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### Article

**Citation** (please note it is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from this work)

**Matthews-Jones, LM (2016) 'Granny thinking what she is going to write in her book': religion, politics and the Pontefract by-election of 1872 in Josephine Butler's Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade (1896). Women's History Review. 26 (6). pp. 935-952. ISSN 1747-583X**

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**‘Granny thinking what she is going to write in her book’: religion, politics and the Pontefract by-election of 1872 in Josephine Butler’s *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (1896)**

**Lucinda Matthews-Jones**

**Abstract**

Josephine Butler’s *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (1896) has long been considered as one of the crucial pieces of evidence for the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts. Yet few scholars have examined this text to consider what Butler’s only explicit autobiographical publication tells us about how she represented and sought to represent her role in the repeal movement. Scholars have instead preferred to explore how Butler revealed the ‘auto/biographical I’ in the biographies of her father, sister and husband, as well as in her hagiographical writings. This article argues that *Personal Reminiscences* enabled Butler to reinforce a religiously informed identity. It does so by unpacking her account of the Pontefract by-election of 1872. Both biographers and historians have been drawn to her account of the by-election, especially her description of the terrifying events in the hayloft.

Keywords: Josephine Butler, Politics, Pontefract by-Election, Religion, Selfhood

**Biography**

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On 29 February 1896 Josephine Butler sent her granddaughter and namesake a photograph of herself sitting at her writing table in Tooting Bec Road. In the letter that accompanied this image, Butler noted that it showed ‘Granny thinking what she is going to write in her book’.<sup>1</sup> The book in question was her memoir, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (1896).<sup>2</sup> With her pen hovering over the page, Butler was shown in the process of writing about her involvement in the campaign against the ‘State Regulation of vice’ in Britain, Europe and India.<sup>3</sup> Over 245 pages, she charted the political, moral and religious challenges she faced in championing the rights of ‘common prostitutes’ and of women more broadly. Butler saw her memoir as a much-needed and desired ‘history’ of the campaign, written so that their ‘years of labour and conflict’ would not be ‘forgotten’ by subsequent generations.<sup>4</sup> But she was a hesitant scribe and ‘historian’. She acknowledged that her history was filled with ‘lamentable gaps’ and half remembered events. In order to overcome these failings she decided that her book would be presented as a personal reminiscence of the repeal movement. The resulting work can be considered as one of the crucial pieces of evidence for the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts (CD Acts), Acts which subjected prostitutes in specific English port towns to an internal examination for venereal disease. Plain-clothes government officials were allowed to arrest any woman suspected of being a prostitute in England’s garrison towns. Repealers argued that this enforced a state-regulated system of prostitution whereby ‘clean’ women would be made available for men of the Army and Navy.<sup>5</sup>

In this article, I will argue that *Personal Reminiscences* enabled Butler to reinforce a religiously informed identity. Few scholars have examined this text to consider what Butler’s only explicit autobiographical publication tells us about how she represented and sought to represent her role in the repeal movement. Scholars have instead preferred to explore how Butler revealed the ‘auto/biographical I’ in the biographies of her father, sister and husband, as well as in her hagiographical writings.<sup>6</sup> For instance, the essays which make up Jenny Dagers and Diana Neal’s collection *Sex, Gender and Religion: Josephine Butler revisited* have expanded the term ‘autobiography’ to include Butler’s lesser-known writings and to reassess the biographical accounts present in her writing. Yet there is no essay on Butler’s only explicit autobiographical publication. A clue to this oversight can be found in Dagers and Neal’s introduction, in which they note that Butler’s *Personal Reminiscences* was

‘affirming a more public feminine discourse’, whilst ‘preserving a somewhat abbreviated domestic self’.<sup>7</sup>

In order to explore how Butler developed and reinforced her central role in the movement, I will unpack her account of the Pontefract by-election of 1872. This by-election will be analysed because of the prominent place that it has achieved both in Butler’s biographies and more recently in historiographical writings. The by-election has been remembered almost entirely as one of the scenes of Butler’s famous campaign. Both biographers and historians have been drawn to her account of it, especially her description of the terrifying events in the hayloft. Her early biographers Lucy Johnson and George Johnson decided to include an account of the by-election in their second edition because of public demand, highlighting its prominent place in the public imagination.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Millicent Fawcett and E.M. Turner used Butler’s own words to describe the significance of her role in the by-election.<sup>9</sup> E. Moberly Bell and Joseph Williamson, writing nearly fifty years later, also relied on Butler’s narrative.<sup>10</sup> Despite evidence of more detailed background research, even Jane Jordan’s biography does not use alternative accounts of the events in Pontefract.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Helen Mathers has employed Butler’s description of the by-election as a prologue because it reveals ‘Butler’s character’, which she in turn describes as ‘undaunted’, ‘brave, determined, and even foolhardy’ in risking ‘violent attack, even rape’.<sup>12</sup> Butler’s own account merges two earlier descriptions: the first half comes from *The Shield’s* description of the election (1872), while the hayloft scene was initially an extract from a letter from Butler to William Stead for his biography, *Josephine Butler: a life sketch* (1888). While Butler’s reminiscences provided an additional account of the by-election, they illustrate the tension between remembering and what people want to be told about an event.

The by-election was discussed and dissected on the pages of provincial and national newspapers at the time. For this was no usual by-election: it was the first time that the secret ballot was used in British voting. National and provincial newspapers sent special correspondents to report on the workings and success of this new electoral procedure and, according to *The Leeds Mercury*, the event was ‘regarded with the liveliest interest throughout the country’.<sup>13</sup> The repeal movement’s papers in the form of letters and their periodical *The Shield: established to promote the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts* provided a further account. In this article, I argue that, when read side by side with Butler’s own account in *Personal Reminiscences*,

newspaper reports and papers from the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (NA) reveal hitherto un-commented-upon aspects of the by-election and demonstrate the importance of contextualising autobiographical writing within a wide range of primary sources.

What follows is an investigation into how Butler's rhetorical and narrative devices enabled her to find meaning in her repeal work. Butler drew on a melodramatic style to highlight the religious significance of the movement, which would ultimately allow her to reinforce a personal subjective identity that was both holy and sacred. I argue that, far from writing a secular narrative of the Pontefract by-election, Butler drew on melodrama to highlight its *religious* significance. Clearly, this raises several important issues about the construction of agency, the role of religion in this process, and how historians should interpret authorship. Personal reminiscences do not allow for a neat history; they no more reveal the 'truth' of the past than any other source. Instead, as A.O.J. Cockshut argues, autobiographical writings reveal a number of truths, including how the author contextualises herself or himself.<sup>14</sup> As Kerri Allen has suggested, 'Religious rhetoric provided the means of self-expression not otherwise available to many nineteenth-century women.'<sup>15</sup> Turning to a consideration of the Quaker Mary Howitt, Alison Twells has proposed that feminist scholars need to consider how public religious culture empowered women to create and articulate personal Christian identities.<sup>16</sup>

By taking more seriously the religious and spiritual undertones of Butler's account of the by-election, this article builds on the work of Helen Rogers, who has argued that Butler's *Personal Reminiscences* illustrates how she was involved in a radical movement that initially favoured electoral politics over social purity. Rogers has indicated that, within the radical tradition, melodrama was—like realism—an important narrative device and one that Butler certainly adopted in her account of electoral politics.<sup>17</sup> Hence a reading of the use of melodrama will be pivotal to understanding Butler's Pontefract narrative. Melodrama was fundamental to the construction of agency in the nineteenth century. Rohan McWilliam has argued that

Not only were poetry, music and the novel all affected by the 'melodramatic imagination' but more importantly so were identity and experiences. Melodrama provided a cultural resource, a language and a

set of themes and narratives that enabled the nineteenth century to understand itself.<sup>18</sup>

Butler was no exception. Pamela J. Walker has contended that Butler was keen to use popular melodramatic tropes to gain support for her cause.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Judith Walkowitz has noted that the Pontefract by-election illustrates how Butler used melodrama in her political narratives and that ‘Butler superimposed her version of Christian eschatology upon melodramatic narrative, integrating biblical references and prophetic insights into a secular political language that was radical, constitutional, and feminist.’<sup>20</sup> This builds on Walkowitz’s previous analysis of Butler’s prostitute stories, which were published in the 1870s under the title ‘The Dark Side of English Life: illustrated in a series of true stories’ for *The Methodist Protest* and later republished in her husband’s biography; they demonstrate how Butler was able to take on a number of roles in her writing, including the ‘avenging mother’, ‘omniscient narrative’, ‘stage manager’ and authoress.<sup>21</sup> Walkowitz’s assessment of Butler’s melodrama narrative not only challenges Peter Brooks’s assertion that melodrama replaced the myths of religion but furthermore demonstrates how Butler centralised her role through specific roles and literary functions.<sup>22</sup>

The remainder of this article is divided into three sections. The first part introduces readers to *Personal Reminiscences*. The second section contextualises Butler’s account of the Pontefract by-election of 1872 by comparing it to the papers of the NA and to press coverage. The final part considers the religious significance of Butler’s account to show that her narrativisation was infused with a religious purpose and intent.

### **Josephine Butler and *Personal Reminiscences***

Butler’s *Personal Reminiscences* provides an account of her leadership and involvement in the repeal movement. It was first published in 1896, exactly ten years after the repeal of the CD Acts in Britain. Butler decided to write the account because ‘our long years of labour and conflict on behalf of this just cause, ought not to be forgotten’.<sup>23</sup> She wrote to her daughter-in-law, Rhonda Butler, that she had recorded ‘certain events of which I have a personal and clear recollection’.<sup>24</sup>

Butler began her memoirs in 1894 when she was nearly sixty-six, but personal correspondence reveals that she struggled daily to write her version of events.<sup>25</sup> This led her to argue that *Personal Reminiscences* was not a complete account of the crusade's history and she hoped that someone else within the movement would write a more detailed account. Indeed, readers of her account must have been surprised to see that she decided to end the memoir in 1880 and not to include an account of the CD Acts' suspension in 1883 and eventual repeal three years later. Butler's decision to end *Personal Reminiscences* in 1880 implies that difficulties in the writing process had finally forced her to stop, especially when faced with the crucial part of the campaign's history. The extent of activities that she would have had to have written about was simply too much for this reluctant memoirist. Moreover, Helen Mathers has shown that in the years 1895–96 Butler was dogged by cold winters and with her own ill-health and that of her immediate family. There were personal upheavals with her son George sustaining brain damage during an accident, and there was still a campaign to end state-regulated vice in Europe and India.<sup>26</sup> Butler nevertheless believed that her account was necessary because of the press's 'conspiracy of silence' towards the movement. She complained that 'The denial to us of publicity in the Press made it of urgent necessity that we should continually address the public in other ways.'<sup>27</sup>

What makes *Personal Reminiscences* unique is that it is a first-hand account of Butler's repeal work. Butler tended to shield herself from publicity. Stead noted in his character sketch for the *Review of Reviews* the 'narrow limits within which the chronicles of her work are compelled to walk, owing to Mrs Butler's extreme dislike to personal articles about herself'.<sup>28</sup> This dislike was so strong that Butler banned her family from supporting any biography of her after her death. She explained her aversion to being the subject of biography in a letter to her close friend and ally Miss Forsaith. Butler believed that she had written a number of 'auto-biographies', in the form of her biographies of her father, husband and sister, along with her *Personal Reminiscences*. The public already had the sources to know who she was. More interesting still was her conviction that beyond this 'shouting age' was God. Material truth was of no concern to her as long as God knew the truth of a person. It mattered little if Butler 'bent' or 'exaggerated' the truth. What mattered more was that she was at one with God and, more importantly, that he knew her inner thoughts. The only true biographer of Butler, then, was the Lord.

### **Butler's account of the Pontefract by-election in context**

The only way for the CD Acts to be repealed was through an Act of Parliament. As Butler recognised in her pamphlet *Some Thoughts on the Present Aspect of the Crusade against the State Regulation of Vice* (1874), 'the cause needs to become a parliamentary one' because too few MPs had taken up the cause. She continued that 'our tender rights are voted away after midnight by a mere handful of representatives in the House of Commons'.<sup>29</sup> Direct political involvement would not only challenge the Liberal government but also the legitimacy of the Acts.<sup>30</sup> Electioneering therefore provided Butler and her supporters with the means to directly challenge a Liberal government not prepared to repeal the Acts. Their first experience of parliamentary politics, the hotly contested 1870 by-election in Colchester, confirmed to repealers the significance of electoral politics. In Colchester they had successfully challenged Sir Henry Stork, who had zealously administered the CD Acts whilst Governor of Malta. Colchester represented a small victory for the movement. Stork's defeat by 600 votes was perceived to have shaken the Liberal government to set up the Royal Commission on the Administration and Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1871. The Royal Commission, however, did not have the effect that the abolitionists hoped for. Far from repealing the Acts, the Commission reported that there was 'no comparison to be made between prostitutes and the men who consort with them. With the one sex the offence is committed as a matter of gain; with the other it is an irregular indulgence of a natural impulse'.<sup>31</sup> In March 1872 the campaign was further threatened when Henry Austin Bruce, the Home Secretary, introduced a new bill that would extend the CD Acts to the remainder of the country and give the police more power.<sup>32</sup> This attempt was unsuccessful but it put the movement on guard and helps explain why the NA and its female subsidiary, the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA) were keen to participate in the Pontefract by-election.

The Pontefract by-election was the third election that the movement, to use Butler's words, flung 'ourselves into'.<sup>33</sup> A repeal movement, consisting of the NA and the LNA, had been operational for three years prior to the by-election. Its leaders, including Butler, were aware of Pontefract's importance for their campaign. The by-election was triggered when the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, signalled his

intent to bring the former Liberal MP Hugh Childers back into the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Childers had resigned as First Lord of the Admiralty in March 1871, and his re-election as MP was required before he could be given this new government position. Childers's previous role had nevertheless made him infamous amongst repealers. As Elizabeth Wolstenholme reported to Wilson, 'we all know how the Acts were administrated under Admiralty orders whilst he was at the Admiralty ... He is worse to us than Sir Henry Storks'.<sup>34</sup> It was under Childers's office that the Acts had been introduced by the Liberal government in 1864, primarily to protect military personnel. They made repeal an issue for the by-election from the outset.

The NA and the LNA therefore hoped that Pontefract would repeat their Colchester success and once again draw public attention to their campaign. In Pontefract they informed potential Liberal voters not only of Childers's support for the Acts but also of his administration of them when he was First Lord of the Admiralty. Letters between members of the NA and LNA before the by-election continually noted that Childers had enthusiastically maintained and administered the Acts. A success in Pontefract therefore had the potential to further undermine Gladstone's government. As R.F. Martineau acknowledged,

it would be a grand thing if by the opposition of the anti-C.D. Act people and the abstention of voting of the non-cons [non-conformists] the most promising man in the ministry received a lesson to the cabinet ... O that the women had votes.<sup>35</sup>

Yet defeating Childers would be no easy task. He had been the Liberal MP for twelve years by the time of the by-election. Ursula Bright, repealer and wife of the Manchester MP Jacob Bright, believed that Childers was 'a popular & able member of government', meaning that a victory for the repealers would be 'a miracle'.<sup>36</sup> Unlike previous by-elections, the repealers were unable to find a candidate of their own to stand against Childers.<sup>37</sup> Potential candidates were apparently not prepared to declare themselves against someone who had the support of Gladstone and his cabinet. The repealer Elizabeth Wolstenholme admitted that, by not offering an anti-CD Acts candidate, they would be unable to divide the Liberal vote 'without which I fear we shall not win, though I hope that in any case we may greatly damage

Childers'.<sup>38</sup> It was decided that they would instead saturate Pontefract with members of the NA and LNA. With this in mind, Bright sent Butler a telegram on 12 August 1872 urging her to help them remove Childers from his seat.<sup>39</sup> Together with Henry Wilson and his wife Charlotte, Joseph Edmundson, James Stuart, Algernon Challis, Mrs Morris, and two parliamentary agents, Mr Fothergill (for the LNA) and Mr Whitehead (for the NA), Butler descended on this small town, famed for its liquorice and, until now, an insignificant political borough.

Although the repeal movement was unable to find anybody willing to contest the by-election, Childers was opposed by the local Conservative Party, who put up John Horace Savile, referred to in the press as Lord Pollington, and later the fifth Earl of Mexborough. According to Ursula Bright, it was the repealers' success in Colchester that encouraged the Pontefract Conservative Party to contest Childers's re-election. Writing to Henry Wilson, she contended that 'The Tories are traditionally "stupid" but they must be absolute idiots not to fight this election, with the example of Colchester before them.'<sup>40</sup> Unlike in Colchester, however, their direct opponent—Childers—was returned to Parliament with a majority of 80, winning 658 votes to Pollington's 578. The repealers were only too aware that Pollington's weakness as a candidate had undermined their work. Fothergill argued that

There is no doubt that though many of the papers ignored our action at Pontefract, the actual impression left on the public mind is that we damaged Childers very materially, that with a more competent opponent, this danger would have been minimal.<sup>41</sup>

The early stages of the Pontefract by-election are missing from Butler's memoir, but her account reveals much about her leadership of the LNA. The self-manipulation of her image in *Personal Reminiscences* explains why historians have allowed her to dominate in narratives of the repeal movement and of the Pontefract by-election. In fact, much of the back stage work was conducted by Henry Wilson, leader of the Northern Counties League to improve the repeal movement's performance in by-elections. Michel Roper has argued that personal accounts are constructed from the 'cultural imaginaries' of the individual and their perceived place within these imaginaries. Writing therefore becomes 'a space of reflection' providing the publically active narrator with a sense of composure 'to events and experiences

which may be felt to be incoherent and disturbing'.<sup>42</sup> *Personal Reminiscences* makes it seem that Butler was the pivotal figure in the by-election, yet newspaper coverage in fact focussed on the dispute between the two parliamentary candidates and the mechanisms of the Ballot Act. Pollington only appears once in Butler's account. Even Henry Wilson's role is downplayed, despite the fact that Bright's and Wolstenholme's letters were mainly sent between themselves or to Wilson. Butler appears on the periphery of the by-election rather than in the central position suggested in her memoir. This may explain why she struggled to remember many events in the movement's history.

There was also a shift in how key actors of the election were represented in Butler's biography. Childers's involvement in the Acts, for instance, was downplayed. The NA and LNA focused their campaign in Pontefract by personally attacking Childers. Even though, as Paul McHugh has pointed out, Childers had personal doubts about the CD Acts, the repealers made it seem as if he was personally responsible for them in the electioneering.<sup>43</sup> As the *Manchester Examiner and Times* explained:

The election has been marked by one feature which is impossible to ignore, though we refer to it with reluctance and with regret. Mr Childers has had the misfortune to excite in a special degree the [repealers'] hostilities...We rank ourselves among the opponents of the Acts in question, but we cannot assent to the propriety of singling out particular individuals and making them the scapegoat of the sins which Parliament is primarily responsible for.<sup>44</sup>

Childers was 'singled out' by the repealers because he represented the government's complicity in the Acts. A letter to *The Times* reported that Childers's cause was significantly damaged by the presence of the NA and LNA, to the extent that he lost around 100 to 150 votes.<sup>45</sup> This was the true impact of the repeal movement's campaign on the 1872 Pontefract by-election. Although they damaged Childers's vote, decreasing his majority of 200 in 1868 to 80, they did not prevent him from being re-elected.

As we have seen, letters between repealers at the time launched a scathing attack on Childers. When Butler wrote her memoir, however, she was at pains to

argue that ‘Mr. Childers never seemed to me a very devoted adherent to the evil system. His advocacy of it appeared rather to express a confused comprehension of the matter than perverse moral obliquity.’<sup>46</sup> She also adjusted the purpose of the LNA’s election campaign in this later account: ‘We did not hope to secure his rejection as a Parliamentary candidate. All we aimed at was the arousing again of the attention of the Government to a sense of the importance of our demands.’<sup>47</sup> Butler’s shift in tone is due to the fact that between 1872 and 1896 Childers had publicly declared his support of the repeal movement.<sup>48</sup>

Given the nature of autobiographical writing, it is not surprising that Butler’s account differs from press coverage of the time, which, by comparison, was drawn to the workings of the secret ballot or to Childers’s and Pollington’s electoral exchanges. Butler’s account makes no mention of the use of the secret ballot in the by-election, revealing that, by the time she was writing, this method of voting was no longer a novelty for readers. At the time of the election, however, *The Times* readers were provided with a rich account of the new practice, describing the voting booths, the ballot papers, the roles of officials and the polling stations.<sup>49</sup> *The Times* was also keen to provide its readers with a description of ‘rough’ illiterate voters. Newly enfranchised voters, as Keith McClelland and Anna Clark have noted, were supposed to be sober, respectable and financially independent fathers.<sup>50</sup> By describing the character of Knottingley voters as ‘rough and uneducated’, *The Times* journalist was questioning the respectability of these working-class voters and their inclusion in the political process. The *Englishwoman’s Review*, by comparison, maintained that the electoral provisions in Pontefract were ‘curious’ and unfair. Writing for an emerging group of emancipated middle-class women, they argued that the inclusion of ignorant and uneducated male voters under the Secret Ballot Act was at the expense of ‘thousands of educated women [who] are declared incapable of exercising a vote simply because they are women’.<sup>51</sup> The inclusion of illiterate voters demonstrated to the writers of the *Englishwoman’s Review* that it was their gender identity which excluded them from political citizenship.<sup>52</sup> The work of the repeal movement, however, was not mentioned in this periodical, suggesting that the involvement of female repealers—or more broadly the repeal movement—was controversial. This was a point that was reinforced by the *Saturday Review*, who reported that Pontefract was descended on by those ‘dreadful women who appear on the eve of every election to foul the ears and minds of simple people with disquisitions on the Contagious

Diseases Act flitted through Pontefract, and did not disappear without some hooting'.<sup>53</sup>

Working-class men played a different function in Butler's *Personal Reminiscences*. Repealers, including Butler, continually noted the support of the working man for their cause. For example, one working man, Algernon Challis, walked twenty-five miles from Leeds to Pontefract to help those already in Pontefract on the night before election day. As we will see below, according to Butler the rough elements of the by-election were from the middle classes and outsiders. Her account of working men as allies therefore enabled her to strengthen the role and purpose of the movement: middle-class repealers were uniting with working-class fathers. The NA and LNA would have achieved greater support, which in turn would have weakened Childers's position further, if they had not been so public in their denunciation of the Liberals. Thomas Morgan, a Pontefract resident, made a similar point to Wilson when he claimed in a letter that 'It was your indiscretion not your principle [that] did you harm'.<sup>54</sup>

Butler's earlier suggestion that there was a conspiracy in the British press not to represent the work of the repeal movement was evident in coverage of the by-election.<sup>55</sup> Matthew Cragoe has argued that women received limited newspaper coverage in the Victorian press.<sup>56</sup> Some papers, such as the *Leeds Mercury* and those based in Pontefract, ignored repealer activities altogether. This does not mean that the repealers were not covered. Indeed, they achieved more than other pressure groups present at the by-election. Yet, repealers did not understand that journalists were not there to cover their work but rather the workings of the secret ballot and the by-election itself. To their dismay, repealers were rarely reported in the manner that they would have approved, and their involvement in the by-election was often criticised by the press. In particular, journalists were shocked by the public role of female abolitionists. The *Saturday Review*, for instance, described them as 'indecent Maenads'.<sup>57</sup> In ancient Greece, Maenads (translated as 'mad-ones') were a group of women who worshipped Dionysus, the god of wine, madness and ecstasy. They were known for being excitable and emotional, demonstrated by their uncontrollable sexual behaviour, loss of self-control, dancing and excessive drinking. Yopie Prins has argued that 'Maenadism appealed powerfully to the imagination of many Victorians, caught up as they were in heated debates about "The Woman's Question." Greek maenads seemed the very embodiment of feminine rebellion, [and] unruly

sexuality.<sup>58</sup> The *Saturday Review* was one of the LNA's harshest critics during the by-election.

The singling out of female repealers by newspapers raises important questions about women's involvement in politics during this period. The work of the LNA was arguably a defining moment in British pressure politics. Previously, women had engaged in the more socially acceptable aspects of political movements, which included petitioning, boycotting specific food stuffs, bazaars, drawing-room meetings and published writings.<sup>59</sup> Influenced by the anti-slavery movement and anti-Corn Law League, the LNA sought to change opinions and transform social attitudes. It did this by organising national and local meetings, running local clubs and campaigning. Rather than merging into the background, female repealers played a central role, none more so than Butler, who developed an extensive programme of public speaking and writing. At a micro level, the Pontefract by-election reveals some of the 'cultural pressures' (as Gleadle has put it) that female repealers had to contend with. Gleadle argues that during the nineteenth century middle-class women were 'borderline citizens' whose

status as political actors, as well as their own political subjectivities, were often fragile and contingent. They might be conceptualized (and feel) integral to the political process at one moment—but this could quickly evaporate in the face of other cultural pressures.<sup>60</sup>

Women's relationship to the political sphere was usually negotiated by familial connections and authority within a parochial sphere.

In his nomination speech, Childers argued that 'strangers' had descended onto Pontefract and were distributing handbills to inhabitants. His use of the word 'strangers' indicates the complex and controversial relationship that Butler, Charlotte Wilson and Mrs Morris had with public electoral politics. Female repealers were not controversial when they were working within their own communities. For instance, Butler's work amongst the poor women of Liverpool after the death of her daughter, Eva, did not provoke outrage because she was engaging in an appropriate sphere of work for middle-class women: her own locality. However, the controversy that her electioneering evoked mirrored that which surrounded Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire's campaign in Westminster for Charles Fox.<sup>61</sup> Yet Butler's gender did not

prevent her from involving herself in a cause that she believed in. Personal experience and her religious identity played a significant role in this.<sup>62</sup> She had first-hand experience of extra-parliamentary pressure from a young age, having witnessed her father addressing electoral crowds and encouraging them to petition Parliament on anti-slavery, the Reform Bill and the anti-Corn Law movement.<sup>63</sup> Letters from her cousin Charles Grey, later Earl Grey, informed the Grey family of any political news in London.<sup>64</sup> Reaction towards Butler's electioneering might have been different had she been campaigning in Northumberland, an area with which her family were associated. The *North of England Review*, for instance, noted in 1876 that the 'old Northern spirit of independence' dwelt within Butler. They continued: 'There is not a name more deserving of a place among the worthies of Northumberland than that of Josephine Butler.'<sup>65</sup>

Childers's reference to 'strangers' was not exclusively confined to female repealers, however. It was also directed towards Henry Wilson and the Northern Counties League's election agent, revealing both how important local status was in local politics and also the controversial nature of their movement. Public meetings were important in allowing voters and non-voters the chance to disseminate ideas and opinions in a local political landscape. The repeal movement had been given permission by the Mayor of Pontefract to use nearby Knottingley Town Hall (part of the constituency) on 10 August, on the condition that they vacated it before Childers used it for an electoral address at 9 p.m.<sup>66</sup> Before the first meeting started, repealers discovered from the town crier that Childers and his supporters had double-crossed them and decided to speak from the windows of the Buck Inn in Knottingley at the same time as their meeting. Concerned that no-one was likely to attend their meeting, Henry Wilson went to join the crowd outside the Buck Inn. Female agitators watched the scene unfold from a nearby window. Their decision to stand apart from electors was significant, reflecting the extent to which gender defined the forms of public political participation in this period.<sup>67</sup> Wilson, as a man, was able to position himself amongst the crowd.

For repealers outside Pontefract, the account of this meeting was related in the movement's paper, *The Shield*, and later 'cut-and-pasted' into Butler's *Personal Reminiscences*. To the repealers' distress, Childers started his speech by attacking Pollington's character rather than addressing their campaign. He did, however, move on to the topic of the CD Acts, but only because local working-class women heckled

him. According to the repealers, he revealed himself to be entirely ignorant of their concerns by arguing that the Acts were desirous because of the prevalence of venereal disease amongst soldiers, contending that one in three soldiers and sailors were infected.<sup>68</sup> After this intervention by Pontefract's women, Childers attempted to drop the subject of the CD Acts, stating that he did not want to 'cause a blush on one female present', which Butler later noted in her memoir were 'customary excuses concerning the delicacy of the subject'.<sup>69</sup> *The Shield* reported that the effect of this attempt to move the meeting on was an excitable response from the working-class men in the crowd. Some audience members who felt that this was not a topic to be discussed in public encouraged Childers to 'shut up' and shouted 'enough of that nonsense'.<sup>70</sup> According to *The Shield*, working-class men, on the other hand, were provoked to challenge Childers's claims about the CD Acts. Wilson, believing that he had the audience's sympathy, asked Childers if he could address the audience on the matter again. A supporter of Childers, however, responded 'No! you are not an elector, you are not wanted!'<sup>71</sup> This led to a group of working-class men surrounding Wilson to demonstrate their support of his challenge, provoking Childers's local party chairman to attempt to hit Wilson with an umbrella. In the end, a shout from the crowd encouraged listeners to set off at once for the Town Hall to attend the meeting of the repealers, where Butler then addressed an audience which at first had been loud and boisterous but by the end was captivated.<sup>72</sup>

### **The hayloft incident and Butler's use of religious narrative**

Butler's *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* therefore provides historians with an account of the Pontefract by-election from within the movement. The centrepiece of her account is an LNA meeting which was violently disrupted. Few newspapers mentioned this incident at the time and even *The Shield* made only passing reference to the skirmish. Butler recalled that the repealers had difficulty securing a meeting place after the Knottingley Town Hall event and that James Stuart was forced to schedule the use of a hayloft on the outskirts of Pontefract. When he arrived to prepare for the meeting he found that the floor was strewn with cayenne pepper, which was 'unpleasant for eyes and throat'.<sup>73</sup> The meeting started with prayer followed by addresses from Butler and Charlotte Wilson. They then noticed the smell of burning hay and, according to Butler, were set upon by a group of men she

believed to be a mixture of gentlemen, brothel-keepers and roughs. She was quick to point out that they were not honest working-class men or 'Yorkshire people'. 'To our horror,' she remembers,

Looking down the room to the trapdoor entrance, we saw appearing head after head of men with countenances of fury; man after man came in, until they crowded the place. There was no possible exit for us, the windows being too high above the ground, and we women gathered into one end of the room like a flock of sheep surrounded by wolves.<sup>74</sup>

According to Butler, the men used profanities and violence. The attackers apparently objected, in particular, to the 'new teaching and revolt of women'.<sup>75</sup>

Butler stood shoulder to shoulder with Charlotte Wilson. Although they were exposed to the angry men's violence, 'it seemed all the time as if some strong angel were present; for when these men's hands were literally upon us, they were held back by an unseen power'. Then a young working-woman, 'strong, stalwart, with bare muscular arms', dashed forward and ran to find James Stuart. Once she had found him, she proclaimed 'Come! Run! They are killing the ladies.' When he arrived, the attackers picked him up and attempted to throw him out of the window. However, a number of women, including Wilson and Butler, prevented this from happening by standing between the window and the attackers. While this was going on, the windows of the hayloft were broken. According to Butler's account, all of this was ignored by the Metropolitan policemen who had arrived. Feeling desperate, Wilson and Butler whispered to one another, 'Let us ask God to help us, and then make a rush for the entrance.' They then ran over to the trapdoor, where they were able to escape. Once free, they went to their hotel, where they were able to hold a 'magnificent meeting'.<sup>76</sup>

Pontefract residents were, according to Butler, horrified by the incident. Yet neither the *Pontefract Advertiser* nor the *Pontefract Telegraph* mentioned it. It is difficult to verify many of these events from a local viewpoint. James Stuart's autobiography, for instance, makes no mention of the skirmish. The question is, why were these dramatic events not a central part of the newspaper coverage of the by-election? And why are they not mentioned in letters written by repealers? Butler certainly exaggerated aspects of the event. *The Shield* mentioned in its 17 August

edition that Butler's meeting was 'attacked and disgracefully dispersed by a number of roughs'; this was followed up a week later by a letter written by Henry Wilson to the *Sheffield Mercury*.<sup>77</sup> Wilson was frustrated by the negative coverage that the repeal movement had earned in his local paper. Like the *Saturday Review*, the *Sheffield Mercury* had argued that the repealers' behaviour was shocking, especially their distribution of papers and handbills. Wilson questioned their objectivity by arguing that they had 'mislead on more than one occasion ... but more serious [was] the omission of Mrs. Butler's meeting which was broken into by Childers's roughs in a violent and disgraceful manner'.<sup>78</sup>

Although Wilson acknowledged the incident, his account differs markedly from Butler's later reminiscences, namely regarding those who were involved in the sabotage and attack on the hayloft. In Butler's narrative, the men were outsiders frustrated with the revolt of women. By contrast, Wilson suggested that they were roughs attached to Childers's campaign. A list drawn up by Fothergill confirmed Wilson's claims rather than Butler's. 'Childers's roughs', according to Helen Rogers, included publicans, the son of the former Member of Parliament, traders, artisans and the keeper of the Primitive Methodist Chapel.<sup>79</sup> By transposing the identities of the men and creating a personal view of the incident, Butler was able to provide a conventional melodramatic narrative, which, using the words of Patrick Joyce, 'personalised good and evil, interrogating and corroborating the reign of the moral absolute'.<sup>80</sup> She therefore recollected the Pontefract by-election not as a battle between frustrated locals and repealers but as a moral crusade that revealed the malevolent structure of vice. This partly explains why Wilson's letter did not convey nearly the same drama as Butler's account. Wilson made no suggestion that the women's lives were in as grave danger, as Butler perceived them to be. Whilst there is mention of the use of cayenne pepper, there was no acknowledgement of the burning bundles of hay that makes Butler's narrative all the more urgent. It is hard to believe that Wilson would ignore such an important part of the story considering the prominent role of his wife, Charlotte, in the proceedings. It is similarly difficult to believe that *The Shield* would not have made a bigger issue of the potential death of two of their most important repealers.

The role of cayenne pepper in Butler's account of the hayloft incident helps us to appreciate the ways in which she manipulated events to fit her own melodramatic narrative. Butler did not lie about the use of cayenne pepper in the barn; her story is

independently corroborated by the *Saturday Review*. However, she and the *Saturday Review* differed on the sequence of events surrounding the use of the pepper. While both perceived its use as a weapon against Butler and her meeting, Butler's detailed description places the cayenne pepper at the beginning of the episode,<sup>81</sup> whereas *The Saturday Review* claimed that it was used at the end of the meeting. The women's meeting, the *Review* declared, 'was brought to a premature conclusion by the sprinkling of cayenne pepper in large quantities and the intrusion into the room of a body of electors'.<sup>82</sup> To understand why Butler set the use of the cayenne pepper at the beginning of her narrative, we need to consider its figurative significance for her. While Butler's story proclaims that the presence of cayenne pepper did not prevent the women from speaking because of its early discovery, the *Saturday Review's* version argues that the meeting was abruptly ended by its introduction, rendering the women unable to speak, reducing them to delicate women, with the uncontrollable tears and coughing which would have ensued. Yet, according to Butler's narrative, the physical side effects, which were 'unpleasant for eyes and throat', did not stop her planned meeting, only increasing the repealers' determination. In this version, the cayenne pepper reveals the strength of womankind: no manly power could prevent Butler and her associates from speaking. If they were to be stopped, it would only be by God himself, not by earthly agents who had entered the hayloft or set fire to the hay below.

Religion also played an important role in Butler's narrativisation of the Pontefract by-election.<sup>83</sup> Christianity was central to how Butler perceived her place in society. Helen Mathers and Lisa Nolland have examined the significance of Evangelical Christianity in her work, whilst Barbara Caine has argued that Butler's liberalism enabled her to 'fight against the increased encroachment of the government in people's personal lives, whilst stressing the moral and religious impetus of her work and the movement more broadly'.<sup>84</sup> Butler believed that the revolt of women was both a moral and religious question:

The cry of women crushed under the yoke of legalised vice is not the cry of a statistician or a medical expert; it is simply a cry of pain, a cry for justice and for a return to God's laws in place of these brutally impure laws invented and imposed by man.<sup>85</sup>

She contended that the present age was one where men had suppressed their religious selves, arguments that also encouraged a number of religious men and women, especially of the Non-conformist persuasion, to crusade against the Liberal government for the repeal of these ‘Satanic Acts’.<sup>86</sup> Butler’s use of biblical imagery in *Personal Reminiscences* therefore allowed her to write a spiritual memoir. The spiritual autobiography, argues Kabi Hartman, ‘gives rise to copious use of extended metaphors and allegories: life is a pilgrimage or a battle’, whilst the spiritual autobiographer sees him- or herself as ‘a pilgrim, wayfarer, or warrior’.<sup>87</sup> This is most clearly evident in the full title of Butler’s autobiographical publication, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*. The term ‘crusade’ not only harked back to the religious campaigns of earlier Christians but also implied that she was a determined campaigner of a movement that would last over twenty-five years.

In *The Shield*’s initial version, religious imagery is missing. It was a straightforward account of the female repealers’ experiences in the hayloft and of the by-election. Butler’s later account uses metaphors and imagery to emphasise God’s participation in the repeal movement. The women are protected from the autocratic power of men by something more divine. Butler informed her reader that to reach the hayloft, the women had to go up a ladder. Hence they are placed nearer to God, whilst the image of the burning bundles of hay suggests the hellish nature of earth. The burning bundles of hay should also be placed within Butler’s personal theology. In her book *The Morning Cometh*, she argued that the use of fire in the Bible is not suggestive of a hellish world. Rather, it is indicative, according to her, of God. For ‘Fire [is] not a destroyer but [a] revelation’. Here she asked the reader to turn to Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:1–4:17).<sup>88</sup> Understood through secular eyes, Butler’s narrative of the Pontefract election alludes to the dangers that women faced within the repeal movement. Yet it is also evident that the story had Christian implications. It was a narrative that not only placed God as part of the repeal movement but allowed Butler to construct and reinforce a saintly agency for herself as the leader of the LNA.<sup>89</sup>

Butler was therefore asserting that truth belonged to the repeal movement. Her conceptualisation of ‘truth’ nonetheless requires some contextualisation. Seth Koven has argued that evangelicals such as Dr Barnardo were able to manipulate earthly fact by appealing to a divine reality. It did not matter if Barnardo’s photographic images of ragged children or his journalistic stories of midnight rambles around the back

alleys of East London in search of homeless children were figments of his imagination, as long as they embodied a divine reality and truth. Koven contends that, for nineteenth-century evangelicals, ‘truth consisted of that which could lead a person to God’s saving grace ... For evangelicals, “Truth” could be quite different from “fact” because facts, not animated by God’s love, in themselves lacked the power to save.’<sup>90</sup> This may help to explain why Butler preferred to write a narrative of the Pontefract election that underscored the interplay of human evil and sinfulness with divine omnipotence. Her ability to emphasise God’s presence in the hayloft allowed her to stress the idea that the repeal movement was engaged in a ‘holy rebellion’ against the materialism of the Victorian era.<sup>91</sup> It mattered little to her if she was stretching the truth.<sup>92</sup> All that concerned her was the saving of souls and living her life according to God. Indeed, in her repeal magazine *The Storm-Bell*, Butler argued that truth was ‘spiritual’ and ‘moral’.<sup>93</sup> She wrote, ‘A truth so set forth possesses in its degree the nature of the “Sword of the Spirit,” which is “quick and powerful,” and a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”’<sup>94</sup> She saw the establishment of the CD Acts and their supporters as misconstruing holy truth for ‘the mocking laugh of a demon’.<sup>95</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Josephine Butler’s reminiscences of the Pontefract by-election merge two earlier versions of the campaign within a more explicitly religious framework. Newspaper accounts either struggled to accept the public presence of the repeal movement and its female agitators or overlooked the movement’s role entirely. For the repealers, this confirmed press silence over the movement’s activities. Yet Butler’s narrative does not straightforwardly rectify the press’s omissions or prejudices. Her account of the Pontefract by-election demonstrates the significance of her religious faith and the important—albeit controversial—work she undertook because of her faith. Christianity was central to how she perceived her place in society. This article has argued that religious metaphors and imaginary adorned Butler’s account of the by-election. Her faith allowed her to transgress from the private sphere into the public and to envisage her role within society. Moreover, the Pontefract by-election illustrates how Butler placed God at the centre of the repeal movement. She presented the by-election as a pulsating clash between the forces of good and evil. Central to her

narrative was an understanding of spiritual truth, necessitating an analysis which looks beyond material truth. Her account was more than a distortion or the misrepresentations of an old woman. It was a reminder to future generations of the battle that Butler and others had undertaken for fallen women and society more broadly.

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine Butler to Josephine, 29 February 189?, Women's Library Special Collection LSE (hereafter WL) 3JBL/34/10. The image appears in Jane Jordan (2001) *Josephine Butler* (London: John Murray).

<sup>2</sup> Josephine E. Butler (1898) *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*, 2nd edn (London: Horace Marshall). For an account of Butler's work, see Jenny Uglow (1983) *Josephine Butler: from sympathy to theory*, in Dale Spender (Ed.) *Feminist Theorists: three centuries of women's intellectual traditions* (London: The Women's Press), pp. 146–164; Margaret Forster (1986) *Significant Sisters: the grassroots of active feminism* (London: Vintage), pp. 168–202. For additional readings, see notes 3, 6–12 below.

<sup>3</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 44. For histories of the campaign, see Judith R. Walkowitz (1980) *Prostitution and Victorian Society: women, class and the state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Judith R. Walkowitz (1992) *City of Dreadful Delight: narratives of sexual dangers in late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); Glen Petrie (1971) *A Singular Iniquity: the campaigns of Josephine Butler* (London: Macmillan); Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (London: Croom Helm, 1980). Several articles discuss Butler's work in Europe including essays in (2008) *Josephine Butler's Campaigns in International Perspective (1875–1959)*, *Gender, Religion and Politics*, 17 (special issue), pp. 149–298. For her work in India, see Ellen Bayuk, (2015) *Sexual Politics in England and India: the case of prostitution*, in Maria Cristina Alcade, Susan Bordo and Ellen Rosenman (Eds), *Provocations: a transnational reader in the history of feminist thought* (Berkeley: University of California), pp. 77–83.

<sup>4</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, pp. 1–5.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Summers (1999) *The Constitution Violated: the female body and the female subject in the campaigns of Josephine Butler*, *History Workshop Journal*, 48, pp. 1–15.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'auto/biographical I' comes from Liz Stanley (1982) *The Auto/biographical I: the theory and practice of feminist auto/biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press). Butler wrote several auto/biographies, including (1869) *Memoir of John Grey of Dilston* (Edinburgh: Edmondson & Douglas); (1892) *Recollections of George Butler* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith); (1894) *Catharine of Sienna: a biography* (London: Horace Marshall and Son). For a discussion of these biographies, see Pat Starkey (2006) *Saints, Virgins and Family Members: exemplary biographies*, in Jenny Dagers and Diana Neal (Eds) *Sex, Gender and Religion: Josephine Butler revisited* (New York: Peter Lang), pp. 135–154; Ann Summers (2000) *Female Lives, Moral States: women, religion and public life in Britain, 1800–1930* (Newbury: Threshold); Eileen Yeo (1998) *Protestant feminists and Catholic saints in Victorian Britain*, in Eileen Yeo, *Radical femininity: women's self-representation in the public sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 127–148.

<sup>7</sup> Jenny Dagers and Diana Neal (2006) *Introduction*, in Dagers and Neal (Eds) *Sex, Gender and Religion*, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Lucy Johnson and George Johnson (1911) *Josephine E. Butler: an autobiographical memoir* (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith), p. v.

<sup>9</sup> Millicent G. Fawcett and E.M. Turner (1927) *Josephine Butler: her work and principle and their meaning for the twentieth century* (London: Association for Moral and Social Hygiene), pp. 81–85.

<sup>10</sup> E. Moberley Bell (1962) *Josephine Butler: flame of fire* (London: Constable), pp. 105–107; Joseph Williamson (1977) *Josephine Butler: the forgotten saint* (Leighton Buzzard: The Faith Press), pp. 41–45.

<sup>11</sup> Jordan, *Josephine Butler*.

<sup>12</sup> Helen Mathers (2014) *Patron Saint of Prostitutes: Josephine Butler and a Victorian scandal* (Stroud: The History Press), pp. 13–14.

<sup>13</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 16 August 1872, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> A.O.J. Cockshut (1984) *The Art of Autobiography in 19th and 20th Century England*. (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 236.

<sup>15</sup> Kerri Allen (1998) *Representation and Self-representation: Hannah Whitall Smith as family woman and religious guide*, *Women's History Review*, 7, pp. 227–239.

- <sup>16</sup> Alison Twells (2012) ‘The innate yearnings of our souls’: subjectivity, religiosity and outward testimony in Mary Howitt’s *Autobiography* (1889), *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17, pp. 309–311.
- <sup>17</sup> Helen Rogers (2000) *Women and the People: authority, authorship and the radical tradition in nineteenth-century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 3–5, 212–219.
- <sup>18</sup> Rohan McWilliam (2000) Melodrama and the Historians, *Radical History Review*, 78, p. 60.
- <sup>19</sup> Pamela J. Walker (2004) ‘The Conversion of Rebecca Jarrett’, *History Workshop Journal*, 58, pp. 246–258.
- <sup>20</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 91.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90.
- <sup>22</sup> Peter Brooks (1976) *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess* (London, Yale University Press).
- <sup>23</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. v.
- <sup>24</sup> Josephine Butler to Rhoda Butler, 17 July [1896], WL 3JBL/36/02.
- <sup>25</sup> See Josephine Butler to ‘Dear Friends’ [the Miss Priestmans], 5 November 1894, WL 3JBL/33/46.
- <sup>26</sup> Mathers, *Patron Saint*, pp. 176–178.
- <sup>27</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 20.
- <sup>28</sup> William Stead (1896) Character Sketch: Josephine Butler, *Review of Reviews*, p. 300.
- <sup>29</sup> Josephine E. Butler (1874), *Some Thoughts on the Present Aspect of the Crusade against the State Regulation of Vice* (Liverpool: T. Brakell), pp. 4–6.
- <sup>30</sup> Much of this work was modelled on political traditions established by early nineteenth-century pressure groups such as the anti-slavery movement and the anti-Corn League. Claire Midgley (1992) *Women against Slavery: the British campaigns, 1780–1870* (London: Routledge); Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (2000) (Eds), *Women and British Politics, 1760–1860: the power of the petticoat* (Basingstoke: Macmillan).
- <sup>31</sup> *Parliamentary Papers* (1871) 29, c.408, ‘Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration and Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1868–69’.
- <sup>32</sup> Jordon, *Josephine Butler*, pp. 133–136.
- <sup>33</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 25; Rogers, *Women and the People*, pp. 197–240; McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*; M.J.D. Roberts (1995) Feminism and the State in Victorian England, *Historical Journal*, 38, pp. 85–110.
- <sup>34</sup> Miss E. Wolstenholme to Mr H.J. Wilson, 8 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/06.
- <sup>35</sup> R.F. Martineau to Mr H.J. Wilson, 10 October 1872, WL 3JBL/05/13.
- <sup>36</sup> Ursula Bright to Mr H.J. Wilson, 11 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/13.
- <sup>37</sup> See Miss E. Wolstenholme to Mr H.J. Wilson, 9 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/07; Ursula Bright to Mr H.J. Wilson, 11 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/13; Ursula Bright to unnamed women, 11 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/14.
- <sup>38</sup> Miss E. Wolstenholme to Mr H.J. Wilson, 12 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/15.
- <sup>39</sup> Telegram from Mrs Ursula Bright to Mr H.J. Wilson, 12 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/16.
- <sup>40</sup> Mrs Ursula Bright to Mr H.J. Wilson, 11 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/13.
- <sup>41</sup> Samuel Fothergill to Henry Wilson, 21 August 1872, WL 3JBL/05/14.
- <sup>42</sup> Michael Roper (2001) Splitting in Unsent Letters: writing as a social practice and a psychological practice, *Social History*, 26, pp. 319–320.
- <sup>43</sup> McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*, p. 142.
- <sup>44</sup> *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 14 August 1872, p. 5.
- <sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 17 August 1872, p. 5.
- <sup>46</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 46.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> See, for instance, (1875) *The Substitutes Proposed by the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers, M.P.: Manifesto of the Associations Formed to Secure the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts Called Forth by Debate in the House of Common on 23rd June, 1875, on Sir Harcourt Johnstone’s Bill for the Repeal of the Acts* (London: Tweedie & Co.), pp. 1–11.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Times*, 16 August 1872, p. 3.
- <sup>50</sup> Keith McClelland (2000) England’s Greatness: the working man, in Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland and Jane Rendall (Eds) *Defining the Victorian Nation: class, race, gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 71–118; Anna Clark (1992) The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: gender, language, and class in the 1830s and 1840s, *Journal of British Studies*, 31, pp. 62–88.
- <sup>51</sup> *Englishwoman’s Review*, 1 October 1872, pp. 281–282.

- <sup>52</sup> See also Janet Horowitz Murray (1985), Class vs. Gender Identification in the *Englishwoman's Review* of the 1880s, *Victorian Periodical Review*, 18, pp. 138–142. At this time, women were formally excluded from voting by the Reform Act of 1832. Towards the end of the 1860s, the women's movement was campaigning around the issue of female enfranchisement. See Jane Rendall (2000) The Citizenship of Women and the Reform Act of 1867, in Hall, McClelland and Rendall (Eds) *Defining the Victorian Nation*, pp. 119–179.
- <sup>53</sup> *Saturday Review*, 24 August 1872, p. 248.
- <sup>54</sup> Thomas Morgan to Unnamed [Wilson], 16 August 1872, WL.
- <sup>55</sup> McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*, p. 136.
- <sup>56</sup> Matthew Cragoe (2000) 'Jenny rules the roost': women and electoral politics, 1832–68, in Gleadle and Richardson (Eds), *Women in British Politics*, pp. 153–168.
- <sup>57</sup> *Saturday Review*, 17 August 1872, p. 199.
- <sup>58</sup> Yopie Prins (1999) Greek Maenads, Victorian Spinsters, in Richard Dellamora (Ed.), *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 49.
- <sup>59</sup> See essays in Gleadle and Richardson (Eds), *Women in British Politics*; Simon Morgan (2004) 'A sort of land debatable': female influence, civic virtue and middle-class identity, c.1830–c.1860, *Women's History Review*, 13, pp. 183–209.
- <sup>60</sup> Katherine Gleadle (2009) *Borderline Citizens: women, gender and political culture in Britain, 1815–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 2.
- <sup>61</sup> Amanda Foreman (1998) *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Modern Library).
- <sup>62</sup> Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 26.
- <sup>63</sup> Josephine Butler (1869) *Memoir of John Grey of Dilston* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas), p. 88.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- <sup>65</sup> *North of England Review*, 20 September 1876, p. 124.
- <sup>66</sup> A Copy of the Request to the Mayor of Pontefract that he will permit the use of the Town Hall for a public meeting for considering "C.D.As" on Saturday August 10th 1872 can be found in WL, 3JBL/05/09.
- <sup>67</sup> Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 179.
- <sup>68</sup> *The Times*, 14 August 1872, p. 5.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*; Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 47.
- <sup>70</sup> *The Shield*, 17 August 1872, p. 1043.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1043–1044.
- <sup>73</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 48.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48–51.
- <sup>77</sup> *The Shield*, nos. 126 and 127.
- <sup>78</sup> Mr Wilson to the Editor, *Sheffield Mercury*, 16 August 1872, p.5.
- <sup>79</sup> Rogers, *Women and the People*, p. 218.
- <sup>80</sup> Patrick Joyce (1994) *Democratic Subjects: The self and the social in nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 223. See also Helen Rogers (2000) 'What right have women to interfere with politics?': the address of the Female Political Union of Birmingham to the Women of England (1838), in T. G. Ashplant and Gerry Symth (Eds), *Explorations in Cultural History* (London: Pluto Press), pp. 65–100.
- <sup>81</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 48.
- <sup>82</sup> *Saturday Review*, 24 August 1872, p. 247.
- <sup>83</sup> A number of historians have explored the role of religion in Josephine Butler's life and thinking. See Helen Mathers (2002) Evangelicalism and feminism: Josephine Butler, 1828–1906, in Sue Morgan, (Ed.), *Women, Religion and Feminism in Britain, 1750–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 123–137; Lucretia A. Flammang (1998) 'And your sons and daughters will prophesy': the voice and vision of Josephine Butler, in Julie Melnyk (Ed.) *Women's Theology in Nineteenth-century Britain: transfiguring the faith of their fathers* (New York: Garland), pp. 151–164.
- <sup>84</sup> Barbara Caine (2002) *English Feminism, 1790–1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 103.
- <sup>85</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 188.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- <sup>87</sup> Kabi Hartman (2003) 'What made me a suffragette': the New Woman and the new conversion narrative, *Women's History Review*, 12, p. 37.

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<sup>88</sup> Philalethes (Josephine Butler) (1903) *The Morning Cometh: a letter to my children* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: T. M Grierson), p. 25.

<sup>89</sup> Summers, *Female lives, moral states*; Yeo, Protestant feminists and Catholic saints.

<sup>90</sup> Seth Koven (1997) Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions': photography, sexuality and the ragged child in Victorian London, *Radical History Review*, 69, p. 13.

<sup>91</sup> See Josephine Butler (1876) *The Hour before Dawn: an appeal to men* (London).

<sup>92</sup> Jane Jordan, 'Trophies of the Saviour': Josephine Butler's biographical sketches of prostitutes, in Daggars and Neal (Eds) *Sex, Gender and Religion*, pp. 21–36.

<sup>93</sup> *The Storm-Bell*, 7, (1898), p. 73.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Josephine Butler to Fredric Harrison, 9 May 1868, quoted in Jane Jordan and Ingrid Sharpe (2003) (Eds) *Josephine Butler and the Prostitute Campaigns: disease of the body politic volume 1: the moral reclaimability of prostitutes* (London: Routledge), p. 19.