should not be consulted; and because we see that at present there is a demand and new scope for the energies of women and for the development of their powers in all directions. In this last connection I note

at present a resisting and even a hurling-back agency, which will not be thoroughly removed till in some constituency some conspicuous opponent of the rights of women shall be turned out visibly by the influence of women, and the representatives of other constituencies shall look on and learn the lesson. We think ours a pressing and important question, also, because we believe that general politics should be elevated, and that there will be no loss but gain from having the ideas and views of women on all general matters; and we think it a particularly pressing question at this time, when the proposal is to enfranchise the whole population of the agricultural labourers. Without pronouncing any opinion on that question, for or against, on its own merits, we hold that there is a positive danger for women if it is carried, unless our suffrage is carried with it. We foresee, in fact, that there is a danger that the interests of women will suffer and be trampled down under this vast coming enlargement of the pell-mell of merely masculine feet. (Applause.) Professor Masson concluded by calling on Miss Wigham to read the Report.

Miss WIGHAM then read the Report, as follows:—

“Another year has passed over since we presented our Report of proceedings to our friends and subscribers, and we are still working vigorously as a society, the object of our organisation not yet being attained; but though not fully accomplished, we cannot but note with satisfaction, in addition to the increasing importance attached to the yearly presentation of our claim before the House of Commons, many tokens of direct progress, and of success in collateral efforts for the enfranchisement of women.

“The work of petitioning has, of course, occupied much of our attention, and we have found the holding of drawing-room meetings, and other small meetings, very efficacious in influencing public opinion in fresh circles. We have held many such meetings in the past year, and have circulated much information throughout the country by various channels.

“Since we first met in November 1867 to form an Edinburgh Society for the Promotion of Women’s Suffrage, and to unite with others in petitioning Parliament, about two millions of signatures have been appended to petitions in favour of the measure introduced successively into the House of Commons by Mr John Stuart Mill, by Mr Jacob Bright, and last year by Mr Forsyth, Q.C.; and in this large number Scotland has been represented in her full proportion. The last year we sent to Parliament in support of Mr Forsyth’s bill 260 petitions, signed by 49,400 names. 200 of these petitions were general ones, from various places, 16 were from Town Councils, 12 from Good Templar lodges, and 32 from householders. The general signatures from Edinburgh alone amounted to 16,678. All these names and efforts, uniting with those from England, had doubtless their influence on the House of Commons; but they did not quite carry out their object, for while 170 members voted for us in the division of 7th April 1875, 205 voted against us; but though still in the minority, the number of our supporters is increasing, and we confidently hope that before long the minority will become a majority. And we are encouraged to press on by the fact

that the Prime Minister and many prominent members of his Government voted in our favour, besides the usual distinguished support from the Liberal side of the House. The debate on the second reading was, as usual, an animated one; and we would express our thanks to the mover of the bill, as well as to all who spoke in favour of it, and to the members who voted for it, and in this number we would especially include our own Scotch members. A large meeting was convened by ladies on the 10th of April, in St George's Hall, London, for the purpose of criticising the speeches of our opponents in the debate. It was conducted with great talent and power, ladies from Scotland and Ireland taking a part along with those of England. That the importance of this meeting was recognised is seen in the fact that the London *Observer* published all the speeches in full, and a copy was sent to every member of Parliament. It was not difficult to answer arguments based upon custom rather than justice, and especially was the illogical speech of Mr Leatham, the member for Huddersfield, well replied to, since he had hoped a certain brilliancy of style might hide his deficient logic. And again, a meeting was held in the largest hall in Huddersfield, crowded by his own constituents, addressed by ladies, in which his own position with regard to women's suffrage was condemned, and by a unanimous and enthusiastic vote Mr Leatham was requested not only to present a petition in favour of women's suffrage in the present Parliament, but to support it.

"We may be allowed here to allude to a few collateral tokens of progress. The ladies on the School Boards maintain their place of prominence and acknowledged usefulness. Women vote intelligently in England at the municipal elections; and an advance is being now made towards the recognition of the importance of securing for women a qualifying medical education. The Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Governors of the Queen's Hospital at Birmingham have opened their doors for the education of women; and the Convocation of the University of London, preparing for a new charter, have passed a vote that 'no charter would be acceptable which did not provide for the granting of degrees to women, and that such degrees were not to be confined to the Faculty of Arts.

"It is no matter of surprise that women should appear on public platforms, not only to plead their own right to the electoral franchise, but to advance their views on education and other matters bearing on the welfare of their own sex and that of society in general. And thus the public mind is being educated, the nation is being aroused to a sense of the waste and loss there is in neglecting to accept the half of the intelligence and thought of the British people. And women themselves are being educated to the importance of their position in the body politic as well as domestic, finding that their influence in the latter relation is only enhanced by their intelligent interest in the former.

"We have heard the voice from the agricultural labourers claiming direct representation. We sympathise, of course, in their cry, which doubtless ought to be heard, but we would submit that a voice from a far larger section of the community, and one more educated, has for a much longer period been heard, and as yet in vain, and we conceive that the appeal of the right hon. member for Birmingham is quite as applicable to women as to the agricultural labourers, when he exclaims, 'Well, then, give to the people who are now excluded that freedom which the Constitution has given to you . . . and you will invite them with a cordial hand, you will receive them, you will invite them to partake of that sublime justice which injures no one, but is rich in blessings, and benefits all who are permitted to share it.'" (Applause.)

After reading the Report, Miss WIGHAM submitted an abstract of the income and expenditure of the association for the year.

Professor HODGSON moved the adoption of the Report and reappointment of the Committee, and stated that instead of saying anything in support of the motion, he would allow the meeting to have the opportunity of hearing Miss Becker and Miss Beedy.

Miss BECKER, who was received with cheers, stated that, as the meeting had distinctly heard, their object was not universal women suffrage. In fact, they were asking, not that any law should be given extending the suffrage to women as women, but that the disability should be removed that prevents persons, otherwise legally qualified, from voting because they happen to be women. During one of his speeches, Mr Disraeli said of the Reform Bill of 1867 that the House of Commons gave the franchise, and intended to give it, to every householder rated for the relief of the poor. Some time after he had made that statement, Mr Disraeli paid a visit to Manchester. He was driving with an alderman of that city, who pointed out to him a row of twenty houses, and the alderman said, "There is a defect in your Reform Bill." "How is that?" said Mr Disraeli. The alderman replied, "Sixteen of these houses have votes under your Bill; four of them are disfranchised because they are occupied by women." "That," said Mr Disraeli, "is a defect in the bill;" and he added, "it is a defect which shall be remedied at the next opportunity." Now they wished to make the opportunity for Mr Disraeli and for Parliament to remedy that defect; and they were going to ask this meeting to help them in their endeavour.

. . . In England very considerable advance has been made on this question. By having a bill year by year before the House of Commons, they were accustoming people to the idea of giving votes to women householders. Then, again, by the Municipal Franchise Bill of 1869, people were familiar with the spectacle of women year by year going to the polls and recording their votes for town councillors; and the municipal elections in England were becoming year by year more distinctly political contests. People put up a candidate for the town council, not because they thought he understood about paving, lighting, and watching the town, but because he was a Liberal or Conservative, and because the wire-pullers of either party desired to exercise their troops in the municipal elections partly that they might measure their strength, and partly that they might keep their hands in. Therefore, women were every year in England drawn into these political elections. That morning she had the pleasure of reading an article in the *Edinburgh Courant*—a very able and thoughtful article—on the various aspects of the question. Women must expect to see the question treated with a certain kind of half serious banter, as if the writer were not quite sure that the dignity of his sex or the gravity of his occupation permitted him to

interfere with anything so light and trivial as women's affairs. But throughout this banter there were serious lessons to be learned, and much good sense conveyed, which she hoped would be appreciated by the people of Edinburgh. (Cheers.) The writer said, she thought very truly, that the active opposition to their cause was numerically small; that the active promoters of the cause were numerically small; and that the mass of mankind lay doubtful or neutral on the question. This neutrality proceeded partly from ignorance, and partly from really never having considered the matter. It was the business of their Society to trench upon that neutral ground, to occupy it more and more, and send out their advance posts in every direction, to find out whenever they could, opportunities of enforcing their views, and presenting them to the minds of thoughtful and impartial people; and if they did that industriously, they did not doubt that in time they would occupy this neutral ground. But the writer said, "Mr Forsyth's clients, with all their wit and ability, have not yet attained the level of political self-help; they have not proved that many women would vote if the franchise were given to them." It was difficult to attain political self-help on the part of a class expected to help themselves politically, whilst they were deprived of the only political weapon that any person could possess—the franchise. (Cheers.) And if men would give to women the means of political self-help—the franchise—she thought they might trust women to use that means to good purpose. As to the statement that they had not proved that many women would vote if the franchise were given them, she thought that gentlemen must have overlooked the fact that in Scotland women had used the only franchise which they did possess—the School Board franchise—quite as energetically as the men; and in England it was the same with the municipal franchise. In all the great municipal boroughs, the proportion of women who went to record their votes was equal to the proportion of men, according to the number of each on the register. (Cheers.) It was sometimes said that women did not want the franchise, but she thought no one on reflection would say that they had such remarkable and fanciful views on the matter of votes that they appreciated the use of the municipal franchise, and would neglect the Parliamentary franchise if it were in their power. At any rate they said to those men who doubted whether women would use votes or not, "Give us the votes, and then we will shew whether we will use them or not." (Cheers.) It was not only for the general elevation of women in society that they asked for this; they also asked for it as an instrument for the removal of certain injurious legal and social restrictions which pressed upon their sex. Referring to various instances of hardship under the existing laws relating to the property of married women, Miss Becker stated that there was an attempt made to amend these laws, and in 1873 a bill was brought in, and six times counted out. Out of 650 members presumed sent to represent the interests of the whole people, not forty could be got to take a sufficient interest

to discuss a bill directly affecting the property and personal rights of 16,000,000 of her Majesty's subjects. (Hear, hear.) Miss Becker proceeded to argue, that by giving women a vote in the election of members of Parliament, they would secure attention to their interests. In connection with the Manchester election, she adverted to the fact that great efforts were being made to obtain the Irish vote. It would probably, she remarked, be the general opinion that we were more likely to get women's franchise than Home Rule, but these men would be able to obtain from their candidates, she did not say the granting of that which they had asked, but, at anyrate, full and fair consideration for their requests. There were, she supposed, more than 6000 Irishmen on the electoral roll for Manchester. There were 10,000 women householders; and suppose these were on the roll for Manchester, they would have both the candidates anxious to look into the laws affecting women. Miss Becker next proceeded to deal with various objections taken to the conferring of the suffrage on women. The *Times*, she said, appeared to have had some sort of idea that the women's question would be very important at elections, and objected to women's votes on that ground, because it said that in every constituency there would be enough of women's votes to turn the scale, and candidates would be so anxious to secure the women's votes as to neglect the questions affecting men. Their answer was, that if a bill should pass, there would be only one woman to seven men on the register, and if the men could not take care of their own questions with odds like that in their favour, it was time for them to leave off calling the women the weaker sex. (Laughter, and a voice—"Encore.") If it were true that women did not know enough for the franchise, she maintained that if men, who had the arrangements for the education of the people generally, had neglected to educate girls and women, they had no right to turn round and allege ignorance, caused by their own neglect, as an excuse for perpetuating injustice. Sometimes it was said women did not want the franchise. These were surely the women who did not want anything, and who were very comfortably provided for. She concluded by saying that they were proceeding in what they asked on the same principles as prompted our ancestors in their efforts for freedom and self-government. They appealed, not to men's fears, but to their sense of justice; not to force, but to reason and persuasion. And when their voices spoke the words of truth and soberness, and pleaded for a measure of justice, their faith was that the appeal would not be in vain. (Loud cheers.)

Mr MACFIE of Dreghorn, in moving the next resolution, said that although there was doubtless some misapprehension in some minds with regard to the aims of the society, all must admit that they had been very well advocated on this occasion. (Applause.) Some might have thought, from the unseemly interruptions of a few young men in the gallery, that they were meddling with the subject

of the education of medical students. That was not the subject they were there to discuss. Others might think that they contemplated educating young ladies for the bar or the senate; but—nothing of the kind. The cause had been excellently pleaded by the ladies who had spoken; and had given to those young men in the gallery who were not yet old enough to vote for a member of Parliament a very good lesson in elocution. (Applause and laughter.) All would agree with him that if the ladies exercised the franchise as ably as they expounded their right to it, they would be a very valuable accession to the electoral body. (Applause.) It was well known that women exercised a great power in the election of ministers—which was of even more importance than the election of members of Parliament; and he thought if they were qualified to vote in the one case, they should also be qualified to vote in the other, and to take an interest in politics. It had been said that there would thereby be a danger of women neglecting their other duties. Where was there ever found a better wife or a better mother than our own beloved Queen? (Applause.) And yet we found in the memorials of the late Prince Consort that she had been as much a politician as any man on the throne would have been. (Applause.) It should be distinctly understood that the question which they were now agitating was not a party one, but a question on which men of all political feelings and antecedents could heartily join. (Applause.) They were bringing in no spirit of complaint against the way in which the franchise had hitherto been conducted; they simply wanted now that justice should be done to all interests. (Applause.) Take the importance to us of the maintenance of peace, the importance of education at home, the necessity of suppressing anything that had a demoralising effect—such as excessive drinking—and we would find that the influence which women could exercise against those evils was greater than that of men. (Applause.) Why, then, should they not have their disabilities removed? (Applause.) It was evident that religious and ecclesiastical questions must for a long time come prominently before the British Parliament. Now, in discussing such questions, the members of Parliament would be much the better of being in direct communication with the woman-power of the country. (“Hear, hear,” and applause.) He concluded by moving—“That in the opinion of this meeting, the exclusion of women householders and ratepayers from the electoral franchise is inconsistent with the constitutional principle that taxation is the basis of representation, and by the rejection of a large portion of the industry, intelligence, and the property of the country from direct representation, is unjust to those thus excluded, and injurious to the community at large. Therefore resolved, that a petition to this effect be forwarded to Parliament, signed on behalf of this meeting, praying the House of Commons to pass the ‘Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women,’ which is to be introduced into the House by Mr Forsyth, Q.C.” (Loud applause.)

Miss BEEDY, who was received with applause, seconded the resolution. Any one, she said, familiar with the laws of the country, knew that there were many that were unjust to women. Any thoughtful person must see that in all matters where the interests of men and women were opposed, it was only natural that men should look with a keener eye to their own interests than to the interests of women. Mr Gladstone had once, in referring to that fact, said that any man who could devise a plan by which the injustice which resulted from that could be set right, should be considered a great benefactor. Then, again, in matters where there may be no conflict of interests, they saw that the interests of men were attended to, while those of women were comparatively overlooked—as, for example, in the matter of education. Then, again, they saw that in Parliament a bill which concerned only the interests of women had much less chance of being passed than a bill that concerned only the interests of men. That was so well known, that a member of Parliament once said that attempting to get a woman’s bill passed through Parliament was like attempting to move a loaded waggon without horses. Now, all that was wanted by the present movement was to make women constituents of members of Parliament, and thus to supply the motive-power. (Applause.) In regard to industrial pursuits, also, women were placed at a great disadvantage. There were some three or four millions of women in the country earning their own livelihood, who crowded into the labour market, and were forced to compete with men—they all knew at what disadvantage. Now, what was wanted was to enfranchise the women—to do something that would improve their condition. At present the position of the women as compared with men was very much what the position of the middle classes was to that of the upper class before the Reform Bill of 1832, and what the position of the working classes was to that of the employers of labour previous to the passing of the last Reform Bill. After the latter Act was passed, the complaints of the working classes gradually disappeared—and that was through their having been admitted to the franchise. They got passed a Mines Regulation Act, a Factory Act, an Education Act, which was slowly and surely providing them with the means of education; they had laws passed for protecting trades’ unions, and tending to promote the industries of the working classes—(applause)—and all these advantages had come to them since their admission to the franchise—that was, by giving them the power to assist in putting a man into Parliament, or to assist in keeping one out. (Applause and laughter.) Now, they simply asked for women the same power as men in that respect. Miss Beedy proceeded to speak on the other aspect of the question—namely, the injury that was done to the community by excluding so large a part of the industry and intelligence of the nation from the electoral body. They did not seek that women might be allowed to draft Parliamentary bills, or to vote on them when they had been drafted. They were not attempting to put into the

hands of women work requiring technical knowledge and large experience, but a voice in the choosing of the men to whom these duties might safely be entrusted. Women were good judges of character—(applause and laughter)—and were peculiarly fitted to exercise such a privilege. Women were also greater sufferers from disorder and immorality in society than men were, and that being the case, their influence would be given more strongly than the influence of men towards putting men into a position of power that would guard against disorderly states of society. She then quoted from an American paper an opinion by a judge in high position, in a territory where women had the right to vote, in which he expressed the opinion that, generally, it would not do to nominate men for whom women would not vote. In referring to the questions in the British Parliament, Miss Beedy went on to say that it was educational and moral questions that had come to the front; and on such questions as those of education, temperance, the treatment of criminals, the treatment of the poor, &c., she held that the experience of women would be even more valuable than that of men; and they were not subjects on which the opinions of women and of men were always precisely the same. For instance, it was generally admitted that women, as a class, are more strongly in favour of temperance than men are. (“No,” laughter, and applause.) Not only was that true, but the methods that women would, on the average, employ to promote temperance, were not precisely the same as the majority of men would employ. On that subject Cardinal Manning had, she thought, struck the keynote in his speech at Manchester, when he said—“Men drink, and women suffer.” Why, then, should the influence of women not be felt in relation to that and other questions? (Hear, hear.) Then, in regard to the treatment of criminals, she said a great wave of wife-beating had recently spread over England—she was not sure it had reached Scotland—and the lash had been called for as the method of punishment and reformation for these criminal men. (“Hear, hear,” and applause.) Now, that demand had come for the most part from men rather than from women; because the latter, as a rule, did not believe that by brutalising a man you were likely to make him a more humane husband. (Applause.) As to the treatment of pauperism, she regarded it as an urgent question at the present time, and one in connection with which valuable aid had been received from the opinions and experience of women. When Mr Stansfeld was at the head of the Poor Law Department, under the last Government, attention was called to the boarding-out of pauper children, as there was reason to suspect that the work done was not so good as it should be; and Mr Stansfeld, who wished a woman’s view of the working of the system, asked Mrs Nassau Senior to inquire into the matter; and she gave in a report, after two years’ work, on the subject, which had attracted a great deal of attention. A little more than a month after the blue-book containing the report had been issued, they could scarcely take up a

newspaper without finding in it an article on the subject—(applause)—the public were so much struck, not only with a woman’s view of the question, but with the new view of it. (Applause.) After stating that no Scotch member had spoken against the bill, Miss Beedy referred to the utterance of one English member (Mr Chaplin), who had said that he opposed the bill “because he thought the agitation reflected in no way the opinion of the majority of the women of the country, but rather the restless longing and desire of a few, and these perhaps not the most favoured of their sex.” If Mr Chaplin meant by “the most favoured” the most beautiful or richest women in the country, perhaps he was right: so heavy were the demands upon such women by society, that they had no time to devote to the amelioration of their poorer sisters. But if he meant that those engaged in that agitation were not women of the most gifted intellect, she would say he was not right. In proof of that she referred to such women as Mrs Martineau, Miss Florence Nightingale, Miss Carpenter, Mrs Gray, Miss Octavia Hill, and others, who took the warmest interest in the movement. The women whose opinions were quoted in Parliament universally believed that it would be better for women to have the power of voting in Parliamentary elections, and that it would give them greater power in promoting all kinds of philanthropic movements. After some further remarks, Miss Beedy, amid loud applause, concluded by seconding the resolution.

The motion was unanimously carried.

Ex-Councillor ROBERTSON said he had no doubt that the audience had been greatly pleased with the admirable way in which Miss Becker and Miss Beedy had given an exposition of the principles which the society desired to promote. (Applause.) He did not know what better proof they could have of the high qualifications possessed by ladies for the exercise of the franchise than the great power of reasoning which the meeting had had brought before them on the present occasion. (Applause.) In regard to the licensing question, the expression of the views of the ladies, he believed, would have a very powerful effect in regard to its proper settlement; and as to the higher education of women and other questions of a kindred nature, he was sure the views of Miss Becker and Miss Beedy would be considered invaluable. (Applause.) He had great pleasure in moving—“That the thanks of this meeting be cordially tendered to the ladies who have come at this inclement season to attend this meeting, and who have so much gratified their listeners by their able handling of the question.” (Applause.)

Ex-Bailie LEWIS seconded the motion. He said he was sure there could be but one opinion, that the ladies who had favoured the meeting with their presence had most ably and efficiently advocated their position. (Applause.) It appeared to him, and

he never had any doubt of it, that this movement must triumph, and that most speedily. (Applause.) If he were to be called upon to give reasons, the first was that the claim of the ladies was righteous. (Applause.) There were abundant precedents for their claims. In regard to the poor laws, the ladies had a voice in their administration; and as to the Education Act, there was efficient service by the ladies, both in our own city and in England. Besides, in England the ladies had a voice in the municipal arrangements. A good reason, in his opinion, why the ladies would triumph was, that they had not gone about trying to concuss gentlemen to forward their views, but they had done their own work in the way that it ought to be done; and he thought that politicians might well take a lesson from them. (Applause.) He had great pleasure in seconding the motion. He wished to say, in conclusion, that he had seen candidates for Parliamentary and other honours, who, if they had been subjected to the same kind of annoyances as the ladies had experienced from the gallery, would have had great difficulty in proceeding with their remarks, but Miss Becker and Miss Beedy had gone on as if nothing of the kind had occurred, and that could only be accounted for through the confidence they had in the righteousness of their cause. (Applause.)

The motion was unanimously agreed to.

Mrs M'LAREN made a few telling remarks, which were received with much applause.

On the motion of the Rev. Mr SETON, a cordial vote of thanks was given to the chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 18th JANUARY 1876.

INCOME.		EXPENDITURE.	
Balance from last year	£34 6 6	Canvassing	£40 14 10
Subscriptions and Donations	228 19 2	Expenses of Secretaries	80 0 0
		Printing and Publications	22 11 9
		Stationery and Postages	15 17 2
		Expenses of Public and other Meetings	42 10 0
		Advertising	7 2 2
		Balance in Bank	54 9 9
	<hr/> £263 5 8		<hr/> £263 5 8

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS DURING 1875.

Armour, H., & Co.	£0 10 0	Harkness, Miss	£0 10 0
Biggar, Thomas, Dalry	0 2 6	Henderson, Mr D. W.	0 5 0
Black, Miss	0 2 6	Henderson, Miss, Collected by	0 11 0
Blackie, Mrs	1 0 0	Hope, Mrs, Bordlands	1 0 0
Brownlie, Mr Archibald	1 0 0	Hope, Miss	2 0 0
Buchan, Countess Dowager of	1 0 0	Home, Mrs Ferguson	1 0 0
Burton, Mrs Hill	1 0 0	Hoyes, Mrs	1 0 0
Caldwell, Messrs	1 0 0	Hunter, Misses	10 0 0
Caldwell, Miss	1 0 0	Hutchison, Mr	0 2 6
Caldwell, S.	0 5 0	Jex-Blake, Miss	5 0 0
Campbell, Mr D.	0 2 6	Kerr, Mr J.	0 2 6
Craig, Misses	10 0 0	Kerr, Mrs	0 2 0
Crighon, Councillor	0 5 0	Kerr, Miss E.	0 2 6
Crighon, Mr G.	0 2 6	Kippen, Misses	5 0 0
Christie, Miss	0 2 6	Lang, John	0 10 0
Crawford, W. C.	0 10 0	Lauder, Miss Dick	2 0 0
Cross, Mr	0 10 0	Lauder, Mr	1 0 0
Crudelius, Mrs	1 0 0	Lawrie, Mrs, Musselburgh	0 5 0
Cruickshank, E.	0 2 6	Leatham, Major	1 0 0
C. J.	0 2 6	Lewis, Mr D.	0 2 6
Davie, Mr	0 0 0	Lillie, Mrs	0 5 0
Davidson, Mrs, Burntisland	0 2 6	Low, Mrs	0 5 0
Dixon, Mr S., Newcastle-on-Tyne	0 10 0	Low, Miss Kate	0 5 0
Donald, Mr T.	0 5 0	Low, Mr David	0 5 0
Du Pré, Miss	2 0 0	Livingston, Josiah	0 10 0
Flint, William	0 2 6	Marshall, Bailie	0 10 0
Fyfe, Mr A.	0 5 0	Marshall, Mr T.	0 5 0
Friend, A, per Miss Hunter	1 0 0	M'Culloch, Mrs, Dumfries	1 1 0
Friend, A, Dublin Street	0 5 0	M'Callum, Miss	0 2 6
Friend, A, Crosshill	0 10 8	Maclagan, Mr	0 5 0
Friend, A	0 2 6	Macfie, Mr R. A.	3 0 0
Friend, A	0 2 6	Macgregor, D. R., M.P.	3 3 0
Friend, A	0 2 6	Mackay, Mr G.	0 2 6
Friends, Two	0 5 0	M'Kinnel, Mrs, Dumfries	1 1 0
Gibson, Miss	2 0 0	M'Laren, Mrs, Newington Ho.	10 0 0
Gibson, Mr	0 5 0	M'Laren, Miss	5 0 0
Gray, Henry	0 2 6	M'Laren, Mr D., jun.	2 0 0
Greenoak, Miss	0 5 0	M'Murtrie, Mr J.	0 2 6
Greig, John, & Son	0 4 6	M'Tavish, Mr A. H.	1 0 0
Greig, David	1 0 0	M'Queen, Mrs	5 0 0
Grieve, David	0 5 0	M'Robie, Misses	0 2 6
		Masson, Mrs	1 1 0
		Masson, Miss	0 2 6

Melrose, Mr	£0 10 0	Smith, Miss Ramsay	£1 0 0
Miller, Mrs, Brighton	5 0 0	Sloane, Mr T.	0 5 0
Millar, Mrs J.	2 0 0	Somerville, Mr R.	0 2 6
Millar, Mr Whyte	2 0 0	Spalding, Mrs	0 5 0
Millar, Mr W.	0 2 6	Stevenson, Miss E.	20 0 0
Mitchell, Rev. Mr	0 2 6	Stevenson, Miss E. (don.)	0 17 0
Mitchelhill, Mrs	0 2 0	Stevenson, Miss L.	10 0 0
Morrison, Mr	0 5 0	Stewart, Miss	0 10 0
		Stewart, Mrs	0 2 6
Nairn, Mr W.	0 2 6	Stodart, A. M.	0 10 0
Nelson, Mr	1 0 0	S. S., per Mrs M'Laren	2 2 0
Nichol, Mrs	10 0 0	Sums, Small, Collected by Miss Cameron	2 14 0
Ord, Mr and Mrs	3 3 0	Taylor, Mrs W. A., Cupar	0 5 0
Pagan, Mrs, Cupar-Fife	0 10 0	Thompson, Walter, Esq.	10 0 0
Paton, Miss do.	0 2 6	Thorne, Mrs	1 1 0
Patrick, Mrs do.	0 5 0	Trevelyan, Arthur, Esq., J.P.	2 0 0
Philp, Mr A.	0 2 6	Taylour, Miss (don.)	1 0 0
Polson, Mr John	1 0 0	Walls, Miss	1 0 0
Raleigh, Samuel	1 0 0	Wallace, Mr James	0 10 0
Renton, Mrs Alexander	5 0 0	Warren, Mr	0 10 0
Renton, Mr J. H.	3 0 0	Wellstood, Mrs James	0 5 0
Ritchie, Mrs Beith	0 3 0	Wellstood, Mrs Stephen	0 5 0
Robson, Mr Walter	1 1 0	Westren, Mr	0 2 6
Robertson, Mrs T.	0 5 0	Whitelaw, Mrs	0 5 0
Rose, Mr Hugh	5 0 0	Wigham, Mrs	0 10 0
		Wigham, Miss	0 5 0
Simpson, Miss	1 0 0	Williams, Mrs, Wishaw	2 0 0
Scott, Mr Alexander	20 0 0	Wilson, Bailie	0 5 0
Smith, Miss	1 0 0		

While warmly thanking our kind friends and subscribers for their support, and congratulating them and ourselves on the balance in our Treasurer's hands, we would remind them that this year's campaign has yet some months to run, and that, even if victorious in the Commons, there will still be struggle before the cause is gained—and so we would request a continuance of their help for another year: and if still able and willing to give their subscriptions, we respectfully inform them that the 1st of February is the most convenient conclusion of our financial year, and we shall gratefully receive and report donations up to that date.