

believe, represents over seventy towns. I appeal, lastly, to the decision—the unanimous decision—of the “Council of Four Hundred” at Birmingham—your own constituency—which you do not represent in this matter, as it has repeatedly, in public meeting, pronounced its verdict in favour of our cause.

Do not say that we wish “to arm the women of this country to defend themselves against their husbands, their brothers, and their sons.” Rather say, We wish to send true men, armed through the ballot box, with power and right to speak authoritatively in our behalf to the House of Commons, and so to put an end to the unseemly differences of Members, who, judging each by the gossip of his own little coterie, presume now to speak in our name without having received our authority.

In conclusion, here is the criticism of a Birmingham paper on your doctrine of physical force :—

“Mr. Bright says, ‘If all men and women voted, the general result must be the same, for by an unalterable natural law strength was stronger than weakness, and in the end, by an absolute necessity, men must prevail.’ Here is the open and undisguised advocacy of the law of force as opposed to the law of right. It is not a new argument, but one which has been used as long as we have had any political history. The only new feature is the promulgation of the worst principles of Toryism in the name of Liberalism. It would, however, be unfair to call such a principle Toryism—it is barbarism. The vital principle of civilised life is the admission of right irrespective of power.”

I am, Sir,

A LADY IN THE GALLERY of the House of Commons on the 26th of April, and a devoted adherent of the principles for which you have suffered and toiled for forty years.

E. MATTHEWS & SONS, Steam Printers, 54, Berwick Street, and 377, Oxford Street, W.

THE
ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN
THE LAW OF THE LAND.

By SIDNEY SMITH.

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THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN
THE LAW OF THE LAND.

There are in these British Islands at this present writing thirty-four millions of human beings. In the old-fashioned phraseology of statisticians, they used to be called millions of *souls*—a term to which it may be useful hereafter to advert. Of these, about sixteen and a half millions are males, and seventeen and a half millions women. Seafaring and adventurous islanders, our men push their way over the world, and settle in our colonies, leaving the balance of sex at home always against them. A large majority of our population, our fellow subjects, responsible to our laws, amenable to the behests of our Legislature, taxed for all the uses of the State, the town, and the parish, engaging in the toils of our industry, adjutants in the production of our material wealth, are yet denied the right of Parliamentary representation. Mothers, wives, sisters, daughters of us—

Where we have garnered up our souls,
Where either we must live or have no life—
The very fountain whence our current runs
Or else dries up—

we, fathers, husbands, brothers, turn our backs on the radical principle of our own constitution, for a pretext to leave them civilly defenceless. It is a maxim in virtue of which we have conceded the suffrage to the vagabond, the drunkard, and the thief, that they are entitled to have a voice in the laws they are to obey. Our rulers have been compelled, by the logic of the constitution, to open its doors to millions, in homage to the

doctrine that the State can only tax and govern us by consent of our representatives—to millions who can neither read nor write, of whom indeed we cannot so much as ask the question—to many who, like the men of Nineveh, know not their right hand from the left. Outlaws, convicted felons—even these may elect, nay, may be elected—but there is no room at the polling-booth or in “The House” for Mary Somerville, Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Browning, or Rosa Bonheur. We set their sex to reap our fields, to fill our factories; they are clerks in our Government offices, merchants, shopkeepers, manufacturers, tradeswomen, saleswomen, skilled mechanics, inn, lodging, stable keepers; they take degrees at our universities, and practise as physicians, but they have not, it seems, capacity to judge of the qualifications of a member of Parliament. It is quite a sufficing reason for giving Hodge a vote, that Tom, the cobbler over the way, has one; but there the logic of analogy halts. The successful farmer of five hundred acres, the dairywoman who keeps as many cows, and who, each by her skill, energy, and forethought, not only realises an ample income, but finds the money for the employment and maintenance of hundreds of families—these, it seems, have not the requisite ability to make a cross at a polling-booth, although the man who carries swill to their pigs, or delivers the milk on their milk-walk, is, we are assured, an independent and competent elector. If the latter are not very fit, “the schoolmaster is abroad;” give them the right now, and they may learn how to use it by and by. But no such experimental enfranchisement is conceded to their female employers.

We make women large landholders, ladies of manors, fundholders, householders, burgesses of our cities. Baroness Coutts is free of the city of London, and a member of a livery company—“anything but to the purpose.” They may keep the post and money-order office; by express law they may be, and have been, sextons to bury us, constables to protect us, overseers of the poor, high-chamberlain, high-constable, marshal; they may be, and have personally *served* the office of, high-sheriff; nay, they have repeatedly exercised the function of returning officer of members to serve in Parliament; but yet we are told that they are unfit to choose their own representatives. To cap the climax of this dialectic farce, our law and

constitution set a woman to rule over us—to negative by her single veto the unanimous voice of both Houses of Parliament—to declare war, make peace, or conclude treaties binding us all—while we pronounce her congenitally incapable, by reason of her sex, to appreciate the qualifications of a single commoner. Perhaps the most perfect *reductio ad absurdum* in this regard is, that the State itself, by express Act of Parliament, has created and subsidised the office of schoolmistress. She must pass a stringent preliminary examination of her capacity to teach all that schoolmasters impart to the male sex. Oh, yes; she can *instruct* electors, but she is without the capacity herself to elect. She may be a member, president of the school board, vote for common council or aldermen, be a councillor or alderman to administer the municipal affairs of a city of 500,000 inhabitants; but no, she cannot be an elector of Little Pedlington.

Sex—what is it but a zoologic expression, referring solely to animal functions? Distinctive among the brutes “without discourse of reason,” and ruled by blind instincts and prone appetites, is it to be applied to the immortal part of us? The human soul is of no sex. Can we tell the gender of the mind or intellect? Is not woman, as man, fashioned in the image of her maker? Is there one mental faculty which has been omitted in her cerebral economy? Even if it could be contended that some intellectual power has, by the habits of society or the circumstances of her position, been unequally or imperfectly developed, does not the same answer apply in her case as that which is given to the objection to the enfranchisement of male stupidity—the exercise of the function will educate for its due discharge? The Turks, more consistent than we, degrade their women to a *status* below their own, as we do; but, unlike us, they deny that they have souls.

The plain truth is, the objection to female enfranchisement is founded on utter ignorance of the natural history of the *genus homo*. There are countries in which the body-guard of the sovereign consists of his wives. The amazon is no myth, but a present reality. There are populous tribes in which the social position of the sexes is reversed, and the men, entirely subordinated to the women, fully recognise their own as a purely subservient status, deferring in everything to their

wives as the dominant power. Among savages in general, it is the women who really discharge every duty but that of fighting and hunting. Even among civilised nations, how many classes devolve, not only the industrial drudgery, but the business, of their calling, upon the women. The most contemptuous gibe the fisherwomen can fling at their neighbour is that "she cannot keep her husband." The great Napoleonic wars that drew the male population away to the army, made the women of France fill up the gap, by carrying on the work and managing the business of civil life; and to such purpose was it done, that to this day there is scarcely a department of trade or industry, hardly an office of trust or skill, in which they are not to be found creditably proficient. In our country, who is there who cannot tell off, in his own circle, or within his personal knowledge, cases of women who have, by their commanding intelligence, redeemed the fortunes of a futile husband, or, as widows, brought up and put out into life the family he failed to support? Of those who engage in business, how few become insolvent; how punctual are they, as a rule, in fulfilling trade engagements; how reliable in meeting liabilities; how rigid in the discharge of duties!

It is indeed strange that the English people should raise such distinctions as those on which this disqualification is founded. The law of inheritance excluding females which had been imported into the constitution of France, from the allodial tenure of the Salic settlers, never prevailed in Britain. This nation always recognised the right of succession in the female line. I well remember the plenipotentiary of an Indian prince declaring to me he had discovered the reason of the subjugation of the Hindoos to the Saxons. "In the zenana," said he, "we have secluded our women, and made them wholly unfit to make intelligent and capable men and women of our children." "Daughters," observes Professor Monier Williams, "are little regarded. When a boy was five years old he was betrothed. After the nuptial ceremony a boy returned without his bride to his father's house, but at the age of fifteen or sixteen he was allowed to live with his child wife. He (Professor Williams) had at Indian high schools and colleges often examined boys, half of whom were fathers. Early marriages were the curse of India. The condition of Hindoo girls was one of hopeless

ignorance; they were unable to read, they were never taught rules of health, or the most elementary truths of science. A feeling prevailed that a girl who had learned to read had committed a sin which would bring down a judgment on her or her husband. A young widow had practically no existence; an old widow was cared for by her children, but a young childless widow was regarded as worse than dead. She might not marry again (a man would marry again eleven or twelve days after the death of his wife); she was supposed to be in perpetual mourning for her dead husband, although she might never have seen him except at her child-wedding; and she was a household drudge." What has ruined Turkey and every eastern country, what ultimately sealed the doom of Athens, but leaving the culture of each rising generation of the governing classes to the sultanas and female slaves of the seraglio and the harem? The education of the citizen begins in the cradle. Habits of cleanliness, order, obedience, industry, and truth must commence in the nursery and the schoolroom. Eve was a helpmate, not a slave. The description Solomon gives of a virtuous woman is really of a wife who manages and gives law to the whole family. "Her husband is known in the gates; her children arise up, and call her blessed." "She considereth a field, and buyeth it; she perceiveth that her merchandise is good; and delivereth girdles to the merchant; she openeth her mouth with wisdom."

This is not a mere debating society question. It is something very much more significant than the exercitation of a speculative essay. The spirit which suggests women's disability for electoral functions, keeps them out of many callings whereby they might rise out of a deplorably dependent position, and earn a comfortable livelihood. The daughters of a professional man, who can save little of his income in the necessity of maintaining his position and keeping up appearances, are placed in a state of cruel suspense and dependence by the existing habits of society. In our old and highly civilised country, where the mechanism of life, artificial and precarious, rests on such hazardous contingencies, there are few new openings for those who have fallen by unmerited misfortune out of their natural circle. It was the tradition of the Bourbon kings that every prince and princess should be taught

a trade; and the wheel of fortune so turned, that the knowledge stood one of them in good stead in his extremity. Fathers scarcely do their duty to their children and to society who do not so change the habits of public opinion and the current of custom as to smooth the way for females to enter upon the pursuit of trades and professions, without suffering impediment from the prejudices of fixed but illfounded ideas of their proper sphere or mental capability. To this end no means could be more conducive than their introduction to and exercise of those political functions of citizenship which form the outward sign of civil competency, and impart a *status* that may help them in their conflict with our settled but too sophisticated habits. It is my abiding conviction, that by having "cabined, cribbed, confined" more than one-half of our subjects in the moral zenana, the conventional nunnery of our national prejudices, and cramping their minds, as the Chinese do their feet, so that intellectually we try to make them totter when nature bids them walk as freely as their gaolers, we are depriving the nation of a power, which, if wisely and trustingly developed, would add immeasurably to its inventive enterprise and progressive energy. I have already touched, in this connection, on the part nature and necessity assigned to women in the formation of the physical constitution, the personal habits, the moral and mental character of the rising generation. It is to the gifts and faculties of the mother that we trace the genius and proclivities of the child. Can we gather grapes from thorns? The education of the nursery does not mean merely pap and caudle, or the offices of the wet and dry nurse. In spite of all our prejudices we are compelled, by the very necessities of our domestic arrangements, to delegate the most important functions of the instructor—those which mould the wax of humanity while yet it is molten, and bend the twig while yet it is lithe—to the nurse and the wife, whom yet we fail to prepare by our social culture for their momentous task. They are to educate our children—but who educates the educators? "Women," observes Lord Kaimes, "destined by nature to take the lead in educating children, would no longer be the greatest obstruction to good education by their ignorance, frivolity, and disorderly manners. Even upon the breast infants are susceptible of impressions; and the mother hath opportu-

nities without end of instilling into them good principles before they are fit for a male tutor." In a dialogue (ascribed to Tacitus) describing the glories of Rome in the age of the Commonwealth, it is observed, "Children were suckled not in the hut of a mercenary nurse, but by the chaste mother who bore them. Their education during non-age was in her hands; and it was her chief care to instil into them every virtuous principle. In her presence a loose word or an improper action were strictly prohibited. She superintended not only their serious studies, but even their amusements, which were conducted with decency and moderation. In that manner the Gracchi, educated by Cornelia their mother, and Augustus by Atia his mother, appeared in public with untainted minds—fond of glory, and prepared to make a figure in the world." If we expect our women fitly to discharge their infinitely important office in the economy of education, we must emancipate them from the bondage of conventional subordination, and call them to the exercise of those political functions in which we now inhibit their participation. I say nothing farther here on the folly of denying to the sex the salutary influences of important duties, and the openings to an honourable ambition, which to active and energetic minds alone realise the higher objects of life. Society knows not what it loses when it confines the larger half of human kind in the enchanted castle of a theory which has no real foundation in the natural history of the race. There is no elementary difference in the inherent mental and moral qualities of the sexes. Their apparent idiosyncrasies are the creatures of hereditary transmission of acquired habits, and of the influences of the manners and customs by which they are surrounded and affected. There are man milliners as well as women soldiers. The interchangeability of the supposed spiritual characteristics of the sexes is one of the best settled facts in the history of the race.

Are then these claims to be put off with banter about strong-minded women by weak-minded men? Is the earnestness with which they are pursued by those who encounter ridicule, unmannerly rudeness, and abuse, in a cause which is really identified with the best interests of the community, to be rewarded only with contumely, and baffled by mere masterly inactivity?

Are women's rights *not* rights? Is it fair that the son should be armed with all the privileges and facilities of making his way in the world, and have the family estate handed over by the law entirely to himself, while his sister is at once to be left without the means of living, and disinherited by the very laws she is forced to obey, and by the State that taxes her without her consent, to uphold a system that robs her of her natural patrimony? How many a loving father has seen a noble estate, with its ancestral halls and monumental oaks, decreed by the law itself to pass away from his only child, the last of a long and noble line, merely because she was helpless and a woman, and some "accident of an accident," the "tenth transmitter of a foolish face," far remote of kin, and having too much already, was of the dominant, perhaps only the domineering, gender. This cause is not the crotchet of a mere social oddity. The earnestness it inspires is not the eccentricity of ill-directed enthusiasm, or the mere errand of the female Quixote. We all owe a heartfelt tribute of respect to those who for its sake have patiently borne the misconstruction to which it has subjected them—the quips, and sentences, and those "paper bullets of the brain," which, because they are so light, hit all the harder in the small talk of conventional frivolity.

Let them persevere, and take heart of grace. "In due season they will reap if they faint not." The law of England is with them, although the lawyers are not. It was the deliberate and calculated statement of the Prime Minister, in his place in Parliament, that the English of Acts of Parliament and their meaning were plain enough. The obscurity lay in the ingenuity of their interpreters. It is not St. Stephen's that has shut its doors against women, but Westminster Hall. They are electors by the law of the land, and disfranchised only by the casuistry of the courts. A single decision of the Court of Common Pleas, from which there is no appeal, even to itself, degrades seventeen and a half millions of British subjects from the most clearly established of public rights. The larger half of the rational creation summarily snuffed out of political existence, by Mr. Justice Bovill! *Nulla vestigia retrorsum* from his irreversible decree! "Think of that, Master Brook!" Is it permissible to presume so far as to whisper in the ear of Queen, Lords, and Commons, that the exercise of this power

of political excommunication by a judicial pope, constituted infallible by Act of Parliament, is wholly unconstitutional, and dangerously impolitic. The House of Commons, by long, uniform, immemorial tradition, is the sole legal judge of all particulars relative to its own constitution, and the qualifications of those who elect it. Coke declares, "Judges ought not to give any opinion of a matter of Parliament, because it is not to be decided by the common law, but *secundum legem et consuetudinem Parliamenti*" (4 Inst., p. 15). An "important power," observes Sir T. E. May ("Usage of Parliament," pp. 40, *et seq.*), "peculiar to the Commons is that of determining all matters touching the election of its own members, and *involving therein the rights of the electors.*" . . . A burgess of Aylesbury brought an action against the returning officer in the Queen's Bench for rejecting his vote; and on the Court deciding it had no jurisdiction, the House of Lords reversed the decision. But the Commons resolved (1704) "that they cannot judge of the right of election without determining the right of electors; and if electors were at liberty to prosecute suits touching the right of giving voices *in other courts*, there might be different voices in other courts, which would make confusion, and be dishonourable to the House of Commons; and that, therefore, such an action was a breach of privilege." Other actions having attempted to introduce the jurisdiction of the courts of law in this regard, the suitors and their agents were sent to Newgate, and, continues May, "the question has never arisen since. The Commons have continued to exercise the sole right of determining whether electors have had the right to vote. . . and its determination declared by statute final and conclusive in all subsequent elections, and to all intents and purposes whatsoever." The privileges, the jurisdiction of the House of Commons, which is strictly a judicial tribunal, a "High Court," in all that relates to its constitution and authority, is the property of the nation; and no session of Parliament, resolution of either House, or Act of Parliament, can have or give power to part with it. In giving to courts of law a directive administrative power to regulate the details of registration, it was not in the power or contemplation of the House of Commons to give to the Court of Common Pleas the sole authority, even excluding its own jurisdiction, to determine absolutely,

and *in gremio*, the very essence and substance of the whole suffrage rights of the British people. Yet it is clear, *meo iudicio*, that the Court of Common Pleas has been illegally clothed with an exclusive jurisdiction, which the House of Commons has just as unconstitutionally abdicated. The citizens of America have seen good reason to repent having set the Supreme (Law) Court of the United States paramount over the constitution.

I repeat my thesis. By the laws of England, women are entitled to be registered as parliamentary electors; and the decision—the single judgment of the Court of Common Pleas, which it has no opportunity to review, and from which no appeal is competent—is *bad law*. Is there any presumption in saying this of the judgments of a court which pronounces the same opinion of its own decisions, and which are just as commonly condemned by Courts of Appeal? After all, the fetish worship of horse-hair wigs by the exoteric public is not very accountable. You or I, are we not as able to understand and interpret our own mother-tongue as e'er a judge on the bench? *Ignorantia juris, neminem excusat*. The statutes of the realm are addressed to the subjects of the realm, and assume that they can read and understand them. Those especially which refer to the universal public rights of the poorest and most ignorant, as well as the highest and most cultured, ought to be so plain that "he who runs may read." There is no witchcraft in jurisprudence—even in that of England. No citizen need approach it as if it were a Delphic oracle to be interpreted only by its priests. The construction of English sentences uttered by one's own representatives—ought that to be "past all understanding?" It is the concrete will of the men who meet us at the polling booth, and ask us for "our most sweet voices." Why should it be "*caviare* to the million?" Do not believe it. Judge for yourselves. I shall endeavour to make the matter clear to the simple; and I shall ask my brother lawyers to allow me to take them along with us in the following examination of the point at issue.

The basis of the existing electoral system is the Reform Act of 1832. That is, so to speak, the wicket through which citizens must pass until they reach the parliamentary register. The franchises, which *for the first time* it creates, are dispensed

on the preliminary condition that they shall be restricted to "every male person of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity." This condition precedent is repeated in reference to every qualification then *for the first time* known to the constitution. Never before, and never after, is such a term as "male person" employed in any statute of the realm. It is an entire novelty, and in reference to such an unspeakably important consideration as the right of the people to choose their representatives, I am entitled to say it is a flagrant innovation. Nay, I am warranted in going the farther length of maintaining that such was the conviction of the framers of the act themselves. While creating and dispensing new qualifications to "male persons," it reserves and perpetuates all franchises in operation at its own date, whether relating to counties or to boroughs; and in continuing to preserve alive and effectual all what are called ancient or reserved rights, which it does, not parenthetically, but by express and separate sections, it drops the word "male" every time it refers to these, and resumes it on every occasion on which it returns to enact a new qualification. What candid mind, interpreting the will of Parliament by its expressed acts, would do other than concede that if it had repeated the word "male" in the continuation of these traditional franchises, it would be restricting what the law and the constitution had left open? The distinction it preserves is too marked, too systematic, and too often repeated to have been adopted *per incuriam*. There is a settled design apparent throughout; and that is manifestly not to trench on any right of suffrage which had been handed down to us from our ancestors. I refer jurisconsults to sections 24, 25, 31, 32, and 33 of 2nd William IV., cap. 45. "The Reform Act of 1832," observes Sir J. D. Coleridge (*Chorlton v. Lings*), "in the clauses which create new franchises . . . speaks of 'male person,' but section 18, limiting the old, has simply 'person;' so sects. 22, 23, 24, et cet."

As far as concerns these ancient rights, we are therefore referred back to the common, customary, and statute law, as it prevailed before the year 1832. The judgment of the Court of Common Pleas rejecting the claim of women to the franchise assumes that at no period of our history had the sex any right of representation—and this is the dictum which I challenge

as wholly without warrant, and opposed to patent facts.

Here let me premise that our earlier statutes and Magna Charta were embodied in Latin. I need hardly add that the word *vir* indicates sex, but that *homo* is employed to signify the human species in contradistinction to the brutes. The *genus homo* applies to either and to both sexes. When Terence says *Homo sum humani nihil, &c.*, it is not in the sense of being a male, but of being human. *Hominum Salvator—pater hominum deorumque* are titles which extend to the whole race, and are not restricted to either gender. In so far as English law is involved, Lord Coke (2 Inst., f. 45) expressly rules that the term *homo* employed throughout Magna Charta has been always held to "extend to both sexes." When the sign of manhood is to be indicated, it is called *toga virilis*, not *toga humana*. From this premiss let the examination of the law start. The first glimpse presented to us in this connection is 20th Henry III., cap. 10, wherein *liberi homines* and *liberi tenentes*, the owners of freeholds, were the suitors at the county courts. On the occasion of the election of knights of the shire all suitors were summoned to the county court, and the majority "on the view" returned the member. It is not denied that women were freeholders, and as such suitors, or that the suitors were the electors. The 53rd Henry III., c. 10, in prescribing who are to attend the sheriff at his courts, exempts only "*religious men and women*," and then only when they are *not required for some other cause*. Prynne, in his "*Parliamenta Rediviva*," refers to "The attornies of the Archbishop of York and of sundry earles, lords, nobles, and *some ladies, who were annual suitors to the county court of Yorkshire*, being the sole electors of the knights, and sealing their indentures, witness the first indenture for this county." Among these suitors is named Lucy Countess of Kent. In the Parliament of 2nd Henry V. Margaret Vavasour (not, observe, a *feme sole*) is a party to a similar indenture, and Mrs. Copley in the reign of Edward VI. attests a third. From this premiss, that the suitors or freeholders—*liberi tenentes*—in the county courts, were the electors of the knights of the shire, legislation proceeds from the reign of Henry III., to the 7th Henry IV., c. 15, which provides that "all they that be there present, as well suitors duly summoned for the same cause, as other . . . shall

proceed to the election." Women were "suitors as well as other." The 8th Henry VI., c. 7, declares the knights "shall be chosen in every county by people (therein), whereof every one of them shall have free land or tenement to the value of 40/." Women were "people, and had free land." The 10th of Henry VI., c. 2, uses the term "chooser" for elector. The 7th and 8th William III., c. 25, describes the electors as "the freeholders," directs that "the name of each freeholder shall be set down;" that "no person" shall vote as trustee unless in possession; nor "any person" under age. The 18th G. II., c. 18, continues the term "person" for elector. The 19th G. II., c. 28, referring more particularly to borough elections, still confines the description of voters to the same indefinite and purely generic title. The 3rd G. III., c. 15, prohibits "any person" from voting unless he has taken up his freedom for twelve months. The 11th G. III., c. 55; 22nd G. III., c. 31; 44th G. III., c. 60; and the 11th G. IV., and 1st Will. IV., c. 74, relating to New Shoreham, Cricklade, Aylesbury, and East Retford, confer the suffrage on "every freeholder being above the age of twenty-one years." Women are persons, people, and certainly are comprehended in the category of "every freeholder." Need I add, what is familiar to every lawyer, that the masculine pronoun "him," "his," "he," used in our statutes, extends indifferently to the other sex.

I have carefully passed before the review of the reader every statute that deals with the question at issue, and it is perfectly obvious that there is not one word in any of our Acts of Parliament that even remotely hints at the creation of any distinction or privilege of sex, as attaching to the exercise of the elective franchise. I do not believe it will be denied by any lawyer, that if any of the statutes I have enumerated had been the first to confer the right to vote, it would have been as competent to any woman who was a freeholder, a suitor, a "resiant," a burgage tenant, an "inhabitant," a "substantial householder," to poll in the year ensuing its enactment, as for any male person whatever. I do not understand, indeed, that this is seriously disputed. Certainly there is no attempt in the *rationes decidendi* of the Court of Common Pleas to support the judgment by any appeal to the phraseology of any enfranchising statute. Let me here state categorically the points at issue.

1. The Act of 1832 reserved and continued, with modifications immaterial to the question, all the pre-existent electoral qualifications.

2. In no Act before or since, is there any mention of gender as a condition precedent to the franchise.

3. Freeholders, tenants in ancient demesne, residents, inhabitants, burgage tenants, potwallers, scot and lot occupiers, burgesses, and other holders "of ancient rights," were entitled to vote in the election of members to serve in Parliament for such counties, cities, and boroughs as retained the franchises peculiar to and the accustomed qualification of each respectively; and women were and are freeholders in counties, burgesses, inhabitants, owners and tenants, "substantial householders" in cities and towns, and are therefore embraced within the category of the enfranchised orders.

4. There is no judgment of the Common Law, nor provision in any statute of the realm, prior to that of 1832, and, as I will show, not even in that, declaring gender a legal incapacity. Common Law and statute are equally silent on the subject.

5. The only considerations the Court of Common Pleas and its followers can oppose to these unanswerable propositions are, that women have never been known in the course of our parliamentary history to exercise the suffrage, and that their votes have never been tendered, or at least received, by the returning officer.

But—

1. The proof of non-user must lie on those who urge the plea; and what judicial evidence is there to warrant the assertion? I have given chapter and verse for the right of females to vote. If it be admitted that they are freeholders, inhabitants, burgesses, and that the franchise is given to these orders, my evidence *prima facie* of their title is complete; and if it is to be cut down by the plea of non-user, the desuetude must be not merely conjectured, but judicially proved.

2. Is it capable of proof? What is it that has to be established? The application of the doctrine of prescription to such a subject is sheer nonsense. If the women of Aylesbury never voted, is that proof that those of Cricklade never can? How do you or I or anybody know that women never voted? What is to be the term of desuetude that is to shut the door upon the sex?

To poll is a public duty. The statutes make the Sovereign to call upon the lieges to return counsellors to advise with him in Parliament. The office is imprescriptible. Because women have not *chosen* to vote, is that any reason why they have no *right* to vote? It is *res mæra facultatis*. Above all things the suffrage of the people is ever living. "*Omnis libertas regia est, et ad coronam pertinet.*" The House of Commons has repeatedly determined ("Granville," 57, 95, 114, 118) that the franchise is not lost by non-user or *laches*. The qualification in virtue of which the right is constituted is different in every borough, and not the same in city and county. Why is the want of public spirit which keeps one woman or many from the polling-booth, to forfeit the right for others who desire to exercise it? Why are the social habits of one age to fasten incapacity upon the citizens of its successor? How is the failure to poll in Yorkshire, to be counted against the suffrage in Birmingham? How far is it to go back? If it counts against sex, it ought to tell against individuals. Not above half the constituency vote at any election. There are many thousands of registered electors who have never recorded their votes for fifty, even sixty years. If there be anything in the argument of prescription, they ought to be precluded from its exercise. A retired man-of-war chaplain was sent for to read prayers to a man that had been gored by a bull; but he expressed his regret he could administer no spiritual consolation to him, because the Book of Common Prayer contained no service for a man who had been gored by a bull. That is the sort of logic presented by the Court of Common Pleas. Why does it stop at the franchise? Why does it not refuse to women a right of way, because it was not proved that any but men had ever used the road? Very likely a negro never voted. Why not stop the first black man? If we are to pick and choose fanciful exceptions at our pleasure, we may empty the polling-booth and the House. The chaplain might have been referred to the Visitation for the Sick, and informed that the gored man being sick, so came within the category. Mr. Justice Bovill might have been reminded that freeholders in counties and inhabitants in boroughs were electors, and that women were freeholders and inhabitants. It is not because they are women that they claim the vote, but because they are bur-

gesses, *liberi tenentes*, resiants. Is it because freeholders are *men* that they vote? No. It is because *men* are *freeholders*. There was probably a time when Irishmen and Scotchmen were unknown in English boroughs or counties as voters. Why were not the first to poll estopped?

3. Again I postulate, on what earthly ground is sex picked out as a disqualification of adults possessing in other respects all the legal elements of franchisement? The suffrage is a public right, the highest known to the law. The people acquire their privileges for each individual, and for all. Women are the major part of the community. If the general public, by usage, acquire a right, can nobody enjoy it who does not first of all prove that he has been in the use personally to claim its exercise? The title of custom, achieved by the habitude of some who have enjoyed it, accrues to those who have never asserted the privilege. Because *some* men have polled, many men alike qualified who have never polled are entitled to vote, even although they have never been known to do so. Women are human. They belong to our common nature—sprung *ex humo*—like men. Rights acquired by the one sex enure to the other; they are both equally citizens and subjects, amenable to the same laws, liable to the same burdens, which are the co-relatives of representative rights. That men have voted, so far from being a reason for confining public rights to the sex, is actually the foundation for the plea that by their assertion of them individually they have imparted and extended them to those who have not—a part of the public have acquired them for the whole.

The judgment of the Court of Common Pleas proceeds on Justice Bovill's two propositions, that "Women are not included in these words, 'every man,' in the Act;" and secondly, "Women are subject to legal incapacity." The last *dictum* I will examine first. Does any statute declare it? Does any resolution of the House of Commons hint at it? Does any judgment of our courts of law express it? Aliens, lunatics, outlaws, peers, servants of the crown, the constabulary, minors—for every incapacity attaching to individuals there is the warrant of enactment, resolution, or decision. Chapter and verse can be given for each. But what Act, committee, or court has ever said that women are under a legal incapacity to vote? Is

half the nation to be disfranchised by a single hazy inference of a branch of Westminster Hall? Mark, Justice Bovill is the first and only judge of England that has so declared. Point to any other shred of authority for such a dictum. If the Parliament of 1832 believed that women were then legally incapable, why did it step out of its way for the first time in the whole course of the statutes at large to insert the word "male" into the Act? Every other uses the term freeholder, people, person, without ever touching upon sex. If women at common law, or by statute, were from time immemorial excluded, why did not the Legislature continue its customary phraseology? Clearly it felt that unless it had employed the term "male," its other provisions would *not* have excluded women.

But it is also evident that the Parliament of 1832 did not regard women as subject to legal incapacity, else it would not have employed the tautology of "male." If women were in the same category as aliens, lunatics, or minors, the word male was quite superfluous. The terms "every person not subject to legal incapacity" would have included women—would have left them outside the constitution, without the use of any adjective specification. Still more singular is it, that in reserving and keeping alive all the qualifications in existence before those itself created, this statute falls back exactly to the accustomed phraseology of the earlier Acts. Whenever it confers a *new* right, it restricts it to every "male person." Whenever it perpetuates *existing* franchises, it continues them to "every person," leaving the word "male" out on set system. At the very least, Parliament manifestly leaves the question open; and I have shown that, by the constitution, the House of Commons, that "High Court of Parliament," is the only tribunal competent to determine the rights of electors. Let me not be misunderstood. It is not necessary for me to argue that the franchises created by the statute of 1832 included women. It is not worth while to argue the point, because if the earlier and later qualifications extend to them, I can make misogynists a present of the first Reform Act.

Nineteen years subsequently to the date of that statute, and sixteen years before the date of that of 1867, Lord Romilly's measure for shortening the language of Acts of Parliament pro-

vided "that in *all acts* words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, unless the contrary as to gender is expressly provided." With that provision full in view, adopting its very provisions in its own clauses, the statute of 1867 enacts that "every man shall . . . be entitled to be registered as a voter . . . and to vote for a member . . . to serve in Parliament . . . who is . . . of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity." Before the Bill was passed into a law, the Hon. G. Denman, *himself at present a Judge of the Common Pleas*, gave notice of a question on the subject to the Government, which he afterwards put thus: "He desired to know why, instead of the words 'male person' in the Act of 1832, the word 'man' had been substituted in the present Bill. In the fifth clause of the Bill he found that after saying that every '*man*' should be entitled to be registered, it proceeded to say or a '*male person*' who has passed any senior middle-class examination. If the Court of Queen's Bench had to decide to-morrow on the construction of these clauses, they would be constrained to hold that they conferred the suffrage on female persons as well as males." That question was not answered by the Government or its law officers, and Justice Denman recorded his vote to the effect of his opinion. I hardly know how to approach the casuistry by which a conclusion so inevitable has been evaded. Does "man" import the masculine gender? Then it must be "deemed and taken to *include* females." Does it *not* import the masculine gender? Then it does not *exclude* females. But the Act does not stop here. It leaves no room for the judge-made law of Westminster Hall—"No loop nor peg to hang a doubt on." It permits no casuistic exception through which forensic ingenuity may carp its sinuous way. It provides that the word "man" shall include females, "unless the contrary as to gender is *expressly* provided." It will not do that the contrary may be *implied*. The clause is not to be explained away by a quirk suggesting that something else may be *inferred*. The contrary must be expressed, and the expression must be *provided*—that is, a provision directly *pro re nata* must be embodied in a clause, to permit sophistry to shirk an order of interpretation plain and "palpable as a mountain."

This were enough, but it is by no means all. Why was the

vir of 1832 changed into the *homo* of 1867? Why was the term "male" specifying gender transformed into the word "man" signifying species, and comprehending humanity at large—the whole race? Had the transition no meaning? Was it entirely *per incuriam* that the most important clause of an Act of literally incommensurable significance, was thrown off at a heat, by the great inquest of the nation? It is a palpable inference, incapable of avoidance, that this marked deviation from the terminology of the leading and principal Act had an object. And what other purpose could it be designed to serve than that for which I contend? It is in harmony with the whole genius and spirit of the nation. Selden, in his "Epinomis," states, among the Britons "women had prerogative in deliberative sessions touching either peace, government, or martial affairs." We choose a queen to govern us. Scotch and English of us have always disowned the Salique law. Our Augustan age was that of a female, who took an active part in ruling her empire, and brought it to a point of greatness it never before had reached. As a rule, where it has been a custom for women to pretermitt the discharge of public duties which by reason of their property, residence, or descent the owners had a right to exercise, it has been simply on account of want of interest in the function, or by exemption, not by reason of exclusion or disqualification. In the election for Gatton the "Commons' Journal" records that "*Mrs. Copley et omnes inhabitantes* returned." Heywood, in his "County Elections," quotes the following return: "Know ye me, the said Dame Dorathe Packyngton (tenant in dower of the town of Aylesburye), to have chosen and appointed Thomas Lichfield and George Burden, Esquires, to be my burgesses of my said town of Aylesburye, and whatsoever the said Thomas and George shall doe in the present Parliament, I do ratify and approve to be *my own act*." In the election for Lyme, Luders observes, a list of *Burgenses sive liberi tenentes* was put in, and included Elizabetha *fi'ia* Thomas Hyatt, Crispina Bowden *vidua*, Alicia Toller *vidua*, and the names also of several men. In another list of *liberi homines* five names of women occur. Mark—when the woman returns to the status of *feme sole*, her right revives. This was in the nineteenth of Elizabeth. In the twenty-first, in a similar roll of *liberi burgenses*

and *liberi homines*, sixteen women are included. When the present Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in arguing as counsel for the appellants, stated "there can be no legal incapacity attributed to women unless it be from non-user, and that cannot take away a public right," Mr. Mellish, for the respondent, admitted, "No doubt, if it were conceded that the right once existed, that which is urged as to non-user would be quite correct." What reasoning in a circle have we here! The only reason assigned by either counsel or judge for women being excluded from the right to vote, is that they have never been known to exercise it; and when it is answered no public right can be lost by its not having been asserted, it is rejoined—Yes, but you must first prove the original right! We do prove it. We show that the customary law, and the statutes on which solely the right is based, are applicable to the sexes indiscriminately. Is any denial given to that? The flank is not even attempted to be turned. The objectors do not answer, do not, because they cannot grapple with that plea. They ride off upon another issue; they contend that women never have used the right, as the sufficing reason for denying it; and then, when they are met with the fact that the exercise of the right is unnecessary to its establishment, women are answered—Yes, but prove you ever had it!

In the case of *Olive v. Ingram*, the judges held "upon the foot of the Common Law," that "a person paying scot and lot" was a description that included women. It has been seen that they were deemed, as "substantial householders," liable to serve the office of overseer. The statute of Elizabeth, observes Justice Ashurst, has no reference to sex. "There are many instances where, in offices of a higher nature, they are held not to be disqualified, as in the case of the office of High Chamberlain, High Constable, and Marshal, and that of a common constable, which is both an office of trust and likewise *in a degree judicial*. So in the case of the office of sexton." "There is a difference between being exempted and being incapacitated." "An excuse from acting is different from an incapacity of doing so." Whitlock observes, "By the custom of England women are not returned of juries, &c., &c.; by reason of their sex they are *exempted* from such employments." Although all statutes ran in the name of the "Kynge," Parliament held "none but

the malicious and ignorant could be persuaded *her* Highness could not use such lyke auctoritie," under that statutory description. In Prynne's collection of parliamentary writs, and in the journals of the House of Commons, are records of not a few returns which, made by female electors, were received. "In the cases of *Holt v. Lyle*, *Coates v. Lyle*, and *Catharine v. Surrey*, it was the opinion of the judges," observes Lee, C. J. (King's Bench), "that a *feme sole*, if she has a freehold, may vote for members of Parliament." "In *Holt v. Lyle*, it is determined that a *feme sole* freeholder may claim a voice for Parliament men." Page, J., to the same effect, "I see no disability in a woman from voting for Parliament men." Probyn, J., "The best rule seems to be, that they who pay have a right to nominate whom they will pay to. . . . An excuse from acting, &c., is different from an incapacity of doing so. The case of *Holt v. Lyle*, mentioned by my Lord Chief Justice, is a very strong case. They who pay ought to choose whom they will pay."

A still more remarkable case, which seems to have hitherto escaped the research of Westminster Hall, remains to be noticed. It has to be premised that Sir E. Coke, whose unhappy domestic history seems to have tainted his judicial authority, and who in the case of women challenged by anticipation the maxim of Justice Probyn, led the Puritan Long Parliament to object to the examination of women before the House as witnesses, on the fanatical pretence out of Saint Bernard that "a woman ought not to speak in the congregation." Let this commentary precede and explain the case following. In 1640 occurred an election for the county of Suffolk, Sir Simonds D'Ewes being High Sheriff. The election began on Monday. "Upon Tuesday morning *some women* came to be sworne for the two Knights, and Mr. Robert Clerke did suddenly take them. . . . There were divers supravisers, but they found no fault with the clerkes in my hearing." Such are extracts from the notes of the proceedings reported by a certain Samuel Dunson, one of the "clerkes." Sir Simonds D'Ewes himself supplies the following:—"By the ignorance of some of the clerkes at the other table, the oaths of *some single women* were taken without the knowledge of the said High Sheriffe; who, as soon as he had notice thereof instantly sent to forbid the same, conceiving it a

matter verie unworthy of anie gentleman, and most dishonourable in such an election to make use of their voices, ALTHOUGH THEY MIGHT IN LAW HAVE BEEN ALLOWED; nor did the said High Sheriffe allow of the said votes, upon his numbering the said poll, but with the *allowance* and *consent* of the said two knights themselves, discount them and cast them out." The two puritan candidates did not need the female votes, having a good majority without, and standing in awe of Sir E. Coke and Saint Bernard. The carnal reason of worldlings—"the law," gave the right of voting to "some single women," and the clerkes knowing and obeying "the law," took their oaths and entered them in the poll books; but the godly Sir Simonds, "with *consent*" of the "unco' gude" puritan candidates, gave their consciences the benefit of a sacrifice that cost them nothing. The significancy of these facts, however, is not to be mistaken. The "single women" knew they had their rights; devout women, they took the oath; the clerks, accustomed to the procedure, took and recorded them; the High Sheriff, fully acquainted with the law and the procedure at elections, makes his report to Parliament that "they in law might have been allowed." If at that time there was no such custom or understanding of the law, is there any likelihood he so would have reported? Moved by these facts and authorities Bovill, C. J., in the very case now under review, is obliged to concede "it is quite true that a few instances of women being parties to indentures of returns of members of Parliament have been shown, and it is quite possible that there may have been some other instances in early times of women having voted and assisted in legislation. *Indeed, such instances are mentioned by Selden*" ("Epinomis," vol. 3, p. 10). It is perhaps worthy of note that in the earlier stages of our Constitutional and Parliamentary history, peers appear to have been parties to indentures of returns of members to the House of Commons. But while, by 25 Henry VI., the Lords spiritual and temporal were thenceforth precluded from attesting such indentures as not being of the estate or order of the Commons, and no farther trace of their interposition in that regard can be found, women continued to attest returns at least to the reign of Elizabeth. Yet all his Lordship can oppose to his own admissions is that "the fact of the right, not having been asserted for centuries,

raises a very strong presumption against its ever having had legal existence;" although afterwards he candidly says, "there is no doubt that in many statutes 'man' may properly be held to mean woman." I have *proved* that the very words of the common law and of the statutes creating the franchise apply indifferently to women as to men—that the only presumption contended for against woman's rights is non-user, and that non-user never renders public rights obsolete.

There is nothing further to examine in the *rationes decidendi* of the Court against the right, but the attempt the Judges make to govern and override the Statute of 1867 by the Act of 1832. They say the Act of 1832 restricts the right to male persons. And, first, that is perfectly untrue. It confines, indeed, the franchises then *for the first time created* to male persons, but it is careful to extend the qualifications theretofore created to "persons," rigidly omitting the word "male" in every instance in which it continues these in force. They further contend that by the fifty-ninth section of the Statute of 1867, it is provided that it shall be construed as one with the Act of 1832. Even that statement is untrue. The section declares that "This Act, *so far as is consistent with the tenor thereof*, shall be construed as one with the enactments for the time being in force relating to the representation of the people." Mark—it is only so far as consistent with its own tenor it is to be so construed, which practically explodes the pretended restrictions of its interpretation. But further, the construction is not to be limited by the Act of 1832; the plural term enactments is employed, and extends the construction to all those enfranchising statutes which do not suggest one syllable of qualification as to sex, and neither use the words "man" nor "male," but "people," "freeholder," and "person." But to pour water on this drowned rat, the 56th section of the Act of 1867 provides that "the franchises conferred by this Act shall be *in addition* to, and not in substitution for any existing franchises." It is true, Byles, J., contends, that "Acts *in pari materia* are to receive the like construction;" but he fails to tell us which half of the Act of 1832 we are to take to accomplish this feat—the half which gives the new franchise to *male* persons, or the other half which continues the old franchises to *persons*, and leaves "male" out in the cold. The

same ingenious juriconsult has discovered that "the word 'expressly' does not necessarily mean 'expressly excluded by words.'" "The word 'expressly' often means no more than 'plainly,' 'clearly,' and the like." Well, a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. Pray, how can an idea be "plainly" or "clearly" expressed, but by *expressing* it? Does Parliament here mean that it winks or nods "male," and that such "natural language" will have all the effect of the shake of Lord Burleigh's head in the "Critic?" "Express" is used in contradistinction to "implied." The clause directs that expression not "plainly" and "clearly" alone, but by a distinct provision is to be given to any deviation from the governing definition. To give expression to an act is to utter it in words. The very object of Romilly's Act is to ordain that wherever the word "man" is used, it shall mean "woman;" and in the very teeth of the one sole object of that Act, it pleases the Court of Common Pleas to insist on ruling that "man" shall *not* import "woman" — and to hold that "clearly" and "plainly" it does not, although the very sum of the interpreting Act is authoritatively to statute that it shall. I have heard of a coach and six being driven through an Act of Parliament, but have never before seen that feat of charioteering so thoroughly performed as here.

The authority of the Scotch Courts has been taken as a prop for this judgment, but with little reason. Before the Act of 1832 the Scottish franchises had no relation to the English. Acts and rights in the sister kingdom become obsolete and extinguished *a non usendo*; and there was in the sister kingdom no room for the contention that the Common Law right and the statutes originally imparted the franchise to the lieges irrespective of sex. In fact, before the Reform Act, it could not be said that there was an elective franchise for the people of Scotland of either the one sex or the other.

It has been seen that a distinction had been carefully drawn by the courts of law and the writers of legal institutes between exemption from the discharge of public official duties, and exclusion from the privileges attached to legal rights. By tacit consent or custom, and those usages which naturally refine the habits of civilised society, the deference which manhood and good manners extend to the fair sex, instinctively

prevailed in reference to the exercise of duties attached to the possession of civil or public rights. It was to be expected, that women themselves would not be forward to exercise functions, offering no social advantages or pecuniary profits, which would bring them into conflict with the strife of faction, or the struggles of party. Common sense suggests that men would not press wives or spinsters into the service of irksome or unseemly duties, and that their own sex would extend a like discretionary forbearance. Sheriff, overseer, constable, sexton, marshal, chamberlain—these were offices which it was unlikely females of position would have any ambition to fill or the community to force upon them; and, therefore, it is not surprising that the records are almost silent on the subject. Yet when of their own motion or by their own desire they chose to step beyond the ordinary offices of their sex, and to discharge duties attaching to certain rights, no objection prevailed to exclude them from acting as returning officer at parliamentary elections, as the constable of their hundred, or the high sheriff of their county. It became their privilege also to do that by deputy or by proxy which the other sex were compelled to discharge in person; and yet the courtesy which good manners bestowed and the refinement of the sex accepted as a privilege and exemption, it is now attempted to torture into exclusion and disfranchisement.

It has especially to be noted that the sole original use of parliaments was to levy money for the Crown. Their germ is to be found in a summons by the sovereign to the wealthiest freeholders and burgesses to be examined as to their means, and to be admonished to pay. To this all contributed without any distinction of sex. The *feme sole* had to disburse her *quota*—the *femina vestita viro*, by her husband for her. Hence it is, that if a female freeholder marries, her husband is entitled to be registered for her freehold, as "in right of his wife." On her death it is lost, or if the demise be to her own separate use, the husband cannot qualify. But who ever heard in law of an absurdity so glaring as that of one person deriving a right from another who has no right? How could a wife impart to her husband the qualification she herself does not possess? So entirely is the franchise vested in the wife, that whenever she dies, the husband's title *ipso facto* ceases. Could he ever have

derived from her what she herself never had? Mark—it is not because *he* has a qualification that he votes. The property is his *wife's*. If he dies, no process of law or of conveyance is required to re-transfer the qualifying tenement to her. It always was hers. It continues hers notwithstanding her coverture. It is the bare right to vote of which the law constitutes him her proxy—her mandatory—her attorney—to borrow the term used by Dames Packington and Copley. Can a trustee have powers *ultra vires* of the trust? Can a proxy do that which his author cannot? What is an attorney but one executing a power which another has? Who can impart to others a *jus devolutum*, who themselves have no *jus*?

Groping one's devious way out of the blinking twilight of the law into the "liberal air" and broad daylight of plain English, and the common sense of the lay understanding, may we appeal from the interpreters of Acts to the makers of them? If Parliament was satisfied that women never had the franchise, why, for the *first* time in the whole range of the statutes at large, and for the *last*, did it introduce the word "male?" Can it point to a single form of legal incapacity as the result of desuetude alone? Go through the whole list, and everyone will be found the creatures of express law, of specific statute, or of express resolution. Not one syllable of any of these has the slightest reference to gender. Where does the Constitution erect a moral or intellectual test of fitness for the office of elector? It confers the franchise not on *fitness* but on *right*, as the co-relative of *duty* and *burden*. Provision is made in the new Act for those who cannot so much as read the names of the candidates. A felon who has finished his term of servitude may make his mark, and have his representative; but George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Oliphant, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, George Sand, or Dé Stael, have no political functions, because Westminster Hall has declared they are incapable of discharging them.

Mr. Gladstone has warned his fellow-countrymen that America is "passing us at a canter." Of all great powers ours is the weakest in material resources. More than half the food we consume we have to import, and yearly our state of dependence becomes greater. It is on the breed of our men, on our people, on the force of character, the energy of cerebral

action, the sum of mental power, we must rely solely to sustain our position. Our governing classes are palpably becoming weaker and less capable to maintain their *status*. There is among them more pressure, perhaps, and excitement, but less faculty of sustained work. Our working men shorten the hours of labour, and deteriorate in productive efficiency. The military standard has to be lowered, and a larger percentage of recruits is yearly rejected. The question of the elevation of our women to higher duties becomes a great political and economical as well as social and philosophical issue. Civilised up to a point of dangerous over-sophistication, tempted to ease and luxury by an artificial social system that offers a thousand sources of self-indulgence, it is not to be disguised that this nation has reached a most critical point in its history—and that without the unanticipated development of fresh industrial and commercial resources, our future prospect is that rather of decadence than of progress. If we would not "fall from the mettle of our pasture," it must be by making our women truly our helpmates. Call them to offices that demand the exertion of higher intellectual powers, and they will impart more efficient endeavour to the rising generation. A masculine understanding—is that to be expected from mothers whose faculties lie fallow, whose moral intrepidity is systematically repressed, and whose aspirations after independence and self-exertion are obstructed and discouraged?

"The sons of Cornelia were worthy of their mother." Elizabeth, Mary of Scots, Lady Jane Grey, were eminent Grecians and Latinists, accomplishments common to their order. Our dames were the physicians of their time and districts. An exaggerated sense of sex wastes accomplishments on the pursuit of mere feminine attractiveness, which might minister to and promote the highest interests of society. We do not want

The soul to spurn its tenement of clay,

but only that the tenement shall be subordinated to its tenant; and, if we be wise, we shall call into action resources of the value of which we have at present but a faint conception. States are great just in the ratio in which the female character is impressed upon the genius of society, and the public life of nations.

Of one other thought in this regard I must deliver myself; yet I know not how to speak or to keep silence. Society condemns our women to bear alone the shaft and scorn of its vices. Hundreds of thousands of them, abandoned and world-forsaken, once innocent, trustful, guileless, "for necessity of present life," live but to drag others down to the dust to which themselves have been cast by the human frailties which they tempt, and for which they suffer. This intensification of the idea of mere sex—this social persistence in keeping before the female mind the one idea that they are women rather than immortal creatures with reasonable souls, and something else and something more than a mere gender of the *genus homo*—this hiding out of view that they have higher destinies and loftier duties than merely to attract, or to "suckle fools and chronicle small beer"—can we wonder that so many, merely taught that their destiny is to live to please, should at last fall to the depth of pleasing to live! Call them to a mission more worthy of their origin, more deserving of their destiny. Arm them with that self-protecting culture that will enable them to pursue a useful calling. Fit them—our girls, as we do our boys—to enter, if need be, upon the great business of life. Fill the empty mind, supply the aimless soul with objects, energise the supine character, by placing before it rational hopes as the result of diligent exertion. *Cy gist l'oïveté*. Idleness is the mother of the vices, and frivolous pursuits are idleness. Think of it! Think of what we might be and do by calling in to the responsible work of civil society a whole half of all the human beings whose minds we stunt and whose faculties we cramp until, finding no intelligent and worthy outlet for the cravings of their spiritual energies, they waste the talents given them to return with usury, and pervert gifts which, wisely improved, might double the wealth of society, and immeasurably raise the public virtue of the nation.

Replace the desire for the admiration of others by the nobler ambition of self-respect; make our women too proud to be vain—proud of useful duties faithfully discharged, of lofty purposes successfully achieved, of solidity of character, and the spirit of independence. No longer a domestic burden, they may lighten by gainful industry the cares of the fireside hearth, and prop by prudent foresight the house too many help to

undermine. *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice*. What women can do, the conduct of their own cause can best avouch. Where has sounder judgment, more unflinching prudence, more indefatigable assiduity, and more conspicuous practical ability sustained the life and ministered to the promotion of a great public object, than the gifts which have distinguished the chief agents in the assertion of Woman's Rights? It has been the business of my life to form public opinion, to organise the issues of national conviction, and to give a practical direction to political forces. I can therefore speak with at least the authority of experience, when I express the conviction that the conduct of this controversy has revealed the possession of moral and intellectual qualities which prove that the sex to the achievement of whose social status these faculties have been devoted, is in no respect less capable of the highest endeavour than those who seek to withhold from them their rights on the ground of the inferiority of their deserts.

Remember—not the High Court of Parliament, but the Court of Common Pleas, shuts on our women the door of the Constitution—they are denied their suffrage rights, not by the Law, but only by the Lawyers.



P. A. Higg

LATEST INTELLIGENCE

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VENUS.

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It may be reckoned among those things not generally known that within a short time direct telescopic communication, by means of signals, has been established between the earth and the planet Venus, and that at certain stations regular interchange of intelligence is now carried on. The results have hitherto been kept secret, partly, it is said, owing to the disappointment of the astronomers at finding in the new country but a mirror of our own, with an hereditary constitutional monarchy, two Houses, a civilisation in about the same stage of advancement as ours, and political and social institutions generally similar. The single remarkable difference presented to their notice is one they are loth to reveal, for fear, we believe, of the family discords it might possibly excite at home, and we are the first to acquaint our readers with the curious fact that in the planet Venus, though the present sovereign happens to be a king, all political business, electoral and parliamentary, is allotted to the women. Women only have the right to vote or to sit in the House of Commons, and the Upper House is formed of the eldest daughters of deceased Peers. Politics, therefore, are included among the usual branches of ladies' education, but except in this respect their social condition presents no unusual features.

This monopoly by women of political power is as old as their system of government, and until a few years ago no one dreamt

of complaining or of questioning of its wisdom. But a pamphlet advocating the enfranchisement of males has lately been published by a clever female agitator, and caused a considerable stir. It is not pretended that a majority of the sex ask or even desire the privilege. The plea put forward is abstract justice backed by possible expediency, and, the cry once sounded, arguments are not wanting, petitions flow in, idle men have taken the matter up and find supporters among the younger women, and last night a member of the Government redeemed the pledge made to her constituents last election, to bring forward a bill for removing the electoral disabilities of men. She has no lack of supporters, some sincere, some interested. Her greatest difficulty was in persuading the House to treat the measure seriously. The notion of admitting young cornets, cricketers, and fops of the Dundreary pattern to a share in the legislation, the prospect of Parliamentary benches recruited from the racecourse, the hunting-field, and the billiard-room, was a picture that proved too much for the gravity of the Commons. A division, however, was insisted upon by the original proposer. At this juncture the leader of the Opposition, a lady as distinguished by her personal attractions as by her intelligence, moderation, common sense, and experience, arose, and made the following forcible speech, which we transcribe for the benefit of all such as it may, directly or indirectly, concern :

“Madam,—Before proceeding to state my opinions on this question, or my reasons for holding them, I wish to impress on you a sense of the importance of the measure just brought forward, that it may at least obtain from you the attention it deserves. I must urge you not to allow party or personal motives to blind you to its nature and bearings. The supporters of Male Suffrage are seeking not only to introduce a

startling innovation into a system of government that has hitherto worked remarkably well, but in so doing they would tamper with the foundations of society, and in a blind cry for equality and suppositious justice ignore the most elementary laws of nature. The question is not a political, it is a scientific and physiological one. About the equality of the sexes we may go on disputing for ever, but with regard to their identity there can be no manner of doubt. No one has ever ventured to assert it. Each sex has its special sphere—mission—call it what you will, originally assigned to it by nature, appropriated by custom. What now are the special and distinguishing natural characteristics of the male sex? Assuredly muscular strength and development. With less quickness of instinct, flexibility and patience than women, men are decidedly our superiors in physical power. Look at individuals, men of all classes—mark their capability for, nay their enjoyment of, exertion and exposure. If these do not naturally fall to their lot they find artificial employment for their faculties in violent games and athletic exercises; some indeed go as far as to seek it in the distant hunting grounds and prairies of uncivilised continents. This quality of theirs has its proper outlet in the active professions. To man, therefore, war and navigation, engineering and commerce, agriculture and trade, their perils and toils, their laurels and gains; to man, in short, all those callings in which his peculiar endowment of greater physical force and endurance of physical hardships is a main and necessary element. Those with superior mental gifts will turn to such scientific pursuits as specially demand courage, exposure, and rough labour. It is most essential that their energies should not be diverted from these channels. We should then have bad soldiers, bad ships, bad machines, bad artisans. Government, on the other hand, is no game to be played at by

amateurs. The least of its functions claims much honest thought and watchfulness. Either, then, the manly professions will suffer, or else—and this is the worst danger of the two—the suffrage will be carelessly exercised, and the mass of new voters, without leisure to think and judge for themselves, will be swayed by a few wire-pullers, unprincipled adventurers, who, seeking only to feather their own nests, will not hesitate to turn to account the ignorance and preoccupation of the electors.

“ Now turn to the woman. Her organisation no less clearly defines her sphere. With finer natural perceptions than man, less ungovernable in her emotions, quicker and clearer in intellect, physically better fitted for sedentary life, more inclined to study and thought, everything seems to qualify her specially for legislation. For the judicious application of general rules to particular cases, peculiar delicacy of instinct is required, and in no capacity have any but women been known to approach the ideal of government—that perfect rule—all-efficient, yet unfelt.

“ Take the family as a rough type of the nation. To whom, at home, is naturally allotted the government of young children? To the mother. To whom that of the domestic household? To the mistress. Widowers and bachelors are proverbially the slaves and victims of spoilt children and ill-trained servants. In all such home matters the husband defers to his wife, and would as soon expect to have to instruct her in them as she to teach him fortification, boxing, or mechanics. Little time or thought, indeed, has the professional man to spare for household superintendence; how much less for matters requiring such careful study as the government of a nation. The clergyman, wearied with his day's visiting of the sick, teaching or preaching; the doctor after his rounds; the merchant or tradesman

overwhelmed with business; what they require when their daily toil is over is rest, relaxation, not to be set down to work out complex social and political problems, to study the arguments for and against the several measures to which members offer to pledge themselves, and to form a judgment on the merits of respective candidates. What time or opportunity have they for qualifying themselves to do so? But the wives of these men, on the other hand, have lives comparatively unoccupied, and of physical and intellectual leisure enough and to spare. Here, then, is a commodity; there a demand and a field for it, and this surplus, so to speak, of time, strength, and attention with us has been always applied to the science of government, nor do I see how a happier or more judicious arrangement could have been made.

“ I will proceed now to enumerate a few of the dangers to which the enfranchisement of men would inevitably expose us. Male voters will view each political question in a narrow professional light, irrespective of its justice or general expediency. Large proprietors will stand up for the game laws, eldest sons for primogeniture. Publicans, brewers, and railway directors will exercise a baneful, blind, one-sided influence on our counsels. An impartial debate or decision will soon become a thing of the past, fairness sink into the shade, and a majority of direct pecuniary interest turn the scale in all cases.

“ Again, the bulk of the national property being in the hands of the men, the openings and temptations to bribery would be enormously increased. Few women have the power, had they the will, to offer bribes sufficient to suborn a constituency, but when millionaires are admitted to the suffrage we may expect to see parliamentary elections bought and sold, and going, like other wares, to the highest bidder.

“ But there is a more alarming danger still. The muscular

force of the community being male, an opportunity would be afforded for an amount of intimidation it would shock us now even to contemplate. Right has ever been might in our land. Shall we reverse our motto? Shall we, who have ever taken pride in the fact that our counsels are swayed by reason and judgment alone—a fact from which men have benefited at least as much as women—invite the fatal indefensible element of force to enter in and meddle with our elections, and let the hustings become the scene of such struggles and riots as in certain countries where, by a singular distortion of judgment, the management of political affairs is thrust entirely on the men? Supposing that the suffrage were irrespective of sex, and supposing it to happen that the men in a wrong cause were arrayed against and outvoted by the women in a right, would they not, as they could, use force to compel the women to submit? And here we are threatened with a relapse into barbarism from which the present constitution of our State affords so admirable a guarantee. And that something of the sort would ensue I have little doubt. Probably the next step would be to oust women altogether from the legislature—the standard of female education would then decline, and woman would sink lower and lower both in fact and in the estimation of men. Being physically weak, she must always, among the rough and uneducated classes, be especially exposed to ill-treatment. Of this in our country, I am happy to say, there are but rare instances, nevertheless. But there are lands where men monopolise the suffrage, and where a state of things exists among the lower classes—let us hope the upper and civilised orders do not realise it, for their apathy would otherwise be monstrous—which if widely and thoroughly known would be recognised as the darkest page of modern history, something to which a parallel must be sought

in the worst days of legalised slavery. Penal laws have utterly failed as a remedy, and it is obvious that they must always do so. What has been our guard against this particular evil? Is it not that point in our social system which raises woman's position, both actually and in the eyes of the men of her class, by entrusting to her functions of general importance, which she is at least as well qualified by nature to fill as man, and which we take care that her education shall fit her for, as a man's, necessarily unequal, semi-professional, and engrossing, can never do? Thus men have an irksome, thankless, exacting, life-long labour taken off their hands, which are left free to work out their fame and fortune; educated women their faculties turned to the best account; while among the lower orders, the artificial superiority conferred on the female sex by its privilege of the suffrage, raising the woman's status in fact and in the eyes of her husband, acts as an effectual check on domestic tyranny of the worst sort, and the nation has the advantage of being governed by that section of the community whose organisation, habits, and condition best enable them to study political science.

“That any wrong is done to men by the existing arrangement, I entirely deny. Most of them are married, and it is so seldom that a wife's political opinions differ materially from her husband's, that the vote of the former may fairly be said to represent both. The effect on the sex itself would be most undesirable. It is a fatal mistake to try to turn men into women, to shut them up indoors, and set them to study blue-books and reports in their intervals of business, to enforce on them an amount of thought, seclusion, and inaction, so manifestly uncongenial to their physical constitution, which points so plainly to the field, the deck, the workshop, as the proper theatre for their activity. The best men are those who are most earnest and laborious in their professions, and do not

trouble themselves with politics. Already they have sufficient subjects to study—special studies imperatively necessary for their respective occupations. Do not let us put another weight on the shoulders of those who, from the cradle to the grave, have so much less leisure than ourselves for reflection and acquiring political knowledge, or else, let us look no more for calm and judicious elections, but to see candidates supported from the lowest motives, and members returned by a majority of intimidation, bribery, private interest, or at best by chance, all through the ill-advised enfranchisement of an enormous body of muscular indeed, but necessarily prejudiced, ignorant, and preoccupied members of society.”

The honourable member here resumed her seat amid loud cheers. On a division being taken, the motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority, and the question of Male Suffrage may be considered shelved for the present in the planet Venus.

B. T.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

AS PREACHED BY WOMEN

PAST AND PRESENT

BY

A LOOKER ON

NEW EDITION

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1881

WOMEN'S RIGHTS
AS PREACHED BY WOMEN

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

COLONEL T. W. HIGGINSON

LATE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

LONDON
1851

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS PREACHED BY WOMEN
PAST AND PRESENT.

PAST.

SINCE the day when Mary Wollstonecraft published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*,* her name has been held in honour by all believers in the equality of the sexes as that of the female Pioneer who was the first in modern times to demand social and political justice for her sex. I also shared the belief that she was such, until convinced of my error by the discovery of a rare, if not unique, copy of a book bearing the title of 'Woman not inferior to Man,' † which very remarkable volume had, I observe, reached its second edition in 1740. The author styles herself '*Sophia*, a person of quality'; and I think my readers will feel indebted to me for making her known to them. Her mind is logical and daring; her style quaint and original; and although, occasionally, she somewhat fails in command over her temper, she is very truly a person of quality in a far higher sense than that in which she herself claims to be such.

Sophia lacks the judicial calmness which distinguishes her greater sister, who views the question of Women's Rights from the high standpoint of the moral advantages to the whole human race which must necessarily follow in the train of justice. Sophia starts at once from the point of view that women are

* 1792.

† 'Woman not inferior to Man; or, a short and modest Vindication of the natural Right of the Fair Sex to a perfect Equality of Power, Dignity, and Esteem with the Man.' (Printed for John Hawkins, at the Falcon, in St. Paul's Churchyard, MDCCXL.)

deprived of their rights through man's prejudice, selfishness, and quite unwarranted pride. 'If,' she exclaims, 'this haughty sex would have us believe they have a natural right of superiority over us, why don't they prove their charter from Nature by making use of reason to subdue themselves? . . . if we were to see the *Men* everywhere masters of themselves, and their animal appetites in a perfect subordination to their rational faculties, we should have some colour to think that Nature designed them for Masters to us, who cannot, perhaps, always boast of so complete command over ourselves; but how is it possible to give in to such a notion while we see those very *Men*, whose ambition of ascendancy over us nothing less than absolute dominion can satiate, court the most abject slavery by prostituting reason to their grovelling passions?'

I confess to having been much struck by the novelty as well as vigour of this thrust, by which the tables are so unexpectedly and adroitly turned. The invariable argument of the opponents of female equality has been that the power of reason is, in women, subordinate to feeling, passion, or prejudice; while the advocates of women's rights have stood on the defensive, explaining the actual inferiority of the sex by inferiority of education and opportunity, and only claiming for them the power to equal men if granted equality of position and circumstance. But Sophia is not content with this: she carries the war into the enemy's camp with quite startling effect, and I think that every unprejudiced man, however great his individual self-control, will admit the dexterity and force of this attack upon his sex's subjection to 'the animal appetites and the grovelling passions,' and cry: '*a hit! a very palpable hit!*'

But little reflection is needed to convince us that women's control over the animal appetites—whether it be the result of a natural insensibility to the grovelling passions or of reason—as Sophia seems to think—has been, and is the safeguard of moral order in society, because the safeguard of the most sacred of social institutions—the Family. It is easy to imagine a state of society in which women as well as men should, at least during the early years of womanhood, act upon the assumption that *il faut que jeunesse se passe*; set up the theory

that a reformed female rake makes the best wife, and proceed to sow their wild oats accordingly. And as it is equally easy to foresee what such a society must come to, it may well have been from an unconscious instinct of self-preservation that men, and especially those men who are most lax in their own conduct, have ever been rigid in their requirements from the women of their own families and their own class, and uneasily adverse to the notion of granting to them any portion of the liberty which has degenerated into license in their own case. The dread—always most conspicuous in the dissipated man—lest woman should fashion herself in his image if granted like freedom with himself, is probably a perverted form of homage to those household gods against whom he has offended, but whose holiness he secretly acknowledges, and whom he desires vicariously to propitiate.

Sophia is of opinion that 'it must appear to everyone who has but a degree of understanding above the idiot, a matter of the greatest surprise to observe the universal prevalence of prejudice and custom in the minds of the *Men* . . . how many things do these mighty wise creatures hold for undoubted truths without being able to assign a reason for any one of their opinions? . . . The Religion they were bred up in they blindly prefer to all others, without being able to give any stronger proof of its being the best, than that it was the Faith of their forefathers. Upon the strength of this prejudice they adhere to it as the only true one; and, without ever examining into it, or comparing it with others, they condemn all beside it as erroneous. . . No country pleases a man so well as his own; nay, so far is he apt to carry prejudice that he can seldom be induced to do justice to any other nation, even where truth is on its side, if the honour and interest of his own is at stake. . . In a word, as they suppose without reason, so they discourse without grounds; and therefore would have as strongly maintained the negative of what they assert if custom and the impression of the senses had determined them to it after the same manner. . . We know we have reason, and are sensible that it is the only prerogative nature has bestowed upon us to lift

us above the sphere of sensitive animals. And the same reason, which points us out our superiority over them, would light us to discern the superiority of *Men* over us if we could discover in them the least degree of sense over what we ourselves possess.'

But as Sophia would 'never have done' were she to reckon up the many absurd notions into which 'the *Men*' are led by the prevalence which custom, ever so wrongly introduced, has over their minds; and as the notion of woman's equality must, she thinks, appear to them as difficult of acceptance as, formerly, the notion that on the nether side of the globe there are men who walk with their heads downwards to us, she asks: 'Whom shall the matter be tried by? To what Judge shall we have recourse, and what evidence can be admitted in an affair which concerns half the creation whatever side may prevail?' Women themselves are, she thinks, too nearly concerned in the decision to be admitted even as witnesses at the trial, much less as judges; and the same consideration equally excludes *the Men* from acting in it in either capacity.* But although by so doing they have constituted themselves judges in their own cause, nevertheless *the Men*† have presumed boldly to decide the question in their own favour, because possession empowered them to make violence take the place of justice. And she complains that the *Men* of our times, without trial or examination, have taken the same liberty from the report of other men, forgetting that the reporter is a *party* to

* Sophia seems here to forget that in reason and justice, as well as in law, the onus of proof lies with those who make the charge; and that, therefore, since it is *the Men* who have charged women with inferiority to themselves, the onus of proof lies with them. And the same is true with regard to every privileged or aristocratic class; all of which owe their origin to individual superiority of strength or craft, and have been perpetuated by claiming for the incidental fact the force of a general rule, and asserting the natural inferiority of those whose rights had been wrested from them by force or won from them by fraud.

† When summarising or quoting Sophia's words I have preserved her quaint use of capital letters and *italics*.

the case and one immediately concerned. 'If a *Man* could thus divest the partiality attached to the Self, and put on, for a minute, a state of neutrality, he would be able to see and forced to acknowledge that *Prejudice* and *Precipitance* are the chief causes of setting less value upon *Women* than *Men* . . . but as there are *few* among them capable of such an abstracted way of thinking, they have no more right to act the Judges in this matter than ourselves, and therefore we must be obliged to appeal to a more impartial Judge; to one incapable of siding with either side, and, consequently, unsuspected on both. *This* I apprehend to be *rectified Reason*, as it is a purely intellectual faculty, elevated above the consideration of any sex, and equally concerned in the welfare of the whole rational species, in general and in particular. *To this Judge* we leave our cause: by the decision of *this* we are prepared to stand or fall; and if, upon the evidence of *truth*, Reason should declare us inferior to *Men*, we will cheerfully acquiesce in the sentence.'

But in order to set the whole matter in as true a light as possible, Sophia reminds us that it will be necessary to 'clear our ideas from all that is huddled and confused, by separating the fictitious from the real, the obscure from the evident, the false from the true, supposition from matter of fact, seemings from entities, practice from principle, and interest and prejudice from justice.'

Excellent advice; but had it not been somewhat difficult advice for either man or woman to follow, probably many other questions that have long troubled humanity would now be less huddled and confused than they still appear to the eye of rectified reason.

In the course of her brilliant little treatise, Sophia also examines whether there be any *essential difference between the sexes* which can authorise the superiority which *the Men* claim over *the Women*, and what are the causes of, and who are accountable for, the seeming difference which makes the sum of their plea. 'And if upon mature consideration, it appears that there is no other difference between *Men* and *Us* than what their tyranny has created, it will appear how unjust they are in excluding us from that power and dignity we have a right to

share with them ; how ungenerous in denying us the equality of esteem which is our due ; and how little reason they have to triumph in the base possession of an authority which unnatural violence put into their hands. Then let them justify, if they can, the little meannesses, not to mention the grosser barbarities, which they daily practise towards that part of the creation whose happiness is so inseparably linked with their own.'

Sophia believes that were every individual man to divulge his thoughts about woman, they would all be found unanimous in thinking that women are made only for their use ; are fit only to breed and nurse children in their tender years, to mind household affairs, and 'to obey, serve, and please their masters, *themselves* forsooth !' And although she admits that, 'amidst a seraglio of slaves, this could not but sound mighty big from a Mussulman's mouth,' she dismisses it as 'of a stamp with all those fantastical expressions more easily advanced than proved.' She points out that, for the propagation of human nature, either without the other would be entirely useless, and cannot therefore see any reason for underrating women, or claiming a superiority over them for an office in life in which men bear so equal a proportion with them. 'It is too well known to be dissembled that the office of nursing children is held by the *Men* in a despicable light, as something low and degrading. Whereas, had they Nature for their guide, they would not need to be told that there is no employment in a commonwealth which deserves more honour, or greater thanks and rewards. Let it but be considered what are the advantages accruing to mankind from it, and its merit must stand confest. Nay, I know not whether it may not appear to render *women* deserving the first places in civil society. Why, or to what end, do the individuals of human species associate together, but for the better preservation of life and the peaceful enjoyment of everything conducive to that purpose ?'

Sophia proceeds to show that princes, and those nearest under them, have been considered the first persons in the State because they were 'at least supposed' to have the greatest share of toil, care, and foresight for the public weal, and as the respect

of mankind is thus conceded on the theory of usefulness to the State, she holds that women are entitled to the greatest share in public esteem, as incomparably the greatest contributors to the public good. Men can absolutely dispense with princes, merchants, soldiers, lawyers, &c., as they did in the beginning, and as savages do still. 'But can they,' she asks, 'in their infancy do without nurses? *Women* will never cease to be useful so long as there are *Men*, and those men have children. Of what use are judges, magistrates, &c. . . . but to secure property to persons but *Women*, more truly useful, are employed in preserving their lives to enjoy that property. Soldiers are esteemed and rewarded because engaged in defending full-grown *Men*, who are equally and often more capable of defending themselves. How much more, then, is our sex worthy their esteem and gratitude who labour for their defence when as yet they know not what they are, are unable to distinguish between friends and foes, and naked of every defence but that of tears !' And as Sophia sometimes gets a little angry, she adds that men are rewarded if they succeed in taming a tiger, an elephant, or such like animals, and exclaims : 'Shall *Women* be neglected for spending years in the taming of that fiercer animal *MAN* ? . . . That they are our masters they take for granted, but by what title they are so, not one of them is able to make out. . . . Certain it is that bare strength entitles the *Men* to no superiority above us, otherwise brutes would deserve the pre-eminence of them, and among themselves the strongest man ought to be the chief in power. . . . So weak are their intellects, and so untuned are their organs to the voice of reason, that custom makes them more absolute slaves of their senses than they can make of us. . . . If from immemorable time the *Men* had been so little envious and so very impartial as to do justice to our talents, by admitting us to our right of sharing with them in public action, they would have been as accustomed to see us filling public offices as we are to see them disgrace them ; and to see a lady at a bar or on a bench, would have been no more strange than it is now to see a grave judge whimpering at his maid's knees, . . . or a peer of Great Britain playing with his *garter*.'

But it is Sophia's chief honour that the right she most earnestly demands for her sex is the right to equality of education, and this on the noble ground that true knowledge and solid learning must, cannot but, make *women*, as well as men, more humble and more virtuous; that the same Creator, by the same laws, unites the souls of women and men to their respective bodies, and the soul, operating in the same manner in the one and in the other, is capable of the very same functions in both. 'Our brain,' she exclaims in language that recalls the plea of Shylock, 'is perfectly like theirs; we receive the impressions of sense as they do; we marshal and preserve ideas for imagination and memory as they do; we hear with ears, see with eyes, and taste with a tongue as well as they.' She considers that it can only be 'a mean, dastardly jealousy' that makes men so industrious to debar women from that learning they have an equal right to, 'for fear of our sharing with and outshining them in those public offices they fill so miserably.' Men, she says, by thinking women incapable of improving their intellects, have entirely thrown them out of all the advantages of education, and thereby contributed as much as possible to make them the senseless creatures they imagine them; so that, for want of education, women are rendered subject to all the follies men dislike in them, and are loaded with men's ill-treatment for faults of their own creating, and which women are denied the means of learning to avoid. 'Besides, let it be observed, what a wretched circle this poor way of reasoning among the *Men* draws them insensibly into. Why is learning useless to us? Because we have no share in public offices. And why have we no share in public offices? Because we have no learning. They are sensible of the injustice they do us, and are reduced to the mean shift of cloaking it at the expense of their own reason.'

It is interesting to observe that while thus claiming education for her sex in the name of rectified Reason, Sophia anticipates a portion of the progress realised in our own century. She says: 'Our sex seems born to teach and practise physic; to restore health to the sick and to preserve it to the well. Neatness, handiness, and compliance are one half of a patient's cure,

and in this the *Men* must yield to us. Indeed, in our turns, we must yield to them in the art of inventing hard names, and puzzling a cure with the number, as well as adding to a patient's grievance with the costliness of remedies. . . . And an *old woman's recipe*, as it is termed, has often been known to remove an inveterate distemper which had baffled the researches of a college of graduates. In a word, the observations made by *Women* in their practice have been so exact, and built upon such solid reason, as to show more than once the useless pedantry of school systems.'

I take leave of Sophia with regret, for I fear that I have done but little justice to her wit and wisdom in this necessarily imperfect review of a treatise which my readers are unlikely to be able to study for themselves. But I cannot close her fascinating volume without quoting the following sparkling flash of scorn at the vanity and presumption of '*the Men*. Were we to express our conception of God, it would never enter into the head of one of us to describe Him as a venerable old man.'

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman* has been so widely read that we shall need to recall but few passages of that work to the minds of our readers in support of our view that she is something more than the most illustrious champion of the equality of women's rights with those of men, though this were distinction enough. But Mary founds her claim upon a higher equality than this: she has a profound belief in the equality of all humanity before the moral law. She asserts the duty of every human being to fulfil that law, and the consequent right of every human being to such full development of all its faculties and powers as shall enable it to fulfil the law voluntarily and intelligently. And as she is too logical not to know that freedom is an essential element of all voluntary obedience to law, she is, in the best sense of the word, a democrat. Any assumption of authority by man over his fellows which is not based upon the free consent of all the governed, is as hateful to her as the assumption of authority by man over woman, and for the same reason—that all such authority is a violation of human dignity, which consists in self-guidance and responsibility. Her book might as fitly be termed a vindication of the

rights of humanity as of woman, since she bases every argument upon the fundamental principle of 'the equality of all the children of the same parent.' The prerogative of man, which she calls 'the original sin of tyrants, resting upon a chaotic mass of prejudices,' does not offend her keen sense of justice more than any other claim to hereditary power, for she 'declares against all power built on prejudices, however hoary.' Her complaint is that from women are withheld the rights belonging to the whole human species; rights which she, like Sophia, believes they must enjoy 'when improveable reason is allowed to be the dignified distinction which raises man above the brute creation.' She therefore 'first considers women in the grand light of human creatures who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to improve their faculties,' reminding her readers that 'the first object of a laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex; and all secondary views should be brought to this simple touchstone. . . . Reason is consequently the simple power of improvement, or, more properly speaking, of discerning truth. Every individual is, in this respect, a world in itself. More or less reason may be conspicuous in one being than another; but the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator . . . the soul of woman is not allowed to have this distinction, and man ever placed between her and reason, she is always represented as created to see through a gross medium and to take things on trust. But, dismissing these fanciful theories, and considering woman as a whole, let it be what it will, instead of a part of man, the inquiry is: Whether she have reason or not?*' If she have, which for a moment I will take for granted, she was not created merely to be the solace of man, and the sexual should not destroy the human character.' Into this error Mary believes that men have been led by viewing education in a false light; 'not con-

* *i.e.* whether she is responsible for herself, or he is responsible for her, or, as Milton impiously phrases it:

'He for God only, she for God *in him*.'

sidering it as a step towards perfection, but only as a preparation for life.' She proceeds to show that woman has hitherto been a slave or a despot, and that each of these situations equally retards the progress of reason. The very constitution of civil government has, she says, put almost insuperable obstacles in the way to prevent the cultivation of the female understanding, 'yet virtue can be built on no other foundation.'

Necessity has been proverbially termed the mother of invention, and Mary tells us that the aphorism may be extended to virtue. '*It is an acquirement*: an acquirement to which pleasure must be sacrificed. . . . Pleasure is the business of a woman's life according to the present modification of Society, and, while it continues to be so, little can be expected of such weak beings. . . . Confined in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch.* It is true they are provided with food and raiment for which they neither toil nor spin; but health, liberty, and virtue are given in exchange. . . . A king is always a king; and a woman always a woman. His authority and her sex alike shut them out from rational converse.'

Mary thinks that if the existence of an evil being were allowed, who, in the allegorical language of Scripture, went about seeking whom he should devour, he could not more effectually degrade the human character than by giving a man absolute power. 'Birth, riches, and every extrinsic advantage that exalts a man over his fellows, sink him below them. . . . Slavery to monarchs and ministers, which the world will be long in freeing itself from, and whose deadly grasp stops the progress of the human mind, is not yet abolished.'

It is not surprising that keeping for ever in view her grand principle of the equal rights of all the children of the same parent, Mary has not one word to say of the so-called 'rights' of *property*. She troubles herself no more with such arguments than with the remark of 'a lively writer' (whose name she

* Mary is here speaking of the upper classes. For *workers* she has much sympathy and respect.

cannot remember) and who obtains but a passing word of contempt for having inquired: *What business women of forty have in the world?* She would, we think, have felt a similar, though sadder contempt for an equally lively writer of her own sex who, in a surpassingly silly and ignorant article, published about two years since in the *Nineteenth Century*, classed all unmarried women together as 'superfluous women.' But Mary towers above such lively writers as high as 'rectified Reason' towers above the paltry vanity that moves them to stalk with mock majesty on their *Nineteenth Century* perch. The noble purpose of her book may be summed up in her dignified reproval of Rousseau's objection to the education of women. 'The more they resemble our sex (says he) the less power will they have over us.' 'This' (says Mary) 'is the very point I aim at: I do not wish them to have power over men, but over themselves.'

PRESENT.

A MISTRUST of general principles appears to be a characteristic of the English mind. It is impossible to read the parliamentary debates without perceiving that the large majority of our representatives hold that practical policy is a thing independent of, if not opposed to principle; not a few of them deliberately argue that much that is true in theory is false in practice. If stated as a general proposition, most Englishmen will admit that Justice is sacred, absolute and eternally right, yet how many of us are ready to declare justice to be inexpedient in any special case wherein it clashes with established precedent, long-cherished opinion, or immediate interest. Such reasoners were they who admitted the right of black men to freedom, yet declined to set them free lest the re-establishment of right should bring disaster upon those who had perpetrated or perpetuated wrong. Mr. Auberon Herbert, speaking of that shortness of mental vision which prevents many men from seeing anything in the prospect before them save the objects nearest at hand, says: 'They cannot see the forest on account of the

trees, and their horizon is inexorably bounded by the immediate struggle in which their party is engaged.'

The advocacy of women's rights has undergone a singular modification in our own day, a modification by which it has lost much of its dignity without gaining in power. It would, unquestionably, have been too exacting to expect the present leaders of the movement to surpass the writers whose works have been considered above, either in logic or eloquence, but it might, not unreasonably, have been hoped that an agitation undertaken for the purpose of gaining a first step towards the practical realisation of the principles laid down by Mary Wollstonecraft, should have been based upon and guided by those principles. Such, however, has not been the policy adopted.

That female householders, who possess the same property qualification which entitles male householders to the franchise, should be denied the same civil rights is manifestly unjust; but, precisely because, in our political system, the franchise is, in every case, a privilege attached to property, and changes hands with it without reference to the character or capacity even of the male holder of it, it appears to us that the non-representation of the property held by female householders is but an insignificant fraction of the great question of Women's Rights. But this fraction of the great whole has, of late years, been thrust into such strong relief as to cast every other into the shade; and the ladies who, upon public platforms, urge payment of this small instalment of the world-old debt owed by the dominant to the subjected half of the human race, are careful to assume, even when they do not assert, their readiness, should their humble request be granted, to give a receipt in full. It may be that some immediate, partial advantage to the selected branch of the subject has resulted from this method, but it appears to me that the cause itself—the vindication of the rights of women—has achieved little, if any, moral advance through the efforts made to extend the property qualification to women.

The position taken up by Mary Wollstonecraft on the high ground of universal justice, was dignified logical, and impres-

sive. Man, being the stronger, decreed the 'prerogative' of his sex, and upon this usurpation his social, legal, and political dominion is founded. Mary, therefore, troubled herself but little about the details of the superstructure, but, with the unerring intuition of genius, set herself to undermine the foundation of the edifice, and overthrow the theory of prerogative, by proclaiming the unity of the human family, 'the equal rights of all the children of the same parent,' an argument which could in no way be affected by the fluctuations of social opinion or the calculations of political expediency at a given time. But the banner raised by that noble champion of her sex proved too weighty for the weaker grasp of those who have held the position of leaders in our own day, and finding themselves unable to lift it, they at once assumed that it would be rash and impolitic to do so: that to display so lustrous a flag would render them a mark, not merely for the sharpshooters, but for the heaviest artillery of those adversaries whose fortress they were not strong enough to storm, and must, therefore, seek to surprise; and that a single shred of the original ensign would suffice to lead their followers through the by-paths they purposed to pursue. Then, having once torn off the fragment suited to their use, they seem to have become oblivious or regardless of the fact that it bore upon it but a single letter of the grand device emblazoned throughout the banner's length by their great precursor. Certain it is that having begun by endeavouring to persuade the public that a part is worthier than the whole, they have either persuaded themselves that such is the case, or have become so enamoured of the policy of tactics and stratagem, and so hopeful that by its means they may either sap or mine the single outpost before which they have sat down, as to believe that if they—the members of the staff—were once secure within its walls, the victory would be complete and the rank and file of the army might well rest and be thankful on the unsheltered plain.

But the battle, meanwhile, has lost much of its true significance; many watchfires have been left untended in the centre, flank, and rear: and the struggle for the principle—for social and political justice to women—has gradually dwarfed and

dwindled in the public eye to the insignificant dimensions of a question of parliamentary expediency.

It should not, however, be forgotten that if the actual leaders of the women's movement have exaggerated, they did not initiate the tactics of expediency. I yield to none in reverence for the memory of Mr. J. S. Mill; I hold that the debt owed to him by women for his splendid advocacy of their rights is eternal; but I feel, nevertheless, bound to express the opinion that if, in introducing the original Women's Suffrage Bill, he had linked the first practical step taken towards the realisation of Mary Wollstonecraft's great claim with her magnificent assertion of the Principle upon which that claim was founded, by naming the first Women's Suffrage Bill, *a Bill to vindicate the political Rights of Women*, I believe, I say, that, although the momentary triumph might have been less, the effect produced upon the country by his logic and daring would have been a thousand-fold greater and more enduring. Many of the members who followed Mr. Mill into the lobby on that occasion were false to his idea on the next division, and subsequent divisions have shown that the transitory effect produced by his admirable address was due to no sincere conviction awakened, but solely to the powerful personality and splendid reputation of the speaker. No errors are more lasting in effect than errors of initiative, of direction; and the mistaken direction given to the movement at that time has seriously impeded its progress during succeeding years, and cramps the action of its leaders at the present day.

But it is easy to be wise after the event, and I may be told that I have learned experience from the superior success of suffrage agitation carried on by the working men. I admit the significance of their example, and gladly appeal to it in support of my contention. Their vigorous assertion of the principle of manhood suffrage did undoubtedly extort from their rulers a far wider extension of household suffrage than the limited demand would have done. But the same is true of every successful reform movement. They who withhold any right from their fellow men, are naturally anxious to silence all appeal to the principle upon which that right is founded, and consequentlv

compelled to a larger concession than could be won from them without its aid. Moreover, public opinion has greatly advanced with regard to the whole question of representation since the success of the working man, and this fact—far from invalidating—strengthens my assertion, that a corresponding advance is requisite in the methods employed to win recognition of the rights of woman. Meanwhile, it is well, for future guidance, to note that nothing was gained by Mr. Mill's adoption of the limited programme; his lance was shivered none the less against the tough parliamentary breast-plate of prejudice and pride; a disaster which could not have been more complete if his Bill had asserted the principle of women's rights; but in that case the principle so formulated would thenceforward have become the watchword of the party; it would have been proclaimed, not ignored, at every public meeting during succeeding years, to the beneficial education of the public mind, and would thus have rendered impossible the degrading retrogression signalled by the sanction given to Mr. Forsyth's attempt to confirm and perpetuate the political subjection of married women by statutory law.

All who have studied the speeches delivered at the Women's Suffrage meetings which have taken place during the past fourteen years must have gladly noted how much of logic, wit, and truth, and how little of mere verbiage has fallen from women's lips on those occasions. It might, no doubt, be said that the majority of the female orators were picked women; exceptional alike in capacity and education; but whatever the explanation of the fact may be, I think that all impartial judges would admit that the ladies have generally shown themselves superior both in wit and arguments to their male opponents; that they have displayed a quite special aptitude for debate, and have proved themselves able to rival male politicians in the adoption of those tactics which are the recognised methods of political success. And it is especially noteworthy that in none of the able addresses, and still abler replies spoken by women, can one detect any trace of that sentimentalism which it was customary to assume that they would introduce into political life. I might almost go so far

as to say that they have introduced neither sentiment nor imagination into the question. As if acting on a preconcerted plan, they have argued out their—to my thinking—narrow view of their case, in a peculiarly hard-headed and common-sense way, leaving all such oratorical penny trumpets as the cry that the electoral enfranchisement of woman would 'thwart the intentions of nature, and upset the foundations of society,' etc. etc., to be blown by their male opponents.

I must, however, regretfully add that the leaders of the movement have struck out no new line for their sex. They have, on the contrary, ostentatiously copied the other sex, and I think they would have done better service to both, if they had given freer rein to nature and illustrated the advantages likely to ensue from the introduction of an entirely new element into the Government of the Commonwealth, by some feminine originality of method and idea. It is not the likeness, but the unlikeness of the two minds that will avail for good when the representatives of each take counsel together upon a footing of equality and mutual respect.

It is, then, because we hold it to be essential to the just government of the human race that the mind and heart of the mother of the race should have full expression in the councils of her children, that outsiders, like myself, regret that representative women should have abandoned Mary Wollstonecraft's demand for full justice towards her sex, and substituted for it the mere reiteration of the narrow claim that a political privilege enjoyed by a large number of their countrymen, should be conceded to a favoured few of their countrywomen. They do well to demand the suffrage: the right to be heard is the first step towards the acquirement of their fitting place in the human family; but it is grievous that they should stoop to demand it on the paltry plea that the material superiority over their less fortunate sisters which they already possess—the property, which, in the case of spinsters and widows, is not a fiction but a reality—is liable to the same form of direct taxation as the property of men.*

* Taxation without representation is an injustice, but it is not only

We are told that the speakers at the suffrage demonstrations in Manchester and London were eminently representative women, carefully selected to plead the women's cause, with a view to the effect of those demonstrations upon Parliament, the press, and the country. I may, therefore, fairly illustrate my position by remarking that the key-note of these meetings was sounded by the declaration made by one of the most conspicuous leaders of the movement, that 'all they asked' was a modification of our political system which would concede to 500,000 women the electoral franchise now enjoyed by three millions of men. No allusion was made to the fact that the remainder—the vast majority of Englishwomen—would still be classed by the electoral law of England with 'criminals, idiots, and children'; nor did any of the other speakers, who, after varying modulations, invariably 'resolved' into the original key, venture to claim even this restricted privilege on the same terms with men. It may be that the ladies were constrained to this humble attitude by the fact that they had, a few years earlier, deliberately given their consent to the conversion of an incidental into a statutory limitation of the privilege to unmarried women, although marriage in no way affects the political status of men. If, then, the House of Commons were to pass a Bill embodying the little 'all' that is asked by the leaders of the movement, a woman householder who should remain unmarried until the age of thirty, would be recognized as a citizen for nine years, but be reduced to a condition of political slavery on her wedding day. Should her husband die, she would again become a responsible human being, and should she marry a second time, sink once again to her former political level with criminals, idiots, and children.

such, although it is more palpably such where the taxation is direct. The amount of value received by the poorest classes in exchange for the pitiful coppers laid by them upon the counter of the provision shop of their neighbourhood is influenced by the amount of rates and taxes paid by the shopkeeper; nay, the quantity and quality of the food and raiment granted to our very paupers is regulated by the not unnatural effort made by the householders of the parish to 'keep down the rates.'

No word of protest was uttered at either of the women's demonstrations against the ignominy and absurdity of the position thus claimed for their sex by the representative ladies of England in public meeting assembled; these ugly facts were ignored from the beginning to the end of the proceedings. The silence of the married women present is mysterious, but perhaps it is not surprising that the spinsters and widows should have avoided all allusion to a subject that might have compelled public proclamation of the fact that they had but recently consented to sell their sisters' birthright for a mess of political pottage to be consumed by themselves.

It is true that when the ignoble compromise which 'provided always' for the political slavery of wives, was first distinctly embodied in a Bill to be laid before the House of Commons, very many of the ladies who accepted it declared themselves to be *theoretically* offended by it, and only *practically* willing to adopt it 'as a step towards something better.*' Some whispered that it was a *safe policy* to accept it, because men themselves would not allow it to endure; men themselves would not like to see their own wives hold an inferior position to spinsters and widows, and thus married women would probably be relieved in time from this crowning indignity attached to the marriage state, by a side wind. I think that neither Sophia nor Mary Wollstonecraft would have stooped to this.

It is to be hoped that at a future 'demonstration,' some women will come forward to declare themselves not content to beg such crumbs from their master's table as they believe he may be willing to concede to a favoured few among them; some women who will dare to look that master frankly and proudly in the face and demand their sex's right. We believe that the educational effect upon the public, should even one representative woman thus dare to do all that becomes a soul that claims its own, would vindicate the rights of woman not only more nobly, but more effectually than the immediate concession of the parliamentary franchise to 500,000 spinsters and widows could do.

It is true that one of the most eloquent and distinguished

* As if to step aside from the straight path could shorten the route.

speakers urged her sisters to retain all that was noblest in the part hitherto allotted to them in life, and to aim at acquiring only that which is worthiest in the man's part. But are these half-truths, these politic reticencies, these pseudo-parliamentary tactics, the worthiest part? I think they are not, and I think, moreover, that if the ladies had imitated men less, they would have converted them more. The distinctive qualities and characteristics of one sex are complementary of the distinctive qualities and characteristics of the other; and for this reason it is that neither will ever be able rightly to rule and fashion the national life alone, and that justice and policy alike demand for each an equal voice in the conduct of the State. The liberal axiom that all just government is founded on the consent of the governed, is doubly true in cases where the sex of the governor and governed being different, the desires, habits, and even necessities of the ruler and the ruled will occasionally be different also. The question of the intellectual equality or inferiority of women is of no moment here. An assembly of agricultural labourers will have a clearer idea of the wants of agricultural labourers than an assembly of Newtons could have; for the simple, old-fashioned reason that the wearer knows best where the shoe pinches.

We believe that the suffrage cause would rise in dignity and gain in power if its advocates would imitate the absolute sincerity of Mary Wollstonecraft, and, bearing in mind the fact that they come forward as reformers, show themselves above all diplomatic subterfuge (for diplomacy is merely cunning in court dress), dare to state their true aim and to pursue the straight path towards it. They may be very sure that not a man among those who withhold the scanty instalment of freedom actually claimed, believes that the claimants have really declared to themselves: *thus far will we go but no farther*, unless there be—as I have heard it hinted—some few spinsters who have smarted so keenly under the unjust inferiority of their social position to that of their married sisters, that they would gladly grasp an exclusive political franchise in order to readjust the scale, to some extent, in their own favour. I do not believe this; and I regret that a certain

amount of colour is lent to the suspicion by the fact that it has been their invariable system to support the various Bills that have been introduced for the enfranchisement of spinsters and widows on the ground that these measures would 'remove the inequality of *sex* before the law,' forgetting, as it would seem, that the concession of the vote to unmarried women would not remove that inequality unless it were coupled with a ridiculous proviso that marriage should disfranchise men.

The *Saturday Review*, a journal which cannot be accused of having ever advocated justice to women, remarked* that 'the half-way people who suggest spinsters and widows as suitable people to represent the female sex in the constituencies, like all half-way people, satisfy nobody,' and added, 'if the woman's suffrage movement has any meaning at all, it is as being part of a larger movement for the assertion of complete legal, social, and political equality for both sexes.' An Eastern proverb tells us that 'a fool cannot learn from his friends, but a sage can learn from his enemies,' and the ladies who head the suffrage movement have already shown themselves possessed of so much wit and wisdom that they need not scruple to take the hint, even from the retrograde pages of the *Saturday Review*, that the half-way position they have taken up 'satisfies nobody.'

For their enemy spoke truth. Thinkers who sincerely believe that the legal, social, and political rights of women are identical with those of men, cannot rouse themselves to struggle with much enthusiasm for the mere enfranchisement of the few spinsters and widows who are already possessed of an amount of personal, legal, and municipal freedom denied to their less fortunate sisters; while many members of Parliament who might possibly consent to accord the franchise to the limited number of female householders, are rendered distrustful by the fact that the words 'Women's Suffrage' are retained on the placards and advertisements issued by those who seek to reassure them by protesting that they do not desire the *thing*. *De deux choses, l'une*; if imitation of men be, indeed, the best card the ladies have to play, why not copy those working men

* May 8, 1880.

who fought their suffrage fight more frankly yet more successfully? Many of their best friends believe that even the compromise of a female householder's suffrage would be more quickly won, and that the ladies would gain over more hearts to their cause if, bearing in mind how far the greater wrongs of women dwarf the less, they would support their appeal for this first instalment of justice by nobler arguments than their taxgatherer's book; assert the political rights of womanhood with as much dignity as their working-class brothers displayed in asserting the rights of manhood, and cease to proclaim on every platform that all they ask is a privilege for the 500,000 spinsters and widows who have the most money in their purses. So long as they loudly profess that they do not desire the thing, their constant reiteration of the words 'Women's Suffrage' irresistibly reminds one of the single phrase incessantly repeated by Pip's demented sister in *Great Expectations*, who uttered it, we are told, 'with about as much meaning as an electioneering cry,' and of whom the author quaintly says: '*I do not know that I could give a darker picture of her state of mind.*'

It is the habit of Englishmen confidently to assert that their own is the freest country in the world, and to attribute their superiority over other nations in this respect to 'our admirable representative system.' However admirable the system may be, it is none the less a fact that not a single man is represented in England. Let us take the case of the richest commoner in the land. If he were ruined in commercial enterprise without fault on his own part, the day which should see him penniless would see his electoral privilege annulled. He would find that it was not he, but his money that availed, and that, as a mere man, he would count for naught—even as the manhood of a Shakespeare or a Newton would count for naught—were either of them to be beggared by the failure of a fraudulent bank. It is true that mere poverty would not deprive our peers of their hereditary privilege to make laws for their fellow men; but that privilege is theirs, not in virtue of their manhood, but of their descent from those who either seized it for themselves or were ennobled by one who claimed to be something more than man, inasmuch as he ruled by 'right divine.' And the wisest

peer among our aristocracy, were his descent called in question, would be shorn of his share of legislative power on the day which should prove him illegitimate, and remain as voteless as the humblest labourer on the hereditary estate, unless possessed of property extraneous to the ancestral acres, and esteemed more worthy of representation by this purse-ruled nation than the man himself. Nay, if, as in a sensation novel, the humblest labourer aforesaid were suddenly proved to be the rightful heir, that labourer would at once be able to exercise the hereditary privilege, and pass laws for the government of his former ruler. The question of the rights of man would be equally irrelevant in either case; 'our admirable representative system' takes no note of so small a matter.

Much verbiage is still uttered in Parliament, and much misconception exists in society and is fostered by the press on the subject of parliamentary franchise. 'The masses are ignorant,' men cry, 'and to give the vote to the ignorant is to concede to the ignorant the power to govern the wise.' A shudder thrills through the refined lordling on his way to the wholesale slaughter of tame pigeons at Hurlingham, at the bare idea of being governed by brutal roughs; a growl of contempt denotes the raised gorge of the stock-jobber at the notion that such as he should be governed by stupid ploughmen to whom the intellectual operations of 'Bulls' and 'Bears' are a mystery. But let us consider for a moment whether, if universal suffrage were decreed to-morrow, the brutal roughs and stupid ploughmen would really 'govern' one whit more than they do now. Lordling, stock-jobber, and society, alike forget—as it seems to me—what the dreaded vote amounts to. It is simply that right of free speech which all Englishmen theoretically allow to their brother men, exercised according to another method. Under the *régime* of universal suffrage, the roughs and the ploughmen would be asked once in a given number of years: *Which of these two gentlemen do you choose to speak for you in a place wherein your own voice may not be heard?* Should rough and ploughman take no interest in the matter, they would express no opinion; *i.e.*, they would not vote at all. Should the perception that political questions are of some moment,

even to them, at length dawn upon their brains, probably the more plausible and less scrupulous of the two candidates would gain the greater number of votes. I might ask whether this is not sometimes the case even under the actual household suffrage *régime*, but I will content myself with reminding the timid, that society's safeguard against the disruption feared from the enfranchisement of the ignorant lies in the political helplessness of ignorance. So long as men are fools they will vote according to their folly: that folly will be different in kind: the same fair promises that seduce the one will leave the other unmoved, and their votes—given on personal, not political grounds—will be given as much at random and to as little serious, concentrated purpose, as if scattered broadcast among the candidates throughout the whole country; and thus the elements of danger involved in their individual errors will effectually neutralise each other. Universal suffrage, when not exercised under terror of bayonets or pressure of official patronage, as during the late French Empire, will never make of the masses a vital, political force, until they have acquired such capacity for voluntary organisation, through reflection and self-control, as will render them deserving of the amount of power they may thus be enabled to exercise. The capacity for self-restraint and for organisation in view for the realisation of a common aim, will always be in direct proportion to the moral and intellectual development of a given population. The only immediate value of the suffrage to the masses would be its educational effect in rousing the faculty of reason, and gradually awakening in them the sense of responsibility. It is the citizen, not the outlaw, who has a stake in the well-being of the commonwealth.

At the risk of being accused of exaggeration, I venture to confess that—to my thinking—if there be any class to whom the suffrage might, with less comparative injustice, be temporarily denied, it would be the wealthiest; and if there be any to whom it might, blamelessly, be conceded as a privilege, it would be precisely to that despised 'residuum' which is at present destitute, not merely of property, but of every legal means of making its wants, its wishes, and its sufferings known. The influence of mere wealth is so enormous in England, that if our

largest property holders were deprived of the electoral franchise, their wealth could still make its power and influence felt through a thousand political and social channels; a power and influence which the septennial concession to the poorest and lowliest of the right to give free utterance to their wishes upon a single subject could in no way way diminish, until—after many generations—the slow, educational effect of finding themselves called upon to exercise a political right, should gradually awaken in them a sense of political duty, and thus transform idle and helpless human animals into men and citizens.

I hope not to be misunderstood. I have too much faith in 'the divine expediency of justice' to advocate class franchise in any shape; I simply say that, given the right of society to exclude any class from the rights and duties of citizenship, that exclusion would tell with far less injurious effect upon those who are able to exercise every other form of social and political power.

I believe universal suffrage to be the most potent, because the most peaceful agent of political reform. It is true that even reform—in the case of traditional and hoary abuses—involves a certain amount of social peril; but it should not be forgotten that the concession of the suffrage to all who have not forfeited the right of free speech by guilt, would develop the human element—the sense of responsibility—in man, and involve less ultimate danger than now darkly smoulders beneath the store of silent hatred and rebellious feeling unceasingly garnered up in the hearts of the very poor by our condemning them, as we now do, to perpetual silence, while handing them over to the hydra-headed despotism of the police.*

* It is impossible to take up any newspaper without perceiving that the police do, daily, arrest without warrant, and prosecute *poor* men and women without bringing forward witnesses to prove the offence charged against them; and that magistrates do, daily, commit poor men and women to prison, on the unsupported evidence of the policeman who has thought fit to arrest them. These things are done in virtue of *unconstitutional* legislation. The Magna Charta, which has been rightly named the corner-stone of the English Constitution,

A deep and very solemn meaning underlies Mary Wollstonecraft's assertion that 'the education of a being gradually advancing towards perfection' needs to be something more than 'a mere preparation for life.' The human beings destined to that gradual advance are something more than the fore-doomed victims of a sin in which they had no share, and the monstrous conception of a 'wrath divine,'* pursuing the infringement of an arbitrary and incomprehensible decree, which has come down to us from a barbarous age when men fashioned the Deity after their own image, is giving place to the gradual revelation of a law of infinite progress as the LAW which was in the beginning, although the darkness comprehended it not. The passive acceptance of the sacrifice of a sinless One for his unworthy sake no longer satisfies the soul of man, which is conscious of potential worthiness, and athirst for action to achieve it, even at the cost of labour and sacrifice; which already dimly perceives that *evil* is only such imperfection as is the necessary condition of human *merit*; because progress can only be achieved, necessarily, through the conscious and voluntary *conquest* of good.

The first step towards this conquest is the recognition of individual responsibility in the collective advance. Material laws may be fulfilled by organised human machines; progress—the moral law—can only be fulfilled in freedom, which is, therefore, as Mary Wollstonecraft reminds us, the equal right of every child of the same parent; and so long as a single sister or brother is denied the right of voluntary co-operation in the general task, that task will remain unfulfilled. Inferiority of intellect in no way affects this right, which is

provided (s. 42) that '*No Bailiff for the future shall put any man to his law upon his single accusation without credible witnesses to prove it.*' Those opponents of woman's suffrage who consider that the votes of women would upset the foundations of society would do well to consider whether the votes of men have done nothing to upset the foundations of the English Constitution, by continually passing laws which enable the officials, whose sole duty it should be to enforce the observance of law, to override the provisions of Magna Charta.

* The incongruous combination of the two words would be ludicrous, if it were not impious.

based on duty. Be the light star or glowworm, it is bound to shine.

It was, then, with considerable regret that I learned that in urging their sisters to increased exertion many of the speakers at the late demonstration in London laid great stress upon the probability—apparently regarded as of further humiliation to their sex—that if the suffrage were not speedily won for spinsters and widows, they might actually see the uneducated agricultural labourers enfranchised before themselves. I know not what meaning they attached to the word uneducated, but I confess that, to my thinking, every agricultural labourer who has shown so true and deep a sense of the rights of his simple manhood as to have cheerfully endured increased privation, toil, and self-sacrifice, in the endeavour to win the responsibilities of citizenship for himself and his fellows, is already educated in a far higher sense of the word than is implied by any amount of mere erudition.

To sum up—the leaders of the women's movement ask that the suffrage be accorded to them 'on the same terms as it is, or may be, accorded to men.' Wherefore? If the Rights of Woman be not an empty phrase, women have no cause for such reverence for the law as it is, or even as it may be, so long as it is framed exclusively by men. In their eagerness to grasp the fruit upon its lowest branches, I think the ladies have forgotten to nourish the root of the great tree. From the day of their first public meeting, down to the recent demonstrations in Manchester and London, the 'cry of the women' has never been raised in the name of the dignity and rights of womanhood. They have not said to their brothers: *Respect in us the distinctive qualities of heart and mind, the special aptitudes, intelligence, and aspirations of our sex.* Their cry has been and is: *Respect our property: let not the sex of the possessor interfere with the sacred rights of property.* One might fancy the leading ladies to be lineal descendants of the celebrated *Northern Farmer*, and that their carriage wheels echo in their ears the *refrain* sounded in his by his horse's hoofs: 'Proputty, proputty, proputty!'

* I am no communist, but it should never be forgotten that no material thing is sacred save as the symbol of something higher than

I say it with deep conviction—the proposal to grant the parliamentary vote to 500,000 more property holders, *notwithstanding* their sex, in this England of ours, wherein a single rood of land is valued more than the lives which the land should nourish and sustain, is *not* the change for which the times are ripe; for which the hour has come, but not, as yet, the woman.

It should be the glory, and it would be the true policy, of a real woman's movement, frankly and fearlessly to proclaim that the introduction of an entirely new element of moral force into the government of the State, must and will imply—a new departure.

And come it will for a' that—the hour upon which the serfs of sex will not shrink from, but join hands with the serfs of the soil, and preach, not a mere Parliamentary reform, but a Revolution; a revolution the like of which has not been since the world began; the sacred rebellion of human beings proclaiming the supremacy of moral right over chartered might; over every prejudice, every monopoly that mars the full and free development of the lowliest amongst them, and demanding the equal birthright of 'all the children of the same parent.'

it, and property is only sacred because the right to acquire, to hold, and (within certain limitations) to bequeath it, is one of the sacred rights of man. In proportion as the rights of man are held sacred will property be held sacred in a far higher and truer sense than now, because it will become, as it ought to be, the sign and symbol of honest industry, forethought, and thrift. But in a society like our own, when the moneys of an idle fool may double themselves without merit or effort on his part, while numbers of his fellow-creatures can barely sustain a joyless existence by unremitting toil, the 'property qualification,' as it is called, is no just sign of the worth or merit of the qualified, and it is not well to strive to build up a reform on the sandy foundation of an abuse. Hence it is that I would demand the vote for all honest men and women, and say: Here, in our midst, stand human beings, children of God like ourselves, for whom no amount of labour, forethought, or thrift can win the material sign and just reward of their well-doing; there is, then, something rotten in the state of England so far as they are concerned, and it is but simple justice that we should take counsel with them as to what that rottenness is.

Since the above was written a friend has pointed out to me that the *Woman's Journal*, Boston, U.S., published some months since, an interesting account of 'a book written nearly a hundred years before the "Rights of Woman,"' by a Mrs. Mary Astell, who wrote in 1696: 'An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex, in a Letter to a Lady written by a Lady.' The Reviewer says: 'My edition is the third and bears the date 1697.' He gives many interesting quotations from this essay, amongst others the following, which, as he remarks, 'might well be painted on the walls of some of our Universities: "A man ought no more to value himself upon being Wiser than a Woman, if he owe his advantage to a better Education and great means of Information, than he ought to boast of his Courage for beating a Man when his hands were bound.—Page 20."'

X

A DREAM OF 1900 A.D.

BY

CASSANDRA.

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—
1885.

"And women sobbing out of sight
Because men made the laws."



A DREAM OF 1900 A.D.

IT was towards the close of a wearisome debate, that sleepy and exhausted I escaped into the library of the House of Commons, to seek the refreshment of a few minutes repose. My fatigue was greater than I was aware of, and scarcely had my head touched the comfortable cushions, before I fell into a profound sleep.

I was suddenly aroused by a light touch on the shoulder, I opened my eyes and beheld a venerable man standing before me. He was leaning upon a staff and his face and figure bore evidences of extreme old age. The expression of his countenance was grave, but the look with which he regarded me was benevolent though mournful.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to a constituent?" I said, rising to my feet in some confusion, for on no other supposition could I account for his presence there, as the Speaker's rules about the admission of strangers have of late been tolerably stringent, and my venerable visitor bore none of the attributes of a Parliamentary agent.

He looked at me sadly but kindly. "Do you want to know," he said, "what the laws you are now engaged in making will result in? If so, follow me."

I glanced round the room to observe if any others noticed this extraordinary address, but we were the only persons present. In my rapid survey I saw that the apartment was changed in some respects from that in which I had gone to sleep. My guest noticed my look of puzzled embarrassment.

"After the third or fourth dynamite explosions they altered the place a little," he said with quiet indifference.

"I am afraid," I observed, "I have been very sound asleep, I heard nothing of them, when did they happen?"

"Do you not know that to-morrow will be the beginning of a new century?" he said, bending his searching eyes again upon me.

"A most unusual time for Parliament to be sitting," I ejaculated; "and you, my venerable friend, if I may venture to ask your name. . . ."

"I am the Nineteenth Century," said my visitor in a solemn and melancholy tone. "I have come to say farewell to you. Follow me, and see what you and other legislators have been doing in the last years of my life." He laid his hand again upon my shoulder, and I was irresistibly impelled to follow him, as he led the way through the Central Hall and out by the Members' door. I had ceased to be surprised at the turn events had taken. So easy is it for the human mind to accommodate itself to circumstances, that it seemed to me quite natural that the Nineteenth Century should be flitting down the empty corridors of St. Stephens and that I should passively be following him.

The next moment we were out on the Embankment. It was a clear bright evening, the light of day had faded in the west, but no happy family groups were hurrying along in anticipation of the New Year's festivities. The road was deserted, except that far away by Cleopatra's needle there was a swaying noisy crowd that seemed bent on mischief. I made some remark on the loneliness of the place to my guide.

"The roughs are responsible for that," he said. "They first made it dangerous for any modest woman to walk here, and later on no respectable man dared come. Those who had been insulted or injured ceased to prosecute, for if they did the magistrates gave such slight punishments, that the roughs found they might proceed almost with impunity. This was so even before they had Manhood Suffrage."

I expressed my indignation at this indifference to public safety.

"Do you mean to say it was not so in your time?" said my guide, with an accent of incredulity. "Could not a brutal man crush in even his wife's face or kick her nearly to death, and yet get only the tenth part as much punishment, as if he had stolen a purse with a few shillings. Is it possible that you never heard of the Wife-Beater's Insurance Society which provided money to pay the fines, when the Magistrates were courageous enough to inflict them? Did you never read the Wife-Beater's Manual?"

"Yes, but we thought we had made laws to protect the weak," I objected.

"The Laws protect, mainly, those who make them, said the Spirit. "Do women ever make the Laws?" and taking my hand he led me through labyrinths of narrow lanes and courts, and numberless were the scenes of bitter want and misery unrolled before my eyes. I was familiar with the "Bitter Cry of Outcast London," but the London of New Year's Eve, 1900 A.D., appeared to me sunk in yet more hopeless poverty. The women and children particularly looked pinched and suffering; they were half clothed, their faces were pale and gaunt, their eyes dull and sad.

"It is more difficult for them to make a living now than formerly," the spirit said, in answer to a remark of mine. Many trades at which they used to work are closed to them through legislative restrictions in accordance with the demands of Trades' Unions. The competition is thus severer in those trades which they are still allowed to follow, and the hours during which they may work are shortened. Employers, too, are fined heavily if they permit women to work beyond the time fixed by law, even though the women themselves may wish to earn additional money by extra work."

"Surely it is good to protect women from the strain of overwork," I interrupted, thankful to find something in our legislation to praise. "It is injurious both to women and to their offspring's health to work long hours continuously."

"I once thought as you do," replied the Century, "and welcomed laws that restricted the hours of labour, and so long as you legislated only for helpless children, your rule

was beneficent. But by what right, and in whose interest, do you interfere with the labour of adult women? If it is injurious for them to work too hard, it is more injurious to them to live half-starved. If you deprive them of the means of getting food and take away their hope of earning an independence, their health fails rapidly. It is worse for a woman to see her little ones pining for a crust of bread, or to have to go without food herself than to endure the hardest work; but the working men alone have the ear of Parliament, and women have been shut out of one honest field of work after another till only half-paid trades are open to them."

"They should have combined and formed Trades' Unions as the men have done, to protect their own interests," I said.

"They did try to do so," answered the Spirit, "but they had no political influence to support them. Besides, the men alone composed the caucuses, and sent the representatives they liked to Parliament; so that the factory girls and the other working women could not get attended to when they asked for amendments in the laws. Hark to that cry!"

A child's shriek resounded through the narrow street in which we now stood; it was followed by the sound of pitiful prayers and entreaties for mercy. I rushed up to a little crowd which had assembled round something like a prison van. An inspector was trying to place in it a small pale child of three or four years of age, who was shrieking with fright, while its mother clung passionately to it, imploring the officer in heart-broken tones to leave her this one—"her only one, the last had died in the hospital."

"Make that fellow give up the child," I shouted, but the other spectators looked on in resigned indifference, and did not move.

"Gently, he has law on his side," said my companion. "It is only sanitary inspection and compulsory removal to a hospital. If women had been consulted when this law was made, you would not have seen a sick baby or parent carried off by force from their families, so that the hospital, which was once welcomed as a haven of refuge, is now

avoided like a prison, and a doctor is dreaded as an agent of police. Mothers and children would willingly have been taught how to nurse their sick properly at home. Now the children are often so terrified when carried away that it permanently injures them, and the mothers—at least, the old-fashioned ones, who grew up to consider a mother's duty and privilege to nurse her own child—break their hearts over the separation, but the younger ones are getting used to it, and thank the State for taking the trouble off their hands. But follow me farther."

He led me on to the Haymarket. It was now late at night, and the pavements were crowded. The throng was, perhaps, no noisier than it had formerly been, but the faces of the women were harder and more reckless, and those of the men more shameless. The Spirit stood aloof with a stern and threatening expression on his countenance.

"The men may make laws to clear the streets," he said, in answer to my look of disgust, "but till they get women's help and advice in administering them, how can they expect to do more than cleanse the outside of this foul plague-spot in your country? Only women know how to help women. What shelter do your laws give to young children? What protection do they afford to decent honest girls as they go to and from their work? What punishment do they mete out to the men who first wrong them? Look there," and as he spoke the scene had again changed to a thoroughfare, squalid, but none the less crowded, where rows of flaming gin-palaces shed a lurid light on the reckless, tattered groups outside, and as the Spirit spoke he pointed with his staff to a fragile-looking girl, with flushed face, who was issuing from one of the resplendent doors. "Do you see that girl? To save her mother dying from starvation, she left the safe drudgery at which she could only earn a few pence a-day, and went as attendant at one of those bars. Her employer ruined her. Did any penalty await him? He went untouched. Look at her reeling companion in tawdry finery. She could not support life on five shillings a week, which was all she could earn by work, and the law which shuts a woman out from

honest employment, never shuts her out from this last resource. The gin-shops did the rest. There are women enough among the Temperance workers to have closed three-fourths of them, if they could have sent members to Parliament. You can no more cut through these social problems with the help and knowledge of men alone than you can cut a knot with the half of a pair of scissors. You need the co-operation of women voters."

"But if women are not capable citizens?" I began hesitatingly.

"Who was it said they were not?" my companion rejoined with severity. "They are capable citizens when the tax-gatherer comes round. They are capable citizens when your wars raise the income-tax, or your armies of inspectors and police officials double the costs of local imposts. They are capable citizens, and can be punished as such if they infringe the laws. Your Franchise Bill gave the vote to labourers and navvies, wife-beaters, and drunkards, but left out the women. Who can say that a woman-farmer or landowner is not capable of choosing her own representatives, when the hedger and ditcher in her employ is invested through his member with the right of passing the laws under which she must live, and of adjusting the burdens which she must pay. Look what your National Education has done for you."

In another instant we were on the Embankment, standing before the London School Board offices. An inscription now ran along its front, bearing the words "National Reformers' Institute," and in front was a colossal statue of the gentleman whom the electors of Northampton have so repeatedly returned to Parliament. On beholding these changes, I inquired what the building was now used for.

"They still grind out education there," he answered; "Greek, mathematics, grammar—everything that least fits poor men or women for earning their bread. The school-rate is now 2s. 8d. in the pound, and surprising results are confidently expected. Nevertheless, America, France, Germany, and Belgium beat you in your manufactures and your colossal trade has dwindled to nothing."

"That is not what I meant," I said hastily. "Why is that statue there? What is the Church about?"

"The Church!" said the Spirit, with an accent of ineffable disdain at my ignorance. "The Church was disestablished long ago. How is it that you could not see that that was inevitable?"

"When I fell asleep," I said, "I remember the English Church was strong and vigorous; learned and talented men were in her pulpits; her buildings crowded with devout and earnest women. How has this mighty change occurred?"

"The Church was doomed," said the Spirit, "from the day that the most religious portion of the nation was cut off from taking any part in her defence. As long ago as the Public Worship Act of 1874 you excluded women from helping you. You declared that the word "parishioner" meant only male persons of twenty-one years and upwards, and you affirmed thereby, that no matter what changes, or what hollowness crept into public worship, no matter how mischievous or offensive was the conduct of those who carried it on, no woman should have the power of saying that her conscience was offended, but she must bear and suffer in silence. Nevertheless, the women clung to their Church; they still found their best comfort for the trials and disappointments of life in the consolations of religion; they still believed that the Divine Will should govern the actions of nations as of individuals, and settle them upon the best and surest foundations. They still prayed to God that "peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, might be established among us for all generations." But of what avail were their opinions? You first excluded them from the Franchise Bill of 1884, and when, as a matter of course, you afterwards passed Manhood Suffrage, the sex that *most* needed the protection of the law was shut out from all influence upon the law. Agnosticism, materialism, and atheism rode rampant in the land, for the agnostics, materialists, and atheists had votes, while the women had none. So the votes carried the day, the Church was dis-

established, and the same causes have since operated to weaken every Christian sect."

"Is this possible?" I exclaimed. "That was a side of the question I never thought of!"

"Had they known their best interests," said my guide, "every bishop, clergyman, and minister in the land would have raised his voice in favour of enfranchising women; but their policy was short-sighted. They feared that women would become hard and worldly-minded if they took up the responsibilities of politics, and they never realised that their chief hope of safety lay in the sincere love of duty and earnest piety of hundreds of thousands of religious women. How is it possible, also, that the sanctity of marriage can be revered as it was when the sex who looked upon it as a sacrament, and who had most to lose by the increasing laxity of the law were set on one side, and compelled to stand by as helpless lookers-on."

"But what were our landowners, our men of substance about all this time?" I exclaimed in despair.

The Spirit smiled, a wan sad smile, and his voice sounded fainter. "There is no tenure in land now. If you had given the women of property votes, their influence might have been thrown into the scale for the security of property."

His words became inaudible. Looking at him, I saw that his figure was becoming even more decrepid, and at the same time fainter, almost shadowy. A great clash of bells now echoed around us and filled the air with a deafening clamour. Was it the new Century with its anxieties and its losses, its wars and its poverty, that they were ringing in so noisily, or was the crash, as in my dazed condition I fancied, nothing less than the prosperity, integrity, and religion of the British Empire falling about us, in consequence of the wilful exclusion of one-half of its subjects from taking any share in its concerns. The shadow of the Nineteenth Century had now quite faded from my sight, the noise continued even more deafeningly than before, and with a start I awoke.

I was in our own library of the House of Commons once

more, and the division bell was ringing loudly and clamorously. A gentleman, the Member for Wapping, came hurrying past.

"They are ringing for the Division on the Second Reading of Mr. Woodall's Bill to confer the Electoral Franchise on Women Householders," he said. I jumped up at once, and followed him into the House, where the question for the second reading was put.

"THE AYES TO THE RIGHT, THE NOES TO THE LEFT," and I need hardly say that I went to the Right.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Office—10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

THE

Local Government Act

1888

IN RELATION TO

WOMEN VOTERS.

ING

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NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

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Office—10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888,

IN RELATION TO

WOMEN VOTERS.

ING

The Local Government Act of 1888 for England and Wales marks an epoch in the history of the Local Government of this country. It brings large administrative duties, hitherto in the hands of magistrates in quarter sessions and other local authorities, under the control of a popular franchise by concentrating them in County Councils.

The companion Act, the County Electors' Act, 1888, which provides for the mode of election of these County Councils has simultaneously brought about an immense change in the position of women, in their capacity of citizens, in country districts, by the

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wide extension of the area in which they may exercise direct influence as voters for the County Councils. Hitherto the only registration of voters in country districts has been for Parliamentary elections, from which women have been and are still, excluded. But the registration for Local Government elections will include every man householder, and every woman householder being unmarried or widowed, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the poorest woman ratepayer.

What, then, should be the attitude of women to their new opportunities?

Whether they will use their vote or let it lie unexercised is not a question of whether they individually desire more power, but a question whether each woman householder accepts or rejects the responsibilities which the legislature has entrusted to her as a member of the community contributing to its maintenance and sharing the protection of the law.

The following brief notes as to the election and functions of the County Councils may be found an assistance by some women in estimating the purport of the Act and deciding on their own attitude in regard to a franchise on which the domestic well-

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being of the country will henceforth largely depend;—therefore neither to be seized on for purposes of party spirit, nor shirked from personal apathy or indifference, but used from the unselfish, womanly sense that what regards the interests of every town and village and every household in those towns and villages, shall not be indifferent to them.

What, then, are these County Councils? Who shall form them? What shall they perform?

1. What they will not do.

The County Councils will not (for the present at least) touch the work and duties of School Boards and Boards of Guardians; these remain as before. Neither do they affect the functions of Town Councils; they will be established in the towns and country parts where Town Councils do not exist.

2. Who are Voters?

Persons who are occupiers of houses or other tenements, and who are entered on the rate-books as having paid up their rates, provided they have been duly registered on the County registration lists.

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3. How can they be registered ?

The duty of making the lists of voters devolves on the overseers. These lists are made each July. They are publicly set forth at the doors of churches and chapels in August. They are revised and objections considered by the Revising Barristers, some time between September 8th and October 12th. Anyone who finds her name omitted or receives notice of objection, should communicate with the overseers, which may be generally most easily done through the agent of the Liberal or Conservative Association, as may be preferred.

The first Election will take place in the middle of January, 1889.

4. What are the powers of the County Councils ?

On them will devolve the making, assessing and levying of County rates and Police rates and the application and expenditure thereof; also the borrowing of money.

The Shire Halls, County Halls, Lock-up Houses,

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Police Stations, and other County buildings, County work and property will be under their administration.

The duties of Highway Boards for the maintenance, repair and enlargement of public roads and bridges will fall to them.

They will administer Acts referring to contagious diseases of cattle, preservation of fish and of wild birds, weights and measures, the registration of rules of scientific societies and charitable gifts, the certifying and recording of places of religious worship, and the confirmation and record of rules of loan societies.

They will license places for music, dancing and stage plays.

They will be entrusted with the provision, maintenance and management of pauper lunatic asylums, and the establishment of reformatories.

They will have charge of the division of the county into polling districts for the purposes of Parliamentary elections, the appointment of places of election and all matters referring to registration of Parliamentary voters.

The election of Coroners will be transferred to the County Councils; and they will also have the appoint-

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ment of County Treasurer, Surveyor, Public Analyst
and Medical Officer of Health.

The excellence of any machinery depends on those
who work it; and the success of this new machinery
for Local Government depends on the character of
the men elected to the Councils. That, in its turn,
depends on the discretion and discrimination of the
electors. This new franchise therefore claims the
earnest attention of the new electors.

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESENTED AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE

WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL

JULY 14th, 1891.

London :

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Established 1889.

President: Mrs. EDWARD WALKER.

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Hon. Sec.: Miss BARBER, Mount Preston, Leeds.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

OF THE

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Presented at the General Meeting, July 14th, 1891.

It falls to your Committee this year to present a Report with more than the average alternations of hopes and disappointments, checks and encouragements.

On the meeting of Parliament on November 25th several Members balloted for a day for the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill. Mr. Woodall secured the least unfavourable place and accordingly put down the Bill for May 13th, the only day on which a first place was available.

Fears were, however, entertained lest, owing to its proximity to Whitsuntide, that day should be absorbed in the holidays. Some of the Parliamentary supporters in order to secure a debate and division sought to obtain a day for a Resolution. Your Committee feeling strongly that a Resolution at this stage of the question is of no practical value, resolved to make an effort to ensure a debate on the Bill. A memorial was prepared with many influential signatures attached,* which the first Lord of the Treasury consented to receive from a small deputation of ladies, appointing the 20th April for the purpose.

* The text of the memorial, and a complete list of signatures has been published in pamphlet form.

Lord Wolmer having introduced the deputation, Mrs. Fawcett briefly brought forward certain points for consideration. Mr. Smith stated in reply that he had every reason to believe that May 13th would be available for the Bill. He added that that day would certainly not be included in the Whitsuntide holidays, that there was no intention of taking the day for Government business, and that every effort would be made to keep the day open for the Bill.

Meantime Mr. Haldane had secured a first place for a Resolution on April 24th. The Parliamentary Committee on hearing the result of the deputation resolved to proceed with the Bill. Mr. Haldane accordingly withdrew his Resolution.*

Your Committee and the other affiliated Committees at once entered on preparations for the expected division. Mr. Radcliffe Cooke and Mr. Samuel Smith had already given notice of opposition. Mr. De Lisle and Mr. Asquith now also gave notice to move that the Bill be read that day six months. On April 30th, Mr. W. H. Smith moved—"That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday, the House do meet at 3 o'clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all orders of

* The text of Mr. Haldane's Resolution was as follows:—"That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies."

To this the following notices of amendments were given:—Mr. Samuel Smith,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's Motion, leave out all after "That," and insert "this House views with apprehension so grave a change in our political system as would be involved in the admission of women to the Parliamentary Franchise, and declines to entertain the proposal."

Mr. Radcliffe Cooke,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's Motion, leave out all after "the" and insert "alteration of the Laws which exclude women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament would not be expedient until some public demand should arise for the change, and until (in the event of such a demand arising) the change could be effected without injustice to male voters."

Mr. De Lisle,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's resolution, leave out all after "that" and insert "the exclusion of women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is beneficial to the peace and prosperity of the State, being in accord with the fundamental principle of the good government of mankind; and that the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies require examination in order to determine whether the legal qualifications of women are in accord with the natural."

the day and notices of motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday, if it be appointed for that day."

A debate then ensued of a very unusual character led by Mr. Gladstone, who advised that all Wednesdays be taken by the Government; Mr. Bryce and Mr. Labouchere also spoke in the same sense and Sir Henry James proposed to amend the motion so that it should read after the word "Bill," in the last line but one, "shall also have precedence on Wednesdays until said Bill has passed through Committee of the House."

On a division being taken the votes were—for the amendment 218, against 159, majority 59. Mr. Akers Douglas and Col. Walrond, the Government Tellers, were tellers for the minority; neither the debate nor the division lists turned on the merits of the Bill.* The following tabular statement will indicate the mixed character of the voting on this occasion:—

	NOES.					AYES.				
	CON.	L.U.	G.L.	N.	Tot.	CON.	L.U.	G.L.	N.	Tot.
Known friends	15	4	8	0	27	3	0	1	1	5
Supposed favourable	60	4	17	2	83	27	7	41	13	88
Opinions unknown or doubtful	30	4	1	0	35	29	14	31	11	85
Understood to be opposed	12	1	1	0	14	19	4	17	0	40
TOTALS.	117	13	27	2	159	78	25	90	25	218

Some known opponents voted with the minority to support Mr. W. H. Smith; some who had been counted on as friends voted with the majority in order to further the Irish Land Bill. Be the motives what they might, and they were no doubt various, the effect remains the same.

On April 13th, a public meeting was held in the Westminster

* A full report of the debate and division list was given in an Occasional paper issued by your Committee on June 1st.

Town Hall, in support of the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, M.P., the chair was taken by Sir Richard Temple, Bart., M.P. The meeting was addressed by Mrs. Ashford, Mr. Henry Kimber, M.P., the Rev. Harry Jones and Mrs. Fawcett; the following resolution was passed:—

“That in view of the many social questions involving home and domestic interests which will claim the attention of the Legislature in the near future, the inexpediency and injustice of excluding women from all representation has become more serious than at any previous period.

“This Meeting therefore respectfully urges on the Members of Her Majesty's Government, and on Members of the House of Commons, the importance of no longer deferring such extension of the Franchise as shall enable duly qualified women to be placed on the Register before the next General Election.”

In view of the expected debate on May 13th, your Committee arranged a conversazione in the galleries of the Royal Institution of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly, for the evening of Monday, 11th. Invitations were issued in the names of the following ladies, who kindly consented to form a Reception Committee:—The Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtenay, Mrs. Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Miss Davenport-Hill, Lady Lethbridge, Lady Matheson, Mrs. Penrose Fitz-Gerald, the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Westlake, the Lady Maud Wolmer. Between ten and eleven o'clock a large assembly which had gathered in the Eastern Gallery were addressed by Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., the Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, D.D., Mr. McLaren, M.P., and Mr. Woodall, M.P.

Your Committee desire to express their cordial thanks to Mrs. Napier Higgins for a numerous attended drawing-room meeting held at her residence, Percy Cross House, Fulham, in November; Mr. Napier Higgins, Q.C., presided. They would also thank Miss Reid and Miss Guinness for a discussion meeting held in their studio, Augustine Road, Brook Green, and Mrs. Ormsby Sherrard for a meeting held by her kind invitation at 3, Berkeley Square. They are much indebted to Mrs. Louis Blacker, for a well attended meeting

held by her kind invitation at 13, Queensborough Terrace, Col. Birch in the chair, and to Miss Greenhill for inviting a meeting, on May 9th, at her studio, Abdale Road, Shepherd's Bush; Mr. Sharp in the chair; also to Mrs. Shaen, Mrs. Oliver, Miss Abney Walker, Miss Lord and Miss Petrie, for kind help in addressing these meetings.

Two Petitions of a somewhat special character were presented in the House of Commons through the instrumentality of the friends and members of this Society; one signed by 774 professional women including the Heads of Girton and Newnham Colleges, Cambridge; Somerville Hall, Oxford; College Hall, London; Aberdare Hall, Cardiff; and many Head mistresses of schools, together with a large number of artists, authors, journalists, &c. This petition was presented by Sir John Lubbock. The other was signed by 472 women engaged in social work of various kinds, and was presented by the Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie, M.P.

In December last your Committee offered two prizes in connection with the Educational Council of the southern section of the Co-operative Union for the best essay on “The bearing of Co-operative Experience on the Question of Women's Suffrage.” The first prize was awarded to Mr. F. Rockell, whose essay your Committee propose to publish. The second prize was not awarded.

A letter, calling attention to the importance of the Suffrage for Women, which was extensively circulated amongst ladies engaged in political work, was signed by:—Clara, Lady Rayleigh-Miss Balfour (Chief Secretary's Lodge), the Hon. Lady Grey, Egerton, Lady Knightley, Mrs. Cotton-Jodrell, Mrs. Atlay, (The Palace, Hereford), Mrs. Culme-Seymour, Mrs. C. H. Hodgson, (74, Belgrave Road, London), Mrs. Vansittart, Mrs. Dent (Sudeley Castle), the Hon. Mrs. Paley, Lady Rayleigh, and Mrs. Penrose-FitzGerald.

The year that has just closed will be marked in the history of the Suffrage movement for the death of Miss Lydia E. Becker, which took place at Geneva on July 18th, only three days after the last Annual Meeting. Her clear and vigorous mind held a firm grasp of the political bearings of the question,

and as a pioneer in the early and difficult years of the agitation and leader in its councils, the memory of her master mind will ever be associated with its history.

A still earlier advocate of measures for improving the condition of women, Barbara Leigh Smith, Madame Bodichon, breathed her last at Scalands Gate, Sussex, on June 11th. A pamphlet, published by her in 1855, entitled "A Brief Summary of the most important laws of England concerning Women," may be considered to have opened the way for the Married Women's Property Acts. She took an active part in promoting the petition for Women's Suffrage, presented by Mr. J. S. Mill in 1866, and a Paper by her on "Reasons for and against Women's Suffrage" was read at the Social Science Congress in Manchester in the same year. Later she largely shared in founding the college for women now known as Girton College, Cambridge. Though ill-health had compelled her withdrawal for many years from active life, she lived to see her most ardent aspirations more or less fully realized in the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts, the growth of the Women's Suffrage movement, and the success of Girton College

Your Committee have to record the loss, at the close of last year, of Mr. Coleridge J. Kennard, who had been an earnest supporter of their cause, both in and out of Parliament; of Lord Deramore, who as Sir Thomas Bateson, M.P. for Devizes, voted steadily for the enfranchisement of women; and of Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P., who had proved himself a most consistent and disinterested supporter of Women's Suffrage.

In the past few weeks your Society has lost an old and valued member in Sir Robert N. Fowler, M.P.; he had voted in favour as Member for Penryn in 1871, and his name was on the back of the Bill when it passed second reading in 1886. Another of the most valued members of the Society has passed away in Mr. Thomas Hare, who was for many years a member of the Executive Committee, and who throughout his long life had always been a staunch friend of the cause of women.

The death of Sir J. A. Macdonald removes a powerful supporter from the ranks of our colonial statesmen, and in the general

regret for his loss, your Committee gratefully remember that he introduced provisions for the enfranchisement of women in the Canadian Electoral Bill of 1885.

Your Committee have received an offer of £100 a year for three years, provided that another £900 be raised annually. They earnestly appeal to the friends of the movement to enable them to profit by this offer. They would also invite application for lecturers and for literature from associations desirous of information on the subject.

Amidst the many reforms which press for consideration at the present day, your Committee entreat their friends never to lose sight of this question, and to embrace every opportunity of urging on members of Parliament and Candidates for election, that sex cannot be treated as a bar to enfranchisement without risk of injury to all legislation affecting the moral and social condition of the country.

In conclusion your Committee are resolved to leave no effort untried to procure the passing of a measure of enfranchisement during the life of the present Parliament—or failing this to be fully prepared to meet the General Election.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,
CENTRAL COMMITTEE, 10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER.

Receipts and Payments for the year ending June 30th, 1891.

RECEIPTS.		PAYMENTS.	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
By Balance	1 16 0	By Rent	40 0 0
" Donations	224 9 0	" Office Expenses	57 4 0
" Subscriptions	174 12 6	" Salaries	128 15 4
" Sale of Publications	2 0 0	" Meetings and Advertisements	73 5 4
		" Stationery	14 7 0
		" Printing and Publications	65 7 8
		" "Women's Suffrage Journal"	4 19 7
		" Postage	43 10 5
		" Secretary's Travelling Expenses	3 18 1
		" Newspapers and Parliamentary Papers	11 16 6
		" Prize Essay	2 2 0
		Balance in Bank	393 5 11
			9 11 7
	<u>£402 17 6</u>		<u>£402 17 6</u>

Examined, compared with the books and vouchers, and found correct,

M. HARRIS SMITH, *Accountant*,

13, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., and
Royal Bank Buildings, 123, Bishopsgate Street Within, E.C.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

General Annual Meeting of the Central Committee.

Westminster Town Hall, July 14th, 1891.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT, M.P., in the Chair.

The SECRETARY presented the Report and Financial Statement.

RESOLUTION I :

That this Meeting adopt the Report and Financial Statement and direct that they be printed for circulation.

Moved by Miss TOD.

Seconded by BARON DIMSDALE, M.P.

RESOLUTION II :

That in view of the approaching General Election this Meeting is of opinion that a Bill should be introduced next Session to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to women who already possess the local franchises.

Moved by COL. JODRELL, M.P.

Seconded by MRS. FAWCETT.

RESOLUTION III :

That the Executive Committee for the ensuing year consist of the following persons, with power to add to their number, and of delegates of Associated Societies :—

Professor Adamson, Miss Gertrude Andrews, Mrs. Ashford, Miss Baker, Miss Helen Blackburn, Miss Jessie Boucherett, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, M.P., Miss Courtenay The Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P., Miss F. Davenport-Hill, Miss Emily Davies, Captain Edwards-Heathcote, M.P., Mrs. Henry Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Hallett, Mrs. Haslam, Miss Lucy Johnson, Mrs. E. J. Mylne, Miss Mordan, Clara Lady Rayleigh, T. W. Russell, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Stephen Spring-Rice, Mrs. Sterling, Miss Tod, and Miss Vernon.

Moved by MRS. SHAEN.

Seconded by REV. J. C. KIRBY (S. Australian W. S. Committee).

RESOLUTION IV :

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Albert. Rollit for presiding on the present occasion.

Moved by Miss EMILY DAVIES.

Seconded by MRS. PENROSE FITZGERALD.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Adams, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Addison, Mrs.	-	0 2 6
Adair, Mrs. H.	-	0 5 0
Allen, Miss	-	1 0 0
Anderson, Mrs. Hall	-	1 1 0
Anderson, Miss	-	0 2 6
Atkins, Edward, Esq.	-	0 5 0
Atkinson, Mrs. Beavington	-	0 5 0
Aylmer, Miss	-	1 1 0
Babb, Miss	-	2 2 0
Babb, J. Staines, Esq.,	-	1 1 0
Baker, Miss	-	0 2 6
Bailey, Miss	-	0 10 0
Baxter, Mrs. Fleming	-	1 0 0
Baxter, Miss	-	0 5 0
Beechcroft, Miss	-	0 2 6
Biggs, Miss Ashurst	-	1 1 0
Biggs, Miss Maude	-	1 0 0
Bishop, Mrs. (Dolycarrig)	-	0 2 6
Blacker, Mrs. Louis	0 10 0	0 10 0
Blackmore, Miss	-	0 5 0
Borchardt, Miss	-	0 3 6
Bostock, Miss	-	1 0 0
Boucherett, Miss Jessie	50 0 0	-
Brandreth. H. S., Esq.	1 0 0	1 0 0
Bridges, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Brodhurst, Mrs.	-	0 10 0
Brown, Miss E. L.	-	0 2 6
Brumgate, Miss	-	0 2 6
Buchan, Dowager Countess	2 0 0	2 2 0
Buckland, Miss	-	0 2 6
Burne, Miss	-	0 5 0
" Collected by Mrs. Burne	0 2 6	-
Thomas Burne, Esq.	0 2 6	-
Miss S. M. Gardiner	0 2 6	-
Miss de Natorp	0 5 0	-
Smaller Sums	0 3 0	-
Burt, Miss N. S.	-	0 2 6
Bush, Misses	-	2 2 0
Calthorpe, Miss	-	0 5 0
Camperdown, the Earl of	5 0 0	-
Channing-Pearce, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Charlesworth, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Clarke, Mrs. Benjamin	-	1 0 0
Cheeseman, Mrs.	0 2 6	-
Chickall, Miss	-	0 2 6
Clutton, R. G., Esq.	5 5 0	-
Cobbe, Miss F. Power	5 0 0	-
Chickall, Miss	-	0 2 6
Colborne, Hon. Mrs.	0 10 0	-
Cotton, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Cowell, Mrs. H.	-	1 0 0
Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard, M.P.	-	1 0 0
Courtenay, Miss	10 0 0	-
Coxhead, Miss	-	0 10 0

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Crook, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Crowe, Miss	-	1 0 0
Crump, Miss	-	0 10 0
Culme-Seymour, Mrs.	5 0 0	1 0 0
Curry, Miss F. W.	-	0 5 0
Darwin, Mrs. Francis	-	1 0 0
Davenport-Hill, Miss	-	1 1 0
Davenport-Hill, Miss F. }	10 0 0	1 1 0
" " (second donation)	1 0 0	-
Davies, Miss Emily	-	1 1 0
Davies, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Davis, Miss M. H.	0 2 6	-
Debenham, Mrs. Wm.	-	0 10 0
Dimsdale, Baron, M.P.	-	3 3 0
Donkin, Miss	-	0 5 0
Dougal, Miss L.	-	0 2 6
Dublin Committee	-	1 0 0
Duer, Misses	-	0 10 0
Dunn, Miss	-	1 1 0
Eaton, Mrs. Lauder	-	0 5 0
Eccles, Miss	10 0 0	5 0 0
Edge, Miss	-	0 2 6
Edmunds, Miss	1 0 0	-
Ely, Miss Emily	-	0 5 0
Evans, Miss	-	0 10 0
Eve, Mrs.	0 10 0	0 10 0
Ewart, Miss	2 0 0	-
Fawcett, Mrs. Henry	10 0 0	5 0 0
Fawcett, Miss	-	1 0 0
Field, Mrs. Eastwick	-	0 5 0
Ford, Miss E. H.	5 0 0	3 0 0
Ford, Miss I. O.	-	5 0 0
Ford, Rawlinson, Esq.	-	1 1 0
Ford, Mrs. Rawlinson	-	1 1 0
Friend, A (Windsor)	0 10 0	0 10 0
Friends, Several, per Miss Lucy Johnson	5 0 0	-
Garrett, Miss Agnes	-	2 2 0
Goff, Miss	-	0 2 6
Goldsmid, Louisa, Lady	5 0 0	2 2 0
" " " (second donation)	5 0 0	-
Gordon, Miss	-	0 5 0
Green, Miss E. H.	-	1 0 0
Grey, Mrs. Wm.	-	2 2 0
Grove, Miss	-	0 10 0
Gurney Miss M.	-	1 0 0
Gurney, Miss A.	-	0 10 0
Gwynne, Miss	-	0 10 0
Hallett, T. G. P., Esq., and Mrs. Hallett	5 0 0	-
Hamilton, Miss	-	0 5 0
Hamley, Miss	-	0 2 6
Hallwright, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Harberton, Viscountess	-	1 0 0
Hardie, Miss	-	0 2 6
Hare, Thomas, Esq., (the late)	-	1 1 0
Harrison, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Hart, Miss M. H.	-	0 5 0

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Harvey, Miss	-	0 2 6
Heath, Mrs. Bayly	-	1 1 0
Heberden, Mrs.	-	0 2 6
Higgins, Mrs. Napier	-	2 0 0
Higginson, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Hill, Miss Emily	-	0 2 6
Hill, Miss Georgiana	-	0 2 6
Hill, Frederick, Esq.	-	1 0 0
Hodgson, Mrs. C. H.	3 3 0	-
" " (second donation)	5 0 0	-
" " (third donation)	3 3 0	-
Holland, Mrs. Charles	10 0 0	2 2 0
Holland, Miss Mabel	-	2 0 0
Howse, Mrs.	-	0 10 0
Hubbard, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
J.L.A.	1 0 0	-
Jex-Blake, Dr. Sophia	-	1 0 0
Jodrell, Col. Cotton, M.P.	3 0 0	-
Johnson, Miss Agnes	-	1 1 0
Johnson, Miss Lucy	-	1 1 0
Jones, Miss Constance	-	1 1 0
Jones, Miss H. M.	-	0 5 0
Kensington, Miss	-	0 5 0
Lafone, Alfred, Esq., M.P.	-	2 2 0
Lawrence, Miss D.	-	1 1 0
Lawrence, Miss M.	-	1 1 0
Lawrence, Miss	-	1 1 0
"Left Hand"	2 0 0	-
Lewin, Miss	-	0 4 0
Light, Miss	-	1 1 0
Link, F., Esq.	0 5 0	-
Lister, Miss Emma	-	0 5 0
Lloyd, Miss	0 10 0	-
Ludlow, Miss	1 0 0	-
Lyttelton, Hon. and Rev. Edward	-	1 1 0
Lyttelton, Hon. Mrs. Edward	-	1 1 0
<i>Per Luton Committee:—</i>		
Mrs. Alford	-	0 3 0
Mrs. Baily	-	0 1 6
Miss Bigg	-	2 2 0
Mrs. Boutwood	-	0 2 6
Mrs. Hall	-	0 2 6
Mrs. F. B. Webb	-	0 2 6
John Webdale, Esq.	-	0 5 0
Mrs. Webster	-	0 5 0
Mrs. Wootton	-	0 2 6
Mrs. Henry Wright	-	0 5 0
The Committee	-	0 2 6
McKerlie, Miss Helen	-	0 5 0
Mackovski, Stainslaus	-	1 1 0
Manning, Miss E. A.	-	1 1 0
Marshall, Dr. Mary	-	1 1 0
Marshall, John, Esq.	-	1 1 0
Marshall, Mrs. John	-	1 1 0
" " " per Miss von Herder	-	0 5 0
" " " " Miss Beavor	-	0 2 6

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Marshall, Mrs. Stephen	-	2 0 0
Martineau, Miss L. E.	-	1 0 0
Meinertzhagen, Miss	-	0 5 0
Mitchell, Mrs. J. F.	1 1 0	-
Moore, Miss Ogle	-	0 2 6
Mordan, Miss	-	5 0 0
Mordan, Augustus, Esq.	-	1 0 0
Morris, Mr. George	0 7 6	-
Mosley, Miss M.	-	0 2 6
" " Collected by		
Miss E. S. Clarke	-	0 2 6
Mrs. Curling Hope	-	0 2 6
Miss E. G. Pierpoint	-	0 2 6
Mrs. Maguire	0 2 6	-
Muller, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Mylne, Mrs. E. J.	-	0 10 0
Newman, Prof. F. W.	-	1 0 0
Norris, Miss	0 3 0	-
Notcutt, Miss	-	0 5 0
O'Connor, Miss	-	0 5 0
Oliver, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Paley, Hon. Mrs.	-	2 0 0
Paine, Mrs. Lewis (two years)	-	0 10 0
Pereira, Hon. Mrs.	-	2 2 0
Phillott, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Phillott, Miss Constance	-	0 5 0
Phillott, Miss Edith	-	0 5 0
Pochin, H. D., Esq.	5 0 0	-
Pochin, Mrs.	5 0 0	-
Ponsonby, Hon. Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Porter, Miss	-	0 5 0
Poyser, Mrs.	-	0 2 6
Pym, Mrs. Guy	1 1 0	-
Rayleigh, Clara, Lady	-	1 0 0
Reeves, Miss	-	0 10 0
Reid, Miss	-	0 2 6
Roberts, Sir Owen and Lady	-	2 2 0
Robertson, Miss	-	1 0 0
Robson, Miss H.	0 10 0	-
Rolleston, Miss	-	0 1 0
Russell, T. W., Esq., M.P., and Mrs.	-	0 10 0
Ruth, Miss (2 years)	-	2 0 0
Salès, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Sanderson, J. S., Esq.	-	1 1 0
Scholefield, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Seakins, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Shaen, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Shaen, Miss	-	1 1 0
Shedden, Mrs. E. C.	-	0 2 6
Shedden, Mrs. R.	-	0 2 6
Shurmer, Miss Ada	-	0 5 0
Sidgwick, Prof. and Mrs. Henry	-	2 2 0
Sieveking, Miss E. W.	-	0 2 6
Singleton, Mrs.	-	0 2 6
Smith, Mrs. Murray	5 0 0	-
Smith, Mrs. F. P.	-	0 5 0

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	Dons.			Subs.		
Smith, Miss M. Harris	0	10	6	0	10	6
Smith, Mrs. Macleod	2	0	0			
Snoad, Mrs. Frank, Collected by						
Miss E. M. Phillips	0	2	6			
Mrs. De Rheims	0	2	6			
Small sums	0	2	0			
Spring-Rice, Mrs. S.				1	1	0
Collected by	0	7	6			
Spring-Rice, Miss A.	0	2	6			
Spring-Rice, Hon. Mrs. F., Collected by	0	6	0			
Stansfield, Miss	1	0	0			
Sterling, Mrs.	1	0	0	2	0	0
Sterling, Miss	1	0	0	2	0	0
Stopes, Mrs.				0	5	0
Strange, Miss L. G.				1	1	0
Streatfield, Mrs.				2	2	0
Tabor, Miss M. C.				0	5	0
Tacey, Miss				1	0	0
Tacey, Miss Alice	4	0	0	1	0	0
Tacey, Miss Anne				1	0	0
Tatlock, Miss				1	0	0
Taylor, Mrs. Thomas				1	0	0
Thomas, Mrs. Charles				1	1	0
Thomas, Mrs. Elizabeth	10	0	0			
Thorne, Mrs.				0	5	0
Toynbee, Miss				0	5	0
Tubbs, Mrs.				1	0	0
Turner, Mrs. J. W.				0	5	0
Twining, Miss Louisa				1	0	0
Venning, Miss Rosamond	1	0	0			
Wainwright, Miss				0	5	0
Walker, Miss Abney				1	0	0
Walker, Edward, Esq.				1	0	0
Walker, Miss Ethel				0	2	6
Walker, Mrs. Ingram				0	10	0
Ward, Miss F. B.				0	2	6
Waterman, Miss	5	0	0			
Wedgwood, Miss Julia				0	10	0
Wellesley, Mrs. Gerald				1	0	0
Welsh, Miss				1	0	0
Westlake, John, Esq., Q.C.				0	10	0
Westlake, Mrs.				0	10	0
Wilkinson, Miss F. R.				1	1	0
Wilkinson, Miss L. M.				1	1	0
Wodehouse, Mrs. E. H.	0	10	0			
Wolmer, The Lady Maud				1	1	0
Wordale, Rev. J.	2	0	0			
Zimmermann, Miss Agnes				1	1	0
Various small sums				0	5	0

RECEIVED SINCE BOOKS MADE UP.

Mrs. Jeffcock	0	5	0
Mrs. Frank Hill	1	1	0
Mr. Michael Cook	0	5	0
Miss Lucy Bird	0	10	0
Mrs. Tapson	2	2	0

GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Agg-Gardner, J. T., Esq., M.P.	Johnston, Wm., Esq., M.P.
Collings, Jesse, Esq., M.P.	Kenyon, Hon. Geo., M.P.
Cotton-Jodrell, Col., M.P.	Lafone, Alfred, Esq., M.P.
Courtney, the Rt. Hon. Leonard, M.P.	Laurie, Col., M.P.
M.P.	Lethbridge, Sir Roper, M.P.
Dimsdale, Baron, M.P.	Maclure, J. W., Esq., M.P.
Dunsany, Lord, M.P.	Manfield, M.P., Esq., M.P.
Edwards-Heathcote, Capt., M.P.	McLagan, Peter, Esq., M.P.
FitzGerald, R. U. Penrose, Esq., M.P.	McLaren, Walter, Esq., M.P.
M.P.	Puleston, Sir J. H., M.P.
Fitzwygram, Lt-Gen. Sir F., M.P.	Rollit, Sir A. K., M.P.
Fowler, Sir R. N., Bt., M.P.	Round, James, Esq., M.P.
Fry, Lewis, Esq., M.P.	Russell, T. W., Esq., M.P.
Hanbury-Tracy, Hon. F. S., M.P.	Temple, Sir Richard, Bt., M.P.
Hughes, Edwin, Esq., M.P.	Wright, H. Smith, Esq., M.P.
Abbott, Rev. Edwin A., D.D.	Cobbe, Miss F. Power
Adamson, Professor	Colborne, The Hon. Mrs.
Andrews, Miss Gertrude	Colville, Col.
Anderson, Mrs. Garrett, M.D.	Cooper, Miss Laura
Anstruther, Louisa Lady	Cotton-Jodrell, Mrs.
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NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

The object of the Society is to obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for Women on the same conditions as it is, or may be granted to men.

The Society seeks to achieve this object—

1. By acting as a centre for the collection and diffusion of information with regard to the progress of the movement in all parts of the country.
2. By holding Public Meetings in support of the repeal of the Electoral Disabilities of women.
3. By the publication of Pamphlets, Leaflets, and other Literature bearing upon the question.

RULES.

PASSED AT THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND SUBSCRIBERS TO ITS FUNDS, HELD JULY 17TH, 1872.

1. The Central Committee shall consist of the present members and such others as the Executive Committee may, from time to time, elect.
2. The Executive Committee shall consist of members of the Central Committee, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and of single delegates, the same being members of Local Committees, appointed by Local Associations to represent them; the Executive Committee having power to add to the Central Committee, and to its own number, and to appoint the Officers.
3. A subscription of any amount constitutes membership of the National Society.
4. A General Meeting of the Central Committee shall be held once a year to appoint the Executive Committee, to receive the Annual Report and the Financial Statement and to transact any other business which may arise.
5. The Executive Committee shall, at its first meeting, appoint the Officers.
6. A Special General Meeting may be called by the Executive Committee at any time; or, at the written request of not less than twenty-five members of the Central Committee the Secretary or Secretaries shall call a Special General Meeting to discuss such matters only as are mentioned in the notice of such meeting.
7. Eight days' public notice shall be given of all General Meetings.
8. The above rules shall not be altered except at a General Meeting after fourteen days' notice of the proposed alteration given to the Executive Committee.

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COMMITTEE.

MEMORIAL to the Marquis of Salisbury and the Rt. Hon. W. H.
Smith. Price 1d.

OCCASIONAL PAPER issued June 1st, 1891.
Contents—Notes of the Session, Debate in the House of
Commons on Sir Henry James' Amendment, Division List,
Opinions of the Press, &c. Price 1d.

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National Society for Women's Suffrage.

OCCASIONAL PAPER,

*Issued by the Central Committee, 10, Great College Street,
Westminster.*

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Notes of the Session.
Debate in the House of Commons on Sir Henry James'
Amendment.
Division List.
Conversazione.
Opinions of the Press.
Future Efforts.

JUNE 1st, 1891.

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1891

NOTES OF THE SESSION.

The Central Committee consider that it may be useful and desirable to present to their friends and subscribers a brief narrative of the events of the past few weeks, especially the circumstances which led up to the loss of the day for the second reading of the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill.

It was generally understood that Mr. Woodall had obtained a first place for the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill on May 13th. Fears were, however, entertained that this date might be absorbed by the Whitsuntide holidays. Mr. Haldane subsequently obtained a place for a resolution on the question on April 24th. It thus appeared that a debate either on Bill or resolution was ensured during the Session.

A vote on a resolution is, however, no more than the expression of an abstract opinion; the Central Committee, therefore, had, early in the Session, resolved to leave no effort untried to secure a division on the Bill rather than a resolution, and to this end a memorial, with many influential signatures appended, had been prepared, and a request made to the First Lord of the Treasury to receive this at the hands of a small deputation of ladies. Mr. W. H. Smith named April 20th as the date on which to receive the deputation, which was introduced by Viscount Wolmer, M.P., and consisted of Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Emily Davies, and Miss Helen Blackburn.

Mr. W. H. SMITH, in acknowledging the memorial presented by the deputation, gave the assurance that the House would not adjourn until after May 13th, and that, unforeseen contingencies apart, the Government

had no intention of taking the day for Government business.

The Parliamentary Committee met later in the same day, when the result of the deputation was communicated to them. The following members were present: Mr. Ainslie, Col. Cotton-Jodrell, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. Sydney Gedge, Mr. Haldane, Capt. Edwards Heathcote, Mr. Johnstone, Sir Rainald Knightley, Mr. Lafone, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Round, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Edward Watkin, Mr. Alfred Webb, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Woodall.

On hearing the tenour of Mr. Smith's reply, it was agreed to proceed with the Bill, and Mr. Haldane accordingly withdrew his resolution.

The various Women's Suffrage Committees at once commenced preparations for vigorous work in view of a division on May 13th. The opponents were equally on the alert; notice to move that the Bill be read that day six months appeared on the papers of the House from no less than four different members, viz., Mr. Radcliffe Cooke (Newington, West), Mr. de Lisle (Leicestershire, Mid.), Mr. Samuel Smith (Flint.), Mr. Asquith (Fife, East), and schemes were laid for its destruction.

On April 30th, Mr. Smith moved that certain specified days should be appropriated to Government business. Mr. Gladstone immediately rose to lead the Opposition, but instead of objecting, as is usually the case, to the time of private members being appropriated, he insisted that Mr. Smith should be 'perfectly uniform in the application of his rule,' and include all Wednesdays before Whitsuntide. Mr. Gladstone's proposal afforded a manifest opening for shelving the Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women, which the opponents of the measure were quick to perceive. A debate of nearly an hour followed, of which a full report is given in these pages. Mr. Smith declared himself unable to take the day for Government business after the expectations which had been aroused. Mr. Stuart and Mr. Bryce thereupon pressed the claim of Wednesday the

8th to be equally exempted for the Access to Mountains Bill. Mr. Labouchere scouted the idea of giving a day to "female franchise, or some folly of that sort." Mr. Courtney defended Mr. Smith's proposal. Finally Sir Henry James moved an amendment to take all days to Whitsuntide. This was opposed by Lord Wolmer, supported by Sir Wm. Harcourt, and finally carried by a division of 218 to 159; and thus the Government, for probably the first time in Parliamentary history, had a day forced upon them.

The division list, which is given on another page, is worthy of careful study. By that list we find that there voted

	Majority.	Minority.
Conservatives,	79	128
Liberal Unionists,	25	13
Gladstonian Liberals,	90	27
Nationalists,	25	2
	<hr/> 218	<hr/> 159

and more than this, we find that fourteen known opponents, including several members of the Government, voted in the minority to give a fair opportunity of discussion of the question, while eighty-six who were supposed to be friends voted in the majority, viz., twenty-six Conservatives, one Liberal Unionist, forty Gladstonian Liberals, thirteen Nationalists.

Further, the absence of many steady friends is also to be noted, due to the snatch nature of the vote, and showing that the division, however instructive, is not decisive of the genuine opinion of the House of Commons.

There is at least one member whose courageous consistency should be fully recognised. When Mr. Haldane placed his resolution on the paper, Mr. de Lisle gave notice to move as an amendment to leave out all after "that" and insert "the exclusion of women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is beneficial to the peace and prosperity of the

State, being in accord with the fundamental principle of the good government of mankind; and that the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies require examination in order to determine whether the legal qualifications of women are in accord with the natural."

Mr. Samuel Smith and Mr. Radcliffe Cooke also gave notices of amendments.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

House of Commons, Thursday, April 30th.

THE BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I wish to put a question to the leader of the House, the answer to which may in a certain sense, I think, possibly tend to shorten the conversation upon the motion which the right hon. gentleman is about to make. First of all, is it his intention to ask for the particular preference he desires to have on behalf of the Irish Land Bill exclusively; and, secondly, is it his intention to apply the power which he seeks to obtain without making any exception in favour of any particular measure, so that it shall be perfectly equal in its application?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I appreciate the spirit in which the right hon. gentleman has put the question. The preference which we ask for has reference to the Irish Land Bill at the present time. We conceive that that Bill should be pressed forward with all reasonable speed. It has unfortunately lagged greatly in Committee during the last few days. I suppose the question of the right hon. gentleman is directed specially to the Wednesdays. So far as other days of the week are concerned, we do not propose to make any exception whatever. The Government do not think it would be possible to make an exception in favour of one motion or proposal without making an exception in favour of others, so far as Wednesdays are concerned. One difficulty in which we are placed is that an hon. gentleman opposite had a motion on the paper for last Friday, and removed it under the impression that I had given a pledge that the 13th of May should be reserved for its consideration. I did not give that pledge. I did not give that pledge unreservedly; I merely stated that, so far as the Government were concerned, they would not propose that there should be an adjournment for Whitsuntide before that Wednesday; and if no unforeseen event occurred they would not propose to take that day. However, it has been translated into a pledge, and therefore I am afraid I should

not be able to take that day for Government business. After Whitsuntide there are Bills of private members which would be in progress, and under Standing Order No. 12 those Bills would be entitled to precedence before any other orders. But it would be a strong measure on my part to deprive those Bills of the position they have obtained until absolute necessity compels me to do so. It would be held to be exercising the rights of the majority rather severely upon hon. gentlemen who had charge of other Bills, and therefore it is not the intention of the Government to take the first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide so far as Bills in progress are concerned. Therefore it comes to this. The proposition of the Government is that the time of the House shall be given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, without reservation, for the Land Purchase Bill. Next Wednesday shall be given for that purpose, but the first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide will not be given until fair progress has been made with the Bills which are in Committee.

Mr. J. STUART asked whether it was open to the right hon. gentleman to reconsider the decision to take next Wednesday, when a most important Bill was down.

Mr. BRYCE inquired whether, seeing the right hon. gentleman took a night in February last, on which he had a motion down with reference to the access to mountains in Scotland, he did not intend to make an exception now in favour of that motion, which was down for May 8.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: It would, I think, be more convenient that I should enter into these questions, in regard to which I have had more notices than one, when I make the motion for precedence. I express my regret if by any motion of mine I have deprived the right hon. gentleman of any opportunity of bringing forward his motion.

The SPEAKER then, upon formal notice from the First Lord of the Treasury, proceeded to read the motion on the paper, but, in response to Opposition cries of "Move,"

Mr. W. H. SMITH again rose and moved, "That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday the House do meet at 3 o'clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all orders of the day and notices of motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday, if it be appointed for that day." He then proceeded to describe the obstruction to which the Irish Land Purchase Bill had been subject.

Mr. GLADSTONE, after commenting on the general business affected by the motion, added: There is only one other point on which I wish to say a word, and that is with regard to the reference which the right hon. gentleman made to me in connection with next Wednesday. He said that if I expressed a certain opinion with regard to next Wednesday he would not be disposed to take it. I am disposed to speak in the opposite sense. If the right hon. gentleman thinks it necessary to interfere with the course of business in the House and with the rights of private members, particularly in circumstances so remarkable as these, when he has taken

the night of the motion of my hon. friend the member for Aberdeen, in which so much interest is taken in Scotland, in my opinion his only safety is to insist on that on which he has often insisted on previous occasions, and to be perfectly uniform in the application of his rule. I do not look to the contents of the Bills, or to anything that may be called a matter of immediate urgency which I might conceive would be a possible subject for exception, but, taking these measures as measures, they are all well entitled to discussion, and I think the motion of my hon. friend the member for Aberdeen is better entitled than any other motion, on account of what has formerly happened. I may press on her Majesty's Government that they should not make two bites at a cherry, but should make a fair and uniform practice, and therefore avoid all occasion for giving ground for special complaint on the part of those who may be interested in any particular measure.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Am I to understand that the right hon. gentleman is inviting me to take all Wednesdays after Whitsuntide?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I thought that we were discussing absolutely the question of all days until Whitsuntide, and then after that of the days on which the Land Purchase Bill was down.

Mr. LABOUCHERE, who was received with ironical cheers, said that as the right hon. gentleman was in a somewhat prophetic mood as to what was going to take place in the present year, he was sorry that he had not said when there was going to be a dissolution. With regard to the motion of the right hon. gentleman, it seemed to him that he was always expected to play lamb to the right hon. gentleman's wolf. The right hon. gentleman turned on him as if he were the *fons et origo* of all obstruction in the House. In one sense he was—in the right sense of the word obstruction. The Conservative party and Ministers had extraordinary notions as to the duties of that House. He further objected to the proposal of the Government to take the time of private members, because it introduced a new element into the demands on the public time. By means of it Ministers were able to say in effect what Bills they approved or disapproved. They would take one Wednesday when Bills which they disapproved were to be brought on, but not the next, because then a Bill favoured by their supporters was to be brought on—a Bill about female franchise or some folly of that sort. In those matters let them at least be fair. What was sauce for the gander was sauce for the goose also. Let the Government take all the Wednesdays or none.

Mr. BRYCE moved an amendment to except Friday, the 8th of May, from the operation of the resolution. He said he could understand the action of the right hon. gentleman if it had been uniform, but to select days in a particular way and practically in favour of particular Bills was scarcely fair to the House. He should not have moved his amendment if the right hon. gentleman had taken all the time of private members, and if he had not intimated that the Government would not take Wednesday, the 13th; but under the circumstances he felt bound in duty to his constituents and to the people of Scotland to take the course he had done.

Mr. COURTNEY said the hon. member for Aberdeen had candidly confessed that his principal motive of action was to except Wednesday, the 13th of May, not that he loved the Access to Mountains Bill so much as he hated the Women's Franchise Bill.

Mr. BRYCE said that what he stated was that he desired absolute equality in the matter.

Mr. COURTNEY said the hon. member distinctly stated that he should not have moved his amendment if the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had not intimated that he would not take Wednesday, the 13th. Therefore, he had not unfairly interpreted what the hon. member said. Now, as to the question that was to come on on the 13th of May. Last Friday week the first notice of amendment on going into Committee of Supply stood in the name of the hon. member for Haddington relative to the political disabilities of women. That could not have been brought on if the Bill of the 13th of May still stood on the paper, and it was a question with those members interested in the subject whether that motion should be proceeded with or whether the chance of the 13th of May should be retained. A deputation went to the right hon. gentleman to ascertain the intentions of the Government with respect to that day, and the right hon. gentleman had frankly repeated what he said to the deputation—that it was not intended to adjourn the House before the 13th of May, and that in the absence of unforeseen circumstances the Government had no intention to take that day. Well, had anything unforeseen happened?

Mr. LABOUCHERE.—Yes, surely. The First Lord of the Treasury bases his claim to the days of private members on the fact that the unforeseen has happened—that the Land Purchase Bill is obstructed.

Mr. COURTNEY said that had not happened since the time referred to, and was not unforeseen. On all grounds it was impossible for the right hon. gentleman to depart now from the engagement he had made. The engagement of the right hon. gentleman was known to every member of the House; it was known to the hon. member for Northampton. Before sitting down he would like to say that his right hon. friend was a little obscure with respect to the Wednesdays subsequent to Whitsuntide. With regard to Bills which had been considered before Whitsuntide, which had passed a second reading, and which were set down for progress after Whitsuntide, if the opportunity of further progress was taken away they would put a stop to all legislation by private members and would make such legislation before Whitsuntide a farce. He entirely agreed with the right hon. gentleman as to the necessity of reserving those Wednesdays for such Bills. He protested against the contention of the hon. member for Northampton and the hon. member for Aberdeen that Wednesday, the 13th, should be taken.

The SPEAKER reminded the House that the amendment before it was a limited one.

Sir H. JAMES appealed to the member for Aberdeen to withdraw his amendment, and he would then ask leave to amend the motion so that it should read after the word "Bill," in the last line but one, "shall also have precedence on Wednesdays until said Bill has passed through Committee of the House."

Mr. BRYCE said that on that understanding he was willing to withdraw his amendment.

Sir H. JAMES said that if there were any ambiguity in the views of the hon. member for Aberdeen, there was no ambiguity in those of the right hon. gentleman the Chairman of Committees. Whatever might be the inconvenience to members of that House, and however desirable it might be that their time should be occupied by useful legislation, all that, according to the right hon. gentleman, ought to give way to what would be an abstract discussion on the right of female suffrage. The effect of the amendment which he begged leave to move was that until the Irish Land Bill passed through Committee all the Wednesdays should be taken up by that Bill. In that case they might hope that the Bill would be through Committee before the Whitsuntide recess, and if it were fewer Wednesdays would be taken by the Government after Whitsuntide. Anything which should interfere with the progress of that Bill through Committee would be detrimental to the public interest. What did the right hon. gentleman the Chairman of Committees ask? He asked that the Bill should be suspended, and that precedence should be given to the second reading of the Bill for conferring the suffrage upon women. Did the right hon. gentleman hope that there was any possibility of that Bill passing through the House? The House had still to deal with the Bill for marriage of a diseased wife's sister, with the Rating of Machinery Bill, with the Bill which would give a close time for hares. All those Bills had vested interests, and ought to be dealt with practically by the House. If they now said that they would not take away the Wednesday in question, but would give it for the pleasure of hearing the eloquence of his right hon. friend they must take more days after Whitsuntide, and all for an abstract proposition which they had already discussed eight or ten times in that House. There was only one argument which had been used in favour of that course—namely, that the right hon. gentleman had given a pledge. But this was a question for the House itself. They had to consider how they should best do what was useful for carrying on the public business. They should not be able to leave that House in the month of July if these days were not taken, and the Session would have to be further prolonged. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the House did not anticipate when he gave what had been called a pledge that eleven days would have been taken up with three clauses of the Irish Land Bill. He begged to move the amendment.

Viscount WOLMER said that the First Lord of the Treasury stated that he did not intend to move the adjournment of the House before the 13th of May, and that he would not take that day for the business of the Government unless some "wholly unforeseen emergency" had arisen. He would like to ask if any wholly unforeseen emergency had since arisen.

Sir W. HARCOURT said he did not know what the leader of the House would do. The right hon. gentleman was asking the House to make a sacrifice of its time for the purpose of carrying the Irish Land Bill through Committee. With regard to the pledge which had been referred to, the right hon. gentleman said that he had not

given a pledge, and it was a curious thing that a man should be bound, not by what he acknowledged to be a pledge, but by what other people understood to be a pledge. He thought that the proposal of the right hon. member for Bury was one which they ought to accept. The arrangement that all Wednesdays should be taken need hardly be broken into for the grand field day of the right hon. member for Liskeard and the noble lord the member for the Petersfield Division, whom in other circumstances they would be even more pleased to hear on the subject of female suffrage than they would be to hear the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. COURTNEY.—Why?

Sir W. HARCOURT.—He is younger.

Mr. W. H. SMITH trusted that the House would not consider it necessary to prolong the debate. The question before them was a very narrow one. It was whether the understanding that had been come to with reference to May 13th should or should not be observed. For himself he felt bound not to depart from that understanding, but it was for the House to decide what course should be taken.

Mr. WOODALL thanked the First Lord of the Treasury for the loyalty with which he had adhered to the understanding with reference to May 13th. He suggested that, as there were now only two Wednesdays before Whitsuntide, it would be just and equitable to exclude them from the operation of the resolution.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said that, in answer to a question addressed to him by the right hon. member for Mid Lothian, he had expressed willingness to forego Wednesdays altogether, but since his doing so the Wednesdays had been pressed upon the Government, and those who were responsible for the conduct of public business could hardly refrain from accepting facilities of that kind when they were offered.

Mr. HALDANE complained that if May 13th were taken by the Government it would be unfair treatment, for he had abstained last Friday from moving his resolution on female suffrage on the understanding that the Bill dealing with the subject would come up for discussion on Wednesday, the 13th.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS protested against the proposal to take May 6th, for which day the Town Holdings Bill stood at present as the first order.

The House then divided on Sir H. James's amendment, when there voted—

For the amendment	218
Against	159
Majority	—59

There was much cheering when the Clerk placed the voting paper in Sir Henry James's hand and the figures were announced.

A consequential amendment to strike out the words at the end of the motion, "if it be appointed on that day," was accepted by Mr. W. H. Smith and agreed to.

THE DIVISION LIST.

Thursday, 30th April, 1891.

Numb. 162.—Business of the House (Proceedings on the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill.—Motion made, and Question proposed, “That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday, the House do meet at Three o’clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday if it be appointed for that day;”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*:)—

Amendment proposed, in line 5, after the word “Wednesday,” to insert the words “until it shall have passed through Committee:”—(*Sir Henry James*:)—

Question put, “That those words be there inserted:”—The House *divided*; Ayes 218, Noes 159.

AYES.

Abraham, Wm. (Glamorgan).	Campbell, Sir Arch. (Renfrewsh.).
Abraham, William (Limerick).	Campbell, Sir Geo. (Kirkcaldy).
Asher, Alexander.	Campbell-Bannerman, Rt. Hn. H.
Austin, John.	Carew, James Laurence.
Bailey, Sir Joseph R.	Cavan, Earl of.
Baird, John George Alexander.	Colman, Jeremiah James.
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.).	Crawford, Donald.
Balfour, J. Spencer (Burnley).	Cremer, William Randal.
Ballantine, Wm. Henry Walter.	Crilly, Daniel.
Barclay, James William.	Davenport, W. Bromley.
Baring, Viscount.	Davey, Sir Horace.
Barnes, Alfred.	Dawnay, Col. Hon. L. P.
Barran, John.	Deasy, John.
Baumann, Arthur Antony.	De Lisle, Edwin.
Beckett, Ernest William.	Dickson, Thomas A. (Dublin).
Bickford-Smith, William.	Dillwyn, Lewis Llewelyn.
Bigwood, James.	Donkin, Richard Sim.
Blane, Alexander.	Duff, Robert William.
Blundell, Col. Hen. Blundell H.	Duncan, James Archibald.
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford.	Elcho, Lord.
Bolton, Jos. Cheney (Stirlingsh.).	Elliot, Hn. Art. R. D. (Roxburghs.).
Bowles, Capt. Henry Ferryman.	Elliot, Geo. Wm. (Yorks, N.R.).
Bright, John A. (Birmingham).	Esslemont, Peter.
Bristowe, Thomas Lynn.	Evans, Francis H. (Southampton).
Brown, Alex. H. (Salop).	Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan).
Bruce, Gainsford (Finsbury).	Evershed, Sydney.
Brunner, John Tomlinson.	Ewing, Sir Archibald Orr.
Bryce, James.	Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith).
Burdett-Coutts, W.	Finch, George H.
Burghley, Lord.	Fisher, William Hayes.
Buxton, Sydney Charles.	Fitzgerald, J. Gubbins (Longford).
Caldwell, J.	Fitzwilliam, Hon. W. H. W.

Fletcher, Sir Henry.	Lloyd-George, David.
Flynn, James Christopher.	Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine.
Foljambe, Cecil G. S.	Long, Walter Hume.
Fowler, Rt. Hn. H. H. (Wolverh'n).	Lyell, Leonard.
Fry, Theodore (Darlington).	Macartney, W. G. Ellison.
Fulton, James Forrest.	MacInnes, Miles.
Furness, Christopher.	Maclean, James Mackenzie.
Gardner, Herbert.	M'Calmont, Capt. James.
Gathorne-Hardy, Hn. J. S. (Kent).	M'Cartan, Michael.
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E.	M'Carthy, Justin (Londonderry).
Gladstone, Herbert J. (Leeds).	M'Ewan, William.
Goldsmid, Sir Julian.	Maguire, James Rochfort.
Gower, Geo. Granville Leveson.	Mahony, Pierce.
Hall, Sir Charles (Cambridgesh.).	Malcolm, Col. John Wingfield.
Halsey, Thomas Frederick.	Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe.
Hanbury, Robert William.	Marjoribanks, Rt. Hon. Edward.
Hanbury-Tracy, Hon. F. S. A.	Maskelyne, M. H. Story.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir William.	Mildmay, Francis Bingham.
Hardcastle, Edward (Salford).	Milvain, Thomas.
Hardcastle, Frank (Lanc. S.E.).	More, Robert Jasper.
Havelock-Allan, Sir Henry M.	Morgan, Rt. Hn. G. O. (Denbighs.).
Heath, Arthur Raymond.	Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen).
Heneage, Rt. Hon. Edward.	Morgan, W. Pritchard (Merthyr).
Hinckes, Harry Tichborne.	Morley, Arnold (Nottingham).
Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead).	Morley, Rt. Hon. J. (Newcastle).
Howard, Joseph.	Morrison, Walter.
Howell, George.	Morton, Alpheus Cleophas.
Hunter, Wm. Alex. (Aberdeen).	Mowbray, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Oxf. U.).
Illingworth, Alfred.	Mowbray, R. G. C. (Lanc. S.E.).
Isaacs, Lewis Henry.	Muncaster, Lord.
Jarvis, Alexander Weston.	Neville, Ralph.
Joicey, James.	Newark, Viscount.
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.	O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary).
Keay, John Seymour.	O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal).
Kennaway, Sir John Henry.	O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool).
Kimber, Henry.	Oldroyd, Mark.
King, Henry Seymour (Hull).	O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E. (Roch.).	Paget, Sir Richard Horner.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. (Kent).	Palmer, Sir Charles Mark.
Knox, Edmund Francis Vesey.	Parker, Hon. Francis (Oxfordsh.).
Labouchere, Henry.	Paulton, James Mellor.
Lafone, Alfred.	Pease, Alfred E. (York).
Lane, William John.	Pease, Henry Fell (Yorks. N.R.).
Laurie, Col. Robert Peter.	Picton, James Allanson.
Lawrence, Sir Trevor (Surrey).	Playfair, Rt. Hon. Sir Lyon.
Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool).	Powell, Francis Sharp.
Lea, Thomas (Londonderry).	Priestley, Briggs.
Lees, Elliott.	Reed, Sir Edw. James (Cardiff).
Lefevre, Rt. Hon. George Shaw.	Reid, Robt. Threshie (Dumfries).
Leighton, Stanley.	Rendel, Stuart.
Leng, John.	Ridley, Sir Matthew White.
Lewis, Thomas P. (Anglesey).	Roberts, John (Flint Burghs).

Robertson, Edmund (Dundee).
 Robinson, Thomas (Gloucester).
 Roe, Thomas.
 Rothschild, Baron F. James de.
 Rowlands, James (Finsbury).
 Russell, Sir George (Berkshire).
 Samuelson, Sir B. (Oxford, N.).
 Sexton, Thomas.
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew).
 Sheehan, Jeremiah Daniel.
 Sidebottom, T. Harrop (Stalybr.).
 Sidebottom, William (Derbysh.).
 Sinclair, William Pirrie.
 Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.).
 Spencer, Hn. C. R. (Northampton).
 Stack, John.
 Stewart, Halley (Lincolnshire).
 Stokes, Sir George Gabriel.
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath).
 Sullivan, T. D. (Dublin).
 Sutherland, A. (Sutherlandsh.).
 Tanner, Charles Kearns.
 Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr).
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray.
 Trevelyan, Rt. Hn. Sir Geo. Otto.
 Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Henry James and Colonel Saunderson.

NOES.

Ainslie, William George.
 Allison, Robert Andrew.
 Allsopp, Hon. Geo. (Worcester).
 Allsopp, Hon. Percy (Taunton).
 Anstruther, H. T. (St. Andrews).
 Anstruther, Col. Lloyd (Suffolk).
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Ellis.
 Baden-Powell, Sir Geo. Smyth.
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r).
 Balfour, Gerald William (Leeds).
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Bazley-White, J.
 Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants.).
 Beaufof, Mark Hanbury.
 Bentineck, Lord H. C. (Norfolk).
 Bethell, Commander.
 Biddulph, Michael.
 Birkbeck, Sir Edward.
 Birrell, Augustine.
 Boord, Thomas William.
 Bridgeman, Col. Hon. Francis C.
 Brodrick, Hon. St. John.
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn.
 Tuite, James.
 Vivian, Sir Henry Hussey.
 Wallace, Robert.
 Waring, Col. Thomas.
 Watson, James.
 Watt, Hugh.
 Wayman, Thomas.
 Webb, Alfred.
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras).
 Wharton, John Lloyd.
 Whitley, Edward.
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon.
 Wiggin, Henry.
 Will, John Shiress.
 Williams, Joseph Powell- (Birm.).
 Williamson, J. (Lanc. N.).
 Williamson, Steph. (Kilm'nock).
 Wilson, Charles Henry (Hull).
 Wilson, John (Lanark).
 Wilson, Sir Samuel (Portsmouth).
 Winterbotham, Arthur Brend.
 Wodehouse, Edmund Robert.
 Wroughton, Philip.
 Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong.
 Young, Charles Edward Baring.

Ellis, Sir J. Whittaker (Surrey).
 Farquharson, Dr. R. (Aberd'sh.).
 Feilden, Lieut.-Gen. (Lanc. N.).
 Fellowes, Ailwyn Edward.
 Fenwick, Charles.
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manch'r).
 Forwood, Arthur Bower.
 Fowler, Sir Robert N. (London).
 Fraser, Gen. Charles Craufurd.
 Gedge, Sydney.
 Giles, Alfred.
 Godson, Augustus Frederick.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General.
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon.
 Goschen, Rt. Hon. Geo. Joachim.
 Grimston, Viscount.
 Grove, Sir Thomas Fraser.
 Gunter, Colonel.
 Gurdon, Robert Thornhagh.
 Haldane, Richard Burdon.
 Hamilton, Col. Chas. E. (South'k).
 Harland, Sir Edward James.
 Heathcote, Captain Edwards.
 Herbert, Hon. Sidney.
 Hill, Rt. Hn. Lord Arthur (Down).
 Hill, Col. Edwd. Stock (Bristol).
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich).
 Holloway, George.
 Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry.
 Howorth, Henry Hoyle.
 Hozier, James Henry Cecil.
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin.
 Hunt, Frederick Seager.
 Hunter, Sir Guyer (Hackney).
 Isaacson, Frederick Wootton.
 Jackson, Rt. Hon. Wm. Lawies.
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick.
 Johnston, William.
 Kenyon, Hon. George Thomas.
 Knightley, Sir Rainald.
 Leahy, James (Kildare).
 Lechmere, Sir Edmund A. H.
 Legh, Thos. Wodehouse (Lanc.).
 Lennox, Lord Walter C. Gordon.
 Lewisham, Viscount.
 Llewellyn, Evan Henry.
 Lockwood, Frank.
 Low, Malcolm.
 Lowther, Hn. Wm. (Westm'land).
 Lymington, Viscount.
 Mackintosh, Charles Frazer.
 Maclure, John William.
 M'Donald, Dr. Roderick.
 M'Lagan, Peter.
 M'Laren, Walter S. B.
 Madden, Dodgson Hamilton.
 Marriott, Rt. Hon. Sir W. T.
 Matthews, Rt. Hon. Henry.
 Maxwell, Sir Herbert E.
 Montagu, Samuel.
 Morgan (Octavius V. Battersea).
 Morrell, George Herbert.
 Mount, William George.
 Mulholland, Henry Lyle.
 Murdoch, Charles Townshend.
 Nolan, Colonel (Galway, N.).
 Norris, Edward Samuel.
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford.
 Norton, Robert.
 Pearson, Sir Charles John.
 Pelly, Sir Lewis.
 Philipps, John Wynford.
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare.
 Plowden, Sir William Chichele.
 Plunket, Rt. Hon. David R.
 Pomfret, William Pomfret.
 Price, Captain (Devonport).
 Rankin, James.
 Reed, Henry Byron (Bradford).
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson.
 Robertson, Rt. Hon. J. P. B. (Bute).
 Robinson, Brooke (Dudley).
 Round, James.
 Rountree, Joshua.
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone).
 Selwyn, Capt. Charles William.
 Smith, Abel (Herts).
 Smith, Rt. Hn. Wm. H. (Strand).
 Stanhope, Rt. Hn. E. (Lincolnsh.).
 Summers, William.
 Sykes, Christopher.
 Talbot, John Gilbert.
 Taylor, Francis.
 Temple, Sir Richard.
 Theobald, James.
 Thorburn, Walter.
 Tyler, Sir Henry Whatley.
 Vernon, Hon. Greville Richard.
 Vincent, Chas. Edw. Howard.
 Walsh, Hn. Arthur Henry John.
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight).
 West, W. Cornwallis.
 Weston, Sir Joseph Dodge.
 Weymouth, Viscount.

Williams Arthur (Glamorgan).	Woodall, William.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.).	Wortley, Charles Beilby Stuart.
Winn, Hon. Rowland.	Wright, Caleb (Lanc. S. W.)
Wolmer, Viscount.	Wright, H. Smith (Nottingham).
Wood, Nicholas.	

Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Akers-Douglas and Sir William Walrond.

CONVERSAZIONE.

In view of the expected debate on May 13th, a conversazione was arranged to take place in the galleries of the Royal Institution of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly, on the evening of Monday, 11th. Invitations were issued to supporters of Mr. Woodall's Bill, in the names of the following ladies, who kindly consented to form a Reception Committee:—The Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtenay, Mrs. Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Miss Davenport-Hill, Lady Lethbridge, Lady Matheson, Mrs. Penrose FitzGerald, the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Westlake, the Lady Maude Wolmer. Amongst the earliest arrivals were, the Lady Frances Balfour, Dr. Storey (of Roseneath), Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Davies, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Mr. Anderson, the Misses Anderson, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtney, Lord and Lady George Campbell, Lady Matheson, Major and Mrs. Houston, Mr. and Mrs. Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, Miss Garrett, Miss Gurney, Mr. McLaren, M.P., Mr. Woodall, M.P., Mr. and Mrs. Moberley Bell, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, Mr. and Miss Amos, Miss Dorothea Roberts, Mrs. Shaen, Mrs. Rowland Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Stopes, Colonel Wintle, Mrs. Miller Morrison, Mr. B. Blackburn, Mrs. Rowe Bennett, Miss Catherine Drew, Mr. Atkins, Mrs. H. W. Lawrence, and Mrs. Coffey, Mrs. Bateson, Mrs. Bathurst, Mrs. and Miss Henn Collins, Mrs. Culme Seymour, Captain James, Mr. Clutton, Miss Edith Phillott, Miss McKerlie, Miss A. E. Bell, Miss Gertrude Andrews, Mr. Tod, Misses Hill, Mrs. Earnshaw, Miss Ellaby, M.D., Miss Spring Rice, Misses Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. Shore Smith, Miss Hubbard, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Miss Cicely Philipps, Miss L. M. Wilkinson, Miss F. R. Wilkinson, Miss Greenhill, Lady Weston, Miss Zimmerman, Mr. and the Lady Ida Lowe, Mrs. Gerald Wellesley, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Watt, Miss Vernon, Mrs. and Miss Sterling, Mr. Stone and Miss Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Stanger, Mrs. S. W. Rea, Miss Eccles, Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Pease, Major and Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. W. Debenham, Miss M. H. Hart, Mrs. Kyllmann, Misses Vernon Harcourt, Miss Robson, Mrs. Alexander Ross, Mrs. Mylne, Miss Walker, M.D., Mr. and Miss Dryhurst, Mr. F. E. Garrett, &c., &c.

Letters regretting unavoidable absence were received from the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mr. Rankin, M.P., Sir Albert Rollit, M.P., &c. Lady Maude Wolmer was prevented by

illness from being present, also Miss Tod, Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., Misses Davenport-Hill, and several others.

The Committee had, in the first instance, contemplated a gathering mainly social in character, but after the change wrought in the political position by the division on Sir Henry James' amendment on April 30th, it was determined to introduce a more political element, and speeches were accordingly arranged to be given between ten and eleven o'clock in the Eastern Gallery, by Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., the Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, D.D., Mr. McLaren, M.P., and Mr. Woodall, M.P.

Mr. McLAREN was voted to the chair, and after reviewing the circumstances by which the Bill had been set aside, he went on to say it was of course open to the House of Commons to discuss, or decline to discuss, any measure that might come before it, but no measure had been treated with such injustice as this one—despite all the efforts their friends could put forth. Two years before, when a debate was expected, they had been cheated out of their day by a conspiracy between the Radicals, Mr. Labouchere being chief intriguer, and the Conservatives' Whips. This year it had not been possible for the intriguers to enter into negotiations with the Government, because Mr. W. H. Smith had given an assurance to the deputation of ladies who had waited on him, that the day for second reading should not be absorbed. They had been obliged, therefore, to adopt more open proceedings, and attention had thus been drawn to the manner in which the Women's Suffrage party had been cheated.

Many members though in favour of the measure, had not the courage to oppose its being set aside. They tried to get all they could from women and would give nothing in return. If women would take a bold stand, and make it clear to candidates and members that they would not receive their help unless they pledged themselves to support Women's Suffrage they would, in a year or two, have the fulfilment of their hopes. But so long as it was treated only in an academic way, they would be cheated in the future as they had been in the past. He trusted that all women interested in this subject would do their best so to organise in the constituencies as to press this matter forward at every election.

The LADY FRANCES BALFOUR being then called upon to speak, said she did not know why she should be asked to speak first, unless it were because she was the youngest of the recruits. In a lively manner she described the fears that were felt when it was known that the Government intended to take private members days, how Mr. W. H. Smith stated that he had given something in the nature of a pledge that the 13th should not be taken, and now after all the day for the Suffrage Bill was lost. When they considered the position the question occupied now and compared it with that it occupied fifteen years ago, they had no cause for anything but cheerfulness. They had only to go straight forward, for they had come to be regarded seriously: they had only to go on trying to strengthen members of Parliament, and in a short time they would gain all they wanted.

Mr. WOODALL, M.P., after some preliminary comments on the

fate of the Bill, went on to say that now they must dismiss all illusions. They had been accustomed to think of Women's Suffrage as having been voted for on its own merits. They had seen women taking their part so well in Municipal elections, School Board and Poor Law Guardian work, that if by a stroke of the pen their work and influence could be eliminated it would be to annul a great power from among the motive forces which are now being brought to bear on the administrative work of the day and on social problems. They had taken it for granted that the battle was over when they might count on a majority in the present Parliament. Thus a fallacious opinion had grown up that the academic feeling in favour of their claim was strong enough to assure them a vote of the majority of the House. It was only of recent years that all political parties had come to acknowledge the importance of the co-operation of women, yet all had misgivings, lest they should spoil their calculations by the introduction of this new element. They needed to impress members with the conviction that women are in earnest; that they desire the vote for the uses they can put it to. They must make earnest effort. He believed there was a general feeling even amongst opponents that their ultimate triumph was certain.

Mrs. GARRETT ANDERSON, who was very cordially received, said she wished to express how very important she thought the present crisis to be. They must throw their hearts into this work if they meant to bring it to a successful issue. People were not yet sufficiently convinced that women do care for this thing. A great deal of activity ought to be their's before the next general election, and she would be glad to see a large sum raised, for propagandism is expensive. When they heard a person like Mr. Labouchere say that the suffrage is no more likely to be given to women than to rabbits, that ought to be brought up against him on every occasion. It was a scandal for a man who called himself a man to say such a thing.

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT said that it was in 1870 that the Women's Suffrage Bill was first introduced into Parliament, and there were some present that evening who had never ceased to work for the question during that long period of years. In the early days of the movement they had endured the scoff and sneers of opponents with becoming meekness. They were supported by the belief that they had got hold of a truth which, in the progress of events, would have to be acknowledged. They had seen political power gradually extended to thousands of "capable" illiterate men. Statesmen had now to reckon with a vast unwieldy electorate swayed by emotion and sentiment, and in their difficulties they were entreating women to lend their aid to lead and guide this incalculable host. Women having no voice in forming the laws were asked to help to form the ideas of the new law makers. No longer were politics outside women's sphere. If women, to quote Mr. Gladstone, have "a real part to play in Party politics," then it was clear that the bottom had been knocked out of all the arguments, ancient and modern, against giving them responsible political power. The women who are asking for the franchise are the only voters representing property who are left outside the

Constitution. They are already included in the local electoral roll, and when added to the Parliamentary register they would bring some balance of intelligence to set against the ignorance that abounded. She believed that the votes of women would be on the side of strong Government, on the side of law and order, of religion and morality. They asked for the franchise for women because they believed it would add a new power and virtue to the State, and that in the future, as in the past, every act which helped to raise the status of women would add to the well-being of the world.

The Rev. DONALD FRASER was next asked to address the audience, and began by saying that this was his maiden speech on the subject, though he had been a convinced adherent for over twenty years. His profession had taken him from political discussions, yet in his quiet room he had often felt indignant that a question of such importance should be balked year by year by provoking delays, nor did he think it creditable to men that it had to be pressed so much. He had no fear that its supporters would lose heart or hope, for as it has been said, "our desires are increased by our difficulties."

It is the voice of the dunce that says "women do not understand public affairs," the dunce is afraid of the woman who has enlarged her mind by these questions. The real objection is that men think women very dangerous persons. They are so easily humbugged, men say, and so fond of hobbies. But that is about the most incorrect fallacy they can utter. Women are not so sentimental as men, for they are much more practical, and in so far as they have been intrusted with the public affairs of the country it is not they who have set up fads and hobbies. This question was not one that should be only pushed by women; men should push it also. Women, when they have the power of the vote, would see through a good many men who are cajoling the masses. They would put their bodkins into a good many windbags. It would not be possible to subtract from the number of voters, but it would be possible to make a wise and reasonable addition, one that would bring intelligence and a new point of view into the whole sphere of politics, and would help the moral amelioration of the people.

Mrs. FAWCETT then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and the company, which had collected during the speeches in the Eastern Gallery, dispersed through the various rooms, taking leave towards midnight.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Times.

"The Woman's Franchise Bill belongs to a class of measures which are a scandal to representative institutions—measures which, by the insistence of a noisy and importunate minority acting upon the cowardice and flabbiness of candidates for seats in the House of Commons, gradually secure the perfunctory support of numbers who

are thoroughly opposed to them, and sometimes become law in defiance of the true opinion of the House and the country. Men in quest of seats are addicted to the immoral practice of promising their support to measures which they know to be bad, and of soothing their conscience with the argument that the measures are too bad ever to pass. There is no measure too bad or too ridiculous to be passed by an Assembly in which this form of dishonesty is prevalent. A moment arrives when the number of those who are bound by these dissolute pledges becomes so great that the obstacle in which they put their trust, even while doing all that lay in their own power to overthrow it, is finally swept away. This is bad enough even in matters of minor importance. But in this country we have no written Constitution and no organic statutes of any kind. Nothing is safe from a chance vote of the House of Commons, and, unless that House is inspired by a high sense of public duty, the tactics we have described may be as easily used to effect the most profound as the most superficial changes. The admission of women to equal political power with men is a wild experiment from which the most advanced democracies in all ages have shrunk. Yet to that experiment we are so nearly committed, in the teeth of reason, experience, and the sober conviction of an overwhelming majority, that the House of Commons is glad to snatch at the somewhat ignominious expedient of preventing the question from being put to the vote."

Globe.

"Women's Franchise is not a burning question, but it is of very much more importance, in respect both of justice and of expediency, than many which emulate temporary volcanoes; and to treat it as an intrusion upon the serious business of the country is to virtually admit ignorance of its whole character and bearing. Moreover, a considerable number of pledges have been given that it shall be fairly considered; and we do not take for granted that election pledges are made only to be broken, or else given under the tacit condition that the measure in respect of which they are given shall have no chance of becoming law. Mr. W. H. Smith only gave evidence of his care for the reputation of the House, as well as of his right estimate of a great question when he insisted upon giving advocates of women's suffrage their single opportunity during the present session. For once, the temper of the House of Commons appears to be sufficiently cool and unpreoccupied to consider it on its merits; and—though such appearances are deceptive—it is regrettable that the opportunity should have been refused."

Pall Mall Gazette.

"The great movement which is teaching women to think, and enabling them to act, for themselves, which is encouraging them to possess character and individuality, and to put those qualities into careers, will but receive a slender tributary when a Woman's Suffrage Bill is read for the third time and has sustained but little check from yesterday's jockeying.

"Meanwhile, there is one practical good which should arise from

yesterday's double shuffle. It ought to teach the Liberal lady politicians that they are being humbugged; that from the Liberal Party, as a party, they, as women, have nothing to look for."

Western Morning News.

"Women already vote for Municipal Councils, for Boards of Guardians, and for School Boards. Nobody has suggested that they have unsexed themselves. But when it is proposed that the Parliamentary privilege shall be extended to them, then the bulk of the Liberal Party will not so much as discuss the matter. So much the worse for the Liberal Party. If the Conservatives are to have on their side all that is most intelligent and aspiring amongst educated English women, we may depend upon it that the Conservative Party will soon be moved by yet stronger and stronger desires for social improvement, and that in the end it will become popular by good deeds which can never be extinguished. Services like those performed by the main body of the Conservatives last night towards women will be paid, not so much by women's support, as by women's influence. We wish we could claim more Liberal Unionists, but we have some of the best of them."

Punch.

"*Thursday.*—A pretty little game on to-night. OLD MORALITY moved his Resolution taking power to appropriate Tuesdays and Fridays evening sittings, and all Wednesdays for Irish Land Bill. In ordinary circumstances there would have been stormy protest led from Front Opposition Bench against this inroad on time of private Members. Other fish to fry to-night. Wednesday week assigned for Second Reading of Woman's Suffrage Bill; if Government take that day for Irish Land Bill, obviously can't be utilised for furtherance of Woman's Rights. This is an awkward question for some Members; don't like it, but daren't vote against it. Here's opportunity of getting rid of it by side-wind. Not necessary in arranging proceedings to mention Suffrage Bill, or even Wednesday, 13th of May. It was principle for which Members struggled; the 'principle of uniformity,' as Mr. G. beautifully put it. 'Let us,' he said, though perhaps not quite in this phrase, 'go the whole hog or none; take all the Wednesdays, or leave them.'

"Pretty to see OLD MORALITY protesting against this unprecedented access of generosity. The very picture, as MCEWAN said, of a good man struggling with the adversity of overwhelming good fortune. Was prepared to take a Wednesday here and there; but, really, too much to appropriate every one. 'Not at all—not at all,' said Mr. G.

"But it was only under compulsion of a Division that he consented to accept the endowment. In meanwhile, the Woman's Suffrage debate on Wednesday week snuffed out, and final opportunity of Session lost.

"'I'm inclined,' said WM. WOODALL, 'as a rule, to take kindly views of my fellow men, to put the best construction upon their actions; but, upon my word, I'm not satisfied in my own mind that

we advocates of Woman's Rights have not been made the victims of deep and dastardly design.'

"'Order! Order!' said COURTNEY; 'no more am I.'
"Business done.—Woman's Rights men dished."

Truth.

"Had the House of Commons had an opportunity to vote upon the proposal, the ladies would have discovered that the Legislature is as likely to give them votes as to give votes to rabbits, for it would have been defeated by a very large majority."

Methodist Times.

"The way in which the House of Commons sneaked out of the necessity of recording its opinion for or against the Female Franchise Bill was not creditable to the male sex. If Members of Parliament do not believe in extending the vote to women, let them at least have the courage to say so, and then we shall know where we are. It is to be feared that some advocates of the Female Suffrage have imperilled their cause by making extreme demands. Not satisfied with giving votes to such women as are ratepayers, they wish to confer the vote upon every woman at once, which would effect at a stroke such a complete revolution in the distribution of political power that even the friends of the gradual recognition of Female Suffrage might hesitate to concede it. The frequently expressed argument that the vote should be resisted on the ground that all women are Conservatives is too contemptible for discussion. If women are entitled to the suffrage the way they are likely to vote has nothing to do with it. As to the argument that they are likely to be influenced by the parsons, it comes with ill grace from men who have been often influenced by the publicans, and of the two we prefer the parsons. We quite admit that the question is a grave one, but it ought to be discussed on its merits and not meanly dismissed by a side wind."

Speaker.

"Certain forms of female suffrage are already in force in this country, and practical politicians have had an opportunity of seeing for themselves how they answer. It is true that the extension of the franchise to women which has already taken place is in itself unobjectionable. But the equity of the change which gave certain women a vote in municipal affairs is independent of the manner in which they have used that vote. Unfortunately experience has taught all who are concerned in municipal elections that the working of the female franchise has not been satisfactory. Whether rightly or wrongly, the fact remains that the great majority of female voters have the strangest dislike for independence. There are, of course, striking exceptions to the rule; but these exceptions only seem to make the rule more conspicuous. The majority of the ladies who now enjoy a vote in municipal affairs vote as they are told. That is to say, they place themselves in the hands of some trusted friend, and their ballot-paper is marked as that friend advises. By-and-by this may all be changed; the idea of the independence of

woman, which now possesses so strongly the minds of a few, may permeate the whole mass of the female sex. But clearly that is not the case at present, and will hardly be the case for a generation to come. What happens now is that certain favoured persons—clergymen being conspicuous among their number—though they are not allowed a plurality of wives, are permitted to enjoy a plurality of votes; and in more cases than we care to dwell upon, the votes of women in municipal contests have been cast against useful and necessary measures of reform, merely for the sake of pleasing their spiritual or medical advisers."

NOTE.—The following letters furnish an appropriate commentary on the above passage.

The first is from Miss Sanders, Cardiff.

"My father (Mr. Alderman Sanders, of Cardiff) wishes me to say that he thinks few men have a wider or more continued experience of municipal contests than he has had, which experience extends over more than thirty years. It may be perfectly true that some women vote as they are told, but not the majority. It is equally true that many men vote as they are told, but on the whole he is convinced that the majority of women voters use their suffrage with a higher and nobler purpose than do the majority of the other sex."

The next letter is from Mr. S. Hayward, Bath, who writes:—"An experience of thirty years in municipal elections in Bath (where the women voters comprise 1,700 out of 7,000) enables me confidently to contradict the assertion of the writer in the *Speaker*, 'that the great majority of female voters have the strongest dislike for independence.' The municipal elections here have generally been fought on political grounds (I think unfortunately), and hence both male and female voters have been influenced in various ways; but I have found that the women voters have generally attached more importance than the men to the personal moral character and social usefulness of a candidate; and certainly have shown more independence than the majority of the lower class of male voters."

FUTURE EFFORTS.

The Executive Committee have received many suggestions as to the best methods of concentrating the strength of the movement which has for quarter of a century being steadily increasing in force.

The effort to obtain a fair hearing for the question has now received the aid of the Government. This combined with the approach of a General Election makes the present a time peculiarly calling for energetic action.

In regard to the necessary sinews of war, the Com-

mittee have received the following letter from a lady, whose name if she would permit its publication, would carry weight. They commend it to the attention of their supporters:—

“I advise raising a good sum to spend in working up the country during the next three years. I will contribute £100 a year for three years on condition that £900 a year more is promised.

“I think £1,000 a year is not in the least too much to spend just now.

“Would it be worth while to have a Self-denial Suffrage Week, say in November or December, of each year, in which friends all over the country shall deny themselves all luxuries and put the proceeds into our fund? . . . We must find ways of making it recognised that we care VERY MUCH on the subject.”

The aid of women is constantly invoked in election contests, and it is surely reasonable to ask those who desire such help to take part in obtaining for women the right to exercise quietly by their votes the political power which they are urged by all parties in turn to exert in their favour by canvassing or other more conspicuous methods.

Women are called on now more imperatively than they have ever been called on before to make their views known to the men who are likely to have the power of carrying them out, and by this means lend the most effective form of co-operation to the efforts of their friends in the House of Commons as well as to the efforts of the Committee, who will do their utmost to secure the introduction of a Bill next session.

already done their best, but is it not the function of a federation to speak with a louder and stronger voice in the name of the individual units of which it consists?

Believing that the women's vote would greatly help forward those social reforms in which we are all so much interested, I beg you most earnestly to consider the importance of getting the members of our associations to take up this question seriously, so that at the next Council meeting, the voice of the associations will be in favour of making the enfranchisement of women, one of the first objects of the Women's Liberal Federation.

A. Cowen, Nottingham.

‘TRUTH’ has the following:—

“The advocates of Female Suffrage on the Women's Liberal Federation were routed last week.”

Female Suffrage has had its day like many another fad. A few ladies, who want to figure in Parliament and in County Councils, made such a noise about it, that they seemed to be speaking for their entire sex, and they managed to shout down all manly opposition. It was soon, however discovered, that they only represented themselves, and that the vast mass of women no more desired to vote than to enter the Police Force. The bubble has burst. In the present House of Commons, the proposal to allow women to sit on County Councils, found 50 supporters, and I should fancy that this will be the highest number of supporters that Female Suffrage will have in the next H. of C., whilst the majority of these 50 will rejoice greatly when the proposal is defeated. Candidates at the next General Election will not allow themselves to be bullied into pledging themselves to vote for this absurdity, as some of them did at the last. They will gain no votes by doing so & they will lose many. “We will not come and help you, if you do not promise,” say the lady suffragists. Well my dears, keep away if it pleases you. If you like to leave the W.L.F., by all means leave it. Candidates and Federation will get on very well without you; there are Liberal & Conservative ladies, as good speakers, & as good canvassers as you are, who will take your place.”

TRUTH, June 4th, 1891.

THE WOMEN'S LIBERAL FEDERATION
AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The action of the Council of the Women's Liberal Federation on May 27th, requires careful consideration by the friends of Women's Suffrage.

You are aware that last year, the Council passed by 400 votes to 12, a Resolution approving of the Franchise being granted to women, and urging that "*the earliest suitable opportunity should be taken of including the enfranchisement of women in the Liberal Programme.*"

At the Council this year, the following Resolution was proposed,—"*That in furtherance of the Resolution passed by the Council in May 1890, approving of the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women on the same terms as to men, this Council now instructs the Executive Committee to lose no opportunity of pressing forward the question, both in the country and in Parliament.*" This was lost by 266 votes to 201!

It is with feelings of deep sorrow, and shame that I record this result, sorrow, that such a blow should be struck at the the cause of Women's Suffrage, the greatest that has been experienced for years, by a women's organisation; shame, that an assembly of representative *liberal* women should be so false to the first principles of liberalism, trust in the people, and the right of the tax-payer to representation!

If the W.L.F. refuse to place the enfranchisement of women on their Programme, how can we expect our friends in Parliament to work for this measure? Will they not be warranted in saying, "It is clear you women do not want the Suffrage, or you would have passed that Resolution! We shall therefore do nothing more till you show that you really wish for it."

We are told, that it is for individual associations to take action, and the Ex. Committee is instructed to give all information of every opportunity that may arise of promoting the political enfranchisement of women, in Parliament or otherwise. Many associations have

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Office—10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESENTED AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE

WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL

JULY 14th, 1891.

London:

WOMEN'S PRINTING SOCIETY, LIMITED,
21B, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Professor ADAMSON.
Miss GERTRUDE ANDREWS.
Mrs. ASHFORD.
Miss BAKER.
Miss HELEN BLACKBURN.
Miss JESSIE BOUCHERETT.
Miss FRANCES POWER COBBE.
Colonel COTTON-JODRELL, M.P.
Miss COURTENAY.
The Right Hon. LEONARD
COURTNEY, M.P.
Miss F. DAVENPORT-HILL.
Miss EMILY DAVIES.
Captain EDWARDS-HEATHCOTE, M.P.

Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT.
LOUISA LADY GOLDSMID.
Mrs. HALLETT.
Mrs. HASLAM.
Miss LUCY JOHNSON.
Miss MORDAN.
Mrs. E. J. MYLNE.
CLARA LADY RAYLEIGH.
T. W. RUSSELL, Esq., M.P.
Mrs. STEPHEN SPRING-RICE.
Mrs. STERLING.
Miss TOD.
Miss VERNON.

And Delegates of Associated Societies.

Hon. Treasurer—Miss VERNON.

Hon. Secretary—Mrs. FAWCETT.

Secretary—Miss BLACKBURN.

Bankers.—LONDON AND COUNTY BANK—HOLBORN BRANCH, NEW OXFORD STREET.

Office.—10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—

Established 1867.

Honorary Secretary: Miss ATKINSON.

Treasurer: THOS. CHORLTON, Esq.

Office: Queen's Chambers, 5, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—Established 1868.

President: The COUNTESS OF PORTSMOUTH.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT.

Secretary: Miss BLACKBURN.

Office: 69, Park Street, Bristol.

NORTH OF IRELAND BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—Established 1871.

Hon. Secretary: Miss ISABELLA TOD, 11, Lower Crescent, Belfast.

DUBLIN SOCIETY.—Established 1874.

Hon. Secretaries: MRS. HASLAM, 91, Rathmines Road, Dublin.
Miss MACDOWELL.

LUTON COMMITTEE—Established 1880. *Hon. Sec.*: Miss LOUISA BIGG.

LEEDS NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—
Established 1889.

President: Mrs. EDWARD WALKER.

Hon. Treas.: Mrs. RAWLINSON FORD.

Hon. Sec.: Miss BARBER, Mount Preston, Leeds.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

OF THE

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Presented at the General Meeting, July 14th, 1891.

It falls to your Committee this year to present a Report with more than the average alternations of hopes and disappointments, checks and encouragements.

On the meeting of Parliament on November 25th several Members balloted for a day for the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill. Mr. Woodall secured the least unfavourable place and accordingly put down the Bill for May 13th, the only day on which a first place was available.

Fears were, however, entertained lest, owing to its proximity to Whitsuntide, that day should be absorbed in the holidays. Some of the Parliamentary supporters in order to secure a debate and division sought to obtain a day for a Resolution. Your Committee feeling strongly that a Resolution at this stage of the question is of no practical value, resolved to make an effort to ensure a debate on the Bill. A memorial was prepared with many influential signatures attached,* which the first Lord of the Treasury consented to receive from a small deputation of ladies, appointing the 20th April for the purpose.

* The text of the memorial, and a complete list of signatures has been published in pamphlet form.

Lord Wolmer having introduced the deputation, Mrs. Fawcett briefly brought forward certain points for consideration. Mr. Smith stated in reply that he had every reason to believe that May 13th would be available for the Bill. He added that that day would certainly not be included in the Whitsuntide holidays, that there was no intention of taking the day for Government business, and that every effort would be made to keep the day open for the Bill.

Meantime Mr. Haldane had secured a first place for a Resolution on April 24th. The Parliamentary Committee on hearing the result of the deputation resolved to proceed with the Bill. Mr. Haldane accordingly withdrew his Resolution.*

Your Committee and the other affiliated Committees at once entered on preparations for the expected division. Mr. Radcliffe Cooke and Mr. Samuel Smith had already given notice of opposition. Mr. De Lisle and Mr. Asquith now also gave notice to move that the Bill be read that day six months. On April 30th, Mr. W. H. Smith moved—"That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday, the House do meet at 3 o'clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all orders of

* The text of Mr. Haldane's Resolution was as follows;—That the exclusion of women, otherwise legally qualified, from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is injurious to those excluded, contrary to the principle of just representation, and to that of the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies."

To this the following notices of amendments were given:—Mr. Samuel Smith,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's Motion, leave out all after "That," and insert "this House views with apprehension so grave a change in our political system as would be involved in the admission of women to the Parliamentary Franchise, and declines to entertain the proposal."

Mr. Radcliffe Cooke,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's Motion, leave out all after "the" and insert "alteration of the Laws which exclude women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament would not be expedient until some public demand should arise for the change, and until (in the event of such a demand arising) the change could be effected without injustice to male voters."

Mr. De Lisle,—As an Amendment to Mr. Haldane's resolution, leave out all after "that" and insert "the exclusion of women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is beneficial to the peace and prosperity of the State, being in accord with the fundamental principle of the good government of mankind; and that the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies require examination in order to determine whether the legal qualifications of women are in accord with the natural."

the day and notices of motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday, if it be appointed for that day."

A debate then ensued of a very unusual character led by Mr. Gladstone, who advised that all Wednesdays be taken by the Government; Mr. Bryce and Mr. Labouchere also spoke in the same sense and Sir Henry James proposed to amend the motion so that it should read after the word "Bill," in the last line but one, "shall also have precedence on Wednesdays until said Bill has passed through Committee of the House."

On a division being taken the votes were—for the amendment 218, against 159, majority 59. Mr. Akers Douglas and Col. Walrond, the Government Tellers, were tellers for the minority; neither the debate nor the division lists turned on the merits of the Bill.* The following tabular statement will indicate the mixed character of the voting on this occasion:—

	NOES.					AYES.				
	CON.	L.U.	G.L.	N.	Tot.	CON.	L.U.	G.L.	N.	Tot.
Known friends	15	4	8	0	27	3	0	1	1	5
Supposed favourable	60	4	17	2	83	27	7	41	13	88
Opinions unknown or doubtful	30	4	1	0	35	29	14	31	11	85
Understood to be opposed	12	1	1	0	14	19	4	17	0	40
TOTALS.	117	13	27	2	159	78	25	90	25	218

Some known opponents voted with the minority to support Mr. W. H. Smith; some who had been counted on as friends voted with the majority in order to further the Irish Land Bill. Be the motives what they might, and they were no doubt various, the effect remains the same.

On April 13th, a public meeting was held in the Westminster

* A full report of the debate and division list was given in an Occasional paper issued by your Committee on June 1st.

Town Hall, in support of the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, M.P., the chair was taken by Sir Richard Temple, Bart., M.P. The meeting was addressed by Mrs. Ashford, Mr. Henry Kimber, M.P., the Rev. Harry Jones and Mrs. Fawcett; the following resolution was passed:—

“That in view of the many social questions involving home and domestic interests which will claim the attention of the Legislature in the near future, the inexpediency and injustice of excluding women from all representation has become more serious than at any previous period.

“This Meeting therefore respectfully urges on the Members of Her Majesty's Government, and on Members of the House of Commons, the importance of no longer deferring such extension of the Franchise as shall enable duly qualified women to be placed on the Register before the next General Election.”

In view of the expected debate on May 13th, your Committee arranged a conversazione in the galleries of the Royal Institution of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly, for the evening of Monday, 11th. Invitations were issued in the names of the following ladies, who kindly consented to form a Reception Committee:—The Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtenay, Mrs. Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Miss Davenport-Hill, Lady Lethbridge, Lady Matheson, Mrs. Penrose Fitz-Gerald, the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Westlake, the Lady Maud Wolmer. Between ten and eleven o'clock a large assembly which had gathered in the Eastern Gallery were addressed by Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., the Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, D.D., Mr. McLaren, M.P., and Mr. Woodall, M.P.

Your Committee desire to express their cordial thanks to Mrs. Napier Higgins for a numerously attended drawing-room meeting held at her residence, Percy Cross House, Fulham, in November; Mr. Napier Higgins, Q.C., presided. They would also thank Miss Reid and Miss Guinness for a discussion meeting held in their studio, Augustine Road, Brook Green, and Mrs. Ormsby Sherrard for a meeting held by her kind invitation at 3, Berkeley Square. They are much indebted to Mrs. Louis Blacker, for a well attended meeting

held by her kind invitation at 13, Queensborough Terrace, Col. Birch in the chair, and to Miss Greenhill for inviting a meeting, on May 9th, at her studio, Abdale Road, Shepherd's Bush; Mr. Sharp in the chair; also to Mrs. Shaen, Mrs. Oliver, Miss Abney Walker, Miss Lord and Miss Petrie, for kind help in addressing these meetings.

Two Petitions of a somewhat special character were presented in the House of Commons through the instrumentality of the friends and members of this Society; one signed by 774 professional women including the Heads of Girton and Newnham Colleges, Cambridge; Somerville Hall, Oxford; College Hall, London; Aberdare Hall, Cardiff; and many Head mistresses of schools, together with a large number of artists, authors, journalists, &c. This petition was presented by Sir John Lubbock. The other was signed by 472 women engaged in social work of various kinds, and was presented by the Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie, M.P.

In December last your Committee offered two prizes in connection with the Educational Council of the southern section of the Co-operative Union for the best essay on “The bearing of Co-operative Experience on the Question of Women's Suffrage.” The first prize was awarded to Mr. F. Rockell, whose essay your Committee propose to publish. The second prize was not awarded.

A letter, calling attention to the importance of the Suffrage for Women, which was extensively circulated amongst ladies engaged in political work, was signed by:—Clara, Lady Rayleigh-Miss Balfour (Chief Secretary's Lodge), the Hon. Lady Grey, Egerton, Lady Knightley, Mrs. Cotton-Jodrell, Mrs. Atlay, (The Palace, Hereford), Mrs. Culme-Seymour, Mrs. C. H. Hodgson, (74, Belgrave Road, London), Mrs. Vansittart, Mrs. Dent (Sudeley Castle), the Hon. Mrs. Paley, Lady Rayleigh, and Mrs. Penrose-FitzGerald.

The year that has just closed will be marked in the history of the Suffrage movement for the death of Miss Lydia E. Becker, which took place at Geneva on July 18th, only three days after the last Annual Meeting. Her clear and vigorous mind held a firm grasp of the political bearings of the question,

and as a pioneer in the early and difficult years of the agitation and leader in its councils, the memory of her master mind will ever be associated with its history.

A still earlier advocate of measures for improving the condition of women, Barbara Leigh Smith, Madame Bodichon, breathed her last at Scalands Gate, Sussex, on June 11th. A pamphlet, published by her in 1855, entitled "A Brief Summary of the most important laws of England concerning Women," may be considered to have opened the way for the Married Women's Property Acts. She took an active part in promoting the petition for Women's Suffrage, presented by Mr. J. S. Mill in 1866, and a Paper by her on "Reasons for and against Women's Suffrage" was read at the Social Science Congress in Manchester in the same year. Later she largely shared in founding the college for women now known as Girton College, Cambridge. Though ill-health had compelled her withdrawal for many years from active life, she lived to see her most ardent aspirations more or less fully realized in the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts, the growth of the Women's Suffrage movement, and the success of Girton College.

Your Committee have to record the loss, at the close of last year, of Mr. Coleridge J. Kennard, who had been an earnest supporter of their cause, both in and out of Parliament; of Lord Deramore, who as Sir Thomas Bateson, M.P. for Devizes, voted steadily for the enfranchisement of women; and of Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P., who had proved himself a most consistent and disinterested supporter of Women's Suffrage.

In the past few weeks your Society has lost an old and valued member in Sir Robert N. Fowler, M.P.; he had voted in favour as Member for Penryn in 1871, and his name was on the back of the Bill when it passed second reading in 1886. Another of the most valued members of the Society has passed away in Mr. Thomas Hare, who was for many years a member of the Executive Committee, and who throughout his long life had always been a staunch friend of the cause of women.

The death of Sir J. A. Macdonald removes a powerful supporter from the ranks of our colonial statesmen, and in the general

regret for his loss, your Committee gratefully remember that he introduced provisions for the enfranchisement of women in the Canadian Electoral Bill of 1885.

Your Committee have received an offer of £100 a year for three years, provided that another £900 be raised annually. They earnestly appeal to the friends of the movement to enable them to profit by this offer. They would also invite application for lecturers and for literature from associations desirous of information on the subject.

Amidst the many reforms which press for consideration at the present day, your Committee entreat their friends never to lose sight of this question, and to embrace every opportunity of urging on members of Parliament and Candidates for election, that sex cannot be treated as a bar to enfranchisement without risk of injury to all legislation affecting the moral and social condition of the country.

In conclusion your Committee are resolved to leave no effort untried to procure the passing of a measure of enfranchisement during the life of the present Parliament—or failing this to be fully prepared to meet the General Election.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,
CENTRAL COMMITTEE, 10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER.

Receipts and Payments for the year ending June 30th, 1891.

RECEIPTS.		PAYMENTS.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
By Balance	1 16 0	By Rent	40 0 0
" Donations	224 9 0	" Office Expenses	57 4 0
" Subscriptions	174 12 6	" Salaries	128 15 4
" Sale of Publications	2 0 0	" Meetings and Advertisements	73 5 4
		" Stationery	14 7 0
		" Printing and Publications	65 7 8
		" "Women's Suffrage Journal"	4 19 7
		" Postage	43 10 5
		" Secretary's Travelling Expenses	3 18 1
		" Newspapers and Parliamentary Papers	11 16 6
		" Prize Essay	2 2 0
		Balance in Bank	393 5 11
			9 11 7
			<u>£402 17 6</u>

Examined, compared with the books and vouchers, and found correct,

M. HARRIS SMITH, *Accountant*,

13, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., and

Royal Bank Buildings, 123, Bishopsgate Street Within, E.C.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

General Annual Meeting of the Central Committee.

Westminster Town Hall, July 14th, 1891.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT, M.P., in the Chair.

The SECRETARY presented the Report and Financial Statement.

RESOLUTION I :

That this Meeting adopt the Report and Financial Statement and direct that they be printed for circulation.

Moved by Miss TOD.

Seconded by BARON DIMSDALE, M.P.

RESOLUTION II :

That in view of the approaching General Election this Meeting is of opinion that a Bill should be introduced next Session to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to women who already possess the local franchises.

Moved by COL. JODRELL, M.P.

Seconded by MRS. FAWCETT.

RESOLUTION III :

That the Executive Committee for the ensuing year consist of the following persons, with power to add to their number, and of delegates of Associated Societies :—

Professor Adamson, Miss Gertrude Andrews, Mrs. Ashford, Miss Baker, Miss Helen Blackburn, Miss Jessie Boucherett, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, M.P., Miss Courtenay The Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P., Miss F. Davenport-Hill, Miss Emily Davies, Captain Edwards-Heathcote, M.P., Mrs. Henry Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Hallett, Mrs. Haslam, Miss Lucy Johnson, Mrs. E. J. Mylne, Miss Mordan, Clara Lady Rayleigh, T. W. Russell, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Stephen Spring-Rice, Mrs. Sterling, Miss Tod, and Miss Vernon.

Moved by MRS. SHAEN.

Seconded by REV. J. C. KIRBY (S. Australian W. S. Committee).

RESOLUTION IV :

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Albert. Rollit for presiding on the present occasion.

Moved by Miss EMILY DAVIES.

Seconded by MRS. PENROSE FITZGERALD.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Adams, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Addison, Mrs.	-	0 2 6
Adair, Mrs. H.	-	0 5 0
Allen, Miss	-	1 0 0
Anderson, Mrs. Hall	-	1 1 0
Anderson, Miss	-	0 2 6
Atkins, Edward, Esq.	-	0 5 0
Atkinson, Mrs. Beavington	-	0 5 0
Aylmer, Miss	-	1 1 0
Babb, Miss	-	2 2 0
Babb, J. Staines, Esq.,	-	1 1 0
Baker, Miss	-	0 2 6
Bailey, Miss	-	0 10 0
Baxter, Mrs. Fleming	-	1 0 0
Baxter, Miss	-	0 5 0
Beechcroft, Miss	-	0 2 6
Biggs, Miss Ashurst	-	1 1 0
Biggs, Miss Maude	-	1 0 0
Bishop, Mrs. (Dolycarrig)	-	0 2 6
Blacker, Mrs. Louis	0 10 0	0 10 0
Blackmore, Miss	-	0 5 0
Borchardt, Miss	-	0 3 6
Bostock, Miss	-	1 0 0
Boucherett, Miss Jessie	50 0 0	-
Brandreth. H. S., Esq.	1 0 0	1 0 0
Bridges, Mrs.	-	1 0 0
Brodhurst, Mrs.	-	0 10 0
Brown, Miss E. L.	-	0 2 6
Brumgate, Miss	-	0 2 6
Buchan, Dowager Countess	2 0 0	2 2 0
Buckland, Miss	-	0 2 6
Burne, Miss	-	0 5 0
„ Collected by Mrs. Burne	0 2 6	-
„ Thomas Burne, Esq.	0 2 6	-
„ Miss S. M. Gardiner	0 2 6	-
„ Miss de Natorp	0 5 0	-
„ Smaller Sums	0 3 0	-
Burt, Miss N. S.	-	0 2 6
Bush, Misses	-	2 2 0
Calthorpe, Miss	-	0 5 0
Camperdown, the Earl of	5 0 0	-
Channing-Pearce, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Charlesworth, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Clarke, Mrs. Benjamin	-	1 0 0
Cheeseman, Mrs.	0 2 6	-
Chickall, Miss	-	0 2 6
Clutton, R. G., Esq.	5 5 0	-
Cobbe, Miss F. Power	5 0 0	-
Chickall, Miss	-	0 2 6
Colborne, Hon. Mrs.	0 10 0	-
Cotton, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Cowell, Mrs. H.	-	1 0 0
Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard, M.P.	-	1 0 0
Courtenay, Miss	10 0 0	-
Coxhead, Miss	-	0 10 0

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Dons.	Subs.
Crook, Mrs.	-	1 1 0
Crowe, Miss	-	1 0 0
Crump, Miss	-	0 10 0
Culme-Seymour, Mrs.	5 0 0	1 0 0
Curry, Miss F. W.	-	0 5 0
Darwin, Mrs. Francis	-	1 0 0
Davenport-Hill, Miss	-	1 1 0
Davenport-Hill, Miss F. }	10 0 0	1 1 0
„ „ (second donation)	1 0 0	-
Davies, Miss Emily	-	1 1 0
Davies, Mrs.	-	0 5 0
Davis, Miss M. H.	0 2 6	-
Debenham, Mrs. Wm.	-	0 10 0
Dimsdale, Baron, M.P.	-	3 3 0
Donkin, Miss	-	0 5 0
Dougal, Miss L.	-	0 2 6
Dublin Committee	-	1 0 0
Duer, Misses	-	0 10 0
Dunn, Miss	-	1 1 0
Eaton, Mrs. Lauder	-	0 5 0
Eccles, Miss	10 0 0	5 0 0
Edge, Miss	-	0 2 6
Edmunds, Miss	1 0 0	-
Ely, Miss Emily	-	0 5 0
Evans, Miss	-	0 10 0
Eve, Mrs.	0 10 0	0 10 0
Ewart, Miss	2 0 0	-
Fawcett, Mrs. Henry	10 0 0	5 0 0
Fawcett, Miss	-	1 0 0
Field, Mrs. Eastwick	-	0 5 0
Ford, Miss E. H.	5 0 0	3 0 0
Ford, Miss I. O.	-	5 0 0
Ford, Rawlinson, Esq.	-	1 1 0
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Friend, A (Windsor)	0 10 0	0 10 0
Friends, Several, per Miss Lucy Johnson	5 0 0	-
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Gurney, Miss A.	-	0 10 0
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Hallett, T. G. P., Esq., and Mrs. Hallett	5 0 0	-
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Hamley, Miss	-	0 2 6
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	Dons.	Subs.
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Heath, Mrs. Bayly	-	1 1 0
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Higgins, Mrs. Napier	-	2 0 0
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Hill, Miss Emily	-	0 2 6
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Pochin, Mrs.	5 0 0	
Ponsonby, Hon. Mrs.	-	0 5 0
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Shedden, Mrs. R.	-	0 2 6
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Sterling, Mrs.	1	0	0	2	0	0
Sterling, Miss	1	0	0	2	0	0
Stopes, Mrs.				0	5	0
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Tacey, Miss Alice	4	0	0	1	0	0
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Thomas, Mrs. Charles				1	1	0
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Thorne, Mrs.				0	5	0
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Turner, Mrs. J. W.				0	5	0
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Westlake, John, Esq., Q.C.				0	10	0
Westlake, Mrs.				0	10	0
Wilkinson, Miss F. R.				1	1	0
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The object of the Society is to obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for Women on the same conditions as it is, or may be granted to men.

The Society seeks to achieve this object—

1. By acting as a centre for the collection and diffusion of information with regard to the progress of the movement in all parts of the country.
2. By holding Public Meetings in support of the repeal of the Electoral Disabilities of women.
3. By the publication of Pamphlets, Leaflets, and other Literature bearing upon the question.

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1. The Central Committee shall consist of the present members and such others as the Executive Committee may, from time to time, elect.
2. The Executive Committee shall consist of members of the Central Committee, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and of single delegates, the same being members of Local Committees, appointed by Local Associations to represent them; the Executive Committee having power to add to the Central Committee, and to its own number, and to appoint the Officers.
3. A subscription of any amount constitutes membership of the National Society.
4. A General Meeting of the Central Committee shall be held once a year to appoint the Executive Committee, to receive the Annual Report and the Financial Statement and to transact any other business which may arise.
5. The Executive Committee shall, at its first meeting, appoint the Officers.
6. A Special General Meeting may be called by the Executive Committee at any time; or, at the written request of not less than twenty-five members of the Central Committee the Secretary or Secretaries shall call a Special General Meeting to discuss such matters only as are mentioned in the notice of such meeting.
7. Eight days' public notice shall be given of all General Meetings.
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FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

A LETTER

FROM

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

TO

SAMUEL SMITH, M.P.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1892.

Price Threepence.

LONDON:
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STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

1, CARLTON GARDENS,
April 11, 1892.

DEAR MR. SAMUEL SMITH,

In reply to your letter, I cannot but express the hope that the House of Commons will not consent to the second reading of the Bill for Extending the Parliamentary Suffrage to Women, which will come before it on the 27th instant.

The Bill is a narrow Bill, inasmuch as it excludes from its operation the entire body of married women; who are not less reflective, intelligent, and virtuous, than their unmarried sisters, and who must I think be superior in another great element of fitness, namely the lifelong habit of responsible action. If this change is to be made, I certainly have doubts, not yet dispelled, whether it ought to be made in the shape which would thus be given to it by a halting and inconsistent measure.

But it is a change which obviously, and apart from disputable matter, ought not to be made without the fullest consideration and the most deliberate assent of the nation as well as of the Parliament. Not only has there been no such assent, but there has not been even an approach to such consideration. The subject has occupied a large place in the minds of many thoughtful persons,

and of these a portion have become its zealous adherents. Just weight should be allowed to their sentiments, and it is desirable that the arguments on both sides should be carefully and generally scrutinised: but the subject is as yet only sectional, and has not really been taken into view by the public mind at large. Can it be right, under these circumstances, that the principle of a change so profound should be adopted? Cannot its promoters be content with that continuance and extension of discussion, which alone can adequately sift the true merits of their cause?

I offer this suggestion in the face of the coming Election. I am aware that no legitimate or effectual use can be made of it for carrying to an issue a question at once so great and so novel; but I do not doubt, considering the zeal and ability which are enlisted in its favour, that the occasion might be made available for procuring an increase of attention to the subject, which I join with them in earnestly desiring.

There are very special reasons for circumspection in this particular case. There has never within my knowledge been a case in which the franchise has been extended to a large body of persons generally indifferent about receiving it. But here, in addition to a widespread indifference, there is on the part of large numbers of women who have considered the matter for themselves, the most positive objection and strong disapprobation. Is it not clear to every unbiassed mind that before forcing on them what they conceive to be a fundamental change in their whole social function, that is to say in their Providential calling, at least it should be ascertained that the womanly mind of the country, at present so largely strange to the subject, is in overwhelming

proportion, and with deliberate purpose, set upon securing it?

I speak of the change as being a fundamental change in the whole social function of woman, because I am bound in considering this Bill to take into view not only what it enacts, but what it involves. The first of these, though important, is small in comparison with the last.

What the Bill enacts is simply to place the individual woman on the same footing in regard to Parliamentary elections, as the individual man. She is to vote, she is to propose or nominate, she is to be designated by the law as competent to use and to direct, with advantage not only to the community but to herself, all those public agencies which belong to our system of Parliamentary representation. She, not the individual woman, marked by special tastes, possessed of special gifts, but the woman as such, is by this change to be plenary launched into the whirlpool of public life, such as it is in the nineteenth, and such as it is to be in the twentieth century.

So much for what the Bill enacts: now for what it involves, and involves in the way of fair and rational, and therefore of morally necessary, consequence. For a long time we drew a distinction between competency to vote and competency to sit in Parliament. But long before our electorate had attained to the present popular proportions, this distinction was felt to involve a palpable inconsistency, and accordingly it died away. It surely cannot be revived: and if it cannot be revived, then the woman's vote carries with it, whether by the same Bill or by a consequential Bill, the woman's seat in Parliament. These assertions ought to be strictly tested. But, if they cannot be confuted, do not let them be ignored.

If the woman's vote carries with it the woman's seat, have we at this point reached our terminus, and found a standing ground which we can in reason and in justice regard as final? Capacity to sit in the House of Commons now legally and practically draws in its train capacity to fill every office in the State. Can we alter this rule and determine to have two categories of Members of Parliament, one of them, the established and the larger one, consisting of persons who can travel without check along all the lines of public duty and honour, the other, the novel and the smaller one, stamped with disability for the discharge of executive, administrative, judicial, or other public duty? Such a stamp would I apprehend be a brand. There is nothing more odious, nothing more untenable, than an inequality in legal privilege which does not stand upon some principle in its nature broad and clear. Is there here such a principle, adequate to show that when capacity to sit in Parliament has been established, the title to discharge executive and judicial duty can be withheld? Tried by the test of feeling, the distinction would be offensive. Would it stand better under the laws of logic? It would stand still worse, if worse be possible. For the proposition we should have to maintain would be this. The legislative duty is the highest of all public duties; for this we admit your fitness. Executive and judicial duties rank below it: and for these we declare you unfit.

I think it impossible to deny that there have been and are women individually fit for any public office however masculine its character; just as there are persons under the age of twenty-one better fitted than many of those beyond it for the discharge of the duties

of full citizenship. In neither case does the argument derived from exceptional instances seem to justify the abolition of the general rule. But the risks involved in the two suppositions are immeasurably different. In the one, individual judgment and authority plainly would have to distinguish between childhood and manhood, and to specify a criterion of competency in each case, which is now more conveniently fixed by the uniformity of law. In the other, a permanent and vast difference of type has been impressed upon women and men respectively by the Maker of both. Their differences of social office rest mainly upon causes, not flexible and elastic like most mental qualities, but physical and in their nature unchangeable. I for one am not prepared to say which of the two sexes has the higher and which has the lower province. But I recognize the subtle and profound character of the differences between them, and I must again, and again, and again, deliberate before aiding in the issue of what seems an invitation by public authority to the one to renounce as far as possible its own office, in order to assume that of the other. I am not without the fear lest beginning with the State, we should eventually be found to have intruded into what is yet more fundamental and more sacred, the precinct of the family, and should dislocate, or injuriously modify, the relations of domestic life.

As this is not a party question, or a class question, so neither is it a sex question. I have no fear lest the woman should encroach upon the power of the man. The fear I have is, lest we should invite her unwittingly to trespass upon the delicacy, the purity, the refinement, the elevation of her own nature, which are the present sources of its power. I admit that we have often, as

legislators, been most unfaithful guardians of her rights to moral and social equality. And I do not say that full justice has in all things yet been done; but such great progress has been made in most things, that in regard to what may still remain the necessity for violent remedies has not yet been shown. I admit that in the Universities, in the professions, in the secondary circles of public action, we have already gone so far as to give a shadow of plausibility to the present proposals to go farther; but it is a shadow only, for we have done nothing that plunges the woman as such into the turmoil of masculine life. My disposition is to do all for her which is free from that danger and reproach, but to take no step in advance until I am convinced of its safety. The stake is enormous. The affirmation pleas are to my mind not clear, and, even if I thought them clearer, I should deny that they were pressing.

Such being the state of the evidence, and also such the immaturity of the public mind, I earnestly hope that the House of Commons will decline to give a second reading to the Woman's Suffrage Bill.

I remain, dear Mr. S. Smith,

Very faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

A REPLY

TO

THE LETTER OF MR. SAMUEL SMITH, M.P.

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

BY

MRS. FAWCETT.

Reprinted, with additions, from the MORNING POST and other Papers.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER.

1892.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH, M.P., ON WOMEN'S
SUFFRAGE.

Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P. for Flintshire, has given notice of his intention to move the rejection of Sir Albert Rollit's Women's Suffrage Bill, which is down for second reading on April 27th. It seems, therefore, not inopportune to consider some of the objections urged by Mr. Smith against women's suffrage, which were printed and widely circulated among members of parliament and the public during last session.

It is obvious at the first glance that Mr. Samuel Smith's criticisms do not apply to either of the Bills introduced by Sir Albert Rollit or Mr. McLaren, but to an entirely different measure which exists only in the clouds. Mr. Smith's objections apply to a Bill which would have the effect of enfranchising eleven millions of women; he recurs to the figures again and again: 11,000,000 women, he says, would be enfranchised, and we regret to notice that his experience of women leads him to believe that they would be animated by a practically unanimous desire to destroy the commerce, the credit, the empire and the greatness of England. Against this horde of 11,000,000 malignant women, he says that the fortress of the constitution would only be defended by 10,000,000 men; and the inevitable consequence, in his opinion, would be that "the splendid fabric of centuries will totter to its fall". Trust women with the franchise, he says, in effect, and their first act will be one of matricide.

"This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world"

is according to Mr. Samuel Smith worthily served by her sons, but would be hated and betrayed by her daughters. He says that our success as a nation is due to the "inherited instinct for government which centuries of freedom have developed"; but he appears to believe that this "inherited instinct" is strictly tied up in tail male. He does not, however, explain why he thinks women would be insensible to the claims of patriotism, for he claims for women superiority in matters where heart and the power of affection enter, and also says that "woman has a finer and more highly strung

constitution than man". Now patriotism is very much a matter of the heart, and of susceptibility to the emotion of gratitude and the sense of indebtedness to what others have wrought for us. It is therefore to be expected that if women are really more developed on the side of the affections, and if they really have finer and more highly strung constitutions, they would be more susceptible to love of country, and more keenly sensitive in regard to those actions which might prove either injurious or beneficial to national interests.

The curious mixture in Mr. S. Smith's mind of sentimental homage and practical contempt for, and distrust of, women, must not, however, lead us aside from combating the fundamental error upon which the whole structure of his argument is founded. He assumes throughout that universal womanhood suffrage is what is aimed at; and that every political disability of women will be swept away. Having made this fundamental (and false) assumption, he is able to conjure up at will his horrific pictures of the 11,000,000 women destroying the constitution; wives being brought up to vote against their husbands; wives and mothers neglecting their babies and their husbands' suppers to attend clubs and political meetings; the physical health of unborn generations being destroyed by "febrile excitement" on politics on the part of mothers, and all the rest of it. It could hardly be believed, if it were not a patent fact, that all these things are said in criticism of a practical proposal which, if carried out, would enfranchise not 11,000,000 but less than 1,000,000 women, heads of households, ratepayers and property owners, who have already exercised, during some twenty-two years, all the various local franchises without producing any symptom, however infinitesimal, of the evils Mr. Smith so confidently predicts. It is true that Mr. Smith says that if once Parliament enfranchises women householders, it must necessarily go on to universal womanhood suffrage. But that is not for Mr. Smith nor any of us to decide; the decision as to how far exactly future Parliaments will go in the direction of female enfranchisement is one for those Parliaments, or rather for the nation as then constituted, to determine. All that can be with certainty predicted is perhaps that Parliaments in the future, like Parliaments in the past, will be more influenced by practical considerations than by any desire to attain exact logical consistency. That is really the strength of the women's suffrage question at the present moment; we are not asking Parliament to give legislative expression to any theory or doctrine of equality between the sexes, but we ask Parliament to weigh the practical expediency of giving Parliamentary representation to a certain class of women who,

as heads of households and ratepayers, have already had experience of voting in other elections, where much good and no harm whatever has resulted from including them in the lists of persons entitled to vote.

Mr. Smith confesses at the commencement of his letter that he was once in favour of extending the parliamentary suffrage to women householders, but that his opinion has changed for two reasons:—the first is that "the injustices from which women formerly suffered have been remedied", and the second is that if there is women's suffrage at all, it must be universal womanhood suffrage.

I have already attempted to show that the English Parliament can stop just when it chooses to stop, or rather, just when the constituencies choose to stop, in the process of enfranchisement. The principle of popular election has existed in England for some six hundred years without as yet landing us in universal suffrage. Parliament does not, as a matter of fact, labour under the necessity of riding to death any principle which it sees fit to adopt. When Catholic emancipation was carried, certain exceptions were made. Three of the highest offices of State were reserved and cannot be held by Catholics. To some minds this may be illogical; but it commends itself to the judgment of the majority of Englishmen as a reasonable precaution, and the reservation will be maintained, logic or no logic, as long as the political safety of England appears to require it. In the same spirit, it may be confidently anticipated, Parliament will act in regard to the political emancipation of women; it will enfranchise the nine hundred thousand women householders and property owners without being bound therefore to go on and enfranchise the whole adult female population of England. In a country where for so many hundred years women have been allowed to reign but not to vote, no mere logical exigency will control the freedom of Parliament. It is true that most of the advocates of women's suffrage hope and believe that additional experience of it may encourage future Parliaments to go further in the direction of enfranchisement than this Parliament is asked to go; but this hope and expectation is a very different thing from an assertion that future Parliaments will be bound to go on to universal womanhood suffrage, no matter what experience may teach us as to the effects of a more limited measure.

There is a very curious inconsistency in Mr. S. Smith's position in regard to manhood suffrage. He says that he is opposed to it; that he wishes to prevent it; that he believes household suffrage to be a sounder basis for Government than manhood suffrage. Holding these views, it might be ex-

pected, especially from one who thinks legislation is controlled by logical necessity, that he would endeavour to strengthen household suffrage by making it a reality, and including as householders, whether men or women. If he did this and helped to secure the enfranchisement of women householders, he would then be in a position logically to use all those arguments based on the numerical majority of women in this country, which he now attempts to apply, although they are totally irrelevant, to the practical question raised by the Bills before the House.

Let us now glance at the other reason which Mr. Smith gives for changing his views on the question of women's suffrage. "Women," he says, used to be "subject to some injustices, which men seemed unwilling to remedy"; but these injustices he apprehends, have been remedied one after another, therefore he thinks there is no reason to give women the protection of representation. Mr. Smith's calm assumption that the legal injustices under which women labour have all been removed, is an instance of the fortitude with which one of the kindest of men is prepared to endure the misfortunes of others. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that there is scarcely an instance in which the supposed interests of men and women come into conflict in which the state of the law is not flagrantly unjust to women. The law in regard to the relation of parents to their children appears to have been framed in practical infidelity to the Divine law which gives to every child two parents, a father and a mother. The man-made law regards this as more than enough, and it therefore endeavours, in a bungling way, to deprive each child of one of its natural protectors. Where the birth of a child is legitimate, that is where it brings nothing but happiness and credit with it, the sole parent, the sole fountain of authority in the eye of the law, is the father; but where the child is illegitimate, where the birth means disgrace and shame, the sole parent recognised by the law, except under special conditions which it is easy for the father to evade, is the mother. The inequality of the divorce law is well known and need not be expatiated on. The law in regard to the protection of children and women from criminal immorality is studded with provisions which seem framed with the express purpose of protecting the criminal and making his detection and punishment far more difficult than they ought to be. The law for the protection of property (*e.g.*, the protection of infants from money-lenders), is tenfold more stringent and more vigilantly executed than the law for the protection of the persons of young girls and women from the pursuit of vicious men. The law at present deals most inadequately with persons who

trade in vice. Parents who bring up their children to send them on the streets in order to live on the proceeds of their infamy, are well known in every town and in many villages. Little or no effectual attempt is made by our law-makers to restrain them. Husbands send their wives on the streets by actual personal violence or by threats of it, and are hardly touched by the law unless they happen to complicate their villainy by mixing it with blackmailing of their male victims. Every man is a possible victim of blackmailing, and everything that law can do to stop it has, very properly, been done. What we wish to see is equal vigilance for the repression of offences of which every woman is a possible victim. The law in all cases deprives a divorced wife from access to her children, but a divorced husband is not invariably treated in the same way; the heir to a ducal house was taken away a few years back from his innocent mother and made over to the charge of his guilty father, although it must have been obvious that the best hopes of moulding the child's character for good were thereby seriously endangered.

Many cases might be mentioned in which English law is unjust to women or grossly inefficient. A leading member of the late government at Melbourne, writing the other day about his probable return to this country, concludes his letter by saying, "I shall try to keep my Victorian domicile for the sake of my daughters. I hope if they marry they will have good husbands, but if one of them is unlucky I should not like her to be under the tender mercies of the English law." And yet Mr. Smith flatters himself that all the injustices which he appears to have been aware of a short time ago have been removed, or are rapidly being removed by the action of Parliament.

With regard to avenues of remunerative employment, every woman of the professional classes who has to get her own living knows that every profession that can be closed to women is closed. The medical profession has been at last opened after years of conflict; but the opportunities for professional study in it are very much more restricted and hampered than they are in the case of men. The older universities admit women to their examinations, but rigidly exclude them from any kind of membership. The Vice-Chancellor's certificate that women have passed tripos or other honour examinations gives them no status whatever in the university. Of course no university prizes or positions are open to them; they are permitted to use the museums and libraries of the universities only on sufferance, and they are liable at any moment to be turned out of them.

The way in which women of the industrial class are re-

stricted in their choice of employments by the rules and political power of trades' unions is well known. Hardly a session passes without new legislative restrictions on the labour of women. The efforts of trades' unions are constantly being directed against women's labour:—"Female labour is not at present a crying evil in our trade: it would be worse than folly to allow it to become so", is a passage from the report of one of the London Bookbinders' Unions of 1891. This union succeeded in turning women out of the employment of gilding and marbling the edges of books in which they had been employed for many years. Among the working class the opinion is almost universal that it is justifiable to forbid by law or forcibly prevent the labour of women wherever their labour comes into competition with that of men. A witness before the Labour Commission was describing a strike that had taken place against employing women in one of the Army Clothing factories in Ireland. Mr. Courtney asked the question: "Have not the women the privilege of living?" to which the witness replied, "They have the privilege of living as long as they do not interfere with the men".

What this witness was guileless enough to put into words is the spirit that animates nearly the whole of men's trades' unions. They exert themselves to keep women out of all except the most unskilled and worst paid trades: they combine to prevent the natural growth of industrial efficiency among women: and in so far as they are able to do this, they swell that great army of "fallen women" whose ranks are so much recruited by industrial inefficiency and want of steady employment. The Rev. G. P. Merrick, late chaplain of Millbank, in an address recently published (Ward, Lock & Co.) made an analysis of the life-history of 16,022 "fallen women" who had passed under his care; he speaks of "want of industrial efficiency" as being very prominent among the causes of a vicious life among women. He also says, "I am continually coming across cases where the street is resorted to only during the time when more reputable work fails. . . . When their trade revives they gladly forsake the streets." Those engaged in rescue work constantly refer to the necessity for an increase of female industrial employment, and to the difficulties presented by the low wages of women in ordinary industry.

It cannot for a moment be doubted that the possession of Parliamentary representation would immensely strengthen the position of women industrially. We have only to look at what the possession of the Parliamentary franchise has already done for the agricultural labourer, to be sure that if women had votes, all parties would be eager to prove their

zeal in remedying any legal, educational or industrial incapacity from which they may suffer.

Mr. Smith in one passage of his letter appeals to the religious argument and to the authority of St. Paul. In this matter we appeal from Paul to a greater than Paul, to Christ. No words ever fell from His lips which were inconsistent with that elevation of womanhood which is so marked a feature of practical Christianity. That women were among the last at the cross, that they were the first at the tomb, that when all forsook Him and fled, they remained faithful; that our Saviour honoured them by specially addressing to them several of His most important conversations; that He proclaimed, what the world has not yet accepted, that there is but one moral law for the man and the woman; all these things afford indications that work for the uplifting of the lives of women from a position of subordination is in accordance with the spirit of His teaching. With regard to St. Paul, we may remember this:—that if we take his teaching about women with its context, it is obvious that he was expressing to the best of his capacity his judgment about the circumstances of his own time; and he particularly and definitely asserts in more than one place that this is so. "I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment." Much therefore, of St. Paul's teaching about the position of women and other social matters is not accepted by any Christian Church as a practical guide for conduct at the present time. St. Paul taught and believed that celibacy was a higher state than marriage, both for men and women; but I do not think that even in the Roman Catholic Church celibacy is recommended, except for the priesthood and for sisterhoods. St. Paul thought it unseemly for a woman to pray with her head uncovered; but I have never heard of any one regarding this as having any application at the present time, and the most devout Christian women attend and conduct family worship bareheaded, just as they braid their hair, wear gold, pearls and costly array on fitting occasions without any inward accusations of conscience in the matter. If we are now to be tied by the exact letter of St. Paul's opinions on the social questions of his own time, we may expect Mr. Smith and those members of Parliament who agree with him to move, when the education estimates come on, to reduce the vote by the amount of the salaries of the women teachers, for St. Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach". It is no exaggeration to say that one who did so would be considered very near the confines which separate sanity from insanity. Then why in other social matters, must we not merely accept St. Paul's words in their simple

natural meaning as expressing his best judgment in the special circumstances of his own time, but twist them into something quite different, *viz.*, into an argument for voting against the second reading of Sir Albert Rollit's Bill for enabling women ratepayers to vote for members of Parliament?

I have already encroached too much on the limits of your space, but Mr. S. Smith makes such an astounding statement about women's suffrage in Wyoming and in the British Colonies, that I must trespass a little further on the patience of your readers. He says, "the idea" of women's suffrage "is scouted in these countries". A women's suffrage Bill was carried last autumn in New Zealand by large majorities in the Chamber of Representatives, and was only lost in the Upper House by the narrow majority of two. It is not a little instructive that two Maories voted in this majority and therefore it may be said that they turned the scale against women's enfranchisement. Those long resident in the colony inform me that in their opinion women's suffrage is absolutely certain to become law there within a very few years. Women's suffrage has been supported by a majority several times in the South Australian legislature, but the majorities have not been sufficiently large, as an absolute majority of the whole House is required there for any law amending the constitution. In 1890, the women's suffrage measure only failed at the third reading by one vote of this sufficient majority. In Victoria and New South Wales the promoters of women's suffrage have more than once come very near success. It is supported in New South Wales by Sir Henry Parkes, probably the most influential of our colonial statesmen. He embodied women's suffrage as an integral part of his scheme for the confederation of the Australian colonies. And yet Mr. Samuel Smith boldly asserts that the idea of women's suffrage is "scouted" in the Australian colonies. One is tempted to imagine that, like Mr. Brooke in "Middlemarch", his pen runs away with him sometimes. Now for the scouting of women's suffrage in Wyoming:—Mr. Smith quotes Mr. Bryce as having said in his book on the American Commonwealth that it was adopted there by accident, and is looked upon as a practical joke by the rest of the country. It is true that people who have had no practical experience of women's suffrage are apt to regard it as a joke and to produce ancient Joe Millerisms in reference to it, such as that if women's suffrage were restricted to women over forty, not a single woman would be found to claim it; but these very humorous comments do not generally survive practical experience of women's suffrage. The people of Wyoming, having seen it at

work for twenty-five years, take it quite seriously, and recently confirmed it (though they were told that their adherence to it would imperil the success of their claim to be admitted as a State of the Union,) by a majority of 8 to 1.

Mr. Smith has lately taken a prominent part in favour of Church Disestablishment. I do not do him the injustice of supposing that in opposing women's suffrage he is influenced by the impression that the majority of women would be against him on this question. As Mr. Courtney said the other day, such a reason for opposing a measure of enfranchisement is too shameful to be avowed, and, he hoped, too cynical to be secretly acted upon. The importance of the question of Church Disestablishment gives a fresh weight to the claim of women to enfranchisement. Whether we are for establishment or for disestablishment, surely this is a question in which women are as vitally interested as men, and have at least as great a claim to be heard. In his last speech to his constituents, my husband, himself a supporter of disestablishment, placed this issue plainly before them. "If the Church is to be disestablished", he said, "the wishes of women on such a question are entitled to the fullest consideration". Mr. Gladstone has said that to withhold the franchise from any section of the community on the ground that their political views may not be in accordance with our own is a "sin against first principles". I therefore earnestly hope no one will be guilty of this sin on the 27th April, but that all who believe that a case for the enfranchisement of women householders has been made out, will vote for Sir Albert Rollit's Bill.

MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT.

AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

The qualifications entitling voters to be registered for Parliamentary elections in Great Britain at the present time fall broadly into four groups—Freeholders, Freemen, Landowners, Occupiers. The development of these groups shows the exclusion of women to be not an ancient usage but a modern innovation.

To take the groups in their order :—

(1) FREEHOLDERS.—The earliest statutes regulating the election of Knights of the Shire (7 Henry IV., c. 15) expressly mentions *suitors* as persons qualified to be electors, suitors being freemen who owed suit to the County Court. Many instances occur both of women attending these courts, and also of women themselves holding courts.

The next statute on the subject (10 Henry IV., c. 2) uses the word *People* (*gentz demourant et reseantz*) dwelling in the county and having freehold of forty shillings.

The 7th and 8th William IV., c. 25, uses the words "all *freeholders* there and then present." The Act 18 George II., c. 18, says no *person* shall vote without having a freehold estate of forty shillings.

(2) FREEMEN.—By 3 Geo. III., c. 15, *persons* claiming as freemen to vote must have been admitted to the freedom of the city twelve months before they can be admitted to vote. The qualifications which admitted to the freedom of cities varied greatly from city to city, but nearly all were as applicable to women as to men, before the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 reduced all to a rigid uniformity and express limitation to *male persons*.

Thus in York it was *every child* born after the father had been admitted to freedom of the city, and in Cardiff

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and Carmarthen every person who had served an apprenticeship of seven years to a freeman.

In Shrewsbury, in Haverfordwest, and other places, members were returned *by inhabitants paying scot and lot*.

The Corporation of Leicester went out of their way in 1661 to record their opinion that it "was not thought fitt that any women be hereafter made free of this corporacon."

In Dublin many women have had the freedom of the city, as readers of this journal will remember (see REVIEW of November, 1889, and January, 1892).

(3) LEASEHOLDERS AND COPYHOLDERS.—The Reform Act of 1832, in extending the franchise to £10 lease and copyholders, did so to *male persons* only, this being the first occasion in which this phrase appears on the statute book in regard to electoral qualifications. "Suitors," "people," "persons," "freeholders," "freemen," all were words of general application. "Male persons" was of a distinctly limited application; the old electors might have been women; the new electors could only be men.

(4) OCCUPIERS.—The Act of 1867, by which household suffrage was extended in boroughs, used the word *man*. Was this to have the wider or the narrower interpretation? The failure of Mr. John Stuart Mill's effort to have "person" substituted for "man" left the question still undecided, especially in the light of the Act for shortening Acts of Parliament, which lays down that where the contrary is not expressly stated, words importing the masculine include the feminine.

In hope that the wider interpretation would be admitted, 5460 women applied to have their names placed on the registers in 1868. The revising barristers took divers views of the position, and a test case, *Chorlton v. Lings*, was brought before the Court of Common Pleas in November of that year.

Mr. Justice Bovill ruled that there had been too long usage to the contrary.

The agitation for women's suffrage dates from that time.

The position of women before the electoral law of Great Britain has therefore gone through four stages:—

(a) The stage when women used the right of voting where circumstances put it in their way—a period coinciding generally with the Plantagenet and Tudor dynasties.

(b) The stage which set in with the Stuarts, and which might be described as the period of disqualification by discouragement.

(c) Then follows that of disqualification by enactment—that is to say, the period from the first Reform Act of 1832 to that of 1867.

(d) Finally, the period of constitutional agitation for enfranchisement.

The period embraced by the first stage affords many instances of important public duties and responsibilities devolving on women, including often the despatching of military contingents to the king, the defence of castles, the control of gallows. Such duties make greater demands on the powers of capable citizens than the return of a "parliament man," even when that "parliament man" is returned by the sole vote of the lady of the manor, as in the oft-quoted case of Dame Dorothy Pakington. This was a period which culminated with the period of highest culture, whether for men or women, ever attained in former periods of our history.

The second stage set in with the Stuarts, and the struggle between King James I. and Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Montgomery and Pembroke, is typical of the change of tone towards women. Nicholaa de la Haye was entreated by the king to continue in the office of Sheriff of Lincoln. Ela of Salisbury was appointed Sheriff of Wilts year after year—but Anne Clifford had to do battle with the king for rights which were hers by ancient inheritance. She acted fully up to her motto "maintain your loyalty, preserve your rights," and withstood alike the attacks of Cromwell on her castles, and the efforts of Charles II. to impose an unwelcome member on her constituency.

But she stands alone. Education deteriorated rapidly in those days of social strife and unrest for both men and women, and it was longer for women in rallying again. This second stage, in fact, em-

braces the period when education was at its lowest ebb. The third falls at a time when many functions hitherto treated as private privileges were passing into the region of public duties. It came at the close of the long period of educational depression which had not tended to prepare women for new responsibilities.

But the period of agitation has coincided with a very marked change, the efforts of the last twenty-five years have brought the education of women to a height never attained in England before.

Moreover, ancient usage has been reverted to in all matters of local legislation. Their disfranchisement has been mainly due to change in the responsibilities attendant on property, not to change in the attributes of women. And not to change in their attributes, but to recognition that responsibilities cannot be withheld from any large portion of the community without detriment to all, will their future enfranchisement be due.

SPEECH

BY

PROF. R. C. JEBB, M.P.,

At the Annual Meeting of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, May 31st, 1892.

In supporting this resolution, I am glad to have an opportunity of indicating the reasons which led me to vote for Sir Albert Rollit's Bill on April 27th. The debate was an able one on both sides. Will you allow me to estimate, as concisely as possible, the position in which, as I conceive, it has left this great question?

The characteristic of Sir A. Rollit's Bill is that it affirms a general principle, but applies this principle only within certain limits, recommended by experience and convenience. The principle is that a woman should not be disqualified, merely because she is a woman, from exercising the rights of citizenship. The limits are those of the Municipal franchise, as already possessed by women.

The arguments used against the Bill were chiefly of two classes—those which impugned the general principle, and those which impugned the special form proposed for its application.

Among the arguments against the principle, the first was that which is derived from the physical constitution of women. This argument was urged in two forms. First: that the ultimate sanction of the law is physical force. But we reply that in civilised communities the exercise of this ultimate sanction is assigned to a certain portion of the community, specially organised and trained for that purpose, viz., the police, and, in the last resort, the military. Secondly: it was said that among the active duties of citizenship is that of fighting, at need, in defence of one's country. But there are great numbers of men who would be completely useless for that purpose; and yet no one proposes to disfranchise them.

The next argument was founded on the intellectual and moral characteristics of women. No one went so far as to say that women are intellectually incapable of exercising the franchise aright. But it was said that most women lack the requisite knowledge. Might not the same thing have been

said of the average rural labourer? Then, more generally, it was said that the nature of women is such that it would be deteriorated by bringing them into the turmoil of public life. But already large numbers of women take part in canvassing for Parliamentary candidates, in the business of committees, and in other electioneering work. Candidates of all opinions have been only too glad to avail themselves of such services. If women can do all this without degradation, they can also support the ordeal of being canvassed, and of recording a vote. It cannot be reasonably maintained that the temperament of women, however much it may normally differ from that of men, affords any ground for excluding them from the franchise. Gloomy prophecies were uttered as to the probable effects on domestic life; but no serious attempt was made to show exactly how such effects would be produced by the possession of a vote. Prophecies of a similar kind were equally rife at the time when women first obtained control over their own property; but they have not been realised.

I turn now from the arguments against the principle to the arguments against the limited form proposed for its application. It was urged, first, that there is no proper analogy between the Municipal and the Parliamentary franchise. It is true that the Municipal franchise rests on a distinct ground, the payment of rates. But the difference between the function of the Municipal voter and that of the Parliamentary voter is a difference merely of degree, not of kind; it depends on the fact that the questions submitted to the Parliamentary voter are more various and more important. If the possessor of the Municipal vote is capable of using the Parliamentary vote aright, the fact that the Municipal franchise rests on the payment of rates is not, in itself, a reason against conferring the higher franchise. It was further objected that, on the Municipal basis, the Parliamentary franchise would still be withheld from a large class of self-dependent women who are not householders but merely lodgers. In reply it may be pointed out that the women householders whom it is proposed to enfranchise would be very largely in sympathy with the needs of their unenfranchised sisters, and would be able to make those needs understood. The reason for taking the Municipal basis is that it represents a limit within which Parliament has already given a vote to women, and within which a trained electorate of women exists. This area also coincides roughly with that category of women whose claim to the franchise is most obviously just, viz., self-dependent women householders, who bear the burdens of citizenship, while they are excluded from representative rights.

The argument which told most against the Bill was undoubtedly the argument from "the inclined plane." It was

said that this Bill would initiate a process which must ultimately lead to womanhood suffrage—when the women voters would outnumber the men—and to women sitting in Parliament. I fully admit that legislators are bound to consider such ulterior consequences of their present action as can be shown to be either necessary or strongly probable. But in this case we must distinguish between two kinds of possible consequences, which opponents of the Bill confused. First, with regard to possible future extension of women's franchise beyond the Municipal basis. Here it is enough to reply that the Municipal basis is a well-defined limit which we are now justified in adopting, and which could be defended at any future time by the same reasons which justify it now. It is impossible to foresee all the circumstances under which a further extension of the male franchise may hereafter be urged, or the modifications in the area of the franchise of women which might then be suggested: but it is precisely one advantage of the Municipal basis of the concession, as now proposed, that it does not by any logical necessity commit us to ulterior developments: we leave the circumstances of the future to the discretion of those who will have to deal with them. A fallacy sometimes lurks in a metaphor, and the inclined plane is here a metaphor of that sort. The process really represented by the proposed measure is not that of setting a ball rolling down a slope; it is rather that of taking in part of a wide field, by setting up a barrier which those who come after us will be perfectly able to maintain if they choose. Now, as to the other kind of consequence foreshadowed by opponents of the Bill—that women will claim seats in Parliament, will hold office, and sit in the Cabinet: the answer is that there is a fundamental difference between having a voice in the election of persons who are to exercise certain functions, and being admitted to the exercise of those functions. Clergymen can vote for members of Parliament, but cannot sit in the House of Commons. It is wholly unwarrantable to say that women's enfranchisement would logically lead to their being made eligible for seats in Parliament. The reasons against women sitting in Parliament are absolutely independent of the arguments for or against giving them the franchise.

Lastly, certain arguments were employed which had a wider scope, since they might equally be used against extending the franchise to a new category of men. It was alleged that women have no longer any grievances which make it desirable that any of them should obtain the franchise. On this point three things may be said. First, experience shows that the extension of the franchise is apt to be followed by the revelation of needs and desires deeply felt by those to whom it is extended, but not disclosed or fully appreciated before.

Thus the enfranchisement of the £10 occupier in 1832 led to the opening of the Municipal Corporations; the enfranchisement of the urban householder in 1867 led to National Education; the enfranchisement of the rural labourer in 1885 has led to allotments and small holdings. Secondly, even now women are known to have some causes of complaint which are not likely to be removed until some women have votes. It is enough to mention the Divorce Laws, the law relating to the custody of children, and—to take an instance affecting many thousands of poor working women—the need for women inspectors in the textile factories. Thirdly, in all those social questions which concern women there is a great difference between direct and indirect Parliamentary representation. Only when women have some direct voice in Parliamentary elections can we be sure that we shall have these questions put before us from those points of view from which women themselves regard them. Then there is the often repeated assertion that women themselves do not desire the franchise. Before 1885, did any unanimous prayer for enfranchisement go up from agricultural labourers? Nay, did they evince anything like such an active desire for it as has been evinced by great numbers of women all over the country? What have women left undone, to show this desire, that it was possible for them to do? They have organised committees, they have held meetings, they have spoken and written. It is not a relevant answer that many other women are apathetic or adverse.

If I might conclude with a word of counsel, though I feel diffidence in offering anything of the kind to such a meeting as this, it would be that the friends of this movement should subordinate all minor differences, and concentrate their efforts on an endeavour to pass into law a measure on the lines laid down in the Bill which lately came so near to success.

Appendix to the Annual Report of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 10, Great College Street, Westminster.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

Women's Suffrage Candidates

FOR THE

General Election of 1892.

NOTE.—*In issuing this list the Committee wish it to be understood that it does not claim to be exhaustive, they believe that many Candidates of whose opinions information has not been forwarded to them, have expressed themselves more or less favourably to their constituents.*

Capitals denote those Members of the present or of previous Parliaments who have voted in support of Women's Suffrage.

An asterisk denotes those who voted for Sir Albert Rollit's Bill.

§ denotes new candidates, who have replied in the affirmative to the enquiry whether they would support a measure for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to women who already possess the various local franchises.

Others have spoken in public or otherwise shewn themselves in favour.

*ACLAND, A. H. DYKE	G. L.	Yorks, Rotherham.
*ADDISON, J. E.	C.	Ashton-under-Lyne.
*AGG-GARDNER, J. T.	C.	Cheltenham.
AIRD, JOHN	C.	Paddington, North.
Allen, Egerton	G. L.	Pembroke District.
Allison, R. A.	G. L.	Cumberland, Eskdale.
§Annand, J.	G. L.	Tynemouth.
*ANSTRUTHER, Col.	C.	Suffolk, Woodbridge.
ARNOLD, ARTHUR	G. L.	Dorset, North.
§Arnold, Alfred	C.	Halifax.
ASHMEAD-BARTLETT, E.	C.	Sheffield, Eccleshall.
§Askew, W. Robertson	C.	Northumberland, Berwick-on-Tweed.
§Bagot, Capt	C.	Westmoreland, South.

*BAIN, SIR JAMES	C.	<i>Cumberland, Whitehaven.</i>
*BALFOUR, RT. HON. A. J.	C.	<i>Manchester, East.</i>
*BALFOUR, G. W.	C.	<i>Leeds, Central.</i>
*BALFOUR, J. S.	G. L.	<i>Burnley.</i>
*BANES, MAJOR	C.	<i>West Ham, South.</i>
Baptie, J. Proctor	G. L.	<i>Bath.</i>
Barnes, F. E.	G. L.	<i>Surrey, Reigate.</i>
Bayley, Thomas	Labour	<i>Finsbury, Holborn.</i>
Bateman, J.	G. L.	<i>Derby, Chesterfield.</i>
*BEACH, W. W. B.	C.	<i>Hants, Andover.</i>
Beale, E. J.	G. L.	<i>St. Pancras, South.</i>
*BEAUFOY, MARK	G. L.	<i>Kennington.</i>
Begg, Faithfull	C.	<i>Kennington.</i>
Bell, W. A.	L. U.	<i>Leith.</i>
*BENTINCK, LORD H.	C.	<i>Norfolk, North West.</i>
*BIGWOOD, J.	C.	<i>Middlesex, Brentford.</i>
Billson, A.	G. L.	<i>Devon, Barnstaple.</i>
*BIRKBECK, SIR E.	C.	<i>Norfolk, East.</i>
*BIRRELL, AUGUSTINE	G. L.	<i>Fife, West.</i>
*BOLITHO, T. B.	L. U.	<i>Cornwall, St. Ives.</i>
Boord, T. W.	C.	<i>Greenwich.</i>
*BORTHWICK, SIR A., BT.	C.	<i>Kensington, South.</i>
§Boscawen, A. G.	C.	<i>Kent, Tunbridge Wells.</i>
§Bousfield, W. R., Q.C.	C.	<i>Hackney, North.</i>
§Bowring, W. B.	G. L.	<i>Liverpool, Abercrombie.</i>
Brand, Capt. Hon. T. S.	G. L.	<i>Sussex, Eastbourne.</i>
*BRIDGEMAN, HON. COL.	C.	<i>Bolton.</i>
BRIGHT, JACOB	G. L.	<i>Manchester, South West.</i>
Broad, H. J. E.	G. L.	<i>Derby, South.</i>
Bunting, Percy	G. L.	<i>Islington, East.</i>
Burns, John	Lat.	<i>Battersea.</i>
*BUCHANAN, T. B.	G. L.	<i>Edinburgh, West.</i>
*BURT, THOS.	G. L.	<i>Morpeth.</i>
CAINE, W. S.	G. L.	<i>Bradford, East.</i>
*CAMERON, DR. CHARLES	G. L.	<i>Glasgow, College.</i>
§Cartwright, T. L. M.	C.	<i>Northampton, South.</i>
CHANNING, F. A.	G. L.	<i>Northamptonshire, East.</i>
§Chesney, Gen. Sir G.	C.	<i>Oxford.</i>
*CLARK, DR. GAVIN	G. L.	<i>Caithness.</i>
§Clarke, Sir Andrew	G. L.	<i>Chatham.</i>
§Clare, O. Leigh	C.	<i>Lancashire, Eccles.</i>
Clayden, Arthur	G. L.	<i>Camberwell, Dulwich.</i>
§Clayton, N. G.	C.	<i>N'umberland, Hexham.</i>
§Clough, W. O.	G. L.	<i>Portsmouth.</i>
Cohen, B. L.	C.	<i>Islington, East.</i>
Coldstream, L. P.	G. L.	<i>Wigtonshire.</i>
*COLERIDGE, HON. B.	G. L.	<i>Sheffield, Attercliffe.</i>
*COLLINGS, JESSE	L. U.	<i>Birmingham, Bordesley.</i>
Collins, R. C.	C.	<i>Devon, Ashburton.</i>
Colomb, Sir John	C.	<i>Tower Hamlets, Bromley.</i>

§Colston, E.	C.	<i>Gloucester, Thornbury.</i>
COMPTON, EARL	G. L.	<i>York, Barnsley.</i>
*CONYBEARE, C. A. V.	G. L.	<i>Cornwall, Camborne.</i>
*CORBETT A. CAMERON	L. U.	<i>Glasgow, Tradeston.</i>
Costelloe, B. T.	G. L.	<i>Chelsea.</i>
*COTTON-JODRELL, COL.	C.	<i>Cheshire, Wirrall.</i>
*COURTNEY, RT. HON. L.	L. U.	<i>Cornwall, Bodmin.</i>
Crook, Wm.	G. L.	<i>Wandsworth.</i>
*COZENS-HARDY, H. H.	G. L.	<i>Norfolk, North.</i>
§Crosland, Sir Joseph	C.	<i>Huddersfield.</i>
Dane, R. M.	C.	<i>Fermanagh, North.</i>
§Debenham, Frank	G. L.	<i>Cheltenham.</i>
DE WORMS, BARON	C.	<i>Liverpool, East Toxteth.</i>
*DIXON, GEORGE	L. U.	<i>Birmingham, Edgbaston.</i>
*DIXON-HARTLAND, F. D.	C.	<i>Middlesex, Uxbridge.</i>
Drucker, A. G.	C.	<i>Northampton.</i>
§Duke, Col. Oliver T.	C.	<i>Bedford, Luton.</i>
§Duncan, S. W.	C.	<i>Cambridge, Wisbeach.</i>
*Dunn, W.	G. L.	<i>Paisley.</i>
*ELCHO, LORD	C.	<i>Ipswich.</i>
*ELLIOT, SIR GEORGE BT.	C.	<i>Monmouth, District.</i>
*ESSLEMONT, PETER	G. L.	<i>Aberdeen, East.</i>
§Everett, R. L.	G. L.	<i>Suffolk, Woodbridge.</i>
*EYRE, COL.	C.	<i>Lincoln, Gainsborough.</i>
*FARQUHARSON, DR.	G. L.	<i>Aberdeen, West.</i>
Farrer, A.	G. L.	<i>Westmoreland, Kendal.</i>
*FINCH, G. H.	C.	<i>Rutland.</i>
Finch-Hatton, H. H.	C.	<i>Nottingham, East.</i>
*FISHER, W. HAYES	C.	<i>Fulham.</i>
§Fitzgerald, Vesey	C.	<i>Liverpool, Scotland.</i>
*FITZGERALD, R. U. P.	C.	<i>Cambridge.</i>
FITZMAURICE, LORD E.	G. L.	<i>Deptford.</i>
*FITZWYGRAM, SIR F.	C.	<i>Hants, Fareham.</i>
*FORWOOD, RT. HON. A. B.	C.	<i>Lancashire, Newton.</i>
§Forster, Henry W.	C.	<i>Kent, West.</i>
§Foster, S. P.	C.	<i>Carlisle.</i>
*FRY, LEWIS,	L. U.	<i>Bristol, North.</i>
Frye, F. C.	G. L.	<i>Kensington, North.</i>
*GANE, LAWRENCE	G. L.	<i>Leeds, East.</i>
*GATHORNE-HARDY, HON. A. C.	C.	<i>Sussex, East Grinstead.</i>
§Giffard, Henry A., Q.C.	C.	<i>Cambridge, Newmarket.</i>
*GILLIATT, J. S.	C.	<i>Lancashire, Widnes.</i>
*GILES, ALFRED	C.	<i>Southampton.</i>
*GODSON, A. F.	C.	<i>Kidderminster.</i>
*GOLDSWORTHY, GEN.	C.	<i>Hammersmith.</i>
*GORST, RT. HON. J. G.	C.	<i>Cambridge University.</i>
*GOURLEY, E. T.	G. L.	<i>Sunderland.</i>
§Graham, Harry R.	U.	<i>St. Pancras, North.</i>
*GRAHAM, CUNINGHAME	G. L.	<i>Glasgow, Camlochie.</i>
§Greenwood, Arthur	C.	<i>York.</i>

*GREY, SIR EDWARD	G. L.	Northumberland, Berwick-on-Tweed.
*GROTRIAN, F. B.	C.	Hull, East.
§Gunn, John	L. U.	Cardiff.
*HALDANE, R. B.	G. L.	Haddington, East Lothian.
Hallifax, Sydney	G. L.	Kent, Faversham.
*HALSEY, F. T.	C.	Herts, Watford.
*HANBURY, ROBT. W.	C.	Lancashire, Preston.
Hardie, James Keir	Labour	West Ham, South.
*HARRISON, HENRY	Nat.	Tipperary Mid.
Harvey, Robert	C.	Devonport.
§Haslam, Sir Alfred S.	L. U.	Derby.
§Hatch, E.	C.	Lancashire, Gorton.
Haysman, J.	G. L.	Mile End.
HAYNE, C. SEALE	G. L.	Devon, Ashburton.
*HEATON, J. HENNIKER	C.	Canterbury.
*HERVEY, LORD F.	C.	Bury St. Edmunds.
HIBBERT, RT. HON. J. T.	G. L.	Oldham.
§Hickman, Sir A.	C.	Wolverhampton, West.
*HILL, A. S., Q.C.	C.	Stafford, Kingswinford.
*HILL, RT. HON. LORD A.	C.	Down.
*HILL, COL. SIR E.	C.	Bristol, South.
§Hoare, E. Hugh	G. L.	Cambridge, Chesterton.
*HOARE, S.	C.	Norwich.
§Hodgson, C. D.	G. L.	Surrey, Kingston.
*HOLLOWAY, GEO.	C.	Gloucester, Stroud.
Hope, Captain T.	C.	West Lothian.
Hopkinson, Prof.	L. U.	Manchester, South.
HOPWOOD, C. H., Q.C.	G. L.	Lancaster, Middleton.
*HOULDSWORTH, SIR W.	C.	Manchester, N. W.
HOWARD, E. STAFFORD	G. L.	Gloucester, Thornbury.
*HUTCHINSON, CAPT. GRICE	C.	Aston Manor.
*HOLDEN, ISAAC	G. L.	Yorkshire, Keighley.
HOWORTH, H. H.	C.	Salford, South.
*HOZIER, JAMES H. C.	C.	Lanark, South.
*HUGHES, COL.	C.	Woolwich.
Hudson, G. B.	C.	Herts, Hitchin.
§Hunter, C. E.	C.	Durham, Mid.
*HUNTER, W. A.	G. L.	Aberdeen, N.
§Hulton, Harrington	C.	Lincoln, Bosworth.
Hume, Major M.A.S.	L. U.	Stockport.
*ILLINGWORTH, ALFRED	G. L.	Bradford, West.
*ISAACS, MAJOR	C.	Newington, Watworth.
*ISAACSON, F. W.	C.	Tower Hamlets, Stepney.
JACOBY, J. A.	G. L.	Derby, Mid.
*JEBB, PROF. R. C.	C.	Cambridge University.
JENKINS, SIR J. JONES	L. U.	Carmarthen District.
JENNINGS, L. J.	C.	Stockport.
§Jones, W. C.	C.	Lancashire, Louth.

Jones, Dr. Sydenham	G. L.	Middlesex, Hornsey.
*Johnston, William	C.	Belfast, S.
Josse, Henri	G. L.	Grimsby.
§Judd, G.	G. L.	Hants, Basingstoke.
*KEAY, J. SEYMOUR	G. L.	Elgin Group.
KENYON, HON. G. T.	C.	Denbigh District.
*KERANS, F. H.	C.	Lincoln.
*KIMBER, H.	C.	Wandsworth.
*KING, H. SEYMOUR	C.	Hull, Central.
*LAFONE, ALFRED	C.	Southwark, Bermondsey.
Laverton, W. H.	C.	Wilts, Westbury.
§Laurie, General	C.	Pembroke District.
*LAWSON, SIR W., BT.	G. L.	Cumberland, Cocker- mouth.
Lea, Thomas	L. U.	Londonderry, South.
*LEAHY, J.	Nat.	Kildare, South.
*LEAKE, R.	G. L.	Lancashire, Radcliffe- cum-Farnham.
§Lease, J. F.	G. L.	Lancashire, Accrington.
*LECHMERE, SIR E., BT.	C.	Worcester, Evesham.
§Leeke, Samuel	C.	Derby, Ilkeston.
Lever, W. H.	G. L.	Birkenhead.
Lidgett, Geo.	G. L.	Plymouth.
Lile, J. H.	G. L.	Cornwall, St. Ives.
*LLEWELLYN, E. H.	C.	Somerset, North.
Lockhart, R. A.	L. U.	Montrose Group.
§Lockwood, Col.	C.	Essex, Epping.
*LOCKWOOD, FRANK	G. L.	York.
*LOGAN, J. W.	G. L.	Leicester, Harborough.
§Lowe, Frank W.	C.	Leicester, Harborough.
*LUBBOCK, SIR JOHN, BT.	L. U.	London University.
Lush, A. H.	G. L.	Devon, Totnes.
McARTHUR, W. A.	G. L.	Cornwall, St. Austell.
*McCARTHY, JUSTIN	Nat.	Londonderry.
§Macdonald, A. J. Murray	G. L.	Bow & Bromley.
§Macdona, Cumming	C.	Southwark, Rotherhithe.
*McKENNA, SIR J.	Nat.	Monaghan South.
*McLAGAN, PETER	G. L.	Linlithgow, W. Lothian.
*McLAREN, W. S. B.	G. L.	Cheshire, Crewe.
McLAREN, C. B.	G. L.	Leicester, Bosworth.
MACLURE, J. W.	C.	Lancashire, Stratford.
*MADEN, J. H.	G. L.	Lancashire, Rossendale.
§Maddison, F. B.	G. L.	Rochester.
*MAGUIRE, T. R.	Nat.	Donegal, North.
*MALLOCK, RICHARD	C.	Devon, Torquay.
*MANFIELD, M. P.	G. L.	Northampton.
*MARRIOTT, RT. HON. SIR W.	C.	Brighton.
*MATHER, W.	G. L.	Lancashire, Gorton.
Maxwell, W. A.	L. U.	Dumfriesshire.

Morice, Beaumont	G. L.	Somerset, Wells.
*MAXWELL, SIR H. E.	C.	Wigtonshire.
Meates, T. A.	G. L.	Wimbledon, North East.
§Meredyth, W. H.	C.	Monmouth, West.
*MILDMAY, F. B.	L. U.	Devon, Totnes.
*MONTAGU, S.	G. L.	Tower Hamlets, White-chapel.
*MORRELL, G. H.	C.	Oxford, Woodstock.
MORGAN, COL.	C.	Monmouth, North.
*MORGAN, O. V.	G. L.	Ashton-under-Lyne.
Morgan, Sir Morgan	C.	Glamorgan, South.
Moulton, J. Fletcher	G. L.	Notts, South.
*MUNTZ, P. A.	C.	Warwick, Tamworth.
Murray, Col. Wyndham	C.	Bath.
§Mytton, Capt. D. H.	C.	Montgomeryshire.
§Napier, Major Scott	C.	Cumberland, Cocker-mouth.
Nicholson, Joshua O.	G. L.	Staffordshire, Kingswinford.
*NOLAN, COL.	Nat.	Galway, North.
*NORTHCOTE, HON. SIR S., BT.	C.	Exeter.
Norton, Captain	G. L.	Kennington, West.
*O'BRIEN, WM.	Nat.	Cork, North East.
*O'BRIEN, PATRICK	Nat.	Limerick.
Ogilvie, A. Graeme	G. L.	Suffolk, Sudbury.
§Otter, Francis,	G. L.	Lincoln, Horncastle.
Owen, Thomas	G. L.	Cornwall, Launceston.
Palmer, D.	C.	Gravesend.
Paul, Herbert	C.	Edinburgh, South.
§Pavey, Capt.	G. L.	Kent, Tunbridge.
Pearse, Sir W.	C.	Plymouth.
*PEARSON, SIR CHARLES	C.	St. Andrew's University.
§Philipps, Sir C. E. G.	C.	Pembrokeshire.
*PHILIPPS, J. WYNFORD	G. L.	Lanark.
PLAYFAIR, RT. HON. SIR LYON	G. L.	Leeds, South.
*PLOWDEN, SIR WM.	G. L.	Wolverhampton, W.
Pollard, Dr.	G. L.	Southport.
*PRICE, CAPT.	C.	Devonport.
§Pryce-Jones, Sir Pryce	C.	Montgomery District.
*PULESTON, SIR J.	C.	Carnarvon.
§Purvis, R.	C.	Peterborough.
Pym, Guy	C.	Bedford.
*QUIN, THOMAS	Nat.	Kilkenny.
*RANDELL, DAVID	G. L.	Glamorganshire.
*RANKIN, J.	C.	Hereford, Leominster.
*RASCH, MAJOR	C.	Essex, South East.
*REED, BYRON	C.	Bradford, East.

Renshaw, C. B.	C.	Renfrewshire.
§Richardson, J. M.	C.	Lincolnshire, Brigg.
§Richardson, T.	L. U.	Hartlepool.
Richards, H. C.	C.	Northampton.
*ROBY, J. A.	G. L.	Lancashire, Eccles.
*ROBINSON, BROOKE	C.	Dudley.
*ROLLIT, SIR A. K.	C.	Islington, South.
ROLLS, J. A.	C.	Monmouth, North.
ROSS, J., Q.C.	C.	Londonderry City.
*ROUND, JAMES	C.	Essex, Harwich.
*ROUNTREE, JOSHUA	G. L.	Scarborough.
*ROWLANDS, BOWEN	G. L.	Cardiganshire.
*RUSSELL, SIR GEORGE	C.	Berkshire, Wokingham.
*RUSSELL, T. W.	L. U.	Tyrone, North.
§Samuel, H. S.	C.	Tower Hamlets, Lime-house.
*Sanderson, Col.	C.	Armagh.
Saunders, W.	G. L.	Newington, Walworth.
§Savory, Sir Joseph	C.	Westmoreland, Appleby
SCHWANN, C. E.	G. L.	Manchester, North.
Scott, C. P.	G. L.	Manchester, North East.
Serena, Arthur	G. L.	Falmouth.
*SETON-KERR, HENRY	C.	St. Helens.
§Shadwell, Lucas	C.	Finsbury.
Sharp, W.	C.	Kensington, North.
*SHAW, THOMAS	G. L.	Halifax.
*SIDEBOTTOM, A. W.	C.	Derby, High Peak.
Sitwell, Sir Geo.	C.	Scarborough.
Souttar, R.	G. L.	Oxford.
*SMITH, ABEL	C.	Hertfordshire.
SPENCER, J. E.	C.	West Bromwich.
*STANSFELD, RT. HON. J.	G. L.	Halifax.
Smith, Clarence	G. L.	Hull.
Smith, Frank	G. L.	Hammersmith.
Smith, P. Vernon	C.	Essex-Saffron, Walden.
*STANLEY, E. J.	C.	Somerset, Bridgwater.
Stapley, R.	G. L.	Lambeth, West.
§Sparrow, Arthur G.	L. U.	Lancashire, Rossendale.
Stewart, J. F.	G. L.	Hackney Central.
*STOREY, S.	G. L.	Sunderland.
*STUART, JAMES	G. L.	Shoreditch, Hoxton.
Sturt, Hon. H.	C.	Dorset, East.
SUMMERS, W.	G. L.	Huddersfield.
*SULLIVAN, DONAL	Nat.	Westminster.
SULLIVAN, T. D.	Nat.	Dublin, College Green.
§Tallents, G. W.	C.	Newington, West.
*TEMPLE, SIR R., BT.	C.	Surrey, Kingston.
Terry, H. M. Imbert	C.	Somerset, South.
Terrell, T.	G. L.	Paddington, North.
*THOMAS, ABEL	G. L.	Carmarthen, East.

Thompson, Whittaker	C.	<i>Yorkshire, Shipley.</i>
*THORBURN, WALTER	L. U.	<i>Peebles, Selkirk.</i>
Townsend, Charles	G. L.	<i>Bristol, North.</i>
Tritton, Charles E.	C.	<i>Lambeth, Norwood.</i>
*TYLER, SIR HENRY	C.	<i>Great Yarmouth.</i>
Ure, Alexander	G. L.	<i>Perthshire.</i>
Verdon, Dr.	G. L.	<i>Norwood.</i>
*VILLIERS, Rt. HON. C. P.	L. U.	<i>Wolverhampton, South.</i>
*VINCENT, COL. HOWARD	C.	<i>Sheffield, Central.</i>
§ Warner, H. Lee	G. L.	<i>Norfolk, South West.</i>
§ Walter, Sampson	C.	<i>Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent.</i>
*WEST, COL. CORNWALLIS	L. U.	<i>Denbigh, West.</i>
Wainwright, H. H.	C.	<i>South Shields.</i>
§ Walker, Thomas	G. L.	<i>Lancashire, Blackpool.</i>
*WALROND, SIR W.	C.	<i>Devon, Tiverton.</i>
*WATKIN, SIR E., BT.	L. U.	<i>Hythe.</i>
Watson, Robt.	L. U.	<i>Harwich Group.</i>
Wauchope, Col.	C.	<i>Midlothian.</i>
*WEBB, ALFRED	Nat.	<i>Waterford, West.</i>
*WESTON, SIR J.	G. L.	<i>Bristol, West.</i>
Westlake, J., Q.C.	L. U.	<i>Cornwall, St. Austell.</i>
Wickham, M.	C.	<i>Hants, Petersfield.</i>
§ White, Leedham	L. U.	<i>Devon, Barnstaple.</i>
§ Whiteley, Geo.	C.	<i>Cheshire, Northwich.</i>
Whiteley, G. C.	G. L.	<i>Greenwich.</i>
*WHITMORE, C.	C.	<i>Chelsea.</i>
WILLIAMS, A. J.	G. L.	<i>Glamorgan, South.</i>
§ Williams, J. Carvell	G. L.	<i>Notts., Mansfield.</i>
Wills, W. H.	G. L.	<i>Bristol, South.</i>
Wilson, H. J.	G. L.	<i>Yorkshire, Holmfirth.</i>
Wright, J. Macer	G. L.	<i>Stalybridge.</i>
*WOLMER, VISCOUNT	L. U.	<i>Edinburgh, West.</i>
*WOOD NICHOLAS	C.	<i>Durham, Houghton-le-Spring.</i>
*WOODALL, W.	G. L.	<i>Hanley.</i>
*WORTLEY, C. STUART	C.	<i>Sheffield, Hallam.</i>
*WRIGHT, CALEB	G. L.	<i>Lancashire, Leigh.</i>
WRIGHT, H. SMITH	C.	<i>Nottingham, South.</i>
*Wright, T.	L. U.	<i>Leicester.</i>
§ Wyn, Sir W. Williams, Bt.	C.	<i>Denbigh, East.</i>
*WYNDHAM, GEO.	C.	<i>Dover.</i>
§ Yates, J. M.	C.	<i>Manchester, North.</i>
§ Yoxall, J. H.	G. L.	<i>Notts, Bassetlaw.</i>

S P E E C H

IN MOVING

THE EXTENSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
FRANCHISE TO WOMEN BILL,

BY

SIR ALBERT KAYE ROLLIT, D.C.L., M.P.,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

April 27th, 1892.

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10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER.

Sir ALBERT KAYE ROLLIT (Islington, S.): The subject of the Bill of which I now move the second reading is no new one to the House of Commons. For upwards of a quarter of a century it has been debated upon Bills and resolutions. This gives the House the advantage of familiarity with the question; but it has some disadvantage for myself, since it forces upon me a too conscious contrast with those more able men who have on previous occasions introduced this matter to the House of Commons, the benefit of whose assistance I am glad, in many cases, to have to-day. All I can hope to do is to contribute some municipal experience, which, however, may be useful, since the Bill is based on municipal precedents and example, which have been too much ignored in previous debates. (Hear, hear.) One new aspect is, indeed, given to the question by the Open Letter

Mr. Gladstone's Letter. which has been addressed to the hon. member opposite (Mr. S. Smith) by the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I

realise that such a communication is naturally very forcible, and I shall of course treat it with respect; but if I may make one criticism upon it, it is that I think it does not discuss the proposal from the standpoint from which it is now made, but seems to be based rather upon communications of a similar character addressed to the newspapers, and also, I think, to a constituent, by the hon. member for Flint (Mr. S. Smith), and to be a reflection of his opinions rather than a discussion of the principles of the present proposal. (Hear, hear.) But, at any rate, that Pamphlet has had one benefit. If this subject—which I cannot conceive—has not, as the writer argues, already received sufficient public attention, the letter has itself secured it. (Hear, hear.) There is another, and even a greater advantage attaching to the Pamphlet, in that it invites, and sets the example of, a more serious discussion of the subject, and I trust the tone and language of the letter will not in this respect be lost sight of. (Hear, hear.) I have said the subject is

A New Bill. not new to the House of Commons, but I am glad to-day to be free from one reproach which has, on former occasions, been addressed to those who have stood in my present position—namely, that the Bill

has been brought before one and the same Parliament session after session. Now, it may be said that the measure has not been before this Parliament at all; and when I recall the fact that in the last Parliament the Bill had the advantage of the advocacy of the hon.

member for Hanley (Mr. Woodall), and passed the House without a division, I think I am justified in bespeaking for it to-day more statesmanlike consideration. (Hear, hear.) A further change in the position is that the Bill has quite a new form. So much so, that one of my correspondents—who have been numerous and sometimes humorous—(laughter)—has referred to it, in ladylike language, as a “modest Bill.” (Laughter.) I have carefully read the debates and the criticisms passed upon former measures; and, if I may venture to say so, I think those discussions and criticisms have generally been of a too high-pitched and abstract character, and I do not recognise them as applicable to the proposal in its present practical shape. (Hear, hear.) They seem to me—those criticisms—to have exaggerated and distorted both the object of the proposal and the objections to it; and I repeat that even in the case of the recent Letter to which I have referred, the new basis of our proposals seem to have been overlooked, and the same old ground to have been taken once again, viz., that, in the words of the hon. member opposite, this is a proposal “revolutionary in character,” and “a reversal of the order of nature,” that it is “such a change as has never been made since the Creation,” and is now “put forward for the first time in the world’s history.” (Laughter.) And all these expressions are actually addressed to the proposal to confer upon duly qualified and capable women citizens a vote in Parliamentary elections which they have long exercised, and exercised with advantage, in relation to municipal government! It is the old case of the roof coming down because a few cobwebs are to be swept away! (Laughter.)

Revolutionary! Why, Sir, this proposal is not even an innovation; for, if I remember my history correctly, the franchise, both parliamentary and municipal, was possessed by women in former times on identically the same lines as those I suggest to-day—at any rate it was so exercised by women from time to time in the election of knights of the shire for Yorkshire and elsewhere. (Hear, hear.) If I wanted to found myself on good constitutional and ancient authority, I would remind the House that this was so in the days of the Plantagenets, and certainly of the Tudors, and that ought to be good enough for hon. gentlemen on this side of the House. (Laughter.) Then, on the other hand, to influence hon. gentlemen opposite, I might say that this state of affairs was put an end to by judge-made law; and, having in mind expressions of opinion upon judge-made law during the recent debate upon the Law of Conspiracy, I commend that fact to the consideration of such hon. gentlemen. (Laughter.) It is also a coincidence that may strike both sides of the House that, while this judge-made law emanated from a member for Liskeard (Coke), we shall to-day have the advantage of the aid of another member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) in favour of its restitution. (Hear, hear.) And, if this privilege of voting by women was extinguished because of its disuse, I must remind the House that the cessation was

Not an Innovation.

due to the association of the vote with services in kind, and that those services have since been commuted to a money payment, with the result, —which meets the oft-repeated physical force argument,—that qualified women do just as much for the Army as most men—namely, help to pay for it. (Applause.) But these criticisms, however forcibly they may have applied to former measures, can have no Based on political application to this Bill, which aims, as I say, at development. a practical—and the only present practicable—solution of the question, and which is based distinctly on the natural, and ultimately inevitable, development of our applied principles of representative government. If I may quote the highest political authority for this, I should use the words of Sir Henry Maine, who, in his *Early History of Institutions*, says—

“The civilised societies of the West, in steadily enlarging the personal and proprietary independence of women, and even in granting to them political privileges, are only carrying out still further a law of development which they have been obeying for many centuries.”

An age of Franchises.

May I now remind the House that this is an age of successive and successful franchises,—successive notwithstanding the same arguments are now used, viz., that the votes are not wanted, that the unfranchised classes are indirectly represented, and that their enfranchisement will lead us no one knows where,—and successful, especially, in securing attention to, and proper precedence in the consideration of, the interests of the classes on whom the votes have been conferred? (Applause.) And so we hope this extension will secure proper regard for the interests of those who are now unrepresented among the electorate. (Hear, hear.) It was once A security against political neglect. said by the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian, speaking of a large class of men, “They have no votes, and so may be safely neglected.” I heartily accept this expression as applicable to those with which this measure deals. And illustrations of such neglect are not wanting. The middle-class Parliament formed in 1832 did nothing for popular education, or very little; but the election of the Household Suffrage Parliament of 1867 was followed by the passing of the Education Act of 1870 and the Labour Statutes of 1875, which have so materially improved the conditions of life of the labouring classes. So, too, the gift of the County Franchise has been quickly followed by the Allotments Acts and by the Bills which are at the present time before the House for discussion, one of which is to confer upon labourers in the rural districts the advantage of acquiring small holdings. (Hear, hear.) Thus has enfranchisement, whatever else may be said for or against it, been followed by remedial legislation,—yet qualified women have no vote and therefore no such security (hear, hear). Again, enfranchisement

has hitherto proceeded on two great main lines :—
 A Franchise of the possession of qualifying property and contribu-
 Citizenship. tion to taxation. Time was when taxation without
 representation was spoken of as tyranny. That
 was then the tyranny of Kings, but the tyranny is not the less if
 it is the tyranny of a multitude ; it is then but a multiplied tyranny.
 (Applause.) On the ground of representation with taxation, therefore,
 these votes are asked for. For the principle upon which the franchise
 has been extended is the possession of evidence of citizenship ; mere
 manhood is not sufficient ; a man must have, even in the minor cases
 of the lodger and service votes, a house of some description and con-
 tribute, directiy or indirectly, to the payment of rates and taxes.
 (Hear, hear.) Whether a different principle may be adopted in the
 future we cannot say. The basis of the franchise, now, is the household
 and some contribution to the national burdens, and, upon that basis,
 we claim the extension of it to duly qualified women. (Applause.)

Manhood suffrage may, or may not, come ; that is a
 Speculative matter, after all, only of opinion ; speculations based
 Assumptions. upon it are irrelevant to the present question ;
 and we must leave their solution to future Parliam-
 ents. (Hear, hear.) We must not, as I think the hon. member for
 Flint (Mr. S. Smith) suggests, treat future Parliaments as automatic
 machines to carry out the behests of the Parliament of to-day. We
 must have sufficient faith in future Parliaments to know that they will
 act rightly and with the advantage of a knowledge of the circumstances
 and conditions of their time ; that they will do what is just and
 expedient, as we do what is just and expedient to-day. We cannot
 bind future Parliaments ; we cannot phophecy what they may do ; we
 must do our duty by giving the franchise where it is right and due, and
 we must rely on future Parliaments doing their duty in protecting that
 privilege, and in the maintenance of good government, not carrying the
 principle to illogical and improper conclusions. (Hear, hear.) We must
 not, therefore, on the faith of any such speculative assumptions, refuse
 to fulfil the franchise of citizenship by admitting to it qualified and
 capable women citizens ; we must not decline to do right because others
 may seek to do wrong ; we must do our duty in the conviction that our
 successors will do theirs and no more than theirs (cheers) ; and indeed,
 judging from the present state of local electoral law, the fear is, not
 that Parliaments will push matters to too logical conclusions, but
 that they may be only too well trusted to retain any number of
 illogicalities and anomalies. (Laughter.) Yet, we are told that this
 proposal to confer the franchise on qualified women

is, to use the word of my hon. friend, "revolution-
 ary." We are asked when and where was
 Instances of the Franchise. such a change ever made ; and the practice in
 former debates has been to quote instances where such a franchise

has been conferred. It has been asserted that there has been
 a partial exercise of such a suffrage in Italy, and reference
 has also been made to Denmark, and to the existence of the
 female franchise in the territory of Wyoming and other places.
 I will not dwell on these instances, though I may mention that
 Wyoming is now a State, that the user of the female franchise has the
 approval of high official authority, and that the right to vote there
 carries with it the right to hold any public office in the United States.
 But I pass to an illustration nearer home. I have a letter from a
 member of The States of Guernsey, and my correspondent mentions
 that a Bill has recently passed the island Parliament, and is now law,
 giving a vote to women householders—who pay rates and taxes as
 householders—on the very lines of this Bill. Women, my corre-
 spondent adds, are not eligible for any office, nor can they be members
 of the States. There you have the principles, in both respects, upon
 which this Bill is based ; but the right to vote carries with it no right
 to hold office or to sit in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) The measure,
 I am informed, works very well in Guernsey. I might also refer to
 the case of the Isle of Man, where female freeholders have a similar
 franchise. The Colonial Confederation Scheme of Sir Harry Parkes con-
 templated such an extension of the suffrage, and some colonies, including
 South Australia, have nearly passed such a measure. It is suggested
 to me, for instance, that in New Zealand the proposal was only defeated
 by the votes of two Maoris. I mention this because my hon. friend
 opposite has imaginatively pictured the battle of our eleven millions of
 women against our ten millions of men, and the defeat of the latter ;
 and if that be possible, one may also imagine Macaulay's New
 Zealander contemplating from London Bridge not the last man—but
 the last woman. (Loud laughter.) I do not rely, however, on these
 instances or on these illustrations as arguments ; we have for our safe
 guidance ample practical experience in the United Kingdom, in our
 own municipal and county council elections ; and, seeing the
 development of our constitution, I would ask where should we look for
 such a completed franchise if not to our own country, the home of
 representative institutions, from which, as such, this franchise is asked
 for qualified women,—so much, and no more, and for such and such
 only ? (Loud cheers.) Next, much has been said of the manner in

which this proposal has been advocated, and I am
 Methods and not concerned to defend all those methods. But the
 Criticisms. arguments of our opponents are too often contra-
 dictions in terms. (Hear, hear.) If women press for
 this extension, then "they are agitators, and their demand should not
 be complied with ;" if they do not agitate, then "they are indifferent
 to the subject." If many petitions are presented, then "they are got
 up by organisation ;" if the petitions are few, then "you see
 women do not want this extension." If the platform is occupied, then

“there is reason to fear the invasion of Parliament by the advocates of female suffrage;” if the platform is not resorted to, then “there is no popular feeling in favour of the proposal.” (Laughter and cheers.) The allegation that it is not wanted has invariably been urged against the extension of the franchise to any class. It is based on the fallacy of universality. It is not true to say that women do not want the franchise, though some may be indifferent or opposed to it. The only true proposition is, as in most other cases, that many do and some don't wish for votes, and the exercise of the franchise will be optional—there is no obligation to use the vote or to follow the example set by those who think it gives the proper protection of their own interests, and those who do desire it ought not to be debarred from it for the sake of those who need not exercise it. (Hear, hear.) With regard

to the methods by which the present proposal has been advocated, all I can say is I have taken no part in any agitation. I have attended no meetings on the subject; happily, not one of those held last night, the proceedings of which I thoroughly disapprove. (Hear, hear.) Very many petitions have been presented—some, no doubt, open to the criticisms which can always be directed against this form of expression of opinion. These petitions have emanated frequently from bodies of people, and are signed officially by presidents and others, who represent very large constituencies. They have been signed by those who belong to all classes, and very many of whom are obviously in humble positions. (Hear, hear.) Resolutions have, at one time or another, been passed by the great political organisations of both parties, at Leeds, at Birmingham, and elsewhere; and though it may be said that women should not take part in political campaigns, they have been urged to do so by the leaders of both parties; their assistance has been welcome, and most of us, unlike some others, are grateful for it. (Cheers.) Petitions have been presented from some 160 branches of the Women's Liberal Federation, some of them this morning. The attitude of the press towards the proposal has in London been critical but just, and not unfavourable in many cases; the provincial press has been eminently favourable, especially in Scotland, and I do not hesitate to say that from the provincial press we get a good index of the public opinion of the country and of its probable development. (Hear, hear.) This, therefore, is a constitutional concession constitutionally asked. (Hear, hear.) And, though I have

incidentally referred to parties, let me say, as emphatically as possible, that this is in no sense a party matter, as the names attached to the Bill conclusively show. The tendency of the influence of women voters will, it is to be hoped, be to modify party feeling, which, however necessary under our existing system, is, in my opinion, too often a disfigurement of our national life; and I hope for the time when

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it will be more generally felt that he does best for his party who does his best for the State. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, woman's interests must not be sacrificed to party exigency; and I trust that they may be the hope of each party, the prey of neither, and the sport of none. (Cheers.)

I gladly leave this part of my remarks for the moment in order to tell the House how the Bill carries out the principles under which it is introduced, for it appears there is much misapprehension in some minds as to what the Bill, does and as to what it does not do. It enacts that—

“Every woman who in Great Britain is registered or entitled to be registered as an elector for a town council or county council, or who in Ireland is a ratepayer entitled to vote in the election of guardians of the poor, shall be entitled to be registered as a Parliamentary elector, and when registered to vote at any Parliamentary election for the county, borough, or division wherein the qualifying property is situate.”

These words “qualifying property” follow the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882, and this is the basis of the existing female franchise. What, then, will be the effect of accepting this? And what will be the results—not by mere prophecy, but by necessary inference? In England and Scotland, under the municipal corporations and county councils electors Acts, every inhabitant occupier—that is, every householder who for twelve months has been rated and has paid rates—is qualified for, and entitled to, the franchise; and the effect will be to give just the same, no less and no more, to a woman who is similarly qualified, subject to two exceptions which I will deal with in a moment. In Ireland, where there is not yet a Local Government Act, but where we hope that, under the auspices of one party or the other, there soon will be, it will then be easy to apply the same principle for conferring the franchise on women, and I think the Local Government Bill for Ireland contains that provision. Meanwhile, the closest analogous Statute which includes women voters, viz., the Poor Law Act for Ireland (1 and 2 Vic., c. 56), has been taken as giving the nearest approach to the franchise to be conferred on women in this country, and it will thus be given to all those who are duly qualified as ratepayers, or (if no rate has been laid) as county cesspayers, to vote for the election of guardians of the poor. The Bill, if passed, would thus add about a million to the electorate, as against some 300,000 to 400,000 under previous Bills—a million of women who have had a long experience in the exercise of the franchise. (Hear, hear.) And if it be said by my hon. friend opposite that this will be a large number as opposed to men who are similarly qualified, let me tell the House that they will only be a seventh or an eighth of the constituencies, subject, moreover, to a large deduction for those who are said not to wish for the franchise and who presumably will not vote. In the event, therefore, of such a pitched battle as he anticipates the forces will be pretty unequally matched, with all the advantage to

mankind of some millions and also of his leadership on that side. (Laughter.) A million will be added and no more. And now what

will the Bill not do, for I have heard attributed to
 What the Bill will it a great deal which is not within its purview. It
 not do. will not "disfranchise" a single person—it is an

enabling, not a disabling Bill; it accepts the existing
 Parliamentary lines, the lines of experience and usage under the
 municipal, educational, and other franchise Acts. It leaves the
 franchise law exactly as it is, and follows those parliamentary lines
 under which the woman suffrage has hitherto been wisely and safely
 exercised. (Hear, hear.) At present married women are not registered

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as voters for municipal elections, nor can they vote for
 school boards. If, therefore, it be said there is an
 inconsistency and an anomaly in that this Bill does not
 confer the vote upon married women, it is an anomaly
 which is the creation of Parliament itself. If it be said, as it has been
 said by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), that this proposal
 is "halting and inconsistent," then I reply that the halting and
 inconsistency are the halting and inconsistency of Parliament and of
 the Governments of the right hon. gentleman which conferred the
 municipal franchise in 1869 and 1882, thus creating and training a special
 class, and qualifying its members for further similar privileges, any undue
 excess of which may well be left to future Parliaments, which will be
 governed, like ourselves, by practical considerations. (Hear, hear.)
 May I also point out that the criticisms upon the non-inclusion of
 married women are generally put in a somewhat illogical way? It is
 said, first, that the principle of including women in the franchise is
 objectionable; but, again, it is said, "If you include married women a
 great objection to the measure will be removed." In fact, the argument
 is, first, that we should not include any women; and, secondly, that we
 should include more than we do. (Laughter.) This is too often the
 reasoning not of sincere friends, but of enemies—sowing tares and
 tempting us to go further in the hope that we may fare worse.
 (Laughter.) There is no inconsistency on our part; we accept the
 position as Parliament has made it, and we are quite willing, if
 Parliament thinks fit hereafter to consider the assimilation of the
 municipal and Parliamentary franchise, to leave that open for future
 legislation. (Hear, hear.) By an historical accident the municipal and
 Parliamentary registers slightly differ in some few respects. Among
 these, the municipal register does not include married women or lodgers,
 and the municipal register is taken as the basis of this Bill, because
 of the experience of its working, which offers a strong argument in our
 support, for we can say that those who have had the municipal franchise
 have exercised it with such advantage that they are entitled
 also to the parliamentary suffrage. (Hear, hear.) We accept the
 present law and existing experience as a basis, and it has at least

this advantage, in that it enables us to avoid the rocks on which
 previous measures have struck, to escape such differences as those as to
 the duplication of votes, or differences and discord in the home, the
 creation of faggot votes, and the like, by accepting the law just as it is,
 and by not touching such matters of controversy. (Cheers.) In Scot-
 land, again, the law gives the vote to married women who are living, as
 the expression is, "not in family with their husbands," and we take the
 law of Scotland as we find it and as indicating what is in accordance with
 the general opinion and experience of Scotland; and a similar observation
 may be made in regard to the enfranchisement of the female trader,
 whether living with her husband or not, under the custom of the City
 of London. As I have said, the underlying principle of the Bill is that
 it accepts and utilises the law as it stands, whether by statute or
 custom, for a still further development of the franchise. That being
 so, we are able to say the Bill goes past the differences which have
 hitherto divided the House, and we escape criticisms which are not
 applicable to the present measure, however they may have applied to
 previous proposals. (Cheers.) We also claim that we proceed on the
 old constitutional principle of advancing step by step, so often resorted
 to in the legislation of this country, and which, if it has produced some
 anomalies, is at least a safe system. (Hear, hear.) What Parliament
 may hereafter do is a wholly different matter; but if we look at the
 manifold complexities and illogicalities in Acts conferring local
 franchises, it cannot fairly be said that the apparent anomaly here
 presents an obstacle to this measure. Similarly, in relation to women
 lodgers the Bill follows the lines of experience and of least resistance;
 it does what is at present practicable and possible; and though, as
 in the case of married women, we concede that much, very much, may
 be said on each side, as also that many arguments which have been used
 are based on mere assumptions, still the facts remain and justify us
 that the municipal and other registers on which we are proceeding do
 not include married women or lodgers, that the Bill enfranchises large
 numbers of women, that it gives additional security for the consideration
 of the interests of all women, from the woman's own point of view, and
 that other points may well await what would undoubtedly be a public
 advantage—namely, the unification of the municipal and Parliamentary
 registers. (Cheers.) In former debates local experience of a parochial

**Municipal experi-
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character was chiefly resorted to in support of the
 claims of women, such as the right to vote for over-
 seers, and better, the right to vote for local boards, and
 still better, the right to vote for school boards and to
 serve on school boards. I mention the boards of guardians and
 school boards to point out that when Parliament intended to confer
 the right to sit and serve, as well as to vote in elections, Parliament
 has had the courage to give that sanction by Statute. (Hear, hear.)
 But recourse to parochial elections is now comparatively unnecessary.

The Statute of 1869, passed under the Government of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), gave the right to women to vote at municipal elections, or I should rather say, that right was then revived, for it had previously existed, and was ignored by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. In previous debates it has been said that this right of women to vote at municipal elections was given by accident—"by a slip"—"when the House was asleep at three o'clock in the morning," and, said a former member for Huddersfield, "You will not catch us napping a second time." (Laughter.) This means, if anything, that the opponents of the Parliamentary suffrage for women would, if they had the opportunity, oppose municipal suffrage for women, and would on the same grounds—grounds of prophecy which have been falsified by experience—deprive the country of the advantage which that Act of 1869 is generally admitted to have conceded. This shews that they are not very prescient guides. (Hear, hear.) The provision was, in fact, discussed in the Lords in 1869, and had the able advocacy of Lord Cairns, and, I think, the Home Secretary. Lord Aberdare spoke for it even in the Commons, and it was advisedly accepted. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1882, having incorporated the same provision, adopted and conceded the principle, while practice has approved it, and if there is to be any debate now it can only be as to the application of the principle—not to the principle itself—of the right of women to vote. (Hear, hear.) Experience, now for a quarter of a century, completely supports the way in which that franchise has been exercised, and municipal elections have been generally conducted in a manner highly creditable to all concerned, including women. Indeed, any misbehaviour has been, so far as the cases disclose, only on the part of the men. (Laughter.) If there had been any objection, either on principle or in practice, to women's votes in municipalities certainly my connection, as president, with the Municipal Corporations Association would have brought such arguments to my knowledge. (Hear, hear.) But experience rebuts nearly every one of the speculations of my hon. friend opposite. The proportion of women voters in municipal elections is from 15 to 17 per cent., made up of women of all classes, and two-thirds or three-fourths of whom are working women. women occupying houses rated below £20. Let me refer to a letter I have received from the neighbourhood of Huddersfield. My correspondent says:—

"Many women in this neighbourhood would be enfranchised by such an Act as you propose, and especially widows of respectable working men, who have made such provision for them that they continue to rent the houses they occupied during their husbands' lifetime." (Hear, hear.)

This is important testimony to the fact that this proposal will not enfranchise an exclusive class; that it will include a large body of working women, and I have many other similar letters. (Hear, hear.)

Then, much has been said as to the desire or otherwise of women to exercise this franchise, and the answer is, from practice and statistics, that women do exercise the suffrage now at municipal elections in about the same proportion as men, and that the exercise of the vote by women is increasing, especially in Scotland, which is strongly in favour of the present proposal. (Hear, hear.) Moreover, women do not vote in that solid mass which has been suggested but, on the contrary, the votes are very materially divided. The recent county council elections, for instance, show that such is the case. And the reason is that women are associated with all the relations of life, and that with this extension there would be no transfer of voting power from one class to another, such as has accompanied previous enlargements of the franchise. (Hear, hear.)

Then there is the argument from disorder and from the supposed difficulty in women recording their votes at Parliamentary elections. But where can be the difficulty in women, once in some four or five years, doing that which, in municipal elections, they do annually, viz., placing a voting paper in the ballot box? Municipal elections have, in fact, been conducted very much on political lines; political considerations enter largely into them; and if there is question of disorder, I should look for that disorder in those small boroughs where strong party and personal feeling frequently run high, and yet where women are able to record their franchise without any difficulty whatever, and add an element of courtesy to such contests. (Hear, hear.) But the fact is that, so far from having an unfeminine tendency, this Bill will enable the quiet and unassuming women to vote, as distinguished from the more active aspirants to the platform, the former, but not the latter, being now excluded from all political influence. (Hear, hear.) I refer to the exercise of the municipal franchise for one purpose more, and only for one purpose—that is to say, that the municipal vote has not been followed by any general or practical demand for seats in town councils or claims to public office. (Hear, hear.) I should be far from endorsing any such claims, and have declined to present them to this House. There is a distinct and legally recognised difference between the right to vote and the right to sit in a deliberative assembly; the disqualification for the latter has been decided to exist as to women, and it has long subsisted in the case of the clergy and the Civil Service, so I deny the inference that because the right to vote is accorded it must be followed by the vote, I may point out to the House that it is one that has been exercised under the conditions I have mentioned without difficulty; and I do not know that there has been any real complaint as to the manner in which

Desire for the Franchise.

Will not create a class vote.

No objection from disorder.

No demand for seats in Parliament.

Exercise of the Municipal Franchise.

the constitutional privilege of the municipal franchise has been exercised right to sit or to hold office. (Cheers.) With regard to the right to by women. I believe the late Mr. Beresford Hope and the former member for Huddersfield said, now many years ago, "it has not been a success," and one of them added that it had been "a mistake." But I quote the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who has said "they have exercised the franchise without detriment and with great advantage." (Cheers.) And yet the same right hon. gentleman has just published that this municipal experience is, after all, but a "plausible shadow"! It is coupled by him subordinately with the right to enter the Universities, with the right to intellectual culture; and yet the fact is ignored that women have taken an active and useful and unpretentious part in the public affairs of the country and in the localities, and have earned the appreciative expressions of the right hon. gentleman himself. (Hear, hear.) Shadows! It is the criticism which is shadowy, and under the light of experience it is shown to have no substance. (Cheers.) There is just one

other subject to which I should like to refer, and that is
 Neglect of Women's this: that there has been in fact an actual neglect of
 Interests by Parlia- the just requirements of women in dealing with the
 ment. subjects in which they are interested. (Hear, hear.)

I notice that one statesman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has said, and I think he has said with great truth, that—

"Men have often been the most unfaithful guardians of women's rights to social and moral equality."

But it is contended that these grievances have been remedied, and no doubt a great deal has been done for the protection of women and so for the benefit of the nation; for instance, in regard to the conditions of their labour in mines and at the loom. (Cheers.) Nevertheless, a former able advocate of women's suffrage, the right hon. gentleman the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler), said at Wolverhampton only the other night what is certainly true, that—

"The need for reform is as great to-day as ever, and every day develops new claims."

Women's Questions. And I should like to call attention to one or two matters in which this concession on the part of Parliament is eminently necessary for the benefit and improvement of the position of women. In relation to their Property, the right to which is absolute even in such a country as Russia, much has been done; but it took a quarter of a century's fighting to do it, and there are anomalies which still remain to be removed. (Hear, hear.) No doubt Parliament has been rather generous; in some respects even too gallant, for it has given women their property and left men their debts. (Loud laughter.) Perhaps more prudent administration in this House—perhaps the expression of the wishes of women from their own point of view—may lead us to be

a little more cautious in relation to legislation of that description. (Hear, hear.) In regard to the Guardianship of children and the protection of The Home something has been done; but the Bill in relation to the former was greatly modified in its passage through the House, and here is still room for much improvement. (Hear, hear.) In Education men have taken most and the best of the endowments, and have left little for women. There, again, there have been improvements, but there is still much to do in opening the older Universities, in establishing new ones—as in London—in the work of University extension, in supplying the dearth of teachers—for if we want our education to be great we must make our educators great—(hear, hear), and in technical and industrial training for the army of women who have to earn their own livings and fight their own battle in life. (Cheers.) Yet women, despite difficulty and disability, have shown themselves highly capable in all the records of human thought and achievement. The percentage of rejections at the first examination of the University of London, which is close and severe, shews that women fulfil the test quite as well as men competitors; and therefore I need no longer, seeing what has been accomplished, point to those great exceptional cases, which have been sneered at, but which have been the triumphs of the few for the benefit of the many, and which have opened the door for the vast numbers that have followed in their wake. (Loud cheers.) Then the Laws of Divorce, which were discussed here only last night, are still unequal, and women's views could be expressed upon them with advantage. (Hear, hear.) There is, too, the perennial question of the Deceased Wife's Sister, and, intermingled with her, the deceased husband's brother. We hear much of the one, but little of the other. (Laughter.) Breach of Promise of Marriage has been proposed to be abolished, but women's petitions have been presented against it. Surely one of their direct representatives might be allowed to express his views upon that subject. (Hear, hear.) In relation to the great question of the Land, the House, perhaps, hardly realises how many cultivators are in the unfortunate position of having lost their husbands, and are yet carrying on their farms, employing numbers of labourers who have votes, while they, though more qualified in every respect, have none, simply and only because they are women! Few know how many women are farmers and graziers—some 20,000—and few, perhaps, realise that the agricultural interest loses through this cause something like 140,000 votes. (Hear, hear.) On questions affecting The Home, from which springs the nation; on questions as to the Sanitation of the house and workshop; the improvement of the social condition of the people in relation to Vaccination, and Sanitary matters; as to the administration of the Poor Laws, the Housing of the poor, and as to Pensions in old age; as to the *Status* of women in relation to industry and trade; as to the Hours of work in factories and shops; as to the legislation which must follow the result of the Royal

Commissions on Labour, and on Sweating, in which women are very deeply interested; and as to the Payment of Members of Parliament, to which they will have to contribute, but upon which they are not to be heard; on all these and many other questions, women have not, but ought to have, a voice through their representatives in Parliament. (Loud cheers.) Surely these are considerations which should appeal strongly to this House and induce it to accord the vote which we ask it to confer upon women. (Hear, hear.) It may be said, finally, as has

The Municipal Franchise and the Parliamentary vote.

been said by my hon. friend opposite, that this vote is beyond the sphere of women's intelligence and beyond the range of her knowledge of Imperial, as distinguished from municipal, politics. I reply that there is really no inherent distinction and no true difference as between the two cases; and the sphere of each is becoming yearly more intermixed, owing to extensions of local government, to devolution, and to transfers of powers, which is the tendency of the age. (Hear, hear.) The frequent resort, too, to the permissive principle in Acts of Parliament and so to local option, constantly gives to localities the quasi-right of legislation; and, indeed, it may almost be said now, as was said by Cicero, that administration is quite as important and quite as difficult as legislation. So important as this is the duty which you have entrusted to women! yet you refuse them, when equally qualified, scarcely a higher function. (Hear, hear.) And so, also, the objection on the score of range of

Women and the Parliamentary Franchise.

knowledge is no less a fallacy. In former debates it was usual to meet it by saying that women are not less informed than the agricultural labourer, or the illiterate voter, for whom you have taken such pains that he may record his valuable vote. (Laughter.) But, in truth, we need not go so far afield as that agriculturist. It is sufficient to ask who in this House is qualified to undergo any such test as that upon which it is sought to exclude women from the franchise. (Hear, hear.) Who of us is, or ever can be, versed in the whole range of modern politics? However we may flatter ourselves, most of such matters are really determined by the few experts on each, experts which the House delights to listen to, and, upon some such social subjects as I have specified women are the experts of experts. (Loud cheers.) And if they help us in these, or some of them, we can well spare them from "scientific frontiers" and the Eastern Question, and from juries and the army, and the police force—which one honourable member cited as a disqualification. (Laughter.) It is not necessary that women should know—it is not possible that they—or we—or anyone—can know the whole range of politics at the present time. What we ask is only that they should be permitted to choose some representative, who would be able to consider these matters, and record their views on their behalf. Yet my hon. friend opposite seriously proposes to apply to women a fancy franchise test which is even higher than any applied to mankind. He says,

"What do they know about Fair Trade?" Of course they are "fair" traders if they are in trade at all. (Laughter.) He asks, "What do they know about proportional representation?" Why, who knows anything about proportional representation?—except the right hon. member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney). (Loud laughter.) He says "they will be socialistic and vote for eight-hours' Bills." Well many men are doing the same, though women have probably the longer hours of the two, and are yet comparatively silent. (Hear, hear.) How, he asks, can women understand the mysteries of bi-metallism? Why, that is a subject no man can understand. (Loud laughter.) That is the sort of test the hon. member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) proposes by his letters to apply to women! I think that is carrying the argument much too far and reduces it to an absurdity. (Hear, hear.) What women can, and do, understand better than men can understand for them is their own interests, which is the chief justification of a wide suffrage. (Cheers.) There are also some subjects to the solution of which they can contribute, perhaps, more than any others—namely, a practical view of those social questions, mostly the subjects of the day, in which their experience would be most useful, while, without it, Parliament is not fully competent to solve such problems. (Hear, hear.) I am sure I have trespassed far too long upon the attention of the House in endeavouring to show what I feel, viz., that this is a very proper and safe development of the principle of the franchise, based on safe experience, and itself a corollary of our household suffrage, which, in order best to meet a demand for manhood suffrage, we ought to strengthen by inclusion rather than weaken by exclusiveness. (Cheers.) And I ask this on behalf of qualified women, for reasons which may be stated finally in a very few words. They are: That it will be an advantage to Women, to Parliament, and to the State—to women themselves by securing the expression of their views from their own standpoint, and through those who may be entrusted with the safeguarding of their interests, for political influence is the only guarantee of legislative justice. (Cheers.) It will, we are convinced, also improve the social and economical position of women, and so in the end lessen undue and unfair competition with men. (Hear, hear.) It will raise, as we believe, the general moral and intellectual tone of society, and even conduce to a more advanced position than that which women, by their own efforts, have already occupied. We believe, too, that it will be of advantage to Parliament, because it is undesirable that this House, which loses by disabilities, and which should always be adapted to new social and industrial conditions, should fail in the expression of the views of any large portion of the community, or in the representation of the thought and industry of any part of the population. (Cheers.) And lastly, we acknowledge that, after all, the object of legislation should be—as we

believe would be the achievement of this Bill—good government. We believe that if we give the vote to women it will contribute to that good government; and, at least, that it will save them from misgovernment. (Hear, hear.) And, in that belief, and agreeing, as we do, with Lord Beaconsfield, that “the exclusion of the votes of women has been injurious to the best interests of the country,” we offer the remedy of this Bill,—which, though it may not do all that is desired by some, will certainly accomplish much for many,—and confidently ask Parliament to sanction that which we believe to be justified by considerations of justice, experience, and expediency. (Loud cheers.)

TEXT OF THE WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

[55 VICT.] *Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women).*

A

BILL

TO

Extend the Parliamentary Franchise to Women A.D. 1892.

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Act, 1892. Short title.

2. Every woman who—

(1) In Great Britain is registered or entitled to be registered as an elector for any town council or county council; or

Extension of parliamentary franchise.

(2) In Ireland is a ratepayer entitled to vote at an election for guardians of the poor;

shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector, and when registered to vote at any parliamentary election for the county, borough, or division wherein the qualifying property is situate.

(Prepared and brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir A. Borthwick, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. W. M'Laren, Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Burt and Mr. Ernest Spencer.)

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
THAT THE SEVERAL PETITIONS
PRESENTED TO THEM BY
THE SEVERAL SOCIETIES OF
WOMEN

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(Enacted and brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Bart., on the 11th March 1892, in the House of Commons, and passed in the House of Commons on the 12th March 1892, and in the House of Lords on the 13th March 1892.)

HAND BOUND
E.A. WEEKS
& SON
LONDON

