

The questions, therefore, for us as Liberal women to consider now are—

On what lines is the new Programme to be formulated?

Is Women's Suffrage to be included in it or not?

How are we to act so as to secure its inclusion?

As for four years no notice has been taken of our entreaties, it is clear that we can only shew that we are in real earnest on the subject by refusing to work in future for any Parliamentary candidate who is opposed to the measure.

In so doing we cannot now be accused of 'injuring the Liberal Party,' or of 'wrecking important Liberal measures.' We shall be giving due notice of our intentions, and so acting in perfect fairness; and we shall be shewing plainly that we not only 'want' Women's Suffrage, but that we mean to have it.

3. It is repeatedly urged that each Member or Association is allowed entire freedom in the matter of working or not working for any candidate. **But freedom of this sort is a dead letter.** For, when belonging to a large Society like the W. L. F., each individual Member or Association feels, and rightly feels, it disloyal and anomalous to act in opposition to the general wishes and policy of the Federation.

4. I said, four years ago, that any appearance of threat on the part of the W. L. F. would be useless, because it was not then of sufficient importance to be regarded by the Liberal Party as a power to be reckoned with. We were then not strong enough to strike a blow for ourselves.

But this also has changed.

The W. L. F. during the last few years has so grown in strength and organisation that it has come to be recognised as a distinct power in elections. Those who have strength can strike; and if the W. L. Federation says now in Council, 'It is time that Women's Suffrage be included in the Liberal Programme, and we will not in future work for any Parliamentary candidate who is opposed to it,' you may rely on it that Liberal leaders and candidates will think twice before they throw overboard such a large army of zealous workers.

I urge you, therefore, to be strong and fearless; to have the courage of your convictions; and to sound a clear and unmistakable note on the subject by carrying the Resolution that stands in Mrs. Eva McLaren's name.

✓ M. TAYLOR.

Leaflet No. 1., by Mrs. Jacob Bright.

✓
UNION OF
PRACTICAL SUFFRAGISTS,

Within the Women's Liberal Federation.

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. LEEDS, Tower House, Birdhurst Road, Croydon.

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SHALL WE WORK FOR CANDIDATES WHO ARE AGAINST  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE?  
~~~~~

Some women say "I'm a Liberal first and a Woman's Suffragist after."

Another answers, "I'm a Woman before I'm a Liberal," Very good! but can we not broaden even that into "I'm a responsible human soul with duties not only to my sister women, but to the whole world."

How does that bear on the woman's vote and what is our duty with regard to it?

Voting means the power to influence legislation directly and the woman's vote is an essential condition for obtaining the reforms urgently needed for them. We have the right to ask also "Is it not equally needed for the furtherance of the measures in the Programme of the Liberal Party?"

The Liberal Programme, so far as it goes, is a noble Programme, based on the moral law of justice and equality, but the nation has rejected it! No! **NOT** the nation, but the men of the nation.

The power to vote ought to be the instrument for great moral reforms as well as the safeguard against oppression of the merely physical life. It ought to be the expression of the will and aspiration of the people for the condition of a nobler humanity and a more perfect brotherhood, not only for our own country but for the whole world.

Now, how does this effect the woman's vote? The essential peculiarities of the woman's nature render her less liable to the temptations to crime and violence than those from which men suffer. Her acceptance also of great moral truths is much more ready and rapid than is the case with the majority of men.

I have just received the criminal returns from the Lancashire Constabulary for 1895. I choose those to illustrate my position, because there is probably no part of the country where the conditions of life so nearly resemble for women, those to which men are subject, owing to the large proportion of women employed in textile industries. I find from these returns the following facts:

	Male.	Female.
CLASS I.		
OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON, (including murder, malicious wounding, indecency and cruelty)	137	16
CLASS II		
OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY with violence (including Burglary, Robbery, Assaults and Extortion by threats to accuse of crime)	104	10

	Male.	Female.
CLASS III.		
Offences against Property, without violence (including stealing of horses, cattle, sheep, falsifying accounts and other frauds)	1284	322
Other offences in like proportion—		
Of Suicides there were	43	26
For Drunkenness there were apprehended	4469	1134

It will be seen from the above that men in Lancashire are, roundly speaking, four times more drunken than women, four times more dishonest, nearly nine times more murderous and cruel and ten times more violent and criminal.

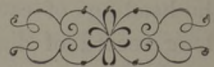
I want to call special attention to this because I have often heard men say (and women also!) "that women are not fit for the vote"! Now what constitutes fitness to govern others? Is not the first condition the power to control ourselves? are not sobriety, decency, mercy, gentleness and freedom from gross vice and crime qualifications for Citizenship?

I would ask our W.L.A.'s, are you satisfied with the way men govern this great empire? Open the pages of any newspaper and let your eye run down the headings of each column. Are they not one long record of disorder, violence, misery and incapacity?

Women! if you are not responsible for the dreadful passions, which now breed war, vice, crime and disease, if you cannot reproach your-

selves with the neglect to put down the fearful massacres in Armenia and Constantinople, the destruction of natives in South Africa, the misgovernment of Ireland, the horrors of Vivisection and the war of classes, it is to you and chiefly to you that we must look for a better state of things.

You are the peaceful factor in the world. Do not suffer yourselves to be made the mere tool of party. You are the embodiment of that divine motherly love, faith and patience which alone can free men from their present bondage. For thirty years the Liberal party has played with the great principle of representative Government, **so far as women are concerned.** I ask you for the sake of that Party, as well as for the maintenance of your own dignity, to call the men belonging to it to a sense of their obligation to Liberal Principles by refusing your support to all candidates not in favour of the Woman's vote.



Copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. at per 1/- 100.

✓
Leaflet No. II., by Miss Priestman.]

Union of Practical Suffragists,

Within the Women's Liberal Federation.

WOMEN & VOTES.

If women only understood the value of a vote they would work harder for its possession. Why have men striven to gain the Franchise? Because they knew it meant freedom and justice. They struggled for it when they obtained the Magna Charta. They struggled for it in America, in the War of Independence. They threatened rebellion in England, in 1832 to win the Reform Bill. They gave money and time and strength for years to give votes to agricultural labourers in 1885. And women would give money and time and strength to gain votes for themselves if they would but take example from those who have understood politics better than they do. A vote is a passport to freedom and justice.

On every Parliamentary Election day, a black mark, as it were, is set on certain houses in town and country. That black mark means that the inhabitant is cut off

from a great advantage. It means that the inhabitant is too ignorant or too debased to have any control over the making of the laws. The house may be tidy, the rent and taxes may be paid, the farm may be admirably managed, but the inhabitants are women, and the stamp of their inferiority is so set upon their dwelling. Members of the House of Commons go to Parliament and take advantage of their helplessness and pass measures without regard to their interests, or considerations of their wishes, because they are non-electors. And there are women who are so blind to this humiliation that they take pains to return men to the House of Commons who insist on its continuance.

Women may fancy they have influence, and may hold great meetings or pass resolutions, and forward them to Parliament in favour of peace, or temperance, or any other holy cause, believing they are doing a great work, but Professor Stuart, M.P., says it is like pulling a bell rope to which no bell is attached, or speaking into a telephone when no one is listening—because there is no link between women and the House of Commons. That link is the vote, and if women would help no candidate into Parliament who is opposed to their enfranchisement, that link would soon be forged, by the passing of the Women's Suffrage Bill.

Copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Hon. Sec.
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Leaflet No. III., by Mrs. Leeds.

UNION OF Practical Suffragists,

Within the Women's Liberal Federation.

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. LEEDS, Tower House, Birdhurst Road, Croydon.

At a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the above Union, held October 7th, 1896, it was unanimously resolved to print and circulate among Women's Liberal Associations the two following important letters.

From Mrs. ———, Hon. Sec. ———, W.L.A., to
Mrs. Leeds, Hon. Sec. Union of Practical Suffragists.

September 8th, 1896.

Dear Madam,

In reply to your Circular sent to the — W. L. A., I have to say that this Association considers the question raised by your new organization to have been decided by a majority of Associations, against such a policy, at the Federation meeting in June last, and we regard such an Association as the one which you ask us to join, as disloyal to the larger body, and tending to defeat its own object—namely the advancement of the Suffrage question.

Believe me, yours truly,

On behalf of the

W.L.A.

Mrs. Leeds' Reply.

Croydon,
September 13th, 1896.

Dear Madam,

I am quite aware that there is a difference of opinion, as to whether the time has come for women to refuse to work for Candidates not in favour of giving them the Suffrage, but the fact that the majority voted against it at our last Council Meeting, is no guarantee that they will do so at the next.

There is no finality in politics,—we Liberals, especially, are constantly adding fresh items to our programme. It is as much the business of the Women's Liberal Association to initiate a policy, as Dr. Spence Watson informed the members of the Men's Federation it was their business, and we who feel strongly on this subject, shall never dream of giving it up because at present we are in a minority,—we shall go on working until we become a majority.

I entirely repudiate your imputation of disloyalty to the Women's Liberal Federation. I have always been one of its warmest supporters, and I think the name of Mrs Eva McLaren on our Committee, should have been enough to protect us from such a calumny.

The best friends of the women's cause, such as Sir James Stansfeld, Mr. Jacob Bright, Sir Arthur Arnold, and Mr. Walter McLaren, all of whom have been in Parliament, assure us that so long as women continue to work for Candidates who oppose our claims, no one will believe we are really in earnest, and that it makes it very difficult for Members of Parliament to advocate our cause, when women themselves are so half-hearted about it. May I ask that you will bring this letter before your Committee.

Believe me, yours truly,
HESTER LEEDS,

Hon. Sec. Union of Practical Suffragists.

Copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. at 6d. per 100.

Leaflet No. V. by Mrs. Walter Grove.

UNION OF PRACTICAL SUFFRAGISTS,

Within the Women's Liberal Federation.

Hon. Sec. : Mrs. LEEDS, Tower House, Birdhurst Road, Croydon.

"LOYALTY IS THE BEST POLICY."

THE chief reason for the existence of all women's political associations would seem to most thinking people to be in order to obtain an acknowledgment of women's status as recognized political factors.

So long as they are denied the right to vote, there is obviously no such recognition.

Also obviously, such women as are willing to work for candidates who do not disguise their intention, should they be elected, of voting against this question, are working against obtaining an acknowledgment of their own existence as political entities.

Further, members of the Women's Liberal Federation who do so, are working against one of the avowed objects of the Federation to which they belong, and are practically admitting that they are willing to continue to exert their influence from without.

Whatever may be their private feelings in the matter, the above is the only inference that can be drawn by the uninitiated from their action.

If all women were content with the outside influence they possess, the formation by them of vast public political organisations would appear to be superfluous waste of their energy; since most of the men, who are opposed to Women's Enfranchisement, proclaim loudly and con-

stantly their belief in the beneficial influence women as individuals in their private capacity can and do have on the political work of their generation.

The saying "We are Liberals first and Suffragists afterwards," has been pronounced and cheered by women as if it were a fine sentiment!

But it is an unworthy sentiment, for the essence of Liberalism consists of Justice, Liberty, and Equality.

Unenfranchised subjects do not enjoy true liberty, they have not equality of opportunity, and therefore they are not justly treated.

No man can fairly claim to be a true Liberal, who perceives the necessity of obtaining legal recognition of interests, and legal redress of grievances, only so far as his own, and that the stronger sex, is concerned.

There are women doubtless for whom the enactment of Liberal measures possesses greater interest than the enfranchisement of some of their own sex, amongst whom they would not perhaps at first number.

But let these ladies ask working women if that is of the greatest interest to them.

Let them ask especially those women whose means of obtaining a livelihood was in danger of being taken from them, through the wisdom, philanthropy, and chivalry of a Liberal government,—as instanced by some of the clauses in the recent Factory Act, and the proposed interference with the labour of prospective and actual mothers suggested by so unquestioned a Liberal as Mr. John Burns.

Let women who exalt so called Liberalism above the independent interests of their own sex ask such women as those above mentioned if they are content to be "Liberals first, and Women Suffragists afterwards."

It is the wage-earning women other workers should

consider first, as being those whom the Suffrage will most affect, not those, amongst whom there are many, whose condition would probably not be affected one iota by the gift of the vote, from the day they obtained it, till the hour of their death.

Lastly there is an idea that it would be unbecoming dictation on the part of those in authority to make it a "rule" of the Federation that a candidate's sympathy with, or at least his pledge of passivity with regard to, Woman's Suffrage should be the condition of help from Women's Liberal Associations.

But the position of those who have adopted this attitude will be found on analysis to be untenable.

It is a "rule" for instance that "Liberals" who are against Home Rule are to be opposed by Women's Liberal Associations.

This "ruling" is unhesitatingly accepted and rightly so, and is not considered "dictation."

But it cannot be solely on account of the intrinsic justice of Home Rule, because there is amongst the Federation members an even stronger belief in the intrinsic justice of Women's Enfranchisement.

It is because a certain section of Liberal English *men* chose to adopt Home Rule as part of their political programme.

Are women to wait patiently until these same men, or a sufficient number of others, also choose to adopt Women's Suffrage as part of their political programme?

Or are we to take steps, as the Irish did, to make it to their interest so to adopt our cause?

What these steps are to be, the women of the Liberal Federation are now urged to consider.

The "patience methods" have been tried for thirty years, and we are no nearer the attainment of our goal—indeed, even further from it, judged by parliamentary votes, than we were fifteen years ago.

Should we not make use of our powerful political organisation, in a splendid united rally round the disjointed forces of Liberalism, and urge the party to accept our undivided help on our own terms?

What is the alternative prospect? It must be apparent to all that we shall lose ground by being divided.

Yet it is obviously impossible for those of us who have formulated a fresh, and as we think the only effectual, policy to withdraw from our position.

On the other hand it is easy for those who have hitherto opposed us to abandon their position with perfect dignity, and without violating a single item of their political faith.

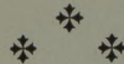
The members of this Union are not enemies within the camp, but equally loyal followers of a great political creed.

For surely it is sycophantish hypocrisy to pretend that Home Rule for Ireland should possess greater interest for the women of England, Scotland, and Wales than their own Enfranchisement.

AGNES G. GROVE,
District Councillor.

Copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. at 1/- per 100.

Parliamentary Echoes



Extracts from
Speeches on
Women's
Suffrage in
the House of
Commons

PUBLISHED BY THE
Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage
10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER
1896

Parliamentary Echoes.

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PUBLISHED BY THE
Central Committee of the National Society for
Women's Suffrage
10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER
1896

To

The Newly Elected

M.P.'s

*who have had no opportunity of voting
in favour of the enfranchisement of the
unrepresented householders and
ratepayers of the British Isles.*

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Parliamentary Echoes.

1866.

(Speech on Parliamentary Reform, April 27th).

Mr. Disraeli (*Lord Beaconsfield*).

“I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right, for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote.”

Mr. Disraeli voted for the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill in 1871; paired for it in 1872; and voted for it in 1873, 1875, and 1876, up to the time when he was created a peer.

1867.

(Introducing Amendment on the Representation of the People Bill, May 20th.)

Mr. John Stuart Mill.

“I rise, Sir, to propose an extension of the suffrage which can excite no party or class feeling in this House; which can give no umbrage to the keenest assertor of the claims, either of property or of mem-

1867

bers, an extension which cannot afflict the most timid alarmist with revolutionary terrors, or offend the most jealous democrat as an infringement of popular rights, or a privilege granted to one class of society at the expense of another. There is nothing to distract our attention from the simple question, whether there is any adequate justification for continuing to exclude an entire half of the community, not only from admission, but from the capability of being ever admitted within the pale of the Constitution, though they may fulfil all the conditions legally and constitutionally sufficient in every case but theirs.

"Sir, within the limits of our constitution, this is a solitary case. There is no other example of an exclusion which is absolute. If the law denied a vote to all but the possessors of £5,000 a year, the poorest man in the nation might—and now and then would—acquire the suffrage, but neither birth, nor fortune, nor merit, nor exertion, nor intellect, nor even that great disposer of human affairs—accident,* can ever enable any woman to have her voice counted in those national affairs which touch her and hers as nearly as any other person in the nation.

"It is true that women have great power. It is part of my case that they have great power; but

* Except the blunder of a clerk, who takes an unusual Christian name to be that of a man.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

1867

they have it under the worst possible conditions, because it is indirect and therefore irresponsible. I want to make this great power a responsible power. I want to make the woman feel her conscience interested in its honest exercise. I want her to feel that it is not given to her as mere means of personal ascendancy. I want to make her influence work by a manly interchange of opinion, and not by cajolery. I want to awaken in her the political point of honour."

1870.

(*Debate on MR. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill to Remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women, May 4th, 1870.*)

Col. Sykes.

"I will tell the House what the India Company did. For a hundred years they granted to women having the money qualification, the right to vote. And for whom? Why for twenty-four men who, in position, dignity, and power were at all events equal to any member of this House, for they had to govern 200,000,000 of people, whereas each of us represents only the 658th part of a legislature for governing only 30,000,000. Under these circumstances I do feel that we are doing a great deal of injustice to the female community. They are as capable of exercising the franchise as we are, and they have a full right and title to exercise it." (Cheers.)

1870.

Dr. Lyon Playfair.

"Our legislature is continually occupying itself with questions to diminish the inequalities of the law with regard to women. There are movements everywhere, even among our universities themselves. The universities, feeling the injustice of the exclusion which they had hitherto practised, are now, in a timid and halting way, opening their examinations to half the race who have hitherto been excluded. This is less the consequence of women's agitation than an awakening of the public conscience to the fact that all capable citizens, whatever their sex, and whatever their position, ought to have equal rights. It is because this Bill completes our sense of national justice that I give my hearty support to it."

Mr. Muntz.

"I want to ask honourable gentlemen why rate-payers worth many thousands a year should be prevented from voting for members of Parliament merely because of their difference of sex. I know a lady worth £70,000 or £80,000 a year, who in the election of members of Parliament has no vote at all, while her gardener, her groom, and other male servants have a vote each. I am not in favour of granting votes to all women, but I think that in some cases they ought to have them."

1871.

(*Debate on MR. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill, May 3rd.*)

Mr. Eastwick.

"There was a special reason why this country should be the first to adopt the enfranchisement of women. That reason was the immense influence which the example of England must exert upon the 200 millions of Asiatics in India, among whom, with a few brilliant exceptions, women had been degraded to a state little better than slavery. How could we expect that Indian women would be emancipated from the imprisonment of the Zenana, or be admitted to the full privileges of education, so long as we continued to proclaim the inferiority of women in this country? If for no other reason he should support this measure, as a blow dealt at the slavery of women in the East, and as a reply to the besotted demand of the Chinese Government, that schools for female education should be dissolved." (Cheers.)

The Right Hon. Lord John Manners (Duke of Rutland).

"What he contended was that if the principle of enfranchising women ratepayers was sound in relation to other elections it was equally sound in relation to the election of members of Parliament. . . . His right hon. friend appeared to say by his argument that women might be permitted to vote for

1871

such inferior bodies as Poor Law Guardians, Boards of Education, and Municipal Councils, but that they had no right to share in the election of so august a being as a member of the House of Commons. Now, he was prepared at all times to vindicate, if necessary, the rights and privileges of that House, but to assert that female ratepayers were not worthy to form a part of constituencies of members of Parliament was an arrogation of personal dignity and superiority which he was by no means able to support. Under all those circumstances, he confessed he was unable to see any reason why the female ratepayers should be any longer excluded from the exercise of the franchise at Parliamentary elections, and he should therefore give his support to the second reading of the Bill."

The Right Hon. George Ward Hunt.

"I have never before recorded my vote in favour of this measure, and lately I have not voted at all upon the question, because when changes occur in one's opinions, one does not like to commit oneself to such changes on a sudden, or without mature deliberation; but having considered the matter calmly, I have come to the conclusion that it is no longer right to refuse to accede to the principles contained in this Bill. (Hear.) It is not often that measures coming from that quarter of the House

1872-3

receive my support, but this particular measure commended itself to my reason. I believe that the feeling against granting the franchise to women is the result of old prejudice, and not of reason, and therefore I shall with great pleasure support the second reading of this Bill."

1872.

ATTORNEY GENERAL (*May 1st*).

Sir John Coleridge (Lord Coleridge).

"The Bill commends itself to me, because it asserts a principle, not an abstract principle, but a practical and concrete principle, based upon a matter of fact. The principle asserted by the Bill I take to be this—that the women whom it proposes to enfranchise, are as a matter of fact, at least as much entitled to the exercise of the franchise it confers upon them as the men who are now to exercise it." (Hear hear.)

1873.

(*April 30th.*)

Mr. Jacob Bright.

"In the last session of Parliament we took great pains on the subject of illiterate voters. It was interesting to see the two Houses of Parliament spending I do not know how many hours in devising

1873

schemes by which men who were too stupid to vote without assistance, should, nevertheless, be enabled to record a vote. We devised one scheme, and one scheme was devised in the other Chamber, and I am bound to say that these unfortunate men have taken advantage of the labour which we bestowed upon them. In the recent elections illiterate electors have shown no reluctance whatever to come forward and express a desire to influence the proceedings of this House. Take, for example, the last election at Pontefract. 1,236 men polled, and out of that number there were 199 persons who declared themselves unable to vote without assistance. That is nearly one-sixth of the whole number of voters polled. Now, Sir, am I putting forward an unreasonable claim, or demanding anything very extravagant when I ask the House of Commons which has bestowed so much care in devising means to enable illiterate men to vote, not to continue to withhold the suffrage from women of education and property?"

The Rt. Hon. J. W. Henley.

"I have hitherto voted against this Bill, but I have lately watched carefully the operation of the exercise of the franchise both in Municipal and in School Board Elections by women, and as I think it has been beneficial in these cases, I do not see

1873

any reason why it should not be beneficial in Parliamentary Elections. What my honourable friend has said has confirmed me in the view I have adopted. He says the French revolutionists considered that they would not have the women. Well, I do not want us to be revolutionists, and that is an additional reason why we, at all events, should give the franchise to women. The principle is that women should have the right of voting. I confess that I have always hitherto voted against the Bill, but for the reasons I have stated I shall now give it my hearty support."

1875.

(Introducing Bill, April 7th).

Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C.

"Four-fifths of the measures which are now before Parliament are such as directly affect women, on which they are entitled to be heard, and on which their opinion would be extremely valuable. When a large number of persons make demands which are not in themselves unreasonable, they ought, as far as possible, to be conceded; and it is impossible to deny the fact that a very large number of women desire to possess the political franchise. Can any hon. member be surprised at the number of women who desire the privilege, or rather I should say the

1875

right, which it is proposed to confer upon them by this Bill? There are no less than 3,000,000 of women in this country who are earning their bread, either by their brains or their hands, and are entirely self-supporting. In this metropolis alone, there are upwards of 4,000 female employers of labour, all of whom have to exert themselves in business for the purpose of earning their livelihood. I daresay I shall be told that in the society in which hon. members of this House move there is no such desire as that to which I allude; that in the drawing-rooms of London not only is there no opinion in favour of the Bill, but on the contrary, the majority of opinion would be found to be in opposition to it. I entreat the House not to be led away by any statement of this kind. It is not those who are nursed in the lap of wealth, who live in luxurious drawing-rooms, who are protected by fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, who feel the pinching necessity of the case. I care not for the minions of fortune and those who are sheltered from the storms of adversity by the possession of rich and happy homes, but I plead for the tens of thousands of women who, unsheltered by marriage, are obliged to fight the hard battle of life for themselves."

1876.

(Debate on MR. FORSYTH'S Bill, April 26th.)

Mr. Fawcett (Right Hon. Henry).

"Every one admits the importance now of giving to women the best education that they possibly can enjoy. If this is the case, should not the women of this country have some power in deciding to what extent the vast educational endowments possessed by this country should be devoted to the education of women? Then, again, in this House we constantly have industrial legislation protecting women. Not long ago we discussed a Bill for limiting the hours of labour of women; and in the course of that discussion the influence and feelings of women were again and again referred to. When you have to appeal to the opinions, the wishes, and the sentiments of a class to influence your legislation, the only direct, and the only certain, and the most constitutional appeal is the appeal to the influence they exercise upon that question. . . . Women look forward to it with the best and most proper of all motives. Women who are actuated by no desire to leave their homes, women who are second to none in their interest and devotion to their children, these women look forward to the passing of this Bill, not from any selfish or improper motives, not from any love of display, but because they think it will improve the welfare of the class to which they belong, and add to the general welfare of the country. . . ."

1876

"I believe whenever you enfranchise a class, the first result of that enfranchisement is to make those who are enfranchised take a keener and a deeper interest in all that concerns the public affairs of the country. It does not draw them from their homes, it does not draw them from their shops, it does not draw them from their daily labour; but I believe that all experience will show that those who are the best workmen, those who are the best traders, and those who are the best merchants are those who are the best citizens; and I believe this will hold equally true when that day shall arrive when women who are ratepayers shall be enfranchised."

Sir Robert Anstruther.

"As to the revolutionary argument, so far from its being revolutionary, it strikes me that it is a Conservative measure. I wonder why every man on the other side does not vote for its second reading, and more than that, why Her Majesty's Government has not long ago taken the matter up with the view of passing the Bill, for I believe that it is as sound, and as wise, and as constitutional and as Conservative a measure as can possibly be introduced into this House. I shall certainly most heartily support this measure."

1877

(June 6th.)

Mr. Jacob Bright (The Right Hon.).

"One-half the oratory of our time, and some of the finest oratory, probably, that Englishmen ever heard, has been expended in teaching people the great advantage of representation. (Hear, hear.) Women have been learners just as men have been learners; this lesson has been taught them; and far from being surprised at it, I should have been greatly surprised if they had not learned it. Look at what has occurred in the change of the character of this House since the passing of the Act of 1867. How differently now we approach any question which working men may bring before us. We approach it in a totally different spirit, because we have the great advantage of being responsible to those for whom we legislate; and therefore we come to this House with a degree of knowledge which we should not otherwise possess. Look at the change that was made in the labour laws. Look at the sudden disappearance of a mass of prejudice that was not creditable to this House, and consider that no harm whatever has followed, but, on the contrary, much good. Let the truth be spoken—women want to feel that any questions in which they are interested will be considered in this House in the same serious manner and in the same earnest spirit that are now exhibited whenever questions affecting working men are introduced."

1878.

*(June 19th).***Mr. Gorst (The Right Hon. Sir John).**

"I shall vote for the Bill simply because I am in favour of the removal of restriction. It takes away a restriction which I think is unnecessarily imposed by the law, and it leaves women in exactly the same position as that which is occupied by men. I consider that they are as fully entitled to the franchise as men, and that they should be as free as men to make such use of the franchise when they get it as they in their own discretion shall think proper. I therefore give my cordial support to the Bill as a Bill simply for the removal of disabilities, and I do it on the principle of personal liberty, and because I think you ought not to tie women down by artificial restrictions, but should allow them to be free and equal with men in the eye of the law, with full discretion to act as they think fit."

Mr. J. T. Hibbert (The Right Hon. Sir J. T., K.C.B.)

"I do not wish to use any exaggerated language as to the result of giving the vote to women householders. I do not think myself that any great difference would be made in the membership of this House; but a grievance felt by a large class would be done away with, and we have always legislated in this country with the object of doing away with

1878

grievances. At a time when an election is about to take place, if women feel that they have grievances to remedy—that the law in respect to their property is not satisfactory, that the law with respect to assaults upon women is in need of improvement, or that the education of women demands legislative attention—I do not see why it should not be in their power to exercise a direct influence upon the legislature. I think the influence they would bring to bear upon the election would be a just and good influence, and would not be exercised to their own injury, but to the great benefit of the constitution."

1883.

*(Debate on Mr. Hugh Mason's Resolution, July 6th).***Baron de Worms (Lord Pirbright).**

"We know that in the course, probably of this Parliament, a large measure of electoral reform will be introduced. Now, what is the nature of that reform? Broadly it is to extend the franchise now existing in boroughs to labourers in the counties. We may assume that the labourers in counties are not as highly educated as men in the same walk of life in the boroughs. Still it is intended to extend the franchise to those men, but at the same time to refuse to extend the franchise to those women who may be landowners in the country, and who may

1883

actually employ those men. Why is this? Simply because they are women! You give the vote to yokels, but you refuse it to the educated women on whose bread they live. A greater absurdity can hardly be conceived. In point of fact these women who own land are of a very considerable number. In England and Wales, according to the return of owners of land in 1872, called the New Domesday Book, the number of women who were landowners of one acre and upwards was given as 37,806 out of 269,547, a proportion of one in seven. In Ireland the proportion is somewhat less, it is only one in eight, and if we assume the proportion of women householders to men householders to be the same in the non-municipal and the municipal areas, we arrive at a total of between 300,000 and 400,000 women, who, being householders rated for the relief of the poor, would be rightly entitled to this vote. These figures appear to me to speak for themselves."

Mr. Henry Fowler (The Right Hon. Sir H. H.).

"The English constitution recognises no question of fitness, as far as intellectual qualification is concerned; the English constitution, in conferring the franchise, recognises no principle of social position, of intellectual fitness, or of moral culture. The franchise in this country is given in counties to the owners or occupiers of real property, and is given in boroughs to the occupiers of real property. Of

1883

course no one will suppose that I am overlooking the fact that persons disqualified by the commission of crime are excluded; what I say is, excluding that obvious disqualification, that whether the voter be immoral or moral, whether he be good or bad, if he owns property, and discharges the obligations of the State in respect of that property, the law of the land confers upon him the right to vote in the selection of representatives in Parliament. That is the principle of the English constitution. Now, we have admitted in our constitution a class of owners and occupiers of property of the female sex, and it rests upon those who object to their being entitled to all the advantages, so to speak, of property, to show why they should not enjoy them. It has been put to-night, 'Why should women have the franchise?' I rather put it, 'Why should they not?' Why should not a spinster, or a widow, a woman discharging all the obligations of the State, paying all the required taxes to the State, why should she not enjoy the right of her unit voice, so far as directing the policy of the State is concerned?"

Mr. Courtney (Right Hon. Leonard).

"One would have thought that the enfranchisement of women in respect of boards of guardians might have tended to thwart the operation of the poor law, yet, as a matter of fact, a totally different result

1883

had been witnessed, and so successful had been the experiment of admitting women, and so charitably and admirably had they endeavoured to carry out the operations of the poor law, that the Local Government Board has used its power of nominating women as guardians where they have not been elected. If we take the case of elections to the school boards, I ask is there a single thing that is of more importance to the nation than the education of the democracy of the future? And yet we give women votes for school boards, and allow them to be elected as members of those boards, because they have to do with the education of girls. In making women capable of sitting on school boards, we have supplied them with a strong argument in favour of this motion, for the work of the school boards far transcends in importance the ordinary questions that come before us at general elections."

1884.

*(In Committee on Representation of People Bill,
June 10th.*

Mr. Woodall.

"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

1884

would have been impossible for that improvement to be brought about without the active help and the intelligent co-operation of those women-workers who have given themselves up to it. . . .

"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. It is said, why bring women of this kind into the vortex of party politics? Well I think it would not be difficult to shew that the addition of the leaven of such capable citizens as these would dignify and elevate political life."

*(Adjourned Debate on MR. WOODALL'S Clause,
June 12th).*

The Right Hon. Lord John Manners.

"To me it is a very simple, and almost a humdrum 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."

1884.

The Right Hon. James Stansfeld.

The right hon. gentleman [Mr. Gladstone] dealt with this as a new subject. Well, Sir, we cannot make that admission. We say on the contrary that this question has been before 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. . . . Very nearly half the members of the Liberal party who have at one time or another expressed their 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. The women to be enfranchised under the clause would be first of all women of property, intelligence and education, having a *status* in this 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

* *I.e.*, Reform Bill of 1884

1884

step into their shoes and to take upon themselves the burden and responsibilities which had previously devolved on 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."

Col. King-Harman.

". . . An argument which I consider a most unworthy one, *viz.*, 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. gentleman guarantee that of 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 two million men there are none who are living on the wages of sin of 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

1884

from it. I consider the argument an unworthy one, and one which will not bear the test of examination."

Mr. Joseph Cowen.

"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.)

The Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford Northcote (Lord Iddesleigh).

"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

1884

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 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

1892

still lower in proportion in the balance by the large addition you are making to the franchise."

1892.

(Introducing Bill, April 22nd.)

Sir Albert Kaye Rollit.

"May I now remind the House that this is an age of successive and successful franchises—successive notwithstanding the same arguments as are now used, *viz.*, that the votes are not wanted, that the unfranchised classes are indirectly represented, and that their enfranchisement will lead us no one knows where—and successful, especially, in securing attention to, and proper precedence in the consideration of, the interests of the classes on whom the votes have been conferred? (Applause.) And so we hope this extension will secure proper regard for the interests of those who are now unrepresented among the electorate. (Hear, hear.) It was once said by the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian, speaking of a large class of men, 'They have no votes, and so may be safely neglected.' I heartily accept this expression as applicable to those with which this measure deals.

The arguments of our opponents are too often contradictions in terms. (Hear, hear.) If women press for this extension, then 'they are agitators, and

1892

their demand should not be complied with; ' if they do not agitate, 'then they are indifferent to the subject.' If many petitions are presented, then 'they are got up by organisation; ' if the petitions are few, then 'you see women do not want this extension.' If the platform is occupied, then 'there is reason to fear the invasion of Parliament by the advocates of female suffrage; ' if the platform is not resorted to, then 'there is no popular feeling in favour of the proposal.' (Laughter and cheers.) The allegation that it is not wanted has invariably been urged against the extension of the franchise to any class. It is based on the fallacy of universality. It is not true to say that women do not want the franchise, though some may be indifferent or opposed to it. The only true proposition is, as in most other cases, that many do and some don't wish for votes, and the exercise of the franchise will be optional."

Mr. George Wyndham.

"If women householders are to be excluded and other householders are to be maintained, it can only be because they are incapable of exercising the vote for their own benefit, and for the benefit of the country. Why are they incapable? We have had some arguments advanced to prove that because women, at the last resource, are possessed of less physical force than men, therefore they are not

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entitled to the vote. But physical force is not everything, even in the more ordinary and more obvious pursuits of life; and in such an elaborate and complicated function of society as the exercise of the franchise, physical force is nothing at all. Physical force, unless propelled by the emotions and directed by the mind, achieves nothing in politics; and even supposing the whole fabric of society were to crumble about our ears, physical force amid the wreck of civilisation would still be of little avail unless so propelled and so directed. And, therefore, if we do not find that women stand on a lower level in moral and intellectual capacity we are not entitled to reject their claim on the ground that physically they are weaker than men. There is another argument or another assertion of the incapacity of women—namely, that they lack judgment, that they are not such good judges of political questions as men are. Surely, when we use such an argument we exaggerate not only the ability but the demands made upon the ability of our fellow voters in this country. It needs no Solon to vote for one man or the other when only two are presented for choice; but, letting that pass, even if a great quality of judgment were required, and even if women possessed less judgment than men, that would not invalidate their claim to the vote, for the argument for every reform has been not so much to increase the power of discernment, and to obtain a more accurate view from one stand-

1892

point, as to multiply the points of view. Then, in fine we have only to consider whether the point of view of these women who are independently earning their livelihood is a point of view which we can afford to ignore."

The Rt. Hon. Leonard Courtney.

"Bill if passed will establish the great principle that women not only economically and socially but politically must be regarded as persons who are more or less capable of self-dependence. And the influence which already operates to a large extent will, from the political operation of the vote, still more be strengthened and confirmed, so that woman in the future working out her own position and dependent upon her own exertions, would fortify the legislature and render it more responsible to her wants."

The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour.

"There is one argument which has been used which I desire directly to traverse. We have been told that to encourage women to take an active part in politics is degrading to the sex, and that received the assent of an hon. friend of mine below the gangway. It has received the assent of almost every speaker to-day. I should think myself grossly inconsistent and most ungrateful if I supported that argument in this House, for I have myself taken the

1892.

chair at Primrose League meetings, and urged to the best of my ability the women of this country to take a share in politics, and to do their best in their various localities to support the principles which I believe to be sound in the interests of the country. After that, to come down to the House, and say I have asked these women to do that which degrades them appears to me to be most absurd.

“ . . . Depend upon it, if any further alteration of the franchise is brought forward as a practical measure this question will again arise, menacing and ripe for solution, and it will not be possible for this House to set it aside as a mere speculative plan advocated by a body of faddists. Then you will have to deal with the problem of women's suffrage, and to deal with it in a complete fashion.”

OPINIONS

OF

Leaders of Religious Thought

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Published by the
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PRICE THREEPENCE.

PREFACE.

The following expressions of opinion have either been kindly furnished in reply to a request from the Central and Manchester Women's Suffrage Committees, or have been taken by permission from essays or addresses already published by their several authors.

The Committees trust that these passages will tend to remove a fear still to be found in some quarters that the Women's Suffrage movement is not consonant with the religious aspect of women's work and duty.

March, 1895.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

"I shall be glad to see women in all cases holding the franchise on the same terms as men."

F. LUNDIN.

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL.

"I am a cordial supporter of proposals to give the Parliamentary franchise to women householders who would be entitled to have the Municipal and Local Government Franchises."

GEORGE SOUTHWELL.

THE BISHOP OF EDINBURGH.

(THE RT. REV. JOHN DOWDEN, D.D.)

“The sound reasons in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to qualified women householders seem, in my opinion, enormously to outweigh all that can be alleged to the contrary.”

JOHN DOWDEN.

THE REV. J. PERCIVAL, LL.D.

(Bishop Designate of Hereford).

“As I have given my support to the movement in favour of Women's Suffrage for I am afraid to say how many years, it is a pleasure to me to have an opportunity of wishing God-speed to you in your efforts on behalf of it.”

J. PERCIVAL.

THE DEAN OF DURHAM.

"I am strongly, as you know, in favour of Women's Suffrage, not on political grounds in the least, but on grounds (1) of justice, (2) of social gain, (3) of the benefit to be attained by a large addition to the Vote-power of persons not tied to party. Of these three reasons the middle one is strongest. For all good legislation in the future will have to deal with questions of civic and social good, and will be as closely connected with them as the Christian faith is; and we know that the women's vote will be right on all these subjects. I think, too, that the women's vote will help to educate the men voters, and will be a far more reasonable vote than that of the average. The outcry that we are taking women 'out of their sphere' is all selfishness. The men have not used their privilege any too well, and are afraid of a better example."

G. W. KITCHIN.

THE VERY REV. J. CAMERON LEES, D.D., LL.D.

*(Dean of the Chapel Royal of Scotland and of the
Order of the Thistle).*

“I am entirely in favour of granting the Suffrage to women. There is no reason known to me why they should be excluded from sharing in the Government of the country. Further, I am persuaded that their possession of the same political privileges with men will exercise an influence on public questions of the most beneficial kind, especially on certain questions in which women are naturally and even supremely interested. My best wishes are with the movement for their political emancipation.”

J. CAMERON LEES.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

"I am in favour of removing the restrictions at present imposed on women in respect to the Parliamentary Franchise. I see no reason why the Suffrage should be withheld from spinsters and widows possessed of the qualifications prescribed by statute."

H. ADLER.

THE REV. G. S. BARRETT, D.D. (NORWICH).

"I am heartily in favour of removing the unjust restrictions at present imposed on women in respect of the Franchise. I hold that women are entitled to the Franchise on the same conditions, and with the same privileges as are now extended to men.

GEORGE S. BARRETT.

THE REV. GEORGE BUICK, D.D.

(Vice-President Irish Archaeological Society).

“I heartily sympathize in the efforts which are being made to have the right of women to exercise the franchise recognised and legalised, and wish you and your associates in the good work speedy and complete success.”

GEORGE R. BUICK.

REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B., D.D.

“I consider that the influence of women will, as a whole, be more likely than that of men to promote Temperance, Purity, Peace and Religion—objects far more important than any mere Party Interests: and that the owner or occupier of any property should be equally entitled to a Municipal or Parliamentary vote, whether man or woman.”

NEWMAN HALL.

THE REV. JOHN MARSHALL LANG, D.D. (GLASGOW).

“I have sympathy with the movement *so far*. But I am apprehensive as to the extent to which we may be carried by it. I don't wish to see women in the House of Commons. I would give women who are themselves Rate-payers votes: not married women. I would have their co-operation in Social Reform, be they married or unmarried. If any Referendum on the Church in question were made I would have them with the right to say *Yes* or *No*. They are more vitally interested than even men in all that concerns Religious Life: for the Home is their Kingdom.”

JOHN MARSHALL LANG.

THE REV. THOMAS M. LINDSAY, D.D.

*(Professor of Divinity and Church History, Free Church
College, Glasgow.)*

“It may be that I have been exceptionally favoured in my surroundings, for I cannot understand how any one who has had mother, sister, wife and daughter can for a moment imagine that women are not able to give as intelligent opinions on political questions as the average educated man. Viewing the matter religiously, it has always appeared to me that to refuse the franchise to women is a survival of theoretical paganism and that it tends to perpetuate a good deal of the practical paganism which lingers in legislation and in social life. The most urgent practical reason for the extension of the franchise to women is given in the fact that Governments are more and more concerning themselves with labour legislation: that laws which regulate such a complicated problem as labour presents are sure to do more harm than good unless legislators are in touch with and thoroughly informed by those whose work is to be regulated; and that so long as working women are not in a position to use their votes to make their wishes respected by those who frame the law, the hard battle of life becomes harder and more hopeless to many thousands of oppressed toilers.”

THOMAS M. LINDSAY.

THE REV. R. J. LYND, D.D.

(Ex-moderator of the Irish Presbyterian Church).

“The movement on behalf of Women’s Suffrage is on the lines of modern salutary advance. The influence of women’s vote in moral, social and educational questions would prove a healthful and, in the highest sense, a conservative element in legislation. The present position of woman—the result of improved education—demonstrates her capacity for exercising as broad and intelligent a judgment on public questions as those at present entitled to the franchise; indeed she already does exercise the franchise in several departments,—and in all of them with much benefit to the public service.”

R. J. LYND.

THE REV. ALEXANDER MACKENNAL, D.D.

(BOWDON, CHESHIRE).

"I am in favour of extending the Parliamentary vote to women on the same conditions as to men for the following reasons :—

"1. In a democratic community like ours, the larger the number of persons who can be brought to interest themselves responsibly in legislation and administration, the better both for the community and the individuals.

"2. There is nothing to exclude women from the operation of this general principle; but every reason for including them. The intelligence of the average woman fits her equally with the average man for understanding the questions submitted to public vote. There are certain questions in which the judgment of men will probably remain decisive; but there are also certain questions in which the judgment of women would be of predominant value. Women have a special function to fulfil as well as a general function, in exercising the franchise.

"3. My experience as pastor of churches in which women deliberate, vote and act responsibly, as do the men, has shewn me how futile is the fear that they are constitutionally unfit for public service, or unable to learn from experience. My observation of their work on School Boards, Boards of Guardians, etc., has confirmed my belief that their counsel and co-operation are of high value."

ALEXANDER MACKENNAL.

REV. W. TODD MARTIN, D.D.

(Moderator of the Irish Presbyterian Church.)

"I cannot, as Moderator of the Irish General Assembly, offer an opinion on Women's Suffrage, for the Church has not given any deliverance on the question but personally I do not see any sufficient grounds for withholding from women householders and tax-payers the right of voting at Parliamentary Elections."

W. TODD MARTIN.

REV. JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D.

“This doctrine (Manhood and Womanhood Suffrage) look too wide a sweep for me, as an English Constitutionalist, who recognises no abstract civic rights, but only such as are earned by some sacrifices made or duties done. I find, however, that in its practical aims, your Society keeps well within this limit, and while protesting against sex-exclusion, would confer the Suffrage on such person only, woman or man, as, in point of age, nationality and capacity, held the citizen's qualification, and whether a householder, chargeable lodger, or responsible head of a family, shared the burdens and was subject to the service of the State. This I heartily approve, and have signed more than one petition to obtain. Out of the large mass of social experience whence alone wise legislation can proceed, no part can be spared that has anything to say. And, until the special contribution which is gathered around and stored within the life of women is welcomed to its place we may expect many a needless acquiescence in remediable wrongs and the continuance of a low standard of National Ethics.”

JAMES MARTINEAU.

REV. CHARLES MORELL, D.D. (DUNGANNON).

(Irish Presbyterian Church.)

When the North of Ireland Women's Suffrage Committee was being formed, more than twenty years ago, Dr. Morell was asked to join it. In agreeing to do so, he wrote:—

“That he had always observed, in the use made by women of the ecclesiastical franchise which they possess in the Presbyterian Church, their influence was a calming and a moderating one: and he believed it would be the same in the State as in the Church.” When asked now if his views remained unchanged in this respect, he replied, “Yes, I hold the same opinion still.”

REV. J. G. MURPHY, D.D., LL.D.

(Professor of Hebrew, Presbyterian College, Belfast).

“Property and the payment of taxes thereon are the qualifications in our country for the right of suffrage. We have not been able to prevent women from having property, and we do not exempt them from the payment of taxes on their own account. Equity seems to require that, so far as these go, the right of suffrage should also go. And the one half of our kind would be at least as safe voters as the other.”

J. G. MURPHY.

THE REV. S. A. BARNETT, M.A.

(Canon of Bristol. Warden of Toynbee Hall.)

“I am in favour of the removal of all legal restrictions on the occupations and voting powers of women. They should have the same liberty as men to follow any calling and to vote at any election. Their present position of subordination develops the more brutal and selfish instincts of men and at the same time provokes women to do acts and make claims which are unwomanly.”

SAML. A. BARNETT.

THE REV. J. LLEWELYN DAVIES, M.A.

(Vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale).

“With regard to the governing of the Country, the manifest tendency of affairs is towards a state of things in which women will share alike with men. It has been a strange anomaly indeed, that a constitution which places a woman on the throne, should forbid a woman to vote for a Member of Parliament. . . . So far as we can draw any inference at all from the action of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospels, we should reasonably conclude that he encouraged a certain freedom and independence in the conduct of women, such as would excite criticism in the present day. And this conclusion becomes far more significant when we recall the conditions of Oriental life with regard to the relations of the sexes, and the disorganised state of Jewish Society in that age. Whilst women were coming into prominence, and acting for themselves, and leaving their homes, as followers of Jesus, no hint is given that they would have been more in their places under the domestic roof, or that they ought to have left the active support of One Who was a centre of sarging political agitation to their husbands and brothers.”

J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.

THE REV. W. MOORE EDE, M.A.

(Rector of Gateshead on Tyne ; Hon. Canon of Durham)

“The extension of the Suffrage to women seems to me a logical consequence of Christian principle. In the Christian Society there is no superior sex, the equality of each member is recognized, the individuality of each person is sacred. St. Paul asserted this when he wrote ‘in Baptism there is neither male nor female.’ The rights of each are equal, therefore women are entitled to express their convictions and assert their individuality by voting if they choose to do so. The exclusion of women from the franchise is a relic of that false idea of the position of woman which merged her identity in that of her male protector, and regarded her as half the slave and half the plaything of man, having no rights apart from him. This false idea Christian principle has been slowly and steadily destroying for nineteen centuries, and man as well as woman has gained by the change, and will gain by the further extension of the principle to the Franchise.”

W. MOORE EDE.

HON. AND REV. ARTHUR T. LYTTTELTON, M.A.

(Vicar of Eccles, Late Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge)

“I am very strongly of opinion that the exclusion of women from a direct share in public affairs is an injury to the political life of the nation, and that their admission to the Suffrage, while it would strengthen and widen their influence in their own home and family lives, would raise the tone of politics and make legislation more adequate to the needs of the nation.”

ARTHUR T. LYTTTELTON.

THE REV. BASIL WILBERFORCE, M.A.

(Canon of Westminster).

“Yes, of course I am in favour of granting the Suffrage to women. The degrading superstition of woman's inferiority to man dies hard, but it is moribund. It virtually received its death blow when the promised 'seed of the woman,' the archetypal specimen of the human race, the Word in embodiment, was entrusted to a woman's care. In recent times, whenever she has come squarely into competition with man, woman has proved herself at least his equal in art, science, literature, diplomacy. In a nation which has been ruled over wisely and well for half a century by a woman, the political disability of women is a paradox and an absurdity. When the Parliamentary franchise is extended to women, I confidently anticipate legislative reforms which will facilitate the conversion of much national 'Old Adam' into 'New Man' through the liberated activity of 'New Woman.'”

BASIL WILBERFORCE.

VEN. J. M. WILSON, M.A.

(Vicar of Rochdale and Archdeacon of Manchester.)

“There exists at this moment in England a class of educated women such as never existed in equal numbers before. There are women to-day who are doing some of the finest intellectual, moral, humanitarian, and social work, work which is in the highest sense political. Women have to-day vindicated the claim of their sex to the recognition of individuality and of political equality, to an extent that was not possible in any previous age. To those who have had the privilege of knowing women of this sort it seems nothing short of a monstrous folly to continue to inflict on women any political disability whatever.”

THE REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS

*(President of the Congregational Union of England and
Wales for 1895).*

“While for twenty-five years I have had clear conviction as to the rectitude of Women’s Suffrage, that conviction deepens in view of the fact that the problems which Parliament has to face to-day are Church problems, and other Social problems in which women have at least as profound an interest as men and therefore have an equal right to take a Constitutional part in their settlement.”

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

REV. RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG (LIVERPOOL).

"I am persuaded that no single cause has so disastrously affected the moral condition of society as the exclusion of women from all share in the public policy of the nation. I do not now speak of the higher tone which I believe that they would give to the discussion and solution of those social problems which are fast becoming the main political problems of our time. I speak of the estimate in which, through their political nonentity, women are held by themselves and by men. I am convinced that the knowledge that a woman is not a citizen of the State, that she is supposed incapable of an intelligent and useful opinion concerning, and is denied an effective influence upon, the great public questions which constitute the subject-matter of politics, cheapens her in her own estimate and in that of the men with whom she associates. It is the remnant of the old and base conception of woman as simply existing as the plaything, the servant, the subject minister of man. It is this that too often deprives her of the self-respect which is her defence against all that degrades her. It is this that fills the young man with a persuasion of his natural superiority in judgment and in action. Even as the working man has arisen into a higher individuality since the State has recognised him as a constituent member, and is now capable of a self-restraint and a dignity unknown to him before, so the vast mass of women will, through their recognition as equal partners with men in the ordering of the nation, be raised above the frivolity which characterises too many of them, and compel from men a respect and consideration of a higher order than the unreal and sentimental chivalry or gallantry which passes as good manners in so many circles. I believe that the moral and social bearings of this question immeasurably surpass in importance the mere considerations of expediency; but I am also persuaded that the day when we shall do woman the simple justice of recognising that she, too, has a stake in our common country will see the dawn of an era, not only of more beneficent legislation, but also of a happier social life, a more equal companionship between the sexes, and a higher and sweeter morality than we have ever known."

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

THE REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

“I am an advocate of Women’s Suffrage because I am an old-fashioned Liberal, and I have always felt that every reason which Liberals urged for extending the franchise to unenfranchised men applied with equal force to unenfranchised women. ‘Taxation and representation go together,’ ‘They who have to obey the laws ought to have a hand in making the laws,’ ‘Class legislation is akin to tyranny,’ ‘The sense of responsibility can only come with the possession of political power.’ How familiar all the old cries are to us! But every one is, in the campaign for Women’s Suffrage, as good as ever. It is simply a question of right, justice and common fairness. Surely the proposal to abolish the custom or the law which insults and wrongs womanhood, by making it anywhere a disqualification for the Suffrage, ought to be considered on its merits, and altogether apart from anybody’s feelings or personal wishes—especially men’s. For in truth, that some men do not like it, but, on the contrary, chafe at it and resent it, may only shew that they are afflicted with a spirit of masterfulness, and need the chastening discipline of seeing women thinking and acting for themselves.”

J. PAGE HOPPS.

THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

“ It seems to me that in a Democratic age like this, the burden of proof lies upon those who would ostracise an entire sex, rather than upon those who are anxious to abolish all purely artificial and superfluous sex distinctions. The only serious argument I have ever heard against Women’s Suffrage is that women cannot fight, which seems to me to be a very powerful argument against war, not against women. In a civilized community like ours, where physical might is no longer legal right, it is eminently desirable in the general interests that women should participate in affairs as actively as possible. The immense majority of human beings on this Island are either women or children, and as modern legislation so directly affects women and children it is absurd to exclude the direct legislative influence of women. The tendency of the time is social rather than political, and moral even more than social. Now in all great social and moral issues the opinion of women is invaluable, Indeed, in spite of artificial prohibitions, women always have exerted an immense influence on politics and they take an active part in political contests to-day. That cannot be prevented and it is evident they will interfere more and more. Is it not highly desirable that when they do interfere they should be weighted with the direct responsibility of a personal vote ? ”

H. PRICE HUGHES.

REV. WM. PARK,

*Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee, Irish
Presbyterian Church.*

“It seems only fair that women householders should have a vote in the election of Members of Parliament, as they have in other things.

“So far I can gladly go with you and perhaps that may be sufficient for your purpose.”

WM. PARK.

PROF. ARCHIBALD ROBINSON,

Assembly's College, Belfast.

“The extension of the franchise to women householders has had for many years my hearty approval. Their claim is so clear and just that it scarcely admits of discussion. Their exclusion on the ground of sex is as unmanly as it is unreasonable, and its continuance is explicable only by the fact that ancient prejudices die hard.

“I am persuaded that in many ways the State would benefit by the political influence of women. Were Parliamentary Candidates aware that their success at the polling-booth depended considerably on the votes of women they would sympathize more with their opinions and social questions of great interest and worth would receive more attention from the House of Commons.”

A. ROBINSON.

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at Birmingham, October 16th, 1896.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

AND

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

In 1883, at the Parliamentary Reform Conference of the London and Counties Union, the National Liberal Federation and the National Reform Union, held in LEEDS (Oct. 17th), the following resolution was passed WITH A LARGE MAJORITY.

“That, in the opinion of this meeting, any measure for the extension of the suffrage should confer the franchise upon women who, possessing the qualifications which entitle men to vote, have now the right of voting in all matters of local government.”

In 1891 the Annual Conference of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, held in BIRMINGHAM (November 23rd), RESOLVED BY A LARGE MAJORITY:—

“That this Conference is of opinion that when the question of the representation of the people is re-opened by Parliament, serious consideration should be given to the claims of women to be admitted to the Franchise when entitled by ownership or occupation.”