

of a woman who possessed one of the most profound scientific minds of the day—one who is said to have been "as extraordinary from her acquirements of knowledge as from her social reticence." Here is a brief account of her from a literary journal :

Mrs. Janet Taylor was a mathematician of the first class ; as such to be commemorated by the side of Mrs. Somerville, less universally cultivated, less admirable in exposition than the latter-named lady in any event little known to the outward world. But her logarithmic tables, we have been assured on fair authority, are correct and complete in no ordinary degree ; and it was her singular occupation to prepare many men for the sea, by her tuition in the higher branches of mathematics. A more quiet, a more singular union of rare powers of will and knowledge, especially in a woman, than hers does not occur to us. She lived at the east end of London among her pupils and clients. We believe she was as gentle and simple in herself as she was deeply versed in the abstruse sciences which she professed.

PROGRESS OF THE AGITATION AGAINST THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

A new Society and an influential general committee have been formed in London and local committees have sprung up in some of our principal towns, all working harmoniously together to oppose the extension of these shameful laws and to procure their repeal in the districts where they are in operation. Great as has been the sacrifice of personal feeling on the part of women in thus arraying themselves publicly, on a question of this kind, many have rejoiced at the opportunity thus afforded them of bearing testimony against the present state of morals, and the unequal penalties of law and public feeling awarded to men and women on these matters.

A friend—the mother of sons—writes to me from Ireland, on the social evil question : "I think this is a grand opportunity for all virtuous men and women to prove their faith by their works. It has long been my feeling that the hideous state of morals called for the most strenuous crusading of all right-thinking people, and I am delighted at last something has occurred to stir up the slumbering indignation of the virtue of England. I shall send in our names to the Ladies' Association. We propose to get up a petition from this city on the act that legalizes infamy ; the act that dethrones Christianity and tramples upon womanhood—the cruel and horrible act that bows down to the devil and his angels. W. T. asked me to write to — (a member of the government) on the subject. Please let us know if he means to lay bare this attack upon the freedom of half the Queen's subjects, which emblazons the land's shame—which lets all men know that the Testament with us is a dead letter—that the Church in our souls has been disestablished to that extent that we now worship the flesh and scorn the spirit!"

GROUND OF OBJECTION TO THE ACT.

The principles involved in the opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts are unassailable. It has been well said that morals and jurisprudence are set at defiance by these acts. Vice is encouraged and made easy by the promise of impunity (false though it be) which they hold out to the male prostitutes. Justice is outraged by the punishment of the victim and the exemption of the chief criminal. Law is set aside by the practical repeal of the *Habeas Corpus*, and of trial by jury for half the population of the districts under the operation of the measure. The medical basis of the law, to which its supporters still cling, only remains to be proved fallacious. There is now good ground to believe that this basis, though supported by

men eminent in their profession in many respects, and whose motives cannot justly be impugned, is wholly untenable. The very highest medical authority, and the evidence that can be adduced of the working of similar laws on the Continent are now known to be distinctly opposed to the principle of the measure on scientific and experimental grounds. Arguments of an unanswerable character have overthrown those of the specialists in the profession. It is enough for the general public to know that the very first and highest medical authority is opposed to the principle of this legislation. A pamphlet, by Mademoiselle Daubie, on the Continental System will silence for ever all supporters of the theory of which that system is a practical result.

But the cause is not yet man and we must be prepared for a stout opposition. Miss Garrett, as well as one or two others, has, I regret to say, taken part with our adversaries, on supposed scientific grounds. The extension party, actuated by various lower motives, is very strong and has the strength of the army and navy and of the House of Lords on its side. To withstand this force, the whole moral might of the nation will be needed, and must be aroused at the central fires of conscience and feeling until it bursts forth in a lava stream of indignation to resist a system which legalizes vice. Science, and law, and morals, are all on our side, but the moral argument is the most powerful, for it reaches all classes, and on it we rely to make this a national question, and to lead to the still deeper demand, "How can prostitution be extirpated?" Many questions, not less important, are involved in the present movement—the question of equal laws for men and women—the question of the standing army—the opening of the medical profession to women, and other subjects of equal significance, are closely connected with it.

The Ladies' Association has taken steps to make the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts a test question at elections. Placards and handbills are being used at Southwark and elsewhere, while elections are pending, to warn the voters to obtain distinct pledges from the candidates that they will use their influence in Parliament against these acts.

NEW OPPONENTS TO THE ACTS.

Two important names have lately appeared on the right side in this question. The Rev. F. D. Maurice, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, has addressed a letter to the *Edinb. News*, in which he says that he was one of those who signed a petition for extending the operations of the act—that he did so from the horror he felt at suggesting the thought that morals and physical science were hostile to each other. He now says, "I am convinced that I was wrong." And adds that : "Every attempt to mitigate the curses of slavery by any legal enactments only showed it to be essentially abnormal. It is the same in the case of prostitution. We, men, had dreamed that, if we could not relinquish it, we might possibly make it a little less intolerable. Jena's curse to the innocent ; less deep degradation to the guilty. I think the protests of the ladies have shown us that we shall involve the innocent with the guilty, that we shall degrade the guilty more, that we are inflicting an injury on the whole sex by assuming that any woman can exist to satisfy the lust of a man. It is easy to describe their cries of indignation as hysterical shrieking. The same language was applied to the anti-slavery champions. * * I believe that we have

arrived at a period when the question must be faced which sounds as ridiculous and monstrous to all wise men about town : 'How can prostitution be extirpated?' * * In seeking for an answer we must earnestly demand the help of the physician as well as of the moralist, of women as well as men. That ladies should have made the tremendous self-sacrifice which their appearance as protesters against the measure involves, is a fact which must strike all of us, and which must awaken us to deep and earnest reflections. * * I write to you not because I can offer much aid, but because I think it is due to your brave correspondents, and to their cause, that I should own they have convinced me of my error in asking the legislature to extend the operation of the act."

Mr. J. S. Mill's opinion is contained in the following extract from a letter of his dated, Avignon, Jan. 11, 1870 :

The subject of your letter of the 3d is one which I have much considered, and in which I feel great interest, and the result of the consideration is that I greatly & sincerely oppose any extension of the Contagious Diseases Act, and should highly approve of its repeal. I do not think the abuse of power by the police more atrocious which could be prevented. I think then the necessary consequences of any attempt to carry out such a plan thoroughly. If once examination is made other than voluntarily, the police must try to prevent evasion of it, and this at once opens the door to innocent mistakes on the part of the police, and makes it necessary to entrust them with power over women which no men are fit to have. I am opposed to the principle of the act. I believe the medical efficacy of it to be doubtful, and I believe it to be impossible to carry it out without a degree of oppression which would more than outweigh any advantages that could be gained. Of course in saying this I look to the female population as well as the male, and strike the balance of advantages to the whole. I may as well say that I think this oppression does exist in France, and is responsible for a state of things among all classes far worse than exist in England. Nor do I think the indirect evils of this kind of registration to be despised. The interpretation which is to be put upon regulations of this description, even if entirely false, is so mischievous that a very great balance of well-ascertained practical good effects would not, perhaps, be sufficient to compensate for it. To fancy that calling this objection a sentimental one at all invalidates it is merely childish, for, assuredly, men's sentiments have a great deal to do in regulating their conduct, and no law can be a good one which gives a bad direction to men's sentiments.

Believe me to be very truly yours,

RAMMOA MOORS.

ADMIRAL RAMSAY ON WOMEN AS SOLDIERS.—The annual meeting of the Governmentes Benevolent Society of Scotland was held the first week in February in Edinburgh. Admiral Ramsay, in seconding the adoption of the report, said he thought women should be admitted to study law, medicine, and theology, if they were willing to pay for it. He did not know how ladies would do to enter his own profession. He would not like to say they would prove themselves unable to command a fleet, or that they would be wanting in courage to encounter all the dangers of naval warfare, but there existed a great deal of prejudice against the fair sex becoming connected with either the army or the navy. On the coast of Africa he once saw a regiment of rifle women—and, black as they were, he would say he never saw a finer regiment. All the officers were women, there was not a single man in the whole regiment. They were most courageous, and fought bravely, in fact, a friend told him that when they went into action they fought like so many Africans.

Miss Anna Thompson has given \$4,000 to the Edinburgh Hospital for the permanent endowment of a free bed.