

TO THE WOMEN ELECTORS OF THE ISLE
OF MAN.

LADIES,—We beg to offer to you, in the name of the friends of the enfranchisement of women, hearty congratulations on the proud position you occupy as being the first women within her Majesty's dominions whose rights as Parliamentary electors have been recognised and legally secured.

The great victory which has been won for you by the sense of justice and the generous exertions of the House of Keys is hailed by us as an earnest of the coming recognition of the same principle in the next electoral Act for the United Kingdom. The action taken by your Insular Legislature, and the manner in which you make use of your newly acquired rights, will be of material significance, not only in regard to the further extension of the principle of women's suffrage in the Isle of Man, but also in the forthcoming struggle for the recognition of women's claims to Parliamentary representation in this country.

The eyes of the friends and opponents of the movement all over the world are bent on you, watching with eager interest the result of the great experiment of women's suffrage in the election of the Legislature in a free country, which you are now about to afford. We look with confidence and hope to your action, to demonstrate the fitness of women for the exercise of political rights, and the baselessness and futility of the objections which have been brought against the proposal to recognise these rights.

We, therefore, especially and earnestly desire to call your attention to the extreme importance of the act you will be shortly called upon to perform. We trust that on the polling day it may be found that no woman whose name is on the electoral list has failed to record her vote, and that every woman will use her vote to the best of her judgment and ability for the preservation of the ancient liberties of her country, the good government of the Insular Kingdom, the promotion of measures calculated to improve the condition of the people, and, more especially, with a view to the amendment of laws which are unjust and injurious to women, and thereby hurtful to the general weal.

We ask you to vote for candidates who will support in the House of Keys the extension of the electoral franchise to women occupiers, the passing of a just law respecting the property of married women, the amendment of the law in any other department in which it fails to secure for women adequate protection, and also for giving to women the full benefit of every educational provision in the Island, for securing to them full industrial rights, freedom to maintain themselves, or those dependant on them, by any work which they are capable of performing, and the right to develop, untrammelled by legal disabilities, all the faculties and capacities with which they are endowed. We also ask you to make your influence felt in other measures not especially affecting women, on which you may have formed your opinion and judgment.

We do not presume to suggest to you the names of any particular candidates, but we are satisfied that, if you are resolved to be diligent and faithful in the discharge of the great trust committed to you, the knowledge that they will be required to submit their qualifications to the judgment of good and thoughtful women will have an ennobling influence upon all the candidates who may seek your suffrages. It will then be seen that the extension of the franchise to women means not simply the addition of so many more names to the electoral roll, but the infusion into political life of those higher moral and spiritual influences which it is the mission of women to diffuse in family and social life.

We cannot doubt that these influences will be as beneficial in politics as experiment has proved them to be in society. Hitherto every advance that has been made in the elevation of women from a servile and subject condition has tended to the benefit of the people among whom it has taken place, and the degree of civilisation to which a nation has attained corresponds to the degree in which the condition of women has been raised.

To your hands is committed the proud and glorious privilege of sounding the first note of the political freedom of women in the British Empire. We rejoice with you while we envy you, and we pray you to regard the exercise of this privilege as a most solemn and sacred duty.—We are, yours faithfully,

LYDIA E. BECKER.

ALICE SCATCHERD.

Manchester, March, 1881.