

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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## Contents :

Leading Article by the Editor.  
Women's Disabilities Bill:  
Debate in the House of Commons.  
Division List.  
The Enemy's "Whip."  
Summary of Petitions.

Death of Mr. J. Platt, M.P.  
Public Meetings:—London—St. George's Hall; Cavendish Square Rooms; Conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel; Meeting at Hanover Square Rooms.  
A Woman as Surveyor of Roads.

A Woman as Navigator.  
National Society for Women's Suffrage:—Offer of One Hundred Guineas; Treasurer's Report for May.  
Vigilance Association for the Defence of Personal Rights.  
Treasurer's Statement for May.

THE Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, otherwise qualified to vote in the election of members of Parliament, has again been rejected by the House of Commons; this year by a majority of seventy-nine, an increase of ten in the hostile majority, which was sixty-nine in 1871. The numbers were in 1871, for the Bill, 151; against, 220. In 1872, for the Bill, 143; against, 222. We place these numbers at the outset of our remarks because they represent the worst that can be said of the position of the question, and because further examination tends considerably to modify the impression which a hasty glance at these figures is calculated to produce. When we add the tellers and pairs to the votes in the two preceding years, we shall find that, although the opposition is numerically stronger than last year, the supporters of the Bill are also more numerous; and that, taking the three years since Mr. BRIGHT first introduced the measure for the consideration of the present Parliament, the number of his supporters has steadily increased. The figures are as follows:—

1870.		1871.		1872.	
<i>For the Bill.</i>		<i>Against.</i>			
Votes ... ..	94	Votes ... ..	220	Votes ... ..	143
Tellers ... ..	2	Tellers ... ..	2	Tellers ... ..	2
Pairs ... ..	23	Pairs ... ..	23	Pairs ... ..	18
	<hr/> 119		<hr/> 245		<hr/> 163
Votes ... ..	151	Votes ... ..	220	Votes ... ..	222
Tellers ... ..	2	Tellers ... ..	2	Tellers ... ..	2
Pairs ... ..	6	Pairs ... ..	6	Pairs ... ..	18
	<hr/> 159		<hr/> 228		<hr/> 242

We see that while the number of members who can be mustered in opposition to the measure remains much at the same point as in 1870, the number of its supporters is considerably larger, and among these appear many of

the leading statesmen in the House, while none of corresponding weight figure in the ranks of the opposition.

On the 1st of May Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, in a most able and convincing speech, moved the second reading of the Bill. The motion was seconded by Mr. EASTWICK, and supported by Mr. MAGUIRE, Mr. HERON, the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, and Sir CHARLES ADDERLEY. The opposition was conducted by Mr. BOUVERIE, Mr. SCOURFIELD, Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE, Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Mr. BERESFORD HOPE, the Attorney-General for IRELAND, Mr. J. HARDY, Mr. W. FOWLER, and Lord HENRY SCOTT, who did not, however, carry into effect his expressed intention of voting against the Bill. The tone of the debate was more serious and respectful on the part of the opposition than on previous occasions. There was a considerable modification of the spirit of levity and scurrility which formerly prevailed; and the debate was prolonged until so near the hour of adjournment that there appeared to be some risk that a division might not take place. It was nearly half-past five when Mr. JACOB BRIGHT rose to reply, and after a few brief remarks the division was taken, when there appeared for the Bill 143; against, 222. The measure was therefore lost for the present.

The minority of 143 contains 105 Liberals and 38 Conservatives. Last year there voted for the Bill 96 Liberals and 55 Conservatives. The loss is therefore in Conservative votes, while we have gained nine Liberal votes. Twenty-one of the members who voted this year were new supporters—of these twelve were Liberals and nine Conservatives. Five of these were members who have been returned to Parliament, during the present year, for Kerry, Tamworth, Wick, Wexford, and Wallingford. Another newly-elected member for East Gloucestershire paired for the Bill. We hope that these votes are a sign of what we may look for from elections in the future. Three members who voted against the Bill in 1871 voted for it on the last occasion. They are Sir CHARLES

ADDERLEY, Mr. KENNAWAY, and Mr. JOHN HINDE PALMER. Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, who was absent last year, voted this year in favour of the measure. Mr. DISRAELI paired for the Bill.

The 222 who followed Mr. BOUVERIE into the lobby consisted of 114 Liberals and 108 Conservatives. Last year he led 115 Liberals and 102 Conservatives. Of the 222 who voted this year 36 are new opponents, being 13 Liberals and 23 Conservatives. Four members who voted for the Bill in 1871 voted against in 1872. They are Mr. EATON, Mr. SALT, Mr. J. HARDY, and Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN. The three first-named members had formerly voted against the Bill, and as the political mind of these gentlemen appears not to be of the most stable character, it is possible that another gust of impulse may bring about another turn of the weathercock.

Turning to the constituencies we find that four of the great towns which return each three members to the House give unanimous support to this Bill. The one adverse vote comes from Liverpool. Manchester and Salford, which are so closely contiguous as to seem like one great town, return five members who steadily support this Bill, though they differ widely on every other political question. Twenty-three constituencies give their full vote of two each for the Bill. Sixty-six constituencies give their full vote of one each for the Bill. Twenty-one constituencies have given one vote to the Bill, their other vote having been neutral on the last two divisions. Thirty-one constituencies gave one vote for and one against the Bill, being 31 votes on each side. Ninety-one constituencies give full and clear, and 23 clear though not full votes; therefore 114 constituencies are clearly ranged on the side of the Bill. The total number of members now in the House of Commons who have voted or paired in its favour is 211, a gain of seven since last division. Of these 65 are county members, and 146 borough members; 138 are Liberals, and 73 Conservatives.

Counting tellers and pairs in the division of May the first, there were for the Bill, 163; against, 242; absent, 253; total, 658. Of English members there were for the Bill, 112; against, 191; absent, 160. Welsh: for, 4; against, 9; absent, 17. Scotch: for, 25; against, 14; absent, 21. Irish: for, 22; against, 28; absent, 55.

The numbers of the opposition are not kept up without some effort. From a circular which appears in another column it will be seen that an earnest appeal was made to members to vote against the measure. We think that many among their countrywomen will be disposed to

apply to the gentlemen who signed this circular, the words of the lady quoted by the Attorney-General for IRELAND, and to say that they might have been better employed than in urging members who did not give themselves the trouble of listening to the debate, to come down and vote against the Bill. Judging from the appearance of the House, these members simply aimed at obeying the call of their leaders, and made their appearance in time to take part in the division. Nothing could more conclusively prove to those who were witnesses of the scene, the necessity for granting to women some kind of representative government, than the contrast between the indifference and neglect shown by honourable members when the arguments and reasons for the claim were being put forward, and the alacrity of their attendance when the time came to vote it down.

There is nothing in the accidental fluctuation of the numbers in the division list to cause us any dismay. Not the less surely is the tide advancing because the fringe of the latest wave does not reach the verge of the preceding one. Behind the dancing edges lies a mighty force, urging on the movement with resistless sway. We see the signs of this great tidal wave of advancing thought on the condition of women, not only in our own but in other lands. In India, and even Japan, where women have been held in personal slavery and intellectual darkness for a period stretching backward centuries beyond the date when our own country emerged from barbarism, the customs and traditions of ages are yielding, and they are being made partakers in the pursuits and advantages heretofore monopolised by men. The political enfranchisement of woman is necessary to complete her intellectual enfranchisement, to endow her with the consciousness of partaking fully in the rights, responsibilities, and self-respect proper to a human being. It is not necessary in order to attain this that every woman should have a vote, or even that very many should possess votes. It is sufficient that the disability should be removed; that womanhood should no longer disqualify a human being from a right to a voice in guiding the destinies of the community, and from responsibility for the exercise of personal or political influence.

The advance of opinion in favour of our measure which has been manifested during the past year, is shown in the remarkable increase in the number and importance of petitions. The number of signatures has been nearly double that of last year, and at the date of the latest report was upwards of 350,000. More than 200,000 of these were presented during the month of April; and highly as

## WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

*House of Commons, Wednesday, May 1st, 1872.*

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT: I rise to move that this Bill be read a second time. The question of giving the Parliamentary vote to women who are owners and occupiers of property has come before the House on three previous occasions; on the second it received much larger support than on the first, and on the third more than on the second. Last year 151 members voted in favour of the Bill, and the total number of members in the present House of Commons who have voted in favour of the principle of the Bill is 202. Outside there has been a corresponding growth of public opinion in favour of the measure, which has been shown by the expansion of old and the formation of new associations, by the resolutions of public meetings in all large towns, and by the increase in the number of petitions presented to the House. Two years ago the number of signatures attached to the petitions was 160,000; a year ago it was 180,000; this year, according to the last return, the number has reached 243,000, and up to to-day no doubt the number will reach a quarter of a million. I mention these facts to show the steady rising and somewhat rapid growth of opinion in favour of the Bill. Although the question has been somewhat extensively discussed in this House, I cannot, of course, ask that the Bill be read a second time without offering some reasons for doing so; but I promise to be brief. Of course everybody admits that in the abstract women have a right to vote. ("No, no.") At all events I can quote opinions to that effect given by the late Sir R. Peel, the present leader of the Opposition, the late Mr. Cobden, and many other distinguished men. Women have to obey laws, to suffer from the infraction of them, and to bear the burdens of the State in common with men. Every year we vote millions of money to maintain the army, the navy, our courts of justice, and the government of our colonial possessions. In support of all these women contribute their full share. The Chancellor of the Exchequer makes distinctions between the rich and the poor in taxing the people. In the case of the income tax, for instance, the very poor pay none, and those who are less poor pay upon a diminished scale. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes no difference between men and women. I am aware, however, that Parliament never legislated to satisfy a theory, or to establish an abstract right, and therefore I must give other reasons in favour of this Bill. Among those reasons I would say that whenever you remove disabilities from a portion of the people, I do not care what those disabilities may be, those in whose favour the change is made always stand higher in the estimation of the community than they stood before. Let women be consulted as men are consulted, in a constitutional manner, with regard to the laws which they are asked to obey, and from that moment they will have more self-respect and will command a greater degree of respect from men. Among the many very poor reasons which are urged against this Bill is the statement that if women had the franchise that courtesy which is supposed to be universally extended to them by men would disappear; but it must be in the recollection of hon. members that in days gone by there were women in this country who returned members to this House in their own right. Does anybody suppose that these privileged ladies were treated with less courtesy by those among whom they lived than their less privileged sisters. Women may or may not have intellectual defects which do not belong to men, but they have at least the sagacity which has enabled them to discover that it is independence which commands courtesy, and not dependence; they

we estimated the zeal and ability of our friends, and the readiness with which the people admitted the justice of our claim, we confess that we were unprepared for so great a manifestation of public opinion in our direction. As a sample of the manner in which the people respond when the simple question involved in our Bill is put before them, we may mention that in the towns of Newcastle and Gateshead 20,000 persons signed the petition in twelve days. The opponents of the measure in the House of Commons endeavoured to explain away the force of the petitions by saying that they were sent to the places ready prepared, and the people asked to sign them. That circumstance in no way detracts from the force of the consideration that people did sign them, when the object of the measure was stated to them. If the petition had not commended itself to the intelligence and sense of justice of the people of Newcastle, it would not have been possible for any ordinary agency to have obtained 20,000 signatures in twelve days; and the opinion of the people of Newcastle may be taken as a sample of that of the rest of the community.

The increased interest in public meetings which was experienced in the country was continued in the metropolis. The meeting in St. George's Hall, presided over by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, was so overcrowded that the chairman and speakers had much difficulty in obtaining access to the platform, and a second meeting had to be improvised to hold those excluded from the first, which second meeting also overflowed into the street. After the rejection of the Bill a crowded meeting was held in Hanover Square Rooms, under the presidency of Dr. LYON PLAYFAIR, to afford the ladies who had heard the debate an opportunity of replying to the speeches of the opponents of the Bill. This was done in masterly style; and the close reasoning, intellectual ability, playful satire, and sparkling wit of many of these ladies, together with the gracefulness of their appearance and delivery, produced a marked effect upon their auditors.

We desire here to express our sense of the value of the support we have received from the newspaper press throughout the country. In most of the great centres of population the leading newspapers have advocated our principle, and almost everywhere ample and accurate reports have been given of the meetings that have been held on the question. We ask that our claim, and the arguments by which it is supported, shall be fairly presented, and we are content to rest the issue on the verdict to be pronounced after a full and impartial consideration of the principle.

We beg to direct attention to the advertisement on our last page, containing the conditional offer of one hundred guineas to the funds of this Society, and to express our earnest hope that our friends will enable us to announce in our next issue that the conditions have been accomplished and the prize attained.

have the knowledge which assures them that it is influence and not the absence of influence which obtains consideration, whether it be the influence of wealth, of rank, or of political power. We charge women with leading vain and frivolous lives, and then we endeavour by force of law to limit their fields of thought and of activity to a narrow sphere which we call their own. Give women the responsibility which comes with political influence, and you open up to them a larger life; you will find them with experience and knowledge they did not before possess, and which they would not otherwise have acquired; you will make them fitter companions for intelligent men, and I believe the result would be the attainment of a higher civilisation. I may be told these are not very practical considerations, and that they should be addressed only to men who have generous thoughts and wide sympathies, but I have found in my experience of this House that these mental qualities are as much possessed by men on both sides of this House as they can be in any assembly in the world; and that being so I have a right to appeal to them. I am aware, nevertheless, that both the House and the country will ultimately decide this question upon severe practical considerations, and therefore it is to the practical argument I will for a short time call the attention of the House. There have been within my lifetime, and probably within the lifetime of the majority in this House, two considerable extensions of the suffrage,—that of 1832 and that of 1867. In 1832 the middle classes for the first time in recent years obtained political power, and they have employed that power for their own advantage, and, I believe, for the advantage of the country. They have been enabled to secure almost absolute free trade,—the freedom of that by which they live. They have modified legislation in many ways. Look, for instance, at the position of Dissenters, who are in the main a middle class body. When they obtained political power they were labouring under great disabilities. Civil and religious liberty was the watchword of almost every great statesman, and the result of their enfranchisement was that they were put upon an equality with the rest of their countrymen. It has been the same with the working classes. In 1867 they acquired political power, and everyone knows what a change has come over the tone of the House in consequence. Had they not obtained the vote it would have been impossible to have done justice to the cultivators of the soil in Ireland, or to have inaugurated a national system of education. Not only so, but we have commenced dealing with the truck system, and have come to regard trades unions as legitimate organisations. By the ballot we are giving political independence to the humblest voter; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer never brings his budget before the House without carefully balancing the interests of the country, and seeing that the working classes are treated as generously as any portion of the country. Now, women are said to be illogical; but the facts are against those who make the accusation. It is because women are logical that they ask for this Bill. They have noticed the result of the extension of the franchise in legislation with regard to every other portion of the people. They have found that the middle classes and the working classes have been consulted more assiduously, and are more respected throughout the community than they were before; and they believe, with a degree of reason which is unassailable, that the same results would follow if the franchise were extended to them. Have women any grievances to redress? Do they suffer from inequality of the laws? They believe, and many members in this House believe, that the legal inequalities from which women now suffer are far greater than those which were borne by the middle and working classes before they obtained political power. We should probably differ very much in this House, and in the country, as to the way in which these ine-

qualities should be dealt with, but nobody will doubt their existence. Under the Elementary Education Act I find that some of the Boards, either on their own authority or with the sanction of the Educational Department, give three pennyworth of education to girls and four pennyworth to boys, a distinction which can be defended only on the ground that girls are more intelligent than boys, and that it therefore takes less time to instruct them. Women also have just grounds for complaint that the educational endowments of the country are withheld from them, and that the Endowed Schools Act does not rectify the injustice. Last year I referred to the unequal contest going on between a few intellectual women and the authorities of Edinburgh University. These women have passed with honour every examination to which they have been submitted, but they are not allowed to complete their professional education. No institution which is not national should come to Parliament for funds to sustain it. The Edinburgh University comes to this House year after year, and sums of money are annually voted for its maintenance, and yet it shuts its door to one-half of the community. I know of nothing more scandalous than that the fact that every woman in Edinburgh is taxed for the maintenance of this University, and not one of them can partake of its advantages. I will not refer to the inequality of the divorce laws, beyond saying that last year the Prime Minister, in speaking upon this subject, expressed in eloquent terms his objection to the state of the law. With regard to the rights of property, it is well known that a woman's property is still confiscated by her marriage. To illustrate the hardship of the law I may mention the recent case of Mrs. Shillito, who had £500 in the bank when she married. Her husband soon died, and the money was confiscated to pay the creditors of her husband, the principal of whom were his father and brother, for debts contracted before the marriage. The result was the widow was left penniless. Let it be remembered that while the husband takes everything the wife has which is not settled on her, he is in no wise liable for a farthing of her debts. I have been told by wholesale traders in Manchester, who deal with thousands of shopkeepers all over the country, that it is difficult for them to give credit to any single woman because she may at any time marry, and the result would be that the husband would become possessed of all she had without being responsible for her debts. The hon. member for Coventry has introduced a Bill dealing with this peculiarity; but I hope the House will not accept that Bill, because it proposes a retrograde step, and will never settle the question satisfactorily. With regard to the possession of children, at present the right of the father is absolute, the right of the mother is absolutely nothing. Will any one say that is a just arrangement? Surely the natural tie between the mother and the child is as strong as that between the father and the child. Look at the original anxiety and suffering of the mother in regard to her child; consider the incessant watching by day and night which falls upon her, and then imagine that at the age of seven she ceases to have any right of control over that child. There are numberless cases in which mothers are threatened with the loss of their children, if they do this or refuse to do the other. But there is a stronger case still in the position of the widow having children. If there are those who believe that the father's rights should be absolute when living, surely there are none who think the mother should have no rights when the father is dead. I remember reading a speech by Mrs. Crawshaw, of Merthyr, upon this point, wherein she declared it to be the hardest of all existing laws that the mother is not held to be the natural guardian of her children upon her husband's

death. Nothing in the world could be harder than that. A woman may find when her husband is dead that a stranger may step in and be able to dictate what religion her children should be taught, and even to separate them from her altogether. I could give instances of this kind which have lately been reported in the public press, but I will be satisfied with that general statement, lest I should occupy too much the time of the House. Perhaps I shall be told that most of these hardships come from the common law, and have been of long duration. That is, I suppose, true; but it is not true that recent legislation has been more agreeable to women or more in accordance with their sense of justice, and as it is my duty to make a practical case, showing the necessity for political protection, I am obliged to go for a moment into that recent legislation. Knowing what I know of the opinions of this House and of the other House of Parliament—for we have all of us the means of ascertaining the sentiments which prevail in the other chamber—I am justified in saying that there is nothing at this moment, but the consciences of women standing between this country and a gigantic system of prostitution supported and controlled by the State. So far is this system established by law, so deep is the root it has already taken among us, that prostitutes, in their legalised corporate capacity, have begun to petition this House and to ask for a special vote on account of their peculiar position; and the supporters of the system have been so unwise as to ask that these petitions should be read at the table. (Hear, hear.) Women believe that this system of legislation has inflicted a supreme degradation upon their sex. Our soldiers and sailors are not the most sensitive, delicate, or fastidious even of the humbler portion of our people, yet when this system was applied to them by medical officers there was a general revolt against it; the men declared it humiliating and degrading to them; and it was singular that Parliament could hold that that which was degrading and humiliating to men could in any sense be morally elevating to women. (Cheers.) The Royal Commission has declared against that legislation; there have been innumerable petitions against it, with as many as half a million signatures in one year; the money vote which it required was carried by a narrow majority of Government officials; and still apparently the system is to be continued. Having no part in the election of members of Parliament, women have failed to exert their full influence upon the question. I am aware that what appears to have been an attempt to abolish the system has been made by the Government, but their Bill has in it the objectionable principle of the existing Acts. It is also full of injustice to women, and is characterised by all the harshness and cruelty of Puritan legislation, without the excuse of Puritan belief or of Puritan morals, either on the part of the cabinet which introduced it or of the age in which we live. The legislation to which I have been referring has given an impulse to the movement in favour of women's suffrage greater than it has received from any other cause. Four years ago I attended a public meeting at Manchester, at which for the first time women advocated their claims to the Parliamentary vote, and at the present hour I could name at least 40 women, some of them ladies of rank, many of them ladies of wealth and position, and all women of character who are engaged in the public advocacy of the suffrage question. Last year, when I brought forward this question, I had two principal opponents, the right hon. member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) and the hon. and learned member for Taunton (Mr. Henry James). One of these gentlemen possessed the largest experience in this House, and both men of acknowledged ability. If I am to have opponents on this question, I consider it a privilege to have able opponents, because if the

Bill I advocate is untenable, if it cannot pass, the more able the opponents, the sooner it will be removed from the arena of the House of Commons, and if on the other hand the Bill is a just Bill and the claim such as cannot be resisted, no amount of ability will long obstruct its course. These two hon. gentlemen exercised all their ingenuity—they employed all their eloquence and powers of persuasion to induce the House to treat this Bill with disregard. They had an advantage which is never possessed by the mover and seconder of the Bill, because they spoke to a full House and to those who would decide the question. But the result of their opposition was that a considerably larger number than before followed us into the lobby, and included in that number were men of the very highest political influence. The hon. member for Kilmarnock took what I thought a peculiar line of argument. He seemed to treat women voters as a revolutionary class. He gathered together from all quarters materials to support his views, and attributing fantastic notions to women, described them as dangerous to the Constitution. The hon. and learned member for Taunton took an opposite line. His argument was founded chiefly on the incapacity of women, and he said women would be led by the clergy and others, so that they could never be trusted to act independently. These two arguments could not be both true. One was clearly destructive of the other, and if I might offer advice to my opponents I would say that they would succeed better in opposing this Bill if they would compare notes before they came into the House, and not offer arguments which were mutually destructive. (Hear.) The hon. and learned member for Taunton said that women were more impulsive and less logical than men. I have heard it said that the Scotch are less impulsive and more logical than the Irish, but surely that would not be a good reason for disfranchising the Irish people. Again, the negroes of the United States are more impulsive and less logical than the white population of America, but their enfranchisement is an absolute guarantee for justice, and secures the peace of the country. I will not enter upon a discussion of the mental differences between men and women. If their minds are alike, I suppose my hon. friends will not object to give them votes; if there are mental differences between the sexes I deny that this can be a fairly representative House unless it represents those differences. If, however, it be true that men have some advantage over women mentally, is there nothing to place on the other side of the account? Have not women more control over their passions? Do they not lead more regular lives? Are they not more sober? In the long catalogue of crime is there a single offence in which the male criminal does not greatly outnumber the female, notwithstanding the acknowledged fact that women have a closer acquaintance with poverty than men, and that in the struggle for bread they are more likely to be trodden down by the competitive crowd? If it be true that women want that self-guidance which it is supposed men possess, it is a profound misfortune, because, as the Prime Minister had said, there is a greater number of them every year who are obliged to seek an independent existence, and it has rarely happened that women have to obtain their bread without having to maintain others who are dependent upon them. In asking that women may be allowed to perform the humble function of giving a vote at the poll, it should not be forgotten that they are to be found at the head of important institutions, that they administer large fortunes as wisely as men, that they are every year occupying a higher place in art and literature, and that the most exalted political positions to which human beings can attain have from the earliest times been held by women with credit to themselves and advantage to the people. I have been told that women understand nothing of military matters,

of law, and of diplomacy, and therefore they are not fit for the suffrage. I do not know whether this means that we have too few soldiers, lawyers, and diplomatists in this House. If all those electors who know nothing of law, of military matters, and of diplomacy were eliminated from the constituencies, the electing body would become so small that it might be abolished altogether. When you give votes to men, you do so in order that they may protect themselves against unjust laws. Now, are there no laws on the statute book, and no bills before this House which women can understand? Half a score of bills, which I could name, are at present before the house dealing directly with women and children, and with which men have little to do. There is that Bill to which I have referred, described by the Government I should suppose in a spirit of irony, a Bill for the better protection of women. There is a Bill also on the same subject by the hon. member for Salford (Mr. Charley), a Bill that is believed by those out of doors to have a much more honest character, and a Bill by the hon. member for Salford for the protection of infants. The hon. member for Coventry, as I have already stated, has a Bill before the house with regard to the property of women, and another hon. member has a Bill with regard to the law of marriage. The hon. member for Cambridge (Mr. W. Fowler) has a Bill to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, and a Bill dealing with the custody of children. When I ask that women should have votes, I do so in order that they may give this House the capacity to legislate justly for the country upon matters in which they are peculiarly interested, because I believe no Parliament in the world has the capacity to legislate justly unless it is controlled to some extent by those for whom it legislates. Unless better reasons can be given for rejecting this Bill than have hitherto been given, I think I may express the hope that the House will read it a second time to-day. It is a rare thing for any Bill in the position of this to be rejected by the House. Let me state what I mean. In the first place, it is not a party question. It has been largely supported by both sides of this House. Last year, I do not know the exact numbers, but I believe that 100 members on this side of the House voted for the Bill, and 50 members on the opposite side. The measure cannot, therefore, be regarded as in any sense a party measure. We counted among our supporters influential occupants of the two front benches. There are only two members in the House who have attained to the exalted political rank of Prime Minister. The right hon. member for Bucks (Mr. Disraeli) voted for the Bill last year, and has made on more than one occasion public statements upon the subject which have had more influence than he is aware of in stimulating the agitation in favour of this Bill. In one speech the right hon. gentleman said: "I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right, for example; where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts; where a woman, by law, may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see, where she has so much to do with the state and church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote." That is the opinion of the Ex-prime Minister. What is the opinion of the present First Lord of the Treasury? Last year he made, what I thought, a just and generous speech in defence of the principle of this Bill. He did not vote for the Bill, but he made a speech which if it did not compel him to vote for the Bill at least would have enabled him to do so. And, in conclusion, he said, "if it should 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, and who shall see his purpose carried onward to its consequences in a more just arrangement of the provisions of other laws bearing upon the condition and welfare of women, will, in my opinion, be a real benefactor to his country. (Cheers.) If any one desired to bring about a well-adjusted alteration of the law so as to give women some share of political power, I venture to think he would take the course which I am taking. He would find that women who are householders and heads of families possess already every local vote, and he would propose to give to this class the parliamentary vote. They have the local votes because they have the qualification fixed by Parliament, and having also the qualification which gives men the Parliamentary vote, it would seem as if this should decide our course in any re-adjustment of the law. The right hon. gentleman, the first minister, had spoken of the difficulties in his path, but I think his chief, if not his only difficulty is the inconvenience women would experience by personally recording their votes at the poll. I have read the accounts of meetings that have taken place in various parts of the country, and I give the answer to that difficulty, which has come from the lips of women. They say, "We readily accept inconvenience in order to avoid injustice." When the right hon. gentleman speaks of the inconvenience of personal attendance at the poll I think he must have referred to the dainty and delicate ladies of the London drawing rooms rather than to the women of the whole country, the great majority of whom in their ordinary avocations submit to inconveniences every week in their lives far heavier than that of going once in four or five years to cast a vote at the poll. The ballot too, I suppose, will make some difference in this. Some believe we shall have the ballot this year, and when we have the ballot we shall find the polling day will be one of melancholy quiet. (Hear, hear.) But I think there is an argument arising from the ballot which ought to be alluded to when dealing with this question. The hon. member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) a few nights ago in an argument in favour of household suffrage in the counties, stated that nobody henceforth will hold any votes in trust, and just as no one will hold votes in trust for the unfranchised in counties, so no one will hold votes in trust for women. You will have something like two million of men voting in the dark and not a single woman, and there will not be a woman in the country who will know anything as to how those votes are given. I venture to say that will be found to be an intolerable state of things, and the claim of women to have votes in their own right will be greatly strengthened by this change. I must just refer to a question which has been more or less referred to on previous occasions, and I believe will influence some votes in this House. I have been told that the Bill would give votes to married women. Well, my object was to give votes in accordance with precedent to women who were owners and occupiers of property. I confess I did not know whether or not married women would be competent to vote if they had the qualifications, but my attention has been called to the fact that the question has been mooted in Sunderland by way of objection to the votes of some married women whose names were on the municipal register, and who voted in their maiden names. The election was a very close one, and therefore those against whom they voted, and who lost the day, were very anxious to set aside the votes. The question, as I understand it, was decided in the Court of Queen's Bench against the married women, and it was held that the circumstance of their having married disqualified them. That being so, this objection to my Bill, that it would give married women votes, will be set at rest. But then there

remains the counter charge. There are some who complain that the Bill does not enfranchise married women, but I believe only the opponents of the Bill make that complaint. The right hon. member for Kilmarnock has been reported to have said, when addressing his constituents, that this Bill would enfranchise only "the failures" of the sex. If it be true that the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Miss Nightingale, Miss Martineau, Miss Carpenter, Miss Cobbe, and other distinguished ladies whom I could name—if it be true that widows, the mothers of families whose husbands are dead, are the failures of their sex—then I admit my Bill enfranchises failures. But if this objection be sincere, how is it none of those who advance it bring in Bills to enfranchise married women? In bringing in this Bill I am standing on the ancient lines of the constitution: I am asking that those who have the local vote should have the Parliamentary vote also. The common law prevents married women from voting. When a woman marries she loses her name, her freedom, her individuality, her property, her vote. Surely it is not for me, in my endeavours to give votes to the owners and occupiers of property, to run my head against the common law, in regard to the changes which come about in the case of a woman who marries. It is enough for me to assert that every house shall have a vote in accordance with the principle laid down by that great Act passed in the year 1807, the Household Suffrage Act. (Hear.) Mr. Bright then referred to some of the obstacles which prevented women from obtaining employment, and concluded by saying—I am afraid this is a sample of too many of the industrial difficulties against which women have to contend. It is impossible, however, for us to abolish local legislation such as this. We cannot put down the tyranny of ignorant and narrow-minded men, but it is in our power to give a simple and complete remedy for Imperial injustice. Give to women the power which has now been almost universally extended to men of exercising control in the election of members of Parliament, and every legislative injustice of which they complain will gradually but surely disappear.

Mr. EASTWICK said he trusted that this important question would be debated fairly and dispassionately, and that the opponents of the Bill would for once refrain from imputing to its supporters aims and intentions which they utterly disclaimed, and which, so far from having any real existence, were the mere phantoms of imaginations heated by prejudice. He hoped, too, that hon. members who opposed them would no longer insist upon arguing from contradictory premisses, nor affect to know more of the character, the duties, and the aspirations of women than women themselves, and that under pretence of befriending and protecting the sex they would not persist in denying to them the means of self-defence. He felt justified in making these remarks by the character of the debate last year, for all the faults of argument of which he complained were to be found in the speeches of the opponents of the Bill in that debate. Taking the speech which was most applauded last year, that of the hon. and learned member for Taunton—and certainly, if vehemence and reckless assertion were a recommendation it was entitled to that distinction—he would show how his remarks applied to that speech. He had taken down *seriatim*, as briefly as possible, the arguments used by the hon. and learned gentleman, and he proposed now to examine them, and in so doing to dispose of the stock arguments against the Bill. The hon. and learned member's first point had reference to law, and there, if anywhere, he might be expected to be strong. He said, "Under the very terms of this measure every married woman who procures herself to be rated would be entitled to a vote." The process of procuring herself to be rated by a married woman was not described, and for his part

he must confess he was curious to hear it, and hoped they would be enlightened on the subject. But here was the hon. and learned gentleman's opinion on a point of law, and it turned out to be utterly valueless, for the judges had decided in the case of the Sutherland municipal female voters, reported in the *Times* of the 23rd January last, that a woman who had been entitled to the municipal vote for the whole year just previous to an election lost that vote if she married before the election, and that a married woman separated from her husband, and carrying on a separate business in a separate house, who would have been entitled to the municipal vote had she been single, was not so entitled because of her marriage, the husband and wife being regarded by our law as one, and the legal existence of the wife being merged in that of her husband. All, therefore, that a married woman would get by following the hon. and learned member's advice would be to be rated by her husband instead of being rated by the returning officer. But further on in his speech this very proposition was refuted by another, for the learned gentleman said:—"If I thought the majority of Englishwomen desired this measure to become law, I should hesitate before I combated their wishes; but I say emphatically they do not. A few itinerant ladies pass from town to town, but I never find that any woman, except these well-seasoned lecturers, rises to take a part in any of these political displays." Here was the learned gentleman knowing more about women than women themselves. But, to let that pass, if all women, married and single, were so utterly indifferent about the franchise, was it not absurd to say that the married would volunteer to bear the expense of being rated, and would incur the risk of a quarrel with their husbands besides, in order to get the suffrage, which they did not value the least? The hon. and learned gentleman had pitched his prelude in a high key, but he soon rose to a far higher, for he went on to say that "the natural consequences of this measure, to be gathered from its terms and from the clearly expressed hopes and intentions of its supporters, are that any women, either married or single, may be returned to this House; to balance the Constitution they must be allowed to sit in the House of Lords, and, I presume, to occupy seats on the Episcopal Bench." What! the same languid indifferent women that no practised lecturer could warm into taking any interest on the question of the franchise were to be suddenly changed into a band of frantic Menades, to carry that House by storm, scramble over it into the House of Lords, and, not satisfied even with that, rush onward, still shouting "Excelsior," and topple the very bishops from their seats! That was a striking picture, very sensational indeed, and if it had been drawn by the friendly bantering pencil of the hon. member for Cork he could have understood it and smiled. But when it was seriously presented there as an argument in a grave debate of that House, and was pointed and intensified by an illusion in another speech during the same debate to the sixth satire of Juvenal, then he indignantly repelled and denounced it as a calumny on the women of England, which ought never to have been uttered. The gist of these descriptions and allusions was to imply that women would overstep the bounds of decorum if it were not for the restraints put upon them by men, and this he flatly denied. The great body of Christian women in this country were a law to themselves, and needed no such restraint. As to this particular measure he thought he might fairly put his experience against that of the hon. and learned member, for he was sure he had attended more meetings of its supporters and given more time and attention to it than he had, and he maintained that while its supporters had shown a fixed determination to go through with it, they had also shown the greatest moderation. There had been no indecorous excitement, no intolerance of opposite opinions, no exaggerated

pretensions, nothing, in short, to deserve the sarcasms of the hon. and learned member for Taunton, and of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock. But the next argument on which he had to comment was that "property is made a qualification because it indicates capacity and fitness for the franchise in the holder, and women do not possess the fitness, for their excess of sympathy shuts out logical power and judicial impartiality." But Blackstone said, in volume 1, page 205, that "the reason assigned for requiring a property qualification in voters has been to exclude such persons as are in so needy and impoverished a condition that they are esteemed to have no will of their own; and another argument in favour of some property qualification is that manhood suffrage would give a great, perhaps a dangerous, preponderance to the ignorant over the educated classes." Well! he preferred the authority of Blackstone; but was it endurable that the hon. and learned member should talk in this stilted style about the logical power, forsooth, and judicial impartiality necessary for giving a vote at an election, knowing as he did very well how such votes were usually given? This was the very fiend's arch-mock. You might as well "lip a wanton and suppose her chaste" as go through the mud of an election and then talk of it in those high-flown terms. There was no want of the logical faculty in women, and it only wanted cultivation to be equal to that of men. The next argument was thus expressed:—"In this House we discuss matters connected with the army and navy, with commerce, diplomacy, and law. Women can have no direct knowledge of these subjects." But were these all the matters that engaged the attention of that House? Were there no financial questions, no social questions, no religious questions discussed there? Under which of his five heads did the hon. and learned member rank the questions of education, of the adulteration of food, of conventual institutions, of hospitals and charities? It was a farce to say that women knew nothing of these subjects, that their minds were a perfect blank and their opinions of no value with respect to a multitude of other matters brought before that House, such as infant life protection, marriage with a deceased wife's sister, or the law of marriage generally. The hon. and learned member asked, "How will you check the influence of the priest, the clergyman, and the well-selected canvasser upon women?" Yes! let him tell them how to check that influence upon men, and then they would tell him how to check it upon women. He would now turn for a moment to the speeches of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, and of the Premier, delivered last year. The right hon. gentleman, who was to move the amendment, read an extract last year, from an American paper, which stated, "I am afraid it must be confessed that the woman suffrage movement in the United States is pretty well played out. It has been unmistakably evident of late that the women of the country do not want the suffrage." And then he went on to show how in Illinois 1,400 women petitioned not to be allowed to vote, how in Massachusetts the constitution would have been altered to give women votes but for the women themselves, how in Minnesota the Governor had vetoed a Woman's Suffrage Bill which had passed the Legislature because he was satisfied women would be annoyed to have the vote given them, and, lastly, how in Utah the women had the franchise but refused to go to the poll. Well, could anything be more damaging to the right hon. gentleman's argument than those quotations? It was clear from them that in the United States women might have the franchise if they wished for it. In Utah they actually had it, but it was no wonder that ladies who could content themselves with the fortieth part of a husband should not be anxious to have a whole vote to themselves. In other places they might have it

if they liked, but they did not desire it, and the reasons were plain. In the first place, who would set store on a suffrage to be shared, he would not say by the heathen Chinese, for he might be an honest fellow, but with every vagabond who had reached his 21st year? The truth was the suffrage in the State was so common that it was not worth having, and was so corruptly dealt with that no woman would touch it. The women of the States knew very well that what was wanted under their Government was a retrenchment, not an extension of the franchise. They knew, too, that in their country it could not be given in the moderate form it was asked for and would be given here. If given at all, it must be a universal womanhood suffrage, including married and single women alike; and if voting was already a nuisance in the States, owing to the number of voters, it would become perfectly intolerable if ten or twelve millions of women were all at once to be added to the list. But, above all, it must be remembered that the position of women in the States was incomparably better than that of women here, and that they had really little or nothing to gain by acquiring the suffrage. Two-thirds of the whole education of the people was in their hands. He saw proof of that when he visited the Normal School at New York, where no less than 1,200 young ladies were being trained as teachers. The business of the Treasury was in great part conducted by ladies. Seven hundred performed the work of that principal office of State at Washington, and performed it with an amount of skill, method, and regularity which entirely disproved the statements of the right hon. gentleman's American correspondent as to the unbusinesslike habits of women. The telegraphic offices in the States were full of women, who did their work as well as or better than men. In short there was no employment in the States that women desired from which they were excluded. How should they compare the social position occupied by women in the States with that held by those in this country, or their personal security there with the miserable state of things in this country? A woman might go anywhere in the United States and be sure of being treated with respect. She enjoyed absolute security from the brutal violence of husbands and others. He held in his hands half a dozen slips lately cut from the *Times* recording brutal assaults, and even murder, perpetrated on wives and mothers, which have been punished only with short terms of imprisonment, such as were inflicted for cruelty to animals. From these reports it was evident that a man might in England gouge out his wife's eye or throw her under a waggon, and so crush the life out of her, for a short incarceration. The right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock referred them to the sixth satire of Juvenal. He would refer the right hon. gentleman to our own inimitable satirist, in whose publication of last week he would see a just satire on the odious indifference shown to the safety of women in this country. If the assault of which he had the reports had been committed in the United States, the neighbours of the ruffians who perpetrated them would have anticipated the proceedings of the judge, and would have saved him all trouble in the matter. But he would now turn for a moment to the speech of the Premier, who referred to Italy. Article 15 of the Electoral Law of that country says:—"The direct taxes paid by a widow, or a wife separated from her husband, shall be reckoned in the electoral census in favour of that son or son-in-law of the first or second degree whom she may select." This was repeated in Article 22 of the communal and provincial law. It was quite clear, therefore, that single women in Italy, if they had a property qualification, possessed an indirect vote. But he laid no great stress upon that. If it was right to give the suffrage to women in England let it be given, whatever might be the condition of things in other countries. Before

concluding he wished to state what he conceived to be the case for women's suffrage in England, divested of all that mountain of misrepresentation which the opponents of the Bill would heap upon it. There were 11,189,657 males in England and Wales, represented by 1,250,019 voters in boroughs and cities, and 801,109 voters in counties; in all, 2,051,128. There were 11,663,705 females represented by 108,838 municipal voters. What was asked was that these females who had the municipal vote should have the Parliamentary vote also. As far as he was concerned there was no stress laid upon the lodger franchise for women; but if it were given it would add only a thousand or two voters, for there were but 5,257 men who had the lodger franchise, and it would hardly be said that there would be anything like that number of women. He was not aware of any statistics showing the number of females who would be qualified to vote for counties; but, taking it at the proportion of females to males who had the municipal vote, there would be altogether in round numbers about 170,000 females who would obtain the franchise by this Bill. Thus, there would be one male in every six possessed of the right to vote, and one woman in every 60. Except in giving women a small amount of influence in questions which had a direct interest for them, this measure would invest them with no political power at all. On the other hand, it would certainly relieve them of great difficulties in renting and retaining farms and houses, and other disadvantages in business matters, and it would remove from them an intolerable stigma as if they were creatures of an inferior nature to men. Were women to be so degraded that the wife of a deaf and dumb man might interpret his vote for him, and when he was dead might not vote for herself? What was the logical power and judicial impartiality of a ruffian who maltreated his wife that he should be entitled to vote, while the most refined and intellectual lady in the land, a Mary Somerville, a Burdett Coutts or a Florence Nightingale, was declared incompetent? These anomalies where like the lies of Falstaff, "Gross as a mountain, open, palpable," and he, therefore, said remove this stigma from the women of England, and then there would be no property and no intelligence unrepresented, and this agitation, which could never otherwise be set at rest, would at once subside. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, he seconded the motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BOUVERIE rose, according to notice, to move the rejection of the Bill. The hon. member for Manchester had stated his views in a very earnest and moderate speech, but behind his speech and that of the hon. member for Penryn there appeared the difficulty under which they laboured, which was that while he was speaking in the name of the women of England, the great bulk of the cultivated and intelligent women were opposed to the measure which he was advocating. (Hear, hear.) It was undoubted that some 240,000 or 250,000 signatures had been attached to petitions in favour of the Bill, but a large proportion of those signatures were not the signatures of women, and the petitions themselves, instead of being the spontaneous outcome of the feelings of the signatories, were sent down to the localities ready drawn, and the people canvassed to sign them after the fashion which hon. members so well understood. (Hear, hear.) But supposing the whole of the 250,000 signatures were those of women, they could scarcely be regarded as overwhelming evidence of the desire of the 8,000,000 adult females in these kingdoms for the success of the Bill introduced by the hon. member for Manchester. His hon. friend stated with truth that the House was never disposed to favour arguments based upon mere abstract principles, but insisted that substantial grounds should be shown for legislation. The hon. member then went on to state that the grievances of those whom he represented were the lack of educa-

tional facilities for women, the difficulties connected with the holding of property by married women, and the question of the custody of children. With regard to the education question, he admitted that in time past the female sex were placed at a disadvantage as compared with the male sex in the matter of educational advantages; but different ideas now prevailed, and it was not by any means requisite to give votes to women in order to settle the question on a satisfactory basis. Parliament as at present elected and constituted would at any time be willing to pass any measure calculated to put boys and girls on an equality as far as education was concerned. With reference to the question of the custody of children there was a little weakness in the argument of his hon. friend who had charge of the Bill. He presumed it was the children of married women to whom his hon. friend referred, and, if so, he scarcely saw how the grievance of married women could be remedied by giving votes to unmarried women. ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) Speaking broadly, however, there must be under the marriage union one parent who should have the custody of the children, unless his hon. friend proposed that there should be a judgment of Solomon, and the children should be each divided in half—a laugh—and did his hon. friend maintain that there were no such beings as immoral and ill-conducted wives as well as husbands? (Hear, hear.) There was a sufficiently adequate provision under the existing law for the decision of questions which might arise between parents as to the custody of their children, and with regard to this, as well as with regard to the education grievance, he maintained that it was, at any rate, unnecessary to give votes to women in order that the relations between husbands, wives, and their children, might be put upon a proper basis. The men composing that House had no feeling of sex which would prevent their agreeing to measures of a perfectly equitable character as between men and women. Speaking upon the question of the property of married women, the hon. member for Penryn referred in support of his argument to the common law. But he should have remembered that the common law was based upon the theory that a man and wife made one person, and hence had arisen the rules with respect to property. These rules had in the last few years been considerably modified. Among the upper and wealthier middle classes it was very rare that a marriage occurred without a provision being made by settlement for the property of the woman, thus remedying the defect in the common law as applied to the present system of society, by which a woman's property is given to her husband. There was some ground for stating that the law acted a little harshly as far as the humbler classes were concerned, but even in this aspect of the case it must not be forgotten that the husband, in addition to taking the property of his wife, took also the liability to pay any debts she might have contracted during her maidenhood. He therefore thought there was not much weight in the statement that Manchester warehousemen did not dare to give "tick" to young women who desired to patronise them, because they might marry, and their property be taken possession of by their husbands. (Hear, hear.) He appealed to the House to say whether the grievances he had enumerated did not form the sole basis on which his hon. friend asked Parliament to make a change in the representative system of this country such as had never been made in any other country on the face of the globe. (Hear, hear.) The House had on one occasion listened to the voice of the charmer, and admitted single women to vote in municipal elections, and now it was asked that they should go further and grant to the same persons the power to vote in the election of members of Parliament. He warned the House against the danger of taking this step, and reminded hon. members that unless they stopped their proceeding in this direction there was

no knowing where they might be landed. The addition to the number of the constituencies which would be involved by passing the Bill before the House would be by no means the trumpery affair that his hon. friend would seem to think. The addition would not be less than from 320,000 to 330,000, or between 12½ and 13 per cent, according to a careful calculation which he had made on the basis of returns presented to Parliament. He would remind the House, further, that to make an addition of this character would involve an immediate dissolution of Parliament. (Cries of "No, no.") Hon. members might express dissent from this statement, but he maintained that if so great an addition was made to the constituencies, it would be absolutely necessary to take their opinion as to the mode in which the country was to be governed. His main objection, however, to the proposal of his hon. friend was that it merely touched the hem of a great question. It was not merely whether some two or three hundred thousand people should be added to the number of the constituencies, but whether the whole system upon which this country has been governed hitherto should be altered. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend said that women were equally entitled as men to political power, and he thought his hon. friend was also an advocate for universal manhood suffrage. (Mr. Jacob Bright made a gesture of dissent.) At any rate, many of the supporters of the Bill of his hon. friend advocated universal manhood suffrage, and he failed to see how they could avoid advocating universal womanhood suffrage also. (Hear, hear.) Were hon. members aware of the result that would follow upon this state of things? The women of the United Kingdom exceeded the men in numbers by 718,000, and as about 50 per cent of these were adults, there would be at least 350,000 more female than male voters, and the Government of the United Kingdom and its foreign policy also, would be in the hands of the women, who, according to his hon. friend, were in a state of chronic opposition to the men upon almost every question of public policy. ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) Not only would the women have the preponderance of power over the whole kingdom if universal womanhood suffrage were the rule, but without it they would, if allowed to vote at all, be able in many constituencies where the balance of parties ran very close to give a feminine turn and colour to the policy and character of the legislation. He respected the views of many women, but he was not prepared to see the policy of the country guided by women rather than by men. An ancient Roman in one of Shakspeare's plays regretted that their fathers' souls were dead, and they were governed by their mothers' spirits. Let them not have cause for similar regret, but let the Government of the country be entrusted to the hands of men, to whom the harder portion of life's work was allotted, and let the women undertake the kinder and the gentler duties which naturally belong to their sex. (Hear, hear.) Going further into the subject, he would remind the House that it was not with the mere giving of votes that this matter could end. In this country political rights were not and could not be severed from political duties, and if the right to vote now claimed for them were to be conferred upon the women of the country, they ought to undertake the correlative duties which attach to the position of an elector in this country. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Manchester contemplated women sitting in that House, and if they were to do this, why should they not become members of the Cabinet or even sit in the Speaker's chair? ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) There were some advocates of women's rights who went even further than the hon. member for Manchester, and thought women should be entitled to hold commissions in the army. A writer in a recent number of the *Fortnightly Review* advocated women's rights with great intelligence and ability, and wrote strongly in favour of breaking

down all existing distinctions, as far as business occupations were concerned, between men and women. He said: "Some women are allowed, under the pressure of necessity, to teach, or to write for the press, or, if they have very great energy, to profess medicine; it only remains to allow all who have the necessary material inducement to enter the Civil Service (where Mr. Gladstone is evidently prepared to let them have clerkships cheap) the Army, the Navy, the Universities, and any other learned or lucrative profession they may fancy." The writer also referred to the moral and physical forces of the State, and went on to say: "Undoubtedly when women have seats in Parliament and on the Bench, they will also hold commissions in the Army, and it may even be surmised that the profession of arms will be rather a favourite with them than otherwise; for military glory has more in common with the aims which they have hitherto been encouraged to pursue than any inducements held out by learned or commercial careers. The few cases on record of women who have disguised their sex in order to enter the army offer no criterion as to the number who would do so when the necessity for secrecy was removed. The contrary assumption is so much the creation of habit that it is scarcely possible to argue either for or against it. The physical strength of women is the principal difficulty contemplated, but it is obvious, quite apart from the effect of education or training, that the women of some races are taller and stronger than the men of others; and if that consideration appear too remote, it could easily be ascertained how many maids-of-all-work in London work harder than a dragoon. But it is supposed that women will be particularly influenced by the reluctance which we all feel at the prospect of slaughtering our fellow-creatures. Similarly it was held quite recently that they could not—it is still thought in some circles that they should not—cut off babies' legs. Now, to shoot an invader, who may be out of sight, and to cut off a baby's leg are both painful surgical operations, which no right-minded person would perform except for the benefit of the infant or the fatherland; but there can be no question as to which of the two is most trying to the nerves and harrowing to the sentiments. Unless antiquity—as is possible—was quite mistaken as to the natural instincts of the female sex, it will prefer the science of destruction to the art of healing." ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) His hon. friend was very strong upon the point that he confined his proposal to single women, but he (Mr. Bouverie) confessed his inability to see how this could be done. The greater part of the grievances sought to be remedied by his hon. friend were the grievances of married women, and it was by no means clear that the best way to remedy them was by conferring the franchise upon women who were not married. (Hear, hear.) That appeared to him, however, to be a very roundabout way of doing what they desired, because if it were necessary that political rights should be extended in order that the grievances of any class should be redressed, those rights should be extended, not to those who did not suffer, but to the class aggrieved. (Cheers.) The arguments of his hon. friend, therefore, seemed to point in the direction of giving married women votes; but the giving the right of voting to married women was repugnant to all our ideas of married life. The theory of the married life was that the husband and his wife were one. That was the old law, and it was none the less good because it was old. A learned author, writing in the time of Henry VI., said, "Also though a man may not grant or give his tenements to his wife during the coverture, for that his wife and he be but one person in the law." And it was not only the theory of our law, but of our religion, and of that Sacred Book which we were accustomed to hold in the greatest veneration and authority. In looking over the literature of

this question, he could not help noticing that one of the ladies who had written very ably on the subject showed a very great antipathy to St. Paul. (A laugh.) She professed a great respect for religion, but appeared to entertain a particular spite against St. Paul. And, perhaps, this might be accounted for when they recollected that St. Paul wrote—"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (Hear, hear.) The theory not only of our law and of our religion, but of all our social customs was that the husband should rule over the wife, and this condition of things he believed afforded perfect security in the vast majority of cases for the comfort and happiness of the woman. (Hear, hear.) He could not help thinking that his hon. friend had in this matter fallen into a not uncommon error—that of mistaking exceptions for the rule. With reference to the arguments based on considerations affecting property, he might mention to the House his own personal experiences. When he married, a great many years ago, he went to consult a very able conveyancer, a personal friend of his, about the character of the settlements. His friend said, and he was so impressed with it that he recollected it as well as if it had happened only yesterday, "I advise you strongly for the interest and happiness of your home not to have a separate settlement on your wife." His friend then, with a view to enforce his advice, took down a volume of Chancery Reports and read a passage in which Lord Eldon said that he had seen a vast amount of litigation with regard to settlements, and the result of his experience was that a separate maintenance for the wife in the upper classes was not conducive to the happiness of married life. (Hear, hear.) But the contention of his hon. friend was that all this was now changed. We were now to have a new kind of compound householder. (Cheers and laughter.) It was impossible to draw a distinction in this matter between married and single women. Indeed his hon. friend had had the candour to admit that that was so.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT desired to explain. If he had made such an admission it was a mistake, for he had never intended to convey any such impression.

Mr. BOUVERIE had certainly so interpreted his hon. friend's arguments. But the fact was that not only in this country, but throughout all Europe, a woman was scarcely able to maintain herself by her unassisted industry. This was partly due to the competition which existed among themselves, and it was partly due to their competition with men, for the House must bear in mind that, whether women were placed on an equality with men or not in the matter of voting, they never could be placed on a footing of equality in respect to physical strength. It was no doubt, too, a misfortune that single women, with regard to a large proportion of the various occupations which they pursued, had to engage in competition with other women, who were partly supported by their brothers or their husbands. But these were economical evils not to be affected by the extension of the franchise, but by an extension of education, and particularly of the higher branches of education, a direction in which he was glad to say much had been done of late years. (Hear.) In many of the artistic walks of life, such as engraving, designing, and that class of pursuit for which women were eminently qualified, a great advance had been made. It was men who had to undertake the rough and hard work of life, and all those occupations which involved great physical exertion and endurance, and he ventured to submit to the House that one portion of this rough and hard work was the duty of governing. (Hear, hear.) It was no part of women's work to govern. To rule a household was one thing, but to go into the polling booths and to engage in the turmoil and strife of elections was another. (Cheers.) It was said that women need not do so

unless they pleased, but if they acceded to his hon. friend's proposal, women would practically not be able to avoid exercising the rights given them, because they would be assailed on all sides to vote, and if entreaty did not prevail, the screw probably would. He believed that the vast majority of women objected to this proposal, and that was why his hon. friend and his supporters found it impossible to stir them up. It might be prejudice, but he heartily preferred the system founded upon the experience of all nations and of all generations to that which his hon. friend wished to initiate. That system he should believe to be right until his hon. friend had proved it to be wrong, and his hon. friend, he was inclined to think, had lost sight of the fact that the burden of proof lay upon him to show that the existing system was wrong. (Hear, hear.) He did not think he could do better than, in conclusion, to quote the words of one of those 40 ladies who were his hon. friend's clients. That lady, in an exceedingly well-written series of essays, said: "The majority of Englishmen have, I believe, at this day a secret dread lest the granting of the claims which are just now favoured by women should revolutionise society. I wish particularly to notice the fear or presentiment which seems to me most worthy of our serious consideration—namely, the fear that to grant what they are asking would revolutionise our homes. This is, indeed, a serious question, for I believe that home is the nursery of all virtue, the fountain-head of all true affection, and the main source of the strength of our nation." Fully believing, as he did, in the concluding portions of that passage, he begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. SCOURFIELD, in rising to second the amendment, said that he was impelled to say a few words on this subject from feelings of gratitude and gallantry, for he had, in common with his hon. friends the members for Kilmarnock and the University of Cambridge, received a vote of thanks from the energetic ladies who took part in this movement, not because he had given them his support, but because they believed that his opposition tended to promote their success. (A laugh.) Any amount of notice was preferable to total oblivion, and there were few who cared "to lie in cold oblivion and to rot." The vote of thanks which he had received reminded him of the story of some one who, hearing that a friend had been kicked by an Irishman, observed that he was glad to hear that his friend had risen in the world, for when he was in this country no one thought that he was worth kicking. (Laughter.) He felt perfectly certain that public feeling was strongly against this proposal. They all had a great respect for petitions sent by the people, but they were different things from petitions sent to the people. (Hear, hear.) It had been well said that it sometimes required a vast amount of energy to hold one's tongue, and he was anxious to know why they should ignore the feelings of that great majority of ladies who in this matter had the energy to hold their tongues. (Hear, hear.) If this question of voting had been based exclusively on property, he was not sure that he should have any strong objections, provided the necessity of personal attendance were dispensed with; but when the proposal to substitute voting papers for personal attendance was brought before the House it found no more strenuous opponents than the hon. gentleman and his friends who promoted this Bill. (Hear, hear.) The proposal, too, to render any voter who disclosed his vote liable to a period of imprisonment emanated from a gentleman who, if he had had his way, would now by his advocacy of this question extend that privilege to women. ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) The promoters of the Bill did not propose to extend the franchise to married women, on the ground that they were under the influence of their husbands; but, as an hon. friend of his suggested, if the Ballot Bill were

carried they would no longer be under the influence of their husbands, because, although they might tell their husbands they had voted one way, they might in reality have voted differently. It was said that he and those who agreed with him were fighting shadowy and imaginary evils. But one of the ladies who had taken part in the proceedings at the public meeting recently held to promote this Bill said that under the present system women suffered a loss of dignity and were inclined to take a childish view of life and its duties, to attempt to rival each other in "dress, domestic economy, the conventionalities of society, and infinitely small things of that kind." And another lady afforded them this consolation, that they did not threaten a revolution if their claims were postponed for some time. It was only some 24 hours since that his hon. friend the member for the University of Dublin had led a chorus of Irish and Scotch members who pleaded for a slight increase in the salaries of the Civil servants, but of what use would such an increase be if those about them disregarded all considerations of domestic economy, if, when the husband came home, instead of finding his fireside swept and garnished, he found it cold and comfortless, and if, instead of a mutton chop, he was entertained with a lecture on metaphysics, his wife "quenching her familiar smile with an austere regard of control?" (Hear, hear.) As to the value of the "conventionalities of society," he might invoke the personal testimony of the present Speaker, whom he now addressed, not only with that respect and regard which his high position exacted, and his uniform kindness of manner had inspired, but with sentiments tinged with sadness and mournfulness arising from the reflection that he was now possibly addressing the last male occupant of the chair. ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) Lord Bacon had said that truth emerged more quickly from error than from confusion, and one of the most important means of saving society from utter confusion was the observance of those "conventionalities" which had been spoken of with such contempt. He was afraid that if the lady who succeeded the Speaker in the chair refused to recognise those conventional rules which ordered the proceedings of the House, she would in a very short time find the House in such a state of chaos that she would be compelled to swear in a large number of able-bodied women as special constables to reduce it to order. He, in conclusion, recommended the women of England to rely upon their natural attractions and their domestic virtues, and upon the proud intellectual position which some of their sex had attained. He would conclude by quoting and applying the words of Burns.

For a' that, and a' that,  
A man's a man for a' that.

Now notwithstanding the Darwinian theory as to the transmutation of species, and all the speeches made and resolutions passed at public meetings

For a' that, and a' that,  
A woman's a woman for a' that.

and he trusted that she would remain so to the end of time.

Mr. MAGUIRE—Sir, from the speech of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Scourfield) who has just spoken, it might be supposed that this was a Bill for the abolition of wives and mothers, instead of being, what it really is, a Bill to confer on single women a voice in the selection of those who make our laws—laws by which women are equally affected as men. (Hear, hear.) Before dealing with the main question raised by my hon. friend's Bill, I would say something as to the assertion of my right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie), who is always daring in assertion—(laughter)—that the vast majority of women are opposed to the Bill of the hon. member

for Manchester. (Hear, hear.) Well, how is that shown? What evidence has he given in support of his sweeping assertion? We in this House decide just as judges and juries do in courts of law, upon evidence; and the evidence in the present instance is this—that while petitions in favour of the Bill have been received from all parts of the country, not one petition has been presented against it. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend the member for Manchester has pointed to the 250,000 signatures in favour of his Bill, and referred to the total absence of signatures against it. Now, sir, on which side does the balance of evidence incline? Surely not on the side of the member for Kilmarnock. (Hear, hear.) Can the member for Kilmarnock say that his own constituency are opposed to the principle involved in this proposal? As he seems not thoroughly acquainted with the sentiments of his own constituents upon this question, I take the liberty of enlightening him thereon. Petitions were presented from Dumbarton, Rutherglen, Port Glasgow, and Kilmarnock, in favour of the Bill, and the town council of Dumbarton adopted an unanimous petition in the same spirit—(hear, hear); and I may add that committees have been organised in Dumbarton and Rutherglen of which the respective provosts are secretaries. But the right hon. gentleman objects to the petitions with their quarter of a million signatures, because they all seem to be framed in the same model. What he would desire to see would be an uncontrollable and spontaneous outcome of public feeling expressed in bad English, as a proof of its genuineness (laughter). Why, sir, we all know that in this as in other organisations there is a certain form of petition adopted, as a means of precaution and of safety, by the promoters or supporters of the particular question at issue. In fact, this is a matter of course in the case of every systematized agitation (hear, hear). Now against this mass of signatures, what have we?—the assertion of hon. gentlemen, that women are all opposed to the giving of the franchise to the woman who pays taxes, and fulfils various other duties of citizenship. Of course, no hon. gentleman will assert what he does not believe to be true, but his means of forming an accurate judgment may be limited, and therefore his individual assertion cannot outweigh the evidence on which we are able to rely. (Hear, hear.) The member for Kilmarnock has sought to alarm the House by describing the danger of allowing women to have a voice in public affairs, especially in such questions as those of peace and war—that were their influence felt in such grave questions, a feminine tone might be given to the policy of this country, which feminine tone would be perilous to its honour and independence—in fact, that women from their very nature, would lean to a policy of cowardice at a time when the honour of the country most needed a bold and manly vindication. This is his assertion on the one hand; but he himself answers himself in a moment after by his quotation from the *Fortnightly Review*, in which women are represented as being led away by a passion for military glory, and that what really was to be apprehended was their military and combative spirit—(laughter)—at least, that was the impression the right hon. gentleman sought to convey by his quotation, with which he utterly demolished his original proposition. One thing is clear, that his arguments were utterly inconsistent with, and therefore answered each other. (Hear, hear.) But, sir, what is the state of things at present? Are those who manage our affairs perfect? Are the affairs of this country never conducted in such a manner as to bring discredit upon its character for dignity and wisdom? (Hear, hear.) Has there been, for instance, no blundering by "the lords of creation" in our foreign policy? (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Have we never seen our ministers display at one time a senseless panic, and at another a stupid bravado? Perhaps it would be well if the

influence of women—even the dreaded feminine tone—could be made felt in the government of the country. (Hear, hear.) The speech of the member for Kilmarnock was not only illogical and inconsistent, but it was most unfair to the hon. member for Manchester, inasmuch as he attributed to my hon. friend the making of demands which are not contained in his Bill, and he then argues on an entirely false assumption of his own creation. All the Bill asks for is that the same franchise which widows and unmarried women now enjoy for other purposes—poor law, municipal, and educational—should be extended to them with reference to the return of members to this House. (Hear, hear.) No such demand as this has been made on the part of married women; and I have no hesitation in saying that if it had been made I should have voted against it, because it would not be right or prudent that political contention, or its possible cause, should be brought to the domestic hearth. (Hear, hear.) There is then no question of the franchise for married women; and no just reason has been given why widows and spinsters, who possess property and pay taxes, should not enjoy and exercise it. The objection to this most moderate demand—which I regard as founded on reason, justice, and the strict principles of the constitution—may be divided into two classes—those who speak in the spirit of the Troubadour of the thirteenth century, and those who speak in the spirit of the Grand Turk. (Laughter.) The one would compliment women out of her rights; the other would deny her those rights on the most insulting pleas. The one would place a woman on an imaginary pedestal, and there retain her for the worship of the male portion of the human race. According to them, she is a thing too delicate, too pure, too ethereal, to taint or tarnish by contact with the rude world—above all, by mixing in the riot and turmoil of a political contest; and therefore this dangerous gift of the franchise should be denied to her. Now let us deal with this matter in a rational manner, and not be carried away by high-sounding phrases, or by the descriptions of things which do not exist, or will not exist in this country. This objection to the polling booth is the more important, as it was that most dwelt upon last year by the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, who, I may remark, had since the year before last advanced in opinion on this question. (Opposition cheers.) On the former occasion, as I understood the right hon. gentleman, he regarded the proposal to give woman the franchise as something which, if granted, would imperil the foundations of society, whereas last year his objection was limited to allowing women to go themselves to the polling place; and that if any mode could be devised by which their vote could be taken without submitting them to the danger or inconvenience of personal attendance, he would consent to their obtaining and exercising the franchise. (Hear, hear.) But, Sir, what measure is now passing through this House? The Ballot Bill. The Ballot Bill, which will become law at the end of the present session—(no, no, and hear, hear)—well, certainly the session after—(laughter)—get rid of all legitimate objection as to the polling booth. You talk of riot and tumult at elections. What is the first thing which your Ballot Bill does? It puts an end to nomination days; and thus, at one blow you strike away the main source of riot and tumult, and with it one stock argument against the enfranchisement of women. (Hear, hear.) Now, as to the polling under the system of the Ballot. It was my good fortune to witness the operation of the Ballot in Paris in the November of 1869, when, amongst the candidates of the extreme party, Monsieur Rochfort was elected. The balloting took place on Sunday and Monday. On Sunday the voting was by no means so active as on Monday. On the Sunday comparatively few persons voted, because, as I was informed, the

working classes were afraid of the ballot-box being tampered with by the authorities. (Opposition cheers.) Can it possibly be imagined that anything of that kind would be done in this model country? (Laughter.) Surely such conduct must be altogether confined to the Celtic race, as the Anglo-Saxon would never dream of doing anything so unmanly. (Renewed laughter.) On the Monday, however, I went to five or six polling places, some of these in the most democratic quarters. In one of these I remained more than half an hour, and during that time many persons, including several men *en blouse*, voted, and the whole proceeding was conducted with such order and regularity, such quiet and decorum, that if I were asked to say, on my honour as a gentleman—one having as true and exalted a respect for the delicacy and dignity of women as any of those who oppose their just claims—would I consent that female members of my own family should take part in a similar proceeding, I should answer, certainly, I would. Because there was nothing in what I saw that could in the slightest degree taint or tarnish the most delicate, the most sensitive, or the most ethereal of the sex. (Hear, hear.) Then we have the considerate objector, who says—"Oh, why take women from their domestic duties?—why ask them to sacrifice their time for the public interest?" The obvious answer is—men do not sacrifice their interests, their duties, or their amusements to public affairs, and there is no necessity why they should do so; for even the most active politician can discharge his public duty thoroughly with a very small expenditure of time. (Hear, hear.) One would suppose, from the manner in which this objection is urged, that my hon. friend was by his Bill proposing to produce a constant crop of elections, to bloom like monthly roses. Elections are things of rare occurrence, which generally happen every three years; and the most conscientious and devoted of enfranchised women could easily discharge all the public obligations by the sacrifice of a few hours in the twelve months. (Hear, hear.) But another and grave objection has been raised to-day by my hon. friend opposite in the interest of the over-worked civil servant. (Laughter.) He has drawn a dismal picture of the civil servant returning to his home, wearied and jaded after his day's work, and instead of hearing the kettle singing joyfully on the hob, and his chop being nicely done, is treated by his wife to a lecture on metaphysics—or instead of chops and tomato sauce, is regaled with chops and metaphysics. (Laughter.) Such an argument as this, which would find its legitimate place in the pages of a comic album or in a convivial speech, shows how desperately hard driven are gentlemen for anything like a reasonable ground of opposition to a plain and simple demand. (Hear, hear.) Then you have objections based on the alleged inferiority of women. It is asserted that women—widows and spinsters—ought not to have the right of voting for members of Parliament because of their being incapable of appreciating public questions and judging of public affairs. But, sir, I venture to say there are not ten members of this House who have not, at one time or another, sought the influence of women to assist them in their election—(hear, hear)—aye, and who did not attribute to women a thorough knowledge of the questions then before the country. I imagine the right hon. member for Kilmarnock, upon finding the men coy, going to the women and asking them to induce their husbands to vote. I can imagine a case where the elector is thinking more of beer than of politics, or is perhaps calculating how he can sell his vote to the best advantage, and the wife says to the candidate, "John knows all about such matters, but we women know nothing of them," and the candidate—possibly one who votes against giving women the franchise—saying, "You do know all about them quite as well as any man, and don't mind what they say

to the contrary," and the wife replying "Ah, sir, but you Parliamentary gentlemen say we women are not fit to study political questions, or to mix in political matters. John, who is down in the public, knows all about them, we women do not."

Mr. JAMES—What nonsense!

Mr. MAGUIRE—My hon. friend below me has the courtesy to say "what nonsense!" (Laughter.)

Mr. JAMES—I did not.

Mr. MAGUIRE—I heard you. (Great laughter.) The hon. and learned gentleman enjoys a monopoly of wisdom in this House. But, sir, what is the abstruse or recondite question which a woman, as an elector, would be called on to decide? what is this tremendously difficult question which a woman of ordinary intelligence would find it impossible to answer, but which men, even the stupidest of them, are capable of deciding off-hand? It is simply this, whether A B or C D is the more suitable candidate; whether this ambitious lawyer, or that great merchant, or that extensive landed proprietor, would be the most faithful and consistent and independent member of Parliament? (Hear, hear.) Surely any woman of ordinary capacity, or ordinary quickness and penetration, is as capable of understanding that question fully as any ordinary man. But assume for a moment that women are not as competent to understand questions of public interest, whose fault is this? Is it the fault of nature, or of our existing system? We, in our self-complacency, attribute to an original defect in the constitution of woman what is solely the result of a deficiency of education and training—(hear, hear); but give women the same teaching as you secure to men, submit their minds to the same training, and in a short time you will find that the natural inferiority of woman is purely imaginary, and that they are as well fitted for political rights and privileges as men. (Hear, hear.) What, sir, is the qualification for the franchise—this great boon which you cannot venture to entrust to women? Is it virtue?—is it intelligence?—is it knowledge?—is it sobriety?—is it common decency?—is it character?—is it the possession of any single moral quality? No; the possession of the franchise does not depend upon any of these, for the rudest and most brutal, and most profligate, and most drunken, possess the franchise. (Hear, hear.) Nay, the criminal who has perpetrated some atrocious offence, and has expiated his guilt by punishment—he may exercise the franchise; but the wise, gifted, good, moral woman, is branded with political incapacity. (Cheers.) What then is the qualification which opens the doors of the Constitution to the man, and shuts them in the face of the woman? The mere occupation of a house or the possession of a certain amount of property. It has been argued that it is the house which has the franchise—that the franchise is given to the house. (Hear, hear.) If so, why make a distinction between the house occupied by a woman and that occupied by a man?—why refuse the vote to the one while you give it to the other? (Hear, hear.) Where is the reason in this? But says the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock, if we give the franchise to women they will out-vote and swamp the men. Let us see if there be the very faintest approach to probability in this apprehension. My hon. friend the member for Manchester does not propose that all women, nor anything like all women, shall have a vote; he only asks that the minority shall be enfranchised, and these the occupiers of houses. This enfranchisement will not in any way interfere with the ordinary operations of Nature—it will not destroy those mystic influences which attract the sexes towards each other—it will not prevent marriage and giving in marriage—all this will go on as well after the passing of this Bill as it does now; and thus the vast majority of women

will not be entitled to vote, simply because they are married, and not single. (Hear, hear.) Therefore my right hon. friend will see that the votes of the women cannot by any possibility swamp those of the men. We are told by the same authority that only the "failures in life" demand the franchise—that all the intellectual and highly cultivated women object to it—and that Miss Austen was opposed to the idea of such a concession. If it be true that the failures alone demand the franchise, then all I can say is this—the failures have awfully increased of late, for they may now be reckoned by tens of thousands (hear, hear). As to Miss Austen, she wrote good works some half century since; but if that lady were now alive, would she not be found with the women of this day who are her equals, if not her superiors, in intellect and in cultivation (hear, hear)? Among those failures who are bent on obtaining this right for their sex, are many of our deepest thinkers and our most brilliant writers; are women who, as mothers and heads of families, are models of domestic excellence—are women whom this pursuit does not divest of the delicacy and sensitiveness which are quite compatible with vigour of mind and energy of purpose (hear, hear). Ah, but women are too emotional—too much women, and too little men—they have the fatal defect of being illogical (laughter). Now, sir, there is in this world—I shall not say in this House—a tendency to exalt logic at the expense of every other quality. I, for one, am no believer in the omnipotence of logic. A man may chop logic, and dexterously double up his opponent in argument; but if he be wanting in higher and better gifts, he indeed is a failure—at least a man of this kind makes no great mark on the age in which he lives—none whatever on posterity. (Hear, hear.) Men of this kind fail—fail to lead and influence men, because they cannot understand man—they cannot sympathise with humanity, because they are ignorant of the springs and sympathies by which men are moved and men are governed. (Hear, hear.) I am not afraid of seeing woman's influence more directly felt in this assembly, and reflected in its legislature. A great statesman is really great because he combines in his nature something of the essential characteristic of woman—her generosity, her enthusiasm, her unselfishness, and her large sympathies. When a statesman of this stamp undertakes to redress a great wrong, or grant a great and lasting boon, he does so from strong conviction and with all his heart; and the service and the gift are done and given with such manifest sincerity and earnestness of intention that they are acknowledged and received with a nation's gratitude; and that statesman, though at times he may fail or blunder, is sure to leave behind him a name of honour and a memory of affection. (Hear, hear.) There are other men with nothing of the true woman in their nature, cold of heart and hard of heart, who, if they redress a wrong or grant a boon, are impelled thereto by no generous impulse, by no large sympathy either for a class or for mankind, but whose chief motive is to retain or resume the possession of place and power. There is little gratitude for what they may do or give, and they leave no enduring memory behind them. Sir, if we had more of the influence of woman in this House it would be felt in our laws, which would be more tender to infirmity, more compassionate to suffering, more considerate to poverty—more replete with the spirit of a large and generous humanity. (Cheers.) Sir, I support this Bill with all my heart, because I believe its passing would infuse into politics a higher tone and feeling than that which at present exists, and because I regard the demand which it makes as alike logical and constitutional. (Cheers.)

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN said the Bill was entitled a Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women, but it would be more fitly described as a Bill to add to the duties, the burdens, and the responsibilities of women, or a Bill to amend the laws

of creation, and to revise that arrangement of duty between the two sexes which had hitherto existed, and which had worked with tolerable harmony since the creation of the world. He objected to the Bill because he believed it would inflict a grievous injury on the weaker sex. (Hear, hear.) It was urged that men, being strong, excluded the other sex from participation in certain rights, and that they were bound by their sense of justice, honour, manliness, and chivalry to abandon this untenable position and remove unjust disabilities. Honourable members were bound to consider how it happened that men were in possession of their electoral rights, and the advocates of a measure which would disturb the social relations hitherto subsisting between the sexes ought to show that it was likely to be conducive to the general interests of the community at large. Did the two sexes start at the time of the creation on equal terms as regards strength, character, and intellectual power, and were they then equally fitted for the discharge of the same social and political duties? Was it by an act of unjust usurpation that man attained to the status which he had had from the first, and which he still possessed to the exclusion of woman? Had the teachers of every religion which had ever obtained a hold on the minds of nations been mistaken in regard to the position they had assigned to woman, and had it been reserved for the enlightenment of the nineteenth century to remove the scandal of ages, to redress the wrongs of woman, and to place her in the position of which she had been unjustly deprived by the greed, the ambition, and the rapacity of man? There were many persons in this country who preferred the experience of ages and the universal consent of mankind to the doctrines of modern philosophy. (Hear, hear.) At the creation of the world a power higher than kings and parliaments decreed organic differences between the sexes that legislation could not remove, and at the same time assigned to each sex functions for which each was specially qualified. It could not be denied that these natural differences existed, and it therefore behoved us to take great care lest while we thought we were giving privileges to the weaker sex we imposed on them duties and burdens which they would find unbearable. Perhaps it might be said that he was travelling somewhat beyond the scope of this Bill, but it was sometimes easy enough to open a door which could not afterwards be shut, and he refused to deal with the Bill except as one which would either immediately or eventually not only confer a right on women but impose on them the duty of performing every public function now performed by men. (Hear, hear.) It was argued that as women who paid taxes were allowed to vote at municipal elections, and at elections for guardians and members of School Boards, the Parliamentary franchise ought not to be withheld from them. But surely it would be equally illogical to stop anywhere short of perfect equality between the sexes. It might be urged that as women could be elected members of School Boards they ought also to be permitted to sit in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Perfect equality might be theoretically useful, but practically it was impossible. He now wished to make some remarks on what had been said about married women. As far as he could understand, the promoters of the Bill intended to exclude married women from the franchise, but if marriage were not a crime why should it be clogged with a disability? A woman who had been taught to regard the suffrage as a valuable right would think twice before she relinquished it by committing herself to a matrimonial bond, and the question might even arise whether it would not be desirable to recognise an engagement of a less disfranchising character. (Laughter.) For his own part, if any women were to have the franchise he should be sorry to exclude from it the class most peculiarly fulfilling the true mission of woman upon earth. He

had great respect for those ladies who went about the country delivering lectures, and also for those who had passed through the greater part of their lives without a matrimonial engagement, but he should be sorry to place them in a better position as regards the franchise than the married women who were the light of our English homes. (Hear, hear.) The number of petitions in favour of this Bill had been referred to, and it had been stated that the number of signatures was between 240,000 and 250,000, but it did not appear how many of these were the signatures of women. Assuming, however, that half the petitioners were women, the number was exceedingly small considering there were 16,000,000 women in the United Kingdom. On the other hand it was urged that no petitions had been presented against the Bill, but this was easily accounted for by the fact that the great bulk of the women of England, whose cause he was now pleading, did not like to interfere in politics by sending petitions to Parliament. He opposed the Bill in the interests of the women of England. He was opposed to "Women's Rights," because he desired to maintain women's privileges, and because he believed the granting of the one would seriously imperil the other. During the debates on this subject his hon. friend the member for Manchester spoke somewhat contemptuously of what he called the "pedestal" or the "pinnacle" argument, but he confessed he did not think that was an argument which could be dismissed with a sneer. Those who thought with him and spoke of putting woman on a pedestal attached a tangible meaning to the words. They regarded woman with reverence and love, and while they shared with her the happiness of life, they wished to shield her as far as possible from its harder and sterner duties. It might be said that cruelties were perpetrated on defenceless women by brutes unworthy of the name of men, and this was no doubt true; but he did not see how the present Bill would remedy that evil, whilst the disgust with which such acts were regarded showed of itself the high estimation in which the other sex was held by the vast majority of mankind. (Hear, hear.) If he might be permitted to use a poetical image, woman was the silver lining which gilded the cloud of man's existence. (Laughter.) As he had already remarked, he opposed this measure in the interests of the women of England. No doubt the learned orators and all the professors and philosophers of the present day were its supporters; but on the other side there were arrayed the experience of ages, the universal practice of mankind, the teaching of all churches, and the practical common sense of the majority of English women. (Hear, hear.) He admitted that the promoters of the measure were actuated by pure motives, but for the reasons he had stated he should be compelled to give it a determined opposition. (Cheers.)

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said the Bill itself was plausible enough, and if he were not thoroughly persuaded that it was only a step towards a much larger measure he should have been prepared to support it. The hon. member for Manchester did not hesitate to say that women ought to be admitted into the medical and legal professions, but if they were permitted to do so it would be necessary to pass an Act for the abolition of flirtation. (A laugh.) As the women in the country were about 1,000,000 in excess of the men, what was to prevent them from occupying all the seats in the House of Commons, in which event, perhaps, the present representatives of the people would have to apply for admission to the "Gentlemen's Gallery." (Laughter.) He remembered an anecdote to the effect that when the Bank of England was founded one of the regulations provided that no Scotchman should be a member of the direction, the reason assigned being that if one Scotchman became a director all the other directors would soon be Scotch-

men; and he believed that if votes were given to the women of England the men would be left at home to rock the cradles and wheel about the perambulators. The present measure would be unexceptionable if it were intended to go no further, but he should vote against it because it was the commencement, not of a new reform, but of a revolution in this country. (Hear.)

Mr. O. MORGAN, although he had supported the Bill in previous Sessions, intended to vote against it on the present occasion. He did not attach much weight to the argument that the Bill would unsex women, but there was an argument which would have more weight in the division than prominence in the debate—viz., that to give votes to women would be a great Conservative gain, for he believed Thackeray was right when he said that every woman was a Tory at heart. However, he should not be influenced even by that argument, although he confessed in the present state of parties the Liberals could not well afford to give any advantage to their opponents. (Hear, hear.) In the course of four years he had only met with two women who wished for the franchise, or who would exercise it if it were granted to them; and he wished to put this experience against the number of petitions which had been presented in favour of the Bill. He was convinced that Parliament ought not to legislate on a mere abstract principle, for men could not live by logic alone. It was undoubtedly a fact that English women did not want to have the franchise, and even if this were a woman's question, he had a right to ask who the women were that desired this change, and for what reason. The Bill was advocated only by a very small knot of very earnest women who had been brooding over real or imaginary wrongs for so long a period that they were unable to regard any question from any other point of view. These were the women who originated and sustained the miserable agitation for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts—an agitation which assumed such a form that it was a disgrace to the country, as it flooded gentlemen's breakfast tables with abominable literature, not addressed to themselves only, but also to their wives and daughters. (Hear, hear.) If the franchise were given to these women there would be a new party in the House. There would then be a women's party, and a Home Rule party in the true sense of the word, and there would be not merely war of opinions, or of places, or of creeds, but likewise a war of sexes. If he could believe that a large portion of his countrywomen desired this change, on national grounds and for national purposes he would give to their application a willing and patient hearing, but he could not consent to make a revolution for the sake of a handful of fanatics. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. HERON said he should support the second reading of the Bill. All persons entitled by property to the franchise shall be allowed to vote, unless they were disqualified by want of intelligence. Women now in England vote at municipal elections, vote for Poor Law guardians, for churchwardens, vote as members of the great public companies, vote at the election of school-boards, and are themselves among the most efficient members of the school-boards. Women vote as proprietors of Bank of England Stock, and formerly voted as proprietors of India Stock. The question was virtually conceded when women were allowed to vote at the school-board elections and municipal elections. In Italy women are allowed to exercise the franchise on the condition they will exercise it through a deputy. (Hear, hear.) Is there any reason for their exclusion from the Parliamentary elections? The women who have the qualifications to entitle them to the franchise are better educated, more quiet and sober in judgment than the average of Parliamentary electors. (Hear, hear.) Women physically weaker by nature and less favoured by law have to fight the battle of life in the face of obstacles more formidable

than those which beset the paths of men. And if in the pursuits of life open to women, women are earning the bread of independence, it is by the industry, self-denial, perseverance, and good conduct which are the noblest features of national character—(hear, hear)—and in the progress of society in the free industrial life of England, the number of independent women are increasing every day, supporting themselves as teachers, writers, painters, workers in every trade, artists in every art. (Cheers.) Why then should the women voters, themselves as a class the best educated and best conducted amongst those entitled to the franchise, be excluded, upon the illogical argument that half of the human race are by nature, and ought by law, to be deprived of political privileges? (Hear.) You admit representation ought to be co-extensive with direct taxation. Women are directly taxed. All our recent Parliamentary reforms are founded on the principle that the suffrage is needed by large classes of individuals for self-protection. Is it necessary to give the instance of Edinburgh University? There a few women of great ability desired to be instructed as medical practitioners—desired to learn the practice of those arts of medicine and surgery which every lady cultivated in the days of chivalry. But Government and Parliament were silent whilst those ladies fought their battles alone against a powerful, first-class professional trades union. (Cheers.) Women, therefore, ask for the Parliamentary suffrage because they have a right to have their best interests politically represented, and because they pay in common with men the taxes of the State, and they believe they have a constitutional right slightly to influence the making of the laws which they must obey. (Hear, hear.) We have to meet then the prominent arguments against women's suffrage. They are of two classes, partly selfish and partly sentimental. It is said women ought to be placed on too high a pedestal to be dragged through the mire of a contested election. Politics involve trouble, and there are many most unpleasant things connected with politics—the riot of the nomination, the riot on the polling day—but the ballot will moderate the excitement of the election. We dislike the nomination day ourselves, and it will be abolished. And those who say it is unfeminine for a woman to give a public vote should remember the unpleasant occupations to which women have been allowed to devote themselves. Have not women been allowed to work in mines? Do they not brave all weather as stewardesses on ocean steam vessels. Are they not left all menial work inside and outside the house—the sale of fish from door to door, and internal domestic slavery? (Hear, hear.) Then it is said women have sufficient power. A man's wife is very often the real prompter in what he does in the world, either foolishly or wisely. She is not accountable for the one, and gets little credit for the other. Again, it is said disunion in families will be caused by the domestic head of the family no longer being allowed to be the political head, but it is not proposed to give the franchise to married women. (Hear, hear.) The Bill only gives the franchise to spinsters and widows, but we leave the question who is the head of the house to be decided in the ordinary manner? I pass over the arguments that a woman has not a logical mind. Are we to go into the question who is able to follow in a logical argument? (Hear, hear.) Should women be allowed a voice in the legal questions as to who should have the custody of children? Should women be allowed to vote on the question of a free breakfast table, and questions as to the property of married women? Then there is the historical question. In the middle ages woman was not disqualified from any of the offices incident to the tenure of real property. She might be the returning officer at an election, sheriff of a county, or the warder of a castle.

(Hear.) The exclusion from the franchise, in one remarkable way, works a grievous injustice on some estates. Widows are evicted from the farms their husbands cultivated, because the political influence would be diminished if the vote were lost. The last adverse argument to which I refer is the purely sentimental argument. The ideal of some is that home should be adorned by beings charming and submissive, having no will of their own, not giving the slightest trouble. The opinions of the Eastern Patriarch are cited as a rule for life in Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Some persons may desire to imitate the wisdom of Solomon, but society has completely changed. We do not accept the antiquated idea of the subjection or slavery of women in the Patriarchal times as our rule of conduct. We do not accept either Patriarchal or Spartan, or Athenian or Roman ideas on the subject. In all these is something to be imitated, far more to be avoided. In old times representative government did not exist, and most women shared the common lot of slavery. We do not recognise the dogmas of the physical subjection of women or her moral inferiority. Even in this agitation women have displayed the eloquence with which they are by nature gifted. Let equal political rights be given to those who constitute not the least to the happiness and prosperity of the empire. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE regarded the Bill as belonging to the peculiarly dangerous class of those which were professedly moderate in their apparent object, while the arguments on which they were supported took a much wider scope. Ostensibly a Bill for the enfranchisement of the spinsters and widows with a stake in the country, it was advocated on the ground of the wrongs of women without property, especially of married women. It would be idle therefore to suppose that the agitation for women's rights would be stayed by the success of this measure, for the most bitter agitations had generally small and apparently innocent beginnings, though they might end in a blazing capital. In arguing the question he declined to consider its possible bearings on the balance of parties, although politics, according to some hon. members on both sides of the House, consisted in the judicious or injudicious counting of votes and in calculating the chances of the next general election. Hence some were urged to vote for the Bill on the ground that women were naturally Conservatives. Whether this was the case he did not know, but he was sure that the very qualities which made women the solace of our homes, the very qualities which gave them their real power unfitted them for the hard fight of politics. It was very well in families that hard, calculating, perhaps mercenary man should be influenced by woman's sympathy and consolation. It was well that in a large portion of humankind the heart should rule the head, but to give that portion an independent and directly appreciable control of politics would lead to a reckless expenditure on philanthropic schemes and to wars for ideas. A Parliament in which woman's influence prevailed would be impulsively ready to risk claims and back up assertions which would be ever on the verge of culminating in bloodshed for the sake of honour and mistaken chivalry. His right hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock had been charged with arguing that women's votes would lead to a cowardly policy. He understood him to have said the contrary, and with that view he had expressed his agreement. As to the call for this perilous change, a few ladies might condescend to mingle in the fray of politics, but he did not believe women in general would so unsex themselves, while overflowing meetings in St. George's Hall could not alter the limits which God had placed between the sexes. The hon. member for Cork had drawn a lively picture of women's influence in elections, and had proved, what

no one doubted, how persuasive a tongue he brought with him among the ladies. But his lively pictures of electioneering through the women had all reference to our present system of masculine voting. Let the House conceive if it could how the process would be intensified if the women got direct votes. If an elector's wife could already be so influential, what would be the case if Biddy O'Grady were herself the elector, and brought Mary Shaughnessy with her to the poll? With all the hon. gentleman's eloquence and popularity, he would find himself the director of an enormous power if he could sway the suffrages of the fair daughters of Erin, within sound of

The bells of Shandon,  
Which sound so grand on  
The pleasant waters of the Lee.

How far such a power would, if it succeeded, tend to the furtherance of a stable and logical policy, he (Mr. Beresford Hope) left to the House to judge. The hon. and learned member for Tipperary had urged that the exclusion of women from the franchise had deprived them of the tenancy of farms; well no one could more strongly repudiate than himself importing political combinations into the business relations of landlord and tenant, but that argument had no relevancy unless it implied that the tenant's vote was the property of the landlord. Now as he objected to such undue influence, whether exercised by landlords or trades unions he could not, like the learned member, support this Bill as a process of keeping up women tenants, with the intention of their being women voters also, voting in the sense of their landlords. He presumed that advocates of the Ballot wished by means of this Bill to ascertain whether secrecy could be preserved if the fairer portion of the community were allowed votes. Under the Ballot it was clear that married women ought not to be treated exceptionally. The argument that their votes would be influenced by their husbands could not be urged by advocates of the Ballot, for on their own showing the votes would be secret, and would, therefore, be free from the husband's influence. Either the Ballot was the sham he had always believed it to be or married as well as unmarried women ought to be entrusted with the franchise. Another objection to the Bill was that it would encourage the manufacture of faggot votes, for by the easy process of giving a woman a rent-charge a county vote could be created. Considering the trickery which prevailed and would always prevail in elections, it was obvious that the production of faggot votes would be increased if unmarried women could be employed as the medium of the manufacture. The natural courtesy with which, as he hoped, we should always treat women, would check the rough and ready comments with which a flagrant creation of such faggot votes is now met. The agents would see their opportunity and stuff their faggots with women; and so the constituencies would be extended and denaturalised to an extent of which members had little forethought. As to women's votes in municipal and School Board elections, the municipal franchise was extended to them by a Bill which slipped through the House in the small hours of the night, and though in the case of the School Boards the thing was done deliberately, it must be remembered that these local bodies had limited and definite objects, for which they existed, whereas Parliament was vested with the immeasurable government of the Empire and with questions of peace and war over the world. If women enjoyed the Parliamentary suffrage, they surely ought to serve on juries, a duty from which many of the other sex would gladly be relieved. He opposed the Bill as the offspring of a narrow, fictitious, and noisy agitation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This is a question which appeals to the judicial faculties of the House, and I certainly am not disposed to embark upon the large and sentimental questions

which have been imported into the discussion of it. I trust the House will allow me to state why I, regarding the matter from a legal point of view, am about to support the second reading of the Bill. The Bill recommends itself to me because it asserts a principle, not an abstract principle, but a practical and correct principle, based upon a matter of fact. The principle asserted by the Bill I take to be this—that the women whom it proposes to enfranchise are as a matter of fact at least as much entitled to the exercise of the franchise it confers upon them as the men who are now to exercise it. (Hear, hear.) I don't mean to embark upon a discussion of the abstract question of the rights of women, I will confine myself to the question before the House, and I think there are substantial reasons why, upon the simple issue before us, the verdict of the House should be given in favour of the second reading. Now it seems to me that upon the question as to whether women are disabled by their sex from political rights, it is difficult for us Englishmen under the English Constitution to return a negative answer. We live under a female Sovereign, upon whose character and whose reign it would not be becoming to say a word, but we live also in a country whose history has been distinguished by two reigns as remarkable in intellect and art, in politics and war, as any on the long roll of English Monarchs, and those two reigns were the reigns of female sovereigns. I of course refer to Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne. And upon the authority of others far more competent to speak to this matter than myself, I am able to say that at this moment if you go to India and the East, and if you find any native state peculiarly well governed in an enlightened way, and governed strongly, energetically, and sensibly, you will, as a general rule, find that state to be under female domination. If in one or two instances, then, it be true that the Asiatic woman is fit for the exercise of the highest political functions under circumstances where education, religion, the popular feeling of the country, and every other condition, is unfavourable to the development of the intellectual capacity of the sex, that is an answer to any argument derived from the nature of woman, simply as woman, against her being entrusted with the discharge of other lesser political functions. I do not want to overstate the argument in the least, so I would not assert that all women are, in matters of intellect and political capacity, equal to all men. I do not mean to say that any women that ever lived are equal to some men of former times. I do not think that to be true, and I do not argue it; but I do say that, as far as I am competent to judge, there are large classes of educated women in this country to whom you deny the franchise who are at least as fit for the exercise of it as uneducated men, and large classes of men to whom we already give it. This being a question of fairness and justice, I will not be deterred from giving a vote which I think to be just, by jokes and arguments which, my hon. friend will forgive me for saying, are addressed rather to the prejudices and to the sentiments of the House than to its reason and sense of justice. Now, sir, let me give you an illustration of this. I have already mentioned the two great and distinguished female sovereigns of England. It may be said with regard to the reign of Elizabeth that she was one of the few great women of the world, that there are few such, and that it would be unfair to argue from an exception. I grant it, and I pass by Queen Elizabeth. But take the case of Queen Anne. I take it as far as I know history that Queen Anne was a person of exceedingly ordinary capacity. I do not mean to say, therefore, that she was equal to Edward I. or Henry VII. or William III., but I do say that Queen Anne was as fit to sit on the throne of England as George I. (Hear, hear.) And I say she was a great deal more fit to sit on the

throne than George IV. If that be so, it seems to me we have no right to make a sort of compromise with justice and to say that because we give to woman the highest of all political functions to discharge, we can deny her as woman the exercise of any others. But I will not hesitate to say that passing from the question of fitness of women, I vote for this Bill for another reason. I have perfect faith, and I say it sincerely in the wisdom and justice of Parliament; and I believe that when measures are shown to be unwise and unjust, and when laws which are shown to be unjust are brought before Parliament, Parliament will reject those measures, and will alter those laws. I can scarcely believe that if the House of Commons was as much aware, as every lawyer is aware, of the state of the law of England, as regards the property of women, even still and after the very recent humane improvements in it, it would hesitate to say it was more worthy of a barbarian than of a civilised state. If that be so, I do not think the wisdom of Parliament will be darkened, nor the justice of Parliament slackened, because those who appeal to that wisdom are entitled to be heard by reason of the possession of something like political power when they come forward to ask for justice. I believe fully that after a certain number of years the law, which I regard in many respects as wholly indefensible, will be altered as it is. I believe the sense of justice on the part of men, if they are once aroused to it and convinced of the injustice, will in time bring about the reform needed; but I believe this reform will not be brought about so fast as it would if we put into the hands of those who suffer from this injustice some share of political power. Therefore, sir, while I admit I do not question the justice of Parliament, or the right intentions of hon. members, I submit that the constitutional means of remedying injustice is by influencing members of Parliament in a constitutional way. Now, what is the objection to empowering women to vote? It cannot be said that it is lack of education. It cannot be put upon anything apart from a question of sex. It is said they are unfit for the exercise of this privilege because they are women, not because if they were not women they would be unfit, but they are unfit because they are women. To tell me you are to vote against this Bill because you don't think women as women are entitled to be enfranchised may be your opinion, but it is no argument. It is not perhaps your fault that you cannot advance a better reason; you may have difficulty in advancing a practical argument, and you cannot offer any evidence in support of your statement that women as women are unfit to exercise the Parliamentary franchise. The only evidence we have upon that subject tells against you. You have entrusted women with *quasi* political duties. You have given them a voice in parochial and municipal affairs, and their proceedings have led to a satisfactory result. They can now vote in municipal elections but not in Parliamentary. It is not necessary for me to see, in order to assure myself that they may be fit for exercising the franchise—to vote for a member of Parliament—that they should be also, if the question arises, fit to sit in Parliament. My answer to that question, if put now, is that in my opinion they are not fit, but it is unfair to say you are not to exercise the privilege for which you are fitted, because some years hence you may ask to be admitted to a privilege for which you are not fitted. I am content to ask—Are women in my judgment fit for the privilege they now ask you to give them? My answer is that they are. You are no more flying in the face of nature by allowing a woman having property to vote for a member of Parliament than flying in the face of nature to allow a woman to vote for a town councillor or a member of a School Board. It will be time enough to consider whether

women are fit for other positions than this they now ask to be placed in when they make a new demand. At present we have to decide only this question, and it is absurd to endeavour to influence the decision by issues which may never be submitted to the House. We have been warned too. One hon. member has recommended us to be careful lest this measure which has been introduced as independent of party, should tell against us as a party. I don't know whether women are Conservative or not. At any rate, I believe their tendency in that direction to be greatly exaggerated, and I object to decide questions of this kind on party considerations. It is right in itself, or wrong in itself, to pass this Bill; and if it is right, it should be passed. Probably women would be disposed to show their gratitude to those who had assisted them to procure the franchise, just as the borough voters had done; but whatever the fact, it is the duty of the House to do what it thinks right and just. These things must be judged according to the nature of the question before us. The nature of the question before us seems to me to be that these persons are entitled to vote, and therefore I should confer the right to vote upon them.

Sir C. ADDERLEY: I cannot refrain from protesting against the doctrine into which the hon. and learned gentleman's gallantry has carried him—that the comparative intellectual capacity of men and women should be a criterion in this case. The logical consequence of the hon. and learned gentleman's argument, and of his historical precedents, would be that men should be disfranchised in favour of women, and that there should be an anti-Salic law, so that women might always reign. This, however, is not the ground upon which I shall record my vote. I simply take it that the basis of representation in this country is not the basis of intellectual capacity, but a basis of property. The argument of this Bill is that property should not be disfranchised because it is held by women who are perfectly capable of exercising the franchise. (Hear.) It is dangerous, however, to argue that because women are qualified for sovereignty they are fit for other political offices, because it must follow that they are fit to sit in the House.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND did not agree with the observations which his hon. and learned friend (Sir J. D. Coleridge) had made in support of this Bill. He intended to vote against the Bill, and to give reasons for voting against it. In 1870 he voted for the Bill; in 1871 he recorded a silent vote against it, and on the present occasion, with the kind permission of the House, he would explain why he intended to vote against it. He was not ashamed to own, after a reconsideration of the matter, that he was wrong when on a previous occasion he voted for the Bill. The passing of the Married Women's Property Bill had entirely altered the position of women with regard to their husbands. That Bill provided that if any freehold estate descended to a woman after her marriage, she should be seized of it for her separate use, and that her receipts alone should be a full discharge. That being so, he was opposed to this Bill, because he did not know what it meant, and because the proposer of it did not know what it meant. (Laughter.) He was opposed to it because nobody had stated what it meant. If his hon. friend the member for Manchester did not wish to give a married woman a vote, why did not he say so? He had listened to the speech of his hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General with great pleasure because it was so easy to answer it. (Laughter.) His hon. and learned friend had informed the House that in the reign of Queen Anne there were distinguished statesmen, distinguished scholars, and literary men and poets; but he (the Attorney-General for Ireland) had yet to learn that Joseph Addison was a great writer because Queen Anne was a woman. (Laughter and cheers.) The Augustan age of English literature derived its

name, not from Augusta but from Augustus. (Laughter.) He did not know what the state of our literature in the time of Queen Anne had to do with the question before the House. He believed that if Queen Anne were now to reappear on earth with all the knowledge she had acquired in the meantime, she would disapprove this Bill. (Laughter.) His hon. and learned friend's argument went to this, that if you had a female Sovereign you might have a female Chief Justice, a female Attorney-General, a female Speaker in the chair, and a female Prime Minister. He (the Attorney-General for Ireland) was well aware that many a Judge had been an old woman (laughter), but that was no reason why every old woman ought to be a Judge. (Laughter.) He should vote against this Bill, and one of his last reasons, though not the least, against it was that no demand for it had been made by women. In the evening after he had voted for the Bill in 1870, he saw a lady and told her, "I have been working for your cause to-day; I have been endeavouring to remove the electoral disabilities of women;" and what was her answer? "You might easily have been better employed." (Laughter.) He believed that was the opinion of the great majority of women. (Cheers.) He believed the Bill was bad in form and bad in substance, and would therefore vote against it. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. HARDY said that last year he voted for the Bill, but he would now vote against it.

Mr. W. FOWLER said although he felt strongly that on many points the law was unfair to women, that was no reason why he should vote for this ill-considered and incomplete Bill.

Lord HENRY SCOTT said that although he voted for the Bill last year he would vote against it now.

After a few words in reply from Mr. JACOB BRIGHT.

The House divided, when there appeared—

For the second reading	...	...	143
Against it	...	...	222
Majority against	...	...	—79

The Bill was therefore lost.

#### DIVISION LIST.

Order for Second Reading read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time?"—Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months:"—(Mr. Bouverie)—Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question?"—The House divided; Ayes 143, Noes 222.

#### AYES.

Adderley, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles	Clifford, Charles Cavendish
Allen, W. Shepherd (Newc. U.L.)	Coleridge, Sir John Duke
Amphlett, Richard P.	Corrigan, Sir Dominic
Anderson, George	Cowen, Sir Joseph
Anstruther, Sir Robert	Cowper-Temple, Rt. Hon. W. (H'ts.)
Bagwell, John	Cubitt, George
Bateson, Sir Thomas	Dalglish, Robert
Bazley, Sir Thomas	Damer, Captain Dawson
Beaumont, Somerset A. (Wakefield)	Davie, Sir H. R. Fergusson (Hadd.)
Beresford, Lt. Col. Marcus	Delahunty, James
Birley, Hugh	Denman, Hon. George
Blennerhasset, Rowland P. (Kerry)	Dickinson, Sebastian S.
Brewer, Dr.	Digby, Kenelm Thomas
Brocklehurst, William C.	Dilke, Sir Charles Wentworth
Browne, George Ekins (Mayo)	Dimsdale, Robert
Buckley, Nathaniel (Stalybridge)	Dixon, George (Birmingham)
Callan, Philip	Downing, M'Carthy
Cameron, Donald	Elliot, George
Campbell, Henry	Ewing, H. Ewing Crum (Faisley)
Carter, Robert M.	Ewing, Archibald Orr (Dumbarton)
Cawley, Charles E.	Fawcett, Henry
Chadwick, David	Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Charley, William Thomas	Fletcher, Isaac
Cholmeley, Captain (Grantham)	Fordyce, William Dingwall

Forester, Right Hon. General  
 Forster, Charles (Walsall)  
 Fort-scoe, Hon. Dudley F. (And)  
 Fowler, Robert N. (Penryn)  
 Gavin, Major  
 Goldsmid, Sir Francis (Reading)  
 Gourley, Edward T.  
 Graham, William  
 Gray, Sir John (Kilkenny)  
 Grieve, Jas. Johnstone (Greenock)  
 Grosvenor, Hon. Norman (Chester)  
 Hadfield, George  
 Hanbury, Robert William  
 Harris, John Dove  
 Herbert, Hon. Auberon E. W. (Not.)  
 Heron, Denis Caulfield  
 Hibbert, John Tomlinson  
 Hoare, Sir H. Ainslie (Chelsea)  
 Hodgkinson, Grosvenor  
 Hodkyns, Chandos Wren  
 Howard, James (Bedford)  
 Hunt, Right Hon. George Ward  
 Illingworth, Alfred  
 Jenkinson, Sir George S.  
 Johnston, William (Belfast)  
 Johnstone, Sir Harcourt (Scarbo.)  
 Jones, John  
 Kennaway, John Henry  
 Kinnaird, Hon. Arthur Fitzgerald  
 Knightley, Sir Rainald  
 Lambert, Nathaniel Grace  
 Lancaster, John  
 Langton, W. Gore  
 Lawson, Sir Wilfrid  
 Lea, Thomas (Kidderminster)  
 Lewis, Harvey (Marylebone)  
 Liddell, Hon. Henry George  
 Lusk, Andrew  
 MacEvoy, Edward  
 Macfie, Robert Andrew  
 M'Combie, William  
 M'Lagan, Peter  
 M'Laren, Duncan  
 Maguire, John Francis  
 Mahou, Viscount (Suffolk E.)  
 Manners, Rt. Hon. Lord J. (Leic. N.)  
 Mellor, Thomas W.  
 Melly, George

Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Jacob Bright and Mr. Eastwick.

NOES.

Adair, Hugh Edward  
 Adam, William Patrick  
 Akroyd, Edward  
 Amcotts, Colonel W. Cracroft  
 Amory, John H.  
 Annesley, Hon. Colonel Hugh  
 Arbuthnot, Major George  
 Archdale, Captain Mervyn  
 Armitstead, George  
 Assheton, Ralph  
 Ayrton, Rt. Hon. Acton Smee  
 Aytoun, Roger Sinclair  
 Bailey, Sir Joseph Russell  
 Baker, Richard B. Wingfield  
 Barclay, Alexander Charles  
 Baring, Thomas  
 Barnett, Henry  
 Barrington, Viscount  
 Barttelot, Colonel  
 Bass, Arthur (Staffordshire E.)  
 Bates, Edward  
 Beach, Sir Michael Hicks (Glos. E.)  
 Beaumont, W. B. (Northumb. S.)  
 Bentall, Edward H.  
 Bentinck, G. Cavendish (Whit'vn.)  
 Bentinck, George W. P. (Nortf. W.)  
 Bolckow, Henry W. F.  
 Bonham-Carter, John  
 Bowring, Edgar A.  
 Brady, John

Brassey, Henry A. (Sandwich)  
 Brassey, Thomas (Hastings)  
 Brinckman, Captain  
 Broadley, W. H. Harrison  
 Brooks, William Cunliffe  
 Bruce, Rt. Hon. Lord Ernest (Marl)  
 Bruce, Rt. Hon. H. Austin (Renfr.)  
 Buckley, Sir E. (Newc. under-L.)  
 Burrell, Sir Percy  
 Bury, Viscount  
 Butler-Johnstone, Hen. A.  
 Candlish, John  
 Cardwell, Rt. Hon. Edward  
 Carington, Hon. Capt. William  
 Cartwright, Fairfax (Northamp.)  
 Cave, Rt. Hon. S. (New Shoreham)  
 Cavendish, Lord F. C. (York, W.K.)  
 Cavendish, Lord G. (Derbysh. N.)  
 Child, Sir Smith  
 Childers, Rt. Hon. Hugh Culling E.  
 Cholmeley, Sir Montague (Linc. N.)  
 Clay, James  
 Clive, Col. Hon. G. Windsor  
 Clowes, Samuel William  
 Cochrane, Alex. D. W. R. Baillie.  
 Cogan, Rt. Hon. Wm. Henry Ford  
 Cole, Col. Hon. Henry Arthur  
 Colebrooke, Sir Thomas Edward  
 Colman, Jeremiah James  
 Conolly, Thomas

Craufurd, Edw. Henry J. (Ayr)  
 Crawford, Rob. Wygram (London)  
 Crighton, Viscount  
 Croft, Sir Herbert G. D.  
 Cross, Richard Assheton  
 Dalrymple, Donald (Bath)  
 Dalrymple, Charles (Butesh.)  
 Davenport, William Bromley  
 Deane, Edmund  
 Dent, John Dent  
 Dick, Fitzwilliam  
 Dowdeswell, William Edward  
 Dowse, Right Hon. Richard  
 Duff, Robert William (Banffsh.)  
 Duncombe, Hon. Colonel  
 Dundas, Frederick  
 Du Pre, C. George  
 Eaton, Henry William  
 Edwards, Henry  
 Egerton, Hn. Alg. Fulke (Lanc. S.)  
 Egerton, Capt. Hon. F. (Derby, E.)  
 Egerton, Sir Phil. Grey (Chesh. W.)  
 Egerton, Hon. Wilb. (Chesh. M.)  
 Enfield, Viscount  
 Ennis, John James  
 Erskine, Admiral John E.  
 Eykyn, Roger  
 Fielden, Joshua (Yk. W. R., E. D.)  
 Floyer, John  
 Foljambe, Francis John Savile  
 Forde, Colonel  
 Foster, Wm. Henry (Bridgnorth)  
 Fowler, William (Camb. Bo.)  
 Galway, Viscount  
 Galies, Lord  
 Gladstone, Wm. Henry (Whitby)  
 Glyn, Hon. George Grenfell  
 Goldsmid, Julian (Rochester)  
 Gore, J. Ralph Ormsby (Salop. N.)  
 Gore, Wm. Rd. Ormsby (Leitrim)  
 Gower, Hn. E. F. Leveson (Bodmin)  
 Graves, Samuel Robt. (Liverpool)  
 Greene, Edward  
 Grey, Right Hon. Sir Geo. (Morpeth)  
 Grove, Thomas Fraser  
 Guest, Montague John (Youghal)  
 Hamilton, Lord Clan J. (King's L.)  
 Harcourt, W. G. G. V. Vernon  
 Hardy, Rt. Hon. Gathorne (Oxf. U.)  
 Hardy, John (Warwick S.)  
 Hardy, John Stewart (Rye)  
 Headlam, Rt. Hon. Thos. Emerson  
 Henley, Rt. Hon. J. W. (Oxfordsh.)  
 Henley, Lord (Northampton)  
 Heygate, Sir Fred. W. (Lond. Co.)  
 Hodgson, Kirkman D. (Bristol)  
 Holford, J. Price Gwynne  
 Holland, Samuel  
 Hope, Alex. J. B. Beresford  
 Horsman, Right Hon. Edward  
 Hughes, W. Bulkeley (Carnarvon)  
 James, Henry  
 Johnston, Andrew (Essex S.)  
 Kavanagh, Arthur MacM.  
 Kay-Shuttleworth, Ughtred James  
 Kekewich, Samuel Trehawke  
 Kingscote, Colonel  
 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Edw. H.  
 Knox, Hon. Colonel Stuart  
 Lacon, Sir Edmund H. K.  
 Laird, John  
 Lawrence, Sir James C. (Lambeth)  
 Lawrence, William (London)  
 Learmonth, Alexander  
 Leatham, Edward Aldam  
 Legh, William J. (Cheshire E.)  
 Lennox, Lord Geo. Gordon (Lym.)  
 Lewis, John D. (Devonport)  
 Lindsay, Hon. Col. Chas. (Abing.)  
 Lindsay, Col. Robt. Loyd (Berks)  
 Locke, John

Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Bouverie and Mr. Scourfield.

Lopes, Henry C. (Launceston)  
 Lowther, Hon. Wm. (Westmorland)  
 Lyttleton, Hon. Charles George  
 Mackintosh, Eneas William  
 M'Arthur, William  
 M'Mahon, Patrick (New Ross)  
 Marling, Samuel Stephens  
 Davenport, William Bromley  
 Matthews, Henry  
 Mills, Charles Henry (Kent W.)  
 Mitford, William Townley  
 Monekton, Francis (Staffordshire)  
 Monckton, Hon. Geo. (Notts.)  
 Monk, Charles James  
 Morgan, C. Octavius (Monmouth)  
 Morgan, Geo. Osborne (Denbigh)  
 Mowbray, Rt. Hn. John Robert  
 Muncaster, Lord  
 Murphy, Nicholas Daniel  
 Newdegate, Charles Newdegate  
 Newport, Viscount  
 Nicholson, William  
 North, Colonel  
 O'Conor, Denis Maurice (Sligo Co.)  
 O'Conor Don, The (Roscommon)  
 O'Loughlin, Rt. Hon. Sir Colman M.  
 O'Reilly-Dease, Matthew (Louth)  
 Pakington, Right Hon. Sir John  
 Palmer, Sir Roundell (Richmond)  
 Parker, Lt.-Col. Windsor (Suff. W.)  
 Patten, Rt. Hon. Colonel Wilson  
 Pease, Joseph Whitwell  
 Peel, Arthur Wellesley (Warwick)  
 Phillips, R. Needham  
 Phipps, Charles Paul  
 Pim, Jonathan  
 Plunket, Hon. David Robert  
 Portman, Hon. W. Hen. B.  
 Potter, Edmund (Carlisle)  
 Raikes, Henry Cecil  
 Ridley, Matthew White  
 Russell, Arthur (Tavistock)  
 Salomons, Sir David  
 Salt, Thomas  
 Samuda, Joseph D'Aguiar  
 Seymour, Alfred  
 Simonds, William Barrow  
 Smith, Abel (Herts)  
 Smith, Fred. C. (Notts, N.)  
 Smith, Rowland (Derbyshire S.)  
 Smith, Samuel George (Aylesbury)  
 Somerset, Lord Henry R. C.  
 Stanley, Hon. Fred. (Lanc. N.)  
 Steere, Lee  
 Stone, William Henry  
 Storks, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Knight  
 Strutt, Hon. Henry  
 Stuart, Colonel  
 Talbot, John Gilbert (Kent, W.)  
 Thynne, Lord Henry Fred.  
 Tite, Sir William  
 Tollemache, Major W. F. (Ches. W.)  
 Torrens, Robert R. (Camb. Boro.)  
 Tracy, Hn. Chas. R. D. Hanbury  
 Turner, Charles (Lanc. S. W.)  
 Turnor, Edmund (Linc. S.)  
 Vandeleur, Colonel  
 Verney, Sir Harry  
 Vivian, Henry Hussey (Glamor.)  
 Walpole, Hon. Fred. (Norf. N.)  
 Watney, James  
 Weguelin, Thomas M.  
 Welby, William Earle  
 Wells, William (Peterborough)  
 Whatman, James  
 Whitwell, John  
 Williams, Sir Fred. M. (Truro)  
 Winn, Rowland (Linc. N.)  
 Winterbotham, Hen. Selfe Page  
 Wyndham, Hon. Percy  
 Wynn, Sir Watkin W. (Denbighs.)  
 Wynn, Chas. W. Williams (Mont.)

PAIRS.

FOR	AGAINST.
Brise, Colonel S. B. Ruggles	Pell, Albert
Brown, A. H.	Seely, Charles
Dickson, Major	Sackville, S. G. Stopford-
Disraeli, B.	Hutton, John
Figgins, J.	Walter, J.
Gilpin, C.	Cartwright, W. C.
Herbert, H. A.	Milles, Hon. George W.
Hesketh, Sir T. G.	Waterhouse, S.
Hill, A. S.	Walker, Major
Holmesdale, Viscount	Yarmouth, Earl of
Lennox, Lord H.	Denison, C. B.
Lopes, Sir Massey	Paget, Major
Miall, E.	St. Aubyn, J.
Richard, H.	Leeman, G.
Round, J.	Bowmont, Marquis of
Simon, Sergeant	Verner, E. W.
White, J.	Hanmer, Sir J.
Yorke, J. R.	Tollemache, F.

THE ENEMY'S "WHIP."

The following circular was addressed to members of Parliament previous to the division on the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill:—

"WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE."

"You are earnestly requested to be in the House, on Wednesday, May 1, not later than four o'clock, to vote against the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill. Division certain.

- "E. P. BOUVERIE.
- "A. J. BERESFORD HOPE.
- "J. H. SCOURFIELD.
- "HENRY JAMES."

PETITIONS.

The pressure on our space compels us to postpone the detailed list. The following is the summary of petitions presented respecting the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill during the session up to May 7, 1872, taken from the twenty-second Parliamentary report:—

	No. of Petitions signed Officially	Total No. of or under Seal.	Signatures.
Women's Disabilities Removal Bill—			
Against...	3	3	3
In favour ...	168	829	350,093

DEATH OF MR. J. PLATT, M.P.—We regret to record the death of Mr. J. Platt, member for Oldham, which occurred at Paris on the 17th of May. He entered Parliament in the Liberal interest in 1863, and represented Oldham from that period until his death. He voted in 1867 for Mr. Mill's amendment to substitute the word "person" for "man" in the Reform Act, and has since supported Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women.

The Liberal party in Oldham have chosen as their candidate the Hon. Lyulph Stanley, who is a supporter of women's suffrage.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

LONDON.

On April 29 a crowded meeting was held at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, to support Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill for removing the electoral disabilities of women, now before the House of Commons. At half-past seven the doors of the building were besieged by a large crowd of ladies and others anxious to enter, and filled every available space whether of sitting and standing room. The doors were soon afterwards closed, and a great many persons, including some of the speakers, were kept outside. Mr. Arnold, a gentleman announced to speak, not being able to get into St. George's Hall, invited those outside to another room in the vicinity, where resolutions approving of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill were agreed to.

At the meeting in the hall Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., occupied the chair, supported by Mr. Thomas Hughes, M.P., Mrs. Fawcett (wife of Professor Fawcett, M.P. for Brighton), Mrs. Garrett-Anderson, Miss Becker, Miss Sturge, Miss Taylour, the Rev. Llewelyn Davies (lately elected a member of the School Board for London), &c.

The CHAIRMAN in opening the meeting said that it was called to advocate the claims of women to some moderate share of direct political influence. The crowded state of the room showed him—and he was very pleased to see it—that a material change had taken place in the public opinion of the people. (Cheers.) The meeting was a great demonstration of the interest taken in the rights of women in the metropolis, and he hoped before long to see their disabilities with regard to the franchise removed. (Loud cheers.)

Mrs. GARRETT-ANDERSON moved the first resolution, to the effect that to recognise sex as a ground of disqualification for voting in the elections for members of parliament was contrary to English representation, and was unjust to those excluded, and injurious to the whole community. The grievances of women were almost all attributable to the present system of excluding them from electoral rights, and it prevented them from enforcing their claims on the candidates at an election. Men legislated on matters which they presumed to be for the interests of women, but which they knew little or nothing about, and the very existence of women was often forgotten in the framing of acts of parliament. (Cheers.)

Mr. THOMAS HUGHES, M.P., seconded the motion. He was very glad to see so large an assembly and to have an opportunity of showing his sympathy with the heroic efforts made by the fairer sex to establish their own position. Undoubtedly women were placed in most unjust, and oftentimes cruel, positions by the system which prevailed, which gave men power to trample on them and abuse them. (Cheers.) The law did not give them sufficient protection, and cases in which women were injured for life were continually cropping up, for which the dastardly perpetrators often escaped almost scot free. (Cheers.) The resolution expressed broad principles, and he should second it now, and give his support to his friend in the chair when his Bill came on for the second time before the house. (Loud cheers.)

Miss TAYLOUR, in an eloquent speech, supported the motion; and Mrs. ROSE also spoke in its favour. It was then carried unanimously.

Miss BECKER moved the second resolution, that the meeting approved of Mr. Jacob Bright's Bill, and authorised him, as chairman, to sign a petition on behalf of the meeting in its favour. She then spoke in the highest terms of those gentlemen who had fought the battle of the ladies in the House

of Commons, and said that the time was not far distant when their efforts would be rewarded by success. (Loud cheers.)

Miss TOD seconded the resolution, which was carried by acclamation.

Mrs. FAWCETT then addressed the meeting, and dilated upon the many hardships and inconveniences women were obliged to suffer because of unappreciating and careless legislation.

The Rev. LLEWELYN DAVIES followed, and a vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings, which were of a most enthusiastic character.—*Standard*.

As several hundreds of persons were unable to gain admission to the crowded meeting in St. George's Hall, many of them adjourned to the Cavendish Square Rooms. The chair was taken by Mr. Wilson. Professor BAYNES moved and Mrs. BONNINGER seconded the first resolution—"That this meeting proposes that the suffrage shall be extended to women on the same terms as it is or may be hereafter extended to men."—The second resolution—"That this meeting tenders its assistance to the meeting at St. George's Hall, in order to support the resolutions that they may forward to the legislature."—was moved by Miss JEX BLAKE, seconded by Mr. ARTHUR ARNOLD, and supported by Mrs. HENRY KINGSLEY, who very forcibly pointed out the unfair state of the law as applying to property held by women, also the unfair administration of the law as applied by magistrates in criminal offences. She maintained that the fearful brutality to women was greatly increasing among the lower classes, and that it was greatly to be deplored that persons are frequently sentenced to as much as six months' hard labour for a petty theft while men who knock out their wives' eyes, kick them to death, or murder them by pushing them under waggon wheels, frequently get no more than two or three months.—*Examiner*.

#### CONFERENCE AT THE WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL.

On May the 2nd a conference of supporters of this society and delegates from all parts of the country, was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, to consider what further steps should be taken to promote the object of the society. Mr. E. B. Eastwick, M.P., presided, and the conference was addressed by Mrs. Henry Kingsley, Mr. Frederick Hill, Mr. Pare, Miss Becker, Mrs. George Sims, Miss Lillias Ashworth, Mrs. Rose, and Miss Babb. Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., congratulated the meeting on the remarkable position in which they had succeeded in placing the question in a very short space of time. Miss Frances Power Cobbe remarked that it was a Tory principle that all who paid taxes should have representation, and it was most important that those who had the greatest interest in the peace and good government of the country should have the power, and not those who were in the habit of turning the world topsy-turvy. Mr. Maguire, M.P., Mr. W. Morrison, M.P., and Mr. Johnston, M.P., followed. A resolution, thanking those members of Parliament who had supported the movement, and requesting their Parliamentary leader to re-introduce the Bill next session, was moved by Miss Taylour, seconded by Mr. Hopwood, and carried unanimously, after which the conference separated.

#### MEETING AT HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS.

A crowded meeting, held on May 10th, at the Hanover Square Rooms, was addressed by several ladies, in reply to the speeches delivered recently in the House of Commons on the occasion of the discussions which resulted in the defeat of Mr. Jacob Bright's Women's Disabilities Bill. Dr. Lyon

Playfair, M.P., took the chair, and he was supported by many of the ladies and gentlemen who are identified with the women's rights movement in this country, including Mrs. James Stansfeld, Mrs. Jacob Bright, Mrs. Duncan M'Laren, Miss Taylor, Miss Agnes M'Laren, Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Professor Nichol, Mr. and Mrs. F. Pennington, Mr. Maguire, M.P., Mr. D. Robertson, M.P. (of Ladykirk), Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, Mr. Charles Gilpin, M.P., Mr. Richard, M.P., Rev. T. Binney, Mr. Edward Hazle, Mr. Henry Kingsley, Mr. Lewis Morris, Mr. Arthur Arnold, Mrs. Hensleigh Wedgwood, Miss Le Geyt, Mr. Beavington Atkinson, Mr. Francis Fuller, Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., Mr. M'Clure, M.P., Hon. R. H. Elliott, Mr. Madox Brown, R.A., Dr. Brewer, M.P., and Mrs. Brewer. [There were also present Lady Helena Newenham, Mr. Conolly, M.P., Mr. J. B. Smith, M.P., Captain the Hon. Dawson-Damer, M.P., Sir David Wedderburn, M.P., and the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer.]

The CHAIRMAN briefly introduced the business, saying that, as the fact of there being a male chairman was an anomaly, he would not commit the further anomaly of making a long speech. Having simply stated that the object of the movement was to obtain the same franchise for parliamentary elections that women householders now enjoyed for municipal purposes, he introduced

Miss BECKER, of Manchester, to the meeting. This lady moved a resolution thanking Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Eastwick, Mr. Maguire, Mr. Heron, Sir Charles Adderley, and the Attorney-General, for introducing and supporting the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill, and also the rest of the 160 hon. gentlemen who voted or paired for the second reading, respectfully requesting them to take steps for its reintroduction, and pledging the meeting to increased unremitting efforts until the Bill shall become law. Miss Becker claimed that the strength of feeling of women in favour of the measure had been underrated in the debate on the 1st of May, and she cited as proof of the fact petitions bearing 250,000 signatures presented in its favour. Defending the course taken to obtain signatures to these petitions—the usual one of canvassing—she said that the only way to elicit the opinions of the people on any subject was to ask for those opinions; and, from having been personally engaged in the work, she declared her belief that, if every town were tested in that way, it would be found that a majority of the people would be found to be in favour of women's suffrage. Additional signatures have since been obtained, making the result of four weeks' work 346,000. With that taste for figures which distinguishes her, Miss Becker analysed the state of parties in regard to the question, showing that 113 of their supporters were Liberals, while 47 were Conservatives, and that they were successful in obtaining friends both with the leaders of the Opposition and amongst the followers of the Government. Happily ridiculing the fear of those who opposed the Bill, lest its concession should be followed by larger demands from the ladies, Miss Becker pointed out that if what they desired was just and expedient, it ought to be conceded, since it could not necessarily lead to consequences which were unjust and inexpedient, and that it would be time enough to refuse unreasonable demands when they were made. Dealing with Mr. Bouverie's argument about its being a question whether the whole system on which the country is governed should be changed, she urged that no reform could be introduced without in some degree altering the system of government, and that all that was essential was that the alteration should be so far in harmony with the previous state of things that the transition could be made without violent change. The question of women's suffrage stood in that

position, for the whole system of local government rested upon the basis of a ratepaying franchise, irrespective of the sex of the ratepayer, and they were asking simply that Parliamentary government might be assimilated to local government, and that surely could not be called revolutionary. Repudiating "the wild theories which disturbed the imaginations of so many hon. gentlemen in the recent debate," she asked that women might be judged by what they demanded, and not by what their opponents supposed that they demanded. They asked for a small practical measure in order to obtain redress for grievances admitted by their opponents, and in order to secure unmistakable benefits. She cited the inequalities in the education between boys and girls and the law regarding the property of married women, and dropped down rather sharply on the hon. member for Kilmarnock for an egregious instance of ignorance in his speech in regard to the provisions enacted by the Married Women's Property Act of 1870. As to the argument against giving single women the suffrage, that it would be unjust to disfranchise them when they married, she pointed out that the same argument might be urged against single women holding property. In refutation of the hackneyed statement that women did not desire, and, if they had it, would not exercise the franchise, Miss Becker gave some instructive statistics of a number of women who voted at the last municipal election for a large number of towns—for instance, in Manchester 2,666, in Salford 1,551, and in Bradford 1,827 took part. Dealing finally with "the flimsy argument about women being subjected to practical inconvenience in recording their votes for members of parliament, the lady speaker asked why arrangements could not be made to obviate such inconvenience, if real, though, judging from her experience of Manchester municipal elections, she declared her inability to appreciate the objection.

Miss RHODA GARRETT, who seconded the resolution, admitted that the advocates of women's suffrage were disappointed at the result of the debate on their Bill; but they knew that the prejudices of society, which the hon. member for the University of Cambridge mistook for the laws of nature, were not to be overturned in two or three sessions. Men were not to be blamed that they could not easily unlearn the traditions of centuries. She was severe on the discursive capabilities which hon. gentlemen developed in the course of a discussion of a very simple and harmless measure, which they, however, seemed to think would lead to the destruction and total abolition of man, and in the misrepresentation and ignorance of the real facts of the case which had characterised the speeches of many of the opponents of the measure.

Mrs. ROSE supported the measure in a speech principally devoted to demolishing the Attorney-General for Ireland; and it is only fair to say that the lady displayed humour as excellent in its way as that of the subject of her castigation, and an amount of logical consistency which was certainly not surpassed by that hon. and learned gentleman in his able speech in the debate in question. In conclusion, the lady dealt *seriatim* with the arguments and illustrations of Mr. Beresford Hope, displaying, after the manner of the previous speeches, the groundlessness of the anticipations of the hon. gentleman, and pursuing the subject in a vein of pleasant irony which would not have caused that hon. gentleman quite so much amusement as it did the audience.

Mrs. FAWCETT, who followed in support of the resolution, demonstrated, in opposition to the general dictum of the press, that there has been a reaction against women's suffrage; that there had really been a gain of one vote in the House of Commons in its favour. She was in no way discouraged so

long as she knew that thousands of women would devote their best energies to the question until they brought it to a successful issue. There was matter for congratulation in the marked improvement in tone and language which characterised the speeches of the present year, especially of their opponents. There had been no more allusion to the Satires of Juvenal, or coarse jokes about the sex of the women who had signed the petition. Giving the opponents all credit for sincerity in their professed willingness to remedy the admitted grievances of women, she urged that those who were without representation were sure to be kept waiting, as they were without the "open sesame" which induced attention to their just demands. Criticising the argument that women's votes would strengthen sentimental legislation, Mrs. Fawcett said that if the domination of sentiment was to be considered a positive bar to the exercise of political functions, many members of parliament certainly had no right to occupy their seats; and she cited, in support of her proposition, an hon. and learned gentleman who declined to read an article in favour of women's suffrage because it was convincing, and who announced to the fair speaker that he was going to vote against the Bill, though he knew all the reasons were in favour of its principle, because his feelings were against it. "This sweet gushing child of nature," said the lady, amid the roars of her audience, "was no other than the hon. and learned member for Oxford, Mr. Vernon Harcourt." After a masterly *reductio ad absurdum* of a serious argument against women's suffrage, on the ground of difference in the physical strength of the sexes, Mrs. Fawcett was peculiarly happy in a running analysis of the speech made by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen.

The resolution was then put from the chair and carried, only two or three hands being held up in the negative by a small minority of the "enfranchised sex."

Mrs. MARK PATTISON proposed, and Miss LILLIAS ASHWORTH seconded, a vote of thanks to the chair in short but admirable speeches, the whole of the fair speakers evincing talents which might sufficiently account for the dismay with which many hon. members contemplate the possibility of having to encounter such antagonists in debate.—*Daily Telegraph*.

#### A WOMAN AS SURVEYOR OF ROADS.

A widow lady has been lately appointed surveyor of roads in a parish in Westmoreland. The lady had complained to the surveyor of the state of the roads, and at the next election he prevailed on the ratepayers to elect the aforesaid widow, probably imagining that she would decline the office. But she was strongly advised to accept it, and as she keeps a clerk, and has ample means, she has no difficulty in obtaining a thorough supervision. It is said that she has made some awkward discoveries as to the state of the accounts. The refusal to undertake the duties of surveyor of roads may entail a maximum penalty of twenty pounds. Unless some valid reason can be given for the refusal the justices of the peace are empowered to fine up to that amount. The word used in the clause relating to the appointment of surveyor is *person*, therefore women ratepayers are liable to be elected, and may be fined if they refuse to serve.

#### A WOMAN AS NAVIGATOR.

The Abbie Clifford, from Pernambuco for New York, was spoken April 21, in lat. 22 N., long 50 W., with master (Clifford), first mate, and one seaman dead of yellow fever. The master's wife, being the only person on board acquainted with navigation, was bringing the vessel home.—*Shields Gazette*, May 23, 1872.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
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or greater or less sum, are offered to the committee of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage if twenty others will do likewise within a fortnight. June 1, 1872.

The committee gratefully acknowledge this generous offer, and earnestly appeal to their friends to enable them to realise it. They trust that the manner in which they have employed the funds hitherto placed at their disposal affords a guarantee that any future donations will be efficiently and economically used in advancing the cause. They have great pleasure in reporting that the following sums have been already promised:—

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A Friend .....	0	2	6
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Mr. Hampson.....	1	0	0
Miss Jessie Hanning .....	0	1	6
Mr. J. Howden .....	0	2	6
Mrs. Lucas .....	0	10	0
Miss Martin.....	0	1	0
Mr. Hugh Mason .....	10	10	0
Mrs. Ogden .....	5	0	0
Miss Harriette Rigby .....	10	0	0
Miss Mary Roberts .....	0	10	6
Miss Arabella S. Shore.....	1	1	6
Mrs. Smith .....	0	2	0
Mrs. F. Sparke (proceeds of sale of bazaar articles).....	0	19	0
Mrs. J. P. Thomasson (ditto).....	1	5	0
Mr. Thomas Taylor.....	1	1	0
Miss Ursula Taylor .....	1	1	0
Mr. Thomas .....	0	2	6
Mr. Woodhead .....	0	2	6
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