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selves?" As in the 1790s, the boycott was an inherently radicalizing tactic, because its effectiveness depended on everyone's participating: men and women, rich and poor. Heyrick hoped that the poor, in particular, would rally to the cause, because they "have themselves tasted of the cup of adversity." Inspired by her, women's societies put out boycott pamphlets and began compiling a national list of everyone who pledged to abstain from West Indian sugar.

Although virtually all the prominent male opponents of slavery were still talking about varieties of gradualism—emancipating the slaves in thirty years or raising money to buy women out of slavery—Heyrick would have none of it. In parliamentary elections in 1826 she called for people to vote only for candidates who supported freeing the slaves *now*. Other women agreed, and that year the women's society in Sheffield, ignoring the gradualist men's committee in the same town, became the first antislavery group in Britain to demand immediate emancipation. A few years later, it repeated its call for freedom "without reserve, without limitation, without delay." "Men may propose only *gradually* to abolish the worst of crimes," a woman in Wiltshire wrote, "and only mitigate the most cruel bondage, but why should *we* countenance such enormities? . . . We must not talk of *gradually* abolishing murder, licentiousness, cruelty, tyranny . . . *I trust no Ladies' Association will ever be found with such words attached to it.*"

Women's groups canvassed communities house to house, over four years visiting more than 80 percent of the homes in Birmingham, for instance. One woman, Sophia Sturge, personally called on three thousand households. The women reworked Josiah Wedgwood's famous image; now the legend read "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?" The woman slave in chains was still kneeling and imploring, however. In celebrating the slave rebels who were not on their knees, Elizabeth Heyrick was virtually alone.

Another woman activist, Lucy Townsend, was an Evangelical Anglican from Birmingham who had been inspired as a girl by Clarkson; she wrote to him for advice on forming a women's antislavery society. In reply, Clarkson cautiously suggested that Townsend call her new group the "Female Society for ameliorating the condition of Female Slaves in the British Colonies, but with a view ultimately to their final