

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

VOL. XV.—No. 175. PUBLISHED MONTHLY.
Yearly Subscription, Post Free, 1s. 6d.

JULY 1, 1884.

TREBLE NUMBER, PRICE THREEPENCE.
By Post FOURPENCE HALFPENNY.

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W O M A N S U F F R A G E :
REASONS FOR OPPOSING IT.

By Vice-Admiral MAXSE.

W. Ridgway, 169, Piccadilly, London, W.

PETITION THE HOUSE OF LORDS!—It has been decided to endeavour to have the question of women's suffrage presented for the consideration of the House of Lords. Friends are therefore earnestly requested to aid in collecting signatures to petitions. Persons who have already signed petitions to the House of Commons may sign again for the Lords. The petitions when signed may be forwarded to any peer for presentation, or they may be sent to any of the offices of the Society. Petitions should be ready on or before July 7th, when the Franchise Bill is expected to come on for discussion in the House of Lords; and they may be sent in while the Bill continues under discussion. It is more important to have numerous petitions than many names to each petition. Petitions, ready for signature, will be supplied on application to Miss BECKER, 29, Parliament-street, London, S.W., or 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester; Miss BLACKBURN, 20, Park-street, Bristol; or Miss KIRKLAND, 13, Raeburn Place, Edinburgh.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD AT THE
WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,

ON FRIDAY, JULY 11TH, 1884,

To receive the Report and Financial Statement, and to elect the Executive Committee for the ensuing year.

LEONARD COURTNEY, Esq., M.P., Mrs. FAWCETT, Mrs. ASHTON DILKE, Baron DE WORMS, M.P., W. S. CAINE, Esq., M.P., C. H. HOPWOOD, Esq., Q.C., M.P., COLERIDGE J. KENNARD, Esq., M.P., Miss C. A. BIGGS, J. P. THOMASSON, Esq., M.P., Miss BECKER, and other Ladies and Gentlemen are expected to be present.

THE CHAIR TO BE TAKEN AT THREE P.M. BY

WILLIAM WOODALL, ESQ., M.P.,

The attendance of Members and Friends is invited. Doors open at half-past Two. Admission Free.

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NEW PAMPHLET.

WOMEN AND THE NEW FRANCHISE BILL. A Letter to an Ulster Member of Parliament, by ISABELLA M. S. TOD. Price One Penny. To be had of the Secretary, 29, Parliament-street, London, and 28, Jackson's Row, Manchester.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.—Communications for the Editor and Orders for the Journal to be addressed to Miss BECKER, 29, Parliament-street, Westminster, London, S.W.; or to the Office, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

open one, and the 406 members who took part in the division been free to vote according to their convictions, the clause would have been carried by a majority of seventy-two.

UNDER these circumstances it has been deemed right to present petitions to the House of Lords, praying that in any measure which may be submitted to them for amending the law relating to the representation of the people their lordships will make provision for the exercise of the Franchise by duly qualified women.

As the division in the House of Commons avowedly took place, not upon the merits of the question of women's suffrage, but upon the issue of alleged danger to the Franchise Bill if the clause were adopted, and as one of the elements of such danger was declared to be the apprehension that the House of Lords might be less disposed to accept the Bill if the clause were included, it seems only reasonable to meet this objection by endeavouring to move the House of Lords to give an independent judgment upon the matter.

Should the Lords agree to insert in the Franchise Bill any provision which it might seem to them expedient to adopt for the exercise of the suffrage by duly qualified women, the question would be remitted to the House of Commons in a manner that would enable them to give a free vote upon it untrammelled by the fear lest in assenting to the clause they might be causing delay and danger to the Franchise Bill.

THE division on Mr. WOODALL'S clause is one of those events in the history of the movement which may truly be described as "epoch making." It differs wholly in kind and significance from all the divisions on the question that have preceded it, and a comparison with these can serve only as a means of marking this difference. The only previous division on the question in the present Parliament was taken last year on Mr. MASON'S Resolution. On that occasion the Resolution was lost by 116 votes to 132, including tellers. The 116 who supported the resolution consisted of eighty-four Liberals, nineteen Conservatives, and thirteen Home Rulers. The adverse majority of 132 was composed of fifty-one Liberals, seventy-eight Conservatives, and three Home Rulers. The votes in this division were given freely without party pressure, and the majority of the supporters were Liberals.

This year matters are wholly changed, and we have the very remarkable circumstance that in the only division of

a party character which has ever taken place on the question; the party of the Noes has been the Liberal Government party, while the leaders of the Opposition have given the measure their earnest and cordial support, and the great majority of the Ayes have been Conservatives.

The responsibility for this curious result rests solely with the Government. Mr. WOODALL was most desirous of keeping the question apart from party strife and of having it decided on its own merits. But the Government turned a deaf ear to this desire, and refused to listen to an appeal signed by nearly eighty of their supporters asking that the question might be left an open one. They made it a question of party, and thereby plunged the subject into that very "vortex of political contention" which Mr. GLADSTONE so vehemently declared it ought never to enter. Had not the PRIME MINISTER required his followers on their allegiance to vote against Mr. WOODALL'S clause, it would not have got into the "vortex." The question might have remained for an indefinite period in the calm waters of academic discussion.

But there is this advantage in the situation, that once in the vortex the question can be no longer stationary. It must go on until the goal is reached. The current of political feeling which has brought it within the range of practical politics will not let it be cast aside. The enfranchisement of women is now recognised as a question of practical politics.

No political question can be settled in this country until it has been taken up by one of the two great parties in the State. The nearest approach to this condition of things was attained in the discussion on Mr. WOODALL'S clause, when the leaders of the Conservative party adopted the proposal, and carried the bulk of the Conservative vote along with them into the lobby with Mr. WOODALL.

The Liberal party might have supported the clause had the leaders been so minded. They were as free to accept or reject the proposal as the leaders of the Conservative party. The Liberal leaders decided to reject, or rather to postpone, the enfranchisement of householders and ratepayers who were women. The Conservative leaders elected to support the proposal.

The Conservatives, as a party, move slowly, but they move surely, and we have every reason to believe that the Conservative vote in favour of Mr. WOODALL'S clause will be substantially maintained for the future. The bulk

of the Liberal opposition was probably merely temporary. Liberals may be expected to follow their natural principles, as regards extension of the franchise, as soon as they shall be satisfied that by voting for women's suffrage they will not be doing anything to prejudice the immediate question of the enfranchisement of two millions of men. It is not to be credited that the Liberal party will continue to oppose a measure of enfranchisement which the Conservative party are willing to concede. The situation, therefore, affords grounds for a reasonable hope that before the question of Parliamentary reform is definitely settled for this time provision will be made for the extension of the suffrage to duly qualified women.

IN the morning sitting of Tuesday, June 10th, in Committee on the Franchise Bill, Mr. WOODALL rose to move the clause which stood in his name. He said the PRIME MINISTER, in his speech on the second reading of the Bill, reminded the House that the principle of the measure was to give to every householder a vote. It would now be his object to persuade the Committee that women householders were essentially capable citizens, who would satisfy all the conditions so clearly laid down by the PRIME MINISTER. Mr. WOODALL, in concluding his very able speech, said he had endeavoured to show that his proposal was just and expedient, and he urged, in the words of the PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE, that it was always opportune to do right.

Mr. GLADSTONE said there were two questions to be considered. One of these was the question whether women were to be enfranchised, the other whether the enfranchisement should be effected by a clause introduced in Committee on the present Bill. The second question was that on which he was about to dwell. He deprecated the introduction of new matter into the Bill. The cargo which the vessel carried was, in the opinion of the Government, as large as she could carry safely. The proposal was a very large one. It did not seem unreasonable to believe that the number of persons in the three kingdoms to be enfranchised by the amendment would be little short of half a million. What was the position in which the hon. member placed the Government when he requested them to introduce a completely new subject on which men profoundly differed, and which, it was clear, should receive a full and dispassioned investigation? It was not now practicable to give it that investigation. This was one of those questions which it would be intolerable to mix up with purely political and party

debates. If there was a subject in the whole compass of human life and experience that was sacred beyond all other subjects it was the character and position of woman. Did his hon. friend ask him to admit that the question deserved the fullest consideration? He gave him that admission freely. Did he ask whether he (Mr. GLADSTONE) wished to bind the members of the Government or his colleagues in the Cabinet with respect to the votes they would give on this question? Certainly not, provided only that they took the subject from the vortex of political contention. He was bound to say that whilst thus free and open on the subject itself, that with regard to the proposal to introduce it into this Bill he offered it the strongest opposition in his power, and must disclaim and renounce all responsibility for the measure should his hon. friend succeed in inducing the Committee to adopt his amendment. The debate was then adjourned to Thursday, June 12th.

Lord JOHN MANNERS, in resuming the debate, said he had for a long number of years taken a strong interest in the success of this proposal. The proposal had never been considered as being of a party character. At the same time he entertained considerable doubt whether any question relating to the enfranchisement of any portion of Her MAJESTY'S subjects must not be regarded as a political question. Was this a new question? Why, if there was any question connected with the franchise which had been more thoroughly discussed, sifted, and thrashed out than another it was the very question they were discussing then. If a man takes charge of a great public question in England, and wishes to carry that question to a successful issue, he must resolutely turn a deaf ear to every suggestion of opportunism that may be made to him. Did O'CONNELL and SHEIL carry Roman Catholic emancipation by attending to the suggestions of opportunism? Did COBDEN and BRIGHT bring about the repeal of the Corn Laws by consulting the convenience of Prime Ministers and Cabinets? No. He must inscribe on his banner and upon his conduct the motto "thorough," and must persevere against all solicitations and suggestions whether of fear or favour. For himself, his course was plain. Guided by every consideration of justice and fairness, of equity, of analogy, and of experience, he should give a cordial and unhesitating support to the second reading of the clause.

The debate was continued by Mr. E. A. LEATHAM, who opposed the clause.

Mr. STANSFELD said he failed to be enlightened by the

speech of the PRIME MINISTER as to the specific danger to his measure from the course taken by his hon. friend the member for Stoke. He felt keenly that the PRIME MINISTER should have compelled him, as well as others, to put themselves in the position of opposing his policy. They were as deeply interested in this Franchise Bill as the Cabinet itself, yet the position in which they were placed was this—they must either vote for the clause and then lie under the imputation of being willing to risk this great measure of enfranchisement, and even the Government itself that they had so long and so cordially supported, or else by withdrawing or voting against the clause declaring that they were false to their principles, their profession, and their pledges. But they ventured to think in the first instance that there could be no danger in the discussion of the clause, and there would be no danger in the discussion and division if the clause were rejected. But there was the alternative of the acceptance of the clause, and in that case it seemed to them even still more clear that so far from there being any possible danger to the Bill, the acceptance of the clause would strengthen the Bill. The insertion of the clause would be the act of the House, and of both sides of the House, and they knew, for the noble Lord (Lord JOHN MANNERS) had told them as much, and no one had ventured to deny it, that the insertion of that clause would not have rendered the Bill less palatable to the House of Lords. The principle of household suffrage was one of two things, it was either a rough test of capable citizenship, or it meant what he would call the family vote. That was the idea that commended itself to his mind. The basis of the constitution should be that the family, represented by its head, should be the unit of the State. But with what regard to that principle, or to the permanency of that principle, could they give that family no voice whose head happened to be a woman? There was no subject on which he was more convinced or on which he felt more deeply, and he should insist on recording his vote in favour of the clause.

Mr. NEWDEGATE opposed the clause and was followed by Viscount FOLKESTONE, who said he had been a most strenuous opponent of the franchise for women, but on the present occasion he intended to vote for the clause. Suppose that he was going to vote against his convictions, which he was not going to do, members opposite, both hon. and right hon., ought to be the last to jeer. He had always been of opinion that the conferring of the franchise was not a question of individual right, but of imperial

necessity and constitutional advantage. But the provisions of the Bill before the Committee, which had virtually passed this House, were based on the assumption of individual right, and therefore he did not see why there was any reason now why they should not support the admission of women to the franchise. But if the Bill did not pass and another Bill should be brought in, taking care that no large section of the electorate should have a preponderating influence over the rest, he should reserve to himself full liberty of opposing the extension of the franchise to women.

Sir J. W. PEASE spoke in opposition to the clause.

Baron DE WORMS, in supporting it, said that Lord BEACONSFIELD, speaking a long time ago upon the privileges of citizenship, which were now to be refused by a Liberal Government, said the privilege of citizenship is to give to everyone who is worthy of it a fair share in the elective government by means of the franchise.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE opposed the clause.

Mr. ROGERS said for years he had advocated the extension of the franchise to women, on the ground that in any representative assembly unrepresented interests were never attended to. But however expedient in many particulars it might be to enfranchise women, he did not think a clause for the purpose could with prudence or wisdom be introduced in this Bill.

Colonel KING-HARMAN said in the old state of the franchise it was not so much a matter of importance to women whether they possessed votes or not, but now that this Bill proposed to create two million new voters of a much lower order than those now exercising the franchise, it became of importance to secure some countervailing advantage. They were told this was a matter which could wait. What were the women to gain by waiting? They had waited seventeen years during which the subject had been discussed, and now they were told they were to wait till two million of the common orders had been admitted to a share in the Parliamentary management of the country. The hon. member for Huddersfield had used an argument which he (Colonel KING-HARMAN) thought a most unworthy one, namely, that the franchise was not to be extended to women, because unhappily there are women of a degraded and debased class. Because there were forty thousand of them in this metropolis alone the remaining women who were pure and virtuous were to be deprived of the power of voting. But would the hon. member guarantee that the 2,000,000 men he proposes to enfranchise shall be perfectly pure and moral men?

Would the hon. member propose a clause to exclude from the franchise those men who lead and retain in vice and degradation these unfortunate women? No—men may sin and be a power in the State, but when a woman sins not only is she to have no power, but her whole sisterhood are to be excluded from it. He believed that every idea of common sense pointed to the desirability of supporting the amendment, and he therefore had great pleasure in doing so.

Mr. WARTON explained that he was going to vote for the clause in order to pair with one of the members opposite who was going to vote against it, in order that his vote might correct to a small extent the evil produced by the PRIME MINISTER'S conduct in causing the members of his party to vote against their conscientious convictions.

Mr. AGNEW explained that in voting against the clause, and in favour of the Government, he believed that he was retarding only for a short time the extension of the franchise to women.

General ALEXANDER said Admiral MAXSE had asserted that if female suffrage were exercised at the present moment in France, a revolution would certainly ensue. But what was the result of manhood suffrage in France. At this very moment a Divorce Bill was passing through the Senate punishing a wife in the most rigorous manner for a single act of infidelity, while refusing relief to her for any number of similar acts committed by her husband. They had been told by the PRIME MINISTER and others that the present time was inopportune for opening up this question, but would the PRIME MINISTER tell them what time would be opportune? If the question were raised next year or the year after, would it not be said that they were reopening the whole question of electoral reform, which had been settled for some years to come? He told the PRIME MINISTER that again and again, in season and out of season, they would press this matter upon his notice; and that until the matter was happily settled he need not expect any rest or repose.

Mr. W. H. LEATHAM said that the PRIME MINISTER had told them that the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke would endanger the Bill, and this made it necessary for him to abstain from voting.

Mr. INDERWICK opposed the clause.

Mr. J. COWEN said he should regret extremely if the Bill were imperilled by any vote he was about to give, but he did not think his present vote would have that effect. Justice and logic, precedent and experience, were all in favour of the inclusion of women in the roll of citizenship.

Who endowed the members of that House with power to prescribe the position and apportion the arena in which our fellow-countrymen have to labour? The proper sphere for any human being is the largest and loftiest to which they can attain, and this can only be ascertained by complete liberty of choice. If women wish to become politicians, let them. The supporters of this measure took their stand on the ground of justice and expediency, and claimed that every class ought to be endowed with power to protect itself.

Mr. BRYCE and Mr. LABOUCHERE opposed the clause.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said they were told that if the clause were carried there was a chance of the Bill being thrown out. He asked his hon. friends were they children to be frightened by shadows and phantoms? Throw out the Bill because the clause was carried! He told the Government to their faces that they dare not do anything of the kind. It was a Bill to enfranchise capable citizens, and because 500,000 were added the Bill was to be thrown out. Was ever such a thing heard of? Let them say what they liked he did not believe they would do it.

Mr. GOSCHEN followed in opposition.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE said the question was not now whether it was desirable for women to be admitted to the franchise, it was whether they were to be allowed to discuss whether they should be admitted to the franchise and to vote on their convictions whether or no that privilege should be granted. The PRIME MINISTER and other hon. members had told them that they did not consider this clause to be properly introduced now, because this was not a good opportunity for introducing the question. It seemed to him, on the contrary, that it was the very best opportunity for dealing with it, because they were going enormously to increase the electorate, and would, therefore, make the inequality between men and women much greater than it was before. It would be said they were going to extend the property franchise if this amendment were carried. On that issue they were prepared to join and to maintain that it was a right thing, and it was the duty of that House to make proper provision for those classes of property holders now without a vote. Members who had canvassed boroughs would remember that after going into two or three shops, and asking for the votes of those who were the owners, they have come to one perhaps of the most important shops, and have been told, "Oh, it is of no use going in, there is no vote there." Such women are probably of education and gentle character, and perhaps

live as widows and take care of their families; they have every right to be consulted as to who should be the man to represent the constituency in which they lived, and to take care of their interests and of the interests of those dependent on them. That was the ground on which Lord BEACONSFIELD stood. They had adhered to that ground for several years, and that was the ground on which they stood now.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said he was completely and fully on practical politics an opportunist. So urgent and important did he consider the present Bill that he would allow no side question to make him swerve from supporting it. So he should without any scruple vote against the proposed clause.

Mr. STOREY said it had been urged against the admission of women that they were intellectually inferior to men. He had heard the same argument used against the agricultural labourer and against the enfranchisement of the artisans in towns fifteen years ago, and he said the very reasons urged against their admission constituted the real ground on which they ought to receive the franchise, because the moment the artisans were enfranchised there was a general desire to elevate and improve their condition, and he believed that if women were admitted there would be the same attentive consideration on the part both of Liberals and Conservatives to improve their position.

Mr. RAIKES opposed the clause.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH said he was in favour of the enfranchisement of women, but he should vote with the Government, he confessed, with reluctance, but he was satisfied that in doing so he should be meeting the wishes of a great majority of his constituents who would infinitely prefer that this question should be postponed for a time rather than they should jeopardise or destroy a great measure of enfranchisement.

The Committee then divided. Ayes, 135; Noes, 271. Majority, 136.

SEVERAL important meetings have taken place during the month. Immediately after the introduction of the clause in the House of Commons, and the declaration of the PRIME MINISTER that he would abandon all responsibility for the Franchise Bill if the clause were carried, a meeting of the General Committee was held to consider the course to be adopted. Mr. WOODALL presided, and a series of resolutions in favour of persevering with the clause were adopted with one dissentient. The speakers in favour of the policy of action were Miss BECKER, Miss TOD, Miss

C. A. BIGGS, Mr. McLAREN, M.P., Mr. COURTAULD, M.P., Mr. COLERIDGE KENNARD, M.P., Sir WILFRID LAWSON, M.P., Mrs. HALLETT, Mrs. FAWCETT, Sir RICHARD TEMPLE, and Mrs. SCATCHERD.

On June 13th, the morning after the division, a conference was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, under the presidency of the Right Hon. J. STANSFELD, M.P. There was a very numerous attendance, and resolutions in favour of the continuance of the movement during the progress of the Franchise Bill through the two Houses of Parliament were adopted.

On June 17th a crowded and enthusiastic meeting was held in St. James's Hall, London. Mrs. GARRETT ANDERSON, M.D., presided. The meeting was addressed by Miss BECKER, Miss ORME, Mrs. OLIVER SCATCHERD, Mrs. EVA McLAREN, Miss EDITH SIMCOX, Mrs. BEDDOE, Mrs. STANTON BLATCH, Miss LOUISA STEVENSON, Mrs. ASHTON DILKE, Miss MULLER, Miss F. BALGARNIE, Miss WILKINSON, Miss TOD, and Mrs. HALLETT. An overflow meeting, to accommodate those unable to obtain admission to the great hall, was held in another part of the building. Mrs. LUCAS presided, and the meeting was addressed by the same speakers as those who took part in the great meeting.

A large and fashionable drawing-room meeting was held by invitation of Mrs. COLERIDGE KENNARD at her residence in Upper Grosvenor-street. Mr. KENNARD, M.P., presided, and the meeting was addressed by Miss FRANCES POWER COBBE, Miss BECKER, Mrs. HALLETT, Mr. REGINALD YORKE, M.P., and others. Resolutions in favour of the movement were adopted unanimously.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *Tuesday, June 10th.*
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL COMMITTEE.

The Chairman called on Mr. Grantham to move the clause which stood in his name, and which created a new property qualification to be exercised by men and women.

Mr. GRANTHAM said that he would withdraw his proposed clause, lest its discussion might cause difficulty in the way of the clause to be moved by the hon. member for Stoke.

MR. WOODALL.

Mr. WOODALL: I have to ask the indulgence of the Committee while I submit the clause of which I have given notice, though I do not think it will be necessary to trespass long upon that indulgence. I feel I need the indulgence of the Committee, because while I am very strongly impressed with the justice of the case I am about to urge, I am aware I have to submit it to the Committee under peculiar and exceptional difficulties—difficulties which are attributable to the reluctance of many of those who for many years have earnestly supported the proposal to do anything opposed to the strong desire of the Government to pass the Franchise Bill as originally brought in. I do not think that any of us can reasonably find fault with the Government for not having incorporated in their own Bill the proposal which I am about to submit. They are very

properly the best judges of tactics and procedure, but, on the other hand, I feel that those who take an earnest interest in this subject have no alternative before them but to bring it under the notice of Parliament at the present moment. Foes and friends alike would reproach them if upon an occasion like this they failed to assert that which they believe to be perfectly consistent with the fundamental principle of this Bill. The supporters of this question have made that belief very clear for some time past. Twelve months ago 110 habitual supporters of the Government signed a memorial in which they stated that no Bill of this kind would be complete which did not recognise the rights of female as well as male householders. It is perfectly true that in the division taken upon the abstract resolution submitted to the House shortly afterwards a majority of the House voted against the resolution. That majority, however, it must be remembered was a very small one, namely, 16, while on the previous division on the same question there was a hostile majority of 116. May I refer also to the fact that the Conference of Liberal Associations, held at Leeds under the presidency of my hon. friend the member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley)—a conference which has been repeatedly referred to in the course of these debates as being peculiarly influential and representative, and a conference whose decisions have been in the main adopted by the Government—passed a resolution strongly in support of the motion I am now submitting to the Committee. Under these and other circumstances with which I need not trouble the House, as I have said, there has been in the minds of those who feel strongly upon this question no alternative but to press it as earnestly and as zealously as they can, in spite of the discouragement with which they have been confronted. (Cheers.) This question has really been before the country for a comparatively short period. I suppose its Parliamentary history may be said to date no further back than the discussions on the last Reform Bill, when that distinguished man, Mr. John Stuart Mill, submitted resolutions which, if adopted, would have had the effect that I desire to bring about. No one who has watched the course of public opinion on this subject will hesitate to say that there has been a remarkable and very strong growth of public opinion in its favour. (Hear, hear.) The time has long since gone by when the proposal to enfranchise women was received with derision. There is no longer any necessity for me to trouble the House with abstract or philosophical reasons in favour of the proposal. We have heard from the very highest authority in the House that it is within the scope of this Bill—that it is not extraneous to the proposals before the House; and I was particularly gratified to hear that that was the case, and to find that there was no necessity for troubling the House with a motion by way of an instruction to the Committee, or of taking any action during the progress of the clauses for which the Government themselves are directly responsible, since that might have seemed in some degree hostile to the Bill itself. I rejoice, as do all those with whom I am in the habit of acting, and all those who are earnestly anxious to see the franchise extended, at the progress made last night, and that we to-day are free to make suggestions without being open to the charge of wishing in the slightest degree to impede the conduct of the Bill in the hands of the Government. Indeed, everyone who has followed the arguments by which this large scheme of enfranchisement has been commended to the House must have felt that those arguments were all of them equally applicable to women as to the men whom it is proposed to enfranchise. Every axiom that has been quoted has had, at least, equal force in that direction; and the very terms in which the Bill was specially commended to the House in that remarkable speech in which the Prime Minister introduced it has strengthened, as it appears to me, the case in favour of my motion. The Prime Minister reminded us that the principle and central idea of the Bill was to give to every household the franchise. He said, "The householder is just as much a householder and has just as much the responsibility of a householder, whether"—and I wish he had gone on to say "whether male or female." It will be my duty this afternoon to urge some considerations which I hope will have the effect of persuading the Committee that female householders are essentially "capable citizens," satisfying the conditions which have been so clearly laid down in the definitions of this Bill. In those important debates on this subject which preceded the passing of the Act of 1867, I think on the debate on the motion of Sir E. Baines in 1865, the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister declared that the onus

of proof rested on those who were opposed to enfranchisement; and I think I must particularly on this occasion plead that to be strictly the case. But I am endeavouring to address myself to the objections which have been raised. The objections raised to this enfranchisement are, on examination, found not to be numerous, or, if I may respectfully say so, in my judgment not very forcible. We are told that women should be kept to the domestic sphere, that they are impressionable and emotional, and that they are not to be trusted, therefore, to form a deliberate judgment upon public affairs. There is another objection that has been raised, and which I should not venture to give so much significance to, but that it was very forcibly stated in that very eloquent address with which the Attorney-General closed the debate on this motion last year—that address which will be remembered as singularly forcible and eloquent, but which also conveyed to the House a very strong sense of the earnestness with which the hon. and learned gentleman was actuated. He told us that women could not be soldiers and that they could not serve in the defence of their country, or of public order in cases of emergency. Well, sir, I think it would not be difficult to find cases in which women have, in cases of great emergency, shown heroism even in the art and practice of war. (A laugh.) I suppose Boadicea and Joan of Arc and the maid of Saragossa may be mentioned as amongst these. (Laughter.) But I should like to know how the principle of the Government with regard to this Bill being a measure of enfranchisement and not of disfranchisement would apply if they were to require the test of physical fitness for military service to qualify for the exercise of a vote? If that test were applied many hon. gentlemen sitting near me would be disfranchised. (Laughter.) I am perfectly certain of this, that if, in framing the register, any such test were to be applied it would be a very large measure of disfranchisement indeed. But, sir, the irony of the argument appears to me to be that those who are qualified for military service are just those who are not enfranchised. The soldier and the sailor find that a grateful country recognises their services in various ways, but never by giving them the opportunity, as soldiers and sailors, of voting. On the other hand, the clergy, who are not expected to fight, commonly and generally do vote. I think, therefore, we may dismiss that consideration of physical unfitness as not worthy of serious argument. Is it not true that in everything relating to war and the defence of the country women equally with men have their sphere? They pay their share of the taxes out of which the military service is found. More than that, they play a very important part in wars as non-combatants in nursing the sick and wounded, and in various other ways peculiarly consistent with their sex but which, none the less, are valuable and serviceable to the cause. Well, I feel there is great force in all that has been said with regard to the proper position of women in contributing to the comforts and charms and attractiveness of home life; but I think a serious consideration of this branch of the subject will show that that argument may be pressed too far. Women have been too long made to regard marriage as their solitary vocation. (Laughter.) I must confess I do not understand the amusement which has taken possession of the House. I say women have been too long required to regard marriage as their one vocation, and to neglect that training which would enable them to bear their part in life when left—as so large a proportion of women are—to fight the battle of life without the aid of a companion. Sir, I am happy to think that this theory, which has led to very many of our most serious social difficulties, is being abandoned. I am glad to think that, in the face of the remarkable figures which were included in the census of 1871, this theory is less popular. If I am right in my information, the census of 1871 set forth that nearly three millions of unmarried women in England alone are gaining their livelihood by their own exertions, and managing their own affairs; while eight hundred thousand married women, with their husbands alive, are engaged in occupations by which they earn money. I am sorry that the manner in which the census of 1881 has been prepared does not give me an opportunity of giving comparative figures bearing upon this; but the census is remarkable, as it shows how, in many occupations, the number of women earning a separate livelihood has largely increased. The army of female teachers, for instance, has increased in ten years from 94,000 to 123,000. The number of milliners and dressmakers has increased from 290,000 to 357,000; and, without troubling the House with further figures, perhaps the

Committee will accept my word that similar statistics might be quoted with regard to a great many occupations, including many of a comparatively novel kind. The Committee must bear in mind that all women engaged in this praiseworthy effort to earn an independent livelihood are seriously handicapped in their competition with men. They are rarely able in the same class of work, or by the same amount of work, to earn anything like the same wages that are given to men. They are generally, of course, physically, or from various other reasons, unfit or not qualified to earn as much as men or do the same amount of work; but where their work is of comparatively equal quality they are not able to earn the same wages, and yet they are bound to bear the same local and national burdens without any difference. They are handicapped in earnings with, at least, equal responsibilities. I think it would not be difficult to show the Committee that these women are law-abiding and law-supporting citizens, but, so far, they have had no part in the constitutional theory of our Government in making the laws which they thus so loyally obey. Surely, then, it does not need many more words to show that these women are eminently "capable citizens," and worthy of recognition by the House. I have said that seventeen years have not been a long time for a question of this importance to have been in progress, but I ask the Committee to look what a remarkable progress that has been. Women have now secured, very much by their own exertions, a better recognition of the necessity of elementary teaching, of education in every grade, and they have recently obtained the very highest certificate of recognition from the Universities. May I not, also, in passing, speak of the large number of women who are engaged in literature, and whose writings display a remarkable knowledge of the world, and many of whom contribute largely indeed to our knowledge and aid our study of political questions? (Cheers.) The House has recently been engaged in the consideration of a very important subject, bearing upon the social condition and industrial dwellings of the poor. Lord Shaftesbury has stated that within his own experience the condition of our poorer fellow subjects, bad as it is to-day, has been enormously improved, and he has stated that in his judgment it would have been impossible for that improvement to have been brought about without the active help and the intelligent co-operation of the women workers who have given themselves up to it. (Cheers.) The mention of the name of Miss Octavia Hill—(cheers)—in connection with this subject relieves me of the necessity of saying anything further to the members of this House, many of whom know that she has secured the services of an army of workers, generally women of high social rank, and all of them of refined and cultivated natures. (Hear, hear.) An equally important subject, perhaps, but one not very attractive, is that with regard to nursing, and the sanitary state of our hospitals and of our army. Miss Florence Nightingale, surely, has rendered services which entitle her to be regarded as a "capable citizen" in this regard. (Cheers.) A still less congenial subject is that of the discipline of our prisons and the reformatory agencies directed to those who have formed habits of crime, with which the name of Mary Carpenter has been identified. (Cheers.) Perhaps I may be permitted, in the presence of many hon. members who feel deeply on the temperance question, to refer to the active work of a woman—Miss Robinson—in promoting temperance among soldiers. (Cheers.) I only mention these things not as being in themselves novel, as they must naturally suggest themselves to those who give attention to the subject, but I want to show the Committee how utterly impossible and impracticable any of these reforms would have been if the ideal of domesticity had been accepted by the women who have worked so well, and if there was any truth in Iago's saying that a perfect woman is "born to suckle fools and chronicle small beer." (Laughter.) If this ideal of "cloistered seclusion," which is fatal to all public work, were to prevail, not only would there be a loss of capable citizens, but the general commonwealth would have seriously suffered. (Hear, hear.) It is said, "Why bring women of this kind into the vortex of party politics?" Well, I think it would not be difficult to show that the addition of the leaven of such "capable citizens" as these would dignify and elevate political life. It may be true, and it is often said, that many women do not desire the suffrage—that large numbers are indifferent to this proposal or are hostile to it. I admit the truth of that, especially amongst women of easy circumstances—with whose opinions members of this House are most likely to be familiar. But, I should like to ask, how many women in any social position are aware of the operation

of laws prejudicial to their sex until they are actually touched themselves, or by some near relative, by experience of them? How many happy women, for instance, revelling in the pleasures of their comfortable homes, know that they are not entitled to the custody of their own children? (Hear, hear.) How many such women know that even after the death of their husbands the control of their children may be taken away from them? I venture to think that when the attention of women is called to some of these subjects they will reconsider their hostility in regard to their power of determining legislation affecting their own sex. The right hon. gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Chamberlain), speaking on the second reading of this Bill, referred to the actual disadvantage which the agricultural labourers and the poorer population have suffered from the fact of their not having had any voice in the election of members of Parliament. He spoke of the manner in which common lands and lands bordering on the public highways have been filched from them, and he spoke of the diversion of educational and other charities to aims other than those to which they should have been devoted. I will not enter into a consideration of the policy of recent educational schemes bearing upon old endowments. I should not, perhaps, altogether agree with the view expressed by the right hon. gentleman, but I think it will be at least equally easily recognised by the House that women have suffered in regard to those old educational charities most shamefully and most conspicuously. (Hear, hear.) In regard to the ancient educational charities of the country to which boys and girls were equally entitled, the girls have been pushed aside. (Cheers.) I do not know whether there has been any change in the policy of the management of Christ's Hospital, but so far back as 1867 Mr. Mill quoted it as showing a case where boys and girls had equal rights, and that 1,100 boys had received a liberal education and only 26 girls had received an education which has been acknowledged by hon. members to be not liberal. With regard to the employment of women under the various Acts relating to factories and workshops, something has been said in reference to the manner in which they have been prejudiced by that legislation. I am not quite clear that such has been the case; I am perfectly willing to admit that it was not the intention of the House that it should be so. Upon another question which the House has unfortunately had to consider, and with which my right hon. friend the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) has been associated, and with respect to such measures as those now under the consideration of the other House for the protection of young girls, however much we may differ from the prevailing opinion attributed to women, surely the House must feel these are eminently questions on which women have a right to express their opinions, and upon which their views must be of peculiar value. Having said so much, the House, I think, may congratulate itself on having a certain advantage in approaching the discussion of this question now, as compared with its position seventeen years ago. The case I am about to submit has been constantly strengthening. I am no longer under the necessity of submitting an hypothesis in regard to the manner in which the franchise will be used by women. In a very interesting speech made on this subject last year, the hon. and learned member for Rye (Mr. Inderwick) spoke of women being legally eligible for the office of churchwarden, overseer, sheriff, and certain other functions of a similar character; but he added, "I think these offices were allowed them in the past rather for the opportunity of extorting fines from them than for anything else, and if we find, as a matter of fact, that they never did hold such offices, what are we to think?" But I find that even within the past few months—within the present year—a lady has been appointed to the office of overseer in the parish of Couthorpe, in Lincolnshire, while another lady, Mrs. Gosset—a name well known and honoured in this House—(hear, hear)—has been elected churchwarden in a parish in Wales. (Laughter.) In 1869 an Act was passed which removed some existing anomalies, and confirmed, in the main, the partial usage which had anciently prevailed. The Act was extended to Scotland through the action of the hon. member for Glasgow; but no such provision has yet been applied to Ireland. Under a clause in the Act of 1869, couched in terms practically identical with those I am now submitting to the Committee, women householders, spinsters and widows, vote exactly as men. There can be no use in my troubling the Committee with evidence as to how that vote has been used. Hon. members in the course of the debate can give

their own experience. For my own part I can only say that I have been a candidate for a school board and candidate for a town council, and I frankly state to the Committee that there has been no difference coming within my observation between women householders, as a class, and men householders as regards the manner in which they have used the vote. The women electors have been actuated very much by the same views and the same prejudices, if you will, as the men electors of their own rank. But the Committee may be spared the time and trouble of any vindication of the women householders in that respect, because I find it most amply and sufficiently afforded in the Bill lately submitted to the House by the Home Secretary (Sir W. Harcourt) for the constitution of a Metropolitan Parliament in which will sit the representatives of three or four millions of people—a nation in themselves—and in the election of which women householders will vote as well as men. (Hear, hear.) I am told also that women may be councillors, so that we may possibly live to see a woman Lord Mayor. (Laughter.) So much for town councils and their ever-extending responsibilities, for the Committee will bear in mind how constantly the duties of municipal councils have been enlarged, and how they will probably be further enlarged by modern legislation. No less important than the experience we have had under the Act of 1869 is the experience we have had under the Education Act of 1870, which, as everyone knows, gave not only the right of voting to women, but gave them the right to be elected and to sit as members. Again, no more difficult matter, as it appears to me, requires the careful attention and thought of those who are called upon to act as the representatives of the ratepayers than the administration of the poor law. It is full, as we all must know, of the most dangerous and delicate problems. If, then, women are the shallow and hysterical creatures the opponents of my proposal are fond of describing them, surely their position on boards of guardians would be most perilous and detrimental. But what is the fact? It is found that their natural benevolence is so much tempered by sagacity and prudence that they are not only elected from time to time to those offices, but the Local Government Board, on its own responsibility, nominates such qualified women, in some places, to bear their part in guiding and advising and acting with the elected members of boards of guardians. Women have always voted for members of boards of guardians. They can be elected on them, and they have acted when elected in the way I have described. What more does the Committee want to show that women are "capable citizens?" I know there are some who have said that even conceding the right of women to vote and bear a part in the conduct of local affairs, the Parliamentary franchise remains distinct and is a totally different matter. Now I may, perhaps, instance, for the benefit of the Committee, some cases where the constitution has given to women the right of political voting. In some of the territories of the United States women have possessed and exercised the political franchise. There is, of course, the usual conflicting testimony as to the manner in which they have used it; but, having carefully examined the evidence on both sides, I have come to the conclusion that, on the whole, woman suffrage in the United States has worked eminently satisfactorily. The Queen has signified her gracious assent to a measure which has given women freeholders in the Isle of Man this right—a right which, I am told, they have, so far, exercised satisfactorily. But we are not accustomed to take our materials from foreign places. I place my reliance much more confidently in the experience we have had in every department of local life. One difficulty which existed when this question was discussed on the motion of the hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright), in 1871, has been happily removed. Something was said about the turmoil of public elections, and the Prime Minister on that occasion, in a remarkable speech, spoke very confidently of the change which would come in regard to determining the question of the right and expediency of female voting if secret voting were adopted. Secret voting has been adopted, I imagine, to the satisfaction of all those who formerly advocated it. ("No, no," from the Opposition side of the House.) Notwithstanding the contradiction I have not yet heard that anyone who advocated the Ballot is now prepared, after experience of its working, to change his belief. Hon. gentlemen who contradict me probably never were advocates of the Ballot. Then, we are told this concession is not wanted by those to whom it is proposed to give it. Well, I invite the Committee to say what evidence will satisfy them on such a subject? We have had a very considerable number of perfectly

spontaneous and very influential petitions presented in favour of this proposal. Public meetings have been held throughout the country in its support—meetings equal in number and in the interest they have excited to the meetings held on behalf of any similar movement. Indeed, strongly as I am in favour of giving the vote to the agricultural labourer, and much as I appreciate the zeal and energy with which their agitation has been conducted, I am bound to say that I think the meetings that have been held in favour of woman suffrage have been generally larger and more influential than those held on behalf of the agricultural labourers. Then you have had resolutions from municipal corporations and public bodies of different kinds, and from Liberal Associations. I was told in the lobby last night that an influential member of the Government had received memorials from associations of both political parties in the borough he represents requesting him to support the proposal I am submitting. But these things are small in importance compared with the actual experience of woman suffrage in the municipalities and the manner in which it is exercised. Under the Ballot Act, as hon. members know, we are not now able to give an analysis of such voting, but an analysis made just before that Act was passed went to confirm the view that women vote very much in the same way as men. We heard a great deal in 1867—and remarks of a similar kind have been frequently echoing since—about "an invading army," but those on whose behalf we are asking for this right are really our own flesh and blood, our mothers and sisters, not to speak of our cousins and our aunts. In the main they are governed by the same considerations as ourselves. We are told that women are subject to such an extent to clerical influence that they are not to be trusted with the responsibility of a vote. I can bear my testimony to the great influence exercised by the Church of England on the highest and the lowest of society. I also know that there is a rugged and robust kind of life for which the Nonconformists are responsible which may be looked to to checkmate, if the occasion should arise, the undue exercise of influence by the Church. I have lately had an opportunity of seeing something of women who are associated together in conventual institutions, and surely in the convents of the Church of Rome we might expect to find women more docile and more subject to clerical influence than in any other part of society. They may be so when no serious occupation is given to them, but if anyone will acquaint himself with the constitution and action of women belonging to religious orders, who have undertaken important work, such as the management of reformatory schools and industrial schools and penitentiaries, he will find that these orders of women are Republican in their organisation, and while they recognise the duty of the clergy in their proper functions they will not allow either the clergy themselves or the Bishops to intrude on the conduct of the work for which they are responsible. The hon. member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) naturally shakes his head at that, but I look him straight in the face and repeat what I have said, and I believe it will bear the test of investigation. I think I have shown the Committee that all these fears and apprehensions as to women and their admission to the franchise are chimeras which, like the ghosts of old, only require to be faced by the actual experience of life to be banished as so many delusions. I believe that in a not far distant time there will be incredulity that such a proposal as this which I have submitted could have made some hon. members rage, and the learned Attorney-General imagine the vain things to which he gave expression last year. Liberals have not been accustomed to ask in these matters how votes will be given. Our line has always been, as it was in the Bill of 1867 and in the Ballot Act, and as it is in this measure, to consider the simple question whether the right is well founded, and whether it is generally expedient for the good government and social order of the country that people should have this vote. Who in this House can answer for the agricultural labourer and the manner in which he will use this vote? Who in this House can express himself confidently satisfied that the Irish voter will be brought within the Constitution and will exercise his vote in a manner altogether satisfactory? But we contend none the less earnestly for their enfranchisement. Experience has strengthened our confidence and belief that the growth of education and political intelligence will band these people together in intelligent support of every measure for the well-being of the country. I am pleading to-day not for people like those to whom I have referred; I am speaking for

influential landowners of whom, according to the Doomsday Book, one-seventh are women. I am pleading for tenant farmers who, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which women in such a position labour, number 20,000; for those who are large employers of labour; who are influential in many ways, and who will now have to stand by if my motion is rejected, as I hope it will not be, whilst their humblest dependents are enfranchised. The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government made an appeal to hon. gentlemen opposite and to the House generally to trust the people. Surely I may ask the House to trust the women. Speaking in 1871, the right hon. gentleman, for whom as my leader I have so loyal a regard, and whose words I accept with the greatest sincerity, said: "If it should be possible to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law, the man who shall attain that object, who shall see his purpose carried onwards to its consequences in a more just arrangement of the laws for the welfare of women, will, in my opinion, be a real benefactor to the country." I shall be greatly gratified if the achievement of this great object should be the means of adding another leaf in the Liberal laurels, and of adding to the well-earned trophies to which the Prime Minister himself has been so justly entitled. I am reproached by some of my friends with the fact that hon. gentlemen opposite are likely to give considerable support to my motion; but although I have endeavoured to urge this measure as an eminently Liberal proposal, consistent with and inseparable from the Liberal programme, there may be considerations which at this time may specially commend my proposal to hon. gentlemen opposite. Short as my experience of this House has been, I have often seen members who sit beside me outvoted by Tory aid called in by the Government, and I think perhaps our leaders will not reproach us on this occasion if we find ourselves supported to some extent by hon. gentlemen opposite. But we are told that by the passing of this motion we shall imperil the Bill. Imperilling the Bill is a very serious charge to bring against us, who have so long worked for it, and who are sincerely and earnestly anxious to see it pass; but we have no information given to us as to where lies the peril. If, as I hope it may, it be true that we are to receive considerable support from hon. gentlemen opposite, I cannot imagine where the peril lies. If it is sent to another House, I require some further information that this amendment will make the Bill unpalatable to noble lords. I have endeavoured to show that the Bill is just and expedient, and it is always opportune, to quote again the words of the President of the Board of Trade, to do the right. One word with regard to the clause itself. That clause is framed as nearly as possible in the language of a similar operative clause in the Municipal Corporations Act. I am told that under that clause women householders have alone the right to vote. It is quite true that it may be open to question as to the legal operation of that clause, but all I ask the House is that in voting for the second reading of this clause, they shall assert the general principle that no disability shall attach to those who fulfil all other qualifications and conditions, by the mere fact of sex; but in Committee I shall be perfectly willing to make the point clear to those who are sceptical upon it as to lodgers and married women. The usage has always been to accept the principle and then to consider modifications. I very cordially thank the House for its indulgent attention. I have endeavoured to show that the claim I have urged is right and just. I believe the concession will be wise and expedient, and I hope the House will accord its approval to my resolution.

Question proposed: That this clause be read a second time.

MR. GLADSTONE.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have listened with very great interest to the speech of my hon. friend. He has made an eloquent and able speech in favour of the enfranchisement of women, and he has opened a very wide field of discussion. He has told us himself, towards the close of his speech, that he has not made up his mind as to the final form of the legislation he proposes. What he wants is that the House shall now consent by assenting to the second reading of this clause, to accept what he has termed the principle of the clause; but this is a different case from a case in which the House is invited to accept the principle of a Bill. When the House accepts the principle of a Bill, it has the Bill before it, and is aware of its provisions. My hon. friend invites us to accept the principle of his clause, telling us at the same time that he leaves it open to

us to introduce amendments and alterations in the terms of the clause, which might most materially and even vitally affect its application. I am not stating this by way of objection to my hon. friend's proceeding upon its merits; I am only stating it to show that he has invited us to enter upon a new and wide field of separate legislation. There are two questions which must occur at least to my mind on this occasion, and which, I think, the House will agree it is our duty to entertain. One of these is the question whether women should be enfranchised; the other is the question whether that enfranchisement should be effected by a clause introduced in Committee on the present Bill. Now on the first of these questions I have no opinion to give on the present occasion. I shall not follow my hon. friend through the various arguments which he has made, which may no doubt be supported by a great deal of material urged in their favour, and which are equally open to be controverted from the opposite point of view. My hon. friend has referred to a speech of mine. I have not recently referred to it, but so far as my memory serves me I am not aware of having departed from the general sentiments it embraced, and my own opinions on this subject, if I am to describe them in a very rude outline, are that this is a question of immense difficulty; that it is a question upon which nothing hasty should be done—(hear, hear)—a question which requires to be absolutely sifted to the bottom; a question which ought to be dissociated from every motion of party and every element of political consideration, and upon which the House can only by strict adherence to its rules, arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Now the second question of the two I have named is that upon which I am now about to dwell. Not holding myself the most extreme views as to the first, I certainly entertain myself, and I have to declare on the part of my colleagues, the strongest conviction that it is not fit, but unfitting, in every sense of the word, to attempt to effect this enfranchisement by the introduction of a clause in Committee on the present Bill. We have been obliged to consider the question in what way we can best serve the cause we have undertaken. My hon. friend says he has had no notice that the Bill would be endangered by the mode of proceeding he has adopted. I thought I had given him very distinct notice on that subject by a letter I addressed to him to-day in answer to one I received from him this morning. Possibly it has not reached him, and I am sorry if it has not.

MR. WOODALL: I said it had not been indicated in what way the Bill would be endangered.

MR. GLADSTONE: The expression I used on the part of the Government was that the view they entertained and the estimate they had formed of their position, and of the difficulties by which they were surrounded, and the best means by which they may hope to attain their important end, was that it would be a breach of duty on their part to assent in any manner to the introduction of the clause of the hon. gentleman. (Cheers.) At the outset in the discussion of this subject, I pointed out to the House that we had a great purpose in view. But if there is one duty more than another which belongs to the Government, which it is bound to take into its own hands, and for which it is bound to assert its own responsibility—because, in fact, no one can effectually relieve it of that responsibility—that duty is to consider and determine to the best of its power by what means, by what arrangement of enactments, by what division of the subject, by what steps in the arrangement of the business of the House, with what regard to the action of parties in the country it can attain the end it professes to have in view; and if the Government, professing to desire the enfranchisement of the great mass of the people, surrenders to others the consideration and decision of all the conditions with which that enfranchisement is to be loaded, that Government betrays its duty to the country. I have said first for myself, and I have said on the part of my colleagues, that we deprecate the introduction of new matter into this Bill. The cargo which the vessel carries is in our opinion a cargo as large as she can carry safely. (Opposition laughter.) No measure of this importance ever had one-tenth part of the difficulties and dangers to apprehend which this measure has had to apprehend from its indirect and even unawowed foes. It has been our duty to take into consideration all these propositions, and we have determined in our own mind that to reduce our proposal to a form of strict simplicity, intelligible to the country, not mixed up with a multitude of detailed proposals, not opening up new fields of discussion which involve the introduction of motives and considerations totally new, was the mode in which we could best and in which we could

alone discharge the serious obligation that is undertaken by any Government that proposes a measure to admit two millions of persons to the franchise. On that account we have been obliged to adopt a tone which may have appeared to the House almost pedantic in its strictness, and to use every means in our power for the purpose of putting aside proposals some of which might be meritorious on the whole, some of which might at any rate be entitled to full consideration. Is it possible for us to make an exception in favour of the proposal of my hon. friend? If we do that we are bound to enter into a large discussion of the subject he has opened. It is no light matter. It is a very weighty matter, and if we enter into the discussion of that subject we must be prepared to go round the whole circle of topics connected with the franchise, and one by one to go through the whole details which a thorough examination of them would involve. Now we have to consider one question above all others—the time at our disposal; and, next to that, the advantages that would be given to the avowed or unavowed opponents of this Bill by loading the proposal with regard to the extension of the franchise with matters of an extraneous character. We cannot undertake that responsibility. We will disclaim all responsibility for the measure if my hon. friend carries the motion he has in view. (Ministerial cheers.) Now, at least, I hope we understand fully and clearly in what direction the danger, we think, lies. But this is no passionate conclusion. It is to which I and my colleagues have been driven by the eagerness of the opposition of my hon. friend. There are among us those who are positively friendly to the proposal of my hon. friend in wishing it well—going perhaps as far as my hon. friend in wishing it well; but it is strictly a judgment of prudence, and we have felt that if we were to maintain our ground and to put this great proposal singly in such a way as to give it a fair chance of the judgment of Parliament, it was impossible for us to enter upon the multitude of questions which might fairly be raised in connection with the franchise, and most certainly it is impossible to make the proposal of my hon. friend an exception to that. Why should we not make it an exception? In the first place, it is a very large proposal. My hon. friend did not enter upon the consideration of the number of persons whom he proposes to enfranchise by his amendment. I have referred to authorities upon the subject. It is impossible to arrive at anything resembling a close estimate, but it does not seem unreasonable to believe that the number of persons in the three kingdoms would be little short of half a million. I am speaking of what I wish to be a moderate estimate. I will not say it will not go beyond that number, but I think I state it moderately at that number. Of course if there be any truth in the argument so persistently urged, with some limited amount of reason I admit, with regard to the disproportion of the constituencies which our large enfranchisement is going to create until accompanied by redistribution, the ground of that disproportion, which hon. gentlemen opposite are treating as a thing totally destroying the value of the Bill and converting it into a mischief until we have redistribution, all that disproportion would be immensely aggravated by this very large addition. I think it is not a disputable question, but is in principle a rule-of-three sum. But this question is one upon which my hon. friend has exhibited a very strong feeling, and in my opinion it is honourable to him that he has exhibited that feeling. Every man who examines it must, I think, have a strong feeling as to the exhibitor, but then it unfortunately happens that a large number of those who have examined it entertain feelings quite as strong as that of my hon. friend, but in precisely the opposite direction. (Laughter.) What is the position in which the hon. member places the Government? in which he places—I was going to say myself, but that is too insignificant a question—the position in which he places Parliament which has to deal with this great subject, and which is watched with intense interest by the country as to the manner in which it will deal with it—in fact the position in which he places the country itself respecting the granting of the franchise, if in the middle of June, amidst all our difficulties connected with public business, he requests us to introduce into this Bill a completely new subject upon which it is admitted men will differ profoundly, and with regard to which there is only one thing which is clear, viz., that both on one side and on the other side they would be entitled to require, and they would require that it should receive a full and dispassionate discussion and investigation. It is not now practicable to give it that investigation. (Cheers.) My hon. friend has no doubt severed the position of

domestic and foreign politics. He thinks there is not a sufficient burden upon our shoulders; but he wishes to place this additional burden upon all the rest. It is extremely flattering that he should form such an estimate of our strength; but for our part our judgment is more modest. We think our engagements are quite as heavy as we can discharge, and it is on that account, and not at all because I wish in any way to disparage either the ability of my hon. friend or the pleas he has been enabled to make, that I hope the Committee will decline to entertain the amendment. This is one of those questions to which, in my mind, a kind of sacredness attaches. This is also one of those questions which it would be intolerable to mix up with purely political and party debates. If there be a subject in the whole compass of human life and experience that is sacred beyond all other subjects it is the character and position of women. It is idle to say as decisive of the question that you have given women votes in School Board elections and for Corporations, and that they have discharged their duties well. Nothing could be fairer than that my hon. friend should use those arguments as far as they go, and he has made every legitimate use of them to-night, but they do not decide or dispose of the question. It is quite a different question from local matters. Women are well qualified, and they have shown that they are well qualified without derogating from the high prerogatives of their sex which carry them far above the region wherein our controversies lie, for local duties; but it is one question whether those local duties which they discharge without detriment and with great advantage should be put upon them, and it is another question how far it is desirable that they should be invited to come upon the same footing with men on the stormy sea of politics. (Hear, hear.) I do not attempt to rule that question, but I say it is the largest social question you can possibly have raised. It is the one which you are most bound to deal with; not in an off-hand manner, and in a manner thorough and workmanlike, and corresponding to the vast responsibilities which it carries with it. It is the question which of all others we ought not to mix up with the political and party issues involved in the fate of the Bill. It is not desirable that the claims of women should be denied, or that they should be adopted, because of the bearing which at this moment they cannot fail to have upon political and party issues. Does my hon. friend ask me to admit that this question deserves the fullest consideration? I give him the admission freely, and I assert strongly that it is a proper subject for consideration. Does he ask me if I wish to bind the members of this Government, or my colleagues in the Cabinet, with respect to the votes which they will give upon this question? Certainly not, provided only that you take the subject from the vortex of political contention. But these social considerations are considerations which cannot be trifled with, which must be dealt with carefully and solemnly, and which cannot be either carefully or solemnly dealt with, nor can the mass of details that the principle of this resolution would involve be settled in a satisfactory manner, in conjunction with this Bill. While, therefore, having always thought that this was a question eminently to be considered as an open question and dealt with on its own merits, having belonged to Governments which have so treated it, belonging now to a Government which so treats it, and wishing it to be decided, when it is decided, by the free, impartial, and dispassionate judgment of Parliament on its social and moral aspects, and not upon political considerations, I am bound to say, while thus free and open on the subject myself, that, with regard to the proposal to introduce it into this Bill, I offer to it the strongest opposition in my power, and I must disclaim and renounce all responsibility for the measure should my hon. friend succeed in inducing the Committee to adopt his amendment. (Cheers.)

On the motion of Lord JOHN MANNERS the debate was then adjourned.

Thursday, June 12th.

The House went into Committee upon this Bill, and resumed the adjourned debate upon Mr. Woodall's motion to confer the Parliamentary franchise upon women.

LORD J. MANNERS.

Lord J. MANNERS: In the course of the somewhat comminatory observations addressed to the Committee by the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister, there was one statement made in which I

heartily concur. The right hon. gentleman expressed a decided opinion that this question of female enfranchisement should be discussed totally apart from all political and party considerations. When I heard the right hon. gentleman say that, it occurred to me that it might not be inappropriate or improper that I, who had for a long number of years taken a strong interest in the success of this proposal, should rise immediately after the right hon. gentleman and add my voice to the suggestion that it should be removed from all party considerations. At the same time I must remind the House, in reference to the condition on which the right hon. gentleman laid such great stress, that the amendment of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) never has been considered as being of a party character, and if it had not been for the speech of the right hon. gentleman himself I venture to think that it would have been discussed and decided without the slightest reference to party topics or political considerations. But the speech of the right hon. gentleman, I admit, did throw a good deal of party colouring over the whole question. At the same time, in the remarks I propose to offer to the Committee in support of the proposition of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall), I shall endeavour, as far as I can, to avoid everything that may savour of party politics. But, apart from the desire which has been expressed to keep this question clear from party politics, I confess I entertain considerable doubt whether any question which relates to the franchise—any question relating to the enfranchisement of any portion of Her Majesty's subjects—must not be regarded more or less as a political question. I understand, therefore, the right hon. gentleman's contention to be that whether the question of the enfranchisement of the female ratepayers of the kingdom be considered as part of a proposition for the general enlargement of the franchise as now proposed, or whether it be considered a separate measure, introduced on its own merits, the political questions which surround it should partake in no sense whatever of a party character, and to that I cordially assent. Beyond this agreement, however, I find considerable difficulty in following the right hon. gentleman, and for this reason—that the right hon. gentleman expressed no opinion whatever upon the principle of the clause proposed by the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). He is apparently neither against it nor is he for it. His attitude in respect of this question, which has now been under discussion for a great number of years, may be described as a purely Laodicean attitude—he will neither support it nor will he oppose it in principle. To hear the right hon. gentleman one would fancy that it was a totally new question suddenly sprung on the attention of the House by the hon. gentleman the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). Is it a new question? Why, sir, if there is any question connected with the franchise which has been more thoroughly discussed, sifted, and thrashed out during the last seventeen years than another it is this very question we are discussing now. But the right hon. gentleman went a step further, and he suggested that the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) was endeavouring to entrap the House into a hasty and precipitate decision upon the question. As to haste and precipitancy attaching to a proposal for the enfranchisement of the female ratepayers of this kingdom, I should like to know how many debates have taken place within these walls upon it; how many divisions have occurred in the House of Commons; how many public meetings have been held, and how many writings have been given to the world by eminent thinkers and illustrious statesmen who have sifted this matter to the very bottom. When I heard the charge of haste and precipitancy, I could not help reflecting how the proposals of Her Majesty's Government themselves would stand in comparison, so far as haste and precipitancy are concerned, with the proposal of the hon. gentleman the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). Let us take this question of the enfranchisement of the female ratepayers and contrast it with the proposal of the Bill for the enfranchisement of the Irish cottiers, or the enfranchisement of that novel class of citizens who are under the Bill to come into the enjoyment of the franchise upon what is called the service clause of the right hon. gentleman's Bill. For how many years has the question of giving a vote to the Irish cottiers been discussed either within or without the walls of Parliament? How many years have been devoted to the consideration of whether that class of persons who occupy what may be called, without offence, a servile position, is fit and capable of exercising the franchise or not? I dismiss, therefore, as unworthy of serious consideration this charge of haste and precipitancy being attached to the question we are discussing in connection with this Reform Bill. Well, then, sir, passing

away from that question, I think there were only two other considerations brought under the attention of the House by the right hon. gentleman. The first was what, I think, he called the social magnitude and complexity of this question. Well, I am bound to say that for my part I cannot soar to those heights of speculation to which the right hon. gentleman invites us. I confess that I have never been able to look at the question from that transcendental aspect in which some hon. and right hon. gentlemen have been disposed to regard it. To me it is a very simple, a very plain, and almost a hum-drum question. It is simply this,—Will you grant the Parliamentary franchise to a class of Her Majesty's subjects who for many years past have blamelessly and with great advantage to the State exercised the franchise with respect to municipal, with respect to poor law, and with respect to school board elections? I cannot make the question either greater or smaller than that. It is a simple, practical, and plain question which really requires no speculative skill to discuss or decide upon. Well, sir, if that be so, can anyone allege that the female ratepayers of this country have shown themselves unworthy of the trust which it is proposed to repose in them from the manner in which they have discharged the functions which have already been entrusted to them? I ventured, in some observations which I made upon the second reading of the Bill, to allude to one class of these female ratepayers—the female farmers of this country. By way of illustration I will again refer to that class, because as a county member I naturally have more knowledge of that class, and possibly more interest in them. But, I ask, can anyone allege that from the manner in which during the period of time, now ranging over a great number of years, the female farmers have discharged the duties which have devolved on them, many and important as those duties are, there is the slightest ground for asserting that they are likely to prove themselves unworthy, unfit, or incapable of exercising the Parliamentary franchise? I should like to quote the opinion delivered only the other day in a town with which I am acquainted—the borough of Grantham—by a gentleman well known in the agricultural world of Lincolnshire and Leicestershire on this very subject. I refer to Mr. Wilders, who said: "To my mind the greatest injustice is that the female ratepayer and owner should not be allowed to vote. Fancy a woman farming 500 acres of land, and paying the usual contributions to the taxes of the country, having no voice in the representation of the country, while her own labourers have. If any man disputes the business capabilities of woman, let him begin to finish an important business transaction with her, and I will answer for it that he will come off second best." Well, then, sir, I contend that there has been no reason assigned by anyone why the Parliamentary franchise should not be conferred upon these fit and capable female ratepayers. The right hon. gentleman has drawn somewhat upon his imagination, and has suggested that there might be some occult reason—I don't think he said it occurred to his own mind—but that there might be some occult reason why these female ratepayers who might be perfectly fit to vote at municipal, school board, and poor law elections—nay, even why they should be capable under the new measure which the Government have introduced of managing the whole of the local affairs of the four millions of inhabitants of this great city, but why they still might be incapable, every four, five, or six years, of deciding at the ballot-box who should be a fit and proper person to represent them in this House of Parliament. Was there ever a more puerile reason offered to this House than that suggested by the right hon. gentleman? Is he prepared himself to maintain it in argument? Will he tell the House that he agrees with those who draw this distinction, and that he draws this line of demarcation between the fitness of the female ratepayer to manage the educational and all the local concerns of the four millions of people who inhabit this metropolis, and the privilege of exercising every five or six years the right of voting for a Parliamentary representative? No, sir, I think the right hon. gentleman will not tell the House either now or upon any other occasion that he entertains that view or draws that distinction. Then, the right hon. gentleman has stated as a sort of appeal to the fears of hon. gentlemen opposite to him what the number of female ratepayers is who might come on under the operation of this clause. Again, as a county member, having tested the fitness in the way I have indicated of the female ratepayer to exercise the franchise, I am not in the least concerned at any difficulty which might arise from their admission under the operation of the clause proposed by the honourable

member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). It appears to me that in the great majority of cases the female ratepayers have proved their capacity during a long series of years. I take it that the great majority of those who are to be enfranchised by the measure of the right hon. gentleman occupy a precisely opposite position. They have not—I do not say from any fault of their own, but by the circumstances in which they have lived—had the opportunity of proving their fitness to exercise the franchise which, so ungrudgingly, the right hon. gentleman is about to confer on them. Well, then, sir, on all these grounds, I venture to think that not a shadow of a case has been made out against the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). I come now to consider the last argument, if I may so call it, of the right hon. gentleman—an argument indeed which partook of the nature of a threat, and which might be passed by as unworthy of notice, if it did not constitute the substance and almost the whole meaning of the speech of the right hon. gentleman—I mean the threat with which the right hon. gentleman began and concluded his observations. Well, I confess that when the right hon. gentleman asked the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) if he had not received an important letter which had been transmitted to him that morning, and on being informed that he had not proceeded to give the substance of that letter, I expected, and I have no doubt the whole House expected, some startling announcement of the deadly peril that might ensue to the fortunes of this Bill if the clause proposed by the hon. gentleman were inserted in it. I thought it possible that from some unexpected quarter communications of a startling character might have been sent to the right hon. gentleman pointing out that however friendly the writers were to the Bill as it stood, if the clause of the hon. gentleman were inserted deadly peril would ensue. I wondered myself from what quarter the danger was likely to come. Was it from the bench of bishops? Had they signed a round robin and sent it to the right hon. gentleman, containing this alarming communication? Or was it communicated direct from the three hundred gentlemen—I think that was what the right hon. gentleman called them in the speech which he made before Whitsuntide, when he wanted to deter the House from accepting the amendment of his right hon. and gallant friend the member for North Lancashire (Colonel Stanley)—who in another place were to interpose their authority and influence. Did the right hon. gentleman announce that great additional hostility must be expected by the Government in another place if the clause of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) is inserted in the Bill? No, sir, nothing of the kind occurred. There was no announcement of danger to the Bill from any quarter except in the mind and disposition of the right hon. gentleman himself. There was the peril and the danger to the Bill if the amendment of the hon. member should be carried. It was created by, existed in, and was to be applied only by the right hon. gentleman himself. It exists nowhere else. It is not, of course, for me to offer advice, but it is for hon. gentlemen to say what course they intend to pursue after having heard that statement of the right hon. gentleman. There was nothing before them except that bald statement on the part of the right hon. gentleman. *Hoc volo, sic jubeo.* The exertions, the struggles, the hopes, and the anxieties of seventeen years are to count as nothing compared with the *ipse dixit* of the right hon. gentleman himself. It is no part of the position I now occupy here to presume to offer advice to the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall), but I may perhaps be allowed to give a few words of encouragement or consolation to him, if he decides upon pressing his amendment, even from this bench. It is not many weeks ago since in this House we had a somewhat similar threat on the part of the right hon. gentleman. There was a very important measure which came down to this House from the other House of Parliament, dealing with a question that excited a very great amount of interest from one end of the country to the other. Her Majesty's Government announced that if a certain amendment to that measure then proposed was not accepted and inserted in the Bill, they would not bind themselves to proceed further with the measure, and the House of Commons resisted that threat. They defeated the amendment of Her Majesty's Government, and then the minister in charge of the measure, supported by the right hon. gentleman himself, rose and said that under the very serious circumstances of the case, he must ask for an adjournment in order that the Government might consider the course they would adopt in such a critical condition of affairs. So solemn were the tones

of the Prime Minister that even my noble friend the member for Woodstock (Lord R. Churchill) became alarmed, and suggested that no time should be given to the minister to reconsider the position, but that the House should go on with the Bill immediately, and without delay. Fortunately wiser and more moderate counsels prevailed. The time for consideration which Her Majesty's Ministers asked for was granted. What happened? Was the Bill withdrawn? Did the country suffer the loss of a measure on which they had set their hearts? Not a bit of it. A few words to save the honour of the Government were inserted with the assent of every hon. member in the House, and that measure which was threatened by the Government was accepted by them and by the House, and is now upon the statute-book of the country as part of the law of the land. So it will be I hope with this proposal. Well, sir, I would extend my survey further back than the middle or the beginning of this session. The right hon. gentleman has, I notice, repeated several times certain words which may be held as expressing the doctrine of opportunism. Now, I should like to consider whether this doctrine of opportunism has ever been followed successfully by the leaders of great public movements in this country during the past sixty or seventy years. I do not deny that if a man is advocating his own personal objects, or a cause which he has taken up in order to gratify his ambition—such, for instance, as a desire to become the President of a Republic, or a Secretary of State, or Prime Minister, the desire to achieve the great object of his personal ambition might induce him to follow the doctrine of opportunism. But if, on the other hand, a man takes charge of a great public question in England, and wishes to carry that question to a successful issue, then I venture to say—what all history shows—that he must turn resolutely a deaf ear to every suggestion of opportunism that may be made to him. Did O'Connell and Sheil carry Roman Catholic emancipation by attending to the suggestions of opportunism? Did Cobden and Bright bring about the repeal of the Corn Laws by consulting the convenience of Prime Ministers and Cabinets? Did Lord Ashley in this House or when he was removed from it—did honest John Fielden induce Parliament to pass the Ten Hours Factory Act by attending to the doctrine of opportunism? No. If a man undertakes to champion a great public cause in this country he must, in season and out of season, press forward the question he has at heart. He must inscribe upon his banner and upon his conduct the motto "thorough," and he must persevere against all solicitations and suggestions whether of fear or of favour. But is it true that this clause is inopportune? I think I heard you, sir, say that the clause of the hon. gentleman is perfectly in harmony with the proposals of this measure and that it is germane to the subject of franchise extension. In fact it is only inopportune in the eyes and in the judgment of the Prime Minister and his colleagues. Therefore—although I have said that I will not presume to give advice—I venture to hope for the sake of the success of this cause, which, apart from all partisan considerations, I have had at heart for a great number of years, that the hon. gentleman and his friends on the other side of the House will not be deterred by the violent language they have heard from the Prime Minister, but will proceed, undisturbed, to submit this question to the arbitrament of the House of Commons. But be that as it may, for myself my course is clear and plain. Guided by every consideration of justice and fairness, of equity, of analogy and of experience, I shall give a cordial and unhesitating support to the second reading of the clause which has been proposed by the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall).

MR. E. A. LEATHAM.

Mr. E. A. LEATHAM: I certainly do not rise for the purpose of defending the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government from the attack of the noble lord on the other side of the House in the speech which he has made in support of the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). I could not help feeling somewhat amused at hearing from the seat which used to be occupied in times past by the greatest opportunist who ever lived charges of opportunism flung from that side of the House to this—the opportunism of the great statesman to whom I refer having had special reference to the very question under discussion at the present moment—the great question of reform. Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to those portions of the speech of the noble lord in which he advocated the motion now under discussion. The noble lord began by saying that this was a hum-drum question. It was a very plain,

a very practical, and a very simple question; but I think that if one thing more than another has come out in the course of this debate it is the recognition by the House that the question now before the Committee is one of the very greatest magnitude. I do not think it is possible to exaggerate the importance of the revolution which my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) proposes, and which he proposes as calmly as if he were suggesting that the House should adjourn over the Derby Day. Now do not let hon. gentlemen think that in voting for the motion of my hon. friend they are going simply to vote in favour of the enfranchisement of a few spinsters and widows. The people who are at the bottom of this movement know much better. Once pass a clause which shall remove the disability of sex, and all the rest follows. Once pass an Act of Parliament which shall give the franchise to women, irrespective of marriage, and that is the clear reading of this clause, and I should like to know how long the common law is to step in and bar the vote which you will have given by statute. The fact is already acknowledged that this constitutes the charm of the motion. Perhaps my hon. friend who proposes the clause will explain what his object is in moving it, and what the real object of this movement is. I would ask hon. members to refer to what has been said, and said very recently, by Miss Becker, a very able exponent of the wishes of those who advocate this proposal. In the March number of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* Miss Becker says, "The generation which has witnessed the abolition of one wrong, old as the everlasting hills"—meaning slavery—"is destined to witness the greatest emancipation the world has yet seen—the removal of the brand of political incapacity from half the human race." "The greatest emancipation the world has yet seen" is not the emancipation of spinsters and widows. Widows and spinsters, thank goodness, do not yet constitute one-half of the human race. But fairly applied, the motion means the enfranchisement of married women, and anything short of that is so intolerable to those who are agitating this question, that Mrs. Jacob Bright, in a circular issued early in the year, expressly tells us that when my hon. friend the member for Ashton (Mr. Mason), who had charge of this question last year, publicly declared that if his motion meant the enfranchisement of married women, he would wash his hands of the question at once and for ever—a cold dismay fell upon the ladies in the gallery of the House, and Mrs. Peter Taylor, whom she described as the mother of the movement, resigned on the spot, her example being followed by a number of those to whom, without mentioning their names, I may allude as the grandmothers of the movement. Mrs. Jacob Bright asks if Mr. Gladstone will accept this mutilated measure—that is, the measure containing the clause of my hon. friend—which, whilst granting the right of voting to women of the lowest class, and enfranchising 40,000 of such women in London alone, will nevertheless withhold it from the cultured wives and mothers of the nation? It is impossible not to share in her indignation, for if it be not right to give the vote to married women discharging the highest duties and responsibilities of the sex, can it be right to give it to women who are discharging none of those responsibilities and duties? My hon. friend in moving this clause touched upon what he called the expediency of giving the voting power to married women. I differ altogether from my hon. friend, and I must say there is no more unwelcome fact than that liberal and popular institutions have not always been successful everywhere. The experiment which has been tried with such beneficent results in England and America has been tried in France and Spain, and it has failed so frequently and succeeded so partially that I feel but for the triumphant example of England and America it might be contended that representative institutions are still upon their trial. Why is it that the experiment has so often failed in France and Spain, and has succeeded so well in this country? It is simply because the Anglo-Saxon race is less impulsive, less emotional, less crotchety, less capricious—I had almost said less feminine—than the Latin races. Depend upon it that with female suffrage we should introduce into our electorate all those qualities which have made representative institutions a failure among the Latin race. We should have feminine inconsequence at the very moment when we most desired to be sternly logical, and a feminine flutter at the moment when we desired to be most manly and robust. Why is it that we are asked to admit this most doubtful class of electors? The noble lord the member for North Leicestershire (Lord J. Manners) tells us it is because they have what is vulgarly called "the qualifica-

tion," but which by itself is no qualification at all. It is not because men pay taxes and rates, and own and occupy property, that they have votes, but it is because, in the first place, they are men. The qualification is simply one of a series of restrictions imposed from time to time in order to ensure that the voter, being a man, shall be a man, for the practical purposes of the franchise, of the highest type—that is, a man who is free and independent. My hon. friend proposes to read backwards all the qualifications for political life. He proposes to give the suffrage to a sex which in the nature of things must be always more or less dependent, and to individuals who are not even men. My hon. friend says that we have already broken through the principle of sex by giving the franchise to women in connection with the board schools and municipal affairs. There is no analogy at all between the case of the Parliamentary vote and the case of municipalities and of board schools. It is quite true that we have given the franchise to women, but it has been given most carelessly. You slipped it into a Bill brought in for another purpose just as you are trying to slip it into this Bill. It was contended that as women are allowed a vote as shareholders in commercial undertakings and have therefore a voice in their management they ought to have a vote for the election of those who have the disposal of the funds to which they contribute through the rates. That was the contention; but there is no analogy between the kind of voting in which they participate now and voting for a member of Parliament, just as there is no analogy between the imperial questions which we are called upon to decide in this House and those which puzzle aldermen. When we come to the school boards there is no analogy whatever. It is quite true that we have decided in favour of the right of women to sit upon school boards to superintend the education of girls, just as they are qualified to sit on any other benevolent committee. Having decided that they should have the right to sit and act, it was a necessary consequence that you should give them the right of voting. But the House will see at once that there is no true analogy between the two cases, because nobody proposes that women shall be returned to this House, and the right of voting ought clearly to imply the right of being voted for. The noble lord the member for North Leicestershire (Lord J. Manners) has referred to the case of women who are farmers. He speaks of it as a great anomaly that women who are farmers should not possess a vote while the labourers they employ are allowed to have it. I should like to know what franchise could be devised which would present no anomaly? I think that the man who supposes that he could devise a franchise which should present no anomaly must be a fool—at any rate, I will say he must be a person the reverse of wise. But the anomaly in this particular case has been enormously exaggerated. All who are familiar with the names of women in farm agreements know that they are put there in nine cases out of ten merely as a matter of convenience. They perform no duties in regard to the management and proper care of the farm; they do not join the labourers in the field, the labourers who are to receive votes under the Bill. But if it were possible to give votes to women who are farmers is it a thing to be desired? Whenever women have been subjected to circumstances of peculiar pressure, you have always passed exceptional measures for their protection. Yet, without any such protection, we are now asked to subject women, in all the weakness of their sex, to a pressure which men, in all the robustness of theirs, have been found totally unable to resist. Putting consequences on one side I revert to my original proposition, which is this—that to seek to invest women with the responsibilities and duties of men is, in my view, simply to misunderstand the whole economy of mankind. A very large experience has proved that there are certain responsibilities and duties which attach to men, and certain responsibilities and duties which attach to women, and that those duties are best performed when one sex does not invade the province of the other. This has been so well understood, for so many years, that we are not likely, nowadays, to make many elementary discoveries in this matter. Perhaps I may be allowed to read to the Committee a few words from a distinguished French writer, who asks whether women could act as men and yet remain women? He said, "This is a question of the rights and duties of one sex claimed by the other, and of an absolute change of vocation, idea, occupation, and individuality, and it will be difficult to persuade us that while men find it so hard to act as men,"—he spoke as a Frenchman—"that women can act as men and yet remain women—playing a double

part, fulfilling a two-fold mission, and assuming the two-fold character of humanity. This is what will happen. We shall lose the woman without getting the man. What we shall get is that monstrous and repulsive creature already looming above the horizon—*la femme homme*." I think that is a view of the question which must recommend itself to our common sense, and it is confirmed by the almost total abstention of women from seeking to occupy those public offices which we have been told in this debate are legally open to them, but which they feel themselves compelled to decline because they are unsuitable to their sex. It is still more strongly confirmed by the coldness with which women view the proposition now before the House. The innate sense of what is womanly, which is more to some women than reason or law, perhaps more than religion itself, rebels against this proposition. What I would say to the hon. member is this: Let him first convince his clients; let him get upon his side the women of England; let him prove to them that the franchise is a trust which they will prize, and gladly undertake, and faithfully perform, and then let him come down to the House and make a proposition which would, from their unanimous support, have acquired some degree of substance, but which, stripped of that support, and condemned by their silence, is little less than a burlesque upon our theory of political equity, and an impertinent satire upon them.

MR. STANSFELD.

MR. STANSFELD: I am not about to follow my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham) step by step into the able and impressive speech which he has just delivered. I trust that he will not accuse me of want of courtesy in not following him, when I say that I decline to discuss the subject upon the large lines upon which he has discussed it to-night under the conditions created for those in favour of admitting women to the franchise by the action of the Prime Minister the other day. Those of the Liberal party who take an interest in the subject were told that we might not vote in favour of this proposal unless we chose to place ourselves under the imputation of risking the passing of the Franchise Bill, or it may be of imperiling the existence of the Government itself. My object, in the remarks I shall address to the Committee to-night, is mainly to endeavour to make some reply to the speech of the Prime Minister, on the part of those who feel most deeply and keenly, and who have fought and spoken most earnestly upon our side of the question for years. I will only say before I pass to that part of the subject that my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham) would, I think, have been fairer to my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) if he had replied to his speech—if he had confined his arguments to answering the proposition which my hon. friend has placed before the Committee, instead of quoting the individual opinion of ladies, estimable and talented, but not necessarily and not actually representing the movement or the motion of my hon. friend. Well, then, sir, I will begin by making this acknowledgment, fully and frankly, that Her Majesty's Government, as the Prime Minister said, are the sole judges of their own responsibility in the conduct of this measure for the extension of the franchise, and that they alone must decide for themselves the amount of cargo it will carry, and how much might endanger its safety. I make that admission; I acknowledge the absolute and unanswerable justice of that statement and argument of the right hon. gentleman. No one can divide or diminish their responsibility. The Prime Minister spoke the other day in no hesitating terms—I might almost say in tones of warning, if not of absolute menace—and I regard the clause of my hon. friend in consequence as being upon this occasion doomed and lost. But, sir, I cannot conceal from myself that it is a serious blow that the right hon. gentleman has felt it his duty to deal to some of us, and to a cause which we have dearly at heart. It is, in my view, the most serious and damaging blow which this cause has ever yet received during the seventeen years that it has been before the country, and in the course of the ten occasions on which it has been discussed and voted upon by the House of Commons. The action of the right hon. gentleman appears to me to put upon some one or more of us, who, as I have said, have been most intimately associated with this subject, the absolute duty of giving some explanation of the view which we take of the action of my hon. friend, and some protest against the position in which we find ourselves placed by the action of the right hon. gentleman

himself. Sir, I failed to be enlightened by the speech of the right hon. gentleman—however powerful and immensely powerful it was—I failed to be enlightened by that speech as to the specific nature of the danger to his measure from the course taken by my hon. friend. I failed even to gather exactly the direction in which we were to look for the danger, although the right hon. gentleman triumphantly asked my hon. friend—"is it not clear now to your mind whence the danger is likely to arise?" Well, sir, we who have taken the greatest interest in this subject have thought it our duty, and did think it our duty before this motion was put upon the paper, to consider that question of danger for ourselves. I wish, with the permission of the Committee, to be allowed to state what our views have been upon the question of danger, and I wish to do so for this reason. I feel that there is an unfairness in the position in which, if it could have been avoided, the right hon. gentleman has placed us. We are and have been amongst the most earnest members of his party and of his supporters. (Mr. Gladstone: "Hear, hear.") I seldom speak for myself, but I think I may be permitted to say upon this occasion that I have given to the Government an ungrudging support—(Mr. Gladstone: "Hear, hear.")—although I place no value upon that fact. (Mr. Gladstone: "Hear, hear," and a laugh from the Opposition.)

MR. GLADSTONE: I hope I may not be misunderstood. I did not intend to apply that cheer to the last remark of my right hon. friend, or to imply that I attach no value to his support.

MR. STANSFELD: I quite understood the kind intention of the right hon. gentleman, but I have said all that I wished to say upon that head, and I hardly like to pursue the matter further. I will merely add that, acting in that spirit, I have frequently refrained from addressing the House because I have felt that silence would help the Government more than speech. Indeed, in the course of my public career I cannot recall a single occasion when I have attempted to obtain possession of the ear of the House except there was some special duty before me. When I have differed from the Government I have either been silent or I have spoken in moderation. (Mr. Gladstone: "Hear, hear.") I have been delighted, when I could agree with them, to express heartily and frankly my concurrence. Well, then, addressing myself personally to the right hon. gentleman himself, I do feel keenly that he has felt compelled to put me, as well as others, in the position in which we find ourselves to-night. I declare that we are as deeply interested in this Franchise Bill as he is himself, and as the Cabinet by which he is surrounded; and yet what is the position in which he has, perhaps unconsciously, placed us before this House, our party, and the country. It is this. He has told us that we must either vote for this clause, and then lie under the imputation of being willing to risk this great measure of enfranchisement, and even the Government we have so long and cordially supported, or else by abandoning or withdrawing this clause or receding from it, and voting against it, declare that we are false to our principles, false to our views, false to our professions and pledges, and I will add false to those women whose cause we advocate. (A laugh.) It is useless to laugh. I am impervious to laughter; and I say that we should be false to those whose great exertions we are bound to consider, and who have sacrificed years and years of life, labour, and of strength in a cause which they hold to be sacred. We ventured, in the first place, to think that there could be no danger in the discussion of this clause if it did not proceed to a division; and that there could be no danger in this discussion or in the division if the clause were rejected. I suppose at least that may be allowed us on this occasion. But then there was the alternative of the acceptance of the clause, and in that case it seemed to us even still more clear that so far from there being any possible danger to the Bill, the acceptance of the clause would inevitably strengthen the Bill, and improve the chance of the Government in regard to it. And why? For this simple reason—that the clause, if accepted, would be the act of the House and of both sides of the House, and not the proposal of Her Majesty's Government; and I say that we know—the noble lord has almost told us so much, and no one has ventured to deny it—that the insertion of that clause would not have made the Bill less palatable to the House of Lords. Well, then, sir, we came to the conclusion that there was no possible danger to the Bill from the discussion or the acceptance of the clause of my hon. friend from without, and that the only possible danger must lie within the walls, so to say, of the Cabinet; and I must say that that impression of ours was confirmed to my mind by the speech

of the right hon. gentleman. The relations of parties and of individual political men to this question have been curious and interesting. The question has received genuine support from both sides of the House. On our side of the House that support has been found rather in the rank and file. On the Conservative side of the House it has been found amongst the accredited leaders of the party who sit on the front Opposition bench. I do not now know exactly—I did not at all understand at the time the meaning of some very Sphinx-like words uttered by the right hon. gentleman when he spoke, I think, of the indirect opposition to the Bill, and the motives for that indirect opposition, which I assumed he meant might operate on the minds of some members in dealing with this particular clause; but I say distinctly that this clause has met with genuine support on both sides of the House, and that the support it has met with from the front Opposition bench has been genuine support. I heard my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham) with regret express his opinion that the support given to women's suffrage by Lord Beaconsfield was opportunist and not sincere.

Mr. LEATHAM: I wish to correct a misapprehension under which my right hon. friend is labouring. I simply said that Lord Beaconsfield's position with regard to the question of reform was opportunist.

Mr. STANSFELD: I beg my hon. friend's pardon, but I thought he was addressing himself at the time to the question before the Committee. What I wish to say is that there is no more sincere supporter of the clause than the noble lord the member for North Leicestershire (Lord J. Manners), without the slightest drawback of particular party motives with regard to the subject. Who will doubt the sincerity of the right hon. baronet the member for North Devon (Sir S. Northcote)? It is well known that he has from the first taken this view, and that he has taken a kindly personal and somewhat active interest in the question. With regard to the late Lord Beaconsfield I wish to express the opinions I have always entertained, and which I hold as strongly as I ever did, that there was no political subject, and I call this a political subject, upon which Lord Beaconsfield's convictions or predilections were more sincere or more heartfelt than upon the subject of women's suffrage. No doubt the Prime Minister was perfectly right in saying that there are on both sides profound and keen differences of opinion—the kind of differences which set men against each other in keen and deep antagonism of thought. That I entirely admit, and I find no fault with the existence of such differences because all this keen opinion is *ex necessitate* genuine opinion. But what I regret, if it could have been avoided, is that by the action of the Prime Minister these genuine opinions should not be allowed to have their natural and accurate expression. All this, however, is past. What we, who are most completely and actively in favour of the question, are still left to do is to state conscientiously how we have been affected by the arguments and invitations and appeals of the right hon. gentleman, and what course it is which we shall pursue. Now, sir, one statement of the right hon. gentleman, upon which his appeal was largely founded has been already referred to by the noble lord. It was this. The right hon. gentleman dealt with this as a completely new subject. Well, sir, we cannot make that admission. We cannot make the admission in words, nor can we make it in deed. We say on the contrary that this question has been before the House and the country for some seventeen years—that we have divided upon it in this House ten times without any enormous majorities against us, and on the whole with an improving record. Further, I would say, for the information of the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister, that very nearly half the members of the Liberal party, who have at one time or another expressed opinions on this subject, have declared more or less their accordance with the principle of the motion of my hon. friend. But there is another reason why we cannot accept or give an affirmative reply to the invitation of the Prime Minister. This, sir, is a Bill of principle. It is a Bill the principle of which is household suffrage. Now the principle of household suffrage is one of two things—it is either put as a rough test of capable citizenship or else it means, what I will call, the family vote. Now who are the women it is proposed to enfranchise? The women to be enfranchised under the clause would be first of all women of property, intelligence, and education, having a *status* in the country; secondly, a large class of women of exceptional competency, because having lost the services and support of men who should be the bread-winners and the heads of families they have been

obliged to step into their shoes and to take upon themselves the burdens and responsibilities which had previously devolved upon men, and because they have done this with success. I decline either by word or deed to make the admission that these women are less capable citizens than the 2,000,000 whom the right hon. gentleman proposes to enfranchise by this Bill. Well, then, let it be the family vote—that is to say, exceptions apart, let the basis of our constitution be that the family, represented by its head, should be the unit of the State. Now that is the idea which recommends and has always recommended itself to my mind. But on what principle, or with what regard to the permanence and stability of that principle, can you exclude the head of the family and give that family no voice, because the head happens to be a woman? If this clause be excluded, as it will be excluded from the measure, this Bill will not be a Bill of one principle, but of two principles, if they are worthy of being called principles. It will not be a Bill containing only the principle of household suffrage interpreted as the family vote, but a Bill founded on these two principles—first, the principle of a male householding vote; and, secondly, the principle of the exclusion of the head of the household, when and because the head of the household is a woman. That principle of exclusion is a permanent principle of exclusion, and therefore the Bill with this clause left out is a declaration in principle, and for ever against the political emancipation of women. I will put it still more plainly if I can. My hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham) dealt with this as an unnatural and revolutionary proposal. My right hon. friend the member for Ripon (Mr. Goschen), who, although it is rather rash to say so, I hope may possibly follow me in this debate, regards, as I happen to know, the proposal as a revolutionary proposal, and therefore objects to it. Now, the argument which I am about to put to the House I desire to address pointedly to the mind of my right hon. friend and to those who think with him on the question of revolutionary policy, and I will say this, that the Bill without the inclusion of this clause opens and leads the way to manhood suffrage—manhood suffrage as the *desideratum* and *ultimatum* of politicians, with the definite and permanent and absolute exclusion of women. On the other hand, with the clause included, what I say is this—that it would in a large and true and in a noble and in no party sense be a conservative clause, because it would mean, as far as we can see or provide, that the future basis of our commonwealth should be the family represented by its head man or woman rather than the male citizens of twenty-one years of age. I address that argument to my right hon. friend, and I hope, at least, that it may have some influence upon his mind. Sir, I say that it is impossible for us not to make some protest upon this occasion by voice and by act. The Prime Minister has given us no choice whatever. What did he say with regard to the voting of the members of the Government? I took his words down, and they were these: “When the subject is taken out of the vortex of political contention and strife the members of my Government will be free to vote according to their convictions.” (Mr. Gladstone expressed dissent.) No; the last words were not those which the right hon. gentleman used. To make it quite clear, the actual words of the right hon. gentleman were these:—“When the subject is taken out of the vortex of political contention and strife.” He was replying to a hypothetical question of my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) as to how far the members of the Government would be free in the future to vote according to their own convictions. Well, I was not fascinated by that statement. I confess that it exercised no fascination upon my mind. What does it mean? It means simply that the members of the Government will be free to support the clause in a private member's Bill. There can be no other meaning to these words than that, and even if the subject were brought forward in a private member's Bill the Prime Minister would still be able to say that the question had entered into the vortex of political contention and strife. I was a member of the Government of the right hon. gentleman in 1871, and in that year this question was left an open question, and I voted upon it. Therefore, the right hon. gentleman is making no concession or advance today. Speaking as a member of the Liberal party, and as an advanced Liberal, I must say that it is with considerable pain and with no inconsiderable shame that I have to recall to myself and to this Committee that we must look across the House for a better example than that. In 1867, when the Conservative Government had their own Reform Bill before the House, they treated the motion of Mr. John Stuart Mill as an open question, and their tellers did not tell

in the division. Again, the Prime Minister said, and the right hon. gentleman will correct me if I quote him inaccurately, “It is intolerable that this question should be mixed up with party and political debate.” Sir, I say that these words of the Prime Minister drive and compel us to a division, for what do they mean but this—that this question is never to go beyond the stage of a private member's Bill. But private members' Bills do but prepare the way. Legislation upon a subject like this is not possible by a private member's Bill. It is only by making it part of a Government measure that it can succeed. Our purpose is so to deal with this question in the House and outside the House as to make it more and more a question of practical, and even if necessary of party politics. We cannot, therefore, do otherwise than protest by our votes to-night against the opposition to the clause, for if we were to yield to the appeal of the right hon. gentleman we should be guilty of the dishonesty of deserting, or the dishonour of concealing our intentions and our views. Speaking for myself, there is no subject on which I am more convinced, or on which I feel more deeply. I desire and I intend to do what I can to bring the question within the realm of practical and even of party politics, and as an earnest of that intention I shall insist on recording my vote in favour of the clause of my hon. friend.

MR. NEWDEGATE.

Mr. NEWDEGATE: The right hon. gentleman, as a democratic reformer, does not shrink from enforcing the despotism of a democracy. The right hon. gentleman insists that the Prime Minister shall adopt the policy of a section of his followers—namely, the principle of women suffrage, which the Prime Minister himself has invariably opposed. Is not this an example of the despotism of a democracy?

Mr. STANSFELD: Will the hon. gentleman allow me to interrupt him? I think that he has misunderstood my argument, which was that it ought to be left an open question.

Mr. NEWDEGATE: But the right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) said that he wished it to be left an open question in order that he might force it into a party position. He cannot deny that; and I say this, that deprecating the despotism of a democracy, as every true reformer must, and as every true constitutionalist must, I have never known an instance of the attempt to enforce the despotism of a democracy more distinctly than in this case; for it is an attempt to force this House, as well as the leader of this House, to reverse the rejection of this measure which has been the true expression of the feeling of the House of Commons. Well, sir, the right hon. gentleman quoted the assent given to this proposal by the late Lord Beaconsfield. I always, having served under that noble lord, had an uncomfortable conscientiousness that there was no valid distinction between his opinions and those of the Emperor of the French. I have reason for thinking that—I have in point of fact reason for knowing it, and what was the last issue of the attempt to apply this principle to the guidance of the Conservative party? Why it was that that noble lord, and for many reasons I lamented it, concluded his political career in this country by such a fall as no Conservative leader ever had before, as far as I have known. I say, sir, that with respect to this question I participate fully in the feeling of both the men and the women of the United States. I need not remind hon. members that this question has been agitated in the United States, and the agitation eventuated in this—that the women of the United States have by a vast majority rejected it, and that every genuine Republican in the United States has opposed it. And why? Because they knew that such a democracy would found a despotism. I could adduce various instances, but it is sufficient that I should mention the fact that the majority of the English people coincide with the representatives of the people in the United States in having always rejected this proposition as an unnatural measure. Why, sir, one of the most intelligent supporters of this franchise, Mr. Goldwin Smith, went to the United States, and from the United States he addressed his fellow democrats in this country, warning them against the adoption of this measure. Now it has been repeatedly pleaded that the women of England suffer all kinds of hardships—hardships removable by Parliament. Has Parliament done nothing to alleviate the hardships under which our mothers and our wives and our sisters have suffered? I have reason to remember—for I took an active part in the agitation—that we passed the Ten Hours Bill specially for the

benefit of women and children, and since then we have passed a Nine Hours Bill. I must declare that the present House has submitted to more indignities than any other House of Commons that I ever knew. It has suffered itself to be impeded by the action of a small section of its members until it was only liberated by its Speaker transgressing all rules of order so that it might be freed from the intolerable position into which it had fallen. And if it were now to consent to pass this measure for the establishment of female suffrage it would forfeit the small remnant of the title to represent the manhood and the manly feeling of England which it still retains. There is one book which is not only historic but prophetic. Let even those who doubt its inspiration take the Bible into their hands and from the Book of Genesis to the last chapter of the Epistles they will find the position of woman clearly defined. She is to be altogether dependent on man; she has every claim upon his manhood, every claim upon his best feelings, every claim upon his support and strength. I remember the hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham), who has addressed the House so ably to-night, stating upon this subject in a thin House that the career of man and woman, although parallel, is never identical until they become united by marriage. No statement more true, according to the doctrine of the Bible, was ever made. I might cite text after text to prove that assertion, but I will not weary the House. It would be insulting the House to suppose that hon. members are not familiar with the passages on which I found the argument. Sir, there is no part of the known world in which women are treated with more indulgent deference than in the United States, and with the permission of the House I will quote the description of their treatment which has been given by Mr. Goldwin Smith. Mr. Goldwin Smith, in the able publication which he has issued from the United States, after a warning to the friends of freedom in this country, shows that Mr. John Stuart Mill in his advocacy of women suffrage distinctly attacks the ordinance of marriage and the marriage state. Mr. Goldwin Smith is a gentleman to whose opinions on other questions I am entirely opposed. He is an ultra-Liberal, and he was an advocate of this Bill until he visited that great sphere of experiments—the United States of America. This is the description which he gives of what he saw. He condemns the view which was taken by the late Mr. John Stuart Mill with regard to the relations of women to their husbands in this country and throughout the world. He writes: “Mr. Mill and his disciples represent the lot of the woman as having always been determined by the will of the man, who, according to them, has willed that she should be the slave and that he should be her master and her tyrant.” “Society,” and here he quotes Mr. John Stuart Mill, “both in this (the case of marriage) and other cases has preferred to attain its object by foul rather than by fair means; but this is the only case in which it has substantially persisted in them even to the present day.” This is Mr. Mill's fundamental assumption, and from it, as every rational student of history is now aware, conclusions utterly erroneous as well as injurious to humanity must flow. That is the view of marriage upon which this proposal was advocated by its most powerful representative, Mr. John Stuart Mill. Elsewhere Mr. Goldwin Smith quotes against Mr. Mill historical records, with an extract from which I will trouble the House. He says: “That the present relation of women to their husbands literally has its origin in slavery, and is a hideous relic of that system, is a theory which Mr. Mill set forth in language such as if it could sink into the hearts of those to whom it is addressed would turn all affection to bitterness and divide every household against itself. Yet this theory is without historical foundation. It seems indeed like a figure of invective heedlessly converted into history. Even in the most primitive times, and in which the subjection of women was most complete, the wife was clearly distinguished from the slave. The lot of Sarah is different from that of Hagar; the authority of Hector over Andromache is absolute, yet no one can confound her position with that of her handmaids. The Roman matron who sent her slave to be crucified, the Southern matron who was the fierce supporter of slavery, were not themselves slaves. Whatever may now be obsolete in the relations of husband and wife, it is not a relic of slavery, but of primitive marriage, and may be regarded as, at worst, an arrangement once indispensable which has survived its hour. Where real slavery has existed it has extended to both sexes, and it has ceased for both at the same time. Even the oriental seclusion of women, perhaps the worst condition in which the sex has ever been, has its root not in the slave-owning

propensity so much as in jealousy or passion which, though extravagant and detestable in its excessive manifestation, is not without an element of affection. The most beautiful building in the East is that in which Shah-Jehan rests by the side of Norvabal." Mr. Goldwin Smith then condemns the view of the marriage state which was held by the leading mind that advocated the principle of the Bill, who wrote that the married woman is a slave; but what does this Bill do? It proposes to enfranchise her unmarried sisters, but to leave the wife in the position Mr. Mill describes as that of a slave. Will the House permit me to take one further glance at what Mr. Goldwin Smith found in the United States, where this movement for the enfranchisement of women originated, though it is still unsuccessful there. "In the United States," says he, "the privileges of women may be said to extend to impunity not only for ordinary outrage but for murder. A prisoner whose guilt has been proved by overwhelming evidence is let off because she is a woman. There is a sentimental scene between her and her advocate in court, and afterwards she appears at a public lecture. The whiskey crusade shows that women are practically above the law. Rioting and injury to the property of tradesmen, when committed by the privileged sex, are hailed as a new and beneficial agency in public life; and because the German population, being less sentimental, asserts the privilege of legality and decency the women are said to have suffered martyrdom. So far from the American family being the despotism which Mr. Mill describes, the want of domestic authority lies at the root of all that is worst in the politics of the United States. If the women ask for suffrage, say some American publicists, they must have it, and in the same way everything that a child cries for is apt to be given to it without reflection as to the consequences of the indulgence." Now, sir, we have heard in this House the advocates of this measure assert that the House itself is totally insensible to the claims of woman; and that this House has so little manhood that until it consents to permit woman to have suffrage no justice will be done to her. Was there ever such a monstrous assertion made? And yet it is upon this assertion that this dangerous proposition is based. This question has now been for seventeen years debated. For seventeen years it has been proposed to extend the franchise to women, but except upon one occasion, in 1871, when the second reading of a Bill to enact that principle was passed in a thin House, no affirmative response has been made. The passing of the second reading of the Bill in 1871 was an error which the House hastened to correct upon a subsequent occasion by a majority of 90. As a matter of fact, this dangerous proposal has invariably been rejected by the House, and now the democratic member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) insists that because the caucuses of Leeds and other places have passed a resolution in its favour the Prime Minister should change his course and bow his head to the will of that body. The noble lord the member for North Leicestershire (Lord J. Manners) did everything he could to minimise the question. The Prime Minister was right when he called it the most vague issue it was possible to conceive. It has even failed to become popularised in the United States, and there is but one country in Europe in which women are armed with the vote, namely, in Italy. The right hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) knows that that is the case. But even in that case do the Italians trust a woman to vote by herself? Is she not obliged to employ a delegate? and are not the women of England represented in this House? I will answer for it that if any candidate has the support of the women of the constituency he seeks to represent he is certain of his return. And I thank God that it is so. It is because I know that it is so, and because I am certain that women would forfeit their own natural influence by entering openly into political contests, that I deprecate the passing of this clause, which would convert what purports to be a Reform Bill into a revolutionary measure. I think the Bill now before the House goes very much too far, but I, as a genuine constitutionalist, will not attempt to obtain the defeat of the Bill in another place by committing myself to voting for a proposition which involves the abnegation of our most sacred duties. I sincerely trust that this House, which has condescended to so much, will have sufficient self-respect to persevere in its unvaried course by again rejecting this most dangerous proposal.

VISCOUNT FOLKESTONE.

Viscount FOLKESTONE: Sir, I shall certainly not go into the general question involved in the amendment before the Committee.

As far as I have followed the course of this debate I may say that the only new argument for or against the proposal to confer the franchise upon women was one from a military point of view, namely, that of the hon. member who moved the new clause, when he referred to Boadicea and Joan of Arc. On former occasions and ever since I have had the honour of being a member of this House I have been a most strenuous opponent of the possession of the franchise by women. Very soon after I was returned to Parliament I had the honour of being chosen by a body of gentlemen opposed to conferring this privilege on ladies to lead the opposition to a measure for that purpose then about to be laid before Parliament by the late Mr. Forsyth, and I look back with pleasure to the fact that I was able to conduct that opposition to a satisfactory conclusion, namely, the defeat of the measure referred to. But circumstances alter cases, and I wish with the permission of the Committee to say a few words in explanation of the course I propose to take on the present occasion. I intend to vote for the motion of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent. ("Oh" and cheers.) Now, sir, suppose I had been going to vote against my conviction, which I am not going to do, for reasons which I shall explain, I think that members opposite, both hon. and right hon., ought to be the last to jeer, for there is an old saying that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Lord Sherbrooke, speaking in 1878 on the motion for the extension of the borough franchise brought forward by my right hon. friend the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, made use of these words. He said it was not a question of what the people wanted nor was it a question of equality; it was not a question as to whether the people were fit or unfit to exercise the franchise, but as to whether the safety and welfare of the empire would be promoted by the proposal. Now, sir, that is my idea of what ought to guide us in the present instance. I am and I have always been of opinion that the conferring of the franchise is not a question of individual right, but that it is a question of Imperial necessity and constitutional advantage, and I think the right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) laid some stress upon that idea in the speech to which we have just listened. But, sir, the Bill before the Committee has virtually passed this House; all its clauses which have been divided against have been carried by large majorities, and we who have been opposed to it have had no chance of upsetting any of its provisions. But the provisions of the Bill have been based on the assumption of individual right, not upon Imperial or constitutional necessity, and therefore although I have opposed the Bill,—not *qua* lowering the franchise, because I do not think that that would do any harm if it were combined with some other measure of a constitutional character—I for one do not see that there is any reason now why we should not support the admission of women to the franchise. An attempt has been made to prevent some of the very lowest of the class proposed to be enfranchised by this Bill from getting the suffrage, but that has been defeated, and it has been decided in this House that no person who possesses the qualification proposed in the Bill shall be deprived of the vote. Therefore it is that on this occasion I intend to support the clause proposed by the hon. member opposite. My hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General, speaking the day before yesterday on the question as to whether the inhabitants of one-roomed houses, or hovels as they have been called, should be admitted to the franchise, asked if it was the wish of the Committee to place those people in a position of greater degradation by refusing them the vote. Well, it had been decided by a large majority that those people should be admitted to the franchise although a great number of them are illiterate, and are in consequence certainly not so well qualified as many women are to exercise the franchise, and that is another reason why I intend to support the motion before the Committee. The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in that most eloquent and impassioned speech which he made against this proposal on the last occasion when it was before us, said that the Government had already upon its shoulders as much as they could very well bear, and he alluded to the proposal as the last straw that would break the camel's back. (No, no.) That at any rate was the effect of his remarks. As I understand it this is a Bill to render perfect the representation of the people, and that being so, I think that every point in connection with it ought to be fully discussed and thoroughly sifted, and therefore I say that the argument of the

right hon. gentleman that the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent is putting too great a burden on the Government went not so much against the amendment as against the Bill itself. It appears to me that, unless every point in connection with this subject is fully discussed on this occasion, instead of ending the matter we shall have it cropping up over and over again as it has done for the last seventeen years. Now, although I am about to vote for this motion, I do not intend by so doing to render myself liable to vote for it or for any analogous motion that may be put forward on a future occasion. I have given what appears to me to be very good reasons for the vote I intend to give, but if, happily, this Bill does not pass, and another Bill at no distant day is brought in, which, keeping the constitutional advantage in the eye of Parliament, takes care that no large section of the electorate shall have a preponderating influence over the rest, I shall reserve to myself full liberty of opposing the extension of the franchise to women. The House has decided that it is the abstract right of the individual to have the franchise, and on that hypothesis I cannot understand why, if the Bill became law, the women to whom the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister at Dalkeith, in 1879, so pathetically appealed to exercise their influence for the purpose of returning him and his party, and ousting the late Government from power, should not be allowed to exercise the franchise.

SIR JOSEPH W. PEASE.

Sir JOSEPH W. PEASE: Sir, the noble lord who has just sat down has announced his intention of voting on this occasion for the motion of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent for conferring the franchise upon women, and he has also told us that it is his intention if the proposal should come before him on a future occasion to reverse that vote. Whatever may be the merit of consistency, I believe I have always consistently opposed the conferring of the franchise upon women, and I have done so upon principle. I was early taught that an act of Parliament could do anything but bring a dead person to life, make a man into a woman, or a woman into a man, but it would seem that hon. gentlemen who support this motion are doing their best to achieve the latter transformation, and I cannot help thinking that they will find this clause, simple as it may appear, will carry them a great deal further than they wish to go. The argument we had last Tuesday in the excellent speech of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Woodall) seemed to me to fall very far short of a conclusive reason for conferring the suffrage upon women. He told us of Boadicea and of Joan of Arc, and he described them as great military geniuses. I do not know whether they were great geniuses or not, but I cannot forget that they both came to very untimely ends. And then he told us of Miss Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale, and other ladies. Well, no one doubted that these were excellent women who discharged the duties of life in a manner which earned for them the gratitude of mankind. But surely that is no reason why such a clause as is now proposed should be inserted in this Bill, any more than that because Jezebel misconducted herself and Lady Macbeth was a murderess that all women should be held in reprobation. Again, there may be women ratepayers, but I have still to learn that because they have to pay rates they are entitled to discharge the function of voting. The hon. gentleman on my right and the noble lord opposite, who have to-day spoken on this clause, have, in my humble opinion, misunderstood its full effect. It is admitted that under the Bill married women holding the necessary property qualification in counties will have a vote in counties. How long will you keep married women from voting as occupiers in towns? You bring to the front the whole question both of married and single women voting, and I say you cannot possibly go on the question of single women only voting. Can you, for instance, deprive a woman, when married, of the vote which you say she is to enjoy when single? You cannot possibly do it. A woman is undoubtedly a much better citizen when she is married than when she is single; why, then, is she to be deprived of the advantages and privileges she was entitled to before marriage the moment she ceases to be single? If it were possible to make such an enactment you would be driven to amend it by another Act of Parliament, and you would land yourselves in universal woman suffrage on the same basis as men. Then, I ask, where is that to end? According to the last census the number of the women of England exceeded that of the male population by 700,000, or about sixty in the thousand, and if the door be once opened in

the manner proposed by this clause, the weight which would turn the electoral balance will be in the hands of women; in other words, you will have petticoat government. Again, if you once give married women the right of voting you will have a dual voting power in almost every home, a power which, so far from adding to domestic happiness in this country, will, I believe, tend much to destroy the unity which exists in our homes. But, sir, there is another difficulty which occurs to me, and it is this: I do not see that the matter could rest even here. If we give to women a political vote, they must have also political representation. Beyond all question they would claim in time the right of sitting in this House, and, as they are the majority in the country, they may become the majority here. Thus we might have both married and single members of Parliament. However, sir, I take altogether a higher view of this matter. I believe it to be far better for the prosperity and strength of the country that the franchise should not be given to women. If there be any injustice in the circumstance that some women pay rates while they have no votes, it is in my opinion but an injustice of the very smallest kind, especially when it is compared with the adoption of a proposal, the practical effect of which would be to alter the feelings and customs of the country with regard to the position of women. Whether it be the result of the development of species, or whether it be the dispensation of an All-Wise Creator, there is no doubt that woman is endowed with a most delicate organisation which sways the whole course of her life; it influences her action and her mode of thought, and its effect is to make mankind afford her protection rather than turn her adrift in the vortex of political life. These considerations, I think, ought to weigh with the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent. And now with regard to one portion of the speech of the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld). My right hon. friend says he wonders where the danger to the Bill lies in the event of his motion being carried. If this motion were carried to-night by even a small majority—it cannot be carried by a large one—the Bill would be placed in danger by the hon. gentleman who moved the clause, because I believe that there are many hon. gentlemen on these benches who would prefer no Bill at all to one containing such a provision and embodying such a principle as that under consideration. The member for Halifax was eloquent on the power and aptitude of women for work. I am one who thinks very highly of those to whom we owe so much, but I am unable to concede all that my right hon. friend claims for them in this respect. We have, I think, an illustration of the administrative capabilities of women in the case of school boards. It is generally admitted that in the country districts their presence on the school board is of great advantage, and in those districts I believe that women have had, and ought to have, their effect upon the education of the country, but when we come to the education of the children in this great metropolis we find that they fail, and their presence on the school board only impedes the action of those who administer the Acts. Finally, having carefully thought out this matter, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that there would be a great deal more loss than gain occasioned by a change in our social and political life such as is indicated by the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent, and that it will moreover be attended with positive disadvantage to the State. The Committee should bear in mind the fact that this demand does not come from the women themselves. It is apparently the proposition of a few agitators who go about the country demanding what they call the rights of their sex, and that being so, apart from other considerations, I do not think it would be for the advantage of the country that the clause of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent should be incorporated with the Bill.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS.

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: Sir, I have listened with great attention to the speeches of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, and I am bound to say, without wishing to criticise too strongly, that I failed to find any special argument against the case made out in the speech of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent. I think it well to recall to the Committee the speech in which the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister introduced the great measure of Reform to the House, not with the view of criticising its details—were I to do so I should be out of order—but merely with the object of contrasting it with the speech made by the right hon. gentleman on Tuesday last in opposition to this motion. It will be in the recollection of the Committee that the Prime Minister urged for

their consideration, when he introduced the Bill, that two millions of people were waiting to receive that which he assumed to be a right, but which some others consider to be a privilege, and that all other legislation was to be set aside in order that Parliament might confer upon them that right. Now, supposing that argument to be a correct one, I ask him whether, by a parity of reasoning, those women who, at all events, possess the property qualification have not as good a claim to enfranchisement as the two millions of men whom he proposed to enfranchise. Certainly most of the women in question are the equals, if not the superiors, of the men in intelligence. They are human beings, and they are citizens in the eye of the law; and, therefore, I say that logically they have at least an equal claim with the two millions of men who are not to have their right any longer delayed. Well, sir, the Prime Minister passed over that argument very lightly; in fact, he astonished the Committee by informing them that Her Majesty's Government, at all events as far as he represented it, had not exactly made up their minds with regard to the question of woman suffrage. It is a singular fact that this proposal, which has been before the House for seventeen years, which originated, I believe, on the Liberal side of the House, and which has always found conscientious support with many members of the Conservative party, should suddenly appear to the Prime Minister as an essentially open question. It is true that the right hon. gentleman said he did not entertain any particular dislike to the proposal, and that he admitted that several members of his Cabinet were in favour of it, but I question whether the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent and those who think with him will derive much comfort from that assurance, and I think he might almost say to the Prime Minister:—

When first I attempted your pity to move,
You turned a deaf ear to my prayers;
'Twas all very well to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me down stairs?

I think, sir, those lines are very applicable to the position which the right hon. gentleman has taken up with regard to the question of woman suffrage, although if the adoption of the present proposal had appeared likely in any way to assist the passing of the Reform Bill, I have no doubt that the right hon. gentleman's love would have been of a more decided and active character. But as he thinks that this clause may in some degree affect or interfere with the passing of the Bill, he concluded that the best policy was to issue his fiat against it, and to threaten with the horrors of political excommunication all those of his supporters who ventured to express an opinion in its favour. There are two paragraphs to which I should like to allude, as they show to a very considerable extent how anxious the Prime Minister is to depart from the views of his political friends, as well as to impugn the utterances of his political opponents, whenever the opportunity seems fitting for that purpose. The resolution passed at the meeting yesterday, presided over by the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent, was to the effect that the meeting heard with astonishment that the Prime Minister refused to allow this amendment to be discussed on its merits, and decided by the free exercise of the judgment of the members of the House of Commons, on the ground that its adoption would endanger the Bill, and it went on to say that such an exercise of pressure appeared to the meeting to be an infringement of the privileges of a free Parliament and of the rights of a free people. I venture to think that that verdict will be endorsed by the country at large. It is all very well for the Prime Minister, who wishes to add to his many triumphs a measure which shall go down to posterity as a great Act of Reform, to say that he is extremely anxious to emancipate two millions of men, but I ask him how he can logically say that those of his supporters who are anxious to give effect to this motion are impeding that measure of Reform? They are not impeding it; they are seeking to extend it, and if the proposal had originated with the right hon. gentleman or his colleagues we should have heard from him not one word of condemnation with regard to it. Two million voters are to be added to the electoral roll by this Bill, and if the clause of my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) becomes law we shall add at the outside about 400,000 women to the electorate. It is perfectly true that from the other side very long and interesting speeches have been made as to the merits and demerits of female suffrage, and as to the position which hon. members think women should occupy in the social scale. No doubt as philosophical disquisitions those speeches are valuable, but I am

bound to say they have not touched in the slightest degree the great question before the Committee. Hon. members on that side of the House have urged that the vote is a right. Some hon. members on the opposition side of the House agree with them, others are inclined to think that the vote is a privilege. Let us assume that the vote is a right. I want to know, if it be a right of citizenship, on what possible ground can you take it away from women? Is it simply because they are women? We have heard, and it has never been disputed, that there are 20,000 tenant farmers who are women in this country, and that one-seventh of the real estate of this country is in the hands of women. The hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) said that the argument with regard to the tenant farmers, which I ventured to think was a very strong one, was not a strong one, inasmuch as their farms are administered by their sons or other near relatives. If the hon. member thinks that the advice of the sons or other near relatives with regard to the administration of estates was good, why should not sons or other near relatives advise those who have a vote as to the proper way in which they should exercise it? On the other hand, I would point out to the hon. member (Mr. Leatham) that his argument cannot be taken in connection with the Reform Bill, because if the Bill passes sons and others employed on an estate will have a vote themselves. There lies the absurdity of the whole position. The woman who is the owner and occupier and the employer of the men will have no vote, whereas the yokels she employs will have a vote. I don't think that a weaker argument against the case could be found. The right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld), whose speech by-the-bye was a most refreshing one, spoke with an earnestness and conviction which made it clear to the mind of everybody that his heart and soul were thoroughly in the subject on which he addressed the Committee. Well, the right hon. gentleman told us that he did not for a moment believe the assertions that had been made that Lord Beaconsfield was not sincere in the support which he accorded to woman suffrage. Now, I remember that Lord Beaconsfield, speaking a long time ago upon the privileges of citizenship which are now to be refused by a Liberal Government, said, "the privilege of citizenship is to give to every one who is worthy of it a fair share in the government of the country by means of the elective franchise." I am at a loss to understand by what ingenuity of logic right hon. and hon. gentlemen opposite can possibly get out of the position that the right of citizenship means a fair share in the government of the country by means of the elective franchise. I have observed that in the discussion upon the question of woman suffrage hon. gentlemen always endeavour to introduce extraneous matter. The only question at issue is whether unmarried women possessing the necessary qualifications should be entitled to vote in the same manner as men would be holding the same qualifications. The hon. member for Durham (Sir J. Pease) said that hon. members on this side of the House are not in favour of giving married women the vote. The spinster or the widow of to-day may be the married woman to-morrow; to-day she has a vote, to-morrow she has not; therefore, I cannot for the life of me understand the cogency of the argument of the hon. member for Durham (Sir J. Pease). I recollect that in the debate last year the hon. and learned gentleman the Attorney-General (Sir H. James) used these words: "The hon. member for Wolverhampton said: 'Why not give the franchise to woman, when she is willing to discharge all the obligations to the State? But is she able to do so? Ought not a person who claims the rights of citizenship to be able to fulfil all its burdens? What is the first duty of a citizen? It is to defend the country in time of war. Will she do that?'" But what is the answer to that? You might just as well say because a man is lame or blind, and therefore cannot be a soldier, he is not entitled to vote. A woman does not become a soldier because it is not her vocation; a man who is blind cannot enter the army because he is not fit for the service. Such was the argument used by the Attorney-General (Sir H. James) last year; and, as his speech unfortunately was delivered at the end of the debate, no one had an opportunity of replying to it. Such are the sort of arguments which are consistently put forward by the opponents of this measure. I do not see any danger whatever in according the franchise to women, and I cannot understand the objection to it. If women are properly qualified as regards property, if they fulfil all the conditions of citizenship and are *compos mentis*, and fit to exercise the right of

voting, why, because they are women, should they be excluded from the exercise of that right? The hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) said there was no sort of parallel between the case of women voting in municipal and school board elections and their voting for members of Parliament. I think, on the contrary, that there is every analogy between the two cases. To vote for municipal councillors or for members of a school board is a function of citizenship. To vote for a member of Parliament is also a function of citizenship, though it might be a function of citizenship of a higher degree. Two years ago women were not eligible to take degrees at universities, and we recollect the great outcry against women being made eligible to take them; indeed it was said that if they were, the old characteristics of the universities would cease to exist. Why, even lately, there was a great discussion on this subject at Oxford, and by a large majority women were admitted to the examinations for degrees. Is it a fact that the universities have deteriorated in character because of the admission of women? Statistics show that this is not the case, and that the intelligence of women is on a par with the intelligence of men. The hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) also said that if women were granted the franchise, an hysterical and cowardly element would be introduced into politics. Bearing in mind what the policy of the Government has been, I can understand that that might reasonably occur to the mind of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Leatham), but if we take the average of English girls of late years, I don't think we need be at all afraid that the influence of women would exercise a cowardly or hysterical effect upon State policy. Such arguments may be dismissed for what they are worth. The question remains the same, namely, whether you are prepared to come before the country and say that two millions of men who are not enfranchised are entitled to the franchise, and at the same time withhold the vote from 400,000 women who are better qualified to have votes than the two million agricultural labourers to whom you propose to give the franchise. Luckily in England we have no Salic law, and if there be a country in the world in which women should not suffer from electoral disabilities it is England. Surely our history proves this. Where can you find in the pages of the history of any country so brilliant a record as that in the reign of Elizabeth, or Anne, or our good Queen Victoria? The defeat of the Spanish Armada, the wars of Marlborough, and our victories in the Crimea and India, are the results of a policy which certainly cannot be described as hysterical or cowardly. I think that with these examples of women before us—women who have governed over this nation of warriors with a hand of iron, though in a glove of silk—we should be trifling with the subject were we to accept the argument of the hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) and others, that by granting to women the privilege of voting for members of Parliament we should introduce an hysterical and cowardly element into the legislature of the country. It is because I hold these views very strongly that I shall, as on previous occasions I have voted for similar motions, vote for the motion of my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). (Cheers.)

MR. BERESFORD HOPE.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE: I am sure my hon. friend (Baron de Worms) would not like to get any man's vote on the strength of an argument he could not prove, so I assure him that women cannot graduate in either of the two old English universities. They can, no doubt, take part in the examinations, and be reported by the examiners, but they cannot take degrees. I can also assure my hon. friend that if the question of the graduation of women in these universities were to be raised, it would not be regarded as so light and airy a question as he seems to think it. When my noble friend the member for Wiltshire (Viscount Folkestone) got up and declared he meant to change his vote on this matter, I own I listened with great attention. The arguments he adduced were a great deal marred in my opinion by the promise he gave to perform the part of the returning prodigal when the right time comes. And that leads me to another question, but it is one which no one will answer. It is that if this amendment or clause were separated from the present Bill how many on this side of the House would vote for it? I think many would follow the reserved provision of my noble friend the member for Wiltshire (Viscount Folkestone). My right hon. friend the Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) has been reproached by the right hon. gentleman the member for

Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) and by my hon. friend (Baron de Worms) and by other hon. members, for hectoring or bullying or lecturing the Committee. My objection to the course taken by my right hon. friend (Mr. Gladstone) is of a very different nature; it is because I think the bribe he has displayed brings him actually under the penalties of the Corrupt Practices Act. If ever there were a bribe given with the jubilant contempt for disguise, it was the right hon. gentleman's statement that if the clause of the hon. gentleman the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) were passed this Reform Bill would be imperilled. That was really carrying the persuasion of opponents to an illegitimate extent. Little as I have been able to bend my affection to this Reform Bill, I can see that female suffrage is a step so much more objectionable than if I were certain my single vote would carry the clause of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall), and that that single vote would destroy this Bill, I should vote against the clause. Very gravely I declare that I cannot consider this is a question to be played with as a mere card in the political game, and I reproach both sides of the House for the way in which it has been brought forward and dealt with. It has been truly said that this question goes to the very root of the providential constitution of the human race, and it is all very well for the hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich (Baron de Worms) to try to throw the onus on us, as if we were opposing something self-evident. If the thing is self-evident, why has it not been regarded as such in any place in the world except in two backward states of America, which, I believe, have already done their best to annul the ill-judged arrangement, and in an anomalous way in modern Italy? The Prime Minister made a great mistake when he talked of this as a question new to the House of Commons. It is an old question, for it has been ten times rejected. Years ago a Bill for the enfranchisement of women slipped through a second reading, but the House was so alarmed and startled at what it had done, that on the motion to go into Committee an honoured member of this House and your predecessor in the chair, Mr. Bouverie, led the opposition, and by a magnificent majority the proposal was defeated. The whole *onus probandi* lies with the originators of this proposal. In no country in Europe, with the single exception of the anomalous case of Italy, has the principle of this clause been accepted. I will not follow the example of those who argue the question from the beginning. I have done so several times in this House, and as I do not want to be reckoned amongst those members who are always playing on one string of one fiddle, I reserve my arguments for some future day, in this or some other Parliament, when the question comes up as a substantive motion. I wish to deal with it now in connection with the Franchise Bill, and I contend that to make this proposal in connection with the Franchise Bill is merely to play with our credulity; it is like children in the dark playing at ghost to pretend that this is to be dealt with as a question of female ratepayers or old women farmeresses of Warwickshire. One of the most influential members of the Cabinet stated many months ago that the goal for which he was aiming was manhood suffrage. That is an honest position though a startling one. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) has never recanted, and it is self-evident that this Bill, whether we like it or not, is a very long stride towards manhood suffrage. (Mr. Gladstone dissented.) I never implied that it was so in the intention of my right hon. friend, but bystanders must see. It is my opinion that this Bill is a very long stride in that direction. I do not say my right hon. friend (Mr. Gladstone) means it to be so. I earnestly believe he does not, but I believe that a Bill which at once creates a constituency of two millions in the small area of the United Kingdom is such a concession to numbers that the bulwarks against manhood suffrage are very much weakened. That is my conviction, so I say that from my point of view to argue the question of female suffrage as if it were a mere question of female ratepayers is to trifle with the subject. This Bill is intentionally or unintentionally a contribution to the cause of manhood suffrage. This female suffrage is a contribution towards that more than manhood franchise to the title to which the only condition shall be that the voter is a member of that which naturalists call the *genus homo*, and is residing in this United Kingdom, or these disunited republics, as the case may then be. I have always objected to female suffrage as being contrary to what I believe is the manifest order of nature, contrary to good policy, and an inno-

vation greater than any that has ever been tried. I cannot accept the change, and the bribe that to pass the clause of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) would endanger this Franchise Bill is as I have said, though very tempting, one that it is a duty for me most steadfastly to resist. Never shall I have gone into the lobby with greater satisfaction than that with which I shall follow my right hon. friend (Mr. Gladstone) though for diametrically opposite reasons, but with a similar result, and I only hope that when the question of female suffrage comes on again under different circumstances, and we have to oppose it without any reference to a Reform Bill, my right hon. friend the Prime Minister will return the compliment. (Laughter.)

MR. ROGERS.

Mr. ROGERS: I could not give the vote which I think it my duty to give on this occasion without offering some explanation of the causes which have led me to take what undoubtedly is for me and for the present a change of front in relation to this question. For many years I have advocated the extension of the franchise to certain women, and I have done it on this ground, that I believe that in all representative assemblies unrepresented interests are never attended to. I cannot conceal from myself that of late years the public conscience has been considerably stirred as to the legitimate rights of women. A great deal has been done for the education of women; they have been admitted and most rightly admitted to the studies at the universities, and I believe, notwithstanding what has been said by the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Beresford Hope), that there is one university—the London University—which has admitted women to degrees. These habits are catching in other universities, and I have very little doubt that my right hon. friend (Mr. Beresford Hope) will soon find that in his own University, and in that to which I belong, women will be admitted to degrees. While favouring the principle of woman suffrage, I strongly object to it being pitchforked into this Bill. In the first place, we don't quite know how women might use this franchise, though I should like to say a word or two about how I have known them use an analogous franchise. In the next place, the question ought to be thoroughly debated, and not raised on a side issue. There are many women whom it would not only be undesirable but positively odious to admit to the franchise. I don't want to pursue such a topic far, but there is a body of female householders and lodgers whom no one desires to enfranchise, and in discussing the clause of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) the Committee should bear in mind that while a good and excellent woman is one of the best things one sees in nature, and a thing a man is always ready to honour and reverence, a bad woman is the most odious and most hateful thing in nature. Such questions as this must be considered very broadly, and I say, quite irrespective of what the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister has said, that supposing this clause were carried it would be absolutely necessary to spend a large amount of the time of the House in devising means by which this franchise should be so arranged as to exclude the persons who are in all respects not qualified to exercise the suffrage. I said just now I should say a word about the way in which an analogous franchise has been used by women. Last November an election took place for a town councillor in the city of Oxford, and one of the candidates was Sir George Rickards, a gentleman well known to members of the House of Commons. Sir George Rickards has gone to reside in Oxford. He had large local knowledge, he had a high personal character; indeed, his general reputation eminently fitted him for the position he sought to fill. I don't know that he stood in any particular interest. I don't know that he has any strong political opinions, but he certainly is a very strong friend of the Church. There was brought against him a person who had been on the Bench for the City of Oxford, but who, on his own confession, had been guilty of the grossest and most scandalous personal bribery in a Parliamentary election held a short time before. Had the election inquiry at Oxford been conducted as it should have been other evidence against this man would have been forthcoming, and he ought to have been committed to prison for some months. As it was, it was absolutely necessary he should be turned off the Bench. Now, it is admitted that this disreputable person was returned as town councillor by the votes of the women in the North Ward. I cannot help thinking that we must hesitate a little before we believe in the moral sense of women with regard to public questions. In my opinion it is an open question whether women will give a true deliverance upon public matters, and I am bound to

say that what occurred at Oxford created in me very considerable alarm as to what might happen if all women were admitted to the franchise. A certain enfranchisement of women may be desirable I have all along felt that in certain directions it is expedient that the franchise should be given to them, but I want to hear a little more about it before I vote for such a motion as this. I want, for instance, to have a larger amount of information as to what the judgment of women is with regard to those public functions which they would be called upon to perform. I do not think the advocates of the amendment have made out so clear a case that I can at once make up my mind on so large a question as the extension of the franchise to women—certainly not to support a motion couched in such broad terms as the present proposal. I have had the honour of listening to what the hon. member (Mr. Woodall) has said in support of his amendment, and am prepared to admit that the hon. member has advocated his case with great discretion and force. It is easy to show instances where considerable wrong has been done to women through their not having the franchise. For example, those who are engaged in the occupation of farming are said to frequently lose their holdings in consequence of their sex. Very often when their husbands die and no vote can be given in respect of their holdings, fresh male tenants, who can exercise the franchise, are sought. There are many women who ought to have, for gaining a living, facilities which have not been given to them in times past; and there are a variety of functions which women can perform with admirable skill and with tact and success that men cannot rival, but it is very questionable whether these disabilities should be removed in a Bill of this kind, which is characterised by a few simple principles, or whether in this measure so large an addition to the franchise should be introduced. I will only further observe that in the votes I have given on the Bill—and I do not think I have been absent from one division—I have thought it to be expedient to vote on the lines of "one man one vote," though I entirely agree with the principle in its proper place. If the hon. member for Penryn should bring forward his proposal for the disfranchisement of the universities on some other occasion than this I should vote with him heartily, because I think nothing more disastrous or more mischievous than the university franchise. One who has lived in a university forty years knows something of this, he sees something of the mischief; but if the hon. member had brought forward his proposal on this Bill I should have opposed it. I should have thought that a thoroughly enfranchising Bill was not an opportunity for introducing any disfranchising principle, and, similarly, I think the Committee should not entertain this amendment, having so constantly and persistently, and by such large majorities, refused to go beyond the simple purpose of assimilating the county and borough franchises. However expedient in many particulars it may be to enfranchise women, I do not think a clause for the purpose could with propriety or wisdom be introduced into this Bill.

COL. KING-HARMAN.

Col. KING-HARMAN: It was a very pertinent question how many on this side of the House would vote for this amendment if it were brought in as a measure by itself. There is a curious difference of opinion on this subject between the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope) and the hon. gentleman the member for Southwark, who has just sat down, and who is so well known and so highly respected in the universities. I think, however, I can answer the right hon. gentleman's question, "How many hon. members on this side of the House would not have voted for the amendment if it had been brought forward as a substantive motion are now going to support it?" Perhaps not a large number. A great many who had not made up their minds on the question are now determined to vote for the proposal. In the old state of the franchise it was not so much a matter of importance to women whether they possessed votes or not, but now that this Bill proposes to create 2,000,000 new voters of a much lower order than those who have been hitherto exercising the franchise, it becomes of importance to secure some countervailing advantage in the shape of 400,000 women voters who, for the most part, are possessed of education and property. Having answered that question, and, in turn, I would now ask the hon. member for Southwark how many hon. members on the other side of the House would have voted for the amendment, believing it to be right and just, who will now oppose it if it had not been for the speech of the right hon. gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's

Government the day before yesterday? We know that 110 hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House this year signed a memorial to the right hon. gentleman expressing the opinion that no measure—I am quoting now from a resolution passed with only two dissentients at a large meeting, held at 29, Parliament-street, yesterday, the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) in the chair—for the extension of the franchise could be satisfactory unless it contained provisions for extending the suffrage to women qualified to vote. That memorial, I say, was signed by 110 Liberal members. The Prime Minister shakes his head.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The hon. and gallant member is referring to a motion passed this year.

Col. KING-HARMAN: I believe I said this year. The mistake rests with me. It was a slip of the tongue. I should have said last year.

Mr. WOODALL: It was in May last year.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: It does not matter. The statement is practically the same. We know perfectly well that 110 gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House were of opinion that no measure on the subject of the extension of the franchise should be passed without extending it to women, and yet we know perfectly well that nothing like that number from the opposite side will support this amendment to-night by their votes. The chief arguments which the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister brings against it is not that the amendment is wrong in itself, and not that sound arguments could be adduced against the admission to the franchise of women of respectability and who have a stake in the country, but that it is impossible to add any amendment, whether important or unimportant, and certainly not this very important one, to this Bill. The right hon. gentleman said the ship is overloaded.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The vessel.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: Well, the vessel. The vessel is already loaded down to the load line. It is loaded down to the load line with these 2,000,000 male voters, a large proportion of whom have no stake in the country, so that it will be swamped and lost by the addition to the franchise of 400,000 women possessing a stake in the country, and every right as citizens to vote. I say, then, that the ship must be in a very precarious state, indeed, and I pity the crew if they are to be swamped by such an addition to their cargo. The right hon. gentleman considers that the ship would be swamped by 400,000 extra votes of women, but he does not seem to fear in the least the enormous number of extra Irish votes he proposes to take on board—a number far exceeding that which he put before us in his opening speech. Then we are told this is a matter which can wait. And what are the women likely to get by waiting? They have waited seventeen years, during which the subject has been discussed, and now they are told that they are to wait until 2,000,000 of the common orders have been admitted to a share in the Parliamentary management of the country—2,000,000 of the substratum of society, from which the enemies, the oppressors of women come, from which come the wife-beaters and wife-kickers, whom we see mentioned in our police reports. The class the right hon. gentleman wishes to entrust with a share in the management of the affairs of the country is largely composed of men who consider their wives so many beasts of burden, who live on their wages, ill-use them, and treat them more like animals than human beings. I say the cause of woman suffrage will be thrown back for many years if you do not concede it in this amendment. For this reason I shall vote for it, if for no other. I agree with the hon. member for Durham (Sir J. Pease) that the question as to Boadicea and Joan of Arc and so forth are beyond the point, but I must join issue with the hon. member for North Warwickshire when he introduces the scriptural argument, and tells us that no instance can be given in Scripture in which women did anything to advance the State. The hon. gentlemen, who relies solely on Scripture, seems to have forgotten the people of Israel who were ruled by Deborah, and led by Deborah to victory, and that Solomon did not disdain to receive the Queen of Sheba as the empress of a great nation.

Mr. Newdegate here approached Col. King-Harman and interrupted him with a few words in an undertone.

Col. KING-HARMAN: The hon. member, *sotto voce*, says to me that Deborah acted under advice, but that is not the way I read Scripture. I read it that it was a weak vessel who decided that the children of Israel should vote against their rulers. The hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) used an argument which I think a

most unworthy one, namely, that the franchise is not to be extended to women because, unhappily, in this country as in all others, there are women of a degraded and debased class. Because there are 40,000 of them in this metropolis alone, the remaining women who are pure and virtuous are to be deprived of the power of voting. But will the hon. member guarantee that the 2,000,000 men the Bill proposes to enfranchise, and whom he is perfectly prepared to see enfranchised, shall be pure and perfectly moral men? Will he ensure that amongst these 2,000,000 men there are none who are living on the wages of sin of these unfortunate women? Will the hon. member propose a clause to exclude from the franchise those men who lead into vice, and retain in vice and degradation, these unfortunate women? Will he exclude every man who seduces a poor girl and brings her into this miserable class? No; men may sin and be a power in the State, but when a woman sins not only is she to have no power, but her whole sisterhood are to be excluded from it. I consider the argument used by the hon. member an unworthy one, and one which will not bear the test of examination. I began by saying that a great many hon. members on this side of the House would probably not have voted for this amendment had it come up in the shape of a substantive measure. I believe, also, that a few years ago a great many women would have been against this as a substantive motion who would now welcome it. I know this, for I have had a great many letters on the subject from ladies—so many, in fact, that I am obliged to cease answering them. I know that all over Ireland, among the respectable classes, there has been an enormous change of opinion, but if I were to speak for any length of time on this subject, I should not be able to put the case in clearer, terser, or better language than does a lady who has written to me, and whose letter I hold in my hand. She expresses herself so well that I will read what she says. She writes: "By my former marriage I am possessed of separate property, and I pay taxes of all kinds. I have never hitherto wished to step out of the seclusion of private life, but when I learn that this last act of Mr. Gladstone's midsummer madness may place a vote in the hands of my servant in my gate lodge, who has free house and coal, and so much a week from me, while I, the owner and mistress, will have none, and he will, of course, follow the guidance of his priest, voting from my house, while I am an useless unit, because, forsooth, I am a woman, I am tempted to recollect that I am also a reasonable human soul, created by Him, who has said that in Him there is neither male nor female." This woman is to be denied the franchise, and the right of protecting her property, whilst her lodge-keeper is to have the right of taking part in the management of public affairs, and, possibly, of voting away her property. Where is the justice of this? I maintain that however the question of female suffrage stood before it is immeasurably strengthened, and it is rendered absolutely necessary that it should be immediately granted by this Bill. I entirely agree that if this clause is inserted in the Bill it will make it, to a certain extent, a more Conservative measure. I agree with the argument, that by placing household suffrage in the hands of the head of the household—whether male or female—you will prevent the extension of the franchise beyond household suffrage, that is to say to manhood suffrage. I believe that every idea of common sense points to the desirability of supporting the amendment, and I, therefore, have great pleasure in doing so.

MR. WARTON.

Mr. WARTON: I am strongly opposed to female suffrage. I dislike very much the way in which the agitation has been got up, for, as a matter of principle, I am opposed to all agitation. I think there is nothing more reprehensible than for a number of persons to band themselves together for the purpose of directing the action of members of Parliament. When I was a candidate for a seat in Parliament I had numerous memorials and letters sent me by the opponents of vaccination, temperance advocates, and others, and yet, although I was threatened by them if I did not promise my support to their movements, I never replied to one of them. Nevertheless, I was returned, although at the previous election there was a majority of more than three to one in favour of the Liberals, and that was, I believe, because people always respect those who act according to their principles and will not listen to agitation got up by any class of people, be they respectable or be they not. There is one thing as to this agitation which is extremely revolting, and that is that a number of ladies—of whom I desire always to

speak with respect—are connected with it who have also been associated with another agitation which it is not decent to refer to further. Suffice it to say that it was an agitation against a certain measure which in the judgment of Ministers—which in the judgment of the noble lord the Secretary of State for War (the Marquis of Hartington) was absolutely necessary for the preservation of the health of our soldiers and sailors. This measure, in spite of its necessity, has now been discarded against the real opinion of the House, against the opinion of all the officials of any importance, because an agitation has been unscrupulously brought to bear on the question by a great number of those very ladies who are associated now with this claim for female suffrage. This union of the suffragious and contagious ladies makes the question come before the House under a very unsavoury aspect. I am here to state what I feel and what I believe. Hon. members have spoken of the number of letters they have received, but, for my own part, I am thankful to say that for some time past I have ceased to be pestered with communications on this subject—I am thankful because it saves me the discourtesy of refusing to reply to a lady. I used to get letters and women's suffrage journals, but I am glad to say I have had none for some time now. I say this with every respect for the hon. and gallant member who has just sat down. I am sure we all feel that the sentiments he expressed were those of his heart, and that the expression he gave to them were dictated by his sense of right. I feel every respect for him. I feel that he stands on a far higher platform than I do, and that he entertains a far more exalted impression of the sex than I do myself. But we must look on these questions from a large and broad point of view. I sympathise very deeply with the hon. member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate), because I have always thought that the distinction of the sexes is a matter of divine law. From Genesis to Revelation it is clear that the law is uniform. In Genesis we see the woman told that the husband shall rule over her, and in the Epistles we are told that woman is made for man. Such is the Divine Will, and no amount of screaming, or agitation, or letters, or papers, or journals can alter the relation between the sexes. I have spoken as a man; I am now going to speak as a lawyer, and to call attention to a very singular fact which I have noticed during the discussion. A short time ago, in 1882, an Act was passed called the "Married Women's Property Act." When a similar Bill was brought in in 1881, I ventured to show, and I trust with earnestness, what the results would be. I told the House that we should see a woman residing in a house with her husband and giving him notice to quit. I was laughed at; but what I predicted has actually occurred. I claim, therefore, to have possessed some knowledge of what we are about. It is curious that no one on the other side has referred to the effect of the Married Women's Property Act, but it is important to consider it in connection with this proposal. I denounce this dishonest agitation for this reason, that there are two opinions—and the agitators try to conceal the fact—one being that the widows and spinsters possessed of property should have the vote, and the other being that all women, even married women, so far as they have the same qualification as men, should vote. It is clear there is a division between the two sections of agitators on this question; and I ask is it honest for those who have really the desire to make all women voters—or practically all—to pretend that they only want to enfranchise widows and spinsters? No, sir, but it is easy when an agitation is got up for two kinds of opinion to coalesce—for gentlemen who do not wish to see the point ultimately carried to combine with the agitators. In a matter like this a great many gentlemen vote for an abstract resolution when they have not the courage to vote for the principle involved when it comes to something really practical. Such a course is cruel even to the agitators. The ladies who are engaged in the affair say, "Oh, so-and-so and so-and-so are voting with us this time," and the deluded creatures go counting up their imaginary gains, but when the time comes they find these false supporters slip away one by one until they find they cannot get many of their votes. I am glad reference has been made to the 110 members of the party opposite who urged the Prime Minister to include this principle in his Bill, but I was surprised to see the right hon. gentleman shake his head when the reference was made. No doubt he was right in so far that the memorial was not presented this year, but that shake of the head, at first, meant more than that. It meant a general denial; but the hon. and gallant member (Col. King-Harman) was provided with a reference. You should always be provided with a reference when you

have the Prime Minister opposite you—always have all the blue books and documents you can possibly arm yourself with when you are going to make a speech in his presence. Well, are those 110 gentlemen opposite going to vote for the admission of women to the franchise? No; because of the embarrassing declaration of the right hon. gentleman two days ago. All that talk about overloading the ship is sheer nonsense. With his tremendous majority at his back, with his wonderful power of performing business and more than human power of explanation, the right hon. gentleman can do what he pleases. He can make the 110 vote with him if he chooses, because the hon. members who signed the memorial will certainly vote with the right hon. gentleman directly he sets his foot down whatever their own convictions may be. I am afraid there are, at least, two unhappy members of the Government who have been here watching the debate, and who are really devoted advocates of the enfranchisement of women, who are trembling in their shoes to know whether or not they will be allowed to retire without voting. Is not that a pitiable sight? Why could not the right hon. gentleman have made this an open question? Simply for one reason, nothing more nor less than that. I am not going to repeat the Latin quotation the House heard from the noble lord the member for Leicestershire to-day, because it would be painful to do so, the passage in "Juvenal," from which it comes, referring to the cruel action of the Roman lady who used to scourge her slaves. It would be cruel to the Prime Minister and his followers to quote that. I agree with the admirable speech made by the Attorney-General on this subject. I believe there have been but three speeches made in this Parliament which have really influenced the votes of members, and that was one of them. I very much admire the courage he showed in repressing the agitation that was got up some time ago. He has always been consistent in opposition to these measures, and he must feel much more happy than many members of the Government. The Attorney-General stands far above many of his colleagues, and is much more far-sighted. He has always been consistent on the question. We find that the present day is a day when people must not vote as they like, when the Prime Minister has put his foot down; and I am going to make an appeal to any one of those 110 members who ought now to vote for the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke. The appeal I make is this—I want to-night to see a free expression of the opinion of the House. I consider the conduct of the Prime Minister has, to a certain extent, prevented that being possible; but knowing, as I do, that a great number of those 110 members are going to vote for the Government, I am anxious to pair with any one of them, and the only way in which I can pair is this: I must select one of them, and I must consider that in voting for this proposition, to which I am strongly opposed, I am really pairing with an hon. member who is voting against it, though really for it, and the effect of my so voting will be that it will, to a small extent, correct the votes of the 110 who will vote with the Government against this proposal.

MR. AGNEW.

MR. AGNEW: I am not one of the 110 members who signed the memorial to the Prime Minister to which the hon. member has referred, but I have voted in this House in favour of the inclusion of women in the Parliamentary franchise, and for many years have been and still am in favour of their inclusion. But I consider that it is more than doubtful whether if the Government had introduced a clause into this Bill giving the franchise to women—indeed I am certain—that there would not have been on the second reading of the Bill a majority anything approaching that which supported the second reading. (Hear, hear.) Whilst, in my opinion, there would have been a majority, it would have been so small as to have been in effect an invitation to the House of Lords to reject the Bill. In my view the arguments of the Prime Minister are absolutely unanswerable, and whilst I advocate, and shall continue to advocate, women's suffrage—that is to say, the exercise of the franchise by the spinster and the widow—there I stop, I shall vote against the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke. (Hear, hear.) In so doing I believe I interpret the wishes of nine-tenths of my constituents. I may tell the House that there are 60,000 or 70,000 persons in South-east Lancashire duly qualified to exercise the franchise who are anxiously waiting for this Bill to become law to enable them to do so. I am quite certain that in voting against this clause and in voting for the Government I retard, but only for a time, the

extension of the franchise to women. I am quite satisfied that I interpret the wishes of my constituents, and that I do no harm to the advance of women's suffrage in voting on this occasion, as I shall vote, with the Government.

GENERAL ALEXANDER.

General ALEXANDER: I desire to say in a few words that I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. member for Stoke—(hear, hear)—because it does appear to me somewhat anomalous that one-half of the community should be debarred by the mere accident of sex from the privileges attaching to all capable citizens, although fulfilling all the conditions which entitle the other half to the satisfactory exercise of electoral functions. Why, let me ask, should we capriciously withhold the suffrage from women? Why are we to lay it down as an unalterable canon that no matter what their merits or capacity may be women may never hope to exercise any voice or influence in the preparation of those measures which should concern them quite as closely as, and in many cases much more closely, than men? Is it pretended that women are incapable of performing any electoral duties, or is it suggested that any danger will accrue to the State from admitting them at the present time within the pale of the constitution? There has been only one cry of alarm on that point, and that was raised a few days ago in the columns of the *Times*. Admiral Maxse has discovered a possible source of danger in the circumstance that at a time of great political excitement the majority of men may find themselves defeated in their purpose by a combination of the minority of men with the majority of women. I do not believe in the probability of any such combination; but admitting for the moment, for the sake of argument, its possibility, what becomes of the boasted secrecy of the ballot if you are able to follow and trace out the votes of so many electors? Admiral Maxse asserts, on the authority of a French statesman, that if female suffrage were exercised at the present moment in France, a revolution would certainly ensue, but what is the result at this moment of manhood suffrage in France? At this very moment a Divorce Bill is passing through the Senate punishing a wife in the most rigorous manner for a single act of infidelity, while refusing relief to her for any number of similar acts committed by her husband. That is the atrocious and infamous legislation which is possible, nay even probable, under a system of manhood suffrage. Then, again, it has been asserted that women should be excluded from the electoral franchise because they are incapable of performing military service—because they cannot pay what is called the "blood tax;" but I would remind the Committee that this argument is equally applicable to the case of many men; to the case of clergymen, for instance, and to men who are physically incapacitated. In this country of voluntary service comparatively few citizens are called upon to pay the blood tax or to render any military service whatever. Depend upon it, the axiom that there shall be no taxation without representation is quite as applicable to the case of women as to the case of men, and while on this point I rejoice to see this evening in a letter in the *Pall Mall Gazette* from Miss Müller, who has been called upon to pay her rates, that she has courageously refused to do so, and that when she was warned by the rate collector that he would be obliged to distrain, she told him that she felt herself conscientiously compelled to bar the door against him, and that he must force his way in. If all women would act as Miss Müller is prepared to act they would not have long to wait for the electoral suffrage. Again, it has been said that politics are not the business of women; that they take no interest in politics, but if such be the case is it not the fault of those who do their best to debar them from taking any such interest? Moreover, I contend that the great majority of women will take as much interest as the majority of men in politics, for the great majority of men, except on the polling day, take no interest in politics at all. Why, even Mr. Fox at the end of last century admitted the political capacity of women, for in a speech in the House of Commons on the 26th May, 1797—that is curious I believe as the first occasion upon which the question of female suffrage was ever mentioned in the House of Commons—he observed that, "In all the theories and projects of the most absurd speculation

it has never been suggested that it would be advisable to extend the electoral suffrage to the female sex, and yet, justly respecting as we must do the mental power, the acquirements, the discrimination, and the balance of mind of the women of England in the present improved state of society; knowing the opportunities they have for acquiring knowledge, and that they have interests as dear and as important as our own, it must be the genuine feeling of every gentleman who hears me that the superior classes of the female sex in England must be more capable of exercising the elective suffrage with deliberation and propriety than the uninformed individuals in the lowest class of men to whom the advocates of universal suffrage would extend it." That was the opinion of Mr. Fox then, and if the women of England were capable citizens in the days of Mr. Fox in what he called the improved state of society, what would Mr. Fox's opinion have been if he could have seen the women of the present day? What would he have said if he could have seen, for instance, the labours of a Miss Nightingale or a Miss Davenport Hill, or if he could have been informed of the great honours reaped only a few days ago by a young lady at Cambridge in the tripos, I think, of moral science, distancing all her male competitors, not one of whom was able to obtain the first class, which was only reserved for her? The fact is that the education, the employments, the occupations and the pursuits of women have been completely changed since the days of Mr. Fox, and even since the days of Mr. John Stuart Mill, who in 1867 first brought the question of female suffrage before this House. On that occasion, Mr. Mill complained that the Universities were closed against women, and that by the merest accident one lady, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, had succeeded in obtaining admission into the medical profession by a door which had been accidentally left open, and which, after she had entered, was immediately closed behind her. These things are now happily changed. Women, as we have been informed to-night, have been admitted to the same education and the same pursuits as men, and the institution of secret voting has removed the last objection to the admission of women to the suffrage. It is idle to pretend that women are represented by their male relatives; you might as well say that agricultural labourers are represented by farmers. What we ask is that women shall no longer be treated as children, or as lunatics, but that they shall vote or abstain from voting as they please for members of this House. We have been told by the Prime Minister and others that the present time is inopportune for opening up this question, but if the present time be inopportune will the Prime Minister tell us what time will be opportune? If this question is raised either next year or the year after, will it not be said, "you are reopening the whole question of electoral reform, which has been happily settled for years to come?" I warn those Liberal members who have hitherto been supposed to be favourable to this proposal for female suffrage, but who now unaccountably and pusillanimously hold back, that the more convenient season for which they are waiting will never come. Upon those Liberal members must rest the responsibility for the rejection of this measure, and I tell the Prime Minister that again and again, in season and out of season, we shall press this matter upon his notice, and that until this matter is happily settled he need not expect any rest or repose. (Laughter.) We shall knock louder and yet louder till the doors of the constitution are at last thrown open to these capable citizens. I am not a recent convert upon this matter. I have studied this question carefully and long, and I never gave a vote with greater satisfaction than that which I propose to give to-night in support of the proposition of the hon. gentleman opposite. (Hear, hear.)

MR. W. H. LEATHAM.

MR. W. H. LEATHAM: After the strong speech of the Prime Minister, on Tuesday, I do not feel disposed to go with the hon. and gallant gentleman opposite and others who support this new clause. The Prime Minister tells us that it will endanger the Franchise Bill, and we must believe him. There can be no doubt as to our duty in this matter, and after the eloquent speeches of to-day my mind is not altered from the view I previously took, for it is a matter of real justice that those who have or occupy property should have votes, whether men or women. They are perfectly competent to vote, but the

speech of the Prime Minister makes it necessary for me to abstain from voting, if it will endanger the Bill, and I hope an early opportunity will be found for a women's suffrage Bill to be introduced with his sanction. I was one of the 130 who signed the memorial to the Premier last year, and one of the 80 who signed the memorial this year that it might be left an open question, but he has not given his consent, and he is our chief on this side of the House, so I shall abstain from voting either way.

MR. INDERWICK.

MR. INDERWICK: I am one of those members of the House who are indifferent as to whether the Prime Minister has left this an open question or not, though for my own part I rather regret that he has not done so, because if he had left it open it would have been determined upon its merits, and for the first time in this House as a matter of practical politics. I remember many occasions upon which this question has been brought forward in this House when its defeat could be predicted, and many hon. members no doubt gave votes out of good nature which they would not have given if they had been satisfied that the votes they gave would be followed by any practical operation; and I believe we should have found the numbers of those who gave votes on previous occasions considerably reduced. In the course of this debate reference has been made by most of the hon. members who have spoken to the qualification of women for performing certain duties and for carrying out employments in which they may be satisfactorily engaged. I do not know anyone who desires for a moment to dispute their qualification with regard to these matters. There is no doubt, as has been suggested by the hon. member for Stoke, that women are great teachers of the young, and that their number as teachers has greatly increased. I think that is a matter upon which the country and the women themselves are very much to be congratulated. One cannot conceive any duty that can be better or more faithfully fulfilled than that of the noble army of teachers of the youth of this country. Whether it will be equally satisfactory to the country, or at all events to the male portion of it, that there should be the same increase in the noble army of milliners and dressmakers is altogether another question. With regard to the tenant farmers, to which the hon. member for Greenwich and others have referred, that is a matter which I think requires a little further consideration. I understand that hon. gentlemen base their assertion that there are 20,000 women tenant farmers in this country on the census taken in 1881. I have taken an opportunity of looking at this return because I entertained a strong opinion that that was a very exaggerated statement; and I find from the first column with regard to the ages of these women tenant farmers it appears that two of these women tenant farmers are under the age of five years; 50 are under fifteen years; 156 are under twenty years, and so on in proportion. Now, I judge from that that the return is incorrect—I have no means or desire to impeach the accuracy of the return—but that it does show that before any strong argument is founded upon it, it must be examined to see how many of these women farmers and graziers in the country are simply owners of the farms and pastoral lands; and we must not too readily come to the conclusion that all these women are living on their farms and carrying on the business. But I do not think that the question of whether women are suitable for certain occupations is decisive upon this point, although I know it is a consideration which presses very much upon the minds of members and others who support the enfranchisement of women. Before I pass away from this particular item in the argument, I should like to direct the attention of hon. members to another column in this census as to the occupations of the people. You will find there described agricultural, and mechanical, and other employments; but the last item is the heading "Indefinite and unproductive," meaning, I suppose, persons having no visible occupation, or it may be persons living on their own means, or persons living upon no means, easily ascertained. I should like the House to consider these figures, in order to see how they are to judge of other figures to which reference has been made. In the United Kingdom there are 7,617,000 male persons who are put under the class of "Indefinite and unproductive;" that is to say, 7,617,000 out of a total of 17,000,000. When we turn

to the figures as to female persons we find there are 13,195,000 who come under the class of "Indefinite and unproductive," out of a total of 18,000,000; that is to say, whereas there are 45 per cent of men under this particular class the percentage of women is 73. Now I do not say this is conclusive, or is a very strong argument one way or the other, and I do not rely upon this particular kind of argument at all, but I do say it is a matter which must be taken into consideration when people are founding an argument on the fact that there are a certain number of women who are engaged in one occupation, and a certain number in another occupation, and attempt to found upon that some argument favourable to this clause. Now with regard to this question of female suffrage there have always been two difficulties. One is the difficulty of dealing with married women; and the second is how far, if you are to give women political power at all, you will place any limit to their political power, and if you do that where the line is to be drawn. The first of these difficulties has never been put before the House in an altogether satisfactory manner. In the debate on a Bill brought forward by Mr. Forsyth when member for Marylebone the question arose as to the position of married women. Mr. Forsyth said he entertained a strong feeling with regard to the position of unmarried women, but he did not entertain a strong feeling with regard to the position of married women, and the result was that having made that declaration he ceased to be the representative in this House of the Women's Suffrage Association, and the position was given to another member. The hon. member for Ashton (Mr. Mason) last year brought forward a resolution on this question. That was a resolution which, on the face of it, as one at first read it, might be taken to mean the absolute and entire enfranchisement of all the women in the country, married or single; or it might be supposed to be limited simply to the case of married women. The hon. member for Ashton himself, in the speech he made on introducing that resolution, expressed a very strong opinion with regard to the advisability of including married women in the political representation of the country, and declared that the resolution was not brought forward with that intention. Then there came that remarkable declaration which was made by Mrs. Bright, and which has been referred to by my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham). That declaration appears to me to embody a very strong argument, for it puts this question, "why should you refuse that to a wife and a mother which, under your proposal, you would give to the woman who is the mother of any number of illegitimate children?" I feel bound to say that, as I regard the matter, this is, in reality, a very strong contention. I now come to the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) which is now before the House, and I should like to ask one question of my hon. friend. I should, also, like to ask the same question of some of the hon. members who are intimately associated with this movement, and with the particular association by which it is being advocated. The question I desire to put to them and to my hon. friend is this,—whether, when the resolution was first drawn up, it was or was not intended to include married women? For my own part I have a very strong impression that it was so intended, and I say so for this reason, that I think if it had not been intended that married women should have been included the resolution would have said so. Reference has already been made, in the course of this debate, to the course pursued by the legislature of the Isle of Man, which has given women the power of exercising the franchise; but in the statute by which that power is conferred the words "spinners" and "widows" are especially used, so that there could be no possible mistake about the intention of the legislature. I repeat, therefore, that if it had not been intended, in the first instance, that this clause should include the case of married women, I cannot see the reason why it should not have gone the length of stating clearly and specifically what the intention was. It has, indeed, been stated in the course of meetings that have been held in furtherance of the movement, that it is well understood that the clause would not bear this interpretation, and that it had been brought before some lawyers for interpretation, and they, having been well advised upon the matter, were of opinion that in point of law the clause would not be construed to include married women. This is all very well, as far as it goes; but it

might also be construed the other way, and for my part I have some doubt as to whether it would not. At any rate I am quite certain of this, that all doubt on the point could have been very easily avoided by the use of a very few words, and I will tell the Committee why I am induced to think that if the clause should be pressed as a portion of this Bill, in the way in which it is now drawn, I entertain very considerable doubt as to whether it would not carry the case of married women. It has been said that this would not be so from the construction which the Court of Queen's Bench put upon a similar clause in the Municipal Corporations Act in a case brought before the judges of that Court. But it must be borne in mind, in the first place, that the decision given by the judges in that case was a decision relative to an Act of Parliament of a totally different character to the Bill now before the Committee, and that, in addition to this, there has been since that period, under various Acts of the Legislature, considerable alteration in the relations which at that time existed as between husband and wife. For instance, there has been a great change in the law with regard to the holding of property and the power of making contracts, as well as with regard to the power of suing and proceeding against each other civilly and criminally, all these things having undergone a radical alteration since the judges gave that decision, the relations formerly existing between husband and wife on these matters having been absolutely and entirely changed. Therefore, I say it is important for us to consider the construction which is to be put on the clause proposed by my hon. friend, and, in considering that construction, it is necessary that all these matters should be borne in view. It is to my mind by no means certain, and indeed in my opinion there is very considerable doubt, as to whether any court before whom the clause might be brought for construction would not feel itself called upon to construe it to the fullest extent as giving the most thorough and perfect franchise which it could be capable of conferring. One of the judges in pronouncing the decision to which I have referred made this observation—that "It was a disqualification of status and not of sex." It is not my business to criticise the decisions of the courts or the language or proceedings of the bench of judges, but when I find one of the learned judges laying it down as a legal *dictum* that the disqualification was one of status and not of sex, I think it right to ask the Committee to bear in mind that the disqualification of marriage is one which does not attach to a man, but does attach to a woman, and that only by reason of her sex. I have thought it right to make these few observations with regard to the view that may be taken of the legal construction of this clause, because on a full consideration of the amendment of my hon. friend (Mr. Woodall) I have been led to entertain very considerable doubt as to whether it will not as it is now worded carry the case of the married women; and whether it has not been put in this form for the purpose of giving women to understand that under this clause they may have a chance of obtaining the franchise if they can succeed in satisfying the court before which the question may be brought that they are entitled to it. My hon. friend the member for West Suffolk (Mr. Biddell) intends to bring forward an amendment by which he proposes to insert the word "single" before the word "women;" and in case that amendment should be accepted the clause will run in this shape—"In every case where words import the masculine gender they shall include a single woman." Now, I should like to draw my hon. friend's attention to this, that in the old authorities which constitute the law of the country there is a chapter devoted to the description of those phrases which are to form the addition of women and in that description is the old phrase "single woman," which is well known alike to the law and the history and the literature of the country, and it is there stated that the proper description of a single woman is, a woman who is neither a maid nor a wife nor a widow. Now, we all know perfectly well from what we have heard that there is an enormous number of that particular class who will be added to those who will receive the benefit of the franchise if this clause should be passed. I think I know my hon. friend too well to suppose that he would desire to confer the franchise solely on that particular class of persons, and if he wishes to see any amendment made to the clause I would advise him by all means to get rid of the term "single woman," and to

follow the example set by the Legislature of the Isle of Man, and go back to the well known terms, "spinster" and "widow." But with regard to the question of including married women I would say that, assuming this matter should be so disposed of that the Committee in its wisdom should either accept the proposal to enfranchise women who are married or should refuse to give the franchise to that class of persons, then will come the further question for consideration—if you decide on giving the franchise to women at all are you going to limit the selection of persons for whom they are to vote? Are they to be allowed to vote for everybody except themselves? Four of my hon. friends who have addressed the Committee have referred to the cases of boards of guardians and school boards. Well, what is the state of things with regard to those bodies? Under the existing law women have the power of voting for members of boards of guardians and of voting for themselves as guardians: they have not only the right of voting but also of being themselves elected. The same right applies with regard to school boards. Women have not only the right to vote for members of school boards, but are themselves qualified to sit on those boards and may if they see fit elect each other. Well, if you make use of the school board and poor law and municipal franchise as an argument for conferring a political franchise on women, what reason will you advance for the application of this argument to one state of things and not to the other? If the argument is to be applied to the question of the female franchise we are now discussing, you must either accept it as a whole or admit that it does not form a sound and solid argument, because when applied to the political franchise it partially breaks down. For my own part I am disposed to think that there is no more objection to women being elected to sit in this House than there is to confer on them the franchise in order that they may vote at the election of persons who desire to sit here. If we are to bring women into the political arena at all, I can see no reason why they are not to be introduced into our political gladiatorial combats or prevented from entering this House. But at the same time I entertain a very strong objection to their being brought into political life at all. Most of us know something of political life both inside and outside this House, and have had some experience of its toils and troubles, of the envy, hatred, and malice which spring out of it, and of the difficulties, disappointments, and disenchantments of political life. I think that those of us who have had any lengthy connection with politics must have formed a very strong opinion on this matter, and agree in regarding it as undesirable that women should be allowed to have seats in this assembly. It has constantly been said by hon. members engaged in the discussion of this subject that women themselves have no desire to obtain seats in this House; but that all they are desirous of is to be allowed to be placed in the same position as clergymen and priests, and to be able to record their votes at Parliamentary elections and rest content. I, for one, do not believe a word of it. I am, at any rate, quite certain of this, that the prime movers in this agitation, the most active spirits, the most eloquent and persevering advocates of women's claims, are aiming, in their propagation of female suffrage, first of all at conferring the franchise on married women; and, secondly, on obtaining the right of election for those women who, having before them an object of honourable ambition, look forward to the time when they may have been enabled step by step to have secured for themselves exactly the same political position as men, and may then claim to be themselves elected as members of Parliament. I would remind the Committee of a meeting on this subject that was held not long ago at St. James's Hall. At that meeting the hon. gentleman the member for Leominster (Mr. Rankin) made a speech, in the course of which by a lucky accident he hit on the question of women's claim to have seats in this House. That meeting was conducted with great skill and care—

MR. RANKIN: I beg to say that what the hon. member has said is inaccurate, as it was by no means an accident.

MR. INDERWICK: At any rate from what appeared in the speech of the hon. gentleman as reported in the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, the hon. member said: "Sometimes it was said that if they gave women a vote they must also admit them to Parliament. He drew a distinction between voting for a member and sitting in Parliament, and said there was no doubt

there was an essential difference in the two things. (A voice: "Why?" and interruption, followed by other expressions of dissent.) That being the hon. member's view he was quite right in expressing it, and no doubt the ladies would not think any the worse of him because he honestly stated his opinion. But it shows that the meeting did not altogether agree with him. And I will go further, and I will put it to the Committee whether what I am saying is not absolutely and entirely correct, and whether it is not within the knowledge of many of my hon. friends that a very considerable number of ladies who take a prominent part in the advancement of this movement do desire to take their part in the discussions in this House—whether they do not look forward to the time when by the action of Parliament they may be permitted to take precisely the same part in the political affairs of the country as is now taken by men? It is said, and I know it to be the feeling of many hon. members, including the hon. member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) and those who have supported his proposal on this and on previous occasions, that after all this is only a limited measure, that it is only intended to give the elective franchise to a limited number of women, and that if Parliament would introduce certain checks no great amount of harm or damage will be done. Well, if we could upon the whole agree to look at the matter from this point of view, and could satisfy ourselves that that would be the end of it, then we might say no great harm would be done; but I am disposed to entertain the opinion that before very many years are over there will be a very much greater addition to the electorate of this country than even that which is now proposed by the amendment of the hon. member for Stoke. I think it is fully evident that events clearly point in this direction, and that a much wider addition in the direction of manhood suffrage may be expected. We all know that it is so in the Colonies, and that the same exists in the United States of America, as well as in Germany, France, Denmark, Italy, Greece, and other countries, and I can see no reason why it should not be the case in this country, except that we, in England, are not quite so quick in accepting radical and democratic views. I will, however, suppose I am correct in this, and that it may be so accepted. I will assume also that this House should be induced to extend the suffrage in the way now proposed, and to give a household franchise to certain women. What, I ask, in that event would be likely to happen? Do hon. members think that any checks or safeguards we might now be disposed to adopt would for a single moment be available when the time came for pressing forward this movement in the direction I have pointed out. It is my opinion, and I think it is that of many other hon. members, that those checks and safeguards would be entirely swept away. As the movement towards manhood suffrage progresses it will in course of time be found that some seventeen or eighteen millions of men will be admitted to the franchise and they would then be confronted at the polling booths with some eighteen or nineteen millions of women, having a powerful influence in the conduct of affairs in this country. I have said that a large extension of the existing suffrage is a state of things we have a right to anticipate; but I am bound also to say that I do not fear it. If it comes by means of a slow and gradual progress, which is good for all parties in this country, there need be no ground for alarm, but I should tremble for the future of England if its political future should come to be swayed, and perhaps controlled by an enormous mass of women numerically equal to, and perhaps exceeding the men,—a mass of female voters who would have the power of voting on every question, whose noblest impulses and whose best affections would tend to lead them astray on great political questions, and who I very much fear would be subject among other things to this dangerous influence, that to-day they might be led by fanatics, and to-morrow they might be led by priests. The view I have thus expressed I entertain very strongly and deeply, and it is because I believe that to encourage or allow to the smallest extent the political enfranchisement of women would be injurious to the State that I feel myself compelled to vote against the clause proposed by the hon. member for Stoke whatever may be the course taken by my hon. friends around me.

MR. J. COWEN.

Mr. J. COWEN: I do not propose to follow my hon. friend the member for Rye (Mr. Inderwick) through all the legal subtleties he has imported into this subject. I think that the principle involved in this clause is sound, and that it would be found beneficial in its operation, and it is because of this belief that I intend to vote for it. I do not claim to be so orthodox a party man as my right hon. friend the member for Halifax, but I will say that so far as this Bill is concerned no man is more desirous of seeing it become law, and I have been equally consistent with the right hon. gentleman in giving it a cordial and undeviating support. I believe that I have voted in every division that has taken place upon it, and my vote has always been given in favour of the measure. I have never suggested an amendment, and, in fact, have never uttered a single word. I do not think the most loyal supporter of the Government could have done more than this. I should regret extremely if the Bill should be imperilled by any vote I am going to give, but I do not think my present vote will have that effect, and I certainly do not think it ought. If the clause is rejected, the controversy will terminate. If, on the other hand, the clause is accepted, it will have been adopted by a majority of the House, and I think the Government will probably, on second thoughts, be able to discover some means of adapting the Bill to the wishes of the majority. They have done this on other questions of almost equal importance, and I hope and have no doubt they will be able to do so on this. They would never allow the work of the session to be sacrificed to an adverse vote on the part of their supporters in Committee. Therefore, I do not think that hon. members on this side of the House need have any fear as to the course they may pursue in voting for this amendment. I quite agree with the Prime Minister that it is undesirable to delay the progress of the Bill by the discussion of extraneous and irrelevant subjects; but the proposal now before the House does not come within that category, for it is in strict conformity with the objects of the Bill. All I ask for is that the Bill may be made to fulfil its professions, and establish a uniform household suffrage throughout the United Kingdom. This Bill will, if passed into law, enfranchise two millions of men, irrespective of intelligence and morals, of character or capacity. Occupation is the only test of fitness it imposes. If this is to be the case with regard to one set of householders, why should it not be so with regard to another? Why should a disqualification apply to women and not be equally applied to men? The course of modern legislation has been to confirm the maxim that taxation and representation should be co-extensive, that rights and burdens should correspond, and that before a person suffered under the laws he should assent to them. You admit women to the gallows and the gaol, and to income-tax list and to poor-rate book: by what right do you debar them from the ballot box? The onus of proving their disqualification is thrown on the exclusionists. Let them produce it. They have not produced it yet; it has not been shown in the course of this discussion. You allow women to vote in all and to be elected to most parochial and municipal bodies, and you have also permitted them to vote for and to become members of school boards. In some of the American territories women are invested with all the rights of citizenship. Is there any man who will have the hardihood to argue that any injurious consequences have resulted from the possession of such rights? Woman's influence, whether exercised on a British school board or in an election, college, or convention amidst the rough miners, on the slopes and in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, has been beneficent, and her authority salutary and elevating. Justice and logic, precedent and experience, are all in favour of her inclusion in the roll of citizenship. (An Hon. Member: Precedent?) Yes, precedent. What is against it? Two potent forces—prejudice and pride. The prejudice engendered by the organised selfishness of human nature, and the pride induced by ages of predominance. Nothing more. Woman, it is said, is intellectually inferior to man. I will admit, for the sake of argument, the statement of my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. E. Leatham) that woman is man's intellectual inferior. What then? Do you not allow the humblest and feeblest, as well as the most gifted, to enjoy the same civil privileges? Has the philosopher any legal advantage over the ploughman? John

Hodge is not and never will be the equal of a Herbert Spencer. But John Hodge is not therefore kept in tutelage and forbidden to vote. We have, on the contrary, displayed extraordinary care in providing the machinery for enabling him to exercise his political functions. Ignorance or mental incapacity does not constitute a disqualification for the franchise on the part of man. If not, why should it disfranchise woman, who, equally with John Hodge, is taxed in her labour and her property? The noble lord the member for Leicestershire (Lord John Manners) has cited the case of women farmers. I know a district in which there are three women farmers who hold and cultivate more than one-third of the land in that district. They have some hundreds of acres and they constantly employ fifty or sixty workmen, and many more occasionally. If the Bill is passed as it now stands some thirty-five or forty of those men will be enfranchised, although some of them can neither read nor write, while the persons who supply the capital and intelligence and enterprise, and who find the men their labour, will be deprived of that privilege. Is there any one, even the most credulous opponent of this clause, who believes that such an anomaly—or rather, I should say absurdity—as this can continue? Woman, however, is not intellectually man's inferior. History, reason, analogy prove that her faculties—from diverse vocation and tendency, from perennial legal inequality and injustice—may be dissimilar, but they are not inferior to those of man. Her position has been the gauge and thermometer of civilisation in every age and country. Some of the greatest philosophers, from Plato to Condorcet, and from Condorcet to Mill, have maintained that, although woman may not be identically, she is equally, endowed with man in all his intellectual capacities. It is difficult to determine whether the inconsistency that would deny Miss Nightingale and Miss Octavia Hill a vote, but would give it to the latest housebreaker just emerged from prison, or the impertinence which affects to prescribe the circuit of duty for the Martineaus, the Somervilles, the Jane Austens, and the Mrs. Brownings, is the more intolerable. Woman's sphere, forsooth! Who endowed the members of this House with the power to prescribe the position and apportion the arena in which our fellow-countrymen have to labour? The proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and the loftiest which they are able to attain, and this can only be ascertained by complete liberty of choice. If women wish to become politicians, let them. Remove all obstacles and impediments to the freest choice of career, either in political or social life. Some hon. members have argued that the domestic arena is the only one for which women are qualified, but they exhibit great ignorance and great forgetfulness of history. Our parasitic conventionalities, our fantastic and fanciful modes of life, while professing to honour women, degrade them. Our very homage contains a latent irony. It stimulates to cultivation of woman's personal graces and lighter accomplishments, and to the neglect of her nobler powers. We surround her with a world of dolls, and then complain that she is frivolous. We deprive her of the lessons and stimulus of practical outdoor life, and then we chide her with being flippant and undisciplined. But notwithstanding these disadvantages the number of women who have shone as sovereigns, or who have risen to renown in politics, literature, art, and ordinary life, has been exceptionally large. Call the roll of the most distinguished rulers the world has known—keep in mind the predominance of man over woman—and will any one contend that the proportion of great queens has not been in excess of the great kings? The three brightest eras in British history have been those in which the sceptre has been swayed by a woman—those of Elizabeth, Anne, and Victoria. What does Austria owe to Maria Theresa, Sweden to the valiant daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, and Spain to Isabella, who pawned her jewels to fit out a fleet for Columbus? Can anyone, in face of such instances, gainsay the fact that, the opportunity being given, woman, in spite of her artificial training, has risen to the responsibilities of rulership? But hon. members have argued that one of the first qualifications of a citizen was to be able to fight, and that, as women cannot act as soldiers or policemen, they cannot therefore be electors—that as they cannot build ships nor make guns, nor lead armies they should therefore be deprived of their civil rights. Do we disfranchise men because they are below the military standard? Are the

weak, the aged, and the failing eliminated from the register? Is it fair to apply to woman a test we do not apply to man? We refuse to allow her to take a share in the work of the world. The enervating habits we have imposed on her have impaired her physical powers, and then we cite to her detriment the weakness which our customs have created. Men with splendid natural endowments often die mute and inglorious for want of discipline and opportunity. Great commanders grow out of the circumstances in which their lives are cast. Open to woman the same scenes, immerse her in the same great pursuits and interests, and, if she fails, then, but not till then, shall we be able to make a basis of argument against her on the ground of intellectual incapacity. Those hon. members who use this fighting argument forget the martial energy of the Scandinavian women. When my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) mentioned the names of Boadicea and Joan of Arc a titter went round among hon. members, who in their hurried march of executive life have allowed reflection to be submerged by locomotion, thought by action, and ideality by a narrow and soulless materialism. But the names of the gifted and the lost will live, and the lessons of their lives will stir the pulses of mankind when all our petty politics are forgotten. It has been argued that domestic cares and political pursuits are incompatible. If so, why need there be any fear of conferring upon her this power? No law is required to exclude either man or woman from incompatible occupations. My contention is that women are as capable as men of busying themselves in State affairs, and that it is unjust and unwise to exclude them from active life in all its higher departments. In every great reform the majority at first have always said the claimants for power were unfit for the possession of the privileges sought. This was the stale argument used against the admission of the Jews, the Catholics, and the Dissenters to political rights. But we admitted them. Let us look around for the consequences. Why not try women? Let the tools be for those who can best use them, be they men or women. Let facts and not prejudices settle woman's capacity, and, therefore, her sphere. We take our stand on the ground of justice and expediency, on the self-evident and indisputable principle that every class should be endowed with the power to protect itself, and we claim for women the same rights and privileges that are given to men in like position. (Cheers.)

MR. BRYCE.

Mr. BRYCE: Sir Arthur Otway, I think it has not been fully recognised by those who up to the present time have spoken in favour of the clause, that we want something more than abstract argument to justify our acceptance of the principle which it embodies. On the other hand, I must say that many of the arguments which have been used against this proposal to extend the suffrage to women appear to me weak and such as I cannot adopt. For instance, it is alleged that the franchise would unsex women; but surely nature is stronger than any laws which we can make. Then it is urged that women would vote with the Conservative party; but if women really hold Conservative political opinions, why should they not give effect to them? Women, people say, do not fight, and therefore a case might arise in which all the men would be on one side and all the women on the other; but can anyone suppose such cases likely to arise? Or is it true that in the modern world physical strength is the main source of combative power? But I can just as little find any force in the argument for the admission of women that taxation implies representation, for every man who buys an ounce of tobacco pays a tax to the extent of the duty, and however large may be the taxes which a man pays, he gets no more votes. It has been well said that if we are to regard the State as a joint-stock company, and in that company the holder of one share and the owner of 100 shares have each a vote, it may in one sense be said that 99 shares are unrepresented. Yet no one proposes to give votes in proportion to property. ("Name.") Those are the words of Goldwin Smith, and I do not think that any political writer has appeared in this country who has brought a more independent judgment to bear upon this question. The State is not, however (as he continues), a joint-stock company in which men vote according to their pecuniary contributions, and we do not really base the suffrage upon property. Nor is this question, as my hon.

friend the Secretary to the Treasury tried to make it last year, a sentimental question—a means of creating what my hon. friend called “noble woman.” It is a question far too serious to be decided by vague and speculative considerations of sentiment. The true grounds for extending the franchise to any hitherto unenfranchised class are that the extension should give a better Parliament, that it should secure a voice and influence to interests needing to be represented, and that it should enable this House more perfectly to reflect the opinion of the majority, so far as that majority was qualified to form an opinion. Can it be said that the admission of women is needed for these purposes? Now there is one consideration which appears amply sufficient to decide the point, and it is that women taking them all in all are not politicians—that they know little, and care less about political questions. I am aware that there are a few, and an increasing number of women who do, but how small a proportion do they constitute of the whole mass whom this clause would enfranchise. It is so even in the class which members of this House know best, and if you go down to the poorer classes of the community you will find the difference greater; whatever class one takes the women of that class will be found to have a far smaller knowledge, of a far smaller interest, in political questions than the men have. If we could admit the few women who do take an interest in political questions, without admitting those who do not, I should see no objection, for I do not argue that sex, as sex, ought to disqualify. It is not because women are women, but because the conditions of their lives have not qualified them for the exercise of political power that they are now unfitted to exercise the franchise. The time may of course arrive when women will feel interested in, and when they shall have gained a comprehension of political questions, which they are now without, and the objections which I now take would not then be applicable. When one considers the immense progress made in their general education since the beginning of the education movement in 1865, one may hold that time to be no longer remote. But as things stand at present, women are in every rank and class of life much less informed on politics than men are, and they must owing to the nature of their lives, spent so largely at home, or in comparative solitude, want those opportunities of discussion and of gaining a practical knowledge of the affairs of the world which men enjoy. Let each hon. member ask himself how many ladies there are of his acquaintance who have thought seriously on political questions or formed their opinions independently. How many ladies do they know, excluding the sisters, wives, and daughters of members of this House, who even read the political intelligence in the newspapers? Surely a very small number. I am prepared for the answer that this holds true also of a large proportion of the classes already enfranchised, and of those to whom the Bill seeks to extend the franchise. I admit the force of that answer. Doubtless there are many among these classes whose political intelligence and knowledge falls far short of what is needed for the exercise of electoral power. But the franchise has been, and is being now, extended so widely among these classes, because there are other grounds which make it necessary—because the special interests of the town workmen and of the agricultural labourers need to be protected by giving them votes, instead of leaving them to the mercy of the wealthier classes. It is not because we believe them to be all fit for this function that we enfranchise them, but because we see greater evils in leaving them unenfranchised. I deny altogether that the Liberal party has proceeded on grounds of what is called abstract right and justice. It has proceeded on considerations of what will make Parliament most truly representative of all classes and interests, of what will best strengthen the constitution of the country. No such reasons exist in the case of women. They are not a class. Their wishes and needs are substantially the same as those of the men who are their relatives. In a few points only can they be said to have any separate interests, and in these points the injustices which they have no doubt suffered from are being gradually removed. One of them has been removed by the Married Women's Property Act. As respects the guardianship of children, the law is still unfair to women, but the reception given to the Bill brought in by me this session on that subject makes it probable that here, too, their grievance will soon be removed, although the opportunities for obstruction in this House may delay it for a year or two. Were I convinced that they can only obtain justice through the grant of voting power, I might sup-

port this clause, but we must remember that all measures of justice need time, and that the progress made in such questions as concern women specially has been latterly as rapid as in any other group of questions. Looking at the thing broadly it cannot be said that women need votes in order to obtain remedial legislation. There is, I think, a serious fallacy in the argument of my hon. friend the member for Stoke-upon-Trent and his supporters when he urges that because some women are eminent in literature, or in philanthropic and educational work, therefore they need the franchise. Rather might my hon. friend have observed that the more power women exerted in these indirect ways the less need was there to give them electoral power. There can be no more baseless assumption than that the polling booth is the main source of influence in politics. Women already enjoy greater influence in other ways, both public and private, than the franchise would give them. In fact nothing is more remarkable than the skill, the energy, the success, with which they have conducted political and social agitations. They have more leisure for the work than most men and they threw themselves into it with more than manlike intensity. I may be told that surely ladies who have proved themselves to be such accomplished agitators are fitted for the suffrage. No doubt they are, but they are a very small minority, and the great mass would either vote as their male relatives or friends suggested, or else be left to the mercy of wire-pullers, perhaps female wire-pullers, who would be no desirable phenomenon in politics. Washington knows what female lobbyists can be, and I trust that it will be long before wire-pulling or any of the other arts of professional politics, unpleasing even in men, begin to be practised by women. Now, from the nature of the case, the female vote in any constituency must, as things now stand, be more open to manipulation, because less independent than the male vote; and its introduction will therefore tend to give us a worse instead of a better Parliament. That female vote may be a very large one, for the Committee must bear in mind in deciding upon this question that, whatever some hon. members may think to the contrary, it is impossible to draw a line between married and unmarried women. My hon. friend, the member for Stoke-upon-Trent, did not attempt to draw such a line, because, in fact, it cannot be drawn. It is intelligible to say that all women, married and unmarried, shall be unenfranchised, but it is not intelligible to say that married women shall want the privilege which other women are to receive. If you overleap the greater distinction you cannot stop at the lesser one. The advocates of women's suffrage are generally candid enough to admit this. If the franchise be now conceded to unmarried rate-payers, they will forthwith start a fresh agitation for the admission of lodgers and married women. That agitation will be stronger than the present one, for its logic will be irresistible, and it will be supported by the women who have already obtained the suffrage. We shall be told that it is monstrous that marriage should mean disfranchisement; and truly told, for in many respects married women are better qualified than single women for the exercise of this power. I think, sir, that hon. members must look at this question as if it were proposed to establish womanhood suffrage. Sooner or later the suffrage in this country will come lower than it is now, and if we are to have manhood suffrage we shall have womanhood suffrage. I do not think the Committee will be carried away by the argument of the right hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld), who suggested that we should find a security against manhood suffrage in admitting some women to a right which obviously would not be extended to all women. A Parliament bold enough to take the one leap might face the other. On what grounds, sir, are we asked to make this change? On grounds of abstract theory, a dangerous guide in politics. Why are we to try an experiment, a great and perfectly novel experiment, never yet tried in any civilised country, and not so much as talked about in countries like Germany and France? It has not been tried in any of our democratic self-governing colonies, nor in any one of the thirty-eight highly-democratic States of the American Union. It has been attempted in the rude and thinly-peopled territory of Wyoming, where, so far as one can make out, it works badly; and in the saintly territory of Utah, where the effect of woman suffrage is to give to every Mormon husband as many votes as he has wives. But when the proposal was made not long ago in the great State of Ohio it was rejected by a decided majority of the people, and I believe after careful examination that in the United States the woman suffrage question has gone back instead

of forward, and that the idea was less popular there now and less likely to be carried out than it was twenty years ago. It appears to me that it is by a feeling of good nature that hon. members have allowed themselves to support this movement. They are half amused, half curious, to see how it will work; they have given a heedless assent to the persuasions addressed to them by ladies whose zeal and eloquence excite sympathy as well as admiration; they have been led into pledges which cannot easily be recalled. But we have to look at a very serious question. We are asked in this Bill to try the experiment of enfranchising 2,000,000 men in addition to those who possess the franchise, and by this clause we are asked to try another experiment by conferring the franchise upon perhaps 700,000 women who till lately never dreamt of having it, and the great bulk of whom have given no sign that they desire it. That is a startling thing to propose in a State like this. No member of this House feels more sincerely anxious that the fullest attention should be given to women's claims than I do, or that their interests should be treated not only with justice but with that equitable indulgence which is due to the less combative sex. I have laboured for eighteen years on behalf of the higher education of women, have joined in advocating the Married Women's Property Act, have undertaken in this House the task of trying to obtain for mothers their just rights to the guardianship of their children. And it is just because I have had perhaps more occasion than some other members to know how admirable is the work which women now do, and how potent their influence, because I believe the functions they now fulfil in our social polity and in philanthropic enterprise as well as in domestic life to be of priceless value to the community, that I hope Parliament will not thrust on them political duties for which the vast majority are still unprepared. If this experiment is to be tried, let it be first tried by some State with less to lose than Great Britain has by an error which may prove perilous not only to our government but to the best interests of women themselves.

MR. LABOUCHERE.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Sir, the hon. member for Newcastle (Mr. Cowen) just now made a speech in which he seemed to imply that we should be almost criminals if we refuse to give the vote to women. He said that those who opposed this clause were actuated either by pride or prejudice. If that be the case, then the people of all the countries in the world, with the exception of one or two territories in America, must be actuated by pride or prejudice. The hon. member for Newcastle was exceedingly eloquent and exceedingly poetical, and although if I tried I could neither be poetical nor eloquent, I wish to address one or two observations to the Committee. Sir, I look with considerable suspicion on the conduct of hon. gentlemen opposite. Individually, I believe in the virtues of those hon. gentlemen; politically and collectively, I do not consider that they possess a single virtue; and when I heard that this clause was supported by the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition, and that it would be supported in another place by Lord Salisbury, I thought that a Liberal should pause before going into such bad company. The argument mainly used by gentlemen in favour of the proposal of the hon. member for Stoke is that because we have enfranchised men therefore we ought to enfranchise women. It may be that we should enfranchise women, but because we have enfranchised men is no reason why we should do so. We may discuss the subject eloquently, we may refer to Joan of Arc and Boadicea, but in point of fact from the time of Eve till now there has been a distinct difference between man and woman. There are a great many things which I am ready to admit women can do better than men, and there are other things which I think can be better done by men than by women. Each have their separate functions, and the question is whether the exercise of electoral power is a function which women would adequately discharge. I do not think it is. As yet, I understand that no country has really given women the vote, and were it not that hon. gentlemen opposite, who are generally averse to giving the franchise to any large body of men, think, and think justly, that a very large majority of women would vote for Conservatives, I should be surprised at their making this desperate leap in the dark. Some hon. members on this side of the House have told us that women are better than men. That is the language of poetry. But when we come to facts I am not at all disposed to admit that women are better than men. It is not a question of whether women are angels or not, but whether they will make good electors. They might, of course, but some hon. gentle-

men seem to think that the matter is proved—that they will make good electors and give attention to the interests of the constituencies, and the hon. member for Newcastle told us that he was convinced of this because Anne was a great queen, and he told us also that Elizabeth was a great queen. But Queen Anne was not a great queen, and Queen Elizabeth had the intellect of a man with the weaknesses of a woman. The hon. member also spoke of Queen Christina of Sweden as a great queen; but everyone knows that she was one of the most execrable queens that ever lived, for after being deposed by her subjects she went to Paris and murdered her secretary. We learn that by the operation of nature more women are born into the world than men, that women live longer than men, and that a considerable number of men leave the kingdom as soldiers and sailors, while women remain at home. In consequence of this there are at any given moment a greater number of women than men in the country. I am told that in every county, with the exception of Hampshire, more women would be put on the register than men if we had womanhood suffrage. And what would be the consequence? They would look to the interests of women rather than to the interests of men; they would band themselves together and we should have them, naturally of course, asking to be admitted to this House, and then if they were admitted, instead of being on an equality with them we should put ourselves under petticoat government; we should have women opposite, women on these benches, and a woman, perhaps, in the Chair. They would, like women everywhere, have their own way. But it is not for us to consider that at present; we may suspend our judgment, but at the same time we must look the matter in the face. But the hon. member for Stoke himself hesitates as to the consequences—he hesitated a good deal as to whether he would give the vote to married women or unmarried women, and by his mode of dealing with the question it would seem that he gave to vice what he denied to virtue. As long as a woman remained a spinster it appeared that she is to have the vote, but that so soon as she marries she is to cease to be an elector; she is to lose her rights if she enters into the holy and honourable state of matrimony, and if her husband dies she again gets the vote. When Napoleon was asked by Madame de Staël who was the best woman in the State, he said, “The woman who has most children,” and therefore I think my hon. friend is positively wrong in saying that he will give the vote to unmarried women and take it away from them when they marry. But the reason why we ought to vote against the proposal is that this is not an opportune moment for considering it. This Bill is the Bill of the Government and of the Prime Minister, and I think the right hon. gentleman is perfectly right to object to political cuckoos on this side of the House who lay eggs in his nest. Let us look at the consequence of accepting this measure. As usual, hon. members think the Prime Minister made a mistake and that he did not mean what he said. I think he does mean what he said. He told us distinctly that he would throw up the Bill if this clause were passed. (“No, no.”) What would be the effect if my hon. friends were in a majority on this question? The effect would be that they would not give women the vote, but they would deprive men of the vote. We are here by a distinct mandate of the country; one of the reasons why we were elected was that we pledged ourselves to vote in favour of the franchise being given to agricultural labourers. The Prime Minister says that the adoption of this amendment would imperil the Bill, so not only should hon. gentlemen on this side not vote against the Government, but they ought not to abstain from voting with them, otherwise the Ministry may find itself in a minority, and the consequence would be that the Bill might be thrown over altogether. That, I consider, is a sound reason for voting with the Government at present. There may come a day when we shall discuss this matter on its merits, but in order to do that two things are necessary—first, that we must discover that the majority of women themselves desire the franchise, which I very much doubt; and secondly, that the majority of the electors whom we represent should notify to us that they also desire it.

SIR W. LAWSON.

SIR W. LAWSON: Before I make any remarks on the main question I wish to say I think my hon. friend the member for Tower Hamlets (Mr. Bryce) was not quite right in saying that there was no State of the American Union where this woman suffrage existed. I believe it exists in the State of Wyoming. (“And the Isle of Man.”)

I merely mention this to show that it has not the dreadful effects my hon. friend seems to imagine it would have here.

Mr. BRYCE: I said it existed in Wyoming and Utah, but these are not States, they are only territories.

Sir W. LAWSON: I accept the correction. The exercise of the suffrage by women in Wyoming does not do the harm which my hon. friend appears to think it would do if adopted here. The *Boston Index* of September, 1875, said: "As far as can be known the ladies divide their votes between parties as much as men do; rather more, perhaps, voting for personal friends. To sum up, the opinion of the best informed is that woman suffrage in Wyoming has resulted in making everything just as it was before, only a little more so." (Laughter.) Now my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham), in his very able attack upon the clause of the hon. gentleman the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall), said that he was inclined to think that representative government was on its trial. (Hear, hear.) Well, I don't go quite so far as that, but I am inclined to say that the Liberal party is on its trial to-night. (Cheers.) We shall see whether the Liberal party is determined to be loyal to its principles, or simply true to its party leaders. The discussion on this clause so far as I understand it divides itself into two parts. We first of all have to discuss—though the discussion has not ranged very much over that ground—we first of all have to discuss whether the clause is right in itself, and whether it is proper that women should have the suffrage given to them, and the next question is whether if the clause be a right one it is now an opportune moment for dealing with the question. Now it appears to me that if I prove the first proposition, namely, that this is a proper proposal, the second proposition follows naturally. I take that from the words of my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Chamberlain), who said not long ago, in discussing another question in this House, "it is always opportune to do right." That, I think, was the text from which my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall) spoke the other day when he brought forward this clause. But before discussing whether this is an opportune proposal, I want to discuss whether it is right. I say it is right, and I do so because I hold the old Whig doctrine which has been alluded to in this debate, viz., that taxation and representation should go together. But when I say it is an old Whig doctrine, I hope the Committee will allow me to read one sentence from a speech of Mr. Disraeli, because I think he put the whole case we have before us to-night correctly in one very short sentence. Eleven years ago Mr. Disraeli said: "I believe the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right, to be injurious to the best interests of the country, and I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament." Now that is our case. I don't think it can be put better than that. My hon. friend (Mr. Woodall) does not propose any intricate change in the law. If we carry this clause we simply put those women who are householders exactly in the same position, with regard to the franchise, as men are now, and I think it is to be regretted that on this occasion there should be a combination of Whigs, some Tories, and some Radicals to maintain that which Mr. Disraeli so long ago declared to be injurious to the best interests of the country. I can understand some of my Tory friends, with their aversion to all changes of this sort, being against it, but I see the noble lord the member for Woodstock (Lord R. Churchill) in his place. Why should he be against it? ("He isn't"). Some one says he is not, but I am afraid he is. I look for better things from him, because I will tell you how I regard the noble lord (Lord R. Churchill). Lord Dufferin, in one of his despatches, dealing with Egyptian matters, said that in Egypt there is not an Opposition to the Government, and he added that opposition is the vital spark of constitutional government. Now the noble lord is the opposition, and I look to him as the vital spark of constitutional government. (Laughter.) Every day he becomes, to my great delight, more resolutely Radical, and I hope my speech will have the effect of converting him totally to our side, and that he will vote in favour of this proposal. Why should Radicals—old Radicals as well as new Radicals like the noble lord—(laughter)—be false to their principles on this occasion? There are a great many people who remind me very much of a sentence that was used by a slaveholder in the old days of American slavery, viz., "All men is born

free except niggers." Why should Radicals vote that "all men is born free except women?" There is a certain amount of reason against this motion, and it is to a certain extent plausible. My hon. friend the member for Rye (Mr. Inderwick) made a very able speech just now. He had a bugbear; he was afraid of the clergy. He said he was afraid that the clergy would influence women as to the way they should give their votes. Well, why should they not? What are clergy for unless to influence people to do right? Why does the State employ 20,000 clergy in this country unless to influence people? Why they should not influence ladies as well as other people I don't know. The argument of my hon. friend the member for Rye (Mr. Inderwick) may be a good argument for disestablishing parsons, but it is no argument for disestablishing women. (Hear, hear.) Someone—I forget whom—said to-night that women would all vote Tory. Let them vote Tory. It is the most illiberal doctrine I ever heard to say you will only give people the vote if they vote as you wish; it is high and dry Toryism of the very worst school. I would give women the vote if I believed that at the next general election they would bring into power the gentlemen opposite, the multiple control, Lord Salisbury, the right hon. gentleman the member for Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith), and the noble lord the member for Woodstock (Lord R. Churchill), all joined together. ("And the Lord Mayor," and laughter.) I should not at all object to the Lord Mayor being one of the party; I think he would improve it. (Laughter.) What an extraordinary argument it is. I think my hon. friend the member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), with whom I sometimes agree, is troubled with the fear that women will be Tories. He seemed to have a horror of Tories, and he called upon us not to vote for this motion because the Tories are going to vote for it. What did he do on the dirty-trick day? (Loud laughter.) My hon. friend contends that the Tories voted with him and not he with the Tories. Now I want the Tories to vote with us to-night. Let us get rid of the fear of giving people their rights because they may favour a particular party. Let us "be just and fear not." Well, then, another great argument is that women don't want the franchise. I think that shows how bad our present system is. They have got so disgusted and depressed that they take no interest in politics. I think politics are the noblest pursuit anybody can follow. I regretted to hear my hon. friend the member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Bryce) say that there are no politicians amongst women. The hon. gentleman, however, contradicted himself just afterwards when he said they went up and down stumping the country. (Mr. Bryce: A very few.) Oh! a very few; I hope there will be more. Another great argument is that women can't fight, and that because they can't go and kill people they ought not to go and vote at elections. There is a text, "if any man will not work, neither shall he eat," and the text of the opponents of this clause is, "if any woman will not fight, neither shall she vote," and let us carry that out. Let us prevent the men who cannot fight from voting. What is to become of the hon. member for Merthyr (Mr. Richard) and me, I should like to know. (Laughter.) Well, that argument is of no avail. Another argument is brought forward—I found it in a very able pamphlet by one of the most able opponents of woman suffrage, Admiral Maxse. I read that pamphlet the other day, and it strengthened my belief in woman suffrage. Admiral Maxse said women hate war, but they adore the army. Well, that is what the Prime Minister does. (Opposition cheers, and laughter.) Surely you would not disfranchise him because of that? I believe that when women come to the study of great political questions they will be as much for peace as my hon. friend the member for Merthyr (Mr. Richard) is, or as I am, and I was surprised to hear my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) say how much he dreaded that a feminine alloy might enter into our policy. I wish there was a feminine alloy, an alloy of truth and humanity, in our policy. It will be a good day for England when that alloy does enter into our policy. But about this peace question and about the influence of women, I want to quote a greater authority than the hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham)—I want to read to the Committee a few sentences that were uttered by the Prime Minister in the Corn Exchange at Dalkeith, on November 26th, 1879. What did the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) say to the ladies who presented him with an address? He said: "I understand it to be your wish that I should say some words as to the particular share that ladies and that women may be said to have in the crisis of the day." The crisis of the day was an attempt to turn Disraeli out of power,

(Opposition cheers.) The right hon. gentleman went on to say: "I appeal to you in virtue of the common nature which runs through all, I speak to you ladies as women, and I do feel that the political crisis has to do not only with human interests at large, but especially with those interests which are most appropriate and ought to be most dear to you. The harder and sterner and drier lessons of political economy are little to your taste. You do not concern yourselves with abstract propositions. It is that side of politics which is associated with the heart of man that I must call your side of politics. When I look at the inscription which faces me on yonder gallery, I see the words 'Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.' . . . But of those three words, the one upon which I shall say a few words is peace." And then followed a most eloquent passage descriptive of the horrors of war, such as the right hon. gentleman has been making since. (Loud laughter.) The right hon. gentleman continued: "Do not suffer appeal to national pride to blind you to the dictates of justice. I am making no inappropriate demands, but am beseeching you as women to perform a duty which belongs to you, neglect of which would in some future time be to you a source of pain, but the accomplishment of which will serve to gild your future years with sweet remembrance." What is the use of the Prime Minister making demands of that sort on women if they are not fit to have an opinion upon politics? I say that out of his own mouth that sentence I have quoted only proves the case of my hon. friend the member for Stoke (Mr. Woodall). I have proved it so far as the gentlemen on the Treasury bench are concerned—I don't mean more than that, because I suppose they are all devoted followers of the Prime Minister. But now I come to the second part of my discourse. We are told that this is not the right time to introduce this question, and the Prime Minister said that my hon. friend had not suggested any plan for carrying out his proposal. I think it was not said with the usual clearness of the Prime Minister, because it seems to me that it is simplicity itself. (Hear, hear.) There would be no difficulty about it if it were passed and incorporated in the Act. Women would simply get on the register, if they had the qualification, exactly in the same way as men do. There cannot possibly be any ambiguity or doubt in the matter. But the reason why it is not the right time to go on with this matter is, says the Prime Minister, because it is intolerable to mix it up with purely political and party questions. But he says it is the largest social question which can possibly be raised. Well, surely a social question, and the largest social question, is one which a Liberal Ministry above all others ought to take up, and take up at once, or at any rate to have an opinion upon one way or the other. What did Mr. Disraeli say? He said in one of his earlier writings—and it is a sentence I am never tired of quoting—"The one duty of politics is to promote the social welfare of the people." What is the Liberal party for if it can't promote great social reform? The noble lord (Lord R. Churchill) knows that he learned a great deal at Birmingham. (Laughter.) He went down there—I read his speeches with delight—and he said, "Social questions are the questions of the future," and so they are, and when he is Prime Minister I hope he will remember that. (Renewed laughter.) But what is the Liberal party for if it can't make up its mind on these social questions? It seems to me it is useless, its sun is set, its day is done—the Lord Mayor: "Hear, hear"—and the sooner it is carried away and buried, with the Lord Mayor as chief mourner, the better. (Laughter.) I say it is upon the great social questions that the gentlemen I see sitting upon the Treasury bench are bound to have an opinion and to state that opinion and not to deal with them as they are dealing with this question to-night. Well now, Sir Arthur Otway, how are we to be coerced—some of us, not me? How are we to be coerced to vote against this great measure of freedom? Why, we are told that if we do vote for this clause, and if by a piece of good fortune we should carry it, there is a chance of the Bill being thrown up. I ask my hon. friends on this side of the House are they such children as to be frightened by shadows and phantoms and hobgoblins? Throw up the Bill because this clause is carried! I tell the right hon. and hon. gentlemen who form the Government—I tell them to their faces—that they dare not do anything of the kind. If they did throw up the Bill because this clause was carried, it would be a disgrace vast, exceeding, and abiding. Throw up the Bill which the Prime Minister has told us is a Bill to enfranchise capable citizens and we merely propose to add 500,000 more capable citizens

to the electorate! Why such a thing was never heard of. We merely propose to add a clause which will not impede the Bill's progress, but which, if carried by those wicked Tories who frighten my hon. friend the member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) so much, will smooth its progress to the realms of bliss—(laughter)—will make it more acceptable to the House of Lords. It must be remembered that this is a clause the principle of which, as the hon. member for Halifax stated to-night, has been already supported in this House by very nearly half of the Liberal party. I say that for a set of gentlemen who profess to represent the Liberal party to come down under those circumstances and throw up the Bill would be an act of treachery to freedom and to progress unexampled in the political history of this country. (Hear, hear.) They may get up and say what they like at that table, but I don't believe they would throw up the Bill because they dare not. There is another hobgoblin. They might resign. Awful idea! (Laughter.) I remember that Mr. Cobden said he never knew a change of Government that the people did not get something out of, and I don't know that we should not get something out of a change of Government even now. (Opposition cheers.) What would happen suppose the Tories came in? Why, they would do what they did in '67—they would over trump the right hon. gentleman. I have no doubt that if the noble lord was at the head of the Government along with the right hon. gentleman the member for North Devon (Sir S. Northcote), they would bring in a Bill to enfranchise every man, woman, and child. (Renewed laughter.) As for foreign policy the Tories might be worse, but it would be exceedingly difficult for them to be so. (Opposition cheers.) As to the Liberal party itself, what would happen if the Tories came in? I mean by the Liberal party all the patriots sitting round about me. It would be like a resurrection from the dead. From every platform, from every hall in the country we should have the shout for peace, retrenchment, and reform raised once more, and all of us Radicals would rise once again into life and liberty. The whole political life of the nation would be revived—we should be Liberals once more, instead of poor dummies sitting and voting here as we are bid. (Loud Opposition cheers.) I don't believe that all these dreadful things will happen; we know what the result of the division will be. But notwithstanding that I thank my hon. friend (Mr. Woodall) for what he has done. I am glad there is one man in this House who will stand by his guns. I am glad there is one man who will disregard spurious Radicals and real reactionaries—Whigs, prigs, and philosophers;—who will disregard ministerial maledictions. He may not win to-day. I am afraid he won't, but he will lay the foundation beyond doubt of ultimate success. I congratulate him on the prospect of that success; success of a measure calculated to purify, ennoble, and elevate the national life of this country, and to bring in its train those blessings which always attend a policy of freedom and of justice. (Cheers.)

MR. GOSCHEN.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Sir Arthur Otway, I scarcely know what is the proper tone to adopt in addressing the Committee after the speech of my hon. friend (Sir W. Lawson). It is a curious and significant fact that it seems impossible to continue a discussion upon the admission of women to the franchise without sometimes admitting the comic element. Much as we desire to be serious upon the subject, it appears that jokes can scarcely be kept out. Nevertheless it does appear to me that we have before us a very serious question indeed—one which we can scarcely afford to pass by with simply a sporting allusion to the great difficulties and considerations which surround the subject, and I venture to put it to the Committee that there are many members present who, judging from the speeches they have delivered or the cheers they have given, may well be considered to be unconscious of the clause which is now before us. The purport and scope of this clause seem to me to have been misconceived, because we have been assured over and over again that certain authorities—for instance, Lord Beaconsfield—have pronounced upon the clause, and we have been told who are to be enfranchised by it. My right hon. friend the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) began an enumeration of the classes to be enfranchised. The first are women householders, heads of families, and employers of labour, and so forth; and secondly, he mentioned widows, who, he appeared to think, were exceptionally fitted to vote, but why, I confess I am unable to understand. But I thought the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Stans-

feld) was going to proceed with his list, and that he was going to show to the Committee how the clause now before us differs *in toto* from previous proposals that have been submitted to the House in reference to the enfranchisement of women, and it will be a somewhat significant fact if, when hon. members opposite realise the full purport and scope of the clause, they should, in any large numbers, support it, unless, indeed, they support it as part of a Bill which they afterwards intend to reject. (Cheers.) But, if so, I shall have to tax hon. gentlemen opposite with cruelly playing with the feelings of the ladies. They will seem to be imitating the conduct of those naval and military officers who, in the colonies, will flirt to any extent with native ladies, because they know they will be ordered away before it really comes to business. So it appears to me with hon. members opposite. The noble lord the member for South Wilts (Viscount Folkestone) has stated in the most frank way his intention to vote in favour of woman suffrage in this Bill, which is going to be rejected by the Lords, but he said he was not going to commit himself to woman suffrage in the future. (Cheers.) Well, now, I submit to hon. members opposite whether upon a question of such gravity, for it is a grave question—(hear, hear)—it is right in this way to trifle with a great principle? (Cheers.) The noble lord (Lord John Manners) who opened the debate this evening is perfectly sincere. Other hon. members have always voted in favour of the enfranchisement of women, but up to what point?—so far as they were householders, so far as they were ratepayers, so far as they represented property. (Hear, hear.) Yes, but I understand that some hon. members opposite, and I expect the Lord Mayor, are going to vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Stoke, which is totally unconnected with property, which is totally unconnected with ratepaying, and totally unconnected with any qualifications which in motions submitted hitherto have always governed the case—(hear, hear)—and they are going to vote in favour—I wonder whether they will do so?—of a lodger franchise for unmarried women. (Hear, hear.) I trust that even at this hour of the night it is worth while to put before the House what is nearly the full purport of this motion. Lord Beaconsfield has been quoted, and I see the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition (Sir Stafford Northcote) is likely to take part in this debate. What Lord Beaconsfield said was this: "A woman having property ought now to have a vote in the country in which she can hold manorial courts, and in which she may sometimes act as churchwarden." "A woman having property!" but would he have been prepared to extend the franchise to young ladies who serve behind the counters at the establishments of Messrs. Spiers and Pond? (Laughter.) Would he have the lodger franchise for all the unmarried women in London and the large towns? It is entirely a new proposal. (Hear, hear.) Take the proposal brought forward in the House last year, "That in the opinion of the House it is expedient that the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women who possess the qualification which entitles them to vote, and who on all matters of local government have a right to vote." That is what hon. members have been pledged to hitherto. It was "as ratepayers," and all the arguments that have been used have been directed to that particular point. Now, the right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) was kind enough to make a special appeal to me, and he urged that this Bill would embody this most valuable principle—namely, that it would establish a household—a family vote. It was the family, he said, that was to vote. But it is not the proposal in the amendment before the House? It is a lodger vote—(cheers)—the family vote will not occur in one out of twenty cases. Where, in the case of women, the family vote occurs once there will be twenty other females admitted. Therefore, I say that the situation is entirely changed, and I should like to know when the Prime Minister quoted his figure of 500,000, who would probably be admitted under this clause, whether he was not thinking, as my impression is, merely of householders and ratepayers, and that that number did not include all the unmarried women—that army of unmarried women—who have left their homes, who do not live in their homes, for if they lived with their fathers and mothers they would not be enfranchised—for my impression is that the right hon. gentleman did not include these in the numbers he gave to the House. I ask this House, then, and I ask hon. members opposite, is not this a really startling proposal? It is a proposal for which they ought to vote in order, I suppose, to assert the principle of female suffrage. I do

not think it would be right for any hon. member to vote for such an amendment. I think it would be a most unprincipled thing to do so unless he fully realised the whole purport of the proposal. Well, sir, we are not clear upon one point—namely, how far married women are or are not to be admitted under this amendment. The fact seems to be that married women would be admitted—(hear, hear)—and that fagot votes might be created in favour of a wife. My hon. friend will correct me if I am wrong, but I understand that the hon. member would be prepared to amend this; but the hon. members have got to vote upon the amendment as it stands, therefore I will assume that married women will have a vote. (No, no.) I say yes. It is rather important to make this perfectly clear. Where there is simply an occupation franchise, I presume the vote of the woman will be merged in the vote of the man, but by property qualification, and under the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, votes will be created for women; and if that is so we shall in future have to make an *addendum* to the old text "These twain shall be one flesh." It will be "These twain shall be one flesh, but they shall have two votes." (Laughter.) We shall have two votes in one home, and husband and wife may both record their votes, possibly for the same candidates, possibly for opposite candidates. I cannot think that this House is prepared or desirous to go to this point, and we should have liked some more distinct declaration from the right hon. member for Halifax, or from those who have spoken in behalf of the enfranchisement of women, as to whether or not they mean that married women shall ultimately have a vote. That is important. But I will assume for the purposes of my argument that it is not intended to give them votes, but that the votes are to go to unmarried women who do not reside under the parental roof—not the householders, not the ratepayers—but to the emancipated spinsters and widows. I have had a correspondence—many members have—with my lady constituents on this point, and one of them has expressed her case so well that with the permission of the House I will read a short statement of her views. She says—and I think this will be cheered by my hon. friends who have spoken on behalf of women—"We ask to have a voice at least in the laws relating to women and children. It is a cruelty to frame laws binding on us in every event of life, laws which regulate our labour and our homes, and which come between a mother and her child, and not to permit us even an expression of opinion as a protest. Men cannot know what we want or how we feel on these points as well as we know ourselves." Yes, but how, then, are men going to inform themselves as to the opinion of women, if "men cannot know what we want, or how we feel on these points, as well as we know ourselves?" (Hear, hear.) Now, it appears to me that many of us have a most excellent source to which we can apply to obtain information as to what women think respecting the relations which ought to exist between mothers and children. (Hear, hear.) It appears to me that many of us know where to go when we want the views of women upon this or any other subject. And how can the emancipation and the enfranchisement of spinsters enable women to convey to men a better idea of what women want as regards their children? (Cheers and laughter.) It baffles my understanding. I can assure the House that it is not by way of a simple rhetorical argument that I must put this point. It lies at the whole root of the case. (Hear.) How are women to make their influence felt? Through their husbands, through their sons, their brothers, and through their friends. (Hear, hear.) To think that a collection of female voters will better be able to instruct us as to our duties in legislating for women is an assumption which, for my part, I am unwilling to make. It is said that women cannot now make their influence felt, and this was one of the points raised in the able speech of the hon. member for Stoke. It is alleged that they cannot make themselves heard, and that they have interests which they cannot follow up. I think, on the contrary, that they do make themselves heard. (Hear, hear.) I am bound to admit that my hon. friend was perfectly fair in saying that it was not the intention of this House to oppress women. I should think not. (Hear, hear.) The interests between men and women are not separate interests. The interest of the father is not a separate interest from the interest of the mother. We take a joint interest in our children, be they sons or daughters. We care for the education of the future of our daughters as much as we care for the education and the future of our sons. Now, I venture to think that women in that way, acting through their legitimate representatives, have ample opportunities

of being able to influence political men. (Hear, hear.) But women are to make their influence felt. Well, again, I ask what hon. member of the House is not, or has not been, more or less under the influence of a woman? ("Hear, hear" from Mr. Warton, and laughter.) We know the various classes of women who are able to have an influence in politics. Could we not see from the eloquence of my right hon. friend the member for Halifax how much he had been under the influence of the noble women whom he so well represents, and who made him eloquent on their behalf? (Hear, hear.) There are other women who may be called the sirens of the political boudoir, and very influential they are sometimes—perhaps quite as influential as the emancipated Amazons of the public platform. (Hear, hear.) On all sides we see the influence they bring to bear upon us, but what I object to, and what has been pointed out by other members, is this, that certain splendid examples of womanhood should be put before the House, and that it should be said that because they have so worthily discharged the duties and functions assigned to them, therefore you may enfranchise women generally and place the franchise in the hands of the whole sex. (Cheers.) We have put before us the case of Miss Octavia Hill. Well, Miss Octavia Hill has done, and is doing, splendid service in an unobtrusive manner, but I doubt whether she would be stronger, either with the public or with this House, if it were by the votes of female electors that she was obliged to make their influence felt. (Hear, hear.) It is not the polling booth, but it is through their action and action of this kind that women must influence legislation. Then, it is said—and the argument has been used so often that I will only allude to it for a single moment—that women are excellent poor law guardians, and that, therefore, we have before us a proof as to the capacity of the sex for high civic duties. I object to this view, and deny that we can argue from the parish or the municipality to the State. I say it is lowering the standard of civic duty. (Cheers.) We cannot think that because simply women are good poor law guardians they are, therefore, endowed with those qualities which are necessary to be citizens. Some of my hon. friends around me I cannot address my arguments to because they are in favour of as much flesh and blood as possible being admitted. We always recollect that women are flesh and blood. (A laugh.) To those who think that to thrust a voting paper into a hand of flesh and blood is enough to entrust a "capable citizen," of course arguments of mine are useless. But I would ask hon. members, particularly those below the gangway, whether they really believe that women are capable citizens. I would ask, "Would they be content if they had—as many of us have—a political association in their boroughs or counties, that the president, and the treasurer, and the secretary, and the various other officers of that association should be women?" (Hear, hear.) And if not, why not? I would ask again, "Would anybody be content to represent a constituency simply composed of women?" Would you trust political questions to them? Certainly not; and why not? Because in your hearts you do not believe that women are "capable citizens." (Cheers.) Well, sir, I do not think that it would be for the interest of women themselves that they should receive the franchise. (Renewed cheers.) I have shown what I believe as regards the means they have of making themselves heard; but why I object to this motion, among other reasons, is because it assumes an equality between men and women which never has existed, and which I believe never can exist. (Hear, hear.) I do not sympathise with the efforts of those who wish to reduce the difference between men and women to an indispensable *minimum* of difference. There is as it appears to me a tendency growing up which is striking more and more at the family, and which is encouraging an independence on the part of women which, however it may please certain sections, is dangerous to society in the future—(cheers)—and which cannot recommend itself to the sympathies of men who are anxious for the future happiness of the family and of society; and I do not believe it is good for the state. (Hear, hear.) I believe that manliness, strength, courage, and all the manly virtues are certainly quite as much required in the present day as they ever have been. (Cheers.) I do not wish that women should be educated up to our manly virtues—(hear, hear)—quite as little as I wish that we should be educated to that feminine tendency which the hon. baronet who has just spoken seemed to welcome. (Cheers.) Well, now, in conclusion, I would ask the House is this the moment, when we are proposing to make this gigantic experiment with regard to adding two millions to the electorate—I would

ask hon. members opposite is this the moment when they are going to try an experiment which certainly is quite as large as the experiment with regard to the reduction of the franchise, and is, in fact, a greater experiment. There have been cases of the universal suffrage for men, but we have had no experience to guide us as to the effect of what has properly been called "womanhood" suffrage. We have no experience in the matter, we have no statistics, we have nothing whatever to guide us; and, therefore, do not let hon. members think that in giving their vote they are simply expressing their own feelings at this moment. These movements gather strength by every thoughtless vote that is given upon them. (Cheers.) Let hon. members opposite know that it is in no party spirit that we make this appeal to them; let them think that the vote they give in favour of the female lodger franchise is in favour of the principle that words importing the masculine gender should include women for all purposes of the franchise, and let them weigh the full scope of that amendment before they give their vote for it, and see how it may complicate their votes in the future. (Hear, hear.) It is no light thing to give a vote for this motion. For my part I shall vote against it, because it seems to me to rest upon a false ideal of the civic duty of women, and because it rests upon a false ideal of all political aims. I do not wish to include women in our ranks when the responsibilities we have to bear are so great, but I trust the burden of the responsibility will still continue to rest upon the shoulders of men. (Cheers.)

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, who, on rising, was loudly cheered, said: I think it must have struck any one who has been in the habit of attending to the discussions which we have had for many years past on this subject, and who has listened to the present debate, that there has passed a great change over the attitude of those who are the promoters and those who are the opponents of the admission of women to the franchise. I remember in the early days when this subject used to arise the arguments by which the change was advocated and supported were very much of a sentimental and transcendental kind. We used to hear a great deal about the character of women, and the refreshing influence which the presence of women in the electorate would have upon the national character; while the arguments of the opponents purported to rest on grounds of a more or less practical character. But, to-night, it seems to me, we have shifted ground, and that, whereas the demand for the admission of woman to the suffrage has been based upon practical considerations, and is of a distinctly practical and moderate character, it is on the side of the objectors that we have had raised all those classes of considerations which I have ventured to designate as "transcendental." We have heard a great deal about not introducing the feminine character into our legislature; we have been told that we ought to cultivate the qualities of strength, manliness, and courage, and so forth, which are not the qualities which we usually associate with women. But these are not the arguments by which the practical proposal of the hon. member for Stoke, and the arguments introduced on his side, can be met. Nor are these answers which ought to be given to such arguments as I have heard, and, least of all, has the right hon. gentleman the member for Ripon (Mr. Goschen) a right to put us the question in a way in which it does not present itself to the House. The right hon. gentleman has endeavoured to fix upon the member for Stoke and his supporters the proposition that it is right to admit all the female lodgers to the suffrage. Now, that is not the position that is taken up by those who support the motion; it is not the position which is taken up by the hon. member for Stoke himself. Still less is it that taken up by others. Has the right hon. gentleman not seen upon the paper the notices that have been given by my hon. friend the member for Suffolk (Mr. Biddell), and, more particularly, by my hon. friend the member for Salisbury (Mr. Coleridge Kennard), that, in the event of the Committee accepting the second reading of this clause, it will be immediately called upon to give effect to it by the amendment to be proposed that women should not be entitled to be registered as voters under any lodger qualification in pursuance of this Act. Well, that directly traverses the argument which the right hon. gentleman has laid such stress upon. Whatever he may have to say as to what might have been advanced by the hon. member for Stoke, this, at least, he has no right to say, in the face of the universal disclaimer by those who are going to support this proposition, that we are the supporters of the female lodger franchise.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I know the right hon. gentleman would not wish to misrepresent me. I have not heard a single disclaimer. (Cheers.)

Sir S. NORTHGOTE: The right hon. gentleman may hear it now. If he had been attending to the course of the debate he would have seen that throughout the greater part of the speeches stress was laid entirely upon property qualification and the household qualification. The arguments were all drawn from that, and it is upon that that we are advocating our cause. (Cheers.) I say it is unfair of the right hon. gentleman to endeavour to present what is really a false issue to the House. (Loud cheers.) The Prime Minister shakes his head. He has presented a good many false issues to the House. (Cheers and laughter.) Now this question of the admission of women to the suffrage we have had before us, as we are reminded, for a good many years. I myself have continually supported or at least have never opposed the motions that have been made for that purpose. It cannot be supposed that in all those sixteen or seventeen years during which the question has been before us we have been so inattentive or so careless as not to consider the objections which are made, and which are made so plausibly against the proposition which is laid before us. We have continually had before us all these considerations with regard to married women and the difficulty as to their losing the vote after having had it before marriage; and the lodger difficulty. All these matters have had to be considered, and we have had to consider the arguments of a more sentimental character which have been brought to bear on the relations between the two sexes, and the effect which the influence of women might have on elections. We have considered all these matters, and I think we are pretty well satisfied with the answers that can be made to the complaints and suggestions that have been made. I will only say a word with regard to one of the principal of them, that of those who say that by giving this new right to women you are about to change the character of the woman, and in a way which is unfortunate, and which deteriorates her. Let me point out that everything you suggest as to the effect of making women politicians you have at present. At present women have power to take any amount of interest in elections short of one little act—that, the most important of all in one sense, but by no means the one which affects most the feminine character. You may have women taking part in your contests, joining committees, taking part in public meetings, making speeches and canvassing as any man would do throughout an election. To all that you make no objection; but when it comes to going into the polling booth to give a vote in a peaceable manner, protected by the ballot, then you say you demoralise and lower her character. Is that common sense? Is that the argument upon which such gentlemen as the right hon. member for Ripon (Mr. Goschen) rely? Does the right hon. gentleman mean to say that it is in the final act of going to vote that the whole influence of a woman's character depends? No it is not. (Cheers.) He knows perfectly well that it is not the final act of voting which determines the character of a woman. On the contrary it is the keeping of woman from taking a proper share in elections that is likely to make her more of an agitator than she is. (Cheers.) The point upon which we lay stress is that upon which the late Lord Beaconsfield laid stress, and upon which so much stress has been laid to-night, viz., that by excluding women you are excluding a large portion of the property owners of this country from representation, and from their share in the legislation. (Hear, hear.) You are now asked to introduce a certain number of women. We believe there will be 400,000 or 500,000 women who will be so admitted. The number is not difficult to recollect, because that is just the number of persons you are going to add in Ireland from the lowest population in that country. It is a moderate demand we make when we ask you to counterbalance the effect of admitting so large a body of men, as to whose qualifications you know so little, and who for the franchise you have no reason to believe have half as much knowledge of the real political questions of the day as most of the women of England have. And we invite you to say when you are going to admit these people as capable citizens, is it unreasonable to demand that the same privilege shall be given to 400,000 or 500,000 women who are at the heads of households and are managers of property in this country? We have been told that the tendency now is downwards towards something like manhood suffrage. If that is so it is time you should connect that with the enfranchisement of those who are representatives of a higher type than the great multitudes of the people to

whom you will have to give the franchise. The hon. member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Bryce) in his speech raised a question which I heard with surprise as coming from that quarter of the House. He said after all the great question was would the admission of women give us a better Parliament. That is not a point that he and his party have insisted upon, or will tolerate, when it comes to the question of the admission of a large class of male voters. It is proposed to admit 400,000 or 500,000 of the Irish peasantry, and if anyone got up and asked whether they would improve Parliament, there would be a howl from that part of the House. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Rye (Mr. Inderwick) told us that he had no more objection to women sitting in this House than to their voting. That is rather an illegitimate question to raise now, for there is no question of women sitting in this House. There would be strong arguments against that, but there is at present no proposal that they should do so. You have had the case of the clergy, who are qualified to vote, but not to sit or take part in Parliament; but the question, I think, was put in the most pertinent manner by the hon. member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). The hon. member brought us to the true point, now at issue. It is not now a question whether it is or is not desirable for women to be admitted to the franchise. It is the question whether we are to be allowed to discuss whether they should be admitted to the franchise, and to vote upon our convictions whether or not that privilege shall be granted. I believe a large proportion of gentlemen on the other side of the House have long ago committed themselves to the principle which so many of them are now going to vote against. (Cheers.) They have examined the question, and after having examined the question, and having satisfied themselves that it is a matter of right to vote in a particular way, they are now busying themselves to find excuses for getting off. (Hear, hear.) We have heard references made to the number of votes which gentlemen on the other side have given in former years. We have heard of a memorial presented to the Prime Minister last session signed by upwards of 100 of his followers in favour of making provision for woman's suffrage in any Bill brought forward for dealing with the representation of the people. Therefore the matter has not been sprung upon the Government. It was brought before them by a large number of their own supporters while they had still time to consider it; and not only that, but at the great meeting at Leeds, where the bases of a Reform Bill were settled by the advanced Liberals, the question of establishing woman's suffrage was brought forward and discussed, and accepted I believe by a unanimous vote. I speak in the presence of the hon. member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley); he can tell me whether I am correct. (Mr. J. Morley indicated assent.) Well, the matter has been put before the Liberal party, before the country, and before the Conservative party. It has been considered by us over and over again; it has been considered throughout the country, and has been brought especially under the notice of the present Government, and they have not thought it worth while to introduce it in their Bill. The Government may have had very fair reasons for not wishing to include this clause in their Bill in the first instance. I can well understand that they may have taken this view: "We have a large business to get through, and we may find difficulty in carrying the Bill, and if we have too many clauses we may find that we are unable to carry this clause, and that we must submit to the loss of valuable time, or to the loss of the Bill, for which we have made ourselves responsible." But this is not the position in which they are put by this proposition of one of their supporters. It embarrasses them in no way, as I conceive, if they will only allow it to be discussed on its merits, and let the judgment of the House be taken on the propriety of including it in the Bill in its final shape. If the House decides against it on its merits the Government will suffer no defeat. On the other hand, if the clause is carried I cannot see any reason why the Government should object to it, unless they object to the whole proposal on its merits. And if they do that they should say so. They have refused to take us into their confidence; they have not explained why they object to the clause; they have given us no other reason whatever for doing so than that it will imperil the Bill. When, however, you ask how it will imperil the Bill, you get no answer but the extraordinary answer of the Prime Minister that he does not choose to have any such clause in the Bill, and if it be included in it he is not sure that he will not throw up the Bill. (Hear, hear.) I do not know that he did not go farther and say, that he would throw up the Bill altogether—(hear, hear),—and

therefore, he puts on his supporters a strain which I am not surprised if many of them find too much to bear. As the hon. member for Northampton wittily said, it is the great offence of the hon. member for Stoke that he has been laying an egg in the Prime Minister's nest. (Laughter.) The right hon. gentleman deals with the measure very much in the spirit that used to be considered objectionable in olden times. He seems to say, "Am I not to do what I will with my own? This is my own Bill, and if I do not choose to put a clause in it, and if I say I will throw up the Bill if it is put in, you must take your orders accordingly." (Cheers.) That appears to show that the Bill is one man's Bill—(hear, hear);—that it is on the Prime Minister exclusively that the responsibility for the Bill rests; and that if we are opposing the Bill it is not to be held that we are opposing the will of the country, but that we are opposing the will of the right hon. gentleman. (Cheers.) And we cannot tell to what extent any of the proposals in the Bill have the real support of those sitting behind the Government, because we see in this case how much their strong and conscientious convictions are overborne by the vehemence and the dictatorial language of the Prime Minister. (Hear, hear.) How can we tell that the same spirit has not been engendered in them with regard to the Bill as a whole? (Cheers.) There is another point. The Prime Minister treats this Bill as if it were one in which there could not be admitted to be any change. If you change the Bill he implies that you destroy the Bill. ("No.") I know he did not say that, but that is the spirit shown. (Hear, hear.) Here is a clause of great importance proposed to be inserted, a clause which has long been in the contemplation of both sides of the House, a clause which fits entirely into the Bill and belongs to it in a proper way; but the Prime Minister comes down to the House and says: "I will not have this clause put in because I will not." (Cheers.) Not only does he come down and order his followers to vote against the clause because it is his good will and pleasure that they should, but he says that if by accident the clause should get into the Bill, he will throw up the Bill at once. (Hear, hear.) In fact, he treats this Bill very much as we would treat a Money Bill sent up to the House of Lords. If a Money Bill is sent up to them, the other House is free to reject it but not to change it. If they changed it in any degree this House rejects the Bill, and it is destroyed. I suppose that is the attitude to be assumed in regard to this Bill. If the Bill goes up to the House of Lords in the shape which the hon. member for Stoke wishes it to have, or if the House of Lords themselves were to introduce a clause into it to this effect, it will be at once upset and thrown aside by the Prime Minister. He will permit no change to be made in it. In what a position does that put the other House, if they are to be treated on the footing that they must pass without change of any sort the measure sent up to them? They are to be free to reject it, but not to make any alteration in it. That is a remarkable course for the Prime Minister to take; and it raises very peculiar feelings in one's mind as to his position. The right hon. gentleman has told us, and other hon. members have told us, that they do not consider this clause to be properly introduced now, because it is not a good opportunity for introducing the question. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it is the very best opportunity for dealing with it. (Hear, hear.) And for this reason, because you are going enormously to increase the electorate, and you therefore make the inequality as between men and women much greater than it was before, and that is why we say you ought to provide for the class of property in the hands of women, because you are going to sink it still lower in proportion in the balance by the large addition you are making to the franchise. Two arguments seem really to lie at the root of the objections to this clause. The one is that women as a body are too Conservative; and the other is that the clause is founded on the recognition of those rights of property which you wish to keep in the background. It may be an objection on the part of the Government that this clause would operate in favour of property, because it is, we know, with the greatest reluctance and difficulty that they have brought themselves to the length of recognising even the existing property franchises. It will be said "you are going to extend that property franchise if this amendment is carried." Well, I say that on that issue we are prepared to join, and we are prepared to maintain that it is a right thing, and that it is the duty of this House under these circumstances to make proper provision for those classes of property holders who are now without a vote. (Hear, hear.) I have no doubt that there are numbers of gentlemen here who have canvassed boroughs. They will have seen, from time to time, that after going

into two or three shops and asking for the votes of those who are the owners, they have come to one perhaps of the most important shops and have been told, "Oh, it is no use going in; there is no vote there. The owner is a woman." Such women are probably of education and of gentle character, who are perhaps living as widows and taking care of their families, and who have every right to be consulted as to who should be the man sent up to represent the constituency in which they live, to represent not only their own interest, but the interests also of those of whom they are taking care. (Hear, hear.) You are admitting masses of non-propertied classes and refusing the vote to these. That is the ground, the Conservative ground upon which we stand. That is the ground upon which Lord Beaconsfield stood. (Hear, hear.) We have adhered to that view for seventeen years, and that is the ground upon which we stand now. (Cheers.) Hon. gentlemen opposite will have to reconcile their own opinions and their own declarations upon former occasions with the unfortunate necessity in which the Prime Minister has endeavoured to place them. I have no advice but only sympathy to offer them. (Opposition cheers.) I can only hope that they will be able to reconcile their action to their conscience. But as for us, although there may not be perhaps a general assent, because there has always been a difference of opinion among us on the subject, I claim for those on this side of the House who have opposed female suffrage as well as for those who have hitherto supported us that liberty which I am sorry to see denied to those who sit opposite. (Cheers.)

MR. JOHN MORLEY.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I promise the Committee I will not detain them more than two or three minutes, but the right hon. baronet appears to suppose that those who on the whole agree with him on this issue as to the general principle and still find themselves unable to go into the lobby with him, must stand in need of sympathy. For my part, I do not feel the least necessity for it. Much has been said about the opportuneness of this amendment. I am myself, completely and fully, in practical politics an opportunist, and I find that those who are most loud against the doctrine are those who never deem it inopportune to attack their own party. So far as the Leeds Conference is concerned, the right hon. baronet has been perfectly accurate; but I believe that had the issue been put to that Conference as it stands to-night the vote would have been different. (Cheers and counter cheers.) I do not conceal from myself that there is a great and a perfect justification for the reluctance of the Government to encumber a Bill such as the present with a clause which opens up so momentous a subject, and deals with questions with which the Bill is not essentially concerned. In my opinion, the Government would be absolutely wanting in a sense of the gravity of their position if they, by a mere sudden side wind, made an enormous extension of the scope of this Bill. If the Government thought it expedient to make a change which, as both those who like it and those who dislike it agree, will create a social revolution, it was for them to introduce it as a deliberate proposition by itself. Those who are pressing the motion on the present occasion must either expect to carry it through or not to do so. If they do not, then it is abstract, idle, and unseasonable. If they do hope and expect to carry it, then they show that they had rather have no Franchise Bill at all than one which does not include women in its scope—in fact, that unless some half million of women are enfranchised, two million of men are to be left unfranchised. In spite of all the reproaches which have been addressed to me, I shall without any scruple vote against the proposition. So urgent and so important do I consider the object of the present Bill, and so resolute and earnest is the mind of the country upon it, that for my part I will allow no side question, however much interested I may be in it, to make me swerve from supporting an object of such paramount importance.

MR. STOREY.

Mr. STOREY: Sir, I do not at all agree with the remarks of my hon. friend the member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), who has just sat down. For my part I do not think that when he announced himself as an opportunist he spoke as a Radical ought to speak. We have seen a very remarkable political phenomenon to-night. The right hon. gentleman the member for Ripon (Mr. G. J. Goschen) has made a speech in which he opposed the admission to the franchise of 500,000 women, and his speech was received with

cheers from the Ministerialists. But it will be in the recollection of the Committee that three or four weeks ago the same right hon. gentleman delivered a speech in this House, in which he opposed the admission to the franchise of a large number of the men of the country, on which occasion his statements were received with cheers by hon. gentlemen opposite, and in grim silence by hon. members on these benches. I ask myself what is the explanation of that phenomenon, which I think is hardly creditable to the character of this Parliament, and I find that the reason of this is simply that, on the one occasion, the Ministry was decreeing the admission of men to the franchise, while, on the other occasion, that it was decreeing that women should not be admitted. I have been in favour for many years of admitting to the franchise as much flesh and blood as it might be possible to obtain. I am in favour of women having the franchise, and for very practical reasons, which I will briefly state to the Committee. (Cheers.) It has been urged against the admission of women to the suffrage that they are intellectually inferior to men, and I ask myself whether that is so. I have heard the same argument urged against the introduction of the agricultural labourer, and against the admission to the franchise of artizans in the towns fifteen years ago, and I say that the very reasons urged against their admission constitutes the real ground on which they ought to receive the franchise, because I observed that the moment the artizans were admitted there was a general disposition to elevate and improve their condition, and I believe that if you admit women to the franchise there will be the same attentive consideration, on the part of both Liberals and Conservatives, for the improvement of their position. I will give a second reason in support of this clause. The hon. member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Bryce) challenged us to produce a practical reason why women should have the franchise. Now, I have always struggled to promote three things since I became a politician, namely, peace, soberness, and education; and I know that if the women of England received the franchise it would constitute a powerful addition to the strength of the Radical party for the attainment of those objects. For these reasons I am in favour of giving the franchise to women. (Cheers.) So far as my hon. friend the member for Newcastle is concerned, I avow myself in opposition to him as an opportunist. I can understand Ministerialists being opportunists, and I can understand the opportunism of those passing along the dangerous road to office. But what I desire to see here below the gangway is a Radical party which prefers, on all occasions, principles to opportunism—a party which will vote against the Ministry when it believes that Ministry to be in the wrong. (Cheers.)

MR. H. C. RAIKES.

MR. H. C. RAIKES: Sir Arthur Otway, I desire to express an opinion which I think is shared by many members of the House as to the embarrassing position in which those who have hitherto opposed the principle embodied in the clause of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent have been placed by a particular turn of the argument used by the Prime Minister in dealing with it on Tuesday last. The right hon. gentleman on that occasion addressed his observations almost entirely to those who are in favour of this Bill and who are supporters of the Government, and rather left out from his consideration those who sit on this side of the House who do not support the Bill and who do not support the Government. If this question is put to the House as one of confidence in Her Majesty's Government—if it is put to the House as a question of "aye" or "no" in favour of this Bill, I am bound to say that it puts a very great difficulty in the way of many who would otherwise be anxious to oppose this proposal and support the Government in resisting it, and I know that this feeling has been largely prevalent on this side of the House. Although I do not love the Bill, and although I am not particularly anxious to maintain Her Majesty's Government in power, I am unwilling, either for the purpose of embarrassing the Government or of defeating this Bill, to vote for a proposal which I believe to be subversive of the whole social system of the country. But I do not rise only to say that because the position I have always taken with regard to this question will have made it clear as to the line I should like to take in dealing with this particular proposal. But I do wish to know whether we have heard the last word on this subject from the Ministerial bench. I see upon that bench the Secretary to the Treasury and the Postmaster-General, and I know that the eyes of this House, the eyes of

all England, and especially of those confiding women whose confidence has been placed in them, are turned upon those members of the Government, who will be expected to make some explanation of the course they are about to take on the present occasion. A politician, as we know, is supposed to have a supple conscience, but it was always believed that there were two men in whom women could trust—the right hon. gentleman the Postmaster-General and the hon. gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. In them, at least, their old associates and present opponents have been prepared to place a confidence which, it appears, they have not deserved. I believe that when the Prime Minister spoke of encumbering this Bill, he had to balance in his mind considerations which must have occurred to him as to the result which might follow from the opposition of gentlemen who sit upon the Treasury bench; he had to balance the Attorney-General against the Secretary to the Treasury and the Postmaster-General, and the right hon. gentleman, I think, very wisely decided that the Attorney-General was worth more than the two hon. gentlemen together. And I wish to render this tribute to the Attorney-General because I think that of all the members of this House he has pursued, with regard to this question, a most intelligible and a most conscientious course; he has always put his foot down, so to speak, in reference to this question, and I have no doubt that if its principle had been accepted by the Government, it would have cost the Prime Minister the services of one of his most valuable adherents. In this matter the Prime Minister knew with whom he was to deal; he knew the hon. and learned gentleman was in earnest, and he knew how great was the earnestness and rectitude of the Postmaster-General and the Secretary to the Treasury. It is upon that balance, struck by the Government, that the fate of this amendment is to be decided, and I only hope that before the division is taken we shall hear the reasons which have led those two hon. gentlemen to take up a position opposed to their principles.

MR. ILLINGWORTH.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Sir, I confess myself in favour of the enfranchisement of those women who occupy the responsible position which in men confers the vote, though I need not apologise for intervening between the Committee and the division. I think we may have a test of the disposition of the House as regards this question by a momentary reference to the division which took place last year, and from which it is clear that about one-half of the members of the Liberal party are prepared to give the vote to women householders. But what was the position of the Conservative party when this question was last tested? Including pairs, twenty-nine members of the great Conservative party were in favour of the enfranchisement of women. In view of that fact I feel bound to ask myself what is the cause of the sudden conversion of that party? I am quite satisfied that if the Prime Minister and the Government had left this an open question there would not have been the tenth part of the zeal which we have seen to-night on the opposite benches. And I would say one word to the women of England with whom I have been associated in pushing forward this question, namely, that they should beware of what will be the outcome of this sudden conversion. The object of the Conservative party, I am convinced, is not to secure to women the vote; it is to destroy the Bill which will enfranchise the men of this country. I do not hesitate to confess that I have been waiting for the speech of the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition before I finally decided as to how I should vote on this occasion: if I had been able to gather from him that the inclusion of women in the proposal of the Government would in his judgment have insured the passing of the Bill in another place, then, sir, in spite of the difficulty in my path, I should have been prepared to vote for the motion of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent. But it has been made manifest by his silence on this point, and by the speeches of the noble lord the member for Wiltshire, and the hon. member for Bridport (Mr. Warton), that the support offered to that motion is nothing but a trick and a trap which has been laid in order that the great Liberal party may fall into it, and, therefore, on this occasion, no more than when my hon. friend the member for Carlisle (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) brought forward a vote of censure on the Government, will I be a party to go into the same lobby in support of a motion with hon. members who vote for it with a diametrically opposite motive and intention. Sir, I shall vote with the Government, I confess, with reluctance; but I

am satisfied that in so doing I shall be meeting the wishes of the great majority of my own constituents, who I believe would infinitely prefer that this question should be postponed for a time rather than that we should jeopardise or destroy a great measure of enfranchisement. I have no doubt as to the eventual realisation of the object which the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent has in view; because with the Prime Minister I believe that whatever is just, expedient, and necessary will be more easily secured for the people of the country when this great measure of the enfranchisement of two million people shall be placed upon the statute book.

Question put: "That this clause be read a second time."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 135; Noes, 271; majority, 136.

Motion negatived.

Motion made and question proposed: "That the Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again." (Mr. W. E. Gladstone.)

Put and agreed to.

THE DIVISION LIST.

Numb. 117.

Representation of the People Bill,—considered in Committee:—
(In the Committee.)

New clause:—

(Extension of suffrage to women.)

(For all purposes connected with, and having reference to, the right to vote at Parliamentary elections, words in the Representation of the People Acts importing the masculine gender include women:—)(Mr. Woodall:—

Question again proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."—

Question put:—The Committee divided; Ayes 135, Noes 271.

AYES.

Alexander, Major-General
Allen, W. S. (Newc.-under-Lyme)
Arnold, Arthur
Ashmead-Bartlett, Ellis
Barne, Fred St. John Newdegate
Bateson, Sir Thomas
Beach, W. W. Bramst. (Hants, N.)
Beetive, Earl of
Biggar, Joseph Gillis
Blackburne, Col. John Ireland
Blake, John Aloysius
Boord, Thomas William
Bourke, Right Hon Robert
Bright, Jacob (Manchester)
Brooks W. Cunliffe (Chesh. E.)
Bruce, Sir H. Harvey (Coleraine)
Bruce, Hon. Thomas (Portsmouth)
Bulwer, James Redford
Buxton, Sir Robt. J. (Norfolk, S.E.)
Caine, William Sproston
Cameron, Charles (Glasgow)
Cameron, Donald (Inverness)
Carbutt, Edward H.
Christie, William Langham
Compton, Francis
Courtauld, George
Cowan, Joseph
Cubitt, Rt. Hon. George
Dickson, Major Alex. G. (Dover)
Dickson, Thomas A. (Tyrone)
Dixon-Hartland, Fred Dixon
Donaldson-Hudson, Charles
Douglas, A. Akers-
Eaton, Henry William
Ecroyd, William Farrer
Elliott, G. W. (Northallerton)
Elliott, Sir George (Durham, N.)
Elton, Charles Isaac
Ewing, Archibald Orr
Fellows, William Henry
Finch, George H.
Finch-Hatton, Hon. Murray E. G.
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Flower, Cyril
Folkestone, Viscount
Forester, Cecil Theodore Weld
Fowler, Rob. Nicholas (London)
French-Brewster, Robert A. B.
Gathorne-Hardy, Hon. John S.
Giffard, Sir Hardinge Stanley
Giles, Alfred
Gore-Langton, Wm. Stephen
Gorst, John Eldon
Gourley, Edward Temperley
Grantham, William
Gray, Edmond Dwyer (Carlow)
Greer, Thomas
Halsey, Thomas Frederick
Hill, Lord Arthur Wm. (Down)
Hill, Alex. Staveley (Staff. W.)
Holland, John Robert (Brighton)
Hopwood, Charles Henry
Houldsworth, William Henry
Kennard, Coleridge J. (N. Sarum)
King-Harman, Edward Robert
Knight, Frederick Winn
Knightley, Sir Rainald
Lawrance, J. Compton (Linc. S.)
Lawrence, Sir Trevor (Sur. M.)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid
Lea, Thomas (Donegal)
Leamy, Edmund
Lechmere, Sir Edmund A. H.
Lennox, Lord Henry G.
Lever, John Orrell
Long, Walter Hume
Lowther, Hon. W. (Westmoreland)
Lusk, Sir Andrew
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, J. W. Ellison
Mackintosh, Charles Fraser
Macnaghten, Edward
McCarthy, Justin
M'Laren, Charles B. B.
Manners, Rt. Hon. Lord John
Master, Thos. William Chester
Miles, Sir Philip J. W. (Som. E.)
Milner, Sir Frederick
Morgan, Hon. Fred. (Monm. Co.)
Moss, Richard

Mulholland, John
Nicholson, W. Newzam (Newark)
Nolan, Colonel
Northcote, Henry S. (Exeter)
Northcote, Rt. Hon. Sir S. (Devon)
O'Connor, A. (Queen's Co.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Galway)
Patrick, Robert Wm. Cochran-
Peel, Rt. Hon. Sir Robert
Pemberton, Edward Leigh
Pennington, Frederick
Phipps, Pickering (Northamp. S.)
Price, Captain (Devonport)
Pugh, Lewis Pugh
Puleston, John Henry
Rankin, James
Read, Clare Sewell (Norf. W. D.)
Richard, Henry
Rolls, John Allan
St. Aubyn, Walter M. (Heston)
Slater-Booth, Rt. Hon. George
Scott, Montagu D.
Severne, John Edmund

Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Woodall and Baron Henry De Worms.

NOES.

Aceland, Rt. Hon. Sir T. Dyke (Dev.)
Agnew, William
Ainsworth, David
Allman, Richard Lane
Anderson, George
Armitage, Benjamin
Armitstead, George
Asher, Alexander
Ashley, Hon. Evelyn M.
Baldwin, Enoch
Balfour, Sir Geo. (Kincardinesh.)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. J. Blair (Clackm.)
Balfour, J. Spencer (Tamworth)
Barclay, James William
Baring, Viscount (Winchester)
Barnes, Alfred
Barran, John
Bass, Sir Arthur (Staffordsh. E.)
Bass, Hamar (Tamworth)
Baxter, Rt. Hon. William Edward
Beaumont, Wentworth Blackett
Biddulph, Michael
Birkebeck, Edward
Blennerhassett, Sir Rowland
Bolton, Joseph Cheney
Borlase, William Copeland
Brand, Hon. Henry Robert
Brassey, Henry A. (Sandwich)
Brassey, Sir Thomas (Hastings)
Briggs, William Edward
Brinton, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brogden, Alexander
Brooks, Maurice (Dublin)
Brown, Alexander Hargreaves
Bruce, Rt. Hon. Lord Chas. (Marl.)
Bruce, Hon. R. Preston (Fife)
Bryce, James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buszard, Marston Clarke
Buxton, Sydney C. (Peterboro.)
Campbell, Lord Colin (Argyllsh.)
Lusk, Sir Geo. (Kirkcaldy)
Campbell, Richard F. F. (Ayr)
Campbell-Bannerman, Henry
Cartwright, William C.
Causton, Richard Knight
Cavendish, Lord Edward
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. Joseph
Chambers, Sir Thomas
Cheetham, John Frederick
Childers, Rt. Hon. Hugh C. E.
Clark, Stewart (Paisley)
Clarke, J. Creemer (Abingdon)
Clive, Col. Hon. G. Windsor
Cohen, Arthur (Southwark)
Colebrooke, Sir Thomas Edward
Collings, Jesse
Collins, Eugene (Kinsale)
Collins, Thomas (Knaresboro')
Colman, Jeremiah James
Commins, Andrew
Coope, Octavius E.
Corbett, John (Droitwich)
Cotes, Charles Cecil
Cowper, Hon. Henry F.
Craig, William Young
Cropper, James
Cross, John Kynaston (Bolton)
Currie, Sir Donald
Dalrymple, Charles
Davenport, H. T. (Staffords. N.)
Davey, Horace
Davies, Richard (Anglesey)
Dillwyn, Lewis Llewelyn
Dodds, Joseph
Dodson, Rt. Hon. John George
Duckham, Thomas
Duff, Robert William
Dundas, Hon. John Charles
Earp, Thomas
Ebrington, Viscount
Eckersley, Nathaniel
Edwards, Henry (Weymouth)
Egerton, Hon. Alg. Fulke (Wigan)
Egerton, Adm. Hon. F. (Derby, E.)
Elliot, Hon. Art. R. D. (Roxburghsh.)
Evans, Thomas William
Fairbairn, Sir Andrew
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, Robert
Ffolkes, Sir Wm. Howell Browne
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Fitzwilliam, Hon. H. W. (York)
Fitzwilliam, Hon. W. J. (Peterbo.)
Floyer, John
Foljambe, Cecil G. S. (Notts, N.)
Foljambe, Fran. J. S. (Retford, E.)
Forster, Sir Charles (Walsall)
Forster, Rt. Hon. W. E. (Bradford)
Fort, Richard
Foster, Wm. Hen. (Bridgnorth)
Fowler, Henry H. (Wolverh'n)
Fowler, William (Cambridge)
Fry, Lewis (Bristol)
Fry, Theodore (Darlington)
Gabbett, Daniel FitzGerald
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E.
Gladstone, Herbert J. (Leeds)
Gladstone, Wm. Hen. (Worc. E.)

Glyn, Hon. Sidney Carr
Gordon, Sir Alex. (Aberdeen, E.)
Goschen, Rt. Hon. Geo. Joachim
Grafton, Frederick William
Grant, Andrew (Leith)
Grant, Daniel, (Marylebone)
Grant, Sir G. Macpherson (Elgin)
Grey, Albert H. G. (Northum. S.)
Guest, Montague John
Gurdon, Robert Thornhagh
Hamilton, J. Glen. C. (Lanark, S.)
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir W. (Derby)
Hardcastle, Joseph Alfred
Hartington, Marquis of
Hastings, George Woodvatt
Hay, Rt. Hon. Admiral Sir J. C. D.
Hayter, Sir Arthur Divett
Heneage, Edward
Herbert, Hon. Sidney
Herschell, Sir Farrer
Hibbert, John Tomlinson
Holden, Isaac
Holland, Samuel (Merionethshire)
Hope, Rt. Hon. Alex. Beresford
Howard, E. Stafford (Cumb. E.)
Howard, Geo. Jas. (Cumb. E.)
Howard, James, (Bedfordshire)
Hubbard, Rt. Hon. John
Illingworth, Alfred
Ince, Henry Bret
Inderwick, Frederick Andrew
James, Charles (Merthyr Tydvil)
James, Sir Henry (Taunton)
James, Walter H. (Gateshead)
Jenkins, David James (Penryn)
Jenkins, Sir John J. (Carmar.)
Johnson, Edward (Exeter)
Jones-Parry, Love
Kennard, Colonel (Lymington)
Kennaway, Sir John Henry
Kenny, Matthew Joseph
Labouchere, Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lawrence, Sir J. Clarke (Lamb.)
Lawrence, William (London)
Leake, Robert
Leatham, Edw. Aldam (Hudd.)
Lee, Henry (Southampton)
Lefevre, Rt. Hn. Geo. John Shaw
Leigh, Hn. Gilbert H. C. (War. S.)
Lloyd, Morgan
Macfarlane, Donald Horne
Mackie, Robert Bownas
Macliver, Peter Stewart
McArthur, Alexander (Leic.)
McArthur, Sir Wm. (Lambeth)
McCoan, James Carlile
McIntyre, Aeneas John
McKenna, Sir Joseph Neal
McMinnie, John Gordon
Maitland, William Fuller
Mappin, Frederick Thorpe
Marjoribanks, Edward
Martin, R. B. (Tewkesbury)
Maskelyne, M. H. Story-
Mason, Hugh
Maxwell-Heron, J. (Kirkcud.)
Mellor, John William
Molloy, Bernard C.
Monk, Charles James
Moreton, Lord
Morgan, Rt. Hn. G. O. (Denbighs.)
Morley, Arnold (Nottingham)
Morley, John (Newcastle)
Morley, Samuel (Bristol)
Mowbray, Rt. Hon. Sir John R.
Mundella, Rt. Hn. Anthony John
Newdegate, Charles Newdigate
Noel, Ernest
Norwood, Charles Morgan
O'Beirne, Colonel

O'Brien, Sir Patrick (King's Co.)
O'Gorman Mahon, Colonel The
Onslow, Denzil
Paget, Richard Horner (Som. M.)
Paget, Thos. Tertius (Leic. S.)
Palmer, Charles Mark (Dur. Co.)
Palmer, George (Reading)
Parker, Charles Stuart
Pease, Arthur (Whitby)
Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Dur. S.)
Peddie, John Dick
Pender, John
Phillips, R. Needham
Phipps, Chas. N. P. (Westbury)
Playfair, Rt. Hon. Sir Lyon
Portman, Hon. W. Henry B.
Potter, Thomas Bayley
Powell, W. Rice H.
Pulley, Joseph
Raikes, Rt. Hon. Henry Cecil
Ralli, Pandeli
Ramsay, John
Rathbone, William
Reed, Sir Edw. James (Cardiff)
Repton, George William
Roberts, John
Roe, Thomas
Rogers, James Edwin Thorold
Rothschild, Sir Nath. M. de
Roundell, Charles Savile
Russell, Charles (Dundalk)
Russell, Geo. W. E. (Aylesbury)
Russell, Lord Arthur (Tavistock)
Rylands, Peter
St. Aubyn, Sir John (Corn. W.)
Samuelson, Bernhard (Banbury)
Seely, Charles (Lincoln)
Sellar, Alexander Craig
Shaw, Thomas (Halifax)
Sheil, Edward
Sheridan, Henry B.
Shield, Hugh
Simon, Mr. Serjeant
Smith, Abel (Herts.)
Smith, Eustace (Tynemouth)
Smith, Lt.-Col. G. (Wycombe)
Smith, Samuel (Liverpool)
Stafford, Marquis of
Stanley, Hn. E. Lyulph (Oldham)
Stanton, Walter John
Lloyd, Morgan
Stevenson, James Cochran
Talbot, Chris. R. M. (Glam.)
Talbot, John Gilbert (Oxf. Univ.)
Tavistock, Marquis of
Tennant, Charles
Thompson, Thos. C. (Durh. City)
Tillett, Jacob Henry
Tracy, Hon. F. S. A. Hanbury-
Trevelyan, Rt. Hon. George Otto
Vivian, Arthur P. (Cornwall, W.)
Vivian, Sir Hen. Hussey (Glam.)
Waddy, Samuel Danks
Walker, Samuel
Walter, John
Waterlow, Sir Sydney
Watney, James
Waugh, Edward
Webster, Dr. John
Whitbread, Samuel
Whitworth, Benjamin
Wiggin, Henry
Williamson, Stephen
Willis, William
Wills, William Henry
Wilson, Chas. Hy. (Kings on H.)
Wilson, Isaac (Middlesborough)
Wilson, Sir Matthew (Yk. W. R.)
Wodehouse, Edmond Robert
Woolf, Sidney (Pontefract)
Wroughton, Philip

Tellers for the Noes, Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington.

MEMORIAL TO MR. GLADSTONE RESPECTING MR. WOODALL'S CLAUSE.

A memorial from seventy-nine Liberal members of Parliament was forwarded to Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Woodall with the following letter:—

Queen Anne's Mansion, St. James' Park, S.W.,
June 9th, 1884.

Dear Mr. Gladstone,—Very respectfully and very earnestly I commend the accompanying memorial to your favourable consideration.

I wish I could convey to you any idea of the wide and deep interest which is felt in regard to this claim of women householders to the Parliamentary franchise, and to the importance of its recognition in the Bill now before Parliament.

I would it were possible for me to tell you how confident is the belief (in spite of what has been said to the contrary) that you will not deny a hearing to a plea the abstract justice of which few deny, and which so many regard as invincible, under what you have termed the principal and central idea of your great measure of enfranchisement.

The appeal as you will see is strongly supported; it is made in the hope that you will regard it as at once just and reasonable, and believing that your favourable assent is consistent with good policy, I remain, dear Mr. Gladstone, faithfully yours,

(Signed) WM. WOODALL.

The memorial was as follows:—

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

The undersigned members of Parliament respectfully represent:

That the Franchise Bill being now in Committee a favourable opportunity is afforded for the discussion of the amendment for extending its provisions to women, of which notice has been given by Mr. Woodall.

That your memorialists have heard a rumour that Her Majesty's Government have declared against allowing the question to be discussed and decided on its merits on the ground that the adoption of the proposal might endanger the Bill.

That your memorialists are of opinion that the claim of women who are householders and ratepayers is just and reasonable, and that the time when the House is engaged in amending the law relating to the representation of the people is the proper time for the consideration of this claim.

That during the discussion in Committee on the Reform Bill of 1867, an amendment for extending its provisions to women was introduced by Mr. J. S. Mill, and that on that occasion the Government of the day offered no opposition to the full and free discussion of the question, and placed no restriction on the free exercise of the judgment of members of their party as to the manner in which they should vote. The tellers appointed against Mr. Mill's motion were not even the Government tellers.

That your memorialists earnestly pray that the precedent so instituted may be followed on the present occasion, and that the clause proposed by Mr. Woodall may be submitted to the free and unbiassed decision of the House on its own merits.

They desire earnestly to express their conviction that the course of allowing the question to be an open one, on which the Government is prepared to accept the decision of the House, cannot possibly endanger or prejudice the Franchise Bill. In connection with this your memorialists would press on your attention the fact that Mr. Woodall's amendment is in the form of a new clause, and would not therefore come under discussion until the Bill as it stands has passed through Committee.

Wm. Agnew (S. E. Lancashire)	W. S. Caine (Scarborough)
W. S. Allen (Newcastle-u.-Lyme)	Charles Cameron (Glasgow)
George Anderson (Glasgow)	E. H. Carbutt (Monmouth Dist.)
Benjamin Armitage (Salford)	Stewart Clark (Paisley)
Arthur Arnold (Salford)	J. C. Clarke (Abingdon)
J. Spencer Balfour (Tamworth)	George Courtauld (Maldon)
James W. Barclay (Forfarshire)	Leonard H. Courtney (Liskeard)
A. Barnes (Derbyshire, E.)	J. Cowen (Newcastle-on-Tyne)
J. R. Blake (Waterford Co.)	David Davies (Cardigan, &c.)
R. P. Blennerhassett (Kerry)	James Dickson (Dungannon)
Jacob Bright (Manchester)	Thomas A. Dickson (Tyrone)
Thomas Burt (Morpeth)	Henry Fawcett (Hackney)

De Ferrieres (Cheltenham)
W. Findlater (Monaghan)
J. B. Firth (Chelsea)
Lewis Fry (Bristol)
Theodore Fry (Darlington)
Edw. T. Gourley (Sunderland)
Albert Grey (Northumberland, S.)
Daniel Gray (Marylebone)
G. W. Hastings (E. Worcestersh.)
Frank Henderson (Dundee)
I. Holden (Yorks, W. R., N. Div.)
John R. Hollond (Brighton)
C. H. Hopwood (Stockport)
J. J. Jenkins (Carmarthen Dis.)
John Kinnear, D.D. (Donegal)
Wilfred Lawson (Carlisle)
Thos. Lea (Donegal)
Robert Leake (S. E. Lancashire)
W. Henry Leatham, (York, W. R., S. Div.)
Andrew Lusk (Finsbury)
C. Fraser Mackintosh (Inverness, Dist.)
P. S. Macliver (Plymouth)
A. McArthur (Leicester)
W. McArthur (Lambeth)
Peter McLagan (Linlithgow)
Charles McLaren (Stafford)
Samuel Morley (Bristol)

Geo. Palmer (Reading)
R. D. Peddie (Kilmarnock, Dist.)
Fredk. Pennington (Stockport)
W. H. Powell (Carmarthenshire)
L. M. Pugh (Cardiganshire)
Henry Richard (Merthyr)
Thos. Roe (Derby)
Henry B. Samuelson (Frome)
Thomas Shaw (Halifax)
Henry B. Sheridan (Dudley)
Jno. Simon (Dewsbury)
John Slagg (Manchester)
T. Eustace Smith (Tynemouth)
C. R. Spencer (Northampton, N.)
Jas. Stansfeld (Halifax)
S. Storey (Sunderland)
H. Villiers Stuart (Waterford Co.)
William Summers (Stalybridge)
P. A. Taylor (Leicester)
T. C. Thompson (Durham Dist.)
John P. Thomasson (Bolton)
C. P. Villiers (Wolverhampton)
E. W. Watkin (Hythe)
Benj. Whitworth (Drogheda)
W. H. Wills (Coventry)
S. C. Evans Williams (Radnor Dist.)
W. Woodall (Stoke-on-Trent)
S. Woolf (Pontefract)

Mr. Gladstone sent the following letter to Mr. Woodall in reply to the memorial:—

10, Downing-street, June 10th.

Dear Mr. Woodall,—In acknowledging the receipt of your letter let me say that I am very sensible of the kindness of its form, of the singleness of your motives, of your thorough attachment to the Franchise Bill, of the weight due to the signatures you have placed before me, and of the just title which your subject possesses to full consideration at the proper time. But the question with what subjects, viewing the actual state of business and of parties, we can afford to deal in and by the Franchise Bill is a question in regard to which the undivided responsibility rests with the Government, and cannot be devolved by them upon any section, however respected, of the House of Commons. They have introduced into the Bill as much as, in their opinion, it can safely carry. The introduction of what it cannot safely carry endangers a measure which the heart and mind of the country alike desire and assent to. Such introduction would, therefore, on our part be a breach of the duty to the Bill and to the nation.—Believe me, yours, &c.,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 13th inst., a specially convened and well-attended meeting of the General Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in the large room of the offices, at Parliament-street, Westminster. At the commencement of the proceedings, Miss FRANCES POWER COBBE presided, and amongst those present were Mr. Woodall, M.P., Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., M.P., Mr. W. H. Leatham, M.P., Mr. C. B. McLaren, M.P., Mr. Blennerhassett, M.P., Mr. Courtauld, M.P., Mr. Coleridge Kennard, M.P., Sir Richard Temple, Miss Lydia Becker, Mrs. Hallett, Mrs. Scatcherd (Leeds), Miss Sharman Crawford, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. C. B. McLaren, &c.

Miss COBBE said their first duty was to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Woodall for his very able advocacy of their cause in the House of Commons on the previous night. (Applause.) It was a cruel disappointment for them to find from the speech of Mr. Gladstone that the first claims of hundreds of thousands of women to Parliamentary representation were to be set aside, and were not even to be listened to when the long-anticipated time for action came. (Hear, hear.) There was surely no stronger proof than an unrepresented class found the utmost difficulty in obtaining a fair hearing. This should, however, make them all the more grateful, and they were more profoundly grateful than would probably ever be known,

to their friends in Parliament who remained steadfast and loyal, especially to Mr. Woodall, for his eloquent and powerful championship. (Applause.)

The motion having been cordially agreed to,

Mr. WOODALL, after expressing his acknowledgments, said: And now, ladies, perhaps this is not the occasion to enter minutely into the precise position politically which we occupy at the present moment. That will be the subject for subsequent consideration; at the same time I may say that of course it is impossible to over-estimate the difficulties of our present position. Mr. Gladstone's appeal was made in very forcible terms, and in a way which, as it was intended to do, has had the effect of very greatly impressing those of his supporters who are favourable to your cause. What will be the numerical result in the division it is of course exceedingly difficult precisely to forecast. On the other hand I think it is only fair to say that Mr. Gladstone did contrive to incorporate in his speech yesterday as much almost as was hoped for with regard to the position which the question might occupy on a future occasion. Of course, as you know, he carefully abstained from pledging his own action; and, although I know that there are different views with regard to the exact effect of what he said, I am bound to say that in the main I regard some points in his speech as rather encouraging for the future. I say that because some of our friends thought yesterday of opening a sort of informal negotiation with a view of eliciting from Mr. Gladstone some undertaking which would as it were form a bridge for those friends of our movement who were disposed to avoid anything which might seem to be embarrassing to the Government. I do think Mr. Gladstone loyally said as much, or nearly as much, as was expected from him on that point. I think it only fair to notice this as one encouraging incident in what is in the main a discouraging position.

Mr. WOODALL was then voted to the chair, and called upon Miss Becker, who he said would move the following series of resolutions:—

"1. That the claim of duly qualified women to the exercise of the suffrage having been continuously presented before Parliament and the country since the Reform Bill of 1867, this meeting is of opinion that the time when the Legislature is again engaged in amending the law relating to the representation of the people is the proper time for the consideration of this claim.

"2. That this meeting heartily approves of the amendment which Mr. Woodall has moved in Committee on the Franchise Bill for extending its provisions to duly qualified women, and pledge themselves to support his action by every means in their power.

"3. That they have heard with astonishment that Her Majesty's Government refuse to allow this amendment to be discussed on its merits and to be decided by the free exercise of the judgment of members of the House of Commons, but that the Government require their supporters to refrain from such free exercise of their judgment on the alleged ground that the adoption of the proposal would endanger the Franchise Bill.

"4. That in the opinion of this meeting the exercise of such pressure appears to be an infringement of the privileges of a free Parliament and an aggression on the rights of the people. They hold that all sections of the community, whether electors or non-electors, have an indefeasible right to have matters affecting their interests submitted to the unbiassed judgment, and decided by the unfettered discretion of the members sent to represent them in Parliament.

"5. That a declaration signed by 110 Liberal members of the House of Commons was presented last session to Mr. Gladstone, which set forth that, in the opinion of the memorialists, no measure for the assimilation of the borough and county franchise could be satisfactory unless it contained provisions for extending the suffrage, without distinction of sex, to all persons who possess the statutory qualifications for the Parliamentary franchise.

"6. That this meeting calls upon those who signed this declaration, and all other members who believe that the claim of duly qualified women to the Parliamentary franchise is reasonable and just, to support the clause moved by Mr. Woodall, in Committee on the Franchise Bill, for extending its provisions to such women.

"7. That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Mr. Gladstone and to every member of Parliament.

"8. That petitions to both Houses of Parliament in support of Mr. Woodall's clause be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of this meeting."

Miss BECKER, in moving these resolutions, said: These resolutions are intended to be our answer to the question, "What will the society do after the declaration of Mr. Gladstone?" Some of our members and friends, and especially some of those who are Liberals, appear to have an idea that this women's suffrage question is one that especially concerns the Liberal party, but the fact is that this movement has never from the beginning been of a party character, and we appeal with perfect impartiality to both parties. There are both Conservatives and Liberals among us—(hear, hear)—and we cannot consent, in deference to the difficulties and susceptibilities of the Liberal party, now to postpone our claim. If we did so, we should be acting somewhat disloyally to those Conservatives among us and in Parliament who have been so long doing their utmost to obtain the franchise for women.

Miss TON (Belfast): I shall have great pleasure in seconding the adoption of these resolutions. I rather think that one thing we have to do, or rather not to do, at this moment is not to express all we feel—(laughter)—because most of us feel very strongly indeed on this matter. (Hear, hear.) We have to think not only of the natural indignation excited in the minds of most of us, and most especially in the minds of those of us who are Liberals, by the utter desertion of Liberal principles which it seems to me the Prime Minister has been guilty of on the present occasion, but also of what amount of support we may hope to get in the future. I think it may be regarded as a duty by most of us to make up our minds as to making appeals in a variety of forms to the Government to bring in a Women's Franchise Bill, which we may fairly ask them to do seeing that they now so earnestly ask us not to interfere with their present Bill. Some good might be achieved by showing them what we expect in the early future in this matter; at any rate nothing could be lost by so doing, and in that view we must be careful not to use language which would make impossible such a solution of the difficulty. (A laugh, and hear, hear.) I don't feel equal at this moment to going over these resolutions with the care they deserve, and besides our minds are a good deal pre-occupied by the difficult position in which we are placed. I do not see any symptom among the women themselves, or among those gentlemen friends, to whom we are so grateful, of being disheartened, or feeling that our work should be at all lessened. (Hear, hear.) On the contrary this may prove in our experience what Lord Lytton describes as "the defeat which inspirits both nerve and brain;" and I therefore hope that in the future we shall fight even more zealously for this movement than we have ever done before.

Miss BIGGS, in supporting the motion, said: In conversation with a member of Parliament friendly to our cause who was unable to come to our meeting, I asked him what he thought we women should do, and his reply was that he thought we had no choice but to go on. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Those who suppose that the franchise question will be settled by the passing of this Bill will find themselves quite mistaken, for the franchise question certainly cannot be regarded as finally settled so long as our just claims remain unsatisfied. (Applause.)

Mr. M'LAREN, M.P., said: Ladies and gentlemen, I cordially agree in the sentiments of those resolutions, and we ought to impress upon as large a number of members as possible the duty of carrying out their principles and voting for Mr. Woodall's amendment. (Hear, hear.) No doubt Mr. Gladstone's speech will have the effect of giving us a very bad division, but many of our Parliamentary friends are still strongly in favour of going on. A few of the men who signed your memorial appear to think that they ought to vote the other way, but that is not their general feeling. I am quite sure, however, that we shall not get such Conservative support as many of us had expected; indeed, I don't believe we shall have fifty from that side of the House. Many of our Conservative friends will stay away, and therefore Liberals need be under no apprehension of the Bill being wrecked. Our efforts should certainly be directed to making as good a show as possible, especially as I hear that some of the Irish members also will not support us. As a Liberal, I feel very deeply the insult, as I may venture to call it, which Mr. Gladstone yesterday offered to our cause. I cannot conceive that it was the duty of a Prime Minister, holding the position he does in the Liberal party, to treat a question of such importance in the way he did. (Hear, hear.) I can sympathise with the difficulties of his position; on the other hand, it is a most extraordinary thing for a Liberal minister to rise in his place to

coerce his own party to vote against one of the principles which ought to actuate them. I listened with resentment and indignation to what he said, and if anything could sever my connection with the Liberal party, it would be the fact that we are led by men who force their chief, Mr. Gladstone, into the position which he occupied yesterday. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. COURTAULD, M.P., said: Ladies and gentlemen, like most of yourselves, I listened to Mr. Gladstone's speech, not only with astonishment, but to take the original word of your resolution with indignation. (Hear, hear.) I cannot understand at all that it is the duty of a Liberal Prime Minister to treat his party in so high handed a manner as to tell us that this clause would wreck the Bill without choosing to tell us how or why, simply declaring in effect that that was his affair and not theirs. That is not the way in which a man who professes to be the leader of Liberal sentiment should treat his party. (Applause.) Whatever influence my few words may have, they must all be on the side of pressing on the clause in the most energetic manner possible; and I hope that Mr. Woodall may still be able to lead a not unimportant body of members with him into the division lobby, notwithstanding that, unfortunately, some members who profess strong Radicalism, and talk much of equal rights to all, may on this occasion falsify their opinions. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. KENNARD, M.P., said: Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid that the speech of Mr. Gladstone will very seriously impair the total you may be able to count upon in the forthcoming division. It has, indeed, to some extent disintegrated and discouraged the growing feeling in your favour among liberal-minded Conservatives.

Mr. WOODALL: Many of my political friends might be rather deterred from voting for my clause by the fear that they would be associated by an overwhelming display of Conservative strength; and, if only a comparatively few Conservative members vote with us, it might be well to have that fact made known.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said: I was rather surprised at Mr. Kennard's speech, for it certainly was a great tribute to the power and influence of the Prime Minister; indeed, we might have supposed that the last thing that would have led them to go into any particular lobby would have been the arguments of Mr. Gladstone. (A laugh, and "Hear, hear.") However, that shows the state in which we are living. Mr. Gladstone seems to be paramount over Tories as well as over Liberals, and it is a very curious thing—a great tribute to his genius and power. I am glad that in your resolution the word "indignation" has been left out, because I could not have sympathised with that. All my powers of indignation were exhausted long since. (Laughter.) I don't think there is anything any Government can do which would make me indignant. (A laugh.) I might be surprised; indeed, I should be very greatly surprised if they did much that was right. (Laughter.) Indignation is a thing quite gone by with me, and here I am not talking particularly of this Government, but of all Governments. They get into power, and they have one object, viz., to remain there as long as they possibly can. (A laugh, and "Hear, hear.") They do no good unless the people make them do it. If the people outside relax their pressure, you get no good from any Government. I am rather inclined to think that you sometimes get more good from a Conservative than from a Liberal Government, because when a Liberal Government gets into power, all the civilising and useful influences outside are neutralised, and people appear to be, as it were, mesmerised with Mr. Gladstone, as if everything that he does is necessarily right, and as if we have only to shut our eyes and open our mouths for what he may send us. (A laugh.) We must, therefore, agitate for everything we want quite as much when a Liberal Government is in power as when we have a Tory Government in power. I suppose your association is one which is *bona fide*. I suppose you really want to get what you are aiming at, independent of what faction may hold the reins of power. (Hear, hear.) If you do not, if you are going to give way and not fight it out because there is a Liberal Government in power, then you would be what, perhaps, it is wrong to call ladies—humbly. (Laughter.) I have no doubt, however, that you are far removed from anything of that sort, and I am glad to be allowed here to pay my humble tribute of thanks to Mr. Woodall for the good service he rendered last night. (Applause.) I have heard several Liberal members say that they never heard your case better put in the House of Commons than it was put by Mr. Woodall. I am sure that in that sentiment I thoroughly concur, and I am thankful to him for another reason.

To-morrow, through the instrumentality of Mr. Woodall, we shall have a good test to see how many Radicals there really are in the House. I told you I was not indignant, and let me add that I am not hopeful, and when the tale of Radicals is told I am afraid it would be a small one. I was delighted that my hon. friend seemed to take as the text of his speech some words used a few weeks ago by Mr. Chamberlain, who said, "It is always opportune to do right." (Hear, hear.) I say that we are the real opportunists who stand to our principles and support what we believe to be right and just. Although I am not indignant and not hopeful, my principle usually is to expect nothing and hope for everything. On this occasion I can hardly hope for much. Although we cannot look for victory, you may depend upon a certain number of members being true to their principles. We may be beaten, but I have no doubt that within a few years the cause of right and justice will be successful. (Applause.)

Mr. W. H. LEATHAM, M.P., said: I desire to say a few words owing especially to the awkward position in which I find myself placed. When I went home last night I was very sorry about the speech which the Prime Minister made; but after all we cannot forget the fact that Mr. Gladstone is the Prime Minister, to whom many of us owe political allegiance. I, therefore, feel it only proper respect to the ladies, and to their cause, which I feel very near to my own heart, to say that under the circumstances I cannot see my way to vote for Mr. Woodall's clause to-morrow. It is not that I have changed my mind in any respect, but I feel a difficulty after Mr. Gladstone's strong language and decided opinion when he had full notice of your views. Last year they were most completely explained to him, and I regret that he should have denied this subject an entrance into the Bill; but I cannot set my own judgment against that of the Prime Minister. Having this view I think it would be better to retire than that it should appear that I approved of all the resolutions you may pass. I think the time is coming, however—I hope it may be next year—when your cause will achieve success. (Applause.)

Mr. BLENNERHASSETT, M.P., who was the next speaker, said: Ladies and gentlemen, I have come to this meeting with the most profound conviction that we should do our utmost to wreck the movement if we proceed to a division upon this clause. I have taken a great deal of pains to find out the views of members who are friendly, and no fewer than three of them told me a little time ago that, if we go on to a division, they will vote against us, and will not vote with us in the future. I fear that we shall have a miserable division, contrasting badly with what we have had in the past; and this, I believe, would irretrievably damage the movement. I therefore strongly urge you to consider whether you should not reconsider your position, instead of giving way to indignation at the course taken by Mr. Gladstone, especially as many of those who agreed in principle with the advocates of women's suffrage thought the Prime Minister was, under all the circumstances, justified in taking up that position.

Miss BECKER: The resolutions of our society are not based upon indignation, but upon reasonable calculation and firm conviction.

Mr. ASHWORTH HALLETT: Ladies and gentlemen, I think some consideration is due to the amount of work which has so long been put into this movement over the country. Let it be remembered that ours is the only association in the country for Parliamentary reform. The only real demand for an extension of the franchise has been made by women. Hardly any meetings on the subject have, in comparison, been held by men, and so far as I know there is no association for demanding an extension of the franchise to men. A large number of us have worked very hard on this matter for many years; indeed I do not think it possible for the House of Commons to over estimate the interest and anxiety shown by women in this question; indeed it has lain at the root of all our questions, and now has come the crisis to which we have looked forward for years. Liberal members have often told us in the past "Wait till the Reform Bill for men comes on, and then your claims will be attended to." We consider that we have convinced the country; on all hands we are told that, if this question had been left open, the House of Commons would have carried the new clause, and we should then at length have had the reward of all our past labours; but when the crisis and the opportunity do come, then to our astonishment Liberal members tell us "Now is not the time." For years they have told us that this is the time we must wait and work for. I take it to be the duty of those Liberal

members who believe in the true principles of representation to stand by us firmly. If there had been more expressions of indignation in the lobby when the Liberal whips were so busy working against us, we should probably never have heard that speech, which we complain of, from Mr. Gladstone. I urge that truly Liberal members ought to stand by their principles and vote for us to-morrow. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Mrs. FAWCETT: I am strongly in favour of going on and fighting this matter to the end. I have always been in favour of that course, notwithstanding the fact that I was fully prepared for what took place yesterday. So much was I prepared for it that I was not even astonished at Mr. Gladstone's speech; but my feeling still was, "We must go on to a division, even if not one Liberal member should follow Mr. Woodall into the lobby, and so we shall test the weight of Tory support." I believe there is a considerable amount of genuine and honest sympathy with this movement on the Conservative side in the House of Commons, and also among Conservatives throughout the country. I think the special work of the moment is to test the strength of that support. At the same time I think we should be very gentle to Liberal members who are in the position of Mr. Blennerhassett and Mr. Leatham. They have been placed in a most difficult and trying position. They have been told that if they support Mr. Woodall they will be doing what lies in their power to wreck the Franchise Bill on which the country has so earnestly set its heart. Many Liberal members still stand by us at all hazards; but if other friends do not feel themselves at liberty to vote with us on this occasion, we must not on that account suspect their attachment to the principles they have always professed. It is a strong testimony to the truth of what I am now saying that Mr. Blennerhassett and Mr. Leatham have had the manliness to come here and speak as they have done; and I must express my gratitude for the openness with which they have acted. We should assure them that we do enter into the difficulties of the position in which they are at present placed. If they now feel themselves not free to support us, we shall with all the more confidence look to them for future support when this matter comes on again. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Miss COBBE: I think I understand Mr. Blennerhassett to say that he considered it would be inexpedient for us to go on at this moment; but it seems to me that the principle of the expediency of women allowing themselves to be put aside into the corner has been pushed a great deal too far. (Hear, hear.) As regards the number of Tories who may vote with us, and I hope there will be many, I can only say that I could not have much respect for Liberals who decline to go into the division lobby with Tories on a great moral question like this. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE, who was next called upon, said: Ladies and gentlemen, my clear advice to you decidedly is to press the clause to a division, for if you do not come forward and show fight now, you will be at a great disadvantage hereafter. My impression is that you will have a great deal of sincere Conservative support. (Applause.)

Mrs. SCATCHERD (Leeds): I think we are all of one mind, the woman from the north as well as from the south, and from Ireland and Scotland; that we should go on steadily battling for this cause. (Hear, hear.) One point brought forward, which has rather astonished me, is the statement that this question of women's suffrage was not before the constituencies in 1880. I have had two important letters from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, the key-note of which is that this was not before the country as a serious question in 1880, and also that it was not meant to be a practical question during this Parliament. Well, I know that there was scarcely a Yorkshire constituency in which the candidates were not questioned on this subject. Some people have chosen to say that the large majority of at least two out of three in our favour at the Leeds Liberal Conference was given hurriedly and without due thought or premeditation. Never was there a greater untruth, because for weeks before one or two of us visited the principal Liberal associations in the North of England and the Midland counties, when the question was discussed and deliberately decided. So that many of the delegates went to the meeting pledged to vote in favour of women's suffrage. The same thing took place at the Manchester and the great Cheshire Liberal Conferences. I must say, therefore, that we do regard and have regarded this question as a practical one. We know that our Liberal friends are in a difficult position, but Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone have already

spoken against us, and we can have nothing worse to fear on the Liberal side. (A laugh.) I may, however, urge Liberals not to desert their colours—not to shrink from the truth they needs must speak. Rather let them dare to be in the right, even with only two or three, and we can promise them that the women will not be ungrateful. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Mr. KENNARD asked whether there might not yet be time to ask Mr. Gladstone to reconsider his position, as the Prime Minister had done on some previous occasions. (A laugh.)

Mr. WOODALL: I am afraid we must not indulge any hopes in that direction. Mr. Gladstone is guided in such a matter by the majority in the Cabinet, and the most hopeful among us cannot believe that the majority are favourable to this movement. It is only just to Mr. Gladstone to remember that under all these circumstances his own position has been an extremely difficult one.

Mr. KENNARD said he had been asked by Sir Stafford Northcote to put upon the Parliamentary notice paper a proviso that, in the event of Mr. Woodall's clause being carried, lodgers should be excluded from its operation.

Miss TOD: If such a proviso is agreed to, and if we women who are lodgers—for several ladies present are lodgers—have to waive our claim for the sake of women householders, I hope it will be made clear that that would exclude an enormous number of the best women in the country.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid we cannot conveniently enter into that now.

The resolutions were then put to the meeting and carried, Mr. Blennerhassett only voting against them, Mr. Leatham having withdrawn from the meeting.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE: Are we really to believe that if this proposed clause is carried, the Government would resign or throw up the Franchise Bill?

Mrs. HALLETT: They have said so.

A LADY: They might throw up the Bill but not resign.

Sir R. TEMPLE: If the clause is carried and they don't resign, how can they stay in office and abandon the Bill? (A laugh.)

The CHAIRMAN: I suppose they mean that if this clause is interpolated in the Bill, the Bill would not then be such as the Government as now constituted would approve, and therefore they would refrain from further responsibility in connection with it; but of course there might possibly be, but not probably, a combination of private members to carry the Franchise Bill.

Sir R. TEMPLE: Do you think the Government would abandon the Franchise Bill?

Mr. KENNARD: I don't believe they would.

Sir R. TEMPLE: Surely not, in the case of adding, not anything which would require the modification throughout of the Bill, but only a few words forming one additional clause. I fancy that what Mr. Gladstone said was only intended as a strong appeal to Liberal members.

The meeting then concluded with a vote of thanks to Mr. Woodall for presiding.

CONFERENCE AT WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL.

On Friday morning, June 13th, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, a conference of delegates and friends of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held under the presidency of Mr. STANSFELD, M.P. Amongst those present were Mr. Woodall, M.P., Mr. Passmore Edwards, M.P., Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P., Mr. Thomasson, M.P., Mr. C. B. McLaren, M.P., Mr. W. Courtauld, M.P., Sir Richard Temple, Miss Becker, Mrs. Cobbe, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Mr. T. G. P. Hallett, Miss Tod, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. M'Ilquham (Tewkesbury), Mrs. Pennington, Miss Müller, Mrs. Müller, Miss Mary Hart, Miss L. Stevenson (Edinburgh), Dr. Lindsay, Mrs. Lindsay (Glasgow), Miss Balmorie (Scarborough), Miss Lupton (Bradford), Miss Babb, Mrs. Ashford (Birmingham), Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd (Leeds), Miss C. A. Biggs, Miss Lucy Wilson, Mr. Fox Bourne, Mrs. Orme, Miss Orme, Miss Williams, Mrs. Lynch, Mr. and Mrs. Walter M'Laren, Mrs. S. W. Browne, Mrs. Paterson, Miss Tanner (Bristol), Miss C. Sturge (Bristol), Miss Sharman Crawford, Mrs. M'Cormick (Manchester), Mrs. Talbot Bruce (Bristol), Miss Kennedy (Bristol), Mr. Blackburn, Miss H. Blackburn, Mr. J. S. Bailey, Mr. Thomas Colby, Miss Pease, Mrs. Theodore Bewicke, Miss Bewicke, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Clark (Street), Mrs. Wallis

(Kettering), Miss Lord, Miss Ward-Andrews, Misses Stacpoole, Mrs. A. W. Hunt, Misses Drew, Miss F. Armstrong, Ex-Baillie James Weir (Paisley), Mrs. Tebb, Miss Howley, Mrs. Seward, Mr. E. Griffiths, F.S.S., Mr. H. W. Rowland, Mrs. Edith Morgan, Mrs. O'Callaghan, Mrs. Cooper Oakley, Dr. George Hoggan, Mr. and Mrs. Bear, Mrs. Hicks, Miss Crossman, Mrs. Goadby, Miss Mordan, Miss Mills, Fraulein von Wolfskeel, Mrs. Grant, Miss Moore, &c., &c.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, congratulated the meeting on the selection of a leader for their movement. He had made a speech which won him the applause of all persons—men and women—and he (the chairman) did not think they could place their cause in the hands of a better man than Mr. Woodall. (Hear, hear.) Hitherto the cause of women's suffrage had been somewhat academic in its nature. Men had played with it, and treated it without serious alarm. Now, however, the Prime Minister was put forward—he used the phrase advisedly—by their opponents in order to crush them and their movement. The man of the most commanding influence, the greatest power in the country, said that it was intolerable that their question should have to be a question of party or practical politics. Their answer was that from that moment they would make the question one of party and practical politics. They now made a new departure—they had done with the academic age. They intended to fight until they won. They intended to seek allies and friends where they could, and they meant that the half of the Liberal party which was against them, many of whom were in high places, should be made to feel and understand—as he believed they were made to feel and understand the previous night—that they had the supporters of women's suffrage to reckon with. On the preceding night their question became one of practical politics, and they had now to address themselves in all the constituencies to the political organisations of both parties. They must insist upon the question being made one of practical politics within and without the House of Commons. Mr. Woodall had undertaken the leadership of the movement at the turning point in its history, becoming the leader of a cause which was certainly destined to triumph in its own time. He therefore bade them be of good cheer. Personally he had no apprehension, but was full of hope for the future of the cause which they had at heart.

Mr. WALTER M'LAREN moved a resolution thanking Mr. Woodall, the chairman, and others, for moving the women's suffrage amendment to the Franchise Bill, and to all the members of Parliament who had voted in favour thereof.

Miss LOUISA STEVENSON, of Edinburgh, seconded the resolution, which was passed unanimously.

Miss BECKER moved, "That, as the division on Thursday night was avowedly taken, not on the merits of the clause, but upon the side issue as to whether it should be introduced at that particular time, this Conference declines to accept the result of the division as a test of the opinion of the House of Commons on the justice of the claim of duly qualified women to exercise the Parliamentary franchise, and requests its Parliamentary friends to take steps for bringing the measure forward at the earliest opportunity."

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE seconded the resolution, and said their cause was making remarkable progress amongst Conservatives, who were beginning to appreciate that enfranchising women would be a Conservative measure in the highest political sense.

Mr. CHARLES M'LAREN, M.P., said the question would have to go through many phases before women would get the franchise, and it was only by going on relentlessly with their question that they would force it through Parliament.

The resolution was further supported by Mr. THOMASSON, M.P., Mrs. ASHFORD (Birmingham), Miss BABB, Mrs. FENWICK MILLER, and Miss MULLER, and was unanimously agreed to.

Miss COBBE moved—"That it be an instruction to the executive committee to consider and take such further steps as might be deemed practicable and expedient during the remaining stages of the measure through the two Houses of Parliament."

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT seconded the resolution.

Mrs. FAWCETT supported the resolution. She was glad to find that Mr. Gladstone in his recent speech did not say one word against the principle of the clause, and she thought they might look forward to success at no distant date. (Hear, hear.)

Miss HELEN BLACKBURN and Mr. COURTAULD, M.P., also spoke, the latter expressing surprise at the vote given by Mr. John Morley.

Mr. PASSMORE EDWARDS, M.P., said that Mr. John Morley had been called to account because he had proclaimed himself an Opportunist on Thursday. He (Mr. Edwards) begged to say that everyone shaped his or her conduct in harmony with the surroundings. He was not there to defend Mr. John Morley, but he believed his vote was a conscientious one. Mr. Morley argued that not only was half a loaf, but five-sixths of a loaf, better than no bread. He was told by the Prime Minister that if this clause was added to the Bill it would not only endanger the measure, but it would destroy it. The Premier in his speech had not said one word against the clause; in fact there was sympathy for the movement in Mr. Gladstone's speech. ("Oh!") He would go still further, and say that Mr. Gladstone had lifted up this subject and surrounded it with something like a halo of sacredness. (Cheers and hisses.) He wanted to raise it above party considerations. ("No!") Mr. Gladstone was surrounded by colleagues who were dead against this measure in an overwhelming majority, and he believed they would rather have left the Government than that this clause should become law. Therefore, he thought it was unreasonable to attack Mr. Gladstone. Looking at his past life, and seeing what he had done in shaping his conduct according to circumstances, he would be the first to carry out their wishes if he could. ("Oh, oh!") He (Mr. Edwards) was one of those who walked out of the House of Commons last night, but he was quite justified in doing so. He was under no man; he had made a promise to no one, and he believed he was at liberty in future to record his vote in the manner he wished.

Mrs. FAWCETT pointed out that there was not a word in the speech of the Prime Minister against the principle of Mr. Woodall's amendment, and nothing that would stamp him with inconsistency if next year he voted in its favour.

The resolution was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. WOODALL, M.P., moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and, in doing so, said it was difficult to forecast the future of the question; but it was hardly conceivable that they could again be placed in a position of such difficulty as on Thursday night. He advised no irritation or exasperation against those who had voted against the amendment, and pointed out that Mr. Gladstone having to do a particular duty had done it in vehement terms, in order to leave no doubt as to the course the Government meant to take. But he had built up a bridge for those supporters whom he called upon to abandon for the moment the cause which they had at heart. The right hon. gentleman had, moreover, expressed a desire for an opportunity of the matter being discussed in the House as an open question, and had not said a word, even inferentially, hostile to the principle for which they were contending.

Mrs. LUCAS seconded the resolution, which was passed with acclamation.

Mr. STANSFELD, in his acknowledgment, suggested the raising of a large fund for pressing on the cause in the future, suggesting that many who had been induced to vote contrary to their opinions on Thursday night would avail themselves of the golden bridge to make their peace with the society.

The proceedings then terminated.

GREAT MEETING IN ST. JAMES' HALL.

A great meeting in St. James' Hall was held on Tuesday, June 17th, in support of the Parliamentary franchise for women householders and ratepayers. The hall was densely crowded in every part, and an overflow meeting had to be arranged for those unable to obtain admission. The chair was occupied by Mrs. GARRETT ANDERSON, M.D., and among those on the platform were Mr. Coleridge Kennard, M.P., Mrs. Kennard, Mr. Thomasson, M.P., Mr. Richard Temple, Mr. Westlake, Q.C., Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Becker, Miss Orme, Mrs. Beddoe (Clifton), Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd (Leeds), Miss Simcox, Mrs. Stanton-Blatch, Miss Louisa Stevenson (Edinburgh), Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Ashton Dilke, Miss Balmorie (Scarborough), Miss Wilkinson, Miss Müller, Miss Agnes Garrett, Miss Tod, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Mr. Hallett, Mr. Moncure Conway, Mr. Robert Stephen (Member of the House of Keys, Isle of Man), the Misses Biggs, Mr. and Mrs. Walter M'Laren (Bradford), Mrs. Charles M'Laren, Mrs. Cowen (Nottingham), Miss Smith (Hyde), Miss Sturge (Birmingham), Miss Tanner (Bristol), Mrs. Lindsay (Glasgow), Miss Kirkland (Edinburgh), Mrs. M'Ilquham (Tewkesbury), Mrs. Kerrison

(Ipswich), Mrs. Evans (Cardiff), Dr. George and Frances Hoggan, Mrs. and Miss Powell (Maesgwyn), Miss Lucy Wilson, Miss Jessie Macgregor, Miss Whitehead, P.L.G., Miss Lord, P.L.G., Mrs. E. M. King, Miss Hart, Mrs. Samuel Bright, Rev. E. Plumtre, Miss A. Shore, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Charles, Lala Piyarelal, Pandit Bishen Varian, Lala Roshanlal, Mrs. Miers, Mr. Griffiths, F.S.S., Miss A. Heather-Bigg, Mrs. Southey, Mrs. O'Connor, Mr. J. H. Levy, Mrs. Kilworth, Miss Coome, Mrs. Rowbotham, Mr. Mark Marsden, Mrs. Theodore Wright, Miss Blackburn, J. G. S. Anderson, Esq., and others.

Mrs. Anderson read the following letter from the Countess of Portsmouth:—

Watford, Sunday, June 15th.

Dear Mrs. Garrett Anderson,—It is with great regret I write to you to state my inability to attend the meeting at St. James' Hall, on Tuesday, 17th. I trust many will remember how often defeats evolve victories, and I believe that when the debate and division of last Thursday can be calmly read, indelibly marked and intellectually digested by English women generally, it may prove to have more to do with their future success and their fitness for success than any easily-won triumph could now effect. If the clearer recognition of justice and liberty as great truths, and not only great sounding words to be used as shifting scenes at the play—if the higher sense of duty and courage is brought to them, I see nothing to fear for the cause in the future—nothing to regret in the past. If it be true that a man who has broken the laws and been convicted of so doing is better fitted to have a voice in the representation of the country than a woman who has consistently used her intelligence and her opportunities to fulfil the obligations of the law, then, also, it must be true that the Constitution is maintained rather to favour those who violate than those who respect its articles, which is absurd. Those who would serve liberty and justice serve jealous gods and may not share their service with any other. In the hour when they look back from these living principles to admire any form of power, or special advantage, or triumph, however brilliant and praiseworthy it seems, they have laid down their arms, and whoever or whatever else they serve, they have forsaken the deity under whose standard they enlisted.—Yours very sincerely,
E. PORTSMOUTH.

Letters were also read from the Dowager Countess of Buchan, Mrs. William Grey, Miss Shirrett, Miss Emily Davies, Mr. Middleton Wake (Assistant Chaplain at the Chapel Royal, Savoy), Mrs. Westlake, Miss Florence Davenport Hill, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Mrs. Alfred Osler, Miss J. E. Cobden, and others.

Mrs. GARRETT ANDERSON said: I am particularly glad to preside to-night. It seems to me that every woman who is really in favour of the claim women are now making for the franchise ought at this moment to put the weight of her influence, so far as she has any, at the service of the cause we are here to support. While the subject was maturing, those of us who are occupied closely with other work might be excused for standing aside and for not giving much more than our sympathetic recognition to the agitation. But now that that stage has passed, now that the question is a practical one, we are all bound to work for it; we are bound to say that our representatives who assert that women wish for the franchise are justified, so far as we are concerned, in making that assertion. We are bound to be ready, if need be, to make sacrifices to carry the struggle to a successful issue. But I am also glad to have the opportunity of saying to-night how full of hope I think we may be that the end of this long controversy is now apparently approaching. So far from being discouraged with the events of the last week, I think the cause has made a most remarkable and sudden advance. No one could have heard or read the debate in the House of Commons without feeling this; it is conspicuous in the utterances of the press and in society. No doubt some of our friends who have given the best years of their lives, and labour without stint, to the removal of this injustice, may have felt something like disappointment that at a moment when it seemed possible that victory might be near they had to see it again escape them, and to know that their work was not yet over. It is not possible but that the leaders of this agitation are weary, and would rejoice from the bottom of their hearts to see it come to a victorious end. No great struggle was ever carried on except with effort and in spite of weariness. But we outsiders have trust in Miss Becker and her fellow-workers that, whether weary or fresh, they will go on, and on, and on, till they have won for us that which

they are working for, and one object, as I take it, of this meeting is that we should declare that we have this trust, and that we look to our leaders to continue to work as well for us in the future as they have done in the past, and to assure them we are ready, too, to work with them if it be necessary to do so. As to the ultimate outlook I am more than sanguine—I am confident. Only very young people could be much disturbed by the vote of Thursday. Youth is the time for impatience and despair. We who have had our fights and struggles have learned never to despair. We have learned the necessity for patience, and not to put too high an estimate on the expenditure of a life-time, or half a life-time, for a worthy cause. What better ambition can any of us have than to work for the good of our fellow-women? What are twenty years in the history of England? A hundred years hence it will scarcely be remembered that women were ever without the right to vote, and the cost of the struggle will be forgotten, but its fruits will remain. Now, however, we are in the fight, and the question is—What tactics to employ, what weapons to use? If anyone has come to-night expecting to hear an outburst of feminine wrath, he will, I hope, go away disappointed. One luxury of language only we will permit ourselves to use, and that is to thank in the heartiest way possible those friends on both sides of the House who supported us on Thursday. Among them I may, perhaps, venture to name Mr. Stansfeld, Lord John Manners, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Cowen, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson. For the rest we reproach no one. A great measure, in the success of which Liberals all over the country are deeply interested, was under discussion, and in the opinion of the leader of the Liberal party it would have been risked by accepting Mr. Woodall's amendment. We may not agree with this opinion, but we can at least enter into the extreme difficulty of the position into which many of our friends were put; and we are confident that they will welcome the earliest opportunity of again supporting us. They have not deserted us, but they have been for the moment deprived of the power of acting independently. Nor, if we refuse to reproach those who are when free our friends, will we descend to sarcasm and invective against our opponents. Sweet reasonableness shall be our weapon, and it shall in the end conquer. In season and out of season we must go on presenting the case in its simple and unanswerable logic to the public mind; in season and out of season we must try to clear away fantastic dreads and the unreal horrors of morbid imaginations, and presently every one will discover that there is absolutely nothing substantial in the arguments against giving women the vote, and that they have been scared once more, as timid folks have been over and over again, ever since the world began, by their unenlightened and untrained imaginations. To us who are accustomed to look at the subject in a straightforward and simple way, without glamour, and as a matter of fact, instead of fancy, it is difficult to realise that objections so fantastic and unreal should have weight with anyone. The physical force argument, for instance; let us quietly look at it. Women must not vote because they are not, and will not be, soldiers. What a curious ghost of an argument that is, when there are tens of thousands of men—scholars, divines, scientists, writers—lame, blind, feeble, old, palsied, and sick who are just as certain never to be soldiers as any women are. Imagine Herbert Spencer, Mr. Martineau, Mr. Darwin, and Tennyson forced to fight. Imagine on the other hand any question which would array all the women voters on one side. It is difficult to conceive of such a case arising, but it could only be on a question very closely and obviously affecting their interests as a sex. Is it to be supposed that in such a case any sane man would wish to overrule and coerce the view of the women? Besides, I would ask, since when has the cry of the oppressed, whether raised by men or women, ceased to find champions in England as stout of heart and limb as the stoutest of the oppressors? Then, again, there is Mr. Goschen's argument, from the moral standpoint, specially directed against women living in lodgings having the franchise. No one can deplore more than I do that the lives of some of these women are what they are, but I fail to see why there should be a property qualification for men and a moral qualification for women. Men and women alike, and good and bad alike, live under the laws and ought to have a voice in the selection of law makers. Another familiar argument is that women have already all they can possibly want from legislation, or that at any rate they have the means of making their influence felt when they wish anything. The first answer to this is that it is not true, and

the second is that if it were it would be no reason for not giving them the franchise. It is not true that the wishes and interests of people who have no votes receive the same amount of respectful attention from members of the House of Commons as the wishes and interests of those who have votes. Very often the representations of women are received civilly enough, but are at once cast aside if they conflict in the least with the interests of voters. Miss Stevenson will, I hope, give you to-night a recent instance of this. It is not in human nature to pay the same attention to the wishes of people without votes as to the wishes and interests of voters. But suppose that women could not be said to have any separate interests. Suppose that they were as much identified with men's interests as, say, any arbitrarily chosen number of men would be. Imagine that some men, say all those below a certain height, were excluded from the franchise, and they were told that it could not matter as they had no separate interests, and they could certainly manage to exert influence over some one or more men who were tall enough to be voters, and so in that way they would be indirectly but sufficiently represented. They might be told—"You have no injustice to complain of, the laws are the same for you as for the voters, you may quite well be content to be legislated for by your fellow-men." How monstrously absurd this would be felt to be. It seems to me that there is absolutely nothing in the distinction of sex to make this argument more reasonable when applied to women than when applied to any particular group of men. I do not in the least ignore or minimise the great importance of the difference of sex, but I contend that it does not in any degree affect the power of women for helping to choose their representatives for the House of Commons; nor does it diminish the indignity put upon them when told that they are not fit to be entrusted with this power. As a weapon against injustice in the struggle for existence in which thousands of women have to engage, the franchise would be invaluable, and it is not true that indirect influence is in any way equal to direct power. Following the arguments of our opponents come their prophecies. Everyone knows these terrible, blood-curdling jeremiads of woes to come. When I hear the dreadful threats of "social revolution," "society upheaved to its foundations," "homes destroyed," "women changed into bad men" (this, I confess, would alarm me more than anything else if I could not retain enough presence of mind not to believe it), I keep up my courage by remembering that things easy to make are not generally of much account, and that of all such things uninspired prophecies are perhaps the easiest to make and the most worthless when made. Look at the prognostications of evil which have been made before every change—social and political—before the Reform Bill, the Jewish emancipation, the removal of disabilities of the Catholics and Dissenters. It has always been the same. The opponents of the change have been lavish of their uninspired prophecies, which the event has always belied. No such prophecies have ever been fulfilled. These false prophets have never had the satisfaction of being able to say "I told you so;" on the contrary, measures of justice and liberation have always yielded the satisfactory results that the classes and individuals relieved of a galling sense of wrong have been better citizens in every way for being so relieved, while none of the evils predicted have resulted. I may add that, as a rule, neither does all the good that is predicted come true, or at least it only does so very slowly and gradually. My own impression of what will happen when the franchise is extended to qualified women is that with regard to a very large and important class of subjects, all those touching domestic legislation, women would be keenly interested and would be as anxious to come to sound conclusions as men are. They would be on the side of temperance, thrift, peace, and zeal for the interests of the poor, both as regards education and public health; while I should anticipate that upon questions of foreign policy, and on large commercial questions they would be for the most somewhat indifferent; but how many of the humbler voters anywhere care for anything beyond domestic politics? But even this amount of prophesying is rash, superfluous, and useless. True wisdom lies, I believe, in doing to the best of our judgment that which is at the moment equitable and just, without attempting to foresee all that may possibly flow from it in the future. Much of the good which results from removing a great class injustice is by its nature subtle, and therefore readily overlooked. I mean the influence it exerts in the formation and development of character; and, after all, the character of the men and

women of a nation signifies far more than anything else. Human beings are for the most part what they find themselves called upon to be by the influences that surround them. If we ask for frivolity and vanity, we get them; if we ask for better things, in like manner we get them. Is it nothing to say in effect to all women, "It is not expected or desired that you should rise to the level of citizenship. You are not parts of the nation; your interests must be petty and personal. No voice that you can raise on subjects which concern the community will gain a hearing. You are not capable citizens?" Is this an influence likely to call out the conscience and intelligence of women on social questions? Our contention is that we may call upon women to be citizens in the truest sense of the word, that we may call upon them to add to the grace of womanliness a conception of the duties which attach and of the dignity that belongs to being recognised members of a great nation, and that both the nation and the women themselves will gain by their being thus incorporated into the national life, and by their being permitted to share in the national responsibilities.

Miss BECKER moved: "That in the opinion of this meeting the Franchise Bill, if passed without including duly qualified women, will be incomplete and unsatisfactory, and that the question of Parliamentary reform will never be settled until the claim of such women received legislative recognition." (Cheers.) She said they had among those who voted against them last week 104 old and tried friends, and there was no reason to believe that they had changed their minds. If they took from the 271 who voted against them the 104 who were really in their favour, and added them to the 135 who voted for them, the question would have been carried by seventy-two. Their claim had been rejected as part of the Franchise Bill, but when it next came before the House the difficulty would have vanished. The Bill would not come into operation till 1886, and they had before them the session of 1885, when their friends would have the opportunity of bringing forward a Supplementary Franchise Bill. The House of Commons had refused to disfranchise convicts when they came out of prison, looking on that as too severe a punishment, and she hoped they would not continue to inflict that punishment on women who had never broken the law.

Miss ORME, in seconding the resolution, pointed out that the effect of enfranchising women householders would be to make the home influence in favour of men taking their share in unpaid public work. It is by giving political education to women that men will be induced to use the vote which now they too frequently neglect. For these reasons she believed woman suffrage to be a necessary part of any complete scheme of representative reform.

The resolution was supported by Mrs. BEDDOE and by Mrs. OLIVER SCATCHERD, of Leeds, who said that whilst she was not going to give expression to what their chairwoman had called "unwomanly wrath," yet she should not be deterred from expressing her honest opinion of the vote of last week. She was a Yorkshire woman, and should speak her mind, and she said candidly she could not thank those who deserted them on that occasion, and she only hoped those members on Sunday last when they went to church said truly from their hearts, "We have done that which we ought not to have done." They on the platform felt that they had had a blow. People who submitted to blows generally got more. Now, they did not want any more, and did not mean to have any. Doubtless the passing of this great measure of reform would add lustre and prestige to Mr. Gladstone's Government—(applause and hisses)—but it was a measure which could not have been long delayed whatever party was in power, and the women of England felt that the anomaly of excluding duly qualified women from the franchise, solely on account of sex, was an anomaly greater and far more absurd than the present distinctive franchise between boroughs and counties. (Applause.) In conclusion, she invited women to join a league which was about to be formed, and refuse to pay their taxes until they got their votes—(cheers)—and she could only say that if her trustee would allow her the option of paying her income-tax, she would not do it until she was permitted to exercise a voice in the administration of the country. (Applause and laughter.)

Mrs. EVA M'LAREN said the recent vote in the House of Commons showed that there were members who had more regard for their party than for principles.

Miss EDITH SIMCOX, Mrs. BEDDOE, and Mrs. BLATCH having also addressed the meeting in support of the resolution, it was put and declared to be carried unanimously.

Miss L. STEVENSON moved the next resolution, calling attention

to the fact that of the 271 members who voted against Mr. Woodall's amendment 103 were known supporters of women's suffrage, who so voted in consequence of the strong pressure brought to bear by the Government; that therefore it was not unreasonable to believe that had the question been an open one Mr. Woodall's clause would have been carried; and expressing a hope that the House of Lords in discussing the Franchise Bill will favourably consider the claims of duly qualified women.

Mrs. ASHTON DILKE, in seconding the motion, said she pitied the poor members who had to rise in their places and say they were going to vote against the clause though they were in favour of it. She hoped they had repented.

Miss MULLER, who also spoke in support of the resolution, said in the list of thirty who joined John Hampden in his refusal to pay an unjust tax were three women, and she intended to follow the example of those women. In January last she got a message from the Government in the shape of a demand note for taxes. She put it in a pigeon-hole. Two months afterwards she received a notice that she must pay within fourteen days. She did nothing of the kind, but she gave them a piece of her mind. (Laughter.) She wrote and said although she was well able to pay, she would not pay, and the reason she assigned was one which had been often rung through the land that "taxation without representation is tyranny." A few days afterwards she got a note entreating her to pay, and on the 28th of May she received a notice from the collector that "unless she paid within three days he should distrain." Her answer was short and very simple, that her doors were locked, and she was ready. (Cheers.) Let her tell them that the action came from the bottom of her heart. After what she had been saying the last seven years, there was no other course when the practical test of her sincerity came than to say "This claim is unjust, and I reject it."

On the motion of Miss TOD, seconded by Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT, a vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Garrett-Anderson for presiding, and the meeting then separated.

An overflow meeting, which was presided over by Mrs. Lucas, was held in the banquetting hall.

DRAWING-ROOM MEETING.

On June 12th, by invitation of Mrs. Coleridge Kennard, a large number of ladies met at 39, Upper Grosvenor-street, for the purpose of "discussing the expediency of giving the Parliamentary franchise to women duly qualified." Among the few gentlemen present were Mr. Coleridge Kennard, M.P., Mr. Reginald Yorke, M.P., Mr. Rankin, M.P., and Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P.

Mr. COLERIDGE KENNARD, M.P., occupied the chair, and said, in opening the meeting, that this was not so much a political gathering as a meeting to enable some ladies, who were not accustomed to take an active part in public affairs, to discuss a question which was one not only political and social, but of party interest and importance. He repudiated the idea that this subject was raised as a mere party cry. Hitherto woman suffrage had been almost the sole property of the Liberal party, and he now considered the threat of the Prime Minister to throw up the Franchise Bill if this moderate amendment of Mr. Woodall was carried was nothing more nor less than pure and simple *blague*. (Hear, hear.) He had no doubt that if this amendment were carried, despite the threat, Mr. Gladstone would see fit to reconsider his position. (Hear, hear.) If the Liberal party would only now redeem the pledges they had made from time to time to the women of England it would be well. The ladies of England had carried this question near to their hearts for a period approaching seventeen years through evil report and through good report. They had made noble sacrifices of time, health, and money, and he felt sure that no one who called himself a man could desert them now in their hour of crisis. (Applause.) Liberal members were now holding out some very ingenious traps. For instance, he had heard that Mr. Herbert Gladstone, the junior member for Leeds, had excused himself from supporting Mr. Woodall on the ground that the question of woman franchise was not before the electors at the last general election. His own experience of the campaign of 1880 was that the women of England did put the question prominently forward. At any rate they did in the constituency for which he stood. In his own opinion duly qualified

women were eminently deserving of the right to exercise the franchise. (Hear, hear.)

Miss BECKER, of the Women's Suffrage Society, moved the first resolution, which was as follows: "That in the opinion of this meeting the Reform Bill to be satisfactory should include provision for extending the franchise to duly qualified women householders."

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT seconded the motion, and defined what she termed "the immemorial argument," that since the world began no state had admitted women to public positions.

Mr. REGINALD YORKE, M.P., supported the motion, and remarked that the time must now be very short before this question was brought to a conclusion. If the women of England could show to Parliament and to the country that there was anything like unanimity among themselves in favour of their exercising the franchise the whole thing would be virtually settled.

Miss COBBE moved: "That petitions to both Houses of Parliament, based on the foregoing resolution, be adopted and signed by the chairman on behalf of the meeting." She explained that in her earlier years she was a strong opponent of what were known as women's rights, and it was only when she saw that the possession of the franchise by women would facilitate the passing of many measures of great social importance that she warmly took the subject up.

The Rev. J. VERSCHOYLE seconded the motion, and contended that Biblical teaching, instead of being opposed to women franchise, was strongly in its favour. He denied that the extension of the right to women would introduce an element of disunion into the domestic circle, seeing that it had not done so in the case of men.

OPEN-AIR TEMPERANCE MISSION, HYDE PARK.

On Monday, June 16th, by kind permission of the managers of the Metropolitan Open-Air Temperance Mission, Miss Müller (M.L.S.B.) and Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd addressed one of their meetings held by the Reformers' Tree, Hyde Park. They were cordially received, the audience evidently sympathising with and approving Miss Müller's action in refusing to pay taxes till votes be accorded to duly-qualified women.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

MR. ION TRANT HAMILTON, M.P.

The following letter has been received from Mr. I. T. Hamilton, M.P., in reply to one received by him on this subject:— Carlton Club, Pall Mall, S.W., June 13th, 1884.

Dear Mr. Wigham,—I received your note of the 10th inst. with reference to Mr. Woodall's amendment to the Government Franchise Bill, and need hardly assure you that it would have given me very sincere pleasure to have met the wishes of my many correspondents on this subject had I been fully persuaded by yesterday's debate that I should have been acting for the best in so doing.

I most readily admit, however, that the proposed great extension of the franchise, in a sense and in a direction which is viewed by many of us with grave alarm, very materially strengthens the case so ably put forward by those who advocate the cause of women's suffrage, and prevented me from voting, as I had done on former occasions, against the principle embodied in Mr. Woodall's new clause.

I greatly regret that it was quite out of my power to reply separately to the many letters I received of late from friends on this subject, and, knowing the great interest you have always shown in this matter, I trust you will allow me to convey through you my apologies to those whose communications I was, unfortunately, unable to acknowledge.—Believe me to be, very faithfully,

ION T. HAMILTON.

J. C. Wigham, Esq.

MR. HUGH MASON, M.P.

House of Commons, May 21st.

My dear Miss Becker,—I have decided not to sign the memorial to the Prime Minister. I would not move one hair in the direction of imperilling the Franchise Bill. If we get that Bill we shall stand a vastly better chance of securing woman suffrage in the next Parliament. I wish to feel quite free in my action, and not to stir a finger to thwart the Government.—Very truly,

HUGH MASON.

Miss Becker.

Letters explaining that the writers, though favourable to the principle, would not be able, after the declaration of the Government that the introduction of women's suffrage would imperil the Franchise Bill, to support Mr. Woodall's clause have been received from Dr. Farquharson, M.P., Mr. Illingworth, M.P., Mr. Morgan Lloyd, Q.C., M.P., Mr. Mappin, M.P., Sir R. Cunliffe, Bart., M.P., Mr. Hardcastle, M.P., Sir E. J. Reed, M.P., Mr. Geo. Palmer, M.P., Sir J. M'Kenna, M.P., Sir M. Wilson, Bart., M.P., Mr. Wills, M.P., Sir C. Forster, Bart., M.P., Hon. L. Hanbury Tracy, M.P., Mr. Stuart Rendel, M.P., Mr. W. Powell, M.P., Mr. Thos. Earp, M.P., Mr. H. Lee, M.P., and others.

ELECTION INTELLIGENCE.

LEICESTER.

RETIREMENT OF MR. P. A. TAYLOR, M.P.

Mr. P. A. Taylor, who has represented Leicester continuously for a period of twenty-two years, has, much to the regret of his friends, resigned his seat in Parliament. Mr. Taylor has been all through his Parliamentary career an advanced Radical, and an upholder of personal liberty. He voted in 1867 with Mr. J. S. Mill in favour of the enfranchisement of women, and his name appears in every

division that has taken place on the question in the House of Commons. His long and honourable Parliamentary career was fitly closed by the last vote he gave before his resignation, which was recorded in favour of Mr. Woodall's clause in the division on June 13th. Mr. Taylor is succeeded in the representation of Leicester by Mr. J. Allanson Picton, whose opinions as regards questions of justice for women are similar to those of his predecessor.

CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

LIVERPOOL CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATION.

A special meeting of the council of the Liverpool Constitutional Association was held on June 10th to consider the Franchise Bill, Mr. A. B. Forwood in the chair. A resolution was passed in favour of the insertion in the Bill of Mr. Woodall's clause for extending the franchise to women; another was in favour of the removal of the disqualification of policemen from voting; and the third contained a strong representation in favour of the retention of rating as a qualification for the franchise.

MIDDLESBOROUGH CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of the officers and executive committee of the Middlesborough Conservative Association, held at the Conservative Club on June 7th, it was resolved that the chairman, Mr. W. B. Dick, should sign a petition on behalf of the meeting in favour of the extension of the franchise to women.

LIBERAL ASSOCIATIONS.

LONDON COUNCIL OF THE JUNIOR LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of the London Council of the Junior Liberal Association, held in the Council-room, Exeter Hall, on the 10th June, with Mr. F. Dolman (President) in the chair, the following resolution, proposed by Mr. Percy Lemon, and seconded by Mr. W. A. Procktor, was almost unanimously carried:—"That this council is of opinion that no Bill for the extension of the franchise is complete that does not add to the electorate of the United Kingdom the large class of women who are householders, but who are precluded from Parliamentary voting owing only to their sex."

COBDEN CLUB RADICAL ASSOCIATION.

At the discussion meeting of the Cobden Club Radical Association, Kensal Road, on June 18th, the following resolution was adopted by 20 votes against 17:—"That it is the opinion of this meeting that it is right and just that the suffrage should be extended to women."

PETITIONS.

THIRTEENTH REPORT.—Continued from page 138.

Table listing petitions with columns for date (May/June), location (e.g., Wicklow, Dublin, Sandymount, Eliza Ann Beale, Glasgow, Cork, Sandymount, Meath, Kingstown, Hastings, Birkenhead, Newport, Carlisle, Tipperary), and number of signatures.

(Thirteenth Report of Petitions continued next month.)

Obituary.

MR. J. HINDE PALMER, Q.C., M.P.—We greatly regret to record the death of this gentleman, who, during the time he represented Lincoln in Parliament, concerned himself most with the amendment of the law relating to women. In 1873 and again in 1882 Mr. Hinde Palmer had charge of the Married Women's Property Bill. He was also a steady and consistent supporter of the franchise for women. Mr. Palmer sat for Lincoln from 1868 till 1874; was re-elected in 1880, and represented the city until his death last month at the age of 76.

MANCHESTER SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, JUNE, 1884.

Table listing subscriptions and donations for June 1884, including names like Mr. J. W. Teale, Mrs. F. Bright, Miss Hopkins, etc., and a total of £119 13 6.

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, TREASURER, 28, Jackson's Row, Manchester.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS, FROM MAY 28TH TO JUNE 28TH, 1884.

Table listing subscriptions and donations from May 28th to June 28th, 1884, including names like Mrs. Sterling, Mr. A. Wilson, Mrs. Peek, etc., and a total of £100 16 6.

LAURA M'LAREN, TREASURER, 29, Parliament-street, S.W.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS FOR JUNE, 1884.

Table listing subscriptions and donations for June 1884, including names like Mrs. Garnett, Rev. A. N. Blatchford, Miss Kennedy, etc., and a total of £33 14 6.

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