

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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## Contents :

Leading Articles by the Editor.  
Reply of Mr. Disraeli to the Memorial.  
Parliamentary Intelligence :—  
Household Franchise (Counties).  
Municipal Franchise (Ireland).

Debate on the Women's Disabilities Bill.  
Summary of Petitions.  
Election Intelligence :—  
Bath, Gloucester, Scarborough, Richmond.  
Correspondence.

Obituary : John Stuart Mill.  
Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage :—  
Offer of Two Hundred Guineas; Treasurer's Report  
for May.  
Central Committee :—Donations and Subscriptions.

THERE are many indications since the division in the House of Commons on the Women's Disabilities Bill, that the question has made a real and substantial advance. The division might be regarded as a critical one. Both the supporters and opponents of the measure looked to the result as a crucial test whether the opinion of the House was tending for or against the proposal. The majority against the Bill had slightly increased from 1871 to 1872. Had that increase been maintained in 1873, it would have been reasonable to conclude that the sense of the House was distinctly against the claim, and was being manifested more clearly as the demand was growing more serious and earnest. The opponents of the measure therefore made a most determined effort to administer a crushing defeat to the Bill. An urgent whip was sent out by the enemy, requesting members to vote against it; and so sanguine were they as to the result, that one of the leaders of the opposition to the Bill told one of the friends, during the debate, that on the division there would be twenty more votes against the Bill, and ten fewer in its favour, than last year. How this confident boast was falsified we all know.

The reply of Mr. DISRAELI to the Memorial signed by upwards of eleven thousand women is a noteworthy and weighty expression of opinion of the highest significance to the progress of the cause. Mr. DISRAELI has been Prime Minister once, and may be again, how soon no one can foresee. He is, therefore, a statesman holding the highest rank known to English politics, and one whose utterances on any great question of the day may be taken to express not simply his own private sentiments on an abstract proposition, but those principles which he regards as of practical importance, and which he desires to see adopted by the Legislature. We have no doubt that this expression of careful and matured opinion from the leader of the Conservative party will have the effect of hastening the completion of the measure.

The question is not to be considered at rest, even for

the present session. A Bill is before the House awaiting a second reading, introduced by Mr. TREVELYAN, member for the Border Burghs, for the extension of the household franchise qualification to counties "and otherwise to amend the laws relating to the representation of the people." The professed object of this Bill is to give votes to agricultural labourers. Mr. JACOB BRIGHT has placed on the notice paper of the House of Commons an amendment in committee on this Bill, the effect of which would be to give the franchise in counties to women householders as well as to agricultural labourer householders. It is scarcely probable that the amendment will be discussed this session, since the understanding seems to be that the County Franchise Bill will not be pressed further than the second reading, which takes place late in July, but that next session it will be introduced early, possibly as a Government Bill. Mr. JACOB BRIGHT'S amendment shows that the Parliamentary supporters of the removal of the electoral disabilities of women do not intend to allow the question of the extension of the franchise in any direction to be discussed apart from the claims of women to representative government. Should the supporters of the County Franchise Bill in its original form reject the proposed amendment, they will have to employ in resisting the claims of one set of householders in counties to the electoral franchise, the arguments which they will have to refute in urging the claims of another set. Most of the arguments urged for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer are absolutely identical in principle with those for the extension of the franchise to women. Many of the reasons adduced by the opponents of the one are exactly those employed by opponents of the other. As a specimen we may refer to the remarks of the late Liberal candidate for the representation of Bath, reported in another column, who declined to pledge himself to vote for the County Franchise Bill, as he had declined to promise to vote for the Women's Disabilities Bill, alleging the usual reasons, want of political education—fear that the voters

would be influenced by the squire and the parson, etc. This gentleman was at least consistent in his political views. We cannot say as much of a politician, who, calling himself a Liberal, and avowing his readiness to give votes to labourers, denies them to women, and refers the House of Commons to the standard of political thought in the days of CHARLES JAMES FOX, as the limit beyond which no further advance in regard to the political condition of women can or ought to be made.

The denial of the franchise is attempted to be justified on the assumption of an inherent distinction in the nature of men and women. It was stated in the course of the debate that nature had created a difference between men and women, assigning duties and functions to one sex which could not be performed by the other, and that that was the whole point of the matter. Now we venture to deny that the whole point of the matter lies in the assertion that there are differences between men and women. Nobody disputes that there are such differences, and one of the strongest arguments for the admission of women to a share of political power is grounded on them. It is just because of their existence that an assembly wholly elected by men, and which excludes women from any influence over its deliberations, cannot fairly represent the interests and the sentiments of the co-ordinate half of the nation. We repeat that the whole point of the matter does not lie in the assertion of a distinction between men and women, but that, in order to make out their case, the opponents are bound to prove that voting in the election of Members of Parliament is one of those duties which can be performed by the one sex, and cannot be performed by the other. Nature interposes no barrier to the voting of women in the election of town councillors; as soon as the statute which imposed the disability was repealed, women began to vote in such elections without any hindrance from the laws of Nature. We suppose that no Member of the House of Commons believes that were the statutory disabilities on their voting in the election of Members of Parliament repealed by the passing of Mr. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill, that the laws of Nature would interpose any barrier to the exercise of the Parliamentary franchise by women.

The possession of the logical faculty is denied to women. It may be the want of this faculty which prevents us from discerning the completeness of the following syllogism which we deduce from the speeches of the opposition—"There are certain duties which can be performed by one sex and cannot be performed by the other; therefore women ought not to be permitted to vote in the election

of members of Parliament." We had always supposed that a syllogism required both a major and a minor premise in order to lead to a conclusion. But the minor premise appears to be entirely overlooked by the Parliamentary logicians. Their argument in its complete form would seem to run thus—"There are certain duties which can be performed by men and which cannot be performed by women. Voting in the election of members of Parliament is one of the duties which can be performed by men and which cannot be performed by women; therefore the law which prevents women from voting in such elections ought not to be repealed." But before we can accept the conclusion both premises must be proved; and we have seen no attempt made to prove that the act of voting is contrary to the nature of women. We have seen abundance of assertions that women are unfit for other duties, such as commanding the army, sitting in the Speaker's chair, serving as members of Parliament, &c. But this may be granted without proving that women are unfit to have a voice in choosing men to fulfil these duties; and therefore we submit that Parliamentary logic, as applied to the Women's Disabilities Bill, is defective in an essential particular. The employment of such imperfect reasoning in so important a question by men who, by right of sex, assume monopoly of pure reason, can only be accounted for on the principle of like to like, or that he who reasons with or about persons assumed to be illogical must needs himself be illogical.

#### JOHN STUART MILL.

ONE of the lights of the world has been extinguished within the past month. No man has done more to mould the thought and direct the mind of the present and future generation than he who has just been laid in the tomb of his wife at Avignon. But if men owe much to him, women owe more. His was the hand which dealt the first effectual blow at the political slavery of women. Many before him had thought, and spoken, and written against the subjection of women, but no one before him had taken practical steps to abolish their political disabilities. Probably no one but Mr. MILL would or could have introduced the proposition in the House of Commons. He was the first candidate who placed the political enfranchisement of women in the programme of principles on which he appealed to the voices of a great constituency; and no sooner did the occasion arise than he endeavoured to give effect in Parliament to the view he had expressed out of it. The

first step which he took was to move for a return of the women possessed of the electoral qualification, who were excluded from the franchise on the ground of sex. This proposition was received with shouts of laughter, which were repeated when he presented the first petition from women for the franchise. That that laughter is silenced now—that respect has taken the place of ridicule even among the opponents of the claim—is mainly owing to the courage which first faced the storm, to the ability which at once lifted the question out of the reach of the shafts of folly, and placed it in the front rank of those demanding practical consideration. The great work of Mr. MILL in Parliament in the cause of the enfranchisement of women was done in 1867. Seventy-four members followed him into the lobby, a result most surprising in an unreformed Parliament on the first discussion of a new political principle. The inherent justice of the claim was doubtless the primary cause of so large a following. But a just claim needs a great advocate, and the combination of these laid the foundation of the movement, which is destined to certain, and possibly to speedy, success.

It has been suggested by many, and the thought must have been echoed in thousands of women's hearts, that the gratitude and devotion of women to the memory of one who has so nobly and persistently laboured for their enfranchisement should find expression in some tangible form. Such a tribute would indeed be fitting, and we should rejoice to hear that steps were being taken to afford it. But we would remind women that the fittest tribute to the memory of MILL would be to complete his work—to walk in the path he has pointed out—to press forward to claim the privileges, the way to which he has opened for them. The movement which he began in the House of Commons has been effectively prosecuted by others; and the attitude assumed towards the question by leaders on both sides of the House distinctly invites women to come and take the offered privilege. Let them, then, avail themselves of the occasion; let them honour MILL by the one tribute and the one duty which women alone can give. Men can raise monuments to his memory; men can labour, as he has laboured, for the removal of electoral disabilities; but MILL could not give—and men cannot give—political freedom to women, unless they themselves come forward to claim and exercise it. Men cannot prove that MILL was wise or right in claiming political emancipation for women; women alone can justify to the world the course he took on this great question by the earnestness with which they seek, and the discretion with which they use,

the political rights which he sought to obtain for them. Every woman who joins the ranks of those who are demanding the franchise, every woman who aids to carry forward the movement which he began, brings a tribute more precious than gold, and more enduring than granite to the memory of JOHN STUART MILL.

WE desire to call attention to the announcement in our advertising columns of the General Meeting of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, to be held in the Westminster Palace Hotel on June 23, and to express the hope that a large and influential gathering may be assembled on the occasion.

#### REPLY OF MR. DISRAELI TO THE MEMORIAL.

Mr. Disraeli has addressed the following reply to the Memorial from women of Great Britain and Ireland, presented through Mr. Gore Langton, M.P. :—

"Dear Gore Langton,—I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the Memorial signed by 11,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.—Yours sincerely,

"B. DISRAELI."

#### PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

##### HOUSEHOLD FRANCHISE (COUNTIES).

The following appears among the notices of motion given on Tuesday, 20th May.

In Committee on Household Franchise (Counties) Bill:—Mr. Jacob Bright, at end of Clause 2, add the following subsection:—Wherever words occur which import the masculine gender, the same shall be held to include females for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to be registered as voters, and to vote in the election of members of Parliament, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

##### MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND).

A Bill has been introduced by Mr. Butt with the object of assimilating the conditions of the municipal franchise in Ireland to those in England. But Mr. Butt's Bill limits the franchise to male ratepayers, and so far fails in its professed object. Mr. William Johnstone has placed on the paper amendments in committee on the Irish Municipal Franchise Bill similar to those introduced by Mr. Jacob Bright into the English Bill.

DEBATE ON THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES  
BILL.*House of Commons, Wednesday, April 30th, 1873.*

On the order for the second reading of this Bill,  
Mr. JACOB BRIGHT said: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill I am the last person to forget that it has already been three times rejected by the House. It might therefore be said, in fact it has already been asked, "why bring it forward again? Why not wait until another election before troubling Parliament again with a discussion upon this measure?" I think that powerful reasons may be given why I should not be influenced by that advice. In the first place it is a mistake to suppose that the same House of Commons which rejects a Bill will never consent to pass it. I could give many instances of greater or less importance to show that that is not the case. The Parliament which placed Sir Robert Peel in power in the year 1841 was a conspicuous example. In that Parliament my right hon. friend, the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. P. Villiers) asked again and again that the Corn Laws might be repealed, and over and over again the House of Commons rejected my right hon. friend's proposition. But in the year 1846 the same House of Commons which had refused to listen to him passed a measure repealing the Corn Laws. Then again in 1866 the House of Commons which refused to pass the £7 Franchise Bill, in the year 1867 gave us a franchise Bill of a much wider character. It may be said, however, that on the occasions to which I have referred there was an irresistible outside pressure which does not exist in regard to this Bill. It is perfectly true that no such outside pressure does or ever can exist with regard to this Bill, but, sir, there is a pressure before which the House might yield with quite as much dignity as it showed in yielding on the occasions to which I have referred; namely, the pressure of accumulating reasons which receive no answer, the pressure of opinion in favour of this Bill which is gradually growing in volume, and which I think many hon. members will admit is making itself felt in their constituencies. I see my hon. friend the member for Bath on my left, and if he should speak during the course of this debate, perhaps he will tell the House what is the state of feeling in his constituency upon this question, because I noticed that the two candidates who came forward to contest the vacant seat for that constituency, both the Liberal and the Conservative candidate, have, as I am informed, given in their adhesion to this question—not that they were much if at all in favour of it before they came forward as candidates, but because they found that the opinion in the city of Bath is so strongly in favour of the principle of this Bill that they felt themselves bound to accept it. If, however, in giving notice of the second reading of this Bill I had been perfectly sure that the House would again reject it, I should not have deviated from the course which I have taken. We are accustomed in this House to discuss a Bill, to vote upon it, again and again endeavouring to carry it if we can, but if we fail to carry it we know that we have accomplished something else. We have taken the best means in our power to instruct the people upon a great public question. The substance of this debate will be carefully reported in the newspapers, the report will go to every town and village in the United Kingdom, and to every English-speaking country under British rule, and therefore we shall secure that, for at least one day in the year, there will be a general discussion on a question so deeply affecting the interests and privileges

of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. But there is another reason for bringing forward this Bill, and which I think justifies me in again asking the House to discuss it. No year passes by in this country without producing changes which affect the position of a public question; changes which tend either to hasten or to retard the period of its settlement. Well, sir, such a change took place last year when the Ballot Bill was passed, and I think no one will be more willing to admit that than the hon. gentleman opposite, the member for the University of Cambridge. Men are no longer subject to criticism in giving their votes; they are not answerable to the public or to their neighbours. They have complete irresponsibility. Before the passing of the Ballot Act it was said that a vote was held in trust for those who had it not. That doctrine has been swept away. Now, two millions of men vote in secrecy and in silence. Women are driven further than ever into the political shade, and are more thoroughly severed from political influence than they ever were before. And, sir, if I needed any corroboration of this I need only point to the countless speeches which have been made in this House to show that this view is correct. The passing of the Ballot Bill, then, has strengthened the claim of women to the Parliamentary franchise. But it has also done another thing. It has removed some objections to the proposed change. We were told that there was great turbulence on the day of election, and that there were scenes of such a disreputable character that no right-minded man would desire a woman to partake in them. The Ballot has now been tried in the largest as well as the smallest of the constituencies. It has been tried in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland, and whatever else it may have accomplished we have found that it has succeeded in securing peace and order at the poll. I believe no one will deny that a woman can now go to the polling booth and return from it with far greater ease than she experiences in making her way out of a theatre or a concert room. Anyone having introduced a Bill into this House very naturally looks with interest to the views of the leaders of the House upon that Bill, and although the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister is unfortunately not in his place, I am entitled to make a few remarks upon his altered position in regard to this question. Two years ago the right hon. gentleman acknowledged that women ought to have a share in political representation; he made an objection to the personal attendance of women at the poll. That seemed to me to be the right hon. gentleman's chief difficulty. The Prime Minister also referred to the Ballot, and said he was as yet uncertain what effect it would have, whether it would produce order at elections or not. If the right hon. gentleman was here I think he would admit that the Ballot has had the effect of producing order at elections, and he would be no longer able to object to the personal attendance of women at an election upon that ground. The right hon. gentleman spoke of the representation of women in Italy, where it is understood they vote by proxy, and said if something of the sort could be contrived for this country he should not object to take such a proposal into consideration; but if women were to vote by proxy they would lose the protection of the Ballot; for, so far as I know, no one can vote by proxy and vote in secret. It appears to me, sir, now that the Ballot has become law, that the speech which the Prime Minister made two years ago puts him in such a position with regard to this question as to render it very difficult for him to say a single word against it again. There is another Bill before the House of Commons which deals with the Parliamentary franchise, and which is in the hands of my hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs (Mr. G. O. Trevelyan). That Bill

proposes to equalise the county with the borough franchise, and if it is carried will give an addition of 1,000,000 voters, whereas this Bill will give an addition of from 200,000 to 300,000 voters. I acknowledge the justice of this Bill of my hon. friend, but if justice demands that 1,000,000 of men should be added to the register, which already contains the names of 2,000,000, justice even more urgently demands the admission of 300,000 women, seeing that up to this time women have not a particle of representation. Now there are members in this House—political friends of mine—sitting near me at the present moment, who are pledged to support the Bill of the hon. member for the Border Burghs, but who persistently vote against this Bill, and yet, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there is not a single argument that has ever been used, or that ever will be used with regard to the County Franchise Bill which does not tell even with greater weight with regard to this Bill. The position occupied by those Liberal members who support the one measure and vote against the other seems to me to be one of great inconsistency; I am bound to say that they have not satisfactorily explained their conduct. We have been told that it is a great anomaly to give votes to persons on one side of the borough line and to refuse them to those whose houses are situated on the other side of the borough line; but, sir, I wish to bring about a state of representative equality between persons who are separated by no line whatever, but who are citizens of the same community. My attention was called the other day to a row of 20 substantial houses in a street in Manchester, and I was told that 16 of those houses had votes, 16 of those families were represented in this House. They had control over the taxes which they were called upon to pay, and had an influence in the making of the laws which they were all bound to obey. But four out of those 20 houses had no votes, four of those families were unrepresented, and the only reason why those four families are unrepresented in this House is because the heads of those four families are women. Now, sir, in municipal matters, and with regard to the School Board elections women, so far as voting is concerned, are placed in exactly the same position as men; and I must remind the House that women have been put in that position by Parliament because they have an equal interest with men in municipal and School Board questions. Those votes were given to women with the consent of the Liberal members of this House, and they were given for the reason which I have stated. But a more powerful reason exists why women should be entitled to a Parliamentary vote. We do not deal here simply with local taxation. We deal with the interests of men and women in the widest possible way; their property, their lives and liberties are under our control, and hence the necessity of that protection which the franchise alone confers. When this County Franchise Bill comes in we shall be told that the vote will have a considerable influence upon the condition of the agricultural labourer, that it will have an effect upon legislation favourable to him. The land laws and the game laws will have to be dealt with; in fact if the County Franchise Bill becomes law the condition of the agricultural labourer will assume an importance hitherto unknown. All this is true, but will any hon. gentleman say that it is not equally true with regard to the Bill which I hold in my hand. I cannot discuss this question without referring to the County Franchise Bill. I am bound to refer to it because I want to know why that Bill is to be supported and this rejected. I do not want to be put off with reasons that will not bear reflection, but I should like to have reasons given that will have some weight with those who are agitating this question out of doors. It is a common belief on this side of the House, that should the Government meet

another session of Parliament the County Franchise Bill will be one of their principal measures. Well, sir, how will the Prime Minister be able to accept that Bill and reject this. It has been said that when he once takes up a position he never goes back. I have explained the position which he has taken with regard to this Bill. He said, two years ago, "that the law does less than justice to women," and added, "if it shall be found possible to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, the man who shall attain that object will be a real benefactor to his country." That is the language of the Prime Minister. The Bill before the House is supported by a powerful organization. The petitions and public meetings in its favour grow from year to year. The inequalities in the law between men and women, owing to the fact that women are unrepresented in Parliament, are admitted on every hand. Over 200 members of the present Parliament have supported the Bill. These are considerations which should not be forgotten when the Government again undertakes to improve the representation of the people. There are many landowners in this House. If the County Franchise Bill ever passes through Parliament it must be with the consent of the landowners. If there be any of them present now I would like to ask them whether they think it right to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny a vote to the farmer? The census of 1861 shows that there were about 250,000 farmers and graziers in England and Wales, and one-eleventh part of that number were women. The proportion of women farmers would be still greater if women did not labour under political disabilities. In England and Wales there are no fewer than 22,708 women who are farmers and graziers. The landowners trust their land to these women, who have to provide the rent, to pay the wages, and to look to the whole economy of their farms. I ask the question whether the landowners intend to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny it to those who direct his work. Perhaps some may doubt whether women are really farmers, and in order to satisfy that doubt I will read a short extract from a back number of *The Field*. *The Field* says: "But it may be said, What business have women with farming? It is nonsense to suppose a woman can farm successfully. In answer to this query, the report of the competition for the 100 guineas prize for the best-managed farm in the central districts of England may be referred to. It is published in the last number of the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*. Twenty-one farms competed for the honour. It was awarded to the tenant of Ash Grove Farm, Ardley, near Eicester, as showing the best example of good general management, productiveness, suitability of live stock, and general cultivation with a view to profit. The farm is one of 890 acres, 820 being arable and 70 pasture. 1,000 sheep and 70 cattle are wintered annually. Cattle to the amount of £1,200 is purchased yearly. The labourers work by piece work as much as possible, and no beer is given. The judges said the farm was an exceedingly good example of a well-managed one. But, though the Royal Agricultural Society have awarded the tenant the first prize, they refuse to second the honour by the advantages of membership, for the simple reason that—she is only a woman." I would like, in consequence of that remark of *The Field*, to refer for a moment to the general injustice with which women are treated, merely because they are women. I will make another quotation from *The Field* on this subject. "The farmers of England include a very considerable proportion of women among their numbers. These not only labour under the disadvantages which are inseparable from their sex, but are most unjustly, not to say ungallantly, deprived of certain advantages which are enjoyed by their masculine competitors. The Royal Agricultural Society of England confers

on its members certain valuable privileges. They can have their superphosphates and purchased fertilisers analysed at a nominal rate by the agricultural chemist to the society. They are protected from imposition in the purchase of oilcake. Their soils can be carefully examined. They can exhibit at the annual meeting under more favourable conditions than strangers. These advantages, strange to say, are denied to those women who are farmers." I entertain the belief that if we wish to get rid of this general practice, and it has been shown to be a general practice throughout the country, of treating women unjustly merely because they are women, we could use no more effective means than to remove the stamp of inferiority which must attach to them as long as their political disability is maintained. In order to show the House how Parliament—no doubt unconsciously—sometimes treats women with intense injustice I will refer to one fact. The trial of election petitions is now a local one, and the locality is rated in order to defray the expenses of the inquiry. Consider for a moment how that affects women. That law was passed in 1868. This question of the political disabilities of women had then only once been brought before the House of Commons. Had the attention been given to the subject which it has since received it is possible that the House would not have legislated in the manner in which it did with regard to the trial of election petitions. Well, sir, there was an election inquiry at Bridgewater under the provisions of the Act of 1868. After that inquiry, when the Bill had to be paid, the women of Bridgewater, that is the widows and unmarried women of Bridgewater, met together and got up a memorial to the Prime Minister, and this is the only part of the memorial which it is necessary to read to the House:—"We, the undersigned widows and unmarried women of the town of Bridgewater, in the county of Somerset, beg to lay before you, as First Lord of the Treasury, an account of a most heavy and unjust taxation which has been levied on us in common with the other householders of this borough for the payment of the expenses of the commission. We feel that it is unjust, inasmuch as we are not exercising the franchise and have not been concerned either directly or indirectly in the illegal practices, that we should be required to pay not less than 3s. in the pound according to our rental." Now I put it to the House whether a portion of Her Majesty's subjects who have no representation in this House should be subjected to such a tax? We all know very well that members might be returned for Bridgewater or anywhere else who on some questions affecting women might vote entirely against their views. Women could not have participated in any of the practices which led to that inquiry. In replying to this memorial, the Secretary of State for the Home Department expressed his regret that the malpractices of a portion of the inhabitants of Bridgewater should have necessitated the expense of a Royal Commission. He regretted it very much, but added that it was not in the power of the Secretary of State to exempt women owning or occupying property from the imperial or local taxation to which such property was liable. It is, however, in the power of Parliament to give to the property of women exactly the same privileges which are attached to the possession of every other kind of property, and that would remedy the injustice. In the case of Bridgewater it may perhaps be said that the innocent suffer all through with the guilty; that a great many men have to pay this tax who were innocent of bribery or corruption. That is true; but at least it should be borne in mind that the men had some control over the election, and also had the benefit of representation, whereas the women had not. Whilst speaking on this subject I wish

to refer for one moment to the proposition of the hon. member for Brighton. The hon. member for Brighton asked the House to enact that the necessary expenses of Parliamentary elections should be defrayed out of the local rates. I have voted for that proposal, although I am constrained to admit that looking at the proposition from a disfranchised woman's point of view, it would be unjust for Parliament to pass such a law, because we have no right to impose such a burden upon persons whom we shut out from representation. In the last session of Parliament we took great pains on the subject of illiterate voters. It was interesting to see the two Houses of Parliament spending I do not know how many hours in devising schemes by which men who were too stupid to vote without assistance should, nevertheless, be enabled to record a vote. We devised one scheme and one scheme was devised in the other Chamber, and I am bound to say that these unfortunate men have taken advantage of the labour which we bestowed upon them. In the recent elections illiterate electors have shown no reluctance whatever to come forward and express a desire to influence the proceedings of this House. Take for example the last election at Pontefract. 1236 men polled, and out of that number there were 199 persons who declared themselves unable to vote without assistance. That is nearly one-sixth of the whole number of voters polled. Now, sir, am I putting forward an unreasonable claim, or demanding anything very extravagant when I ask the House of Commons which has bestowed so much care in devising means to enable illiterate men to vote not to continue to withhold the suffrage from women of education and property? During these discussions it has not unfrequently been mentioned that the highest political functions of the realm were performed by a woman, and in my opinion it is not of slight importance to the question under debate that this is the case, and I am especially reminded of it by the late Ministerial crisis. We outsiders on that occasion obtained a very interesting glimpse as to how the Royal duties were performed. Judging from the statements made to the House by the two right hon. gentlemen those duties were discharged with the greatest tact and judgment, and with the utmost anxiety to smooth the way to obtain a Government to carry on the business of the country. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the Oppositions, speaking some time ago at Hughenden Manor, made a very remarkable statement with respect to the duties of the Crown. He described them as multifarious, weighty, and increasing, and remarked that no head of any department of the State performed more laborious duties than those which fell to the sovereign of this country. Well, sir, if this is true, and no one can doubt the correctness of such a statement, when it is made by a gentleman who has himself filled the office of Prime Minister, it appears to me to be a very extraordinary thing that the educated women of this country should not be allowed to do so simple a thing as to record their votes for a member of Parliament. There are some countries where the Salic law prevails, under which no woman is permitted to wear the crown. If anybody should make that proposition here, namely, that after Her present Majesty no woman should again wear the crown of England, I venture to assert that there is not a man in the whole British Empire who would hold up his hand in its favour; and when women come to exercise the franchise—and they will come to exercise it sooner or later—it would be just as impossible to go back to the old state of things as it would now be to introduce the Salic law into this country. There is one reason which operates on this side of the House against admitting women to the franchise, to which I wish to refer; the objection that women are too much under

the influence of ministers of religion. There are many influences at work during an election. We have the influence of the large landowners, and of the large manufacturers, we have the influence of the trades unions, and we have the influence of that vast trade which supplies intoxicating liquors to the people; and I would say that the influence exercised by ministers of religion is at least not the worst of these various influences. I think moreover that members show a singular inconsistency in advancing such an argument, when they are in favour of planting a minister of religion in every parish in England and Wales, and approve of the Bishops occupying seats in the House of Peers. Supposing that women were a more criminal class than men, it would perhaps be argued that it would be unwise to admit them to the franchise. But what are the facts of the case? Taking the judicial statistics of England and Wales for the year 1871, and looking at the number of summary trials, I find that the total number was 540,000, but only 105,000 out of that 540,000 were women. Therefore women are clearly not a very dangerous class; and if we look at those cases proceeded against on indictment, we should find the proportions about the same. The hon. Bart., the member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock), intends to bring in a Bill to apply the Factory Laws to shops. Legislation for factories, the limitations put upon the labour of women, have not interfered with their means of gaining a livelihood, because factories cannot be worked without them. Shops can be managed without them, and therefore a proposition to apply the Factory Acts to shops should be carefully considered. In matters so gravely affecting the interests of women there should be some constitutional means of ascertaining their views. In conclusion I may say that no answer has been made to the case—I do not mean the imperfect case which I have from time to time placed before the House. I mean that no answer has been made to the general case which has been placed before the country by scores of women of education and position who have undertaken to win this battle. I say no answer has been made to their claim, and therefore the demand grows and the agitation becomes more powerful. In the debate which occurred on the second reading of this Bill last year, two lawyers spoke. They stated that they had previously voted in favour of the measure, but intended on this occasion to vote against it. They assigned reasons which, had they been given by a woman, would have been referred to as conclusive proofs of the radical defects of the feminine intellect. My right hon. friend the under Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a very fair speech against the Bill, argued that to give women a Parliamentary vote would be "contrary to the experience of mankind." Most of us who are endeavouring to improve the condition of the people are in search of a state of things contrary to the experience of mankind, because, up to this time, that experience has been very deplorable. We see many things which are contrary to the experience of mankind. The Colonial Empire, with whose affairs my right hon. friend is connected, extending round the world and bound together by ties of affection and not by force, this is contrary to the experience of mankind, but it nevertheless rightly obtains the admiration of my right hon. friend. It is contrary to the experience of mankind that a Government, the Government with which my right hon. friend is connected, should invite the women of this country to present themselves to large constituencies, to issue addresses and attend public meetings in order to be elected members of Education Boards; and it would be contrary to the *reason* of mankind if my right hon. friend, after being a consenting party to that innovation, should continue to resist the claim of women to give a silent vote at the poll. I am very well aware that long before this debate has ended to-day the Bill I am now submit-

ting to the House will be attacked on the ground that it gives a vote to married women and, also, because it does not give a vote to married women. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Both of these charges cannot be true. There is another thing which has always been said by the opponents of this Bill, and which will inevitably be said in the course of this debate—that women do not care for a vote. It ought to be a sufficient answer to this statement to say that whenever women have been allowed to exercise a vote they have made use of the privilege. We know that they have exercised the municipal vote in many of our populous towns, and that in these cases they have used it in equal proportions with men. As the most recent evidence that women do care for the vote, the House will perhaps allow me to quote from a note I have received from a lady in Edinburgh—a lady who for some years has been of the greatest assistance to this cause. Speaking of the votes given by women at School Board elections she says, that, "In Edinburgh one-seventh of the actual voters are women, and in most of the country parishes *every* woman"—the word "every" is underlined—"who was registered voted. We have four women representing Edinburgh—two for the city and two for the county and fourteen for other towns in the country districts—eighteen in all. Of these *six were returned at the head of the poll.*" Then she says, "We expect some half-dozen more women to be returned in the next board elections." Surely, sir, this should have some weight with those who say that women do not care for a vote. Scotland is not the least intelligent or the least informed of the various portions of Her Majesty's dominions, and if in that country you find that women are everywhere interested in public matters and anxious to take a reasonable share in them, the fact ought to have some weight with the House. But when hon. members say that women do not care to possess a vote they ought at least to bear this in mind, that they, as a rule, are in the habit of associating with ladies who are favourably situated—who are surrounded by all the blessings of life. Those hon. members associate with ladies belonging to a rank in which they are not likely to feel the pressure of circumstances. (Hear, hear.) They should remember, too, that the women of the upper classes have been better cared for than women belonging to humble life. With regard to questions of property, the Court of Chancery has done as much for them as any statute could have done. During the present session of Parliament a Bill has passed this House which will in all probability be of service to women of the higher class. I refer to the measure which relates to the custody of children. That Bill will have the effect of helping ladies who are able to meet the difficulties and expenses of Chancery, but with regard to the poorer class of women the measure will be of little use. (Hear, hear.) When I am told that women do not care for a vote I am reminded that two or three weeks ago a friend of mine informed me that he had been talking to a lady of high position in this country. He questioned her as to what she thought of the subject of women's rights. Her reply was "All I know is that I have no wrongs." This was told me that I might reflect upon it and see the error of my position. Sir, I did reflect upon it, and I came to this conclusion, that if that lady, instead of being surrounded by all that can make life happy and even brilliant, had been in different circumstances—if she had been seeking to obtain admittance into an educational institution which she was taxed to support but which shut its doors upon her—if she had been the widow of a farmer and had lost her home and her occupation because she could not vote—if her small property had been dissipated because it was too small to bear the expenses of a settlement and the trouble of a trust; or if she had happened

to have lost her husband and a stranger had stepped in and deprived her of all authority over her children, requiring that they should be educated in a faith which was not her own—if that lady had been so placed as to have been the victim of any of these circumstances I think that she would not have been able to declare that she had no wrongs. (Cheers.) And if the members of this House were enabled to look at this question through the eyes of the humble classes—those women who have to meet the difficult struggles of life—I believe it would not be necessary year after year to ask that this moderate Bill should be passed into law; but that on the contrary a single session would suffice to bring about the result we desire. (Cheers.) I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. EASTWICK, on rising to second the motion, said:—There never was a controversy in which such earnest appeals and serious arguments on the one side were met by such scoffs and unfair and unsound statements on the other, as this. It had been his fate to sit there and hear for three successive years the same sarcasms, the same again and again refuted fallacies repeated, and hope against hope that for once the question would be honestly debated. He did not know what particular fallacies would be brought forward on the particular occasion, and he could not wait to listen, for his place in the debate was fixed. He was obliged to go forward in the front of the battle, leaving those merciless archers, the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock and the hon. member for Pembrokeshire, in his rear, who would be sure to send a keen shaft against him wherever they could espy a weak joint in his armour. He knew their ruthless determination to oppose this Bill too well to expect any good result from appealing to them, but he should go forward trusting in the goodness of his cause. His hon. friend had referred to a speech of the Prime Minister in the debate of 1871, on the women's suffrage question, in order to show that what was considered one of the principal objections to the Bill had been done away by the introduction of the Ballot. He, too, was about to refer to the same speech in order to carry that deduction a little further. The Prime Minister said, "The great objection, on which the hon. gentleman the member for Pembrokeshire based his opposition, is the proposal which required the personal attendance of women to give their votes, and which would consequently involve them in the general proceedings of contested elections. That appears to me an objection of great force. It may be that when we adopt the principle of secret voting we may ensure that tranquillity of elections which has been achieved in other countries." And then he went on to say, "Speaking generally I am inclined to say that the personal attendance and intervention of women in election proceedings, even apart from any suspicion of the wider objects of many of the promoters of the present movement, would be a practical evil not one of the gravest, but even of an intolerable character." This led him to make the following suggestion: "I have never heard any conclusive reason why we should not borrow a leaf from the law books of Italy, where a woman is allowed to exercise the franchise if she is possessed of a qualification, subject to the condition that she shall only exercise it by deputy, some friend or relative especially chosen for that purpose." Now he (Mr. Eastwick) was bound to say that he would almost as willingly see a leaf taken out of the confessional as out of those law books of which the Prime Minister spoke. To adopt those suggestions would be to give women the power of voting and take from them the responsibility. In nine cases out of ten it would be simply giving the male friend, who acted as deputy, two votes instead of one.

Besides it would fail to carry out one of the things for which the supporters of the Bill were most anxious, the removal of that stigma which now rested on women, their implied incapability of exercising the suffrage in a free unfettered way like men. But what did the suggestion amount to but this—that because the conduct of men at contested elections was intolerably bad, therefore the suffrage was to be denied to women, whose conduct would be good. As to their personal safety, he supposed the law would take care of that; and as to the demoralising effects of contested elections on their character, there was no fear of that, for vice in such scenes appeared in an odious and repulsive form rather than in a corrupting or seductive one. But those scenes were now for ever put an end to by the introduction of the Ballot; and the School Board elections had shown that when a woman came to record her vote she was received by the working men with even more respect than was shown to her on other occasions. The Prime Minister went on to say that "with regard to the higher circles, to those who are familiarly called the 'upper ten thousand,' there is no case at all for entertaining a measure of this kind." What, was there no case when the most high-born, the richest, the most meritorious, indefatigable, and intellectual woman was denied a vote simply because she was a woman, while it was given to the most sordid and debased brawler simply because he was a man! In the same debate the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock had based his opposition to the Bill mainly on the inferiority of women to men, and he had supported that argument by a reference to the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of Genesis: "The desire of the woman shall be unto her husband, and he shall rule over her." Now he (Mr. Eastwick) disliked to see texts of Scripture unnecessarily referred to in debates. He desired to speak with the utmost respect, but he must remind the right hon. gentleman that the passage he had quoted was part of the curse upon woman in her fallen state, and it certainly had reference only to those who were married. The difference of the sexes was not, as the right hon. gentleman supposed, an essential difference of mind. It was a mere accident of the body and of training. Did anyone in this enlightened nineteenth century really suppose that there were masculine souls and feminine souls. Such a notion was as unphilosophic as it was un-Christian. The greatest philosopher of ancient times had repudiated the notion, and as for Scripture, was it not plainly said that in the existence to which all were hastening there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but all were as the spirits of heaven. The idea of masculine and feminine spirits was more worthy of a gross Sadducee than of a Christian philosopher. But, descending to plain matters of daily experience, was it not the fact that women who had the advantages of a masculine education succeeded in what they were taught as well as men. It had been said that the stage was the only career in which no deduction was made for sex, and certainly on the stage women succeeded as well as men, if not better. But take oratory. It was only during the last few years that women had commenced to speak in public, and already there were many who spoke as well as men. He would take, however, the most extreme case possible—the profession in which more than in any other the physical superiority of men was most conspicuous—that of the army. Even there there was no such inferiority as that which the right hon. gentleman was pleased to impute to women. He would not go back to remote times, nor even to the fifteenth century, when the only French general who ever continuously defeated English troops was a woman. Nor would he cite

an example which had been quoted by a right hon. gentleman, who sat opposite, in the debate of 1867—that of Dahomey. He would cite examples from more civilized countries. He remembered very well hearing General Langiewicz, who commanded the Poles in their last rebellion, recounting the miseries and horrors of that war. He said that his troops were miserably armed and equipped, and that when they encountered the Russians their first movement was to throw themselves on the guns in order that they might wrest from the enemy some pieces of artillery, of which they had not one when they began the struggle. Well, after picturing all the horrors of that mournful campaign he said, "The best soldier I had was a young Polish lady. She bore the fatigues and confronted the dangers of the war as well as the best men I had, or even better." The other case was one which had been lately described to him by an eye-witness, who could not be mistaken. It was that of the Rani of Jhansi. In the celebrated campaign of Central India no one displayed greater courage than that lady. She went into action twenty paces ahead of her cavalry, and when Jhansi fell she exposed her life where the danger was greatest, and the fire hottest. One day when she was on the wall under the fire of our batteries a sergeant, after carefully laying his gun, said to the general, "I have her now, sir, quite certain!" "No!" was the reply, "don't fire, remember she is a woman." She died a soldier's death, however; and as she lay bleeding under a tree, with two sabre cuts and a gunshot wound, she used her ebbing strength in distributing her ornaments amongst her most faithful followers. Why did he mention these things? Not to suggest that women should step beyond their own sphere and take up professions which belonged to men, but merely to show that women and men were not essentially different in their nature, and that to speak of their natural inferiority disqualifying them from having the suffrage was an absurdity. No doubt there must be a division of duties, and it was only natural that the care of the home and of the family should be entrusted to women, but how could it be pretended that the exercise of the privilege of voting once in four or five years would interfere with that duty. On the other hand it was equally absurd to argue that the granting the suffrage to women who had the property qualification would result in their wishing to get into Parliament. Every member of Parliament who conscientiously discharged his duties felt that they were so onerous as to interfere with the management of his own private concerns. How preposterous then it was to suppose that a woman could be in Parliament without neglecting her own proper work. But in truth it was calumniating women to say that women had not sufficient tact and discernment to know what it became them to attempt. They knew their own vocation better than men could tell them it. But he must now turn for a moment to a statement made by the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, in the debate of 1871, that "the game of women suffrage in the United States was pretty well played out."

Mr. BOUVERIE: Was not that a quotation?

Mr. EASTWICK: It was, but the right hon. gentleman endorsed it in his speech, and no doubt he believed it to be true; but he could prove to him that he was mistaken. Women's suffrage was referred to with respect in the declaration of the convention that nominated General Grant. The Vice-President of the United States, the Hon. Henry Wilson, was a supporter of the women's suffrage movement. The men who stood at the summit of the literary ladder in the United States supported it. Of these he would mention Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had called it "an era in civilization," and who had delivered a noble lecture in support of it. The

author of Atlantic Essays, Mr. Higginson, the well-known journalist, Mr. G. Curtis, and the distinguished orator, Mr. Wendell Phillips, as well as Mr. Hoare, member of Congress, and a most eminent barrister, and Judge Richardson of Massachusetts. But it was unnecessary to refer to the support of individuals, when in the important territory of Wyoming, soon it was to be hoped to become a State, women were actually enfranchised. The right of voting is there exercised by women, so at least he was informed, and with the best results. The women voters were treated with the greatest respect, a respect which was not entirely unalloyed with self-interest, as it was known that their votes would always be given in favour of a party of order. But arguments in favour of women's suffrage in America were doubly strong in relation to this country, for in America there was no reason why every woman should not be married and obtain some share in the suffrage through her husband, since the number of women was less than that of men. But in this country there were 600,000 more women than men, and consequently there must always be that number of unmarried women, dependent to a great extent on their own exertions for maintaining their position and deserving to be represented, many of them at least, as contributing independently towards the taxation. Lastly there was an argument in favour of female suffrage here which he desired to commend to the especial attention of the Conservative side of the House. Conservatives had probably no desire for manhood suffrage, but an agitation in favour of it was already commencing. A monster meeting had already been held in the North, and would be followed by others. He believed that the only way effectually to meet the agitation in that direction would be to give the right of voting to women, because their votes would certainly be given against manhood suffrage, which would completely swamp their influence. On the other hand if the elective franchise were once conferred on women who had the property qualification, manhood suffrage would be rendered impossible, for it would imply womanhood suffrage, and as women exceed men in numbers, universal suffrage would give them the controlling power in political affairs, an absurdity which no one contemplated. At the municipal elections women had well and regularly exercised their right of voting, and at the School Board elections, in Scotland, where they had now got the right to vote for the first time, they had voted, in proportion to the numbers qualified, more exhaustively than men. Now one of the greatest justifications for giving the vote to any class, was that that class would avail themselves of the privilege, and the women certainly did. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill in the belief that not only were the women themselves anxious to exercise the suffrage, but that they would use it for the benefit of the community.

Mr. BOUVERIE, in rising to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, thought it was rather bold on the part of his hon. friend who had just sat down, in exposing what he had termed the fallacies of those who held opposite views, to indulge in the fallacy of erroneous statement to probably a greater degree than any one who had taken part in the debates upon this subject. His hon. friend maintained that there was no distinction between man and woman which education would not remedy, and he had supported that proposition by a reference to cases in which women had successfully engaged in military affairs. It would shortly, he presumed, be urged as a grievance that women were not allowed to compete for commissions in the army—(laughter)—and we might look forward to the time when some lady might be found occupying the post of his right hon. friend the Secretary for War or of his right

hon. friend the First Lord of the Admiralty. Was his hon. friend prepared to say that we were to recruit our army with women? (A laugh.) [Mr. Eastwick had distinctly repudiated the idea of women becoming soldiers.] He could scarcely understand why these military ladies were referred to unless it was to show that but for the defects of education women were as well able to take part in military matters as were the men. But there was one grand objection to all such doctrines—that women were weaker than men, and no amount of education would render the female as strong, as powerful, and as capable of continuous exertion as men were. (Hear, hear.) He could not help feeling that his hon. friend the member for Manchester in his speech had laboured under the difficulty of feeling that his case was not so strong in the House or the country as it had been represented to be. No doubt there was a very active, persevering, and respectable minority in favour of this movement; but, as far as he could judge, it was but a very small minority. There was a knot of ladies very earnest in the cause of their sex, who, in their speeches and their writings, had displayed considerable ability, and who had gone about the country lecturing on the subject; but in populous towns it was easy enough to get up a public meeting upon any subject, and meetings which attended to hear speeches from attractive ladies could not by any means be taken to represent the feeling of the country at large, to whom this proposal was utterly repugnant. (Cheers.) If this question were made the cardinal question at a general election, he did not believe that there would be a single member returned who was in favour of this claim. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend the member for Manchester had referred to the case of the Bath election, in which both candidates had said that though personally not strongly in favour of this proposition, they would give it their support. If that statement were correct, he did not think it much to the credit of either candidate. (Cheers and laughter.) But, in any case, they knew that the power of a small but determined minority was very great in the case of a closely contested election. Besides, his hon. friend should remember that Bath contained more widows and spinsters than probably any other town in the kingdom. (Cheers and laughter.) His hon. friend had instanced a case in which out of a row of houses in Manchester sixteen houses had votes and four had none. Now, he did not know whether it was the doctrine of the school to which his hon. friend belonged—it certainly was not the doctrine of the political school of which he was a member—that votes should be conferred upon houses instead of people. A man was once contending with Dr. Franklin that men in order to have votes should be possessed of some property, and that, at all events, they ought to have some small sum of dollars. "Very well," said Dr. Franklin, "let us take the case of a man whose property consists of a donkey worth 20 dollars. He loses his donkey, and he loses his vote. Was it the man or the donkey that had the vote?" (Cheers and laughter.) The possession of property was only a test of fitness which was employed, but the disqualification of women rested upon entirely different grounds. He quite agreed with his hon. friend in thinking that the Ballot had done away with one of the objections to this proposal, for respectable women would no longer have to face the old polling booth; but that was not the narrow ground on which the House had in previous years decided the question. He could not help thinking that his hon. friend had introduced that day two of the weakest possible arguments into a discussion which might be regarded as having by this time been worn threadbare. His hon. friend argued that the women farmers ought to have votes because they were unrepresented on the Royal Agricultural Society. That might be a very

good reason for appealing to the Royal Agricultural Society to alter their rules, but it was a very bad one for founding an appeal for Parliamentary representation upon. (Hear, hear.) The other was, that the female ratepayers had to share in the expenses of the bribery inquiry at Bridgewater. Corrupt, however, as Bridgewater no doubt was, the vast majority of the electors were not corrupt, so that this hardship fell upon the electors generally with as great force as it did upon the women of that town. (Hear, hear.) It might be that with the progress of civilisation there were many defects and rules of the Common Law which in the interests of women ought to be modified; but complaints in this respect were only trotted out for the purpose of the annual debates on this subject, and no one could say that the House of Commons had ever refused to consider any such question when publicly brought before it. (Cheers.) His hon. friend, as an argument in favour of the fitness of women for the franchise, had referred to the fact that there were only 105,000 summary convictions of females in one year as against 540,000 summary convictions of males. The effect, however, of his hon. friend's proposal was to turn women into men, and if women were to become men and be exposed to the same temptations, trials, hardships, difficulties, and contests, the result would be the same as it was in the case of men, and their criminality would be multiplied four-fold. (Cheers and laughter.) His hon. friend and those who agreed with him did not appear to see that what they proposed was to introduce what was probably the greatest revolution which had ever occurred in the country. (Hear, hear.) For his own part, he thought that men should remain men and women should remain women, and if they attempted to change women into men they would be manufacturing a very inferior and bad article. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend said it was a matter which, after all, dealt with only 250,000 votes. He had already referred to the power which could be exercised by a small but determined minority in a closely-contested election. It was quite possible that a very clever woman, by the aid of great ability, answering questions at public meetings successfully, and a canvass in which there was a discreet use made of those feminine arts to which they were all susceptible, might succeed in being elected a member of that House. His hon. friend said nobody contemplated such a thing, and it was not in the Bill. That, however, was exactly the point. It was one of his objections to the Bill that it did not contain any provision of this kind, for they all knew what must follow. The Bill was the grain of mustard seed that was to grow into a tree, but if it developed into anything it would, he feared, bear more resemblance to a upas tree than anything else. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) If they permitted women to vote for members of that House, they could not deny them the right to sit there if they were elected. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend had referred to the case of women voting at municipal elections and to the part they took in connexion with School Boards; but these were mere vestries dealing with local matters, whereas that assembly had to deal with the affairs of the whole country, and had among it a committee sitting upon the Treasury Bench whose duty it was to govern a great part of the world. (Hear, hear.) He ventured to say it would be a bad thing if those ladies who aspired to take a prominent part in the government of mankind had their way. It was part of a system which was contemplated by the dreamers of dreams, dreams supposed capable of becoming realities by those who advocated these ideas of the equality of men and women. In all walks of life women were to compete with men, to share their duties as barristers, jurors, judges, and magistrates. But

apart from the fact that women were differently constituted from men, that in their early life they were subject to infirmities from which men were exempt, his objection lay deeper still, for he objected to dragging our countrywomen into public life. (Cheers.) While ostensibly a small Bill, giving a vote to widows and spinsters, it contained the germ of a great social revolution. If it passed, the exclusion of women could not be maintained, for why should the greater part of the adult women, the mothers of the rising generation, who attended to their households, be debarred a right conceded to the unmarried? Let the House fancy a lovely spinster taking part in its debates, and having on the eve of a narrow division, with the fate of a Ministry at stake, an offer of marriage—(laughter),—probably from a gentleman of opposite politics, who wished to take away her vote. Let them fancy the Whip jumping up and moving a new writ in the place of Miss So-and-so, who had entered into the bonds of matrimony. (Renewed laughter.) Our social system and habits were bound up with the distinction between the sexes, which was the foundation of much of our national happiness and glory, and he would have no part in beginning to destroy it. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman moved that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Mr. SCOURFIELD denied the right of the hon. member for Manchester to claim the Prime Minister's vote. In the speech referred to, the right hon. gentleman, commenting on a remark which had been made by himself, that a system of voting papers, dispensing with personal attendance at the poll, would possibly lessen his objection to the Bill, intimated the possibility of a change of opinion; but the advocates of the Ballot would resist such a system as a violation of the principle of secrecy, and many supporters of the measure had defeated every attempt to dispense with attendance at the poll in exceptional cases. Female voters would therefore be subjected to this inconvenience, as also to the annoyance of canvassing. He denied that exclusion from the franchise was a political degradation, for on nature's principle of compensation women in return for material exemptions from duty were deprived of certain privileges; and on visiting the Queen's Bench the other day he wondered how women would like the prolonged martyrdom with which the jurors in the Tichborne case were being visited. All rational people would wish to be governed by "a large amount of ascertained consent," to quote an expression from the Queen's Speech in a former Session, but with all due respect for public meetings and petitions, which often evinced much labour and organization, he could not take these alone as the criterion. A distinguished member of the House used to ascertain the general opinion by collecting individual opinions, and, guided by this and by the press, he was convinced that the vast majority of women deprecated the *damnosa hereditas* which the Bills would confer on them. The late Attorney-General for Ireland, whose speeches always displayed a genuine ring of that Irish humour which softens the acerbities of life, and saves the Saxons from the painful fate of boring one another to death—(a laugh)—once voted for the Bill, but on informing a lady of it was told he might have been much better employed, and he afterwards, in opposing it, remarked that nobody knew what it meant, comparing it to a Highlander's gun, which would have been a very good one if it had only a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel. (A laugh.) The hon. member for Penryn had undertaken to say that in a future state there would be no distinction of sex, but without pretending to such transcendental knowledge, he thought as much might be said for the opposite assertion, and it was safer to base legislation on present rather than on prospective conditions. Père Hyacinthe, who had shown his estimation of woman by marrying

and thus estranging himself from many of his associates, had said it was woman's province to leave to others the making of laws and the writing of books—here he differed from him, for there would be a hideous blank in literature if women had shunned authorship—and to influence ideas and manners, and through these to govern. If women generally desired the suffrage they would assuredly obtain it, but he declined to take those possessed of the moral courage, or rather the physical power, of holding meetings as the exponents of their sentiments, and he did not believe they desired to mix in the turmoil of politics. (Hear, hear.) The hon. gentleman seconded the amendment.

Mr. Serjeant SHERLOCK: Mr. Speaker—Sir, it appears to me to be a very important element in the consideration of this case, and one which the House ought not to overlook, that we should follow, so far as we possibly can do so, consistency in legislation. And if we find that women in possession of property have been already permitted to exercise political rights, and have been authorised by the Legislature to vote for School Boards in matters involving intellectual questions, and in municipal elections on questions relating to the management of property and subjects incidental to taxation; and if it has been found that although the assertion of these rights, political as well as social, leads to contests as bitter sometimes as Parliamentary contests, yet that women have exercised those privileges which have been conceded to them with moderation and discrimination, it does appear to me that it ought to follow, as a fair and necessary consequence, that when they ask us to give them the right incidental to property, which men enjoy, of having a voice as well as having an influence in the selection of these Parliamentary representatives, that right ought not to be denied them. Now that women do exercise very considerable influence at these elections is a matter which I think will not be denied by a majority of the members of this House; and I think there are very few members of this House, in the event of an election, who do not in the investigation of the possessors of property in the district which they seek to represent apply themselves to the female influence as well as to that of the direct voters. We find as a rule, I say, that ladies in the possession of property exercise the rights of property with as much discrimination, with as anxious a regard for the interests of their tenantry, and of the duties which, as well as rights, property carries with it, as men do. And when we come to consult our prospects of success on the eve of a Parliamentary election female influence is not disregarded, I venture to assert, by the majority of members on either side of the House. Well, unless you establish the fact of some inferiority of intellect upon the part of the females of this empire you have no justification for refusing them the privilege of selecting their Parliamentary representatives, who alone have very considerable influence in the taxation of their property, in the modification of the rights of property, and also in the various social questions in which they are interested. Now, I cannot understand why a woman should not be as well fitted to select her representatives in Parliament as she is fitted to select her representative upon some municipal board. (Hear, hear.) With regard to want of intelligence I cannot conceive that a stupid man is superior to a stupid woman; I cannot believe that a clever, intelligent, well-informed woman is not capable of arriving at as clear a conclusion, and as proper a conclusion as a man. It by no means follows, sir, that by the Bill now before the House every position which man is fitted to occupy, and every duty which he is fitted to discharge, is being granted to women. In the discussion upon political concessions, in the granting

of political privileges, there are almost in every case, whether they arise from religious distinctions or other causes, certain exceptions. It is not intended, for instance, to concede to women a position which will invest them with the right of going in for examination for the Army, as has been suggested, or for the Church, or for the Navy, or for this House. Apprehensions have been suggested by the right hon. member for Kilmarnock that this is but the beginning of a series of legislative efforts which will open to females further claims, and which will bring them into this House. Now, that is an argument which has always been used upon the introduction of any Bill giving rights to any class. It has always been argued by members of this House, and by the public opposing any measure, that we were to look, not to the professed measure under discussion at the moment, but to the latent difficulties that were sure to follow. When the question of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics was before the Legislature in 1829 it was strongly urged, in both branches of the Legislature, that if their rights were once conceded as asked for in that Bill, the inevitable consequence in a very few years must be that the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland would be sitting in the House of Lords. That was distinctly held out as the necessary consequence of the concession. Well, I do not think that any hon. member of this House apprehends that such a result is very likely to follow now. There may be possibilities of removing other ecclesiastical authorities from the House of Lords, but as to the danger of extending the privilege of sitting there to Roman Catholic bishops, the result, I imagine, of modern views is to lull all fears on that score. This Bill does not authorise or extend the proposed privileges to married women. Upon a principle which is perfectly clear in the first place the right to the Parliamentary franchise is at present annexed to property, and if the right and privilege of the Parliamentary franchise were so low as to include that 20 dollar animal to which the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock referred to it would be in right of that property that a vote would be given. But at present, as a rule, the right of property rests in the husband. It would be unjust to give to the wife a vote and thus to give two votes for the same property. The married woman enters into a contract as a rule to submit her rights to her husband, and to confer upon him the privileges incidental to the property. Although we lawyers recognise the principle in Courts of Equity of the separate estate of married women, that is with a view to their protection against extravagant or improvident husbands; but those rights do not affect the great principle that when once a woman marries she hands over to her husband for better or for worse both her individual liberty and her property. If that is not abused she has a reasonable influence in the management of that property, and the present Bill will not affect in any manner or interfere with her position in that respect. The hon. member for Pembrokeshire has stated that having visited the scene of the present trial in the Court of Queen's Bench he found twelve jurymen discharging a duty which is likely to become a term of imprisonment extending over a considerable period. But I did not see the relevancy of that illustration. This Bill does not seek to grant the privilege to women or to impose upon them the burdens of acting as jurors in certain cases. The same observation applies with regard to magistrates. This Bill does not ask and does not seek to give to women the right of being appointed magistrates, and it is as it appears to me hardly a candid mode of meeting the Bill to state that there is behind it, looming in the distance and invisible, a process by which this will be carried out in such a manner as will

give claims to future alterations which may be dangerous and will possibly lead to very serious consequences. We must look to legislation as it is proposed upon the face of it. This Bill is short and has this further advantage—it does not appear to me to have been prepared by a lawyer—it is intelligible—(laughter)—it is very concise; and although the right hon. and learned gentleman, the late Attorney General for Ireland, to whom reference has been made, in his speech last session, spoke of the Bill as not being intelligible, and explained, as his reason for not voting for it, that he did not understand it, I think if he exercised some of those powers of intellect with which he is gifted, he could easily understand this Bill, which is as simple and intelligible as any Bill ever brought before this House. Now the important, and, as it appears to me, the only real argument against this Bill, is the statement that women in general do not desire it. Of course if it once be established that the large majority of the class for whom we propose to legislate do not desire it, I think that is an answer. But, again, there is scarcely any measure ever proposed which purports to be for the amelioration of a class but you will find some members of the class rejecting the proposed boon. It was so at the period of Catholic Emancipation. There were some members of that religious body who declared—and I think petitions were presented to the Houses of Parliament declaring—that they did not want political rights, and were perfectly satisfied with their position. Well, I do not think that in the result it can be said that the body at large objected to those principles. We are told that a lady said that an hon. member would have been better employed than in voting, as I am about to vote, for this measure. But one does meet even among females with some eccentricities who do not see the value of the benefit about to be conferred upon them, but sneer or put questions in such a way as to show there may be some difference of opinion. Let those ladies and gentlemen who do not wish to exercise political privileges remain as they are. The law will not compel them to vote; and if they find anything inconvenient in voting, they will remain at home. And so far they will have a right to decline to exercise it. The case put forward by the hon. member in charge of the Bill shows that women having the municipal franchise do exercise it; and I have no doubt that when we do concede this privilege of voting in Parliamentary elections the great majority of women will exercise it with the moderation and discretion with which they have exercised the privileges they have already been endowed with. No such evil results as are predicted by hon. gentlemen will follow, and this measure will really conduce to respect for the rights of property, and at the same time to the withdrawal of that line of demarcation and discrimination which, I say, is an insult to women. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LEATHAM: I should scarcely have ventured to take part in the debate but for one circumstance, viz., that the constituency which I have the honour to represent has lately experienced an invasion of ladies, and I have been really so manfully challenged to state the reasons why I cannot support this Bill that I feel it only due to the sex to avail myself of the very first public opportunity of doing so. My hon. friend the member for Manchester has twitted the Radicals with their inconsistency in supporting the proposed Bill of my hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs, and in opposing his measure. I remember that, on a previous occasion, he went still further. He said that no Radical could vote against his Bill without a feeling of discomfort akin to shame. I am one of those persons whose opinions are usually supposed to tend in a Radical direc-

tion, and I am going to vote against my hon. friend's Bill—(hear, hear)—and I am going to support, if I have an opportunity, the Bill of the hon. member for the Border Burghs; but I can assure my hon. friend that beyond the repugnance with which I must always oppose any measure introduced by my hon. friend I am insensible to any feeling of discomfort or shame. (Hear, hear). I fear that I must oppose my hon. friend on the very threshold, not merely on the question of expediency, but upon the question of principle. I venture to deny his grand fundamental axiom that because women obey the law and pay taxes, therefore they have an abstract right to vote. So long as women accept the protection of the law so long ought they to submit to the laws, and their property to contribute towards the expense of carrying them out. I object to an argument of this kind because it ignores the career which revelation and the experience of all ages, and the common consent of mankind has marked out for woman—a career which runs parallel with that of man, is in all respects as dignified as it is, and yet is totally distinct from it. This idea has been elaborated by an eminent French writer of the present day, who says, "The women who demand political equality with men declare loudly enough, and declare, I believe, in all sincerity, that they are not going to abandon their obligations either as wives or mothers. They maintain that they will only become more capable of fulfilling those duties and better instructed. This is not a question of moral or intellectual developement, it is a question of the rights and duties of one sex claimed by the other; of an absolute change of vocation. It will be difficult to persuade us that whilst men find it so hard to act as men, women can act as men and yet remain women, playing the double part, fulfilling the two-fold mission, assuming the two-fold character of humanity. What will happen? We shall lose the woman without gaining the man; what we shall get is that monstrous and repulsive creature which is already looming above the horizon—*la femme-homme*." My right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock has shown conclusively how revolutionary this measure is in its tendency. We may pursue that argument a little further. If we give women the right to vote we cannot possibly withhold the right of being voted for, and if we are to have women returned to this House, what can prevent their sitting upon the treasury bench? Perhaps the House would not object to an engaging First Commissioness of Works—(laughter)—or a lovely and accomplished Post-mistress-General. What should we think if a great measure were stopped in its career because the learned Attorney had eloped with the Solicitrix-General; or if public business were suspended on account of the accouchement of the Prime Minister. (Laughter.) Why should there not be also Ambassadors and Governesses-General. "Why not?" said the hon. member for Manchester, "have you not Queens and Empreses already?" "Why not?" says the hon. gentleman opposite, "do not women make the best soldiers?" Yes, and we have all heard of men-nurses, and we all reverence men-cooks, but we do not argue upon these facts that the nursery or the kitchen is the true field for the exercise of masculine energy. Now there is another argument against the measure of my hon. friend, which I should like to put before the House. It is that by the nature of things, speaking generally, the position of women is one of dependence, and it is our duty, as far as possible, to enfranchise not dependent but independent electors. Now this argument occurred to a statesman who once adorned this House, and whose opinion would, I think, even with my hon. friend, carry great weight, I mean Mr. Fox. In a speech on Parliamentary Reform, towards the close of the last century, Mr. Fox said that while it must be allowed that many women among our upper classes were in point of mental power and knowledge

better qualified to exercise the franchise than many men in the lower classes, yet it had never been in the contemplation of even the most absurd theorists to extend the elective franchise to the other sex. Mr. Fox with all his great sagacity did not quite foresee what is now proposed by my hon. friend the member for Manchester. (Laughter.) It has been said that the Ballot would remove all the difficulties. I am a strong advocate for the Ballot, but we cannot do with the Ballot between man and wife. My hon. friend may fairly say, "It is no part of my proposal to enfranchise married women at all," but I do not find that setting aside the case of married women forms any part of the programme of those ladies who discuss these questions with me. The real ground taken by the advocates of this measure is that the female sex would be raised in the estimation of men by their enfranchisement, but nobody would suppose that the enfranchisement of a few spinsters and widows here and there would raise the sex in its own estimation or in ours. We must really look at the whole scope and tendency of this question, or else we may find after passing the Bill of my hon. friend that we shall be told, as in the case of the Municipal Franchise Bill, which was carried in the small hours of the morning in an almost empty House, that we have surrendered the whole position with reference to the enfranchisement of women. I altogether deny that there is any analogy between the case of the woman who votes for town councillors and the woman who aspires to control the policy of this great empire, with all its vast and varied interests. If with any show of reason it can be contended, that because we have given them the municipal franchise, we ought therefore to give them the parliamentary franchise; with far more reason will it be contended when we have passed this Bill that we ought to extend the franchise to married women. May it not be said that marriage is the normal state of woman? Ninety-nine out of every hundred women aspire to that state, the desire for which is probably the last to desert the female breast. Would it be just to enfranchise only those who are not in the normal state, and who, as the right hon. member for Kilmarnock, in a momentary aberration from the gallantry which distinguishes him, once said, are "the failures of the sex." (Laughter.) Do not let my hon. friend try to persuade the House that women will not obtain justice if they do not obtain this Bill. Have they obtained no justice already? has nothing been done towards the amelioration of their condition? and by whom has it been done if not by men? and is not my hon. friend himself a man? In this civilised country there is no indisposition to take up and settle in a just and generous sense all questions affecting women; but there are questions affecting women which women, forgetting for the moment the only true mode in which their influence can be effectual, and proclaiming themselves politicians, have damaged, and I fear irretrievably, in public estimation. It is monstrous in the last degree to suppose that there is any antagonism between the sexes. Man is not the enemy of woman. Women have already the greatest possible influence upon the votes of men. They exert it in a perfectly unobjectionable way, without moving one step from their proper and natural sphere, and without sacrificing one particle of that reserve and delicacy which have secured for them—and I hope always will do so—far more than the mockery of masculine functions, the respect and admiration of men. (Cheers.)

Lord J. MANNERS remarked that ridicule and sarcasm were the principal weapons which had been employed by those who had spoken against the Bill. The seconder of the amendment had admitted that it was the part of wisdom to deal with the evils of the day as they arose; and that sound axiom he would commend to the attention of its mover.

His right hon. friend (Mr. Bouverie) had eloquently denounced all sorts of portentous evils, which, in his candour, he owned were not contained in that Bill, but which, he thought, would in all probability be contained in some measures which would hereafter be brought forward in that House. When those extravagant proposals as to feminine judges, jurors, and members of Parliament, which his right hon. friend had conjured up were really made, he should meet them with as decided an opposition as the right hon. gentleman. He was surprised to find his right hon. friend—an almost venerable reformer—indulging in that style of argumentation against the modest and moderate measure of the hon. member for Manchester. Were not the various Reform Bills for which his right hon. friend had voted always opposed on grounds precisely similar to those used against the present Bill—namely, that they were certain to lead to ulterior and revolutionary measures? His right hon. friend was so pinched for real arguments against the Bill that he condescended to overwhelm it with that torrent of unlikely and inconvenient consequences which he predicted it must produce. The hon. member who spoke last also pictured the Treasury Bench as filled with female Ministers as the result of that measure; but did he seriously believe that it would be impossible to resist the claim of ladies to sit in that House if they once conceded to female ratepayers the Parliamentary franchise? An important and influential class of the community had long possessed the franchise and yet were prohibited from sitting in that House. Perhaps his right hon. friend would view the intrusion on the Treasury Bench of a Venerable Archdeacon or a Very Rev. Dean with even more horror than that of a spinster or a widow. (A laugh.) For centuries, although there had frequently been legislation directly affecting their interests proposed, there had never been any attempt, excepting in the case of Mr. Horne Tooke, made by the clergy of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic priesthood, or the ministers of Protestant dissent to enter the House of Commons. In former days priests and women were placed very much in the same category, and that analogy between them had existed almost from time immemorial. He did not believe there now existed the slightest inclination on the part of the women of this country to depart from that salutary and long-established demarcation between the right to vote and the right to sit in that House. Pressed by the argument that women now voted for members of School Boards, Town Councils, and Boards of Guardians, the opponents of the Bill said that women might be well qualified to vote for those bodies, but not for so august a person as a member of Parliament. His right hon. friend said the interests affected by those elections were trivial, but were they? The interests dealt with by School Boards were not trivial; and from all he heard he thought the policy of the country was likely to be affected by their proceedings. The 25th clause of the Elementary Education Act gave rise to serious controversy from one end of the country to the other, yet female ratepayers were not only permitted to vote at the election of School Boards, but encouraged to aspire to seats in them. He had very great doubts about the immense School Board they had created for London; still the thing had been done, and they must face the consequences. But to say that women might vote for such a Board and sit on it, and yet were disqualified by their sex—for that was the argument—from voting for those who sat in that House for St. Ives, or Bodmin, was one of the most illogical propositions he had ever heard. (Hear, hear.) His right hon. friend had spoken eloquently about taking women out of their proper sphere, and the hon.

gentleman who last addressed them talked of converting them into men; but if giving women power to vote unsexed them, the mischief had been done already, and those who supported the extension of the School Board and municipal franchise to women had been consenting parties to that operation. It was idle, therefore, to talk about the excitement of Parliamentary elections, which occurred, perhaps, once in five or six years, while women duly qualified by property were called upon to vote every year for Town Councillors and every two or three years for other local bodies. Everywhere but in London the School Boards were elected by open voting; but after the adoption of the Ballot nearly the whole of the right hon. gentleman's argument on that head fell to the ground. As to the evils of women-voters being canvassed, he reminded his right hon. friend that one of the blessings promised them under the Ballot was that it would do away with canvassing. ("Hear," and a laugh.) His right hon. friend had spoken of women becoming agitators, and wished to see them restored to their proper functions and the duties of domestic life. But he did not see that by the course he persistently adopted he was driving women into the very attitude he deplored and condemned? So far from its being true that this measure was not making way in the country and that its rejection this year would restore women to the position in which he wished them to be placed, the fact was precisely the reverse, and if the Bill was rejected a larger number of women than ever would take part in that agitation. In conclusion, he supported that measure simply and exclusively for what it proposed and intended to do. He did not concern himself and thought the House would do well not to concern itself, with all those remote and tremendous dangers which its opponents conjured up. By passing the Bill they would terminate that agitation—"No, no!"—put an end to an unreasonable and illogical exception, and satisfy a reasonable demand. ("No, no.") Believing that the measure was a sound, a safe, and a constitutional measure, and one that would bring the question of the ratepaying vote to a satisfactory and permanent conclusion, he would give it his hearty support. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Bruce: I am desirous of giving very shortly the opinions I entertain, but I am anxious to be understood that I am speaking my own opinions and not those of the Government. I am bound to admit that on this matter the members of the Government have divided opinions, and indeed it will be in the recollection of the House that one of the most interesting parts of the discussion last year was the passage at arms between my learned friends the present Attorney-General for England and the late Attorney-General for Ireland. The noble lord who has just sat down told us that the importance of this measure had been exaggerated, but to my mind its importance cannot be exaggerated—(hear, hear)—for on what grounds was it supported by the hon. member who moved the second reading and the hon. gentleman who seconded it? My hon. friend the member for Manchester supported this Bill upon the ground of the political equality of the sexes. That was the ground upon which he supported the measure, and then he thinks to settle this question by offering a miserable contingent of some 250,000 votes to the female sex, which comprised half the population of the kingdom. He himself stated that there were two million voters in this country, while a measure was about to be introduced which would add another million; and he proposes now for a final settlement of this question to add only 200,000 or 300,000 female voters to the constituencies of the country. What political equality is that, and how can he possibly suppose that the female sex, who are not slow to assert their rights

when they believe them to exist, will be satisfied with such a state of things? The noble lord opposite (Lord John Manners) charges with inconsistency and exaggeration those who look beyond the mere provisions of this Bill; but my right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock, spoke most reasonably and rightly when he said the House ought not to look at the Bill as it stood before them, but ought to see the possible consequences to which it might lead. Is it to be supposed for instance that one of the first ladies of the land, possessing a large income, and making a noble use of her property, is to cease to have a vote because she marries? (Hear, hear.) And then if you once enlarge the number of female voters it will follow as a matter of course that their influence in proportion to their number would be directed towards obtaining direct representation in this House. (Hear, hear.) There are plenty of ladies who have shown ample ability to take a part in this House and whose capacities so far as knowledge and powers of speech were concerned would do no discredit to it. The hon. gentleman who seconded the motion put his support not so much on the ground of political equality as on that of natural equality. He expressed something like wonder, not unmixed with scorn, that there should be two opinions on the question of whether man and woman were not in all respects equal. He said the only difference between them lay in the education they had received. I am not going to enter into a discussion of the physical and mental differences between man and woman. It is patent that those differences do exist. Any one who has watched little boys and girls growing up from their earliest infancy must see how nature has implanted in them very different characteristics. The hon. member gave instances of women who have shown personal courage and even military abilities, but even with respect to the quality of courage we may trace through the whole history of woman a broad distinction between man and woman. Nobody can deny the possession by woman of courage, but her courage is of a passive kind, fitting her for endurance, whilst the courage of man is of an active character. I cannot explain the causes of the differences between the two sexes in matters where equality might have been expected. I cannot say why it is that women, having paid so much more attention than men to the art of music, have never produced a great composer. Again, why is it that women, notwithstanding that they have turned their attention so much more to painting and drawing, have never produced a really great artist? (Murmurs.) I cannot understand either why women who have cultivated cookery so much more generally than men, should, according to universal testimony, have been wanting in the inventive and creative faculty when applied to that useful art. My hon. friend has undertaken a very difficult duty when he calls upon the House to reverse the policy not only of our legislation but of all mankind. From all time there has been drawn a broad line of distinction between the sexes. We have had monarchies and republics, universal suffrage and limited suffrage, but in no country in the world have you had the suffrage conferred upon women up to this time. The noble lord opposite accused those of want of logic who were opposed to this Bill, and who yet voted for the right of women to give their votes in municipal elections. I plead guilty to having supported that Bill without the slightest doubt or hesitation, and for this reason. Women already exercised the right of voting in all similar matters, and I could see no reason why a distinction should be drawn between one municipal question and another municipal question. I am not here to say that women who can perform many duties should not also have many rights; but what I say is that women who are not able to perform all the political duties which fall upon men should not have all the political rights which can be given

safely to men only. Let us look for a moment at the important incidents in the history of our country. What has made our own country, with its vast dependencies, what it is? Were they who first came across the seas to conquer and occupy it men or women? Were they men or women who fought at Hastings, who wrung Magna Charta from King John, who struggled for our civil liberties in the 17th century, or who founded our Colonial Empire? All our history has been made by men and not by women; and our great empire, as it has been made, so it must be preserved in external safety and internal quiet by the action of men. Women are altogether exempt from police and military duties. If our safety is threatened by foreign foes, it is to men alone that we must look for defence; if by internal disturbance, every man among us is liable to be called upon to peril life and limb in defence of public order. If women were as independent as their advocates assert, how is it that we have special legislation treating them as dependent creatures, restricting their employment in manufactories and mines? The only justification upon which it is based, is the conviction that women are dependent upon men, and that it is necessary to protect them. One of the most fatal arguments against this Bill is that by which the hon. member for Falmouth tried to recommend it, namely, that it was to afford security against manhood suffrage, because we cannot admit all women to the suffrage. But if so, what becomes of the political equality or of the natural equality of the sexes? There is one argument, and one only, which would induce me to support this Bill, and that is if I were satisfied that we were doing injustice to women. I deny that altogether. I admit there has been injustice in the legislation of the past, but there has also been injustice to men; and I deny that it was so because this House consisted of men only. Its legislation was determined by the opinions, convictions, feelings, and possibly by the ignorance of the people generally, and improvement in that legislation was due to the increasing intelligence of the people, produced by the writings and reasoning of thinkers who pointed out the barbarous characteristics of our laws. As public opinion advanced so did our legislation. The hon. member for Birmingham said he should vote for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer because he suffered under a grievance which a vote only can redress. There may be force in that, because a whole class is unrepresented in Parliament; but what I assert is that women are represented by husbands, brothers, and fathers who are not indifferent to their welfare; and it is a monstrous assumption that direct representation is needed to ensure in this House the fullest consideration of all their grievances. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE appealed from the repudiation of the thin-end-of-the-wedge argument offered by the noble lord the member for North Leicestershire to the blunt-end-of-the-wedge arguments of the sponsors of the Bill, who ought to know what they were talking about. The mover spoke of enlarging the franchise altogether, of altering political relations as determined by the voting power, and of this Bill in particular as being the necessary complement of the one brought in by the member for the Border Burghs for extending the county franchise. That concluded the question, by putting the whole matter on the basis of a broad agitation for extended suffrage, which, if it went on unchecked, would end not in manhood, but under a female regime in a literally universal suffrage hitherto unknown in any well-regulated community. This was the mover's own answer to the somewhat narrow view of his noble friend, who had supported the motion, that it was clear that in this time of general unsettlement the female vote which they had to appraise would be the per-



sonal vote unrestricted by any qualification, not the privileges of a few easy spinsters and widows. The hon. member for Penryn made a still bolder plunge, for, rushing on with the impetuosity of a Tartar Khan, he first described the condition of that hereafter, of which he clearly had such accurate knowledge, and he then dilated on women's capacity for acting. He (Mr. Beresford Hope) was unequal to follow this rapid flight from the kingdom of heaven to the side scenes of the Adelphi; nor could he admit the identity between angels and the corps de ballet; so the hon. member must make his election, as he could not stand upon both. Scripture had asserted "Male and female created He them." The hon. member said "no" to this; the difference according to him was merely one of education. But he had other arguments besides those drawn from heaven and the theatre and the battle field. It seems that President Grant, at the late presidential election, declared himself favourable to female suffrage, and also Vice-President Wilson. He admired the courage of the man who would draw an argument from that election after what had come out in Congress. The hon. member had not said whether Vice-President Colfax had also favoured women's suffrage, although he went on to tell the House that women already voted in Wyoming Territory. No doubt the House would be much influenced by the example of this juvenile community which stood he believed somewhere near Utah. This movement was a specimen of those fictitious agitations which were too common, and which were got up by a certain number of people who were eminently sincere, but who confounded public opinion with an artificial feeling for which they were responsible. No doubt the ladies who made speeches and circulated pamphlets on the subject were as capable of charming the House with their eloquence as were many of its members; but the object of the Bill was to emancipate, not a given list of ladies, but a class of the female population. Had the ladies who were conducting the agitation considered the condition, financially, intellectually, and socially, of the whole class—many of them poor people overwhelmed with household cares—whom they would enfranchise? Did they suppose that every woman who was painfully eking out a precarious living by letting lodgings was a reader of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*? Many of the class in view could not answer the most elementary question on the most prominent topic of the day, while the least educated of male voters received some political education in the conversation of the workshop and the public house. Where was the slightest evidence of a similar leavening of the female population? The Bill would not remedy the specific grievances of those women who were said to be suffering, as it emancipated only that class of women—the unwedded, namely—who were from their position and circumstances free from such grievances. The absence of spontaneity in the movement was shown by the clever management which secured a report of a meeting in the daily papers on the eve of this debate, and by such petitions as one he had presented. It happened that day that he had presented a petition in favour of this Bill, signed by several very eminent members of the University which he had the honour to represent—men of distinction and ability—men whose support he was sure he should not forfeit by giving an honest vote. This petition did not come directly to him from any one of these distinguished constituents of his, but it came accompanied by a letter from a lady who explained herself to be the secretary of the London Society for promoting this cause, while the analysis of the signatures had previously been sent to the newspapers. He believed that he was speaking in the

presence of one who signed that petition, and he attached great value to his as to the other signatures, but he did not think that justice had been done to the petitioners by the manner in which the petition had been treated. If for no other ground he opposed this Bill, because it was a contribution to doctrinaire agitation on the part of people who lived in the solitude of their own philosophic ideas and thought to recast society on their private theories, forgetful of that great element of human nature which ought to predominate in the affairs of the world. Theory might urge that there was no difference between men and women which the equity of politics should respect, but human nature warned us that if the female character—which was emotional rather than logical—acquired any undue influence in the affairs of state, sentiment and not reason might guide the deliberations of the world. His noble friend the member for North Leicestershire had shown himself somewhat inconsistent in the risky argument which he had drawn from the presence of women on the London School Board. First he had treated the present Bill as a very little measure, and ridiculed the apprehensions of those who argued that women's suffrage might lead to women's membership. Then he not only appealed to the presence of women on the London School Board as a thing good in itself, but he proceeded to exalt the dignity and importance of the London School Board as a body hardly inferior even to Parliament. But if women already sat in an assembly which was by his noble friend's own showing so important, where was the absurdity of anticipating that if this Bill passed Parliament itself might soon be within the female grasp? The election of women on School Boards should be a warning that, if the proposed concession were made, the agitation would go on until, in mere weariness and disgust and utter scepticism as to any good result from further resistance, we might have England governed by that which had never before been heard of except in the Rome of Elagabalus—a Senate of Women.

Mr. FAWCETT: As my name is appended to the petition, and as I have not spoken upon the subject since the Bill was first introduced, I trust that the House will allow me to make a few remarks. With regard to the speech of the hon. member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope), it is only necessary for me to say with reference to the petition to which he has very pointedly alluded, that I believe I have authority to state that there is not a single member of the University who signed that petition who is not perfectly satisfied with the way in which it has been got up, and the matter which it contains. He says it is objectionable that the petition should have been sent to him by a lady who called herself secretary of the London Society for promoting this cause. Now as one of those who signed the petition I must say that I do not think it could be entrusted to better hands than the hands of this lady, especially when I know she is the daughter of one of the most distinguished members of the University which the hon. member represents. I have only one other remark to make in reference to his speech. He says that if women had votes they would be withdrawn from their domestic duties, and that it would be impossible for them to devote the time necessary to enable them to study public questions. Now, in the name of common sense, does he wish us to believe that every man who has a vote is drawn away from the pursuits of his life and from his ordinary daily labour—that an artisan working in a mill—a barrister practising in a court—a doctor attending his patients, cannot properly study public questions without neglecting their ordinary employment. Allow me upon this subject to repeat an anecdote which was related to me a few minutes ago by an hon. member sitting near me, who represents a northern borough.

It will show that the male electors who have votes, are not often, unfortunately, even in their leisure moments, engaged in studying public affairs, but that they sometimes occupy themselves with much less honourable pursuits. I think that the anecdote will forcibly illustrate the injustice of the present system. My hon. friend told me that at a recent election, when he was canvassing the borough he represents, he, and a distinguished member of this House, who was then his colleague, in endeavouring to find two of the electors they wished to canvass, discovered them sitting in a public house. In fact they were drunk, and were certainly not devoting their leisure moments to the study of politics. After my hon. friend had had an interview with his two drunken constituents, and was leaving them, a woman came out of her house and said, "I have paid rates for twenty years. How can you say that I ought not to have a vote when you have just been soliciting the votes of these two drunken men?" "Well," my hon. friend said, "I think what you say is very reasonable," and ever since then he has been a consistent supporter of this Bill. I wish now, in a few words, to refer to the speech of the right hon. gentleman, the Home Secretary. I am not going to be drawn into a discussion as to the relative ability of men and women. It is not necessary to assert that men and women are intellectually equal in all respects. Nobody can express an opinion on the point until the experiment has been fairly tried, and it never yet has been fairly tried. Give women the same opportunities for intellectual development as men, and then, and not till then, shall we be able to say what they can do. I was certainly astonished to hear the Home Secretary say that no woman had ever been a great painter. Did he forget Rosa Bonheur? He said further, that no woman had ever been a great musical composer. He is not perhaps aware, I think it came out afterwards by accident, of a story that shows that women do not always receive their due deserts. Women do their work quietly, and many a man who has attained great success would never have filled so distinguished a position if it had not been that some woman had helped him. Upon this very question of musical composition it has come out that one of the most admired pieces attributed to Mendelssohn was entirely the composition of his sister. That great composer also admitted that she had helped him in his other works to an extent which he could not describe. I must confess that the Home Secretary astonished me very considerably by going into an historical argument, in which he seemed to think that he had discovered, as a reason why women should not have votes, that it was men who had always defended the country, and that it was the barons who obtained the Magna Charta from King John. If this argument is worth anything it certainly amounts to this, that no one should have votes except barons and soldiers. Repeating the argument of the right hon. member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie), the Home Secretary said, the great argument against the Bill of my hon. friend was that if it were carried it would ultimately lead to the giving of votes to married women and to women taking seats in this house. Before I reply to that argument let me say that it is an old one. Never was there a great change proposed, or a great measure of reform brought forward, but that some "bogey" was immediately called up to alarm and terrify us. When Catholic emancipation was proposed and it was advocated that Catholics should have seats in this House, one of the favourite arguments of the opponents of the proposal was, that if the Catholics were admitted to this House there was no reason why a Catholic should not sit upon the throne. One of the favourite arguments used by the opponents of household suffrage was that if household suffrage were granted there was only one other step, and that was manhood suffrage. We have

not been intimidated or frightened by arguments such as this, but it seems to me that the Home Secretary and the right hon. member for Kilmarnock are indulging in doctrines which are dangerous, when they assume to think that property is no longer to be the basis of the qualification for a vote in this country. The right hon. member for Kilmarnock quoted with commendation a saying of the democratic Benjamin Franklin, that it is idle to suppose that property possesses the exclusive right to the franchise. Without presuming too confidently to predict what will happen, I have no hesitation in saying that these words of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, will next Easter Monday be quoted with rapturous applause, when 60,000 men gather together on the Town Moor at Newcastle to demand manhood suffrage. There is no logical reason why married women should not have votes if you demand manhood suffrage. But we who support this Bill do not wish to declare that we desire that the franchise should be based upon any other condition than it is based upon at the present moment, namely, property. Unless a woman can obtain a vote by property we do not wish to do anything either to admit her or to exclude her. It is therefore you who, if you throw this argument of property aside, will be lending an assistance to the agitation in favour of manhood suffrage which I believe you will heartily repent. I wish now, as briefly as possible, to go through the leading arguments which have been advanced in the debate upon this Bill. The reasons in its favour have been stated so often, and I am anxious to occupy as little as possible of the time of the House, that it appears to me to be the fairer course to deal with the arguments against rather than those in favour of the Bill. The first argument is that the majority of women do not ask for this Bill, and that a great number of them are opposed to it. If this Bill contemplated making a woman vote who did not wish to vote, it would not find a more resolute opponent in this House than myself. But when you say that a majority of women are opposed to it, I say that it is impossible to prove it; and I say further, that the same argument, in an analogous case, you did not accept as complete. I remember perfectly well, when I first came into this House, that I heard it stated again and again that the majority of the working classes of this country were not in favour of the extension of the suffrage. It was said that it was only the active politicians among them, just as it is now said that it is only the active women agitators who are in favour of this Bill. Now, what do we observe? No doubt it never could be proved that a majority of the working classes were in favour of the extension of the suffrage, and any more than it can be proved now that a majority of the agricultural labourers are in favour of household suffrage in counties; and yet it was again and again stated that the majority of the working classes were in favour of household suffrage. The House soon after that recognised the justice of the claim for an extension of the suffrage to the artisan class, by having once recognised the abstract justice of the plea. But the argument which no doubt produced the most influence on the House is this, that at the present time the interests of women are far better looked after by men than they would be looked after by themselves; and it is said by the Home Secretary that if you could only prove to him that women's questions of a vitally interesting nature were treated with injustice in this House, it would be a conclusive argument in favour of voting for the Bill. Nothing could be further from my mind than to accuse this House of consciously doing anything which is unjust or wrong to women, but women and men may have very different views of what is best for women, and our position is this, that according to the principles of representative government it is only fair that women should be able to give expression to their wishes on

measures likely to affect their interests. Take for instance the case of educational endowments. The Endowed Schools Commissioners have again and again said that one feeling they found prevalent in the towns is, that educational endowments should be so used that the wants of every boy should be satisfied before any attention is paid to the wants of women. What right have we to suppose that this is the opinion of women on this subject, considering their enthusiasm for education? What right have we to suppose that if they could exercise power in this House they would not demand an equal share in the educational endowments of the country? I wish to direct the attention of the House to what seems to me a most important argument on this subject. Hitherto the question has been treated too much as if it simply concerned women of property. Now, you say that men can be safely entrusted to legislate for women—that men can be safely entrusted in the constituencies to represent the wants of women. I say that any one who studies the industrial history of the country—any one who looks to what trades unions have done—cannot for a moment believe in this conclusion. What are the arguments in favour of trades unions. I am not opposed to trades unions. One of the first speeches I ever made was in their favour, but at the same time I do not conceal their defects. It has been again and again asserted that without the power of combining in trades unions it would be impossible for workmen to obtain a proper reward for their labour, and that it would be impossible to secure their just rights. This is their deliberate conviction asserted a thousand times over. But have they ever admitted a woman to these trade unions? They have almost invariably excluded women, and although they say that without these combinations it is impossible for labour to obtain its just reward, they take very good care to exclude women from them. I have known, on several occasions, when a trades union has organised a strike, that when the women who had had no voice in deciding upon the strike showed themselves anxious to take advantage of the labour market, the trades unionists stood outside the shops to keep women away from doing men's work. What took place in the Potteries? It is perfectly well known that for years and years men were so jealous of the competition of women labourers that they made it a rule in the trades union that the whole force of the union should be used to prevent women from using the hand-*rest* which the men invariably avail themselves of, and which greatly facilitates the rapidity and precision of the work. Let us look to our legislation for the future, and I ask the House calmly to consider whether looking at some of the measures likely to be brought forward, it is not of essential importance that we should take the opinion of women upon them. Probably there is no social measure existing in connection with the manufacturing districts which is of so much interest at the present time as the Nine Hours Bill, introduced by the hon. member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella). I have no doubt that the hon. member has introduced that Bill with the purest motives; it is a Bill that affects vitally the interests of the unrepresented classes. Now what is this Bill? It is a Bill that limits the labour of women to nine hours a day. What must be the inevitable result of that Bill? It must do one of two things—either impose a legislative limit of nine hours a day over all the country—and in that case call it a general Nine Hours Bill, or it must inevitably place the most serious restrictions and impediments upon the employment of women. For how can a manufacturer, unless he employs women on the principle of half-time, say that directly the nine hours are up, every woman must leave, and then let the mill go on working for another hour or two without a woman being employed? The inevitable result will be to place grievous impediments

in the way of the employment of women, and before we sanction such a measure it certainly seems to me that women should be consulted. It is, in my opinion, of the utmost importance that their opinion should be consulted. I am bound in candour to say—I don't know whether the sentiment is popular or not—that, looking to the past industrial history of the country, and seeing what the trades unionists have sometimes done to women, I am not certain that there is not at the bottom of the movement a feeling which is prompted by the jealousy of men with regard to the labour of women. But there is an argument, perhaps not avowed in this House, that is, nevertheless, producing a great influence upon the Liberal members, and it is one to which I wish particularly to direct the attention of hon. members. I have heard it said again and again, by Liberal friends of mine, that they cannot vote for this Bill because they think one of its consequences would be to hinder the disestablishment of the Church. They are of opinion that the majority of women are opposed to disestablishment, and that if this Bill is passed it will put back that question fifty years. I am anxious to speak on this subject, because I have always been in favour of disestablishment, and I shall always be in favour of it. But although these are my sentiments, it certainly seems to me to be an injustice of the grossest possible kind if we for one moment sanction the exclusion of women simply because we feel that they are so much in favour of the continuance of the Church that if they could exercise their vote the establishment of the Church would continue. Would it not be an injustice, almost amounting to a fraud, if the Church were disestablished on the plea that just a bare majority of the electors were in favour of disestablishment, when, at the same time, we believe that the feeling of women in favour of establishment is so great that the majority of the men would represent only a minority of the whole nation, and that taking men and women together the majority is not in favour of disestablishment but of establishment? It may of course be said that in some questions the opinion of men is more important than that of women, and that the opinion of 100,000 men in favour of a particular proposal represents more weight than the opinion of 100,000 women against it. But can you say this with regard to such a question as the Church, or the question of the Nine Hours' Bill, or others I might enumerate? Surely you cannot say it with regard to the Church, for the spiritual welfare of women is of just as much importance as the spiritual welfare of men, and in a question whether the Church should be continued as an established Church or not the opinion of women ought to exercise the greatest amount of influence upon us. We ought to endeavour to trace out what is the effect of the Church establishment upon the great mass of the people, and to whom would you go to obtain this opinion? It seems to me that if I wished to ascertain what is the effect which the Church is producing at the present time I should go to those who are most practically acquainted with its working—those who see most clearly its influence among the poor—and I believe they are women and not men. Now, however much I may be in favour of disestablishment, it seems to me that to exclude women from the vote, simply because we think it would delay the reform we desire, is sanctioning a principle which is essentially unfair—essentially unjust—and is just as unreasonable as if the Church party were to try to disfranchise the Nonconformists because the Nonconformists have tried to disestablish them. It seems to me, further, that you cannot rest the exclusion of women upon the ground that they are unfit intellectually for the franchise. Last year you did that which showed conclusively that in your opinion, however unfit intellectually they might be to vote, yet if they possessed a certain

property qualification they ought to have a vote. You cast to the winds the idea of anything like intellectual fitness when you were occupied night after night in elaborating various schemes for securing the representation of the illiterate voter. It is evident, I think, that "coming events cast their shadows before." I infer from the speech of the Home Secretary that the Government are about to join the Liberal members at this end of the House in support of the Bill of my hon. friend the member for the Border Boroughs (Mr. Trevelyan) in favour of giving the agricultural labourer a vote. But if we enfranchise the agricultural labourer, and refuse to give a vote to women, we shall be landed in this dilemma—we shall declare that although the labourer, however ignorant, ought to have a vote, no woman, however intellectual, ought to enjoy it. I will only in conclusion allude to one thing which, no doubt, has greatly prejudiced this Bill. It has so happened that my hon. friend the member for Manchester has been identified with another agitation, and it has also happened that many persons who are advocates of this Bill outside this House have also been identified with that agitation in favour of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. It appears to me singularly unfair to let such a consideration as this in the least degree influence our decision. It would be just as unfair as it would be to let our decision be influenced on any question that can be brought forward by my hon. friend the member for Carlisle (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), because he happens to be identified with the Permissive Bill. I can only say that many of those who support this Bill differ fundamentally from the views held by the hon. member for Manchester in reference to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; and many of those who are the strongest advocates of the Women's Disabilities Bill outside the House are also opposed to the manner in which the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts has been conducted. Now I will only say in reply to the argument of the right hon. member for Kilmarnock that he seems to think that those who support this Bill wish to make women less womanly. If the right hon. gentleman can convince me that giving them a vote would make them in any respect less womanly, or men less manly, I would immediately vote against the Bill. He concluded by quoting a sentence from Addison, in which he says that the glory of a state consists in the modesty of women and the courage of men. I have yet to learn that this Bill is calculated to make women less modest; and I have also yet to learn that giving women a vote, can in the slightest degree diminish the courage of men. It is probable, nay, almost certain, that this measure will not be accepted on the present occasion. I believe that the feeling in its favour is growing. I believe, if there are no more solid reasons than those which have been advanced against it to-day, it is certain to stand the trial of free discussion. It is possible that women exaggerate the advantages which the passing of this Bill will confer upon them, but I am most firmly convinced that the other consequences which are attributed to it by the opponents of the measure are infinitely more exaggerated.

Mr. HERON: Sir,—The usual arguments have been adduced at this stage against the Bill of my hon. friend the member for Manchester. My hon. friend the member for Huddersfield has introduced what I may call the facetious argument, and has referred to the possibilities of what might occur if we had a lady Prime Minister, which invariably provokes a laugh. It is easy, as in a Christmas play, to introduce a baby in a perambulator, and to ill-treat that unfortunate argument. But the hon. member for the University of Cambridge has referred to one or two matters of importance which I invite candid attention to. Among other things he has said that there is no possibility of injustice

being done to a woman by being deprived of the franchise; but I would just remind him that in Ireland it has repeatedly happened in the pastoral districts that a woman, the wife of the elector, and who has practically been the head of the household for years, contributing mainly to its sources of income, as the head and manager of the dairy farm, has, on the death of her husband, received notice to quit, and been driven from the house which she had for years supported. Then some reference has been made to what I may term the historical argument. I thought that was an argument which had been long since exploded, but we have had references to the invasion of England by the Anglo-Saxons, and to the assembling of the barons at Runnymede. Women had no votes then. But it must be remembered that in those times Parliamentary representation did not exist. Representative government, as it is now understood, is only a matter of the last few centuries in the history of the world. It is idle to draw historical allusions from a remote antiquity or even from the middle ages, seeing that in those ages parliamentary representation did not exist. We are also met by what is called the logical argument; but when it is urged that women are deficient in logical acuteness I would ask how many hon. members there are in this House who could stand a competitive examination in the works of John Stuart Mill if that were a qualification for entering Parliament. The common argument is that women should be placed on too lofty a pedestal to be dragged through the mire of political contests; but I would refer hon. gentlemen who use that argument to a consideration of the many degrading employments of women, and I would ask how long it is since women were compelled to work in the mines of England and of Scotland. Is it not the fact that even now they are condemned to the most menial domestic offices, and to those employments out of doors which at all events do not place them on that political pedestal of beauty on which hon. members seek to place them. Now the present Bill is not a matter of the great importance which some hon. members seem to attribute to it. It does not enfranchise any enormous number of women; and I would ask anyone whether, in the present state of modern society, intelligence, good sense, good conduct, and a property qualification should not have a right to the franchise irrespective of sex. If women got the franchise under the Bill which gives it to those illiterate voters for whom we sat hours and weeks last year in order to secure it to them, I do not think they need be at all afraid of any comparison that might be made; and I would ask why women who trade in every trade, who work in every work, and who are artists in every art, are not to be considered fit to hold the electoral franchise. I shall not detain the House from a division any longer; but I trust that by the vote to be recorded to-day progress will be made in this matter, and that at all events a great number of hon. gentlemen will declare that the electoral franchise is no longer to be denied to that half the community who are not the least suited to advance the prosperity and happiness of the empire. (Cheers).

Earl PERCY:—I thank the hon. member for Brighton for one or two admissions which he made in the course of his speech. He told us that a community of trades unionists declined to allow their wives to become members of trades unions, and beat them with sticks from the doors of the shops where they applied for work during a strike, and yet we are constantly told that this class should occupy a most prominent position in reference to all legislative functions. Then he told us that the Church ought not to be disestablished until we had taken measures to ascertain the feelings

of all those who had any interest—I had almost said in their eternal welfare. I think the question before us is one on which the House has probably already made up its mind, and therefore, as it would be idle to spend much more time upon it, I shall not go into one or two other points in the hon. gentleman's speech to which I might otherwise have referred. The hon. gentleman, however, told us one curious story about two men in a house being drunk and a woman sober, from which he drew the conclusion that the woman ought to have a vote. That was very peculiar logic, for it was equivalent to saying that where A is a man who is sober and B a man who is drunk, A ought to have a vote and B not. That is an argument scarcely worthy of the hon. member. But what I rose for chiefly was to express my astonishment at the support which this measure has received from this side of the House, because I look upon it in the same light as the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, as being the most utterly revolutionary one which has been brought before us for a very long period. I know I shall be told that it is a very Conservative measure, that ladies are very great admirers of Conservatism, and so forth. If hon. members mean by this that it would be a very popular party move, I do not feel myself in a position to be able to give an opinion upon that subject, but if it is meant that Conservative principles would be supported by such a measure, I must say that if that were the case it would be the most remarkable instance of gathering grapes from thorn bushes that was ever witnessed in the history of the world. I look upon this measure as a symptom of that spirit which is now so widely spread abroad—the spirit which seeks to do away with all distinctions in society, whether made by God or man. It is not difficult to see the motive which actuates the agitators of this question—that Will-o'-the-wisp that seems to have been reserved for us in the 19th century—the delusion of equality. It is equality in everything that makes them advocate the female franchise. This is a levelling Bill, and I am convinced that no good can possibly arise from it. We are told on rather high authority that the proper duty of a woman is to be discreet and to keep at home, and from recent experience it certainly would seem that when they cease to be keepers at home they cease to be discreet. We are retrograding in civilization, and no considerations of experience or revelation seem to have any weight with us. But we can still perceive what the laws of Nature impress upon us; and I certainly never heard until this evening the theory really advanced that we should have regiments of Amazons. We do not seem to know that it is not fit for women to teach in large assemblies—yet that discovery was made eighteen hundred years ago. Nor do we perceive what part women have played in history. I know that if this measure had been passed in former times the result would have been that all the viragoes and furies in history would have been the most active voters in contested elections, whereas all the most respectable part of the female population would have stayed at home. Is it necessary to remind the House that women's passions are infinitely more violent, when once called forth, than men's. Who was it that was the chief instigator of the massacre of St. Bartholomew? Has the House forgotten the part that women played in the most horrible scenes of the French Revolution? The state of Europe is not so tranquil nor the future of politics so calm, that this is a fit time to invite the young ladies of England to engage in political strife. Of all ages the present is, perhaps, the one in which political power is most unfitted for them; but the principle is the same in all ages. The real fact is that man in the beginning was ordained to rule

over the woman, and this is an Eternal decree which we have no right and no power to alter. I know this truth has been abused, and that the strong have ever tyrannized over the weak in this as in every other relation of life. But if the remedy for this is to put the weak on an equality with the strong, then we must overthrow every authority and throne in Europe, for all have alike abused their power. This is the radical solution of the difficulty, but it is not one which should have found support from Conservative benches.

After some observations from Mr. GOLDNEY, in opposition to the Bill,

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGGESSEN said: I will detain the House but a very few moments, and I should like to explain in the first instance how entirely I endorse the remark of the noble lord the member for Lewes that this is not a question that ought to be discussed in sarcasm. A certain demand is made by a large number of our fellow-citizens in the most respectful manner, with much eloquence, persistence, and ability, and such a demand is entitled to a considerate reception at the hands of the House. I am bound to say that I always hear with great regret any of those jokes on the subject, and I think they are hardly calculated to maintain the dignity of the House, or that they are consistent with the good taste which generally characterises the debates of a legislative assembly of English gentlemen. I must say, however, that those who support the Bill have rather led its opponents to use language of this kind, because both the mover and the seconder of the second reading of the Bill treated their opponents with something like contempt. Indeed the hon. gentleman who seconded the motion began by saying that all the arguments against the Bill had been answered over and over again, and that therefore he would not pursue them, and then he fell into a strange inconsistency. He had said that it was absurd to suppose that there was anything in the constitution of woman which rendered her less fit for laborious occupations than man, and he had instanced cases in which women had proved as good soldiers as men, and had served as such without their sex being discovered, and in the next breath he said that no one in his senses really believed that if this Bill passed women would sit in this House, because it was palpable to every who heard him that the toil and labour of a member of Parliament were greater than the nature of any woman would enable her to endure. The whole force of the objection to the Bill rests on one argument and consideration, namely that Nature, or I will say God, has created organic differences in the constitutions of men and women, assigning to each sex duties which the other was incompetent to discharge. That is the whole point of the matter. There are certain duties which can be performed by men and not by women, and certain duties which can be performed by women and not by men. I will not attempt to follow the course of the debate, and I regret that after several defeats the question has again been mooted in the last sessions of an expiring Parliament. I still retain the opinions of the Bill which I expressed last year, and therefore shall vote against it; but my so doing will not be attributable to the motives which the hon. member for Brighton has attributed to some hon. members on this side of the House. The argument as to whether women would vote on one side or the other is not, I think, worth considering. I shall not follow the hon. member for Brighton in his remarks as to the bearing of this question on the disestablishment of the Church; but what I do contend is that if you give women the franchise by this Bill you cannot give them additional rights without giving them also additional responsibilities. If women are to have an equal share with us in

our rights, they must be prepared to share equally our responsibilities, and I for one will not expose my countrywomen to that. No doubt there may have been many passionate and eloquent speeches made by different women on this subject, but I do not think we have yet seen any conclusive proof of the general wish of the women of the country for this measure. I wanted to say a few words upon the Bill, because my constituents have been visited by those ladies who go about the country. I have nothing to complain of in the tone those ladies adopt, but only that when they come into my locality they did not give me the opportunity of offering them hospitality. (Laughter.) As for the Bill itself, Parliament has already pronounced against it. The reasons which induced me to oppose it last year are equally in force now, for while I have listened with respect to the arguments given in favour of the measure, I am bound to say that I remain of the same opinion as last year.

Mr. HENLEY:—Sir, I have always voted against this Bill, but I have lately watched carefully the operation of the exercise of the franchise both in municipal and in school board elections by women, and as I think it has been beneficial in these cases I do not see any reason why it should not be beneficial in Parliamentary elections. What my hon. friend has said has confirmed me in the view I have adopted. He says the French revolutionists considered that they would not have the women. Well, I do not want us to be revolutionists, and that is an additional reason why we at all events should give the franchise to women. As to any insecurity in the wording of the Bill, that may be set right in committee. The principle is that women should have the right of voting. I confess that I have always hitherto voted against the Bill, but for the reasons I have stated I shall now give it my hearty support.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that many hon. members were not present to hear the able speech of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie); I still more regretted the conduct of some members on this side of the House, who heard the right hon. gentleman. While I listened to the speech of the right hon. the member for Oxfordshire, who has just sat down (Mr. Henley), and to the speech of the noble lord the member for Leicestershire (Lord John Manners), what these right hon. gentlemen said recalled to my mind the old adage—

"A woman convinced against her will,  
Is of the same opinion still."

And it appeared to me that this feminine peculiarity has infected some of the advocates of the Bill on this—which is said to be the Conservative—side of the House. I hope that these gentlemen are in a small minority among us, for I cannot look upon this as a Conservative measure—(cheers)—although it was so represented by the hon. member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), yet he said he was in favour of the disestablishment of the Church, and then went on to tell us, that, in order to maintain the Church as an establishment, we should disestablish the manhood qualification of the electors. (Hear.) Sir, it was an observation of Mr. Burke, that literary men as politicians are too much given to change; and of the truth of this, I cannot conceive of a more striking illustration than the hon. member for Brighton has afforded. Desiring as he does, the disestablishment of the Church, how can he expect us to accept his advice by adopting so revolutionary a measure as female suffrage; when we know it is considered so ultra-democratic, that it has been rejected by almost every State in the American Union; and yet that we should do this with a view to preserving the Established Church, which is peculiarly characteristic of our Conservative constitution? (Hear, hear.) The weakness of the arguments in favour of this Bill has

been most extraordinary; the hon. member for Penryn (Mr. Eastwick) said, that we have refused to enter into argument with him. But why? Because we dispute his premise. (Cheers.) His premise is, that there is no mental difference between men and women. The whole course of Revelation and of history confutes that proposition, and it lies at the foundation of the arguments, attempted in favour of this Bill. The teaching of history is emphatic in this point; and I lament that hon. members on this side of the House, who call themselves Conservatives, should totally abandon the very foundation of their claim to that title by giving their support to this measure. (Hear, hear.) Experience has taught me to fear the zeal of converts. (Hear, hear.) A Conservative Government, composed of gentlemen now sitting on this side of the House, brought in and carried a measure of Parliamentary reform, which I have heard repeatedly condemned as too democratic by gentlemen on the other side of the House; and since the right hon. gentlemen on this side of the House took that course, it appears to me that some of the leading spokesmen of the Conservative party are more rash in their views of innovation, than many members on the opposite benches. (Liberal cheers, and movement in the Opposition ranks.) I was glad to hear the constitutional and manly speech of the right hon. gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman told us that he did not represent the views of the Government upon this question, and that the Government are divided upon it. So much the worse for the Government. (Cheers and laughter.) I will for a moment consider an illustration that was given by the hon. member for Brighton. The hon. member says that trades' unionists refuse to admit women to their unions. I do not justify in the least the excesses he mentioned which are sometimes committed by these bodies; but I do say that, in coming to this conclusion, the artisans seem to me, in the deliberate exercise of their judgment, to have furnished an argument against this Bill, and surely they are qualified to judge of the interests of their own order. This shows the feeling of the artisan class and the lower grades of society. By citing their example the hon. member for Brighton has furnished us with an argument against this Bill. I hold that *we* ought not to manifest less respect for manhood than these men. (Cheers.) Now let the House consider its own position: the present Parliament began its career with professions of regret and repentance for the supposed sins of its predecessors against Ireland. The House put on sackcloth and ashes in the presence of Irish turbulence. During two sessions this House, arrayed in sackcloth and ashes, devoted itself to the satisfying of Irish demands. You first disestablished the Protestant Church in Ireland; you next gave a large portion of the land, of the property, that once belonged to the landlords to the tenants; in the third session you passed an Election Bill involving the adoption of secret voting, a measure which the Prime Minister at the outset acknowledged inflicted upon him a painful sense of degradation; and in this he was echoed by the hon. member for Taunton. Now, I pray the House not to proceed further in this course of humiliation. I pray you to stand by your manhood. (Cheers.) Do not for one moment admit that, being, as you are, men, an assembly of men, elected by men, you cannot or will not do justice to women. (Cheers.) Be assured that you cannot, either as a House of Commons or as individuals, command the respect of Englishmen, of Scotchmen, or of Irishmen, if you are perpetually repeating and acting upon the understanding that you are ashamed of the conduct of your predecessors, and feel yourselves incapable of performing the common duties of manhood; and among these stand prominent the duty of guarding and protecting the interests of women. (Cheers.)

Sir J. S. TRELAWNEY said that although he had hitherto supported this Bill and intended to do so now, he could not help remarking that during an important debate to which ladies ought not to have listened, ladies were in the gallery fanning themselves, and that much mischief had been done by ladies going about the country to agitate for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. He referred to some passages in the 34th Book of Livy, in which there is censure of certain women for proceedings therein described. "Matronæ nullæ nec autoritate nec verecundia, nec imperiis virorum contineri limine poterunt." "Atque ego vix statuere apud animum meum possum utrum pejor ipsa res est an pejore exemplo agatur."\*

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT said: I am not going to make any speech in reply to the debate, but I should like to thank the right hon. member for Oxfordshire for what I should consider, in spite of what the hon. member for North Warwickshire has said about manhood, as one of the most manly speeches made in the course of this debate. I must congratulate those who support this Bill upon that speech, for I remember the influence which the right hon. gentleman has exercised on this House and in this country in regard to household suffrage for men. I believe his speech to-day will have a great influence in household suffrage for women. I now leave the question to the judgment of the House.

Mr. GREENE could not understand on what ground this Bill could be supported as a Conservative measure. He should be very sorry to see any member in the House vote for a measure which he did not believe to be for the good of the community. He did not believe it to be for the good of the community to enable ladies to vote at Parliamentary elections, although no man had a higher regard for them than he had. He had taken counsel with many ladies on this question, and nearly all of them advised him not to vote for this measure, because they were of opinion that the operation of it would excite unpleasant feelings between themselves and their male relatives. (Hear, hear.) He would tell a little story which might be of some service to political ladies whose husbands were refractory as to voting. There was a poor woman in his parish who had a very bad husband. A clergyman advised her to talk kindly to her husband and thus try to "heap coals of fire on his head." Subsequently the clergyman asked her how matters were going at home. She replied, "I thought a good deal about putting fire on my husband's head, but I tried boiling water." (Roars of laughter.)

The House then divided on the question that the Bill be read a second time, when there appeared—

Ayes ..... 155  
Noes ..... 222  
Majority.....—67

The Bill was consequently lost.

The division list was given in our last issue.

Summary of petitions presented respecting the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill during the session up to May 20, 1873, taken from the Parliamentary report:—

	No. of Petitions signed Officially or under Seal.	Total No. of Petitions.	Total No. of Signatures.
Women's Disabilities Bill—In favour	175	909	326,960

\* The quotation may be translated thus: "The married women could not be kept indoors by any authority, nor by any feeling of modesty, nor by the bidding of their husbands; and I can scarcely make up my mind which is worse, the matter they were about or the example." Livy is describing what happened when it was proposed to repeal the Oppian Law, which limited the amount of property a woman could inherit, and placed restrictions on her dress. The women made demonstrations in favour of its repeal, and Livy's words are his comments on their proceedings.

ELECTION INTELLIGENCE.

BATH.

The return of Lord Chelsea for Bath is the gain of a seat for the supporters of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill. The late member, Sir W. Tite, voted against the measure, but his successor has pledged himself to vote for it. A deputation of the Bath Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage had an interview with Lord Chelsea during his candidature. The deputation was introduced by Mr. R. E. Peach, and consisted of Lady Anna Gore Langton, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Layton, Mrs. E. Hill, Mrs. Clibborn, Miss Ashworth, Miss Liliash Ashworth, and Miss Spender. Miss Liliash Ashworth explained the object of the interview, which was to learn his lordship's opinion on the question. She pointed out the fact that in Bath there were 1,400 women on the burgess list, and entitled to vote at municipal elections. They therefore thought there was no reason why they should not have the parliamentary franchise. Lord Chelsea in replying said that the best answer he could make was to repeat the words he used on Monday. He read an extract from a speech which he had delivered containing an approval of the principle of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill, and after some further observations from his lordship the deputation withdrew, thanking him for granting the interview, and expressing their general approval of his remarks. At a subsequent meeting of the electors, on May 1st, Lord Chelsea again referred to the subject, remarking—"I think you know by this time, at least I hope you do, that I have announced my intention of supporting a measure having for its object the enfranchisement of all those of the opposite sex who by their sex are incapacitated from representing by their votes that property which they hold and for which they pay the burdens of the State. (Hear, hear.) I dare say you all know, because you all take such great interest in public questions, that that measure was discussed yesterday in the House of Commons and rejected. But I do not wish to shirk it on that account, because the motion is brought on annually, and if you return me to Parliament, as I hope you will—(cheers)—and keep me there more than a year, I am pretty sure to have an opportunity of expressing my opinion upon it by my vote. I have said that I had objected to the principle of female suffrage merely on the principle that a woman is entitled to vote because a man does. I am obliged to guard myself in this way, because you would otherwise think that if I voted for Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill now, and if the wishes of some of the agitators were carried out, and we had manhood suffrage instead of a suffrage the qualification of which is property, that is the tenure of a house, and the duties of which involve the payment of rates—if manhood suffrage becomes the law of the land, you would perhaps think I should be inclined to vote for extending the suffrage accorded by Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill to females to all women throughout the land; but it is only right for me to tell you that I do not go as far as that. (Applause.) I may be wrong, but I think it honest to tell you exactly what I think and exactly what I am prepared to do." (Hear, hear.) The question to Mr. Murch, the Liberal candidate, elicited a far less satisfactory response. He said that although there was a good deal to be said in favour of women suffrage he could not make up his mind to vote for it. At one of the ward meetings addressed by Mr. Murch, when questions were invited, Miss Liliash Ashworth rose in the body of the room and asked whether as a ratepayer in that ward she might be allowed to ask the Liberal candidate for Bath a question. He had already declared distinctly that he would not vote in favour of votes being given to women. The question she had to ask him was not one with reference to women, but one with reference to the working

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Women's Suffrage Journal.

Dear Madam,—You gave admission last year to the letter in which I described how I had twice refused payment of the state taxes, allowed a seizure to be made, a man to be put in possession, and my goods to be taken away and sold; so I hope you will now permit me space to say that I have, this year, refused payment for the *third* time, and have taken the consequences as before. I have done this as the most earnest, peaceable, and direct protest that can be made against the great injustice which denies women householders the right to vote for Members of Parliament, although that vote is dependent upon taxation, and men and women householders are taxed equally. If women householders generally could see the importance of making a protest in this way—which proves our earnestness in requiring justice—I believe that they would feel, as I and another householder, who has also made this protest, certainly do, that they can "gladly" bear the inconvenience and expense, which are slight in comparison with the principle at stake. The independence of America was gained by the determination of the colonists in refusing to submit to taxation without representation. To make free a continent was a great work; to make free half the human race is one far greater. Women have not the coarse weapon of the sword with which to fight this battle, but if they believe that justice is above all the world's petty distinctions founded on sex or colour, they will work on in hope and in the faith that right will eventually supersede might. The obligation to do our utmost is laid upon us, and the future of our sisters depends upon the conduct of the present. I believe we can in no way show our earnestness more than in refusing the state taxes, a protest which any woman householder can make without leaving her own house.—Yours faithfully,

GLOUCESTER.

The vacancy in the representation of Gloucester has been filled by the return of the Conservative candidate, Mr. Wait, who is supposed to be favourably disposed to women's suffrage. The defeated Liberal candidate was said to be strongly opposed to it.

SCARBOROUGH.

The Radicals of Scarborough have determined to bring forward as their candidate at the general election Professor Thorold Rogers, late of Oxford. At a public meeting of the electors held on April 29th, in reply to a question from Councillor Whitaker, Professor Rogers said: "As to women's suffrage, he did not see how the franchise could be logically refused to women. They granted that franchise on the payment of rates, and why should not a woman who paid the rates have the same privileges as a man. He believed if we had more of the energies and activity of women brought into play it would be better. The introduction of women into the School Boards had been attended with the best results. If they were upon the Boards of Guardians they would detect cases of fraud that men could not find out. He repeated that it seemed illogical to refuse women the franchise. If this were granted he did not think it likely that women would seek or that they would be sent to fill seats in Parliament. However that might be, he thought it was not the duty of the House of Commons to define who would sit there, that was a question for the people."

RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE.

In the course of an address to the electors of Richmond on May 19th, Mr. J. C. Dundas, the only candidate before the constituency, said, "I observe there are some ladies present, so a word with regard to ladies' suffrage. (Laughter and applause.) I may say, I think so long as there is a property qualification, I see no objection to women suffrage; that is, to unmarried ladies, who possess property qualification, having votes. (Applause.) There may be some here who look forward to manhood suffrage. I don't think that it will ever be; but if it is, I trust I may not live to see it, for I believe it would be a bad day for England. But if that day should arrive, I warn you that I will not vote for women suffrage."

Obituary.

JOHN STUART MILL.

We have this month to record the greatest loss we have as yet sustained, that of the pioneer and original parliamentary leader of the women's suffrage cause. John Stuart Mill died at Avignon on the 8th of May, after an illness of three days. Only a month previously he addressed a public meeting in London, and two weeks before his death he was in his usual health. He was born on the 20th May, 1806. In 1822 he entered the India Office, in which he remained for five and thirty years. In 1851 he married Mrs. John Taylor, widow of a London merchant, and after a brief married life she died at Avignon, in 1858. In 1865—the general election—he was returned for Westminster, and after three years of Parliamentary life he was defeated at the succeeding election of 1868. Outwardly his life was retired and uneventful, yet it has been an event in the progress of the world. He died at the age of sixty-seven years, having lived to see the dawn of success during his own lifetime of one, at least, of the objects which he had most at heart, but of which he at first believed the accomplishment was reserved for the next generation.

Owing to the length of the report of the parliamentary debate, we are obliged to postpone notices of some public meetings which have been held.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

## TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS

are offered to the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage by Two Friends, as soon as the remainder of the sum of Two Thousand Guineas shall be promised. June 1st, 1873.

The committee have pleasure in reporting that Five Hundred Pounds towards the sum has been already promised, and that an extension of time has been afforded. They earnestly appeal to the friends of the cause for aid in raising the rest. The efficiency of the work for the coming season depends on the result of their efforts to obtain funds to provide for it.

Donations of any amount will be gratefully received.  
He gives twice who gives quickly.

LYDIA E. BECKER, SECRETARY.

28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING  
MAY, 1873.

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Thomas Thomasson .....	105	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. W. Hargreaves .....	20	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Wood .....	10	0	0
"A Friend" .....	10	0	0
Mrs. Long .....	5	0	0
Major-General Sir Arthur Phayre, K.C.B. ....	2	2	0
The Dowager Countess of Buchan .....	2	0	0
Mr. C. D. Argles .....	2	0	0
Miss E. Colling .....	2	0	0
Miss S. C. Gould .....	2	0	0
Mr. H. G. Hunt .....	2	0	0
Mrs. Townshend Wood .....	2	0	0
Mr. W. F. Rae .....	1	1	0
Mrs. Gaston .....	1	1	0
Mr. H. Measham .....	1	1	0
Miss E. A. Knott .....	1	1	0
Mr. James Rhoades .....	1	0	0
Lady Lytton .....	1	0	0
Miss Grace Leigh Grange .....	1	0	0
Mrs. Bonus .....	1	0	0
Mrs. F. Eastwood .....	1	0	0
Mrs. Tewson .....	1	0	0
Misses S. and H. Smith .....	1	0	0
Mr. H. Nicol .....	0	10	6
Mrs. Kenderdine .....	0	10	0
Miss Turl .....	0	10	0
Mr. A. M. Worthington .....	0	10	0
Mr. T. K. Greenbank .....	0	10	0
Mrs. Algernon Kingsford .....	0	10	0
Miss A. F. Hughes .....	0	10	0
"Two Friends," per Miss M. Hargreaves .....	0	10	0
Miss Mulligan .....	0	10	0
Miss Merryweather .....	0	10	0
Mrs. Daniell .....	0	10	0
Mrs. George Senior .....	0	7	6
"A White Slave and another Irishwoman" .....	0	7	6
Miss Sophia Wells .....	0	6	0
Rev. A. Worthington .....	0	5	0
Miss Helen C. Gerard .....	0	5	0
Miss J. C. Seel .....	0	5	0
Miss Bessie Seel .....	0	5	0
B. J. Fox .....	0	5	0
Miss Margaret Shaw .....	0	5	0
Mr. F. W. Haslam .....	0	5	0
Mrs. A. Bevington .....	0	5	0
Mrs. Green .....	0	5	0
Mr. J. Briant .....	0	5	0
Mrs. Addison .....	0	5	0
Misses Southall .....	0	5	0
Miss Agnes Simmons .....	0	5	0
Miss Giulielma Stephens .....	0	2	6
"J. H. S." .....	0	2	6
Mrs. Jane Head .....	0	2	6
Mr. J. Briggs .....	0	2	6
Mr. J. B. Adams .....	0	2	0
Collected by Mrs. Sawyer from 50 persons .....	1	13	9

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S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, Treasurer.

107, Upper Brook-street, Manchester.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Central Committee and of Subscribers to its funds will be held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, on Monday, the 23rd of June, 1873, at four p.m., to appoint the Executive Committee, to receive the Annual Report and the Financial Statement, and to transact any other business which may arise.

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Contributions to the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 9, Berners Street, London, W., from April 26th to May 26th, 1873.

	Donations.			Subscriptions.			
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Lady Anna Gore Langton.....	100	0	0	.....			
Mr. Thomas Thomasson .....	100	0	0	.....			
Mrs. Pennington .....	25	0	0	.....			
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Mrs. Blackburn .....	10	0	0	.....			
Mr. Henry Hoare .....	.....			5	0	0	
Miss C. Williams .....	5	0	0	.....			
Mrs. Paulton .....	4	0	0	.....			
"A Lady" .....	3	0	0	.....			
Mr. William Shaen .....	.....			1	1	0	
Mrs. William King .....	.....			1	1	0	
Miss Fanny Smith .....	.....			1	0	0	
Rev. Thomas Binney, LL.D. ....	.....			0	10	6	
Mrs. Roberts .....	0	10	0	.....			
Mrs. Donkin .....	.....			0	10	0	
Miss Donkin .....	.....			0	5	0	
Mrs. Wates .....	.....			0	5	0	
Mrs. Addison .....	0	5	0	.....			
Miss E. Corfield .....	0	5	0	.....			
Miss E. A. Smith .....	.....			0	5	0	
Mrs. Pennack .....	.....			0	2	6	
Mrs. Jackman .....	.....			0	2	6	
"L. M." .....	0	2	6	.....			
Mrs. G. M. Smith .....	.....			0	1	0	
Miss Harriet Justice .....	.....			0	2	0	
Miss Carey .....	.....			0	1	0	
Miss McKee .....	.....			0	5	0	
Miss M. Whitehead .....	.....			0	2	6	
Mrs. John Hullah .....	.....			1	1	0	
Mrs. Plimsant .....	0	5	0	.....			
Miss Hamilton .....	.....			0	2	6	
Miss Handson .....	1	0	0	.....			
Mr. John Staines Babb .....	.....			1	1	0	
	£269	7	6	.....	£13	8	6
	13	8	6				
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CAROLINE ASHURST BIGGS, } Honorary  
AGNES GARRETT, } Secretaries.

### Prize Essay.

THE WOMEN'S PEACE SOCIETY offers a PRIZE of £20 for the best ESSAY written by a woman on the subject of Peace. The following are the conditions of the prize :

1. Title. In what way do wars and military systems affect women ; and, in what way can women best use their influence to prevent war, and to promote the gradual reduction of all armed forces.

2. The Essays to be written in English, and sent in on or before the 1st December, 1873, with name or motto and address.

3. The Prize to be given by the vote of a majority of the judges. The judges to be appointed by the London and Manchester Committees of the Women's Peace Association.

4. If, in the opinion of the adjudicators, none of the Essays are of sufficient value, the prize will not be awarded, but the same sum again offered for competition.

N.B.—Inquiries and correspondence to be addressed to Mrs. E. M. KING, 34, CORNWALL ROAD, WESTBOURNE PARK, LONDON ; or Miss M. ATKINSON, THE LAURELS, SALE, MANCHESTER.

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