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Tracts of Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association. No. 2.

ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
CONNECTICUT
WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION,
HELD AT
HARTFORD, SEPTEMBER, 9, 1870.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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REPORT.

YOUR Committee desire to congratulate the Society on the many signs of progress on the subject of the Enfranchisement of Woman, not only in our own state and country, but also in England and on the continent of Europe.

A majority of a Special Committee of nine in our last Legislature presented a Report advocating the extension of the suffrage to women on the same terms with men, supporting their recommendation of a Constitutional Amendment by reasoning which seems to us unanswerable. The Amendment thus recommended received but few votes in the House—how many is not known, as the vote was taken in the pressure of business just at the close of the session, and the yeas and nays were not called. But the mere fact of the presentation of a favorable report, in connection with the numerous hearings in committee which were called for by eager audiences from time to time, are unmistakable indications that the subject itself has become one of the living questions of the day, and that a just settlement of the question is already inaugurated. We are of the opinion that such hearings before committees are of great value in awakening the attention of thoughtful citizens, both men and women, in every State; but it becomes more and more evident that as a political measure, our main reliance must be upon the action of Congress in passing an amendment to the Federal Constitution. On this account we urge every member of the Society to keep on hand forms of petition that they may obtain signatures from time to time, and return them to the Secretary as soon as filled. Of the importance of flooding Congress with these petitions from all parts of the country, no one can doubt who has watched the course of legislation either in this country or in England. Mr. Disraeli, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated on one occasion, in the House of Com-

By the Constitution of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, all persons subscribing to the Constitution and paying one dollar, become members of the Association.

The officers of the Association for the year commencing September 9, 1870, are as follows:

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MRS. MYRA BRADWELL, *Chicago, Ill.:*

Dear Madam:—I am in receipt of your favor of the 26th ult., in which you request me to give you a truthful statement, over my own signature, for publication in your paper, of the history of, and my observations in regard to, the woman grand and petit jurors in Wyoming.

I had no agency in the enactment of the law in Wyoming conferring legal equality on women. I found it upon the statute-book of that Territory, and in accordance with its provisions several women were legally drawn by the proper officers on the grand and petit juries of Albany county, and were duly summoned by the Sheriff without any agency of mine. On being apprized of these facts, I conceived it to be my plain duty to fairly enforce this law, as I would any other; and more than this, I resolved at once that, as it had fallen to my lot to have the experiment tried under my administration, it should have a fair trial, and I therefore assured these women that they could serve or not, as they chose; that if they chose to serve, the court would secure to them the most respectful consideration and deference, and protect them from insult in word or gesture, and from everything which might offend a modest and virtuous woman in any of the walks of life in which the good and true women of our country have been accustomed to move.

While I had never been an advocate for the law, I felt that thousands of good men and women had been, and that they had a right to see it fairly administered; and I was resolved that it should not be sneered down if I had to employ the whole power of the court to prevent it. I felt that even those who were opposed to the policy of admitting women to the right of suffrage and to hold office, would condemn me if I did not do this. It was also sufficient for me that my own judgment approved this course.

With such assurances, these women chose to serve, and were duly impanelled as jurors. They are educated, cultivated Eastern ladies, who are an honor to their sex. They have, with true womanly devotion, left their homes of comfort in the States, to share the fortunes of their husbands and brothers in the far West, and to aid them in founding a new State beyond the Missouri.

And now, as to the results. With all my prejudices against the policy, I am under conscientious obligations to say, that these women acquitted themselves with such dignity, decorum, propriety of conduct, and intelligence, as to win the admiration of every fair-minded citizen of Wyoming. They were careful, painstaking, intelligent, and conscientious. They were firm and resolute for the right, as established by the law and the testimony. Their verdicts were right, and after three or four criminal trials the lawyers engaged in defending persons accused of crime began to avail themselves of the right of peremptory challenge, to get rid of the women jurors, who were too much in favor of enforcing the laws and punishing crime to suit the interests of their clients! After the grand jury had

mons, that "there was no right really more valuable than the right of petition; nor could any opinion be more erroneous than that which supposed it to be a mere form. Because the petitions presented did not now lead to discussion, it was supposed that the House did not attend to them, but the fact was not so. The Committee on Public Petitions strictly examined every petition, and the more important were printed with the votes. *Opinions expressed in petitions had great influence on the judgment of the House.*" And in our own country, looking back twenty-five years, we see the venerable John Quincy Adams, Ex-President of the United States, bearing into the House of Representatives roll upon roll of petitions from men and women who abhorred slavery, bending under their weight, but sustained by a prophetic vision of the free manhood of to-day, even as though it were already a great reality. Through the same instrumentality must the heart and voice of those who believe in a free and responsible womanhood make themselves felt and heard in the seat of power. "It is only a question of time," said the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the U. S. Senate, to one of our number, when discussing the prospects of a Suffrage Bill already before his Committee; of *petitions* also, we would add, for in this peaceful strife these are our only weapons.

Concerning the progress of the work in this country we have only to refer to the numbers of distinguished speakers who have made the "Woman Question" in some form the subject of their addresses to crowded houses; to the prevailing opinion, which is expressing itself more and more in legislation, that women, as to all rights of property and business, must be placed upon an entire equality with men, a position which must lead inevitably to their personal and political equality; to the large vote already obtained in the legislatures of several Western States for Equal Suffrage; and finally, to the actual admission of women to the polls in the territory of Wyoming, to their election and actual service as grand and petit jurors, and their appointment and service as justices of the peace. As the experiment of Woman Suffrage in Wyoming is observed with special interest, and as it has been the subject of many misrepresentations in the public papers, we give here in full the remarkable testimony of Chief Justice Howe, of the Supreme Court of the Territory, as to the actual working of this legislation, to which he confesses himself to have been originally opposed.

guage: "To those ladies who are members of the Grand Jury the court deems it also but just to say that by your intelligent, faithful, and conscientious discharge of duty, as well as by your great propriety of conduct, you have realized the just expectations of those who saw fit to confer upon you the right to participate in the administration of justice. If future Grand Juries in this county shall follow the example you have set, assurance will be thereby given to all that crime and immorality will no longer be winked at, but all offenders will be brought to justice, and that the law and the courts may safely be relied upon for the protection of the people."*

Concerning the progress of the cause in England, we have thought best to permit able and distinguished writers to speak for themselves, only premising that already, by a recent act

* Since the present report was prepared, the first election has occurred in the Territory of Wyoming, since the passage of the law allowing women to vote. A dispatch to one of the New York papers, says: "The election passed off very quietly. There were no sneers, no profanity, no fighting. The women went to the polls as quietly as if they were going to church. They seemed to be conscientious as to what candidates were worthy of their suffrage, many refusing to vote for men on account of intemperance."

A correspondent of an Iowa paper, writing from Cheyenne, says: "The ladies, with few exceptions, were brought to the polls in carriages and omnibuses, deposited their ballots, and immediately stepped in again and were driven home. One incident of the day is worth relating. The oldest woman—perhaps the oldest person—in Cheyenne, eighty years of age, went to the polls and voted her first ballot. When she alighted from the buggy the whole crowd surrounding the polls, Republicans and Democrats, took off their hats while she marched through and deposited her vote. When she turned to go away, three cheers were called for, and given so rousingly that they were heard for several squares. The ladies didn't all vote one way by any means. Undoubtedly the majority voted the Republican ticket, but quite a sprinkling of them voted with the Democrats. Such is the reverence which the men of America have for females, that not even a drunken rough was heard to offer an insult."

A lady residing in Cheyenne, writes as follows to the *Cincinnati Times*: "When it was first proposed that women should vote, the women felt delicate about going; but our preachers nobly stepped forward and told the women not to be backward, for they would set the example by taking their wives. So the women took courage, and came proudly forward to do their duty. There were judges and their wives, lawyers and their wives, doctors and their wives, preachers and their wives, merchants and their wives, and laborers and their wives, and all classes, both rich and poor, came forward and cast their votes, each man feeling proud of his female companion. There has never an election passed off so pleasantly in this territory before. There were men collected around the polls to see how things would be conducted; they were talking and laughing and discussing politics, but as soon as they would see a woman coming they would all stand back and

been in session two days, the dance-house keepers, gamblers, and demi-monde, fled out of the city in dismay, to escape the indictment of women grand jurors! In short, I have never, in twenty-five years of constant experience in the courts of the country, seen a more faithful, intelligent, and resolutely honest grand and petit jury, than these.

A contemptibly lying and silly dispatch went over the wires to the effect that during the trial of A. W. Howe, for homicide, (in which the jury consisted of six women and six men,) the men and women were kept locked up together all night for four nights. Only two nights intervened during the trial, and on these nights, by my order, the jury were taken to the parlor of the large, commodious and well-furnished hotel of the Union Pacific Railroad, in charge of the sheriff and a woman bailiff, where they were supplied with meals, and every comfort, and at ten o'clock the women were conducted by the bailiff to a large and suitable apartment, where beds were prepared for them, and the men to another adjoining, where beds were prepared for them, and where they remained in charge of sworn officers until morning, when they were again all conducted to the parlor, and from thence in a body to breakfast, and thence to the jury-room, which was a clean and comfortable one, carpeted and heated, and furnished with all proper conveniences.

The cause was submitted to the jury for their decision about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and they agreed upon their verdict, which was received by the court between 11 and 12 o'clock at night of the same day, when they were discharged.

Everybody commended the conduct of this jury, and were satisfied with their verdict, except the unfortunate individual who was convicted of murder in the second degree.

The presence of these ladies in court secured the most perfect decorum and propriety of conduct, and the gentlemen of the bar and others vied with each other in their courteous and respectful demeanor towards the ladies and the court. Nothing occurred to offend the most refined lady (if she was a sensible lady,) and the universal judgment of every intelligent and fair-minded man present was and is, that the experiment was a success.

I dislike the notoriety this matter has given me, but do not shrink from it. I have never sought it, nor expected it, and have only fairly performed what I regard as a plain duty, neither seeking nor desiring any praise, and quite indifferent to any censure or criticism which my conduct may have invoked.

Thanking you for your friendly and complimentary expressions, I am very respectfully yours,

J. H. HOWE.

CHEYENNE, WYOMING, April 4.

Subsequently in dismissing the Grand Jury, of which several women were members, the same Judge held the following lan-

maxim, *De minimis non curat lex*, into, "The law cares nothing for the weakest." We may be permitted to call it lamentable, that the source and token of all this injustice,—female disfranchisement,—is now pronounced by the highest legal tribunal to be the law of the land.

"The diversity of mind in man and woman which is adduced as a reason for stripping women of legal protection, is really a reason for giving to women full legal equality, in the interest not of females only, but also of the whole community. Neither is the man complete without the woman, nor the woman without the man. The wisdom of each separately is imperfect; so is man's work, the law. Each sex is a complement to the other. As the conviviality of isolated males is, on the average, less pure for the absence of women; so is law less just, and executive action less humane, in the absence of their counsel and vote."

"The Committee, therefore, earnestly exhort all friends of the cause to redouble their zeal in obtaining signatures to petitions. They recommend that in every locality, where it is possible, a committee should be formed for the purpose, in the first place, of sending up a petition to Parliament through its own member, and ultimately for the purpose of watching over and furthering, by all available means, the movement for opening the suffrage to women. At the same time the Committee wish to remind their friends that in some localities, where difficulty has been found in forming a committee, one woman, able and willing to devote time to giving the necessary explanations to other women, and obtaining their signatures, has repeatedly been found as effectual for the purpose as a committee. Were all the avowed friends of women's suffrage to use but a little exertion, the petitions of 1869 might easily exceed in number of signatures those of 1868, as much as those exceeded the petitions presented in the two years preceding."

Coming down to 1869 and 1870, when the success of petitions in bringing the subject before Parliament and the country opens the door to speculation upon the probable immediate results of the admission of women to the suffrage, we have the following well considered and admirable words from Miss Lydia E. Becker, an eminent leader in the movement, and editor of the *Manchester Monthly Journal*, an organ of the National Society.

"But it seems to us premature to speculate on the future political action of a class of persons hitherto excluded from political influence. When the exceptional disabilities are removed, and free access is given to the same influences which mould the political sentiments

of Parliament, all women possessing the same qualifications with men have been admitted to the suffrage in all municipal affairs, that is, in all town and city elections, and have at a recent election actually exercised their privilege of voting in between 200 and 300 towns and cities of the kingdom.

In 1868, the National Society (England) for Woman Suffrage issued an address from which we quote several paragraphs:

"The progress of the attempt to obtain for women, on the same conditions as men, those electoral rights which are alike required by their dignity and necessary for their protection, is most gratifying. The adherents of the movement, of both sexes, are steadily and rapidly increasing in numbers, and the feelings by which it is prompted are deepening as well as widening.

"When the admission of women to the elective franchise was proposed, in 1867, as an amendment to the Reform Bill, the number of members of Parliament who voted for it, including tellers and pairs, was 81; and several more would have added their names to the list if the division had not taken place unexpectedly early. The very first time, therefore, that the proposal was formally made, notwithstanding its novelty, and the shock it gave to old prejudices, very nearly a seventh part of the House of Commons gave it their support.

"In the session of 1868, petitions to the number of 75, with nearly 50,000 signatures, were presented from many different parts of the United Kingdom; one of which, signed by 21,000 persons, was headed by the honored names of Mrs. Somerville and Miss Florence Nightingale.

* * * * *

"The belief is gathering strength, that, the weaker men are, the more they need political powers. The rich, if disfranchised, can in many ways defend themselves, where the poorer cannot. As the mere vote is of little value to the rich man, but of much value to the poor, so to the weaker sex the vote is of greater importance than to the stronger. Those who peruse the long recital of female disabilities and wrongs, may without exaggeration translate the legal

make room for her to pass. Even the rowdies kept still while women stood near. I never saw a more orderly set of men in my life, and each man that came forth with a female companion to cast her vote at the same time he cast his, looked proud and happy. My husband took my mother and myself to the polls, and I know that he felt proud of having that right; and as a person would walk along the street it looked so nice to see little groups of friends and neighbors, both men and women, talking and discussing politics. I, for one, think that it will make men and women more united. We will all work together for one common cause and women will take more interest in the welfare of the state or territory, now that we are allowed to have a voice in its politics."

general increase of meddling. But there is wise as well as unwise meddling; well-directed as well as ill-directed benevolence; and there is a tendency in the present day to confound the two. It is my conviction that, if the State employed all the means it possesses of raising the standard of morality, and even, in some respects, of physical well-being, in the community, it would find that it has much more in its power than it is now the fashion to believe; and that Governments in these days are quite as blameable in neglecting the right means of promoting those objects, as in days yet recent they were in pursuing the wrong. The time has passed away when Governments, speaking generally, were actively tyrannical; their favorite sins in the present time are indolence and indifference. Whatever scruples they have about doing ill, they have, in general, none at all about leaving ill alone, but allow mountains of mischief to be piled up from age to age, without any serious attempt to check the accumulation. There is something in the nature of government by men alone, which encourages this easy self-satisfaction. Men are more mentally indolent than women, and are far too ready to believe that they have done everything, or that there is nothing to be done. Their consciences and feelings need rousing, and the stronger active impulses of women are wanted to do it. If I am now asked whether, in my opinion, those active impulses can be depended on for prompting the most judicious line of conduct—whether women will discriminate well between good and bad modes of combating evils, and will not be apt to mistake the most direct mode for the most efficacious; I freely confess that the political education of women must be greatly improved, before as much as this can be affirmed with any confidence. But this would only be a real objection, if we were going to disfranchise the men, and turn over the whole power to women. All we want is, that the two should be obliged to take counsel together. We want the ship of State to have both sail and ballast, and not as is too often the case now when the navigation is troublesome, all ballast and no sail. There is little danger that the over-zeal of women will not be quite sufficiently tempered by the over-caution of men. In these days we do not fail, in matters of government, for want of a curb, but of a spur; and women, even with the present defects of their education, are well qualified for that office. As their education improves, they will do more; they will not only be a stimulus to others, but will themselves be capable of doing their full share of the work. Women, on the average, have more contriving minds than men; in things they are really interested in, they are readier in finding means for the attainment of an end; especially in undertakings the success of which greatly depends on the details of the execution. Now this is emphatically the case with attempts to correct the great physical and moral evils of society. These are works of detail. Men form great projects, sound in principle perhaps, and rational in their general conception, but which, when applied to practice, break down from unforeseen

of men, there is no reason to suppose that women any more than men will be disposed to yield themselves up as a class to the dominion of either one or other of the great political parties in the state. This only it is safe to predict. The party which shows itself most strongly animated by a sense of justice towards women, and which manifests that sense by giving active support to their present claim for representation in the councils of the nation, will have the strongest claim for their support so soon as representation shall be conceded. If there are any so-called Liberals willing to sacrifice their principles to the fancied interests of their party by opposing or obstructing the movement for the enfranchisement of women, let them take heed lest such suicidal policy do not alienate the heart of the womanhood of the nation from the great Liberal cause. For our own part, we believe that women have instincts which ally them with both parties. They will prove the truest Conservatives of all that is pure and just and ennobling in the political life of the nation. They will be the most radical of radical reformers when called upon to deal with the sources of misery, oppression, and wrong. They invite both parties to forget party considerations, and unite in giving them a generous and hearty support at this juncture. They promise to reward this support by bringing to the aid of both parties an influence which shall ever be found working on behalf of that which is the professed aim of both—the honor and welfare and happiness of the community.

And again, Mr. J. S. Mill discourses with characteristic discrimination, on the same subject in a recent speech before the London Society.

“But there is a side of the question on which I should like to say something; the particular manner in which the addition of women to the electoral body is likely to affect the character of Parliament, and to modify the mode in which public affairs are carried on. I think that the most marked effect, in the immediate future, would be to infuse into the legislature a stronger determination to grapple with the great practical evils of society. Women electors, I think, will be more difficult to persuade than men that those evils must be accepted—cannot be cured, cannot even be much mitigated—and that we may, with an untroubled conscience, avert our eyes from them, with an occasional grumble at what they cost us in rates, taxes, and charities. Women, I think, will find it hard to believe that legislation and administration are powerless to make any impression on these frightful evils, and that the acme of statesmanlike wisdom is to let them alone. I should consequently expect, from the political influence of women, a considerable increase of activity in dealing with the causes of these evils. I know there are many men who regard any increased activity in that direction with alarm, thinking that it means inconsiderate benevolence, injudicious legal regulation, and

He is a man of very advanced Liberal or rather Radical opinions, and was one of the few who had the courage to stand up in the House of Commons, and champion the cause of the North in the face of a bellowing mob of muddle-headed country squires and arrogant aristocrats. During the session of Parliament Mrs. Taylor's evening receptions are among the most interesting re-unions that could be found anywhere. Aubrey House, Notting Hill, in the Kensington neighborhood, the residence of the Taylors, is a fine quaint old fashioned mansion, one of the few old historical houses still to be found on the fringe of the metropolis. On every alternate Wednesday night of the session, the rooms of Aubrey House are overflowing with visitors. Mrs. Taylor moves among her guests a genial, quiet, attentive hostess, plainly dressed herself, setting a good example at all events, and making, according to Carlyle's recommendation, "one heroine to begin with," and like Mrs. Cady Stanton, not ashamed of the thick grey hair which crowns her clear, intelligent and earnest face. Mrs. Taylor has made Aubrey House the camp and head-quarters of the Woman's Suffrage movement, as it has been of many other good movements. Committees of ladies may be said to sit there permanently, addresses are prepared there, votes are canvassed, plans of action are debated, and the lady of the house contrives to make her influence felt everywhere, and yet to keep herself almost wholly in the background."

At this meeting there were present many members of Parliament, and their wives and other ladies and gentlemen of position and influence. From the many able speeches there made we quote nearly entire that of Mr. Jacob Bright, the brother of John Bright, and the present leader of the Suffrage movement in the House of Commons.

"As I have been asked, with my friend Sir Charles Dilke, to pilot the Bill for removing the political disabilities of women through the House of Commons, perhaps I may make a remark or two as to the present position of the question. It is now just about three years ago since Mr. Mill introduced this question into the House of Commons. I need not dwell upon the ability with which he introduced it, nor upon the very great advantage which the question had in being so introduced by him. I believe it derived great advantage from it; but I believe the remarkable support which it received in the House of Commons was owing very much more to the evident justice of the case, and to the impossibility of finding an answer to anything that was said. Some seventy or eighty members of Parliament followed Mr. Mill into the lobby, I believe something like one-third of the members who were present in the House. They went into that lobby because they had recently been discussing the question of reform everywhere throughout the country, and much

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failure of efficiency in the execution. Many more of these projects would succeed if women had a share in planning them."

Concerning the effect of women's voting upon parties already existing, we have the following admirable remarks by the Solicitor General, Sir John D. Coleridge, to his constituents, in January, 1870. We trust the chivalrous men of this country will adopt the spirit of them as their own, and cheerfully meet the political future whatever it may bring.

"They tell me, especially in Exeter, that all the women are Tories. (Loud laughter.) Well, gentlemen, God bless 'em; they are such good souls that they may be anything they like for what I care. (Renewed laughter.) They are the great humanizers of life, and if they are Tories now, I am sure it is only owing—will they forgive me for saying it?—to their slightly imperfect education. But, whether they be Tories or not, right is right—(cheers)—and if they ought to have this franchise, and ought to have these rights conceded to them, it is not because they make a use of them which you or I may think wrong, that what they have a right to should be withheld from them. True Liberalism, gentlemen, consists in this—in trusting to your principles, in looking beyond the use that may be made of this or that right by a particular man, and in seeing whether it is fair and just he should have the right, and, if it is, in giving it to him, whatever use he thinks fit to make of it. I for one, have that personal confidence in the truth and in the justice of Liberal principles that I am content, where a thing is shown to be right, to give it up, although for a particular moment it may chance to be used against me, and bring about the defeat of this or that man which of course, for the moment I should regret." (Cheers.)

The National Society for the promotion of Suffrage have recently held their first annual meeting in Hanover Square, London. The room was densely crowded, and at 4 o'clock the chair was taken by Mrs. Peter Alfred Taylor. Of her character and position a late writer has given us a very graphic account in the columns of the *N. Y. Independent*.

"At the meeting lately held in London, the chair was taken by Mrs. Peter Alfred Taylor, the first time I think that a woman has presided over a public meeting of men and women in London. It was right that Mrs. Taylor should preside, for she certainly has fairly won, what she never sought, a leadership among the workers in the cause. Mrs. Taylor is the wife of Peter A. Taylor, member of Parliament for Leicester, a wealthy man who has at a comparatively early period of life, withdrawn from all business connections and given himself up to movements of political and social reform.

without a division; but another member, who stood by his side, said: 'No, it will not be carried this session, but it will be carried soon.' I do not want to be over-sanguine upon this matter; I have no confidence about its being carried this session; but I entirely agree that it will be carried soon—and for this reason, that it is a just and necessary Bill. Surely it is just that no class should be asked to obey laws in a free country in the making of which laws it has no influence whatever; and it is equally just that no class should be expected to pay largely towards the national funds when it has no control whatever over those funds. But, as has been amply shown by able speakers who have preceded me, and especially by those admirable speeches to which we have listened from the ladies on this platform, this is not merely a question of abstract justice, it is a question of urgent necessity for the women of this kingdom at least. I don't know whether they are subjected elsewhere to great legal disabilities; but, so far as my knowledge goes, I would say that no class in this world ever entirely got rid of legal disabilities unless they came into the possession of political power.

"A great deal will depend, of course, upon the attitude which the Government may take upon this question. The Government may pass, I won't say any Bill that it likes, but any Bill that is at all reasonable the Government has the power to pass; and the Government has almost unlimited power, in preventing the passing of a Bill. I say almost unlimited power, because happily there are some limits even to the power of such a Government as that which we now possess. But I am not prepared to see the Government oppose this Bill. Why on earth should the Government have been willing to pass the Municipal Franchise Bill of last session, giving votes to women in 200 or 300 towns of this kingdom, including the very largest cities of the land—I say, why should the Government have been willing to give that right, sending women to the polling booth without the protection of the ballot; not every four or five years, but every year; why should they be willing to allow women to be mixed up in all this public strife, and to have this additional privilege, if they mean to turn round now and say, 'No, you shall not have the parliamentary vote?' The thing would be unbearable, because every argument that applied to the giving women the municipal vote, applies to the giving them the parliamentary vote; with this marked addition, that a great many arguments of great weight could be used in favor of women having the parliamentary vote, which do not exist at all with regard to the municipal vote. I say then it would be unlikely, very unlikely, that the Government should oppose this Bill.

"I daresay there are in this room both men and women of all shades of politics. I think the Conservatives here must have derived some support from what has been said with regard to the probable Conservative character of this measure. I offer no opinion

in Parliament; and they felt, as they could not but feel, that every argument which had been used in favor of extending the franchise to men generally, applied equally to the case of women, and therefore for them to have gone into the opposite lobby from that into which they did go would have been certainly at a very great sacrifice of feeling and consistency. After Mr. Mill did that great service to this question in the House of Commons, associations were everywhere formed in the country. There may be those here who are not fully alive to the character and influence of some of those associations; you have not only this Association in London, you have one of great influence in Manchester; you have associations in Edinburgh, in Dublin, in Birmingham, in Bristol, in Bath, in Carlisle, in Leeds, and I do not know how many places besides.

"Now, what is the character of the support which this proposed measure receives? It is well known to this committee that many of the most scholarly and distinguished men in our various Universities are on our side upon this question. It is equally true that the working-classes in our great manufacturing towns support this question. I have seen it introduced in many such meetings, and never saw any opposition to it. One little incident perhaps may be worth telling. During the last municipal election in some town in Yorkshire, I forget now which, the workingmen were so much interested in women having votes, and so well satisfied that they should have been promoted to this right, that they met together, subscribed a sum of money, and gave a handsome testimonial to the first woman who came up to the poll. That shows the great sympathy which exists on the part of workingmen in regard to this question.

"And now, what is our parliamentary position? I think I may say with Mr. Mill, since he introduced this measure there with such flattering success, that our parliamentary position is much stronger. We have good supporters in the House of Lords, and on both sides of the House of Lords. We have members of the Cabinet who are in favor of this Bill. We have law-officers of the Crown who will give us their support; and there is not a single part of the House of Commons, Tory or Liberal, nor a single part of each side of the House of Commons, in which we have not influential supporters. What does all this prove? It proves, undoubtedly, that the claim which women are making is a very strong claim; and it proves that the grounds upon which it rests are so simple that it can be understood both by the instructed and by the uninstructed.

"I have been asked the question sometimes, in the House of Commons, whether this Bill will be carried. Why, nobody in England who pays any attention to public matters doubts that it will be carried. Of course it will be carried. Then we are sometimes asked, 'When?' Well, it would no doubt require a prophet to tell when. A member of the House of Commons told me, the other day, that he believed it would be carried this session, and

questioned right; for last year's Act only abolished so much of the Municipal Corporations' Act of 1835, as had unintentionally tended to deprive Women of their constitutional and historical vote. Thus the *principle* of the Parliamentary vote is really decided in their favor. For, what is the origin of Parliament and of the vote which elects it? The House of Commons did not drop from heaven with divine right. It is a birth out of our institutions in shire and borough. Knights of the shires and burgesses of the towns were its elements. Out of local right of legislation and local voting arose Parliamentary legislation and voting for Parliament. On the face of the matter therefore it is to be assumed, that as a woman of property at the origin of the House of Commons was not disqualified by her sex for the Municipal vote, neither was she for the Parliamentary vote.

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"Last November women everywhere voted in the municipalities. What mischief followed—nationally, for I will not put any party question? Did the voting of women make men more riotous? I need not ask whether the women broke windows or heads. In Clifton and Bristol I believe that their presence made the men more orderly; and very much is this needed. Even rude and violent men are restrained by the presence of ladies. I cannot but believe, that even in this respect, the participation of women in the elections will be wholesome to us.

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"The male sex is the privileged, the female sex is the depressed class; and for ages past has been weighed down by injustices, which become worse, as the excess of the female over the male population increases. While our opponents strangely imply that all women are married, or ought to be married, and are never to be widows or work for their bread, the law is so intensely unjust to married women, that the husbands, instead of supporting them, often do but plunder them. Just law is made to punish rogues and scoundrels; but our common law, as interpreted and enforced by a long series of judges, might seem to assume all husbands to be angels. Moreover, it is computed that two million and a half of women and girls have to maintain themselves without male help. How cruelly unjust then is it, to shut women out of work, or pay them less for their work! Unforeseen calamity reduces to sudden poverty families reared in luxury: how are the ladies to earn bread? To become Governesses has long been their sole resource. Governess has competed against Governess, so as to reduce their pay to a minimum. If any one wants to know the struggles, the virtues and the miseries of this class, let him subscribe a few guineas to some society which seeks to relieve them. Then, when he is called on to vote *which* of them shall have some life-pittance, his heart will be rent by the number of the highly meritorious and profoundly indigent who compete for his favor. Many a female teacher gives every shilling which she can save, to

upon that subject, but I should regret very much if a great Liberal Government should fix this peculiar stigma upon women, and say, 'You are capable of entering into mercantile affairs; you have sufficient intelligence and capacity to manage local matters; but when it comes to imperial concerns you are altogether out of court, and you have no qualification whatever to take part in them.' I say a Liberal Government ought not to put itself into an attitude like that. Every class in the country should be raised, so far as the Government has power to raise it, and it should hesitate long before it takes any course that leads to the disrespect of any particular class.

"In conclusion, allow me just to say one word; that whether this measure be obtained sooner or later, the duty of all who are interested in it is very plain. Every man and woman here who desires to remove the electoral disabilities of woman should work hard for their removal, just as though we were entering upon a struggle of many years. There should be no possible place where you have any influence upon a member of Parliament but you should write him a note asking him to give a favorable attention to the Bill; and your Committees throughout the Empire should continue their labors just as though every possible obstacle beset our path."

Lastly we make several extracts from an address on Suffrage in January last, by Prof. Francis W. Newman, of University College, London, a man of rare culture, and one of the ablest writers in the kingdom. Every word that he utters is pertinent to the condition of affairs in this country, and should be carefully considered by every man and woman who desires the perpetuity of our free government, and the highest moral elevation of society.

"From the moment when Mr. J. S. Mill introduced the matter into Parliament, novel as it was, it has grown rapidly in interest and in approval. Mr. D'Israeli, as leader of the Conservatives, supported it with a zeal quite astonishing, before the country had at all spoken. Mr. Gladstone also has indicated his assent to it, though in cautious and measured words. The cause does not touch party politics, but brings us into a higher and calmer discussion, namely, what is just to Women, and what will tend to the moral welfare and purification of society. It is remarkable with what warmth the cause has been espoused by the most intellectual men of various professions. For instance in Trinity College, which is the leading house in the University of Cambridge, the eagerness of the Fellows for it is quite unprecedented. On every side we have omens of early success, of which not the least is the ready recognition last year of Women's constitutional right to vote in the Municipal elections. It was not a bestowal of something new, but the recognition of an ancient and un-

lish Moloch never loosens his gripe, until glutted by countless martyrdoms. His votaries assail, as theoretical, Utopian and "heroic," all who want to repeal an evil law *before* a hecatomb of the innocent have been slaughtered by it. Men of our sluggish Anglo-Saxon blood generally mistake compromise, made at other people's expense, for moderation and wisdom. They abhor a simple, clear, self-consistent and complete concession of justice; but prefer to have it wrung out of them, bit by bit, and then extol themselves, as "practical men." Some wit has said of us, that we are eminently patient under other people's sufferings. This is too true of routine-politicians and overworked officials. But is the whole stronger sex of this country willing to submit to such a sarcasm, when the weaker sex are the sufferers? I earnestly trust, Not.

"Where the partiality of *law* has engendered *social* injustices, repeal does not immediately remove the evils. Time is needed, alike that new sentiment may permeate society, and that new organizations may coalesce. For that very reason, legal unfairness cannot be too completely and too quickly renounced, especially in Woman's case, where the duration of injustice is measured by the ages of History. Instead of bit-by-bit legislation, a simple declaration of the equality of the sexes in all legal right, would seem to me wise and easiest as well as most natural and grateful under a female Sovereign. But, in consideration of sluggish intellects, the present movement claims for women only the Parliamentary Suffrage on a par with men; which is but a small installment of our debt.

"I did not myself fully understand till the last half year, how reckless of the elementary rights of females,—how atrociously unfair, as between sex and sex,—English legislation could be; although I had both written and spoken strongly on the subject. Permit me to enter on an important illustration from very recent Acts of Parliament. Every boy and girl knows how proud England is of trial by Jury. It is older than the Norman conquest. To defend it from the invasions of the Executive, is among the first duties of Parliament. The attempt to deprive *men* of it would cause insurrection, and if persisted in, revolution, which would either overthrow the dynasty and the aristocracy, or crush us under French despotism. Scarcely of less importance to us is freedom from arbitrary arrest, and the responsibility of officers for false imprisonment. In great public danger the Habeas Corpus is suspended; but never else. Yet, wonderful to say! in profound peace these essential safeguards for person and reputation have suddenly and almost silently,—by the conspiracy of Officials and of the Press, and by the torpor of an overworked Parliament,—been stript away from women, and from women alone, over great areas of the United Kingdom, while the argument for it, such as it is, applies with greater force against men than against women. I cannot here go minutely into two Acts, passed in 1866 and 1869. The details are too revolting. I touch their substance lightly, dwelling only on their process, which reck-

rear little brothers, or support an aged mother, or keep a sick sister from the Poor House; and at last, when herself incapacitated by age or illness, remains on the wide world, destitute. Women of less accomplishment and lower birth, if strong for rude work, have a greater choice of ill paid occupation: but of these there is always a fraction, which can scarcely anyhow earn food and shelter. What follows then? In Paris, years ago, a celebrated physician and very careful reckoner estimated that out of 3000 women who were there plying the most debasing and deadly of trades, only 35 could in any other way earn a living at all. In England our enumeration of such lost women is too imperfect to allow resting on any such estimates; but that Hunger, sheer Hunger, drives Englishwomen to this desperate and hated resource, is attested too strongly to be doubted. And what is the true source of the evil? The fact, that our institutions are unjust to women, who are the most self-denying, industrious and virtuous part of every nation. The mischief, I say, begins from the law, which treats woman as a mere appendage and convenience of man; thereby tempting men to be unjust, idle, vicious and cruel. The majority of men learn right and wrong from the law, and a large number feel free to do whatever the law justifies. Hence, even in the most cultivated ranks, daughters have far less consideration than sons; and daughters who remain unmarried, after spending their whole youth in a parent's gratification, without an independent life, often exchange opulent luxury, on that parent's death, for a scanty income and solitary lodging.

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"If any of you have not duly attended to the signs of the times, be assured that the great question now rising on the horizon of politics in all Christendom is, the political and social elevation of Woman. The movement, in different phases, agitates despotic Russia, and republican America. As to the greater political question, Sweden and Austria decidedly go ahead of us; in the municipalities the French woman is far more prominent than the English woman. In regard to the pecuniary position of wives, England is, I believe, more iniquitous than any other civilized country. Everywhere the cry is rising for female education, especially for industrial education, with equal chance of employment and equal pay for equal work.

"There are those who think that it would be wiser to claim for women at first only social and industrial justice, and to postpone the claim of suffrage. This, I understand, is the course taken in Germany: where the advocacy of women is led by that illustrious lady, the eldest daughter of our Queen, now Crown-Princess of Prussia. She is already the darling of Germany: she is destined to a noble career.—But in a question of mere policy, opinions will differ. In whichever order the events of the day lead, we have to follow, and must accept every installment of justice as fast as we can get it; for truly in every case reforms come slowly enough. Female victims in plenty have been sacrificed on the altar of cruel law. Our Eng-

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by petitions to Parliament, through the hands of the local Representatives.

"Yet I speak, not for women only, but also for men; that is for our common country. All who have read history, even superficially, are aware that it is usual to moralize over the fall of great States after they become rich and powerful, and to impute it to Luxury. Luxury is not the correct word. Historians ought to say Impurity; fostered by wealth, by venal Art, by vicious trade and vicious philosophy. The very profligates of old Rome saw and avowed how much these causes conduced to fatal degeneracy. Paris is discovering that despotism and immorality are firm allies, and that the State-patronage of Vice is fatal to freedom. For myself, I have learned in a few months, more than in 50 years before, how deep are the corruptions of England, and how vehement her downward career. With minds pre-occupied by materialism and fatalism, our publicists and officials are quietly accepting our abominable state as the natural order of things, which ought to be organized and made comfortable by Law and by Art; thus smoothing our path downwards into a hell of sensuality. The public men who will arrest this seem to be a small minority, and hitherto feeble: their adversaries have a permanent hold of official posts, where they are practically irresponsible and most difficult to dislodge. I see not how anything can purify English society, and destroy the legal incentives and facilities of manifold corruption, quickly enough and decisively enough to save our future, without a greater intensity in the political influence of women.

"Because this is a crisis, at which our nation is called to choose between moral life and death, I am bold to address women themselves, and especially educated ladies. If you, ladies, are happy, remember that others are unhappy. If you have kind and just husbands, remember that thousands of women have selfish or wicked husbands. If you have enough of this world's good, remember that scores of thousands of women and girls can scarcely get bread and shelter even by an excess of toil. If you have been tenderly watched over from childhood, learn that thousands of your sisters are untaught and untrained, and many hundreds wickedly sold by parents or kinsfolk to the shambles of the voluptuous rich. It is a grievous fact, that men possessed of political power, and fully aware of things concerning which we fear to speak very plainly, have enacted in a course of many centuries just enough law against these horrors to salve their own consciences, but never have so enforced any enactment as to make the law a reality: much less have they enacted all that the case demands. I boldly say, that History, and the voice of God sounding through its miserable pages, call upon pure hearted and happier women to succor their unhappy sisters, whom the ruder and less virtuous sex tramples down. You cannot succor them without some power to mould the law and incite its enforcement. To claim a purely *domestic* status, disables you for con-

lessly breaks down the legal safeguards of every thing that women hold dearest. Rather than expound any of the details myself, I quote some words from the Appeal of an English Mother to her countrymen. She says: "These measures are without precedent in the history of our country, for their tyranny and for their defiance of all which has ever been considered by Englishmen as justice. It resembles the Spanish Inquisition in its system of paid spies and anonymous whispers as evidence not to be rebutted. Contrary to the entire spirit of English law, the whole burden of proof is thrown, not upon the accuser, but upon the accused. There is a complete absence of all fair and open court,—to say nothing of Jury." An Association of Ladies of the highest character has drawn up a solemn protest against these Acts, from which protest I extract one clause only. They protest, "because, so far as women are concerned, the Acts remove every guarantee of personal security which the law has established and [hitherto] held sacred, and puts their reputation, their freedom and their persons absolutely in the power of the police." In fact, against mere whispers or suspicions, no woman whatsoever has any legal defence; for no proof is pretended or required, nor is any one responsible in the case of spiteful slander or stupid mistake. Several ladies have said to me, that they never before knew how necessary it is for their protection to have women sitting in Parliament. The wife of an M. P. wrote to me, that she shall never again trust an assembly of *men*, where the rights and interests of *women* are concerned. Who can blame women for such judgments? What would men say, if a Parliament of women were to vote away our right to trial by judge and jury, were to persecute us by spies, and condemn us on the opinion of irresponsible officials, low in the service, who pick up report of us from the whispers of prostitutes, or from the secret letters of profligates? I repeat, that contempt of women's most cardinal rights,—women married or unmarried, chaste or unchaste,—has been displayed in a manner which had previously seemed impossible.

"When these things are not only possible, but facts, is it wonderful that Englishwomen are demanding protection against unjust law? To protect them, it is but a small and indeed insufficient claim, that women's votes shall be mingled with the votes of men in the Parliamentary elections. Yet the concession will not be wholly ineffective. *Some* women will be able to address *every* M. P. as his constituents. Every Member will receive some official notice of women's grievances; and the principle of equal measure to each sex will rapidly grow strong in the public conscience. Now, in the opening of this lecture I observed, that the women who are foremost in claiming the vote are just those who are foremost in intellect and in public esteem. The very same fact appears in the United States. I now pray all, high and low, and especially electors, not to turn a deaf ear to the prayer of their most intelligent countrywomen, nor to the dumb entreaties of the humbler; but to give active support,

new, to devise a plan of state action which will much simplify the work of the Society, and give to every one, however limited in time and means, an opportunity to do something for the cause.

They propose that a fund of several hundred dollars be placed in the hands of the Executive Committee, which they shall apply chiefly to paying the traveling expenses of one or more women of sound discretion, who shall visit every town in the state, meeting there in friendly parlors the few women already interested in the movement, and with them organizing a small local committee, whose chief object shall be to obtain signatures to the petitions for a 16th Amendment, and to circulate tracts on the subject of Equal Suffrage. In this way

list would embrace a large number of our most eminent clergymen of nearly or quite all denominations, some of the ablest members of the legal profession, and a considerable number of members of Congress, besides a very large number of the most intelligent and every way estimable women of the land.

Peter Alfred Taylor, M. P. and Mrs. Taylor.

Lord and Lady Amberly.

Lord Houghton.

Lady Anstruther.

Jacob Bright, M. P., and Mrs. Bright.

Mons. Louis Blanc.

Sir D. Wedderburn, M. P.

Prof. Fawcett and Mrs. Fawcett.

Mr. Eastwick, M. P.

Mr. McLaren, M. P., and Mrs. McLaren.

Mr. Charley, M. P.

Miss Frances Power Cobbe.

Lady Eleanor Brodie.

Lady Crompton.

Countess Beauchamp.

Lady Belper.

Major and Mrs. Bell.

Prof. S. Amos, M. D.

Miss Motley.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Martineau.

Harriet Martineau.

Miss E. Garrett, M. D.

Lady Lyell.

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell.

A. J. Russell, M. P.

Prof. Cassal.

Prof. H. Morley.

Dr. Symes Thompson.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Malleson.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Arnold.

Prof. Francis W. Newman.

Rev. Canon Kingsley.

Sir Thomas Bazley, M. P.

Rev. George Butler.

Mrs. Josephine Butler.

Mrs. Hume-Rothery.

Mr. A. J. Mundella, M. P.

Mr. Morrison, M. P.

Mr. T. B. Potter, M. P.

John Stuart Mill.

Miss Helen Taylor.

Mr. M. S. Bass, M. P.

Miss Jessie Boucheret.

Miss Emily Faithful.

Miss Lydia Becker.

Lady Goldsmidt.

Sir Wilfred Lawson, M. P.

Mr. Thomas Hare.

Miss Hare.

Mr. Pochin, Mayor of Salford.

Mrs. Pochin.

The Ven. Arendeacon Sandford.

Rev. Dr. Temple.

Rev. J. Wolstenholme.

Mr. B. Whitworth, M. P.

Rev. Frederick B. Maurice.

Florence Nightingale.

Mrs. Rebecca Moore.

Richard D. Webb.

test against odious enormities, pregnant with fraud, cruelty and social decay. Such modesty is not womanly sensitiveness; it is rather to be called, womanish selfishness. I implore you, Ladies! in the cause of the wretched and injured, and to quell that licentiousness which is the ruin of great nations,—Arise, and claim your rightful position in the State!”

Your committee being in full sympathy with the views of Prof. Newman, thus admirably expressed, and feeling that our own beloved country is passing through a similar crisis, and is already called to choose between life and death,* are moved to call earnestly upon mothers especially, to “arise and claim their rightful position in the State,” if they would save from ruin, not only their country, but their sons, dearer to them than life itself. Under God, our hope is in the women of Connecticut—may they awake in season to their heaven-imposed responsibilities.†

Your committee have been able after listening to the advice and experience of earnest workers in the old country and the

* Within the year the city government of St. Louis, against the protest of many of her most intelligent citizens, have decided to adopt the continental usages in regard to houses of illfame, furnishing prostitutes, after personal examination, with bills of health for the better protection of their male visitors, and it is understood that the system is now in actual operation. Other large cities are meditating the same ruinous policy, and it is advocated by some of our best citizens on the plea that innocent wives and children are often afflicted with disease through the criminal lives of guilty husbands and fathers. To all such we would recommend a careful reading of the great mass of statistics collected on this subject by the English “Society for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts,” to which Prof. Newman refers.

† We have dwelt upon the proceedings in England on the subject of Woman Suffrage as being of more special interest and influence in this country, but the progress of the cause in several of the continental nations is very encouraging. In Austria, by an imperial decree made in 1864, women vote equally with men in the class of landed proprietors, and in Sweden they are allowed to vote in certain cases, and under certain limitations, as to which we are not fully informed. In Russia votes are cast by households, and women are often sent to vote as representatives of the family. The idea that a woman by reason of her sex is disqualified for the suffrage is rapidly becoming discarded in Europe.

As indicating the state and progress of the Woman Suffrage cause in England, of which we have spoken so largely in the foregoing report, we annex a list of the names of some of its leading friends and advocates in that country. The list might be largely extended both as to numbers and character, but we have not the necessary information at hand.

A list of the leading friends of the cause in America would occupy too much space, and they are besides more familiar to our readers. Such a

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we are confident that the women of the state will be brought to a consideration of the movement if not into active sympathy with it—and your committee will thus be brought into direct communication with them. Should a fund of a thousand dollars be guaranteed to us this fall, we feel confident that marked results would follow our winter's campaign.

We hope also before long to be able to secure a room in some convenient locality in the city of Hartford, where the business of the Society may be transacted, where its publications may be obtained at all times, and where monthly and perhaps weekly meetings may be held for conference, to which people from all parts of the State will be welcome.

In behalf of the Executive Committee,

ISABELLA B. HOOKER, *Chairman.*

HARTFORD, Sept. 8, 1870

At the annual meeting held on Sept. 9th, in Allyn Hall, it was voted that hereafter a membership fee of one dollar annually should be instituted—but this does not cut off from membership those who have already joined the Society without a fee. It is earnestly desired, however, that all present members should forward one dollar every year to the Secretary, and order from her also packages of tracts for distribution in their own locality, paying for them at the rate of \$2.50 per hundred, which is the bare cost of printing. All persons unable to buy these tracts, but willing to circulate them in their own neighborhood, will be furnished gratuitously on application to the Secretary, Miss F. E. Burr, 788 Main Street, Hartford.