

## SCOTLAND.

Miss Hill Burton, Liberton Bank, Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. Hodgson, Bonaly Towers, Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. George Hope (late of Fenton Barns), Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. Duncan McLaren, Newington House, Edinburgh.  
 Agnes McLaren, M.D. (France), 26 York Place, Edinburgh.  
 Miss Siddons Mair, 5 Chester Street, Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. Morrison Millar, 51 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. Somerville, Newbattle Road, Dalkeith.  
 Miss Flora Stevenson, M.S.B., 13 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh.  
 Miss Louisa Stevenson, P.L.G., 13 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh.  
 Mrs. Stoddart, Kelso.  
 Miss Eliza Wigham, 5 Grey Street, Edinburgh.

*\* Member of the Committee of the Bristol Women's Liberal Association.*

## The Bishop of Carlisle on Women's Suffrage.

The following letter was written privately to a friend, who had asked his opinion, by the Bishop of Carlisle. The Bishop has been good enough to yield to a request that it might be made public:—

“Rose Castle, Carlisle, August 9, 1884.

“My dear E——, I should not like to write a leaflet for publication on the subject of women's suffrage, but I have no objection to tell you my opinion. While the number of voters was comparatively small, I consider that those voters were trustees for the general population. This was pre-eminently the case before the first Reform Bill, but it continued to be so after that Bill had become law; there could be no justification of the principle of giving a vote to £10 householders and not to poorer folks, except the assumption that a vote implied a trust to be exercised by the better educated and more substantial class for the good of all. While this was the principle of legislation, I consider that there was no wrong committed in not permitting women to vote; the question was simply one of the extent of a trust, and my own opinion used to be that, upon the whole, women were happier and the government of the country better carried on without the admission of women into the political arena. When, however, the arbitrary £10 line was done away with, and the borough franchise made to extend to every man who had anything which could be fairly called a home, this view of trusteeship was immensely weakened, and, as soon as the vote is extended beyond boroughs, as undoubtedly it will be, I consider that the notion of a man as a voter holding a trust for his neighbours will be well-nigh exploded altogether. I do not say that a vote will not be, in any case, a trust, and an important one, but this will not be its chief characteristic; it is inconceivable that it should be. Consequently, the question of female suffrage assumes, to my mind, an aspect which it never had before. If a woman be a householder, still more if she be an employer of labour and one through whose employment a number of men possess votes, what is there in the mere accident of sex to make it right to say she shall have no political influence? I do not in the least desire that married women should vote. This seems to me undesirable and impossible. The husband and wife must be one in this as in other things. But when the woman satisfies every condition but that of sex, then it seems to me impossible in reason, and I believe it will soon be impossible in fact, to deprive her of a vote. These, in brief, are the opinions which I hold on the subject of female suffrage.—Believe me, yours sincerely,  
 H. CARLISLE.”



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A. Carlisle.

OPINIONS OF WOMEN  
ON  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.



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ISSUED BY THE  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,  
64, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

1879.



OPINIONS OF WOMEN

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

PRINTED BY THE  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE  
4 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON, W.

PREFACE.

THE Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, in making the following collection of Opinions on Women's Suffrage, have been desirous of meeting the objection sometimes put forward by those to whom this question was new, that political representation for women is only desired by women who have failed to find another field for their energies. To refute this objection satisfactorily the Committee have obtained the Opinions of about a hundred women engaged in such non-political work as makes them more or less known to the public.

The Opinions of living persons have been written expressly for this purpose within the last few months: a few quotations from the speeches or writings of eminent women no longer living have been added. It need scarcely be pointed out that the Committee have avoided publishing in this collection the views of those women who are most prominently active in the Women's Suffrage movement, the sole object being to show the current of feeling among women whose pursuits are other than political. Special attention has been paid to obtaining the Opinions of women engaged in forwarding the higher education of their sex; also of women occupying official positions on School Boards or Boards of Guardians, or as secretaries of various social and industrial organisations; of women engaged in philanthropic work, and of women pursuing literary and artistic careers.

With more time the collection might have been made much larger. It is, however, already sufficiently representative, and it will serve to show that the wish that the benefits of political enfranchisement should be extended to women is not confined to only one class, or grounded on only one set of reasons.



PREFACE

The General Committee of the National Society for Women's Education, in making the following collection of Opinions on Women's Careers, have been desirous of meeting the objection sometimes put forward by those to whom this question was first presented, that political representation for women is only feared by women who have failed to find another field for their energies. The results of the collection, which are published in this volume, have been obtained from a number of about a hundred women engaged in such non-official work as makes them more or less known to the public. The Opinions of living persons have been written expressly for this purpose within the last few months: a few quotations from the papers or writings of eminent women no longer living have been added. It need scarcely be pointed out that the Committee have awarded publishing in this collection the views of those women who are most generally active in the Women's Cause, and mean the sole object being to show the current of feeling among women whose pursuits are other than political. Special attention has been paid to obtaining the Opinions of women engaged in forwarding the higher education of their sex; also of women occupying official positions on School Boards or Boards of Guardians; or as members of various social and industrial organisations; or women engaged in philanthropic work, and of women pursuing literary and artistic careers.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.  
WOMEN IN OFFICIAL  
POSITIONS.

I. MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS.

- Mrs. Buckton ..... Jan. 1879.
- Mrs. Dickinson ..... Feb. 1879.
- Mrs. Fenwick Miller ..... Nov. 1878.
- Miss H. Richardson ..... Jan. 1879.
- Mrs. Surr ..... Oct. 1878.
- Miss Helen Taylor ..... Oct. "
- Mrs. Westlake ..... Nov. "

II. GUARDIANS OF THE POOR.

- Mrs. S. A. Barnett..... Feb. 1879.
- Miss Collett... ..... Feb. "
- Miss Merington ..... Sep. 1878.

PART II.  
WOMEN ENGAGED IN LITE-  
RATURE AND ART.

- Mrs. Allingham ..... July 1878.
- Mrs. Arthur Arnold ..... Dec. "
- Mrs. G. Linnæus Banks . Nov. "
- Miss Alice Bewicke..... Oct. "
- Mrs. Bodichon ..... Sep. "
- Miss Ellen L. Brown ..... Nov. "
- Mrs. Charles..... Jan. 1879.
- Mrs. Cowden Clarke ..... Jan. "
- Miss Cobbe..... July 1878.
- Miss Sharman Crawford... Nov. "
- Mrs. Eiloart ..... July "
- Mrs. Ewing ..... Feb. 1879.
- Mrs. Fawcett ..... July 1878.
- Miss M. Gillies..... Jan. 1879.
- Miss Dora Greenwell ..... Oct. 1878.
- Mrs. Haweis ..... Oct. "
- Mrs. Howitt ..... Jan. 1879.

- Mrs. Alfred Hunt ..... July 1878.
- The Misses Keary ..... Sep. 1878.
- Miss Keddie ..... Dec. "
- Hon. Mrs. Octavius Knox Dec. "
- Princess Mele Barese ..... Sept. "
- Miss Meteyard. .... Nov. "
- Mrs. Molesworth..... Jan. 1879.
- Mrs. Notley ..... Nov. 1878.
- Miss Charlotte O'Brien .. Nov. "
- Miss Otté ..... Feb. 1879.
- Mrs Mark Pattison..... July 1878.
- Mrs. Pfeiffer ..... July "
- Mrs. Richmond Ritchie... Nov. "
- Miss Arabella Shore ..... Oct. "
- Miss Simcox ..... Sep. "
- Mrs. J. K. Spender..... Oct. "
- Miss A. Swanwick ..... July "
- Miss Tabor ..... Nov. "
- Mrs. E. M. Ward ..... Oct. "
- Mrs. Howitt-Watts ..... Oct. "
- Mrs. Webster ..... July "
- Miss Julia Wedgwood ... Oct. "
- Mrs. Villari ..... Jan. 1879.

PART III.  
WOMEN FOLLOWING SCIEN-  
TIFIC & PROFESSIONAL  
CAREERS.

- Mrs. Anderson, M.D.
- Miss Annie Barker, M.D. Oct. 1878.
- Miss Eliz. Blackwell, M.D. Dec. "
- Miss Jex-Blake, M.D. ... Sep. "
- Miss Buckland ..... Nov. "
- Miss Isabella Clarke ..... Feb. 1879.
- Miss Dunbar, M.D. .... July 1878.
- Mrs. Hoggan, M.D. .... Aug. "
- Miss Orme..... July "
- Miss Pechey, M.D..... July "



PART IV.  
WOMEN ENGAGED IN PROMOTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION OR THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

Madame Belloc ..... Jan. 1879.  
Lady Bowring ..... Oct. 1878.  
Miss Corlett ..... Oct. ,,  
Mrs. Crawshay ..... Oct. ,,  
Miss Emily Davies ..... Sept. ,,  
Mrs. R. L. Ford ..... Oct. ,,  
Lady Goldsmid..... Nov. ,,  
Mrs. William Grey... Sept. ,,  
Miss Mary Gurney ..... Sept. ,,  
Miss Emily Hall ..... Nov. ,,  
Mrs. Nichol ..... Oct. ,,  
Mrs. Paterson ..... Sept. ,,  
Miss Prideaux ..... Oct. ,,  
Miss Shirreff..... Aug. ,,  
Miss Louisa Stevenson ... Oct. ,,  
Mrs. Thorne ..... Feb. 1879.

PRINCIPALS OF COLLEGES AND HEADS OF HIGH SCHOOLS.

Miss Buss ..... July 1878.  
Mrs. Bryant ..... Feb. 1879.  
Mrs. Byers... ..... Sept. 1878.  
Miss Grove..... July ,,  
Miss Wood ..... Sept. ,,  
Miss Porter ..... Jan. 1879.  
Miss Creak... ..... Sept. 1878.  
Miss Neligan..... Oct. ,,  
Miss Alger..... Nov. ,,  
Miss Rowdon..... Feb. 1879.  
Miss Pearse ..... Nov. 1878.  
Miss Robinson ... Jan. 1879.  
Miss Youngman ..... Oct. 1878.

Miss Wills ..... Nov. 1878.  
Miss Hastings ..... Nov. ,,  
Miss Jones..... Oct. ,,  
Miss Woodhouse ..... Oct. ,,  
Miss Lumsden ..... Feb. 1879.  
Miss Day ..... Oct. ,,

PART V.  
WOMEN ENGAGED IN PHILANTHROPIC WORK.

Miss Davenport Hill ..... Aug. 1878.  
Miss Florence D. Hill..... Aug. ,,  
Mrs. Hilton ..... Feb. 1879.  
Miss Ellice Hopkins ..... Jan. ,,  
Miss Irby ..... Sept. 1878.  
Miss Manning ..... Nov. ,,  
Miss Merryweather..... Sept. ,,  
Miss Florence Nightingale July ,,  
Mrs. Southey ..... Sept. ,,

SPECIALLY ENGAGED IN PROMOTING TEMPERANCE.

Mrs. Dawson Burns  
Mrs. M. A. Clarke ..... Nov. 1878.  
Mrs. Lucas ..... Nov. ,,  
Mrs. Parker ..... Nov. ,,

PART VI.  
PASSAGES FROM WRITINGS OR SPEECHES OF EMINENT WOMEN NO LONGER LIVING

Miss Mary Carpenter  
Mrs. Grote  
Mrs. Jameson  
Lady Anna Gore-Langton  
Miss Martineau  
Mrs. Nassau Senior  
Mrs. Somerville

I.  
WOMEN IN OFFICIAL POSITIONS.

MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS.

MRS. C. M. BUCKTON

(Member of the Leeds School Board. Author of "Health in the House," "Food and Home Cookery," "Town and Window Gardening").

It will always be a subject of great regret to me that I remained so many years indifferent to the Women's Suffrage question. Directly my sanitary work among the working people brought me face to face with the difficulties which assail women obliged to fight the battle of life, I felt that their only hope of gaining a fair field and justice would be by obtaining, as men had done, a direct voice in the legislature and in demanding that representation and taxation should go together.

CATHERINE M. BUCKTON.

MRS. DICKINSON

(Member of the Painswick School Board).

I feel strongly that no words of mine could add anything to the amount of valuable opinion you have in favour of your cause; but you have my sympathy in your efforts, and hearty good wishes for your success.

F. S. DICKINSON.

MRS. FENWICK MILLER

(Member of the London School Board. Author of "The House of Life").

The demand for Women's Suffrage is not made in any spirit of antagonism between men and women, nor is there under-



lying the movement any assumption that such an antagonism exists.

Many women hapily married, together with many thoughtful men, join in seeking this extension of the franchise, believing that it would be productive of good both to women and to the community. Because—

First: Laws regulating the existence of women where their daily life differs from that of man (as in the maternal relation for instance) cannot be properly made, and questions specially affecting the female half of mankind cannot be wisely decided, without the opinion of the class to be affected being given, and without their knowledge of their own needs being admitted to counsel the legislators.

Second: There is among women collectively much intellect, much conscientiousness, and much energy, which might be employed in public affairs to the benefit of the whole community. And further, men and women in our complex social state, of necessity act and react upon each other to so great an extent that men cannot progress far alone; civilisation and good government must needs be hampered and delayed so long as women are excluded from sympathy and participation in the thought, the devotion to public causes, and the active patriotism by which improvements in legislation and society are effected.

FLORENCE FENWICK MILLER.

MISS HELLENA RICHARDSON  
(Member of the Bristol School Board).

Women are more free from party politics and party bias than men are, and, consequently, more likely to take measures on their own merits. And, therefore, although woman's judgment may often be inferior to that of men, yet it is probable that she would vote more fairly for what is likely to benefit the nation in its domestic relations. And as woman is not considered so inferior to man as to require that she be excluded from paying taxes, it seems but just that she should have some voice in deciding how the taxes should be spent.

HELLENA RICHARDSON.

MRS. SURR  
(Member of the London School Board).

So long as there is no slackening of strenuous effort among the noble and patient band who labour for the extension of the franchise to women—their ultimate success is certain.

Surely the hour is not far distant, when thoughtful and honourable men will blush that their sisters should have been debarred so long from exercising a right to which, as ratepayers, they have an equal claim with themselves. ELIZ. SURR.

MISS HELEN TAYLOR  
(Member of the London School Board).

Domestic life can never have all the elements of the happiness it is capable of giving, while women are careless of one large branch of men's interests in the world: and men's interests can never receive all the development of which they are susceptible, until women share with men in all the tasks of life.

HELEN TAYLOR.

MRS. WESTLAKE  
(Member of the London School Board).

I desire women's suffrage because, where representative government exists, not to share in it is almost to be excluded from the nation. It is said that all government rests ultimately on force. This is true, if not only physical force be meant, but the mental and moral qualities which combine and direct physical force be included. The voting power can never be made proportional to all the elements of force, and I believe that such proportion as now exists between them would not be diminished by women's suffrage. ALICE WESTLAKE.

#### GUARDIANS OF THE POOR.

MRS. S. A. BARNETT  
(Member of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians).

Although pity is usually reserved for the oppressed, it is the oppressor who is the most to be pitied, for the moral nature is



more harmed by the act of oppression than by the endurance of it.

It was the slave-owner, and not the slave, who suffered most from the institution of slavery.

The women who agitate for the suffrage are now claiming the pity of the world because they are deprived of their rights.

Might it not be that the men who refuse to others the right which they themselves possess are the more to be pitied?

Without asserting that the woman's keener sense for morality, combined with her interest in details, would be more beneficial, when directly brought to bear on the legislators—without reasserting the old argument that property has a right to be represented—without asserting the desirable influence that responsibility would have on the character of the man or women themselves—without asserting that even if a few women should lose their womanliness by taking part in public life, it would be well sacrificed for the good which would accrue to the whole nation—without asserting that women would gain by receiving this right, it is at least injurious to the nation that a portion of the community should be, legally, in the position to refuse to a body of its intelligent members a share in the privilege of government.

Women are at present, politically, an outcast class, and it is to the prejudice of the men that they can treat them as inferiors and refuse to recognise them as equally concerned in the well-being of the commonwealth.

HENRIETTA O. BARNETT.

MISS COLLETT

(Member of the St. Pancras Board of Guardians).

I heartily desire the political enfranchisement of women, though for many reasons, too lengthy to name here, I have never taken any part in the efforts to procure it.

MARGARET COLLETT.

MISS MERINGTON

(Member of the Kensington Board of Poor Law Guardians).

I consider it would be most desirable that women having the same qualifications as men, and holding equal responsibilities in other respects, should have power to exercise this privilege and duty in like manner as men. Those who have hitherto exercised the right of voting at municipal elections are capable probably of voting with judgment and fairness at any other election. I think the time has come when the electoral vote should be extended to them; and that in thus raising the social status of women, Parliament would do an act of justice, and would make a great social reform.

MARTHA CRAWFORD MERINGTON.



II.  
WOMEN ENGAGED IN LITERATURE  
AND ART.

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MRS. ALLINGHAM.

It certainly seems to me that women paying taxes ought to be able to vote as men do. HELEN ALLINGHAM.

MRS. ARTHUR ARNOLD

(Translator of Sênor Castelar's Works, &c.).

The suffrage is admittedly a protection to men, and women, being weaker than men, are still more in need of its protection. Anyone who takes the trouble to read the police reports in the daily papers will see that women, being unrepresented, are unsafe in purse and person.

If "taxation without representation is tyranny" it is also robbery. Under the form of taxes women are defrauded of vast sums of money, frequently for objects of which they wholly disapprove. This Afghan war for instance, how many women are opposed to it! yet they must help to pay for it and try to fancy they are living in a free country.

All those who fulfil the conditions on which the franchise has been granted to some persons, are equally entitled to its protection. Women receive less value for their money than men do at present, since they are taxed like men, but they are not represented like men. When both sexes are represented, then England may be called a *free* country, but not before. Every educated woman with whom I am acquainted desires the Parliamentary Suffrage, and though many of them do not ask for it, it must be remembered that numbers of women are supported by men, and often afraid to express their opinions.

AMELIA ARNOLD.

MRS. G. LINNÆUS BANKS

(Author of "Ripples and Breakers," &c., &c.).

With respect to the Female Franchise, I can only say, that I should be most reluctant to give my adhesion to any movement calculated to make women less womanly or to remove them from the sphere undeniably assigned to them by the Creator. But so long as there are women on whom all the duties and responsibilities of men devolve, or are thrust, so long as such women have to pay for the maintenance of governments, local or national, I consider that they have as clear a right to vote for proper representation as have their masculine brothers. I know it is urged that there are women who do not want the franchise, who could not fitly exercise it if they had the right. Just so, to puppets or blocks, whether male or female, the franchise is a nullity. But to responsible thinkers, whether feminine or masculine, the franchise is a privilege and a *right*.

I owe a shipwrecked brother's life to the exercise of the female right of vote amongst a tribe of cannibals in the Oriental Archipelago, and I have therefore reason to uphold the principle. ISABELLA BANKS.

MISS ALICE BEWICKE

(Author of "The Last of the Jerminghams," "Lonely Carlotta," &c., &c.).

Unless women contrary to common belief care less about their opinions than men do, the State exposes itself to danger by depriving them of that direct mode of expression, through the election of a representative, which it is found expedient to throw open to men. In the blackened ruins of Paris may be read the handwriting on the wall, telling how women, degraded even as those of Paris are degraded, yet cannot sink past feeling their degradation and resentment against the society that inflicts it. And though we may trust that English women could never be driven to a like desperation, yet it seems inevitable but that their thoughts should become slightly more passionate or morbid, for want of a safe legitimate outlet. How



insidiously the thoughts of women may sap a nation's strength may be read in the history of Sparta, which suppressed women till, eaten up by corruption and effeminacy, it itself perished as a nation.

A. E. N. BEWICKE.

MRS. BODICHON.

The longer I live the more I see the necessity of women taking an intelligent part in all that concerns the welfare of their country, and I am sure that if they had the power of voting they would feel more decidedly than they do, that they are an important part of the Commonwealth.

BARBARA L. S. BODICHON.

MISS ELLEN L. BROWN

(Author of "The Favell Children," &c.).

When women are told to keep to their sphere, they can well answer that existing legislation discourages their doing so. When they have conscientiously performed all the important duties of life which fall to their share, it would seem that, according to the ruling of the State, they must also take upon themselves the entire work of the other sex before they can be deemed worthy to enjoy equal civic status with the man who is scarcely short of being a criminal or a lunatic. This enforced and unnecessarily debased position is not only the direct cause of many more cruel hardships than would naturally fall to the lot of women, but it is a distinct, though often unrecognised, drawback to every woman in all that she undertakes, both in her home and beyond it. Her voice, her influence, her work, count for so much less, and in philanthropic labours her time and talents, and even money, must be more profusely sacrificed to outweigh the disadvantages of her political disabilities, and the consequently lowered estimate of her mental and moral powers. This opinion is the result of very careful observation of the lives of women.

ELLEN L. BROWN.

MRS. CHARLES

(Author of "The Schönberg Cotta Family," &c., &c.).

I believe that "public spirit," a genuine interest in all questions of national or social importance, is as essential a part of true womanhood as of true manhood.

The question of Women's Suffrage is not one which has hitherto interested me much, because I think the possession of the franchise would add a mere fraction to the true influence of women. But it seems to me just, both to themselves and to the State, that women, on whom the responsibilities of property have devolved, should not be exempt from the responsibility of the vote attached to property in all other cases.

And I think there is a hope that the possession of the suffrage might help to educate women, as only practical responsibility can educate; and might also, through the thoughts and hearts of good women, tend to raise political questions out of the region of party strife into that true, ideal Divine and human world where men and women work together for the redemption and the perfection of each other, according to the will of God.

ELIZABETH CHARLES.

MISS COBBE

(Author of "Broken Lights," "Re-echoes," "Hopes of the Human Race," &c.).

So far from the truth is the reiterated statement of certain honourable M.P.s that "Women do not desire the franchise," that in my large experience I have scarcely ever known a woman possessed of ordinary common sense, and who had lived some years alone in the world, who did not earnestly wish for it. The women who gratify these gentlemen by smilingly deprecating any such responsibilities, are those who have dwelt since they were born in well-feathered nests, and have never needed to do anything but open their soft beaks for the choicest little grubs to be dropped into them. It is utterly absurd (and I am afraid the M.P.s in question are quite aware they are talking nonsense) to argue from the contented squawks of a brood of



these callow creatures, that full-grown swallows and larks have no need of wings, and are always happiest when their pinions are broken.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

MRS. COWDEN CLARKE

(Author of the "Concordance to Shakespeare").

It gives me cordial pleasure to find that the great question is in such excellent, competent, and energetic hands as those of the ladies whose distinguished names are appended to the Opinions of which you enclose me a copy. . . . a cause which to me appears clearly obvious in its appeals to reason, justice, and common sense.

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

(Extract from a letter).

MISS SHARMAN CRAWFORD.

"If a husband provides his wife with a due supply of food and clothing, she should never go outside the door," said an Egyptian dragoman. "Would you like a perpetual indoor life?" I asked. "Certainly not, but I am a man," was the conclusive answer. In England, where women have an admitted right to the enjoyment of personal liberty, the absurdity of the reply is evident; but as regards their political liberty, the majority of Englishmen at this present day reason in dragoman fashion. They have yet to learn that, if the physical health of woman is admittedly impaired by confinement within a limited space, her mental health also suffers through legislative disabilities; and that it is as unfair to deprive her, on the ground of sex, of political liberty, as, in the Oriental mode, to shut her up within four walls. At this present day the Turkish empire is crumbling into ruins through the consistently enforced rule of the exclusively domestic sphere of woman, whilst society in England is vivified by a general infringement of this principle. The feminine philanthropist—designer and director of some beneficent public work—is essentially a politician; and, happily for the poor and friendless, this feminine poacher on masculine preserves is an ordinary feature of English life, in town and country. To say that a woman is unfit to vote in a land where a woman rules, is like saying that to pull an oar requires more intelligence than to steer.

MABEL SHARMAN CRAWFORD.

MRS. EILOART

(Author of "Some of our Girls," &c., &c.).

I do not believe that the wrongs the sufferings and the claims of women will ever meet with due consideration until they have that share in legislation which the franchise alone can give them.

ELIZABETH EILOART.

MRS. EWING

(Editor of "Aunt Judy's Magazine").

I am unable to see any rational objection to the "Extension of the Franchise to Women Ratepayers and Householders." This, as I understand, is all that Mr. Courtney asks, and it is all on which I express the opinion you have requested.

My name can carry no weight whatever on your leaflet, but I would gladly help you to disprove the notion that women whose interests and circumstances lie apart from public affairs, and whose gate happens to be shielded from legal or social hardships, are therefore indifferent on these subjects.

JULIANA HORATIA EWING.

MRS. FAWCETT

(Author of "Political Economy for Beginners," &c.).

I am every year more convinced of the value that the granting of the Parliamentary suffrage would be both to men and women. Everything that is now being done to enlarge the sphere of women's lives needs the help that the possession of the suffrage by women would be. In itself, too, the removal of electoral disabilities would be a great good; it would foster public spirit and a sense of public duty in women. When women are shut out from all direct political influence they are apt to forget the claims of patriotism and to grudge all that they or their relatives have to give up for the public good. Anything which brings home to Englishwomen that they are "citizens of no mean city" will help to make our future as a nation worthy of our past.

MILLCENT GARRETT FAWCETT.



MISS MARGARET GILLIES.

As holders of property and payers of rates and taxes, women who do so ought, it seems to me, to have a vote in the choice of those who are their representatives in Parliament.

MARGARET GILLIES.

MISS DORA GREENWELL  
(Author of "The Patience of Hope," &c.).

It appears to me that the possession of property is like speech, or like prayer, one of the grand distinctions between rational and merely animal life. Animals, it is true, hoard, but can scarcely be said to *own*, property. To refuse such a right to a woman in a country whose chief magistrate and ruler is a woman seems (to me at least) a manifest absurdity.

DORA GREENWELL.

MRS. H. R. HAWEIS  
(Author of "Chaucer for Children," "The Art of Beauty," &c.).

I am interested in the franchise, not only as a means of bringing the direct influence of women to bear on questions which directly concern them, but also as one of the steps towards their general elevation. I think that in proportion as women realise that they hold a responsible place in the State, they will become fit for it. No woman is a worse wife or mother for understanding her duties; and she would be the better citizen for appreciating her legal and political, as well as her social position.

M. E. HAWEIS.

MRS. HOWITT.

I entirely sympathize with the movement to obtain Female Suffrage.

MARY HOWITT.

MRS. ALFRED W. HUNT  
(Author of "The Hazard of the Die," &c.).

If women are too weak and too foolish to be trusted with votes, they ought in common fairness to be spared the burden

of taxpaying. The latest arguments I have heard of (all the others having really been worn to death) against the manifest injustice of departing in the case of unmarried women from the constitutional maxim about Taxation and Representation being joined together, is that which is based on the ground that all government rests ultimately on physical force, and therefore it would not be well for the State to have a large class of voters who could vote, but could not (or, it is to be hoped, would not) be able to take part in the rough work of politics. I thought it had been settled long ago that one of the chief advantages of civilised government was, that under its opinion and intellectual judgment as such had full and due means of expression afforded them. The opponents of the Women's (unmarried ratepayers) Suffrage Bill must fall back on the old simple argument of women's intellectual inferiority if they are to put forward any show of argument at all.

MARGARET HUNT.

MISS ANNIE KEARY  
(Author of "Castle Daly," "A Doubting Heart," &c.).

MISS ELIZA KEARY  
(Author of "Heroes of Asgard," "The Little Sealskin," &c.).

It is because we think that not only women but the men themselves would be benefited by the association of the sexes in the acts of legislation that we wish to see the suffrage extended to women. Though it has been said that nothing is so like a man as a woman, it is not to be denied that the difference between them is a root difference and that neither is complete without the other—wherever they work together, they work better than apart. The household is ruled jointly by man and woman in practice if not in theory, and it seems to us that the very fact of their essential difference makes it, not desirable merely, but needful that the influence of both should be everywhere felt. Whom God hath joined together, let not conventionality and prejudice keep asunder.

ANNIE AND ELIZA KEARY.



MISS KEDDIE (SARAH TYTLER)

(Author of "Citoyenne Jacqueline," &c., &c., &c.).

It seems to me it is no more than justice that those women who, as householders, share the burden of paying taxes, should also share the privilege of the franchise.

HENRIETTA KEDDIE.

THE HON. MRS. OCTAVIUS KNOX

(Author of "Sonnets and other Poems").

Certainly I think woman should differ from man; but not by being ignorant where he is instructed, prejudiced where he is large-minded, foolish where he is wise. If then you have women instructed, large-minded, and wise, it is impossible that men should long withhold from them so elementary a right as that of choosing who shall make the laws they have to obey. One is a little impatient of writing down "reasons" for so obvious an act of justice, yet I believe that this delay, this timidity about granting her the franchise, is good for woman; it gives her an aim, a hope, and it winnows from amongst the number of those who declare for this aim all cowards, all who have never thought for themselves, all, in fact, who could not use the franchise if they had it. The delay, however, is not very creditable to men, neither are some of the arguments employed in its favour, such as "that physical force being behind men and not behind women no modicum of ruling power can safely be given to the latter." In the end which rules, which do we desire should rule, in civilized communities, brute force or intellect? We had always thought that (make what political arrangements you will) intellect did, because it is by its nature king over brute force, in the long run; can gather that together, can organize, can command it. Cromwell gathers his Ironsides, and through intellectual and moral force he wields them; his mind withdrawn what avails the force of his powerful army? Napoleon gathers, leads, and trains his big battalions, and through his intellectual might he triumphs; through his want of morality he falls. Surely this argument from "force" cannot long prove

a bugbear to the wise; but will they not feel the force of this one? "You cannot expect wisdom where you deny all power and responsibility; you must desire wisdom in one half the community if your highest aspiration is that wisdom should rule the other." It has been truly said that "Man and Woman form one perfect whole,"

Two glorious wings humanity was given;  
How piteous should the silver feathers sweep,  
Broken and marred, on either hand the dust.  
Ah, not alone we suffer! man faints too;  
His mate unequal, all the flight is stayed.

LUCY KNOX.

PRINCESS MELE BARESE

(née Lilian Mackworth Praed).

It is difficult to give any special reason for desiring the political enfranchisement of women, simply because there are so many reasons for desiring it. But the one which, perhaps, to my mind, has the greatest weight, is, after all, not grounded on any wish to benefit women only, or even specially, but rather on the conviction that in raising *them* we should raise men also; that in the higher development of their capacities—such as I believe would undoubtedly result from their political enfranchisement—we should promote the higher development and culture of the whole nation.

E. L. M. MELE BARESE.

MISS METEYARD

(Author of "Life of Wedgwood;" "Wedgwood and his Works;" "Wedgwood Handbook," &c., &c.).

I believe that the extension of the franchise to women householders would play an important part in leading them to a knowledge of political subjects, and to the taking a vivid interest therein. At present, generally speaking, the dormant condition of female intelligence in respect of all the great moral, social, and political questions of the time is something lamentable, and is a main cause of that narrow conservatism of ideas which stops the way to the intellectual advance of the middle classes.

ELIZA METEYARD.



MRS. MOLESWORTH

(Author of "Carrots," "Grandmother Dear," &amp;c.).

I have often felt astonished that there could be any diversity of opinion as to the manifest injustice of women who are in the independent and responsible position of ratepayers and householders being deprived of the political rights which they should enjoy. And were I in a position to do more than express my hearty concurrence in your opinions, and my admiration for your efforts, I should gladly do so. LOUISA MOLESWORTH.

MRS. F. E. M. NOTLEY

(Author of "Olive Varcoe," &amp;c., &amp;c.).

I am of opinion that to withhold the franchise from those women who are undertaking and suffering all the burdens and responsibilities of men is an injustice as senseless as it is illogical. I hold this opinion upon much wider grounds than the mere payment of rates and taxes. I know that women cannot hope for much change in the cumbrous and unfair laws which weigh on them now so heavily, until they have a voice in the choosing of law-makers. Therefore, I consider it is their bounden duty honourably and bravely to continue their struggle to obtain the franchise, until victory crowns the cause. Men have fought to the very death for freedom and for just laws, always with women's support and sympathy; it is our turn now to ask them for help and to entreat them to remember that "The woman's question is the man's." F. E. M. NOTLEY.

MISS CHARLOTTE G. O'BRIEN

(Author of "Light and Shade," &amp;c.).

Granted the desirability of women's education, the desirability of the suffrage becomes a mere consequence. Will any man or woman learn a trade they never expect to make use of? No. How then can it be expected they should learn to interest themselves in politics (without which interest a really educated mind

is impossible) if their so doing can have no fruits? But this interest does bear fruit in other forms. Undoubtedly it does, but only as the side growths of a pollarded tree, imperfect though often vigorous. CHARLOTTE G. O'BRIEN.

MISS OTTÉ

(Author of "Scandinavian History," &amp;c.).

It is often argued that women generally do not wish to acquire the right of electoral suffrage, and that if it were extended to them the majority of those who might claim it would regard its obligations as burdensome and distasteful, and would either evade them altogether, or fulfil them with reluctance and indifference, or with inconsistency and caprice. Such an argument can, however, have no weight in a question like this, which is one of right and not of sentiment. Similar charges of disinclination and inefficiency for the discharge of electoral duties might possibly apply with equal force to numerous men; but no one would for a moment pretend that any such individual contingencies could be advanced as reasons why Englishmen should not retain their constitutional right of having a voice in the election of those who legislate upon the questions which most closely affect the interests of each individual member of the community.

If women generally labour under the ignorance and indifference imputed to them with regard to all that concerns the conduct of public affairs, it would seem the more imperative that they should be made participants with men in the exercise of those electoral duties and privileges to which Englishmen are wont to point as the basis of their own claim to be regarded as patterns for other nations of the enlightenment which springs from the free individual exercise of political rights. If it be true that political enlightenment comes with the power to exercise political rights, women will have an important grievance to complain of till they are in this respect put on an equality with men. ELISE C. OTTÉ.



## MRS. MARK PATTISON

(Author of "The Renaissance of Art in France").

I earnestly desire to see the franchise extended to women. I believe that its educational value would be great, and that by its possession women would be led to exercise judgment in forming their opinions upon questions which at present they regard with ignorant indifference, or with equally ignorant prejudice. I think also that it cannot be contested, that at the present day the right to vote is the one right, without which no other right is secure.

E. F. S. PATTISON.

## MRS. PFEIFFER

(Author of "Glán Alarch," "Gerard's Monument," "Quarterman's Grace," &amp;c.).

Although not a worker in the cause of women's suffrage, the efforts of those engaged in it have my deepest sympathy, convinced as I am that its success would let in a stream of now ineffective light upon questions of highest importance to the race. Thought is liable to become unsound when divorced from action, and the orderly evolution of the mental power of women,—now first emerging from the trammels of custom,—requires the wider field which they claim, not for themselves alone, but in the interests of human society.

Further, the open recognition of gifts on the part of women, which whether equal or not to those of men, are needed to the fuller efficiency of the complicated social machine, would, in increasing responsibility and womanly self-respect, give a new impulse to moral and intellectual culture, and form a needed counterpoise to the lamentable tendencies of the social (more truly anti-social) ambitions, in which the energies of the more stirring of the sex have been wasted.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

## MRS. RICHMOND RITCHIE (Miss Thackeray)

(Author of "The Village on the Cliff," "Old Kensington," "Miss Angel," &amp;c.).

I entirely sympathise with your wish that the franchise should be extended to women.

*Extract from Letter.*

## MISS ARABELLA SHORE

(Author of "War Lyrics" and "Fra Dolcino").

The position of women is, I think, at present anomalous and most unsatisfactory. Efforts are being made in various directions to improve and elevate their condition; but these are more or less frustrated by the assumption of their natural inferiority and incompetency stamped on the whole of our legislation concerning women, especially in the refusal of the suffrage to them. Social progress, to be real and consistent, must be accompanied by political emancipation. It seems almost ridiculous to grant them new rights, open new fields, claim offices of responsibility for them, while the simplest of rights which almost any man is thought good enough for is denied them. The law which makes the highest of women the inferior of the wife-beater, the drunkard, and the illiterate, must act injuriously on the moral sense of the whole community; and general professions of respect and homage are rendered nearly worthless by the habit of classing women as political incapables along with criminals, lunatics, and idiots. The depth of this prejudice is shown by the facts that the very words, justice and right, seem to lose their force, in most men's minds, when applied to women, and that all the arguments for representation deemed unanswerable in the case of classes of men, are quietly ignored when urged by women themselves for the same classes of women, or are met by the simple assertion that they don't apply to women. Yet by women the weight of these reasons for emancipation are strongly felt, and ever more strongly the more they interest themselves in social work and public questions. Ought not this fact to induce men to attempt, if they can, to look on the subject from the women's point of view also, instead of merely, as hitherto, from their own?

ARABELLA SHORE.

## MISS SIMCOX

(Author of the "Ethics of Law," &amp;c.).

I can only give the same reasons for desiring the political enfranchisement of women that I should give for desiring the



political enfranchisement of anyone else; *e.g.*, of the agricultural labourers now, of the manufacturing towns before the first Reform Bill, and of male householders and lodgers before the last. The chief of these reasons is that I think every member of a society has duties towards that society and owes it a debt of service in return for the innumerable benefits of social and civilised life. And this debt of gratitude and service cannot but be ignored or repudiated by any persons who find themselves permanently and deliberately excluded from civic fellowship. A disfranchised class is either politically ignorant and indifferent, or disaffected. Ignorance and indifference in reference to the welfare of the community, on the part of half its members, though these be only women, seems to me a graver social evil than even positive disaffection in a smaller class. Yet *this* is so serious a danger that hardly anyone nowadays would deny that if a body of discontented men thought the franchise would content them, that safe and inexpensive remedy should be administered at once. *A fortiori*, then, should the remedy be tried in our case, since we are, to a woman, either unwholesomely discontented with our political status, or else unwholesomely indifferent to the highest interests, social and political, of the community which has a right to our loyalty. EDITH SIMCOX.

MRS. J. K. SPENDER

(Author of "Parted Lives," "Mark Fylmer's Revenge," &c., &c.).

My opinion has been formed slowly and after much hesitation. Although for years past I have taken an active part in the educational movements of the day, and have contributed anonymously to periodical literature on the subject of women's work and influence, I have held back till lately from giving my adherence to the cause of Women's Suffrage from a dread lest political controversy should destroy the "womanliness" of women. But after long consideration of various social questions I have felt bound to support the movement, on conscientious grounds, as good and just in itself. LILY SPENDER,

Secretary of the Oxford Examinations, Bath.

MISS ANNA SWANWICK

(Translator of Æschylus).

Recognising the vast importance of legislation, as an agency either for good or for evil, women desire, with such influence as they can wield, to aid in bringing our human laws into harmony with the everlasting law of God. They recognise that the eternal law of righteousness vindicates itself not only through the acts of individuals, but also through the acts of the Legislature, and that failure, involving wide-spread misery, waits upon every measure not in harmony with the requirements of that higher law. In the light of this solemn truth law making becomes a very serious matter, and women are naturally desirous to have a voice in selecting the men to whom this sacred duty is entrusted.

ANNA SWANWICK.

MISS TABOR.

Our legislation is becoming so increasingly domestic in its character, and deals so largely now with the *home life* of the people, their health, their occupations, the disposal of their earnings, the training and education of their children, the treatment of the sick and poor, the paid nursing of infants, etc., etc., as to make it desirable that, in the interests of the community at large, some scheme of representation be devised, by which the opinions of women may be ascertained, and their influence and judgment brought to bear upon matters so clearly within their province and so closely affecting themselves.

MARY C. TABOR.

MRS. E. M. WARD.

You are already aware of my strong opinion on the subject of women's suffrage, and I am quite sure to artists it would be of the greatest use. There are several reasons, which I withhold from want of space, which would make it *most desirable* for women in my own profession. HENRIETTA WARD.



## MRS. HOWITT-WATTS

(Author of "An Art Student in Munich," &amp;c.).

I see more and more—indeed there is not a day in which the newspapers do not display them—the evils of the Disabilities of women. The most important of these, representing—and, in a sense, comprehending—all the others, is the denial to her of the exercise of the Elective Franchise, and it is on that account that I desire to see her relieved from this most unreasonable disability.

I find it difficult to comprehend how, in an age in which exceptional legislation directed against particular classes of society is so universally deprecated, it can still be deemed right by any order of thinkers that these disabilities should continue to be maintained, or why women should be debarred from that highest of all culture which is provided by the exercise of individual responsibility in relation to important questions, some, especially and materially affecting themselves.

I cannot avoid adding the expression of my earnest belief that the existing state of things, and the habit of thought which it perpetuates, is as injurious to man as it is to woman, and that the happiness and welfare of both in this matter are one and indivisible.

ANNA MARY HOWITT-WATTS.

## MRS. WEBSTER

(Author of "Portraits," "Dramatic Studies," "A Housewife's Opinions," &amp;c.).

Women will have ceased to be an unrepresented class when some women have a vote. And for so great a good to us all I would gladly be at some sacrifice individually, if, which I do not believe, it can be a sacrifice to a married woman that unmarried and widowed women should be allowed to exercise a right from which her position precludes her.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

## MISS JULIA WEDGWOOD

(Author of "John Wesley, and the Evangelical Reaction").

I consider the opening of the suffrage to women as a very important indirect influence on all measures taken or proposed for female welfare, as well as one of considerable importance in its direct bearing on this subject,

JULIA WEDGWOOD.

## MRS. VILLARI

(Author of "In Change Unchanged," "Courtship and a Campaign," &amp;c., &amp;c., &amp;c. Translator of "Life of Machiavelli").

It is my firm belief that both reason and expediency are in favour of Women's Suffrage. With the mass of our sex, enlargement of thought is only to be achieved by enlarged responsibility. None can deny that, even in the present state of the law, considerable political influence is exercised by women. That influence is sometimes mischievous, for, being secret, it is often employed for petty aims, whereas, were it open and recognised, the sense of responsibility would induce a higher platform of thought, and public good be more considered than personal caprice. It seems to me that political suffrage is not only desirable for the development of female intellect, but is a natural right which coming generations will pronounce indisputable. The fact that some women may not care to exercise this right in nowise invalidates the claim.

LINDA VILLARI.



III.  
WOMEN FOLLOWING SCIENTIFIC AND  
PROFESSIONAL CAREERS.

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MRS. ANDERSON, M.D.

It is because it seems to me that giving women the franchise would be a very great step towards the uplifting of the whole sex, that I take special interest in it.

ELIZABETH GARRETT-ANDERSON.

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MISS ANNIE BARKER, M.D.

(Women's Hospital, Birmingham).

It gives me much pleasure to have the opportunity of expressing my opinion with regard to the movement in favour of women's suffrage. The reform it advocates, I believe, will have a tendency to raise the social position of women, and on many points of vital interest prove a real gain to them and to the community at large.

ANNIE REAY BARKER.

MISS ELIZABETH BLACKWELL, M.D.

Character, not sex, is the best qualification for the electoral franchise. Any regulations which secure the increased influence of character and intelligence in public affairs must inevitably be productive of individual and national good.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL.

MISS JEX-BLAKE, M.D., L.K.Q.C.P.I.

If I correctly understand the British Constitution one of its fundamental principles is that Taxation and Representation should go together, and that every person taxed should have a voice in the election of those by whom taxes are imposed. If this is a wrong principle it should be exchanged as soon as possible for some other, so that we may know what is the real basis of representation in this country; if it is a right principle it must admit of general application, and I am unable to see that the sex of the taxpaying householder should enter into the question at all.

The argument respecting the "virtual representation" of women under the present system seems to me especially worthless, as it can be answered alternatively, thus:—If women as a sex have exactly the same interests as men, their votes can do no harm, and indeed will not affect the ultimate result; if they have interests more or less divergent from those of men, it is obviously essential that such interests should be directly represented in the councils of the nation. My own belief is that in the highest sense the interests of the two sexes are identical, and that the noblest and most enlightened men and women will always feel them to be so; and, in that case, a country must surely be most politically healthy where all phases of thought and experience find legitimate expression in the selection of its Parliamentary representatives.

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

MISS A. W. BUCKLAND

(Member of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, and Honorary Member of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute).

Although I have always kept myself aloof from that movement commonly known as "Woman's Rights," I hold firmly the opinion that women, otherwise duly qualified, may claim the Parliamentary franchise, not as a favour, but as a *right*. The excuses made for withholding this simple act of justice from our sex show plainly that it is *might*, rather than *right*, which prevails; but I do not believe that legislators would have been able



so long to resist a movement, so entirely in consonance with the boasted progress of this 19th century, in education and liberality of thought, had it not been for the unwise advocacy of some, who have made it apparent that they regarded the franchise claimed for unmarried women and widows, as only the thin end of the wedge intended eventually to include married women also, and to enable a few of the more masculine of our sex to appear on the platform as political agitators or candidates for Parliamentary honours. This idea would, however, I feel sure, be repudiated by the vast majority of those who now desire to be allowed to record their vote according to their opinions, in return for the full amount of taxation imposed upon them; and if our rulers would reflect upon the fact that the franchise claimed would, as a rule, only include women who may be fairly supposed to have arrived at years of discretion (as younger women would almost invariably be represented by father, mother, or husband); and would further in fairness allow, that the municipal franchise granted as a tentative measure and exercised by precisely the same class as would be further enfranchised; has certainly never been productive of political or social embarrassment in any way,—they would, I think, hasten to remove those disabilities, which some among us look upon as a mark of degradation unworthy of a nation standing in the front rank of civilisation.

A. W. BUCKLAND.

MISS ISABELLA CLARKE  
(Pharmaceutical Chemist).

I am glad of the opportunity to express my opinion on the extension of the suffrage to women. I think it most unjust and illogical to deny the political franchise to women while it is granted to men who are in every respect inferiors of the women who would be entitled to it, and especially as women already possess the municipal franchise. Women must be represented *directly* as men are to obtain *direct* justice. Men would not be satisfied to have women as their representatives. It is impossible for either sex to represent the other, although the higher interests of both are identical.

ISABELLA S. CLARKE.

MISS DUNBAR, M.D., L.K.Q.C.P.I.

As the social position of women in the civilized world is very different from what it was in primitive times, it is only reasonable to believe that what has altered and improved so much in the past, must be capable of alteration and improvement in the present and future. There are changes which the generations of to-day are witnessing in the education of women and their employment in professions and trades hitherto closed to them. It appears to me, that the extension of the franchise to women is only a natural concession to a just demand made in conformity to the advancement of civilization and the changes effected by the acquirement of new privileges and responsibilities.

ELIZA WALKER-DUNBAR.

MRS. HOGGAN, M.D., L.K.Q.C.P.I.

It is difficult to over estimate the importance of women's suffrage from an educational point of view. The possession of political rights and the responsibility of political duties will fortify in women the virtues of citizenship, the lack of which has become a reproach to them, and will tend to form that habit of mind, so conducive to the general well-being, which enables its possessor to look at everything from the two-fold standpoint of private and of public interest. The suffrage will also prove a precious safeguard in women's hands of the natural right of children, during the period of their minority, to the enjoyment of maternal care, as well as of those personal rights of their own which have been heretofore ignored by our legislators, owing to their inability to discover and recognise them.

FRANCES ELIZABETH HOGGAN.

MISS ORME.

I regard Mr. Courtney's proposed extension of the Parliamentary suffrage as a necessary reform in our representative system, and I look forward to its success as the safest, the most



effectual, and, on the whole, the most direct means of obtaining for women those educational advantages and remunerative employments still withheld from them. ELIZA ORME.

MISS PECHEY, M.D. (Berne), L.K.Q.C.P.I.

I maintain that the present subjection of women to a position of political inferiority to men is calculated seriously to retard the advancement of the nation, both intellectually and morally. Only by giving full scope for individual development can a state become truly great; and the full extent of individual development can alone be secured by granting equality of rights to all alike without distinction of sex. EDITH PECHEY.

## IV.

WOMEN ENGAGED IN PROMOTING THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION OR THE TECH-  
NICAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT  
OF WOMEN.

MADAME BELLOC

(Author of Essays on Woman's Work).

I think that in a time and country wherein the power of the vote is supreme, that power should be increasingly diffused.

The will of the majority has a tendency to become all-powerful; and, therefore, that majority should be composed of every diverse element, or injustice in a thousand subtle forms will result.

It is on this ground that I think women should ask for and obtain the suffrage. BESSIE PARKES BELLOC.

LADY BOWRING.

My opinion with respect to the extension of the franchise remains unchanged. I cannot but think that those women ratepayers who like myself take an interest in social questions, must, as I do, feel strongly the injustice that is done them in being called upon to share in the taxation, without participating in the advantages conferred by property on the other sex, of a voice in Parliamentary representation.

DEBORAH BOWRING.



## MISS CORLETT

(Founder of Queen's Institute and Queen's College, Dublin).

I have not heard of any dispute in Ireland as to the right of women holding property qualification to exercise the franchise, but there is a majority decidedly adverse to the expediency of its exercise. In Parliament the Irish members support the measure of the female franchise. The sole franchise privilege open to Irish women is that of voting for Poor-Law Guardians. The most remarkable test in respect of confidence in women's capacity arose in connection with framing the government of the Irish Church and regulating the status of its members. For three days the subject of equality in voting powers was warmly debated; about 300 voted for women, but by a narrow majority women were totally excluded from the privileges of Christian membership. I shall not refer to the debates, but they were unequalled for prejudice and unfairness in the expressions of the "opposition," and full of apprehension against the evil of priestly influence. I cannot but think the determination to exclude women from the advantages of Christian union had a serious effect on the popularity of the Church; it certainly weakened the attachments of those holding broad views; that it had a disastrous financial effect there can be no doubt, as very few women contribute to the Irish Church funds. All churchmen connected with the Queen's Institute faithfully upheld women's rights in the Church, and did their utmost to strengthen their just claims.

Among Irish Presbyterians women's votes are equal to men's votes, and the privilege of voting is held in high esteem. In respect of the real value of voting powers to women, my experience in the working of this society leads me to consider it would prove of the highest importance to working women to hold the Parliamentary franchise. In many cases the law could be made to inflict great hardships on working women, and but for compassion I believe the law would often bring home its power grievously to them. No doubt compassionate sentiments often avert the hardships of legislation from women. If enforced, the Factory Acts could not fail to open women's

eyes to their own disabilities. The Public Health Act (Ireland) is one which will cause great trouble and cost to women holding house property, and will compel their attention to the inconvenience of recent legislation. I have no doubt the liabilities under this Act will ultimately prove so exceptionally severe on ladies, that it will result in causing a very strong desire to obtain the possession of the franchise as an indispensable protection under British Law. Hitherto the consideration scarcely touched the upper classes, but they will immediately find it concerns them closely, in its application to property, and this Act can hardly fail to take a share in the political education of women.

A. BARBARA CORLETT.

## MRS. CRAWSHAY.

The degradation of women will never cease, until means of earning an honest livelihood are afforded to that large majority which cannot achieve marriage; to this end women must have a voice in modifying laws which impede their doing a fair day's work, for a fair day's wage; and this will never be until the franchise is granted to women on the same conditions as those on which it is granted to men.

ROSE MARY CRAWSHAY.

## MISS EMILY DAVIES.

I have long wished to see the suffrage granted to women. Now that it has been so very widely extended, the possession of an individual vote may indeed appear to be of little value, and I should not myself expect any very marked immediate effect on legislation from the concession. But the moral effect would, I believe, be deep and far-reaching. As matters stand, the law asserts in a solemn and emphatic form that women are not called upon to take an active interest in affairs of State; and it appears to make the assertion on the ground that they are by nature unfit for such action. This I hold to be a mischievous untruth, and believing, as I do, that political interests are among the noblest that can occupy our thoughts and energies,



I should welcome the removal of a restriction which so strongly discourages women from taking their fair share in public affairs.

EMILY DAVIES.

MRS. R. L. FORD (Leeds).

It is an obvious injustice to deny to women the privilege of citizenship, seeing that no women are exempted, on the ground of sex, from their share in the burdens of the State, and from obligation to obey laws framed by men only, without any reference to the opinions and wishes of women.

HANNAH FORD.

LADY GOLDSMID.

I consider it most unjust and invidious that women, who are ratepayers, should be denied the franchise, and I cannot, further, better express my feeling in favour of the measure than by quoting Miss Buss's words: "I think that women should possess the franchise, as the best means for their protection and representation of their interests."

LOUISA GOLDSMID.

MRS. WILLIAM GREY.

I give my entire and earnest support to the Bill to enable Women Ratepayers and Householders to vote for Members of Parliament, for two reasons: First, because I believe that artificial disabilities imposed on any section of society, which no energy or merit can overcome, and which partake, therefore, of the nature of caste, have a demoralising effect equally upon those who impose and those who are subject to them and, consequently, on society at large. Secondly, because having come originally to the consideration of the subject with the prejudice against it which belonged to my generation, I have become more and more convinced, the more I look into it, that the fears of social disaster, of revolution in the relations of the sexes, of danger to home and family, always put forward by its opponents, are wholly groundless, and that we may rely in

peace upon the action of natural laws, unaided by artificial regulations, to maintain the natural and healthy relations between men and women on which society rests.

MARIA G. GREY.

MISS MARY GURNEY.

If women householders were not, as at present, excluded from the Parliamentary franchise, their influence would be of much value in securing attention in the House of Commons to measures affecting the educational interest of girls.

MARY GURNEY.

MISS EMILY HALL.

Apart from the injustice of excluding women ratepayers from the privileges accorded to men in a like position; and regarding the subject solely with reference to its effect upon *character*, it would seem desirable that the franchise should be extended to women upon the same terms as it is granted to men.

If, in the interests of society at large, it is wished that women should be earnest, liberal-minded, cultivated, and reasoning beings, rather than frivolous and mean, acting more from impulse than principle, then let them be recognised as social and political entities. When, as at present, placed upon an equality with irresponsible children and idiots, is it wonderful if women should sometimes gravitate to this lower level, and by so much act as a dead weight to pull down those who would climb higher? No true progress can be made in either educational or social matters while the two halves of humanity thus "limp on unequal legs." The agile and unfettered member must of necessity restrain his steps and, on pain of complete dismemberment, suit them to the pace of his companion. Thus the whole race suffers, and, with much unnecessary friction, makes but feeble strides towards the goal—that higher development of every faculty which united effort can alone attain.

EMILY HALL.



MRS. ELIZABETH PEASE NICHOL.

It is my belief that the extension of the suffrage to women would not only be a measure of simple justice to them, but that a beneficial influence would thereby be brought to bear in the selection of representatives to Parliament, and on the minds of our legislators.

ELIZABETH PEASE NICHOL.

MRS. PATERSON

(Hon. Secretary of Women's Protective and Provident League).

For working women especially, I should hope for important advantages from the removal of the political disabilities of women, not so much on account of immediate and direct gains, as from the strengthening of the power of self help. Long tradition and habit have left them only the hope, often but a very faint one, that men know, and will do, all that is for their best interests; they cling to this hope in their industrial life, and allow their wages to be ground down, halfpenny by halfpenny, until at last they can think of nothing but how not to starve. Though only a small proportion of working women might have qualifications entitling them to the franchise, their present hopelessness and helplessness would be lightened by the removal of the injustice which places every one of their sisters, however intelligent, however good and useful a member of society, in the position, as some writer has said, of a "political outcast."

EMMA A. PATERSON.

MISS PRIDEAUX

(Hon. Secretary Cambridge Higher Local Examinations (London Centre) for Women).

I give my entire and hearty support to the Bill to enable women ratepayers and householders to vote for members of Parliament. I fail to see why members of society having equal liabilities should not also have equal privileges.

ADA H. PRIDEAUX.

WESTMINSTER,  
10, GREAT COLLEGE STREET,  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

NATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Her Sphere.

December,

No. II.

Reprint

representatives *only*, it is not to be wondered at that important interests concerning unrepresented women are often neglected in the pressure and among the chances of Parliamentary life.

LOUISA STEVENSON.

MRS. THORNE

(Hon. Sec. to the School of Medicine for Women).

As our representative system is based on taxation, and not on physical force, there seems to me no sound reason for the



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# Her Sphere.

(Reprinted from the "Englishwoman's Review" of Sept., 1875.)

THE READER IS REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING WAS WRITTEN IN 1875. IN 1877 MEDICAL DEGREES OF THE KING'S AND QUEEN'S COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS IN IRELAND WERE OPENED TO WOMEN. IN 1878 THE DEGREES OF LONDON UNIVERSITY WERE OPENED TO THEM.

'Tis a beautiful thing, a woman's sphere!  
I have pondered the question for many a year,  
And have reached a conclusion that's pretty clear—  
That it's not the trade that a woman is in,  
The dirt or the weariness, toil or sin  
It is only the money or rank she may' win  
Which will lift her up out of her sphere!

'Tis a beautiful thing, a woman's sphere!  
She may trudge through the snow both far and near,  
As a teacher for £25 a year.  
But she must not ask a Professor's name,  
To learn in a college she has no claim—  
Much knowledge adds nought to a woman's fame,  
It's but raising her out of her sphere.

'Tis a beautiful thing, a woman's sphere!  
She may nurse a sick bed through the small hours drear,  
Brave ghastly infection untouched by fear,  
But she mustn't receive a doctor's fee,  
And she mustn't (oh shocking!) be called an M.D.,  
For if woman were suffered to take a degree,  
She'd be lifted quite out of her sphere!

'Tis a wonderful thing, a woman's sphere!  
She may vote for Town Councillors, Schools, or Mayor,  
And numberless Boards and bodies—that's fair.  
But one feminine vote would the Commons sink—  
It's presuming, even, in her to think  
That mankind is bound by a mutual link,  
And that woman is man's compeer.

'Tis a marvellous thing, a woman's sphere!  
She may starve at her needle with fast falling tear;  
She may hammer nails, or sell gin and beer,  
But she shan't be a lawyer, or clerk at most,  
Or take any nice little Government post,  
For the Law and Society 'd give up the ghost  
If she stepped so far out of her sphere.

'Tis a terrible thing, a woman's sphere!  
She may part with all her sex holds dear,  
May bear the curse, the taunt and leer,  
To earn her bread and to fill her cup—  
But when hands are stretched out to keep her up  
Unspotted and free—oh! then we hear  
That a woman must keep to a woman's sphere.

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## WHO WILL CARE FOR THE BABY?

Says Joe to Sam, in fierce debate  
Upon the woman question:  
"You've answered well all other points,  
Now here's my last suggestion:  
When woman goes to cast her vote—  
Some miles away, it may be—  
Who then, I ask, will stay at home  
To mind and tend the baby?"

Quoth Sam "I see you've made my case  
Appear a little breezy;  
I hoped you'd pass this question by  
And give me something easy.  
But as the matter seems to turn  
On this one as its axis,  
Just get the one who rocked it when  
She went to pay her taxes."

E. E.

Quoted in the "Englishwoman's Review" from "Our Herald", June, 1884



MISS SHIRREFF.

My interest in the movement for giving the suffrage to women householders is founded, *first*, on a keen sense of the injustice of excluding one class of ratepayers from the privilege granted to others, merely because they are women; while their duties and liabilities remain the same. *Secondly*, on the fact that the history of this country shows us, that only as certain sections of the community obtained the suffrage, were their special wrongs redressed; and that it is evident, how much the mere agitation of this question has done, to bring about reforms which would probably have been neglected for generations to come, as through generations past, had not the unwelcome prospect of a wider door to be opened for influence hitherto little felt, made it desirable to cut away some of the grounds of complaints. *Lastly*, my conviction of the cogency of the arguments urged by the friends of the movement is strengthened by the circumstance, that its adversaries are driven year after year to depend on the same contradiction of known facts, on the same flying from argument to prophecy, on the same appeals to custom, to associations, and predilections, to the same pathetic iteration of the "*sentiment* of our forefathers;" whereas had they been able to find one simple intelligible reason to serve their purpose, we must, in fairness to them, suppose that they would in the course of debate, here and there at least, have brought it forward.

EMILY A. E. SHIRREFF.

MISS LOUISA STEVENSON, Edinburgh

(Hon. Sec. to the National Association for Promoting the Medical Education of Women).

Seeing that many members of Parliament feel bound to be representatives *only*, it is not to be wondered at that important interests concerning unrepresented women are often neglected in the pressure and among the chances of Parliamentary life.

LOUISA STEVENSON.

MRS. THORNE

(Hon. Sec. to the School of Medicine for Women).

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ADA H. PRIDEAUX.



exclusion of women householders from the elective franchise, while the fact that women take an active and useful part in many public matters indicates that their responsible co-operation in our system of representative government is likely to be beneficial to the community.

ISABEL THORNE.

#### PRINCIPALS OF COLLEGES AND HEADS OF HIGH SCHOOLS.

MISS BUSS

(Fellow of the College of Preceptors, and Principal of the North London Collegiate School for Girls).

I think that women should possess the franchise, as the best existing means for their protection and the representation of their interests. The interests of all classes of men are represented *directly*, those of women only *indirectly*.

FRANCES M. BUSS.

MRS. BRYANT

(Fellow of the College of Preceptors).

Supposing that men do in a measure represent women, it seems to me that the *indirect* influence involved in the supposition is just one of the worst things in the world by itself. Surely there should be no power that is not acknowledged and direct. Good human beings may easily cause others to do things which they would never do themselves if placed face to face with these things and their consequences. For he who has a power *direct* and can act, questions conscience and investigates facts by the light of reason before he acts. But she who is conscious only of her power of speech may easily use it without reference to conscience and reason at all. Action is always more prudent, and naturally more conscientious, than speech. I think, therefore, that if women have *irresponsible* influence at present, and are thereby indirectly represented, the sooner they are made to feel the weight of *responsible* influence by direct representation the better.

SOPHIA BRYANT.

MRS. BYERS

(Principal of the Ladies' Collegiate School, Belfast).

It is perfectly obvious that from sheer necessity many women are obliged unaided and alone, to make a struggle for existence not only for themselves but for helpless relatives. In this struggle women have many *natural* hindrances of which men similarly placed practically know nothing. I often wonder why good men do not unitedly step forward and free women householders from any legal or artificial disabilities that they can remove, and thus take away any reason for their agitating about a question of personal rights, a thing that must always be disagreeable to women of good taste and refinement.

MARGARET BYERS.

MISS GROVE

(Lady Resident of Queen's College).

With regard to the extension of the franchise to women, I have the sure conviction that sooner or later it must be ours because it is so thoroughly just a demand on our side. In giving it to us, men only give, what in a free country every class has a right to expect: the power of getting its own case represented from its own point of view; and this is a power which any body of educated men, if it were persistently denied to them, would take to themselves at last by physical force.

ELEANOR GROVE.

BATH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS WOOD, Head Mistress.

It seems to me that a disinclination to allow to woman a possibility of individual life lies at the root of many social prejudices and mistakes. "He for God only, &c., &c.," is the text of the speeches in Parliament and elsewhere against the proposed measure. But those who take up the profession of teaching, especially those who are at the head of large schools, are perhaps specially conscious of their individuality, and are constantly reminded that they are social units. Why, then, not political units also?

S. WOOD.



## BRADFORD GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

MISS PORTER, Head Mistress.

I take a warm interest in the efforts that are being made to obtain the suffrage for women. In connection with the work of educating girls, I constantly feel how important it is that they should learn to take an intelligent interest in the great social and political questions of the day. The action of the Government and legislature in settling these questions, and the resulting consequences which flow from that action, have as vital an interest for women as for men, and as direct a bearing on their welfare. Nothing would so tend to create a vivid interest on the part of women in such matters, as the feeling that it was a duty to one's country to embrace all possible means of forming a right judgment on such questions. It has been well said that we all, men and women, hold a place in the great parliament of public opinion, and some of us, feeling the truth of this, hold it to be our duty to form such opinions under *present* circumstances; but the duty will never be generally recognised by women till they have a voice in the election of representatives to Parliament. Surely the large-hearted patriotism which, rising above mere party spirit, cares greatly for the honour and welfare of the country, will one day be found to be as ennobling an influence in the lives of women as it has been in the lives of men.

MARY E. PORTER.

## BRIGHTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS CREAK, Head Mistress.

I am in favour of women's suffrage because it is a doctrine of the British Constitution that Taxation and Representation go together.

EDITH CREAK.

## CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS D. NELIGAN, Head Mistress.

For years I was an indifferent, if not antagonistic, spectator of the efforts made to procure the extension of the franchise to women. When I became a householder, I felt for the first time

that the existing disqualification is an unjust one; and I now support the movement not merely from the desire to see justice done to a class, but in the firm belief that it will do much to raise the aims and widen the thoughts of women, a result which must benefit the whole human race.

D. NELIGAN.

## DULWICH HIGH SCHOOL.

MISS MARY ALGER, Head Mistress.

I cannot understand the principle upon which women are admitted to municipal offices, and yet are not considered qualified to give their vote as citizens. On that day when by unanimous consent women were allowed to become sovereigns, the principle of political equality irrespective of sex took its place; and whilst the right of Women's Suffrage is still withheld from us, it is an anomaly to see a woman occupying the highest position in our country.

MARY ALGER.

## GATESHEAD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS ROWDON, Head Mistress.

Surely all those whose welfare depends upon the laws of a country should have a voice in electing those who make the laws. If so, women would be equally qualified to vote with men.

The chief objection to extending the franchise to women has hitherto been based upon the deficiency in their education. This argument is daily becoming more feeble and without true foundation, since women have eagerly and successfully availed themselves of the greater educational advantages offered them during the last few years.

JANE PASKE ROWDON.

## HACKNEY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS PEARSE, Head Mistress.

I cannot see why, if women desire the Franchise, they should not have it, particularly as they are now eligible to vote for School Board candidates, and I understand also in parochial



matters. Eventually, I suppose, we may be looking forward to universal suffrage, and when that takes place it seems to me it would be only logical if women should vote as well as men.

M. PEARSE.

HALIFAX HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS ROBINSON, Head Mistress.

Women are as justified in their demands for Female Suffrage, as were the Americans in their War of Independence, and it seems to me that by *quietly* keeping the justice of the matter before the public, they must eventually gain their end.

LAURA A. ROBINSON.

IPSWICH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS YOUNGMAN, Head Mistress.

I have much pleasure in entering my protest against the injustice practised upon unmarried female ratepayers in the withholding of the suffrage from them. Until the taxes are removed from a class popularly considered incapable of forming rational opinions, I hold it to be the duty of every member to exercise the sum of her feeble intellectual powers towards the overthrow of such systematic oppression.

SOPHIE YOUNGMAN.

NORWICH HIGH SCHOOL.

MISS WILLS.

My opinion on the Women's Suffrage question is that Taxation and Representation should go together.

L. B. WILLS.

NOTTINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS HASTINGS, Head Mistress.

I am glad to add my testimony to the fact that women earnestly desire the franchise; and to assert my belief that the possession of it would tend to give them wider interests and sympathies.

EDITH HASTINGS.

NOTTING HILL HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS H. M. JONES, Head Mistress.

The extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women who are householders and ratepayers appears to me most desirable from every point of view.

In the first place, it would be simply an act of justice that women who bear the burden of taxation should have some share in that representation which gives to England its political freedom. As it is, instead of being endowed with the rights and privileges of citizenship, women are set aside as a separate class of inferior beings, whose opinions are valueless, and whose wishes and wants are of no importance whatever.

Again, the extension of the franchise to women would act powerfully as an educational stimulus. The national recognition of women as intelligent beings, capable of forming an opinion on the great questions which affect the interests of a nation, would tend not a little to develop that intelligence, and also to rescue them from that state of helplessness, ignorance, and indifference to which so many are condemned by the present political and social state of things.

Again, I earnestly desire the suffrage, because so long as women are unrepresented, their interests are often overlooked, and even set aside by those who ought to legislate for the nation at large. Such has been the case in the distribution of educational endowments, in the laws relating to married women, and also in the regulations limiting the powers of women in the guardianship of their own children.

These all are, in my opinion, reasons why those who desire the well-being of every class of society should do what they can to help forward the cause of women's suffrage, which, when obtained, will free them from the reproach of intellectual inferiority, under which they at present lie. H. M. JONES.

SHEFFIELD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

MISS WOODHOUSE, Head Mistress.

I hope for the extension of the franchise to qualified women, not only as an act of justice to one-half the community now



practically unrepresented, but mainly as a great motive power in increasing the moral elevation of women, by fostering the feeling of responsibility and strengthening the judgment by exercise on questions, which would then become matters of personal interest. By enfranchisement would be removed, I am convinced, one of the chief causes of that levity in the formation of opinions, and evident irresponsibility of character so common among women and so painful to the trained intellect whether of men or women.

The world, in its career of advancement and eager utilisation of all material forces, can ill afford to leave unrecognised and undirected those moral forces, less apparent, but more important to the well-being of the race of which the greatest is, perhaps, the moral influence for good or ill of women. And we may rest assured that in this case, as ever before, the raising of any class to a higher moral elevation will be a great and lasting gain to all, and cannot fail to subserve the highest interests of society at large.

ELIZA WOODHOUSE.

WESTMINSTER GREY COAT SCHOOL.

MISS ELSIE DAY, Head Mistress.

That, constitutionally, all women who pay taxes, have the right to direct representation, appears to me incontrovertible. It is the genius of the English people, when once convinced of a duty, to act upon it; but the growth of that conviction is slow. We would do well to be thankful that it is so. That the conviction will come eventually, as in the case of the Roman Catholic disabilities, I have no doubt. In the meantime, let us quietly wait and educate the nation to look impassionately at the question, not as a matter of opposing interests, but of simple duty—remembering Auguste Cochin's wise caution that "noise does no good, and good makes no noise."

ELSIE DAY.

MISS LUMSDEN

(Head Mistress of St. Andrew's School for Girls).

I earnestly desire that the suffrage should be opened to women. Since women, when taxpayers, bear equally with men the burdens of citizenship, I cannot see any just ground for excluding such women from the privileges of citizenship. Besides, why should any part of the intellectual power of the community be useless to the State on questions of public and national interest? Utilising it would surely prove to be for the advantage, not of women only, but of the whole community. On women themselves I believe the possession of responsible political power would have an enormous influence for good.

LOUISA INNES LUMSDEN.



V.  
WOMEN ENGAGED IN PHILANTHROPIC  
WORK.

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MISS DAVENPORT HILL

(Author of "What we Saw in Australia," &c.).

One objection often raised against the demand by women for the suffrage is that they can at present exercise quite as much political power as is good for them. This may be quite true, but at the same time it must not be forgotten that the power they now exercise is unaccompanied by responsibility; and power without responsibility is a dangerous possession.

ROSAMOND DAVENPORT HILL.

MISS FLORENCE DAVENPORT HILL

(Author of "Children of the State," &c.).

It is as reasonable to suppose that a family is as wisely governed and adequately cared for which has only a master and no mistress, as to believe that the country has all its wants understood and provided for in the absence of the feminine element from its legislation. The fact that women are different from men affords the strongest argument in favour of their joint exercise of the franchise. Were they identical, either sex could adequately represent the other; but being complementary, each is needed, whether in the management of the family or the nation.

FLORENCE DAVENPORT HILL.

MRS. HILTON

(Founder of the Crèche at Stepney).

Women have special functions to fulfil in the social work of the world, in the management of children, assisting the poor, nursing the sick, or educating the ignorant. It appears to me that as the attention of Parliament is necessarily so frequently directed to the concerns of the poor, ignorant, infirm, or helpless, its legislation can only be imperfect as long as women have no share in the election of its members.

MARIE HILTON.

MISS ELLICE HOPKINS

(Author of "Life of James Hinton," "Work in Brighton," &c.).

It is difficult for anyone impartially to study this question of legislation without being led to feel that the absence of the direct moral influence of women is an irremediable loss. Surely the family is the Divine archetype of all social organisation, the constitutive element of which the larger family of the municipality, the yet larger family of the State should be assimilated, and inevitably will be assimilated hereafter, in spirit if not in form. Are not our public organisations survivals of older and extinct forms of the family when the woman was allowed only an indirect influence, was placed under the perpetual guardianship of man, and had her own separate quarters in the house, the *μυχος* of home, and was not permitted to take her place with man at the common table? And if in the slow evolution of the family idea it has been found that the work of the family can be best done by the woman taking an equal place by the side of the man, and realising the ideal of Christianity, which consecrates her as the Divine mother, the fountain of life and love and purity, so in the future may we not find in the larger family of the State, that the work of the world is best done by the man and the woman together, each supplying what is lacking to the other, the man the head of the woman, the woman the heart of the man?

ELLICE HOPKINS.



MISS IRBY.

In reply to your inquiry, I say that I am in favour of the admission of women to a share in the representation. Justice is ever the best policy. We have nothing to fear from freedom. With regard to the application of those principles to the particular question before us, I believe that the extension of the franchise to women is calculated to enable men and women alike to grow more worthy of its possession, and better able to fulfil their joint duties of citizenship. A. PAULINA IRBY.

MISS E. A. MANNING

(Hon. Secretary to the National Indian Association).

The claim of women to the suffrage, when considered impartially, seems so natural and just, that probably fifty years hence the present opposition to it will be looked back upon with curious surprise, and will be quoted as an instance of the force of imaginary fears. ELIZABETH ADELAIDE MANNING.

MISS MERRYWEATHER

(Lady Superintendent of the Nurses' Home, Broad Sanctuary, Westminster).

I feel that justice and morality can never rule the country where half the population, even when qualified otherwise, is, by the accident of sex, excluded from the representation.

MARY MERRYWEATHER.

MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

You ask me to give my reasons for wishing for the suffrage for women householders and women ratepayers. I have no reasons.

The Indian ryot should be represented so that the people may virtually rate themselves according to the surveys of what is wanted and spend the money locally under certain orders of an elected board.

If this is the case : That we wish to give to the Indian native, peasant and Zemindar alike, such local representation *as we*

*can* in spending the taxes he pays,—is the educated English taxpayer, of *whichever* sex, to be excluded from a share in electing the Imperial representatives ?

It seems a first principle, an axiom : that *every* householder or taxpayer should have a voice in electing those who spend the money we pay, including, as this does, interests the most vital to a human being—for instance, education. At the same time, I do not expect much from it, for I do not see that, for instance, in America, where suffrage is, I suppose, the most extended, there is more, but rather less, of what may truly be called freedom or progress than anywhere else.

But there can be no freedom or progress without representation. And we must give women the true education to deserve being represented. *Men* as well as women are not so well endowed with that preparation at present. And if the persons represented are not worth much, of course the representatives will not be worth much. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

MRS. SOUTHEY

(Hon. Sec. of the Women's Peace and Arbitration Association).

I am in favour of women's suffrage because the basis is justice, and what is morally right must eventually prove to be politically right. ELIZABETH MARY SOUTHEY.

## WOMEN ENGAGED IN PROMOTING TEMPERANCE.

MRS. DAWSON BURNS.

It has been argued that had women the power of voting they would in some instances show how unsuitably that power would be used, or even utterly abused. Even were it so, let it be remembered that non-suitability, or the abuse of the privilege, does not disfranchise a man. Here are two glaring anomalies : A man may drink as much as he pleases, far beyond the bounds of moderation and respectability ; may be as ignorant and brutal as he pleases ; may be quietly breaking every law that should honestly bind him to his home, his wife, and his children ; may



be utterly incompetent to estimate either the character or intelligence of the man for whom he is asked to vote; yet, let him only live in a borough as householder or lodger, paying a yearly rental, and he possesses the right of voting at Parliamentary elections.

Contrast this case with that of a woman who has all her life maintained an honourable position; guided her house with consummate judgment; has been first and foremost in various benevolences and schemes for her country's purity and elevation; can always give an excellent reason for the judicious opinion she has formed; yet, whether widow or spinster, as a householder paying taxes, or a lodger renting apartments of the required value, is denied the opportunity of exercising that tact, that judgment, that influence in the election of candidates whom she deems best qualified to legislate for the urgent wants and necessities of the times.

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MRS. M. A. CLARKE (Headington).

There are so many *reasonable* reasons for giving the franchise to tax-paying women that it is difficult to make a selection. Perhaps the injustice of withholding the suffrage wherever taxes are demanded may to some minds be brought home by a startling contrast. We see a well-educated woman with wealth and property at her command classed by the law with minors, idiots, and felons, while the man who opens her carriage door or drives her horses may have a voice in the legislation of the country, be he ignorant, drunken, or depraved!

The hackneyed argument that women are imperfectly informed about politics will not hold good while so many men voters are profoundly ignorant concerning the highest politics of the day. In both cases the possession of the vote will necessarily create an interest in the subject, and no woman can be far wrong who votes for the men that do their best to promote peace, sobriety, and equal justice in the land.

MARY ANNE CLARKE.

MRS. LUCAS

(President of the British Women's Temperance Association).

It would appear that women are being drawn into the political arena, whether or no they desire it, owing to the growing tendency to bring all questions before Parliament which affect them equally with men. This being the case, it is only a question of justice to grant the moral right of representation to women who have the same qualifications as men. There is no doubt their votes would be widely utilised in stemming the tide of intemperance, and this power united with the moral influence they already possess would add immense weight to the cause of social purity.

MARGARET LUCAS.

MRS. PARKER (Dundee)

(President of the International Christian Women's Temperance Union).

Looking at it as a matter of simple justice, I never could understand why men should shut women *out* of privileges, who pay rates, and shut themselves *into* privileges on the same ground, and do both in the name of justice. It seems little else than plunder of the most ungenerous kind. Woman certainly has a right to have her property represented in the representation of property, and her person in the representation of persons. To say that woman is not educated for the ballot is idle. The best education for the ballot is the ballot itself.

MARGARET E. PARKER.



## VI.

PASSAGES FROM WRITINGS OR SPEECHES  
OF EMINENT WOMEN NO LONGER  
LIVING.

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## MISS MARY CARPENTER

(Died June, 1877. Author of "Juvenile Delinquents," "Our Convicts," &c.  
Founder of the Red Lodge Reformatory for Girls, Bristol).

At the Annual Public Meeting of the Bristol and West of England Society for the Promotion of Women's Suffrage, on March 8th, 1877, Miss Carpenter said:—"She very warmly sympathised in the principles of that Society and wished it success, though she was unable from her other engagements to take any part in the movement."

## MRS. GROTE.

(Died January, 1879.)

By the Reform Act you have invested with a large measure of representative power the classes who do not represent property, or at least in very small proportions, but who live by their labour; that is to say, you have augmented the weight of the representation of numbers; then, is it not fair that at least the property side should be in possession of all its legitimate power? Why, when you have augmented one side of the representation, are you not to give the full measure of its power to the other? I think that is an additional reason for giving the franchise to women, that is to women who occupy the position of citizens, bearing the burdens to which their position is subject, contributing to the support of the State, and having the liabilities which attach to property.—*From a speech at Hanover Square Rooms, March 26th, 1870.*

## LADY ANNA GORE-LANGTON.

(Died February, 1879.)

A great many social questions are annually brought before Parliament, such as all matters relating to health, education and guardianship of children, marriage laws, employment, and remuneration of labour. These questions affect both sexes, and women ought to be allowed to express their opinions through their representatives in Parliament. In these days, prejudices are slowly disappearing before the brighter light of knowledge and liberality; but principles must always remain the same. It will always be a principle that Christian women should be meek, humble, modest, and charitable; but it is a prejudice to suppose that giving them the franchise will make them less so. Intellect has been given to them which enables them to form opinions—whether equal or not to men we need not consider; such as it is, they are answerable for making the best use of it for themselves and others. I agree that women's duties begin at home—they begin there, but there they do not end. Wherever there is poverty or sorrow, need or suffering, there it is the duty of women to follow, and try to alleviate or remedy the evil. It is because I believe that if women had the political vote they would be raised morally and socially, and have more power to help and benefit their fellow-creatures, that I am here to-night to try and advocate the cause of women's suffrage.—*Speech at Bristol meeting, March 4th, 1875.*

## MISS MARTINEAU.

(Died June, 1876.) "Society in America," Vol. I., p. 150.

"The interests of women who have fathers and husbands can never be identical with theirs while there is a necessity for laws to protect women against their husbands and fathers. This statement is not worth another word.

"Some who desire that there should be an equality of property between men and women oppose representation on the ground



that political duties would be incompatible with the other duties which women have to discharge. The reply to this is that women are the best judges here. God has given time and power for the discharge of all duties; and if He had not, it would be for women to decide which they would take, and which they would leave."

MRS. JAMESON.

(Died March, 1860.) "Winter Studies," &c., Vol. I., 104, 1838.

"I am not one of those who opine sagely, that women have nothing to do with politics."

"Communion of Labour." 1856. Page 24.

"I have the deepest conviction, founded not merely on my own experience and observation, but on the testimony of some of the wisest and best men among us, that to enlarge the working sphere of woman to the measure of her faculties, to give her a more practical and authorised share in all social arrangements which have for their object the amelioration of evil and suffering, is to elevate her in the social scale; and that whatever renders womanhood respected and respectable in the estimation of the people tends to humanise and refine the people."

MRS. NASSAU SENIOR.

(Died 1877.) Inspector of the Female Departments of Workhouses and Workhouse Schools; appointed 1873.

(Letter from the late Mrs. Nassau Senior to the Secretary of the Central Committee.)

Lavender Hill, Wandsworth Road, S.W.,  
April 10th, 1875.

Dear Madam,—The Reports of the Debate on the Women's Disabilities Bill, and the leading articles in the *Times*, show so plainly that the question is not dealt with fairly either by the legislature or the press, that I feel it a duty (holding as I do that women have a just claim to the franchise) to do my utmost to promote the success of the measure, regardless of any effect

which this may possibly have on my chances of future employment under the Local Government Board, or of election to any Board of Guardians.

I can do little to help on the cause, as I am confined to my bed, with small prospect of any immediate improvement in my health, but I should like to have any petitions sent me to sign, and I enclose £1 for the fund.

I am, dear madam, yours truly,

J. E. SENIOR.

MRS. SOMERVILLE.

(Died November, 1872.) "Personal Recollections," p. 344, and p. 346.

"The British laws are adverse to women; and we are deeply indebted to Mr. Stuart Mill for daring to show their iniquity and injustice. The law in the United States is in some respects even worse, insulting the sex, by granting suffrage to the newly-emancipated slaves, and refusing it to the most highly-educated republic.

"I joined in a petition to the Senate of London University, praying that degrees might be granted to women, but it was rejected. I have also frequently signed petitions to Parliament for the female suffrage, and have the honour now to be a member of the general committee for Woman Suffrage in London."



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## WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

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It is now seven years since the question of giving votes to Women was first mooted in this country, as one deserving serious public attention, and the proposal has in this short time met with a success which is perhaps without precedent in the case of a movement at once so great and so novel. Nevertheless, many persons have very indistinct and erroneous notions of what "Women's Suffrage" really means, and so many of the objections against which it has to contend are founded on a misconception both of the nature of its object and the limits within which it is confined, that a clear explanation of these points not unfrequently induces a ready assent to the movement from those, who, on mistaken grounds, were formerly its vigorous opponents. Some suppose that all women are to have a vote, whereas MR. JACOB BRIGHT'S Bill in Parliament simply proposes to enfranchise those women, *unmarried* or *widows*, who are independent householders, or have the same property qualification that is required of men. The fact that married women are strictly excluded, even where they possess property in their own right, on grounds of obvious expediency, at once disposes of a favourite and powerful argument against the whole question. That fear of domestic discord which seems to sit like a nightmare upon the souls of some half-informed opponents of the movement, is a phantom hardly worth conjuring up now, when it can no longer frighten terrified husbands into a defensive alliance against it. There are always timid persons to be found, who are persuaded that if a proposed change is made, the world will immediately come to an end. Experience tells us, that the world generally goes on just as it did before,—perhaps a little more easily,—while the change is of great benefit to society. Four thousand years of history tell us, and every day's experience confirms the unhappy truth, that those who have interests to be looked after, must look after them themselves, or else they will go to the wall; and if any class of persons is both physically weak and politically defenceless, it is certain to suffer at the hands of those who are strong and powerful. The middle classes in England were oppressed until they demanded the power of political self-assertion in 1832; so were the working classes before the Reform Act of 1867. The same arguments were used in Parliament this Session on behalf of the agricultural labourer; and if any one wants stronger illustrations, let him consider the parallel (and perhaps more apposite) cases of serfdom and slavery. Now women, arguing for their own interests exclusively, make the same complaint; and with so much truth, that an English woman is not overstating her case when she says—that in no country in the world is the *legal* position of a female



so degraded, so barbarous, or so cruel, as her own. It is no consolation to her to be told that if she will only keep quiet, men will see that she gets her due. Men do not, and men will not—unless they are compelled to do so; and this is just why women want votes. Englishmen, indeed, are not bad enough to take advantage of the full powers the law allows them; most of them do not know what those powers are. If they did, the shameful nature of that law would shock many who are now ignorant of the injustice it tolerates and commits. A long course of legislation *by* men has produced a legislation *for* men, in which the interests of women are thoroughly ignored. Yet men are found who say, "If women get votes, they will do themselves more harm than good." How insolent such a remark appears, or how flippantly ignorant, when spoken to those who know what facts are; nor could a more cruel irony be uttered, or a more self-condemnatory sophism, when it is made in the presence of any one of that multitude of women, who are silently suffering wrongs which no man will remedy! It is worse than idle, it is more than folly, for men to preach to women what is good for them, when they every day refuse to redress those evils of which women alone feel the sting. It is the same futile nonsense which has been talked to every class of men who have insisted upon helping themselves; and we may well feel surprised that certain men are not ashamed of harping to that old tune, when all the world is tired of it. When it is an accepted principle in modern and enlightened politics, that every class must look after itself, why are women, the very class who must need such a right, to be treated, against their will, according to a different rule?

Compare the legal status of a married woman in Christian England and in polygamous and Mohammedan Persia. The Persian holds her own property, her own children, and her own person, in all circumstances, without being legally liable to her husband. She can demand a separation if he takes a second wife, and the law compels him to support her apart in a comfortable position in life. He is not permitted to treat her in any way contrary to her wishes, much less to abuse her. Such, so far as circumstances are the same, is the case with all lands of western civilization except our own. In this country, before 1870, every penny of the wife's property belonged absolutely to the husband; and, subject to certain exceptions in the case of some kinds of landed estates, if he died the day after it became his, the widow got none of it, for the law gave it to his heir, who might be a distant cousin. He was also at liberty to will all her personalty and leaseholds to whom he pleased; and to this day, a married woman is legally incapable of making a will. Cases have constantly occurred where not only has the husband spent his wife's fortune in profligacy, and treated her with neglect and cruelty, but when she has endeavoured to earn a living by keeping a school or a shop, or by one of the few miserable means of livelihood which are open to her sex, he, with the sanction of the law, has come, time after time, and seized her furniture and savings, in order to provide himself with the means of the grossest dissipation.

Our common law allows him to beat his wife with "reasonable" severity, to restrain her wishes, her movements, nay even her person; and if she, heart-broken by the cruelty and outraged by the infidelity of the man to whose uncontrolled discretion the law confides her every interest and her every hope, leaves her miserable home, she is denied even the consolation of her own children, whom she must suffer to grow up away from her care, with the infamous example of their father as their only guide. How many mothers, rather than suffer this cruel separation, submit in silent suffering to their fate, we may guess, but never know. A woman has literally no rights over that to which both nature and reason declare her to have the strongest and most sacred right—her own offspring. But, if her children are illegitimate, if it is man's interest to abandon them, then the unhappy mother must bear unaided the burden of a shame and sin of which she herself is but too often the injured victim. If, on the other hand, a husband dies without appointing guardians for his infant children, the law, made by that wisdom and that justice on which, we are told, women may trustfully rely, does not allow the mother to educate her own offspring, but hands them over to the husband's heir, to be brought up according to his views and his religion, totally disregarding any wishes of the mother to the contrary. The worst husband can direct the education of his children during his life, or by will after his death, and man-made law will not interfere. In short, there is no amount of injustice which the law does not perpetrate against the wife, who is regarded as a nonentity, incapable of owning herself, her property, or her children, of making a will, even of succeeding to her husband's rights after his death, or of resisting the most tyrannical exercise of them in his lifetime. In 1870 a small change was made regarding her property, chiefly owing to the efforts of a number of determined ladies, who refused to witness the silent slavery of married women, especially amongst the lower classes, without raising their voice against it; but even under this new law the old spirit so strongly prevails, that while a woman is allowed to keep her own earnings, her husband may forbid her to earn anything at all. In other respects the law remains as we have described it, and in divorce, the injustice between man and woman is, perhaps, greater. It is no use to say these cases are exceptional. Perhaps they are. But laws are made not for the good only, but for the bad; and if a law does not protect the good or the weak against the bad or the strong, but permits the most intolerable and heartless injustice to be perpetrated in favour of evil-disposed persons, that law is a wrong one; and he who made it or suffers it to continue, is not fit to be entrusted with absolute and uncontrolled powers of legislation on such a subject. Women therefore say that laws relating to women will never be satisfactory so long as they are excluded from a share in making them, and who will say, in the face of facts, they are not in the right? Take for instance the very insufficient punishments awarded for offences against women and children. In this recently much-discussed question, the legislative assistance of women would be valuable.



On still broader grounds, the desirability of abolishing the electoral disqualification of sex becomes apparent. It is not only for their own interests, but for the interest of the nation, nay of the world, that women ought to have votes. They will infuse a gentler and more philanthropic spirit into our legislation. People say few women want the franchise, or that they are not educated to use it. Then let them learn to want it, by being taught that they have responsibilities for the less favoured of their sex; and because a happy few can pass a life of luxury and ease, those who are in very different circumstances, and those who earnestly desire to perform a great duty and exercise a great right, are not on that account to be deprived of it. If they are not educated for it, why do we put them below the ignorant and miserable labourer, whom we are asked to entrust with the franchise as a *means* of education? Let us then educate our women by giving them something lofty—and politics is the noblest of sciences—to which they may turn their attention, and devote that leisure which is often wasted in a trivial and lamentable way. There are over 600,000 more women than men in these islands, to whom, therefore, married life is not possible. A much larger number is excluded by men's unwillingness to marry. About 1,200,000 women earn their own living, and have in this way a direct stake, not only in their own happiness, but in the general political prosperity of the country, and no stake at all in that "chivalrous protection" by men, about which such feebleness is talked to prove, forsooth, that women don't want "rights." Is it impossible to stop twaddle of this sort, and are the men who employ this kind of reasoning incapable of understanding facts? But those who take a serious view of a great question will admit that in this class of women there is a vast and beneficial power, if it could be utilised politically. As to the proportion of women to men voters, the experience of municipal elections, where voting goes on just as at parliamentary ones, only much more frequently, and where both sexes exercise the franchise as one, tells us that it is but one to nine. But even here, the influence of the female element is strong. Women are generally more moral in life, and more sharp in perception than men; and as they often look at things from a different point of view, the introduction of that influence would be of great service to the State. In private life, too, the change would be eagerly appreciated. There are few men who do not admire a gifted and intelligent woman, and who would not prefer a wife capable of sympathising with their views, understanding their ideas, and interesting herself in all that concerns them. A pedant and a blue stocking are equally objectionable, but a highly educated woman is appreciated as thoroughly as a man of culture. To sneer at a woman because she has "rights," or demands those of which she is deprived, is now an anachronism. To expect she shall make herself truly man's equal, by using the rights which cannot long be withheld from her, will soon become a matter of course.

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS:

BEING

*ARTICLES AND EXTRACTS*

FROM THE

*LONDON AND PROVINCIAL PRESS,*

RELATING TO THE DISCUSSION ON

MR. MASON'S RESOLUTION

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY, 1883.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Aberdeen Journal . . . . .	38
Belfast Evening Telegraph . . . . .	41
✓ Birmingham Daily Post . . . . .	27
Bradford Daily Telegraph . . . . .	20
Bradford Observer . . . . .	21
Cambridgeshire Times . . . . .	35
Christian Chronicle . . . . .	42
Daily Chronicle . . . . .	10
Daily News . . . . .	8
✓ Daily Telegraph . . . . .	6
Derbyshire Times (Chesterfield) . . . . .	23
Dundee Advertiser . . . . .	39
Dundee Courier . . . . .	40
Eastern Morning News (Hull) . . . . .	30
✓ Echo . . . . .	14
✓ Evening News . . . . .	16
Globe . . . . .	5
Leeds Mercury . . . . .	32
Liverpool Daily Post . . . . .	25
Liverpool Mercury . . . . .	24
Manchester Examiner . . . . .	26
Midland Counties Daily Express . . . . .	37
Modern Society . . . . .	18
North British Daily Mail (Glasgow) . . . . .	37
Northern Whig (Belfast) . . . . .	41
Norwich Argus . . . . .	44



	PAGE
Nottingham Daily Express . . . . .	35
✓ Pall Mall Gazette . . . . .	11
Peterborough Standard . . . . .	36
Protestant Standard (Liverpool) . . . . .	43
South Durham Herald . . . . .	36
✓ Sussex Daily News . . . . .	19
Tablet . . . . .	42
Weekly Dispatch . . . . .	5
Western Independent (Devonport) . . . . .	34
Western Mercury (Plymouth) . . . . .	34
Western Morning News (Plymouth) . . . . .	18
Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard . . . . .	45

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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### OPINIONS OF THE PRESS, 1883.

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#### WEEKLY DISPATCH, July 1st.

Whatever decision is arrived at next Friday, it is to be hoped, in the true interests of Liberalism, that this measure of justice will not long be denied to English women. In one of the United States it has for years been granted, and it will not be very long before Canada follows the example. The chance of women lending their aid to the Conservative side is entirely outweighed by the far more important consideration that their political education will tend to lessen that apathy which has always been the great stronghold of the Tories. To the energetic Liberal who seeks by every legitimate means to awaken his neighbours to a sense of their citizenship, knowing that if they only study the questions of the day they are pretty sure to become adherents to the party of progress, women's suffrage will be a valuable aid, and the sooner it is granted the better it will be for the coming generation of voters.

#### GLOBE, July 5th.

\* \* Mr. Mason's resolution in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women who possess the qualifications entitling men to vote, does not go beyond the principle that the object of granting the franchise to any given class is to ensure the representation of intelligence and of property; indeed, it only develops to a logical conclusion the constitutional axiom that those



who share in the burdens of the country should have a voice in the disposal of their contributions. From this point of view alone, it is unquestionably an "anomaly"—to use the favourite word of the hour—that an independent woman of wealth and position should, by reason of her sex, be deprived of the privilege which is enjoyed by the average labourer, who, thanks to the present arrangement of taxation, is scarcely compelled to contribute a penny to the finances of the country unless he pleases. This is not to maintain the "flesh and blood" doctrine in the slightest degree. The extension of the franchise to qualified women, so far from levelling downward, would have the distinct effect of raising the average of property and intelligence among the voting population, nor can it be assumed—to take a somewhat lower point of view—that the existing balance of parties would be perceptibly changed. It is true that a certain political section have been doing their utmost to take the question into their own hands, and this has no doubt helped to foster a degree of very natural prejudice against a reform of the franchise in this novel direction. But the movement has never been in want of Conservative sympathy—notably in the case of Lord Beaconsfield; and we need not go out of the way to remind our readers that Conservatism has never failed to give its active support to any and every reform of which the justice and social or political expediency have once been plainly proved.

In the present case, we have always held that these essentials have been plainly proved. \* \*

DAILY TELEGRAPH, July 6th.

\* \* Whatever be the fate of Mr. Mason's resolution to-night, it is pretty certain that the victory of the principle which it embodies will not be much longer delayed. It needs, indeed, but little foresight to perceive that the recognition of the political rights of women, in a qualified form at any rate, is fast becoming inevitable. The denial of the Parliamentary franchise to women who already possess the municipal suffrage was always a theoretical anomaly of a sufficiently irrational kind; and recent legislation and its results have made it so prominent as to disturb even our national indifference to symmetry and logic. Dialectical ingenuity was at one time wont to employ itself in inventing distinctions

between local administration and Imperial politics, with the view of proving that those who are consulted on the former matter possess no necessary fitness to have a voice in the latter. Such distinctions, however, have always been wanting in substance, and have never survived examination. The female ratepayer is a taxpayer also, and her interests in the second capacity are, of course, much greater than her interests in the first. It is of far more concern to her whether there shall be peace or war, light taxation or heavy, wise or foolish legislation, a capable or incapable Executive, than it is whether the streets of her town be well or ill kept, or its poor-law system providently or improvidently administered. To deny her all right of assisting to choose those in whose hands these greater interests are to be placed, while she takes a share in selecting those who are charged with the care of minor civic concerns, is an utterly indefensible paradox. So long, however, as the female ratepayer, excluded from the Parliamentary franchise, only illustrated this paradox by her municipal vote, it was far less conspicuous than it has at present become. It would, indeed, have been just possible to argue that the proper remedy was not enfranchisement but disfranchisement, and that we ought to correct the anomaly rather by depriving women of the municipal than by granting them the Parliamentary suffrage. The passing of the Education Act of 1870, however, and the election of women to the membership of School Boards, dealt a fatal blow to any reasoning of this sort. It was a recognition of the complete civic equality of the sexes in respect to a highly important—perhaps, indeed, the most important—function of municipal life; and even perversity itself could hardly long resist the obvious inferences which flowed from it into the sphere of political duties and political rights.

That the force of these inferences will be practically acknowledged in the coming Reform Bill is no very hazardous prediction. All the omens seem favourable for it; all the signs of the times appear to point to it.

In the extensive form in which some of its supporters demand it, "women's suffrage," doubtless, is not likely to be soon or perhaps ever conceded; but in some modified shape the concession is inevitable. The franchise will be conferred on women who hold property, and thus the conditions which enable them now to vote



for local administrators, or even to act as such themselves, will be deemed, as they should be, sufficient to entitle women to a share in the choice of a Parliamentary representative. Effect would then be given to Mrs. Fawcett's ingenious and persuasive appeal to the Conservatives to enfranchise women of independent means in the name of the "interests of property," and with the view of securing to it the fullest possible representation. Whether the bare householder qualification of the male elector will, as was impliedly demanded by the resolution passed last night, be treated wherever it exists in the case of a woman as similarly qualifying her for registration, is another question. But even if the forthcoming legislation should go as far as this, the initial change in our electoral system would not be very great, nor the addition to the register very large. There are but a limited number of women who would be entitled as householders and personal ratepayers to be admitted to the register, and their enfranchisement would, on that ground, perhaps, be regarded with comparative equanimity even by those who disapprove of it on principle. \* \*

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DAILY NEWS, July 7th.

Mr. Mason's motion in favour of giving the suffrage to women otherwise qualified was rejected in the House of Commons last night by the narrow majority of sixteen. There is nothing in this result seriously to discourage the supporters of a reasonable reform. The debate was interesting and important, though it necessarily travelled over familiar ground. Mr. Mason, in his moderate and sensible speech, was careful not to go beyond the terms of his own resolution. He asked the House of Commons to affirm that all women who can now vote in municipal elections ought to have the Parliamentary franchise conferred upon them. This would exclude all married women, for it has been judicially held that they cannot exercise the local suffrage, even if they are otherwise qualified. It is a little matter no doubt, but we cannot see why a wife who is also a ratepayer should not be entitled to a voice both in municipal and Parliamentary contests. However, the number of such cases is so small that the point is not of much practical moment. The question really is whether women who in the existing constitution of society have their own way to make

in the world, and who contribute to the maintenance of public funds, are to be debarred from all share in the election of a body supposed to represent the entire community. To say that they are intellectually unequal to the task is a mere impertinence, of which only very stupid men are guilty. It is idle nonsense to say that an educated woman is not capable of forming a rational opinion on the political topics of the day. The "St. James's Gazette" courteously and sagaciously contended yesterday against the introduction of what it called the "hysterical element" into politics. Considering the frequent, not to say the daily, contributions which our contemporary itself makes to that factor, its objection might be called highly disinterested if it did not slightly savour of jealousy. The notion that all women would vote alike on all questions, which is one of several absurdities postulated by this theory, is, of course, wholly absurd. There are just as many diversities of political opinion, and shades of political partisanship, in the one sex as in the other. Equally unreasonable is it to urge that women should not be allowed to vote because they will be influenced by the clergy. The assertion is unfounded, and if it were true it would be irrelevant. It might as well be argued that Roman Catholics ought to be disfranchised, to say nothing of the clergy themselves, who, if their instruction is so pernicious that it must be artificially counteracted, ought surely to be excluded from the polling-booths.

Mr. Mason made a good point last night when he referred to the Election Commission at Macclesfield. The expenses of that inquiry were very heavy, and they were most properly levied upon the ratepayers of a constituency in which gross corruption had been shown to prevail. But among those called upon to pay this fine were more than fifteen hundred women who could not by law take any recognised part in the election, and who could not therefore have sold their votes. This case indicates a very serious injustice, and one which Parliament ought to lose no time in removing. It may fairly be said that there is no department of public or social activity where women have been given the chance of succeeding and yet have failed. Of late years the limits of their work have been very greatly extended. The battle of life does not become easier for them, and they, or many of them, are called upon to perform duties from which one would gladly see them



relieved. But it is aggravating and not mitigating the evil to shut out some of the most labourious members of the community from all part in public affairs. The opponents of Mr. Mason's resolution made but a poor show in the discussion last night. Mr. Edward Leatham's "immemorial basis" was made to do such arduous and continuous duty that it palpably gave way under the strain. The supporters of female suffrage are called "sentimental politicians" by the soft-headed and rough-mannered persons who believe that all sentiment is a sign of weakness. But in this debate the dry fact and hard argument were on the "sentimental side." The facts are all in favour of the capacity of women for business and for practical life. The maxim that representation should follow taxation, or, in more homely language, that those who pay the piper should call the tune, is not exactly the random suggestion of feeling divorced from reason. On the other hand, "sentiment" does not become rational because it is narrow, grudging, and ill-informed.

DAILY CHRONICLE, July 7th.

\* \* The key-note of Mr. Mason's speech was the inquiry whether it is just to give women a vote. He left mere expediency out of account, and did not think it necessary to consider how the vote would be used if it were given. It was not difficult to show that by refusing to give women the Parliamentary franchise we are not only guilty of inconsistency but of violating an essential principle of the Constitution. The inconsistency lies, of course, in allowing women to take part in municipal elections, and to refuse them the privilege of voting for Members of Parliament, while it is an acknowledged constitutional principle that taxation and representation should go together. Mr. Mason quoted the case of Macclesfield, where there are five thousand five hundred electors and fifteen hundred women ratepayers; and it is certainly difficult to justify the practice of making them pay rates and taxes, and refusing to give them a voice in the administration of affairs for which they help to pay. Mr. Henry Fowler put this point forcibly when he said that, as women are taxed, they ought to be represented. We do not think there is equal force in Mr. Leatham's contention, that the suffrage should not be given to women because it would disturb the "immemorial basis" of the representation, for

this kind of argument would have been fatal to such a measure as the Married Women's Property Act, as well as various others. The Attorney-General advanced more forcible reasons against the concession asked for, and he was able to show that there is, on this as on most other subjects, much to be said on both sides. But as the municipal franchise has been given to women, and as no evil results have followed, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the concession of the Parliamentary franchise, though refused at present, must ultimately be granted.

PALL MALL GAZETTE, July 7th.

When Mr. Mill introduced his amendment in favour of substituting "person" for "man" in Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867, he carried seventy-three members into the lobby with him. The first vote on the same question in the present Parliament has raised this number from seventy-three to one hundred and sixteen. The discussion last night must on the whole be pronounced inferior in breadth and force to that which took place sixteen years ago. Arguments against the extension of the franchise are always very like one another. The reasons why householders who pay rates should not have the parliamentary vote if they chance to be women were much the same as the reasons that were formerly given why male householders should not have votes if their annual rent chanced to be under ten pounds. The same reasons will be heard again next year when it is proposed to extend household franchise to the counties. Women are ignorant of affairs, said the Attorney-General; of the army and the navy, of foreign policy, of law, and of the great currents of trade and business. As if exactly the same will not be said, and more truly said, of the rural labourer. What does Hodge know of foreign policy, of law, of the great stream of public affairs? Yet Sir Henry James will vote for giving the franchise to him with unquestioning alacrity. Women will be under the influence of priests and parsons. As if Sir Henry James himself had not just insisted on a clause in his own Corrupt Practices Bill for protecting male voters against the undue spiritual influence of priests and parsons. Yet nobody is ever so foolish as to use the susceptibility, say, of Catholic voters to spiritual persuasions as a reason why Catholics should not have



votes. As if, too, one main cause of this influence did not lie in the exclusion of women from the bracing influence of political discussion and political responsibility! If the influence of the clergy be so great, how have they acquired it? First, because the exclusion of women from the responsible cultivation of political notions has tended to throw some of the best of them into the other great field of serious interest. Second, because the clergy take trouble to arouse and attract the enthusiasm of women towards their own subject; and that is altogether to their honour. If women had votes, laymen who care about politics would have a motive for taking the same pains to instruct and persuade them in great matters of public concern as priests and parsons take in things of purely spiritual concern. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to believe that women, taking them all round, are more especially under the thumbs of their spiritual advisers than men are. The majority of those whom Mr. Mason would enfranchise are women of the humbler rank, who are just as independent, and just as likely to resent the intrusion of the clergyman outside his own sphere, as mechanics and artizans notoriously are. But, as Mr. Courtney put it, why need we go further than experience? What is the use of wasting time in abstract reasoning about the comparative value of men's faculties and women's faculties, when we have an opportunity every day of seeing by practical observation how little this difference, whatever it may amount to, affects the fitness of women to vote for School Boards and for Boards of Guardians, and not only to vote but to be members of such Boards? If there was one thing, Mr. Courtney said, that might have been deemed more hazardous than another, it was allowing them to be members of Boards of Guardians, because the Poor Law has qualities about it which the supposed peculiarities of women would have made them singularly reluctant to recognize and to act upon. But they had properly appreciated the character of the Poor Law, and had assisted so admirably in carrying out its provisions, that the Local Government Board had itself nominated them where they had not been elected, and successive Presidents had promoted their election. What greater inconsistency can there be than to allow women to administer a law much of whose effect depends on the mode of administration, and to prevent them from having any voice in making the law? But

they have a voice, it will be said; if a woman has anything to urge she can lay her views before a Member of Parliament just as if she were a man. It is too late at this time of day to bring back the exploded theories of virtual or indirect representation. Wherever an extension of the franchise to a new class has been proposed, the opponents of the change have urged that the class in question could influence the Legislature just as efficiently without actually having votes as if they had them. No doubt next year we shall be told by Mr. Beresford-Hope and Mr. Raikes, though not by Sir Henry James, that the views and interests of the agricultural labourer are quite adequately represented by the present County Members. The argument will not be listened to by half of those including Mr. Gladstone, who went into the lobby against the admission of female householders and ratepayers last night. Mr. Gladstone will proclaim with Olympian thunder that no class can be safely trusted to represent the views and the interests, the opinions and the wants, of any other class. With what face, then, can it be contended that in a representative and parliamentary system like ours, one half of the community can be fairly excluded from power, on the strength of the care which the other half will take of their interests?

The usual eloquent pictures were drawn of the purity of the home, the beauty of the female character, the sacred duties of the wife and the mother. Words, words, words. Just as if you could metamorphose human nature by a vote; as if the family and maternal instinct were so light and superficial an affair that it would vanish from the female breast before the overwhelming delights of the canvassing-book and the polling-booth. Men are not always thinking of politics, simply because they have political power. Most men think of politics very little, and a great many men do not think about them at all. It would be the same with women. Why should they sink all their other duties for the sake of active politics, any more than men do? Of course nothing of the kind would happen. The vote, and the political curiosity which its possession would arouse, would only be an interest the more in lives that would be all the better worth living for the addition of responsible interests. Not only would the lives of women themselves be better worth living, but in at least an equal degree so too would the lives of the men who are their companions,



and to whom they are in a thousand respects the most potent of all surrounding forces. The truth is that half of this idealization of "woman's life" is flat hypocrisy. The chief opponents of the proposed reform conceal under their fine words a very hearty contempt for women. It is they who think no term so contemptuous as "womanish" who talk of the proposal of last night as the device of "womanish men," though that is hardly the name that we should think fit for a good many hundreds of its supporters, from Jeremy Bentham down to Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Henley.

ECHO, July 7th.

The Woman's Suffrage Question had a fair discussion in the Commons last night. Its warmest advocates and most strenuous opponents represent Liberal constituencies. Two speeches—one for and the other against—came from the Treasury bench. Mr. Courtney, with unusual warmth, vindicated the political rights of women, and the Attorney-General, with still more warmth, opposed them. It would have been comical to see Mr. Fawcett answer the Attorney-General, and it would have become confusion worse confounded to have heard Mr. Gladstone answer Mr. Fawcett. Such a state of things might have occurred last night, but it was obviated by the lateness of the hour into which the debate drifted. There was scarcely an argument used last night against Mr. Mason's motion for granting the privilege of voting to widows and spinsters who are householders and who pay rates, which has not in modified forms been used against the extension of the suffrage to men who are householders. In fact the debate last night resembled, in one primary feature, the debate which took place in the House of Lords a week before on the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. The opponents of the latter Bill, and particularly the Bishops, foretold dreadful consequences if the Bill passed. They said it would break up the foundations on which the marriage law has existed for fifteen centuries in the principal parts of Christendom, and introduce a disturbing and destructive influence into family life. As the Bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, and Exeter regarded the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, so Mr. Leatham, Mr. Inderwick, and the Attorney-General regard the Woman's Suffrage Question. Mr. Leatham

would prevent women "sharing in the mire and filth of political elections," as if such elections consisted only of mire and filth. The Attorney-General regarded woman's suffrage with terror, as it would be politically detrimental and socially disastrous. We have heard similar forebodings, but from other lips, before. Other changes and reforms which were heralded by gloomy prediction were not succeeded by the deluge, and it is probable, to say the least of it, that if thirty or forty thousand women who are rate-payers, and who now vote at municipal elections, and who also exercise the right of voting for Poor-Law Guardians and School Boards, and who are eligible to serve as Guardians and as members of such Boards, should also have Parliamentary votes, that the decadence of England would not be the inevitable result. We are inclined to look at the matter in a different light. We are rather inclined to think the introduction of woman suffrage into political elections would tend to elevate and purify those elections, and at the same time broaden and deepen our constitutional system. During the last twelve or fifteen years the question has been well argued in and out of the House of Commons. It is questionable whether a repetition of the arguments for or against the innovation will, for some time to come, modify convictions or alter votes. Much now will depend on the attitude and action of women. If they want the suffrage, no power in this country can keep them from it. We do not mean a comparatively few women, but a fairly large proportion of the intelligent women of the country. If they are sufficiently numerous and sufficiently in earnest, they have only to unite and stretch forth their hands and they will obtain what sentiment may dictate and reason may claim. But we question whether they can command the most attention by using the coercive portion of the general machinery of political agitation. More ground can, in the long run, be gained by quiet and patient action than by more stormy demands. The still small voice, the private letter—which is in itself a mighty engine—and the home meetings of twenties or fifties, will, if sufficiently multiplied and persistently employed, become irresistible. Such were the methods which were to a large extent adopted to modify opinion and to create a majority in favour of the repeal of the Compulsory Clauses of the Contagious Diseases Act. If the means we indicate are not



successful it is because there is insufficient moral force in this country to put the woman who is at the head of a household, and who pays rates, in possession of the political franchise.

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EVENING NEWS, London, July 17th, 1883.

\* \* It is only logical that those who contribute to the income and property tax should have the chief control over the expenditure of Parliament. A widow or a spinster, very often a person of narrow income, contributes just as much to the public burthens as a man. She feels the results of good or bad legislation just as much as a man. Public affairs are of as much interest to women, and they take as much interest in them as the sterner sex. If, then, the principle that representation and taxation should be co-extensive is a true one, upon that principle, women who contribute to the direct taxation of the country, either in the shape of rates or income tax, are entitled to a voice in the election of representatives to Parliament.

Again, there are many questions which come before the Houses of Parliament which affect women far more than they do men, and in regard to which women are capable of forming a sounder judgment than men do. We might instance two Bills that have been before the House of Lords this year—the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill and the Bill for the Protection of Young Girls. It seems strangely unjust that women should have no direct voice in the election of the representatives who are ultimately to decide such questions as these.

If, then, upon other grounds it be just and politic that the Parliamentary suffrage should be extended to women ratepayers and taxpayers, have we any reason for supposing that there is any inherent infirmity in their sex by reason of which they cannot rightly exercise those powers? On the contrary, we believe that women as a class would prove to be, if anything, a more conscientious body of electors than men. We think, too, that most men will agree that women as a class are far more religious than men (using the word in its best sense), and have a far higher standard of morality. There are few men of mature years who would not in honesty have to confess that the average moral code which they

recognised in their youth appears low and contemptible to them in their late years. With women, especially in the upper and middle classes, matters are very different. They are carefully reared at home, out of the reach of the "seamy side of life," upon a code of truth and morality very far superior to any which is recognised by the schoolboy or undergraduate. It is to this height of moral aim and purity of conscience that women owe the great influence they possess over even the best and most thoughtful of men, who carry for decision before their purer judgment, doubts and difficulties which their own consciences, deadened more or less by contact with the world, are unable to discriminate. If, then, this purity of aim and strength of conviction is the chief characteristic of women as a sex—and we think that few thoughtful men will doubt it—why should we deprive ourselves as a community of the value of their judgment, which as individuals we prize so highly? Surely in the present day the besetting sin of politics is desertion of principle. Principles—religious, moral, social and political—which Conservatives and Christians have heretofore regarded as axiomatic are now declared, on high Liberal authority, to be "as dead as the worship of Osiris," or "only fit to be relegated to the planet Saturn." Whatever may be the temporary aberrations of the feminine mind, though they may now and then wander astray after crotchets, to those great principles they are warmly attached. We are confident that their moral superiority will infuse fresh life into politics, and enable us to hold fast some of those cherished truths which now seem to be slipping out of our grasp.

We think, then, that women ratepayers and taxpayers are entitled to claim the Parliamentary suffrage as a right, on the ground that those who directly contribute to the burdens of the commonwealth are entitled to a voice in its administration. We think that the country on its part is entitled to claim the benefit of their judgment in the election of representatives to Parliament in an age when their characteristic good qualities render that judgment of infinite value. We will hereafter treat of the necessary limits to the feminine element in politics, and endeavour to show that the objections usually urged to female voters are in reality applicable to female representatives.



## MODERN SOCIETY, July 14th.

It may probably be a mistake to allow women to vote, but, then, why are they to be called upon to pay? It is a matter of taste upon the part of the ladies whether they will exercise the right to vote, and perhaps a great number of good women will always refuse to do so, but the question is one of constitutional justice. It is possible to push the question of disqualification of sex too far, for it would lead us to say we erred in accepting Elizabeth, Anne and Victoria as Monarchs. Did ever King do better, or was his reign more illustrious?

## WESTERN MORNING NEWS, Plymouth, July 5th.

The leaders in the movement ought to be encouraged by the alarm which it begins to cause. Whenever a project is said to be changing the basis of the constitution, destroying the family life, and launching us forth upon a sea of disaster, we may be sure that it is going to pass. This exaggerated language is always the rhetoric of a despairing argument. It is the natural moan of a lost cause. It but precludes the acquiescence in change which follows the change. Such a point have we now reached: the opponents begin to declaim with more vigour than common-sense. Women seek the franchise just as men seek it, not to destroy the family, but to gain justice for themselves and to ameliorate the general conditions of life. The mere entrance into the political arena has changed the point of view of our politicians. Women have obtained higher education, the right to their own property, the right to sue in the courts, places on our School Boards, openings for a career in the civil service, and positions as doctors and lawyers. Gradually their sphere has widened; and no independent-minded young girl now needs to choose between the life of a governess and that of being a burden to her family. Complete justice is not yet done, and will not be done, until women have the vote; but the change in twenty years is so great that the prophet who in 1863 predicted it would have been laughed to scorn. It is to complete this great work that women now demand the franchise. They will do more. Instead of interfering with the work that is being done, with the lightness of irresponsibility, they will

have to devise themselves means for the abatement of intolerable evils. Instead of crying out about rights they will have to get rid of wrongs; and they will keep the Legislature to the point. The enfranchisement of women means an abatement of the great evils which now afflict our social constitution.

## SUSSEX DAILY NEWS, July 5th.

\* \* Time is on the side of the political equality of women, and the only arguments which can be used against them are such as time is gradually removing.

At one time it was regarded as a solecism in manners to talk politics before ladies; they were supposed to be too deeply immersed in the petty affairs of the household to give a thought or have a care for the deep problems of humanity agitating the great world. Nobody talks and few think like that now. Women are almost as keenly political as men; they take part in every political movement and help to form public opinion, and to restrain political action. From them have proceeded many of the movements of the time. There is hardly a great cause now agitating the world which does not find women engaged in it, whether it be the liberty to marry deceased wives' sisters, or the right of our Hindu fellow-citizens to equality with ourselves. The drawing rooms of London are as political as, in times of great interest, have been the *salons* of Paris. The great prejudices which prevented women from being interested in politics have been broken down; the woman is called a baby who does not know something about them, and she generally knows as much as the man; and with her interest in politics, should come her admittance to direct political interest.

Her exclusion is doing untold harm. A prejudice against "masculine legislation" has grown up among women, which is not only hurtful to our social progress, but is in some directions an absolute bar to it. Women are obtaining a veto upon legislation, while they are powerless to propose substitutes for it. We can always be certain that, if they unite in opposition to any bill, however salutary, it is doomed. They have proved it this very year. But when, having prevented men from taking their own way by the influence they exert, they are asked to propose a substitute for the check, which they have destroyed, upon an intolerable evil,



they admit their powerlessness. They ask us to give them the vote. Already they look after the poor as Guardians; already they tend the children as members of School Boards; they are eligible as High Sheriffs and as Churchwardens. Their enfranchisement needs only one more step. It is illogical and absurd to deny it to them. It is said they have not the physical capacity to vote, but to drop a paper into the ballot box needs no very great exertion. It is said they have not the intellectual capacity to judge of members; but put the women who pay rates alongside of the agricultural labourers, who are about to be admitted to the franchise, and it will be admitted that, for keenness of intelligence, they are not inferior to the men. They will be revolutionists, say some; priest-ridden, say others; blind and bigoted Tories, the strident Radicals declare. To hear people talk it would be supposed that our mothers, wives, and daughters were as unknown as the savages who inhabit the unexplored interior of New Guinea. Some of them will no doubt be revolutionists. There is a Louise Michel as well as a Rochefort. Some of them will be priest-ridden; there are such women, and there are priests. Some of them will be Conservatives; and it is just possible that in the sex one might be found to emulate the intelligence, the agreeable methods, and the beautiful innocence of Mr. Warton. This is just possible, but not at all probable. But if we are to disfranchise women because of Louise Michel, we should disfranchise men because of Rochefort. If we disfranchise women because they go to church too often, we should disfranchise the clergy who go to church to help the women. If we disfranchise a sex that probably does not contain a Warton, we ought to make Mr. Warton unable to sit in Parliament.

BRADFORD DAILY TELEGRAPH, July 7th.

Mr. Hugh Mason's resolution affirming the desirableness of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women was defeated last evening, by a majority of sixteen, in a small house, the numbers being 114 for and 130 against. Comparatively little interest was manifested in the trial of conclusions, and Mr. E. A. Leatham with doubtful taste twitted the supporters of the movement upon the fact. Said the latter gentleman: "From having possessed in former years

the robust proportions of a Bill, it had shrunk to the lowest form which a motion could take to be a motion at all—a Friday's motion on going into Committee of Supply." Well, the reason of this retrograde movement is clear enough to most men's minds, if not to that of Mr. Leatham. We are within measurable distance of a new Reform Bill, and it may be taken for granted that when the measure is presented to the House it will be found to include a provision for removing the present electoral disabilities of women.

BRADFORD OBSERVER, July 7th.

It would be flattering both supporters and opponents of women's suffrage to say that they made the debate in the House of Commons last night exceptionally interesting. Few of the speakers went beyond the stock arguments; and we do not notice that one of them dwelt with sufficient emphasis on the fact that the suffrage movement is only part of a far wider social change, which has been going on with unprecedented rapidity during the present generation, and which is beating down point by point the same kind of emotional dislike that meets the suffrage demand. This social change cannot be checked at the present stage any more than in the past; and those who cannot understand nor bring themselves to sympathise with it have simply to reconcile themselves to it gradually as best they may. In almost every direction women are expected to do more for themselves, and they have therefore necessarily greater liberty, than was the case a generation ago. Mere inattention to and ignorance of the real significance of the suffrage movement can alone excuse those who allege that it is an artificial agitation, got up by a few theorists and "social failures," and unsupported by any real sense of grievance shared by a considerable proportion of women. The truth is that in modern times the chivalrous ideal which sought to make of all women a sort of semi-angelic aristocracy has vanished altogether with many other similar ideals. It was never very successfully carried into practice, save amongst the wealthier classes; the facts of life proved too much for those lower in the social scale. Women must work as well as smile and weep, or they will be left to starve as unkindly as if they were men. And during this generation they have had to work in rapidly-increasing numbers. We need not at present inquire into



the economic or other causes to which the phenomenon is due; nor would the inquiry be of any avail to the women themselves. Enough that the causes operate on a large scale; that not only in the artisan class have multitudes of women to earn their living—the chivalric ideal never reached them—but in the middle classes, up to a line which is continually rising, is it more and more necessary that women should acquire some business by which they can obtain food and the comforts of life by their unaided exertions.

This is the phenomenon that explains the whole movement of which the women's suffrage demand is but a detail. Until the economic or other social causes have been removed or altered, it is sheer emptiness to quote or invent poetic phrases relating to the troubadour ideal of womanhood. Indeed, it is worse than emptiness, for it falsifies the problem which must be solved, and is being solved. \* \* Every class must do its best to influence the Legislature in its favour. It must agitate, propagandise, appeal to electors who happen to be ignorant and indifferent, hold meetings, put every kind of available pressure on members and candidates. If ten thousand women agree that there is some peculiar obstacle in the way of earning their livelihood which only the Legislature can remove, or any other grievance peculiar to them, what are they to do? They must proceed just as any other aggrieved class proceeds. They must associate, and the cleverest and most leisured of them must become leaders, and the leaders cannot help becoming politicians if they are to do their duty to their clients. How many thousand women, does Mr. Leatham suppose, have reason to thank leaders like Miss Becker for promoting legislative and social reforms which have opened careers to them and given them the title to their own property! How else could Miss Becker and her allies have done all this except by becoming most active and influential politicians, whose opposition or support is of very serious importance to Parliamentary candidates and to candidates for other public positions? And is it not absurd to withhold from women whose word already influences votes by the thousand, the right to record and enforce directly their own unit of influence?

Thus we see that the opponents of women's suffrage are not resisting a mere theory, or a false and mischievous notion about the equality of the sexes. They are trying to resist a great human

tide-movement arising from influences utterly beyond their control. Intellectual or physical equality of the sexes has nothing to do with the question. Here are a multitude of women who have some brains and some physical strength, which they are compelled to make the most of, for the same reasons which impel men to similar effort. To those who say that they are incapable of this, that, and the other, they make the same answer as a man—"We must try." And nothing else but experiment will be a satisfactory test. How many of the trials have resulted satisfactorily everyone knows. These women are convinced that the Parliamentary franchise will in various ways facilitate their struggle for existence. People who have not passed through their experience tell them that the vote would not help them in any way. They know better; for they have found their influence upon other voters of service to them, and they regard it as nonsense to say that the addition of more votes on the same side would not help it. They equally regard it as nonsense to talk about the immemorial experience of mankind and the laws of nature; because they know at first hand their own experience, which happens, the circumstances being changed, to differ from the alleged experience of former generations; and they have as good a right to discover what are the laws of nature as their opponents. An increasing number of women have to earn and live an independent life, it is becoming more the custom to expect that they should do so, and they want every weapon that will help them in the fight—there, in a nutshell, is the case for the women's suffrage movement, and the reason why it must presently succeed.

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DERBYSHIRE TIMES, July 7th.

We cordially trust that the day is not far distant when women householders will have votes. If you tax a woman and impose on her the responsibilities of a man, we cannot see why she should be deprived of the franchise. There are thousands of unmarried ladies at present who maintain themselves, do much useful work in the land, bear their share of the burdens of the State, and yet have no votes simply because of their sex. It is not urged that they are incapable of forming as good a judgment, or a better, of the qualifications of a candidate as many men voters. That would



be too absurd when we see the mental stamina of many of the present voters. Nor is it argued that women would be likely to vote for bad measures, for it is notorious that the sympathies of women would be more certainly given on the side of those things which are good than could be said of an equal number of men. By an accident women obtained the municipal franchise, but they have certainly used it so well that no one would now seek to deprive them of it. Why then should they not vote for members of Parliament? We can see no valid reason, and we hope that the extension of the franchise in this direction will speedily be effected. Laws are made for women as well as men, and they have therefore a right to have a voice in the election of the law-makers. Married women vote by their husbands, but at present the independent woman householder has every burden thrown upon her, and has no privilege except that of paying. The anomaly cannot last, and it ought not to do so.

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LIVERPOOL MERCURY, July 7th.

\* \* Women's rights as thinking and acting members of society have for years been impressing themselves with growing strength upon the consciousness of public men, and the hour has arrived when an earnest effort should be made to remove from the sex the one grievance regarding which they are now so sensitive and clamorous. Besides—and this is the most powerful plea of all—they possess the franchise in every election that is not to seat a member of Parliament. They vote for municipal corporations, for school boards, and for boards of guardians. If they are worthy of exercising a choice in the selection of all sorts of local representatives, it is an absurdity to assume that they are not equally worthy and capable of exercising a choice in the selection of our lawmakers. We draw no contrast of the kind as regards men, and there is something ridiculous in retaining it as regards women who have the same social responsibilities. The tendency of our legislation, indeed, is rather to broaden privileges in proportion to the higher importance of the electoral duty to be discharged, and this is illustrated, for example, in the fact that the Parliamentary franchise is much wider, fairer, and embracing than that which is put in motion to choose local boards of health. And this being

the actual and reasonable bent of our system, it is proportionately irrational to tell the woman that we form our judgment on what is right and expedient in the matter without any reference to her.

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LIVERPOOL DAILY POST, July 7th.

Although Mr. Leatham says that Woman Suffrage is making no way it is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that its triumph is at hand. The public are beginning to see that there is a want of reason in granting the municipal and withholding the Imperial franchise. Women are permitted to rent houses. Women who rent houses are compelled to pay rates. Taxation without representation is tyranny, and the sex of the taxed person who is not represented clearly makes no difference. These considerations suffice to establish a *prima facie* case, which must hold good unless great inconveniences can be brought home to female suffrage. No such inconveniences fall within any experience or can be divined by any ingenuity. We all feel—even if we prefer, as a matter of taste, that women should not take any part in politics—that there is no real fear of their becoming unsexed, or neglecting for politics those home duties which so well become them. In the absence of all complaints and of all reasonable apprehensions, it may fairly be presumed that the equality of householders before the electoral law will soon be established. The question would be discussed in a manner much more acceptable to many persons if it were deemed politic to put the argument for the change on higher grounds. With every extension of the scope of female intelligence it will be found that good is done. The common sense of home life is increased. The standard of family conduct is raised. And the line taken by public advocates becomes worthier of the politics of a great nation. This would be very largely the effect of extending the suffrage to women, and such ideas are really the animating forces at the back of the agitation. But it is not thus that we proceed in England, and Mr. Hugh Mason confines himself to the strictest demonstration of the justice of the principle of equality between householders in this matter. Fortunately this argument is strong enough to prove his case, and it will ere long be strong enough to silence or convert all gainsayers.



## MANCHESTER EXAMINER, July 7th.

\* \* The question of women's suffrage occupies a very different position from what it did some years ago. The bestowal of the municipal franchise on women has changed the whole practical aspect of the case. The privilege which is now asked for in the election of members of Parliament has long been possessed by every female householder in the election of members of our local Parliaments. The experiment has thus been tried, and is found to answer well. Women are eager to vote; they vote in large numbers at every municipal election. The greater orderliness produced by the ballot enables them to exercise the suffrage without any inconvenience to themselves, and without a shade of unseemliness. Nor can there be much doubt that the change has had good social results. It is felt that a dissability has been removed. Women are more alive to the injustice they once suffered, when, while bearing their share of the burdens of the municipality, they had no voice in the expenditure, or in the general management of the town, and they are sensible of the value of the privilege conferred upon them. What is true of municipal elections applies equally to School Board elections, with the significant difference that women can be elected on the Board. It must be admitted that, as a matter of principle, only very narrow standing room is left between conceding the municipal and School Board franchise and refusing the Parliamentary franchise. Most of the objections, we might say all the objections, which are urged against the bestowal of the Parliamentary franchise, apply with equal force to the municipal franchise, while as regards the latter they have been discredited and set aside, without the smallest inconvenience accruing. The nation is only a larger municipality. Essentially the same interests are involved in the one case as in the other. It may be urged that Town Councils are subordinate institutions, while Parliament is supreme. It may be further urged that Parliament deals with foreign as well as with domestic questions, and that foreign affairs occasionally involve operations in which women can take no part. Some theoretic arguments adverse to the claims of women, may be drawn from these facts, but they have but little practical weight. If women cannot take part in a campaign abroad, neither can one half the men. When a captain

is compulsorily retired at forty, and a recruit of that age would be laughed at, the non-combatant character of women cannot count for much as a political disqualification. In other respects, besides the admission of women to the municipal franchise, the aspect of the question is greatly changed. The Universities are thrown open to women. They compete on equal terms with men, and are equally successful in proportion to the numbers who enter the lists. One of the professions is opening its doors to women. Their claims have been and still are jealously contested, but they will have to be recognised. It is impossible, moreover, not to be struck with the growth of political capacity among women, taking as examples those of them who are most before the public. A monopoly of political intelligence can no longer be pleaded by those who would exclude them from political privileges. And the results of the greater political activity of women have been in a high degree beneficial. Important and most salutary legal changes must be placed among them. After giving due weight to these facts, it must appear almost absurd to refuse to women who possess the statutable qualifications, the right of giving their votes for members of Parliament. \* \*

## BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST, July 9th.

\* \* The debate on Friday night, when Mr. Mason moved a resolution in favour of conferring the franchise on those women who possess the qualifications which enable men to vote, plainly showed that the opposition was merely sentimental. The arguments in support of the motion were clear, intelligible, and, in our judgment, irresistible. It was first insisted that all persons alike, whether men or women, when owning or holding premises, paying rates and taxes, and being subject to the other responsibilities of citizenship, were entitled to a voice in the representation. Next it was shown by the experience of local elections—such as those for Town Councils, School Boards, and Local Boards—that there is no practical objection to the suffrage being exercised by women. Here the cause might have concluded; but some members thought it necessary further to point out that examinations and University competitions in late years have proved that women are a match for men in the intellectual powers an elector is supposed to require for guidance in the disposal of his vote. A



contrast was also drawn between the educated woman now excluded and the masculine elector who cannot even read the names of the candidates on the voting papers. The cause was no doubt strengthened by these additional recommendations; but it was quite strong enough without them.

The reasons given by different members for opposing the resolution were variously stated, but they were only repetitions of a few well-worn ideas, or we will venture to say antique prejudices. The first was that enfranchisement of women would be contrary to the "universal practice or experience of mankind," a proposition which might have been employed in resisting the introduction of railways, steamboats, telegraphs, or any other modern improvements. Then came the argument that woman is subordinated to man by Divine ordination, and is required to acknowledge her subjection at the marriage ceremony. As to this it is sufficient to remark that the resolution only proposed to confer the franchise on women who occupied an independent position. If it had been intended to enfranchise wives, there might be some force in the objection, but when a woman has to pay her own rent, rates, and taxes, and to get her own living, it is nothing short of a mockery to tell her that she occupies a position of dependence on man. Coming to the third reason, we find it still more feeble. It was that women do not possess that robustness of character which would fit them to fight and tussle in the streets during an election. How many men would also be disqualified if the want of this endowment were to prevail with them? But the time has gone by for fighting and tussling over elections in a physical fashion, and men who give themselves to such practices are the least worthy of being entrusted with the vote. We come then, to the fourth reason, which was that women had not asked for the franchise; but the supporters of the resolution declared that they had asked for it, and we are certainly under the impression that the demand has been repeatedly made. "Widows and spinsters" are not sufficiently numerous in the constituencies to get up monster demonstrations; but meetings are frequently held for the assertion of their political claims, and, unless reports are deceptive, they nearly always terminate with a unanimous vote in favour of the object Mr. Mason seeks to promote. Great stress was next laid on the argument that, if women obtained the right to vote, they

could not be denied the right to sit in the House of Commons. Singularly enough, this was especially dwelt upon by Mr. Raikes, though he represents a constituency composed in great part of clergymen, who, being graduates, can vote twice—once for the university and once for a county or borough—but who cannot be returned as members. With this example before him, Mr. Raikes could scarcely have been talking seriously when he contended that it could not be followed in regard to women. As if conscious that this and the preceding objections were too shadowy to rely upon, the opponents further asserted that if women were allowed to vote, once in five years or so, at Parliamentary elections, they would be rendered unfit for those domestic duties which constitute their proper employment; and also, that no one had a right to the privilege of the vote except those who were prepared to undertake the rougher work of fighting for their country. A large percentage of men would be excluded if the latter of these contentions were acted upon; and as to the former, it is strangely put forward at a time when women have already been voting at annual and triennial elections for 14 years. The Attorney-General, who was the propounder of the soldier theory, did not hesitate to attack the groundwork of the women advocates by denying that the right to vote depended on the property or occupying qualification. He said it was fitness that was required, and that qualification was merely one form of evidence of fitness. If, he said, putting the famous joke of Franklin in a new form, occupying was absolutely to qualify, it would not be every man who held a house that would vote, but every house that held a man. Believing women not to be fit, he thus got rid of their claim, though people will not find it easy to follow his line of reasoning, for, in point of fact, the property or occupying qualification is universal, with such rare exceptions as but serve to prove the rule. Mr. H. Fowler, in taking the part of the women, very properly said that as the owners and occupiers of one sex were admitted, it rested with those who objected to show why the other sex should be excluded. Instead, therefore, of asking why women should be admitted, he would rather put it—why should they not? Mr. Hope, Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Raikes, and the Attorney-General devoted themselves to answering this question, but their replies were so inconclusive that they may be said to have left the cause of women



stronger than it was before. The resolution was defeated by a majority of 16, but, after carefully reading the whole, we are driven to the conclusion that prejudice had a far greater share than reason in causing its rejection.

EASTERN MORNING NEWS, Hull, July 9th.

The most Radical House of Commons ever elected has rejected the proposal to enfranchise women by a majority of 16. If we are to judge of the reasons for this rejection by the arguments used in the debate, they were very weak. After all, they came only to an assertion that women are women and ought not, because they are women, to vote. Mr. Leatham has discovered that it is quite unscriptural, and declares it to be a new heresy. Sixty years ago he would probably have defended slavery on the same ground. It is worse than unscriptural, however; it is Nihilistic. A woman who wants to go to the ballot box and drop a paper in is of the persuasion of Vera Sassaulitch. But though this woman is a Nihilist, yet her shrinking from physical trouble is a bar to her enfranchisement. "Were women," Mr. Leatham asked triumphantly, "prepared to fight and tussle in the streets?" Because women are *not* prepared to fight and tussle, therefore they are to be disfranchised. No doubt Mr. Leatham is prepared for fighting and tussling. What the nature of his preparation for indulgence in street rows may be we do not know; but it is to be hoped that the police of Huddersfield, the town which he represents, will remember at the next election what he is prepared to do. If, however, Mr. Leatham will not disfranchise men as well as women, we may tell him that even men are not prepared to fight and tussle in the street at election time. No doubt it is a proof of the degeneracy of man, but it is a fact; and probably Mr. Leatham will soon be alone in his desire to carry on elections in this way. Sir Henry James put the argument somewhat higher when he said that the vote involved an obligation to military service, and there would be something in his position if the women of England were likely to send their husbands and brothers to fight in an unjust battle. But, as a matter of fact, the stress and strain of war are felt as much by women as by men; and it is unjust to deprive them of the political power which they would almost certainly use to

preserve peace. Quite as beside the mark was Sir Henry James's contention that women have not the requisite knowledge to judge of politics. "They lacked the experience," he declared, "which was necessary for the conduct of public affairs. The men sitting in that House had all had practical experience in different walks of life. Some had military experience, others legal, and others commercial. But what knowledge had women of such matters? Their only experience was domestic experience, which fitted them, perhaps, well enough for service on the School Board; and when questions of peace or war should arise, they would be found timid in a time of panic and violent in a time of outbreak. He believed that were a war to be proposed for the purpose of restoring the temporal power of the Pope, every woman in France would advocate it. If women were given political power they would often be guided by the impulses of the heart rather than by the reason of the mind." But is this so? Do not women now gain as much knowledge of the world bearing on politics as men? Sir Henry James doubtless has a larger experience than most women, but he has also a larger experience than most men. What is there in the daily life of a miner, or a carpenter, or a shoemaker, or an agricultural labourer which more fits a man to decide whether Mr. Gladstone is a good Prime Minister than the daily life of an ordinary housekeeper? If you desire knowledge of human nature you do not go to Dickens for it in preference even to George Elliot. Who shows more acquaintance with life than Mrs. Oliphant? Take the agricultural labourer and his wife, and we venture to say that the wife will be found the more cultivated of the two, and quite as shrewd in judging as her husband.

The whole argument rests, in fact, upon a prejudice. It is the idea that a woman who thinks about politics, who knows the difference between a Liberal and a Conservative, who can form an opinion on such a question as the annexation of New Guinea, or the Government of Ireland, will cease to be charming. "There was a class in this country," said Sir Henry James, in minatory tones, "which did not often make its voice heard, and yet it had at times determined the state of parties. He referred to those men who cared little for political life, who found their happiness in their homes, and who believed that upon the stability of those homes the greatness and prosperity of the country depended. If



once they should think that the women who formed their happiness were about to be called from their houses to join in political affairs, they would unhesitatingly prohibit such a movement. The proposed change could add nothing to the happiness of domestic existence, and in public life it would be a source of weakness, and it would, therefore, be detrimental to the interests of the country." But all this is so much rubbish. As a matter of fact, a woman who understands politics will simply have her head filled with something else besides the dress which she wears, and the heresies of the last new curate. She will talk politics as men talk politics. She will no more quarrel with her husband about the questions at issue between them in politics than she does about the questions at issue between them, say on Church Ritual or the use of the Athanasian Creed. The notion that with everything else in daily life to quarrel about, a couple will be good and sweet in their relationships so long as politics are excluded, but if politics become a topic of interest between them, will forthwith be maddened into furious controversy, is of all notions the most stupid. On the contrary, the introduction of questions of the sort will be beneficial to any home where the interest is narrowed. Loud and ribald laughter greeted Mr. Courtney's argument upon this head, but it was a good one. "If they wanted the heroic woman, the woman of public spirit, the companion and helpmeet of the ideal English citizen, they must have a woman who could understand and sympathise with the ideas of the age, and with the life of her husband. In many cases the husband was pulled down by a wife of deficient education and possessing no sympathy with the motives and ideas of his life, and unless they made a woman helpmeet for man they would not only find stunted woman but would be punished by finding society fall away, and the national life become impoverished, poor, and petty." What there is to laugh at in that we do not see; the laughter with which it was greeted is the measure of the reverence which the present House of Commons has for true womanhood.

LEEDS MERCURY, July 9th.

Mr. Mason, the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne, asked the House of Commons on Friday night to declare that in its opinion the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who, in

all matters of local government have the right of voting." It will be observed that the terms of the resolution were limited "to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote;" in other words, to women who are independent owners or occupiers of property. The question has been from time to time so exhaustively discussed, both in Parliament and outside, that it would be impossible to say anything new upon it. The claim is urged upon the ground that morally and intellectually women possess qualifications equal to those of men, and that in the eye of the law they are equally responsible; and that single women, or women engaged in business independently of their husbands, are liable to all taxes and rates as if they were men. Responsibilities of this kind imply duties, and duties involve rights. Those rights are recognised as regards men, and in many respects as regards women. In all the ordinary relations of civil life women enjoy a status scarcely inferior to that of men. Politically, however, they have no recognised existence. It is against this illogical disability that the supporters of women's suffrage protest. Indeed, the maintenance of this disability can only be defended on the ground that it exists. It is a kind of conservatism, however, which is daily losing its hold upon the minds of thinking people. It is true that Mr. E. A. Leatham, who bolstered up a somewhat frivolous argument by an appeal to the authority of Scripture, asserted that the movement championed by the Member for Ashton was losing ground in the country. But there is little need to take account of this assertion from the lips of the representative of a borough the Town Council of which has petitioned in favour of the proposed change. The desire that properly qualified women should be enabled to vote for Members of Parliament gains ground in proportion as the popular aversion to injustice increases, and as it is more and more generally realised that the rights of citizenship with which women have recently been endowed have been used worthily, and, therefore, to the public advantage. There are still, indeed, those who argue as if physical strength sufficient for the adequate discharge of the functions of a special constable were a necessary qualification for the franchise. But we are glad to believe that the intelligence and the moral sense of the community condemn such reasonings, and that though Mr. Mason's motion was defeated by a small majority, the moderate claim to a share of



political rights which he urged on behalf of women will not much longer be rejected.

WESTERN MERCURY, Plymouth, July 9th.

It appears to us to be just as indefensible to refuse to assimilate the municipal and Parliamentary franchise, as far as women are concerned, as it is to refuse to grant to residents in the counties the same advantages as are enjoyed by inhabitants of the boroughs. We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that Liberals are somewhat apprehensive of the way in which the female vote would go. Well, the female vote would not be large, and when the agricultural labourer is enfranchised, its influence at the poll would be proportionately reduced.

But as soon as the female receives the Parliamentary suffrage she would be appealed to on Imperial grounds, and although there are some weak women, as there are some weak men, we do not think that, when great issues are at stake—issues involving the continuance of a Ministry of despotism, of interference, of war,—the women who would be generally found subsisting upon the profit of investments, and keenly alive to the causes of a declension in their value, who are invariably found in receipt of incomes certain to be diminished by the pursuit of a policy of disturbance, would often be found casting the weight of their suffrages into the wrong scale. At any rate, Liberals ought never to shrink from the right because they fear that their party may suffer. They have never suffered in the end, and would not eventually suffer by making a sacrifice for the sake of the principle now under discussion. It is not to be forgotten that the pioneers of this agitation did not discover that they ought to hold votes before they found out that they could not avoid becoming Liberals, nor that the female politician, who has obtained any distinction at all in the world, has always been an advanced social reformer.

WESTERN INDEPENDENT, Devonport, July 11th.

\* \* When the question is properly defined and limited, we can hardly conceive that a majority of men would refuse Parliamentary representation to qualified women who have no husbands to vote for them. The principle of such feminine representation is not at all new in some other public matters. Female ratepayers

are entitled to vote for town councillors, guardians, vestrymen, and members of various local boards, including School Boards, and they may themselves sit as representatives in some of these bodies, Local franchises have in some cases been recently conferred on women, with the understanding that it was done to test their capacity for taking their share in public life; and we have heard no complaints of any evil effects following from such enfranchisement. On the contrary, we think it is generally acknowledged that a limited participation by women in public business has produced beneficial effects. There is one little consideration, however, that might perhaps check the ardour of unmarried women to obtain the Parliamentary franchise. If they thus receive the full rights of citizenship there seems to be no good reason why they should not fulfil its duties also, as, for instance, in the matter of serving on juries. Many men, now drawn from their business, would welcome this innovation; but some of the lady voters might not appreciate it as a favour, although the office would not be distasteful to a good many.

NOTTINGHAM DAILY EXPRESS, July 12th.

The day when women will have votes does not seem very far off when a resolution in favour of giving them the suffrage is only lost in the House of Commons by a majority of 16 votes. There is a curious admixture of parties among the supporters of the resolution, of firm Tories and advanced Liberals. Baron de Worms and Jacob Bright, Mr. Puleston and Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. James Round and John Morley are not often found voting side by side. One little dependency of the British Crown, not five hours' sail from our coasts, has already conferred the franchise on women. In the Isle of Man any woman who is possessed of separate property is, with certain qualifications, entitled to a vote.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE TIMES, July 13th.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.—The time was, and that not so very long ago, when the proposal to give the suffrage to women was pretty generally regarded as a mere fad or crotchet on the part of a few. The recent division in the House of Commons, however, shows two things—first, that the subject is seriously entertained by a large House (248, including tellers), and, secondly, that if the



majority of the members of that House are opposed to the proposal, the minority is a very respectable one. Mr. Mason's abstract motion called on the House to express an opinion in favour of giving the suffrage "to women who possess the qualifications which enable men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting." The amendment called on the House to say that "it is undesirable to change the immemorial basis of the Parliamentary franchise, which is that men only shall be qualified to elect members to serve in this House." The motion was rejected by 130 to 114, giving the opponents of female suffrage the small majority of 16 only. The subject is thus disposed of, so far as the Legislature is concerned, for this session; but those who take the affirmative side are much encouraged, and will certainly continue their agitation with a view to another division on a similar motion next session.

PETERBOROUGH STANDARD, July 13th.

The House of Commons has refused to adopt a resolution in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women. 114 members supported, and 130 voted against it. This is a question which, so far, has not become a party one, for we find a Radical proposing and a Conservative seconding the proposition; whilst in the division-list there is the same mixing up of party men. For ourselves, we agree with Lord Beaconsfield in respect to the justice of admitting women to the franchise. Some people talk as if it would be an innovation. It has been pointed out that prior to the Reform Bill of 1832 women possessed and exercised voting power, and the words "male person," which were introduced into that measure, actually disfranchised them. It should be borne in mind, too, that every one in seven holders of land, above an acre in extent, is a woman; and that there are between 300,000 and 400,000 female householders who possess the qualification for a Parliamentary voter. As yet, however, they are to be satisfied with the qualification.

SOUTH DURHAM HERALD, July 14th.

\* \* Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett asserted that the bestowal of the franchise on women would be an essentially Conservative measure. Undoubtedly it would, and it must be for that reason

the Liberal element shuns it as it shuns the pestilence. How easy it is to talk about liberty and progress, until the test is applied! I suppose the Liberal programme of "universal suffrage," over which members of Parliament grow fervid at mass meetings, does not include female enfranchisement. "We, the people, the men, the lords of creation;" that is the notion of the party of progress. The arrogance and impudence of some men is astounding. Most of the women of my acquaintance are a great deal more capable of forming a safe and sound opinion on the leading questions of the day than half the men one meets.

MIDLAND COUNTIES DAILY EXPRESS, Nottingham,  
July 16th.

It is evident that the proposal to bestow the privilege of voting on women has a great many advocates in the House of Commons—sufficient, indeed, to justify a continuance of agitation. A minority of 16 is one of those defeats second only to a victory, and notwithstanding that we live, as was suggested, in an age of fads, it is difficult to resist the impression that the time is not far distant when all women who already vote in municipal and other elections will have the Parliamentary franchise extended to them. Argued on the ground of necessity, there is, perhaps, not much to be said in favour of the proposal; but regarded in another light, that of strict justice, there is not much to be said against it. The Attorney-General, in his speech, said that inasmuch as a woman could not act as a special constable, a juror, or a bishop, she was unfit to exercise the duty of a voter. We are not disposed to endorse this theory, because each of the offices named would involve physical exertion, for which it might be presumed ladies are not designed; whereas the act of voting might, if the possessor so desired, be a perfectly silent deed. Stronger arguments than these will be required to stave off the proposed extension of the franchise to a distant period of the future.

NORTH BRITISH DAILY MAIL, July 7th.

\* \* The exclusion of women from the franchise is nothing more than a surviving remnant of the evil of old days when they were mere serfs, having neither property nor volition except those of their lord. Society has changed for the better in many respects



since then, but in none more conspicuously than in the larger place and the higher respect accorded to women. It has been supposed that to allow them to descend into the political arena and mingle there in the rough strife of tongues, would diminish the chivalrous feeling with which they are now very properly regarded. To discuss seriously considerations of this airy and tangible sort is to enter simply upon the region of cloudland. If the property qualification be a sufficient evidence of stability of mind and seriousness of purpose in the case of men, it ought to be equally admissible and conclusive in that of women. It is too late to introduce a Bill this session embodying the reform pointed at in Mr. Mason's resolution, nor is it desirable to separate this from other questions connected with the reform of the franchise. It may be taken for granted, however, that the next readjustment of electoral power will provide for this most just and necessary demand.

ABERDEEN JOURNAL, June 9th.

\* \* When we have a Queen on the Throne—and the best Queen that ever reigned—it is rather too much to contend that women are unequal to political duties; yet the Radical Mr. Leatham moved the traversing amendment, which was carried, and which thereby committed the Radical party to opposition to the political rights of the sex. It would have been well had the House considered, before coming to a vote, that in the election of both parochial and School Boards, women have now votes on the same terms and principles as men; and that in the course of time it must follow that the Parliamentary franchise shall be also conceded to them. It is even a moot point whether, as the law at present stands, women have not the right to vote at municipal elections; and most certainly it will not much longer remain in doubt. Mr. Fowler was the best exponent of Conservative principle who spoke in the course of the debate, when he showed that the Crown called the representatives of property to Parliament to give counsel as to how the people should be taxed for their national expenses. In such a case, a woman holding property to the amount of the minimum fixed by Parliament is just as much entitled to vote as a man; and it is a matter of fact that, under the *regime* of our old Saxon and Norman kings, certain lady abbesses and peeresses were summoned to Parliament equally with abbots and peers. There are

many functions in public life in which woman has not yet taken her proper part, but which this agitation for her enfranchisement in politics will help on. We refer especially to the care of the poor. If anywhere, the presence of a woman is especially desirable at a parochial board; for it is in the care of the poor, in charitable work, and in the outgoing of the heart in the work of healing and aiding, that woman finds her proper sphere. In this respect we have a lesson to learn from those whom in our pride we consider uncivilised, viz., the so-called "savages" of Central Asia. In the life of General Scobelev, recently published, we find that the Akkhal Tekkes, according to a very interesting communication made to the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, "although barbarians, are remarkable for the position which they accord their women." With them woman is the equal of man. She is not the slave of her husband. Her property is her own after marriage as it was before. "She can vote in all the national assemblies; and if her husband treats her badly she can demand a divorce." In this country, with a woman for chief ruler, there can surely be no dread of the influence of womanhood legitimately exercised on public affairs.

DUNDEE ADVERTISER, July 7th.

\* \* If the principle that taxation and representation should go together is to be consistently acted upon, the claim put forward in behalf of women householders ought in fairness to be conceded. It does not affect the argument to contend, as some do, that it is only a noisy minority of strong-minded females who ask for enfranchisement. The fact that representation has been based on the payment of rates should settle the question. To deny the franchise to the woman householder who is obliged to pay rates, simply because she is a woman, is to violate the principle upon which representation in this country is professedly based, and to establish a disability of sex. This is virtually the meaning of Mr. Leatham's amendment to Mr. Mason's motion. Mr. Leatham maintains that "it is undesirable to change the immemorial basis of the Parliamentary franchise, which is that men only shall be qualified to elect members of Parliament." This sounds strange in the mouth of a Liberal. The opponents of reform have always laid stress upon "immemorial" usage, and it is somewhat ungallant to plead



immemorial usage as a barrier to the extension of the suffrage to women householders. It is beside the question to say that the proper sphere of woman is to be found in the home, and not in the arena of political strife. It will hardly be seriously contended that those women who are obliged to fight their own way in the world are less capable of recording a judicious vote than the average male householder. Women, as a rule, do not concern themselves much about politics, but they are probably as well informed and as little liable to act from mere caprice as the bulk of those upon whom the Legislature in its wisdom has seen fit to confer the suffrage.

DUNDEE COURIER, July 7th.

\* \* There is an anomaly in the fact that a highly educated female landowner cannot vote for a Member of Parliament, while the ignorant yokel who works on her land possesses the franchise. The strongest ground on which a change can be advocated is the fact that taxpaying and power to elect Parliamentary representatives ought to go together. The principle of allowing women who are ratepayers to vote for their representatives at public Boards has been practically acknowledged, and a man may legitimately hold that a female ratepayer might exercise the franchise for the election of a Member of Parliament without thereby unsexing herself. At the same time, the question is one which will have to be decided by the growth of public opinion on the matter. If the public come to think that a female ratepayer ought to possess the right of voting for the man who is to represent her in Parliament, and who will have power to vote away her money, then the Parliamentary franchise cannot be kept back from women. While it might be said that Mr. Mason's resolution could issue in nothing practical, the advocates of women suffrage might truthfully reply that the discussion of it is useful in familiarising the public with the arguments for and against the proposal. The result of the division is one with which Mr. Mason and those who think with him may be well satisfied, the figures being—For his motion, 114; against, 130—showing only a majority against of 16 votes.

NORTHERN WHIG, Belfast, July 7th.

The probability of a new Reform Bill being introduced before the dissolution of the present Parliament has given additional interest to the movement for conferring the Parliamentary franchise on women householders. On Thursday the ladies held their annual meeting on this subject in London, and at the evening sitting of the House of Commons yesterday, Mr. Hugh Mason moved a resolution "That in the opinion of the House, the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting." This resolution is a very reasonable one. As a question of political justice the motion could not be opposed by Liberals generally. Women householders who have often to bring up families after the deaths of their husbands, or spinsters who have the responsibilities of providing for households thrown upon them, are likely to be as able to make a good use of the Parliamentary franchise as many men to whom the Legislature has given votes, or to whom it is intended to extend the right of voting. Women in England vote for representatives in the Town Councils and the Poor Law Boards, for churchwardens, and even surveyors of roads. In Belfast they can also vote for Harbour Commissioners and Poor Law Guardians, and some other local representatives. It is not easy to see why they should not vote for members of Parliament. \* \*

BELFAST EVENING TELEGRAPH, July 7th.

\* \* Throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, the labours of the benevolent women have excelled those of the other sex, and they have given proof in the Prison Gate Missions, and in other instances, that they hold a high status of education. The question, therefore, at once arises, why is it that women should be deprived of the general rights of citizenship? Against this decision there can be no fair cause shown. There is no reason why there should be inequality, or that the female descendants of a family should not possess equal rights and privileges with the male members of the race. The denial of this right is foreign to the whole of our national instincts. It has been said that the child is



father to the man, but, according to the existing course of law, where is the mother?

While it may not be desirable that women should occupy seats in the Parliament of England, and sit, vote, and make their speeches from the benches, where they might captivate the support of several members of a youthful and promising description, there can be no reason why, in the course of general elections, the privilege of voting should not be afforded to a legitimate extent. In the course of electioneering contests, notwithstanding every Act of Parliament, the influence of the ladies has been felt, and, it is discovered that, in every instance, they are powerful factors throughout the United Kingdom on these occasions. It is impossible to disregard the importance of their power. It comes home to us in every circle. The person who proceeds to the ballot-box is scarcely an "independent elector." He has discussed the question at home. He is not the real, although he may be the practical voter. There is the wife in the case, who advises the manner in which he should make his cross on the ballot-paper. It is difficult, therefore, to see why it is that this powerful indirect influence should not be directly recognised. The rejection of the motion is opposed to the common sense and progress of the period, but, sooner or later, its promoters must achieve success.

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE, London, July 12th.

"Shall ladies vote for members of Parliament?" was the important question which the House of Commons debated last week for four consecutive hours. Mr. Beresford Hope raised a laugh by suggesting the possibility of a young lady premier, and intimated that the leader of the Opposition and she might marry, and thus form a coalition Government. But the debate was a dull one on the whole. By 130 to 114 the House shelved the matter for another year. The House evidently does not hold with us in our views about the ministry of women. We think the House is wrong, and should have voted with the minority had we been there.

THE TABLET, July 14th.

SHALL WOMEN VOTE?—The debate upon Women's Suffrage was, if possible, a little more unreal than on previous occasions.

The Ministry opposed it, and on grounds which ought to weigh ten-fold force when the question of county franchise comes up for decision. Then it will be idle to talk of the danger of adding a body of ignorant, fickle, and gullible electors to the governing power of the country. If these epithets are applicable to any considerable body of English women, they apply to the whole of the rustics whom the Ministry are pledged to bring within the pale of the constitution. It is held sound reasoning, now, to urge that women are careless of politics, but when the same argument is urged against the agricultural labourers, Sir Henry James will tell the House that the best way to rouse them to an intelligent interest in the welfare of the nation is to let them feel that they have some share in the ruling of their own land, and in the shaping of the laws beneath which they live and suffer. We have no patience with the silly talk which would have us believe that the giving of a vote once in seven years would tell with disastrous effect upon the homelife of the country. The interests, the hopes and fears of most men lie quite outside the sphere of politics, and there is no reason to suppose that the lives of many women would be seriously changed because they were enabled to show effective approval of the conduct they thought best for the nation. It is legitimate, now, to say that the interests of women are well cared for by men, but that same argument will be torn to shreds when the County Franchise Bill comes on—we shall be told the old truth, that no class is fit to be trusted to legislate for another.

PROTESTANT STANDARD, Liverpool, July 14th.

Notwithstanding the defeat of Mr. Hugh Mason's resolution in favour of the ladies enjoying the Parliamentary franchise, yet have we little doubt that sooner or later the measure will be carried, unless indeed the so-called "lords of creation" evince a higher standard of capabilities than they have hitherto shown to protect the gentler sex from many gross acts of outrage and injustice which they are at the present time more or less subject to. As matters at present exist there is an unequal administration of some laws in relation to the sexes. An aristocratic debauchee may accost a woman in the street and escape unpunished, while a woman acting in the same manner towards a man is liable to im-



prisonment. Again, the C. D. Acts still exist for the purpose of degrading women to the vices of men, therefore, on account of these things and others of a minor nature which bear harshly on women, we think that it is high time that the ladies should be enfranchised in order that they may vote for such representatives in Parliament as will enact laws bearing with equal and even-handed justice on the morals of both sexes.

NORWICH ARGUS, July 14th.

That the question of Women's Suffrage, of which we have heard but little since the general election, has not been dead but sleeping, we had the proof in the lively discussion which took place on Friday evening, on the motion introduced by Mr. Hugh Mason and seconded by Baron H. de Worms. \* \* A special degree of interest was excited on the subject, because this was the first time it was brought before the present Parliament, although it had been introduced almost annually in the last. And although there was the counter attraction of the State Ball, and the time fixed for the debate was an evening Friday sitting, when, of all hours in the week the House of Commons is inclined to lassitude, yet, including tellers, no fewer than 248 members were present at the division, and this did not by any means indicate the full interest felt in the discussion, for there were no fewer than 40 pairs. The motion was rejected by a majority of 16, the narrowness of which is exceedingly significant, and indicates that the day is not distant when some change of the kind proposed will be introduced into our system of Parliamentary representation—not improbably when the time arrives for the extension of the county franchise and the redistribution of seats. The debate was conducted with commendable moderation and no small ability on both sides. Mr. Mason limited his claim for female franchise to unmarried women—whether widows or spinsters—who possessed the same qualifications as property owners or ratepayers as entitled men to vote. \* \* But it is not merely on the ground of property qualification that we would base the right of women to the franchise. Other considerations lead us to believe that the privilege might, with advantage, be confided to them. Withdrawn from the muddy current of party strife in which men so much intermingle, their judgment is likely to be calmer and less warped

than that of the angry combatants who meet in the excited arena of party conflict; and we will not conceal the conviction that, beside the essential justice of the measure, we believe the conferring the franchise upon women would give an additional element of strength to the Conservative party, as all who have studied the female character will agree with us that women who stand in an independent position are, as a rule, much more cautious with regard to great changes, and therefore naturally more Conservative than men. And in addition to this it is an anomaly which no ingenuity has been able to reconcile, that females should be denied the right of voting for Parliamentary representation under a Government at the head of which a woman sits and performs with such capacity the duty of a ruler. That this was the view taken of the subject by the great Conservative leader who is gone, there is no doubt, and on every occasion that the question was brought forward of the extension of the franchise to independent women who possess the qualification requisite for men, Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, voted in its favour, and not only voted, but on various occasions spoke with great decision. Many years ago—in 1866—he expressed himself in these terms:—“A woman having property ought now to have a vote in a country in which she may hold manorial courts and sometimes act as churchwarden.” And subsequently speaking on the same subject, he expressed himself with equal emphasis and equal clearness. “What we desire to do,” said Lord Beaconsfield, “is to give every one who is worthy of it a fair share in the government of the country by means of the elective franchise.” For ourselves, we believe that the truest interests of the Conservative party will be most promoted in this matter by acting on the counsel of the wise philosopher who is gone, but who still speaks.

WILTS AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE STANDARD, July 14th.

\* \* For ourselves, not being very strong partisans on the question, and being therefore able to look at the matter in a judicial spirit, we have never been able to see any very good reason why women should *not* vote when they possess the same qualification as men; nor did the strength of the arguments lie on the side of the majority in Friday night's division. Mr. Leatham, for example,



fell back upon the time-worn arguments of immemorial usage and Holy Writ: would he allow either of those pleas to influence his vote on the marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill? Immemorial usage is a good and valid argument against innovations, unless good cause can be shown for the change, but it is a Conservative argument, and hardly fits the mouth of a Radical, whose principle rather is that if a practice or an institution has existed for centuries it is time it should be changed. There was also a good deal of assertion without proof or argument in Mr. Leatham's speech, as, for instance, when he said that "it was essential that the voter should be a man." Why so? That is just begging the question, when the very contention is that the woman is just as well able to exercise the power of voting with discretion as a man. He also asked "were women prepared to fight and tussle in the streets during elections?" Does he mean that to be a voter a man must know how to handle his fists? Has Mr. Leatham himself had many fights in the act of recording his vote? We have taken part in contested elections in which party spirit was running high, not only in our own quiet little borough here, but in a large town noted for its rowdiness, without losing *much* blood. *Some* men fight at elections, no doubt, and possibly some stout-limbed woman might "go for" an opponent under the influence of an exciting contest, but it is rather a coarse comment on the gentler sex to say that a woman of property and intelligence is not as competent to give a vote, and take a thoughtful interest in political questions, as some drunken brute who is ready to "tussle and fight" with any one who wears a ribbon of a different colour to his own.

A much better argument was that the logical result of assenting to Mr. Mason's resolution, taken in connection with the Married Women's Property Act of last session, must be to give the franchise to all women who are owners of property, whether married or single, since the vote represents a property qualification, and inasmuch as a married woman can now hold property independently of her husband, without the cumbrous intervention of a trust, there is no reason why her property should not carry a vote as well as her husband's. Well, if we were governed by strict logic there might be considerable force in that objection, but seeing that we are about the most illogical people in the world we may very well be content to adopt it as our rule that for electoral purposes the

husband represents the family of which he is the head. That is a tolerably well-defined line to which we can reasonably stick, logic or no logic. But what we fail to see is why, when that glorious creature, the husband, is removed, the family should have no representation at all. If the suffrage is an incident of property, representing a stake in the welfare of the country,—as it certainly is, since the pauper has no vote—why should not that property be represented when it is in the hands of a woman as well as when it is in the hands of a man? Seeing that one-seventh of the land-owners of England and Wales are women, it does not seem to be a very logical argument to allow that they are competent to hold and manage their estates, and yet refuse them a political privilege which is given to an ignorant boor who is unable to sign his own name, merely forsooth because the creature is a *man!* At any rate, if women are not to be allowed to vote at Parliamentary elections, they ought at least to be exempt from charges incident to such elections. If men claim the franchise as their sole and special prerogative it is not unreasonable that they should alone be responsible for any expenses that may arise out of their own abuse of their privilege. It does seem hard that the 1,500 women ratepayers at Macclesfield should have to pay their share of the expenses of the commission that enquired into the wrong-doings of that corrupt electorate with which they had nothing to do. \* \*



MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,  
1885-86.

*Presented at the Annual General Meeting, November 3rd, 1886.*

IN presenting their Annual Report your Committee have the satisfaction of recording a victory for the principle of women's suffrage by the passing of the second reading of the Bill in the House of Commons in the month of February last. Although the opponents, by availing themselves of the forms of the House, were able to obstruct the further progress of the measure, the fact remains that almost the first act of the first Parliament elected on the basis of the extended suffrage was to pass the second reading of the Women's Franchise Bill.

Immediately on the assembling of Parliament Mr. Woodall introduced the Bill in the same form as last year. The second reading was fixed for January 27th.

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

A B I L L  
FOR

Extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women. A.D. 1886.

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty,  
by and with the advice and consent of the Lords  
Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present



Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

Short title. 1. This Act may be cited as the Representation of the People (Extension to Women) Act, 1886.

Women to have same voting rights as men. 2. For all purposes of and incidental to the voting for members to serve in Parliament women shall have the same rights as men, and all enactments relating to or concerned in such elections shall be construed accordingly.

Provided that nothing in this Act contained shall enable women under coverture to be registered or to vote at such elections.

The other gentlemen whose names were on the Bill were Sir R. N. Fowler, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Stansfeld, and Mr. Yorke.

On January the 26th, the day before the Bill stood for second reading, Mr. Woodall made an appeal to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir M. H. Beach) to allow the debate on the Address to be suspended in order to allow the Bill to be discussed. In response to this appeal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he admitted the importance of the question, though he might not entirely agree with the hon. member. If the Bill did not come on to-morrow, he did not see how the question was likely to be fairly discussed during the present session. He did not, therefore, wish to press the debate on the Address to-morrow.

This announcement gave rise to considerable discussion, in the course of which it appeared that the feeling of the House was against the suspension of the debate on the Address in order to allow of the discussion of a private member's Bill. Mr. Woodall, under the circumstances, stated that he should be anxious to consider the convenience of the House in regard to his measure, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that after the remarks of the hon. member he had no hesitation in saying that the Government would proceed with the debate on the Address next day. Later in the evening the Government were defeated on an amendment to the Address moved by Mr. Jesse Collings, and in consequence of this the House adjourned over the Wednesday until Thursday, the 28th.

During the adjournment for the installation of the new ministry, Mr. Woodall accepted an office under Government which necessarily precluded him from moving the Bill. Under these circumstances Mr. Courtney consented to take temporary charge of the measure.

When the House re-assembled for business on February 19th, the Bill stood as third order on the paper. The debate on the Address concluded before midnight, and after the next order had been disposed of, Mr. Beresford Hope moved the adjournment of the House. Mr. Courtney opposed the motion, and the House divided, when there appeared for the adjournment, 137; against, 142. Majority, five in favour of proceeding with the Bill. Mr. Courtney then moved the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Puleston seconded the motion. The Bill was supported by Mr. Everett, Mr. Conybeare, Professor Stuart, Sir J. Gorst, Mr. T. M. Healy, and Mr. Illingworth. It was opposed by Mr. Cooke (Newington) and Sir Henry James, who moved the adjournment of the debate. On this Mr. Puleston rose and said that the division on the motion for the adjournment might be accepted as practically a division on the Bill. When the numbers were declared there appeared for adjournment 102, against 159, giving practically a majority of 57 in favour of the Bill. Sir Henry James then said that after the opinion of the House had been so clearly expressed by increasing majorities, he should offer no further opposition to the second reading of the Bill. The Speaker put the question that this Bill be read a second time, and his declaration that the Ayes had it was accepted without dissent. The Bill was then read a second time.

Mr. Courtney having been elected Chairman of Committees, Dr. Cameron, at the request of Parliamentary friends, undertook the charge of the motion for going into Committee, and was assisted in this duty by Mr. C. B. M'Laren and others. But the Bill was continuously blocked throughout the session, and by this means the opponents were enabled to prevent the House from proceeding further with



it. In June the Ministry were defeated on the Government of Ireland Bill, and in consequence the newly-elected Parliament was dissolved on the twenty-sixth of June.

The results of the second general election under the new franchise show an increased number of supporters of women's suffrage over those in the Parliament of 1885. The number of members now in the House of Commons who have voted or otherwise declared themselves in favour of women's franchise is 343. As the total number of members is 670, the friends appear in an actual majority of 12 in the whole House. The known or presumed opponents number about 136, therefore among the 477 members whose opinions are known there is a majority in favour of women's suffrage of nearly three to one. There remain 193 whose opinions have not been declared. It appears not unreasonable to assume that the balance of opinion among the members whose views are unknown will be on the same side as among those who have declared their sentiments.

The 341 friends consist of 167 Conservatives, 101 Gladstonian Liberals, 30 Unionist Liberals, and 43 Nationalists. There are 316 Conservatives in the House, of whom 167 are friends. Out of the 190 Gladstonians 101 are friends. Of the 78 Unionists 30 are friends, and 43 out of the 85 Nationalists.

The verdict of the general election caused the resignation of the Government. Mr. Woodall was again free to take charge of a private member's Bill, and at the request of a deputation representing various committees of the National Society for Women's Suffrage he consented to re-introduce the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, and he has since obtained the names of the same gentlemen to back it as before, with the exception of Mr. Yorke, who is no longer in the House.

When Parliament re-assembled in July it was announced that the whole time of the House would be given to the transaction of necessary financial business; there was therefore no possibility that the Bill could have been brought on for discussion.

Four hundred and fifty-four petitions were presented in the two sessions of 1886 to the House of Commons in favour of the franchise for women, containing 16,905 signatures; of these, 64, with 1,024 signatures, have been obtained by friends and correspondents of your Committee.

Of the 454 petitions, 129 were from public bodies signed officially. These include petitions from the Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, under their corporate seal, of the following municipal boroughs in England and Wales: Accrington, Batley, Bedford, Bewdley, Brecon, Burslem, Cardigan, Chester, Chesterfield, Chipping Norton, Colchester, Crewe, Dewsbury, Dunstable, Glastonbury, Glossop, Halifax, Hartlepool, Harrogate, Jarrow, Kidderminster, Kingston-upon-Hull, Leeds, Newark, Northampton, Rotherham, St. Helens, Scarborough, South Molton, Southport, Sunderland, Tenby, Warrington, Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, Worcester, Wrexham.

The Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland, and the following Scotch municipal councils have also sent petitions in favour of the Bill: Anstruther Wester, Brechin, Dumfries, Dunbar, Dunfermline, Dysart, Edinburgh, Elgin, Forres, Galashiels, Greenock, Hawick, Kilmarnock, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy, Kirkeudbright, Lochmaben, Montrose, Paisley, Port Glasgow, Tain, Whithorn, Wick.

Fifty-six petitions have been presented to the House of Lords, but there is no official record of the number of signatures.

Members of debating societies in the following places have applied for and received packets of pamphlets, &c.: Sunderland (2), Liverpool (6), Sale, Merthyr Tydfil, Penmaenmawr, Taymouth, Hull, Glasgow (2), Cardiff, Uttoxeter, Ashton-under-Lyne, Wolverhampton, London (2), Oxford, Darlington, Manchester (2), Newcastle-on-Tyne, Leeds (2), and Bideford.

During the past year your Committee's Assistant Secretary, Miss Backhouse, has visited the following places: Grimsby, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Derby, Southport, Accrington,







## FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

By MRS. FAWCETT.

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It is rather curious to mark the surprise and consternation that appear to be felt in some quarters because the Prime Minister last month at Edinburgh, and again at Scarborough, declared himself in simple and straightforward language in favour of the extension of the parliamentary franchise to women householders. The language of Lord Salisbury was productive of satisfaction to the friends of women's suffrage, but scarcely of surprise; for in 1884 he had expressed himself in the House of Lords in the same sense; and from that time to the present, the party of which he is the head, has availed itself, more fully and more methodically than any other, of the active and organized help of women in political affairs. There is a manifest absurdity in inviting and encouraging women to study political questions, and to influence by speech and writing the result of political contests, while at the same time denying to them the right to vote. If women are fit to advise, persuade, convince, and instruct the electors of any constituency as to the candidate for whom they should vote, they are also capable of the far less arduous, difficult, and responsible duty of voting themselves. The anomaly of excluding women, whatever their qualification as regards property, education, and knowledge of affairs, while practically every man, however ignorant and besotted, is allowed to vote, was long ago perceived by the clear-sighted political vision of Lord Beaconsfield. In 1873, and on subsequent occasions, he declared his conviction

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that the exclusion of women was injurious to the best interests of the country, and said he trusted it would ere long be removed by the wisdom of Parliament. Mr. Goldwin Smith, and other opponents of women's suffrage, now speak of Lord Salisbury's recent utterances as an instance of the demoralising influence of party, apparently thinking that he can have no other object in supporting the enfranchisement of women than to increase the prospects of the success of the Conservative party at the next general election. Lord Salisbury, it is implied, is willing to offer, at a Dutch auction, the most sacred principles of the British Constitution, if only he can gain some party advantage by doing so. It may be that it is too much to expect that Mr. Goldwin Smith can give credit to the leader of a great party for disinterested conviction on any political subject; but in this matter of women's suffrage it is possible to refer to the authority of those who were altogether independent of party ties, and whose names are eminent among the most distinguished leaders of political thought in the present century. Mr. Walter Bagehot and Sir Henry Maine cannot be accused of Dutch-auction statesmanship; but they both recorded their hearty support of the political emancipation of women, as a change to be expected in the near future, from which benefit would be likely to accrue to women themselves and to the nation at large. There are other names that might be selected from the list of practical politicians, who, although members of a party, were by no means unduly subservient to party influences. Among these may be mentioned Mr. Russell Gurney, the late Recorder of London, Mr. Henley, M.P., for Oxfordshire, Mr. Fawcett, and Lord Iddesleigh. These all supported women's suffrage, because they believed it would be for the good of the nation, or because they had become convinced by experience that the evils they had at one time anticipated from it would prove illusory. Thus, Mr. Henley, whose common sense, honesty, and independence made him universally respected by all parties, said he used to oppose women's suffrage because he believed it would be hurtful. He had

watched its effects in municipal and school board contests, and had seen it to be beneficial; he could not perceive why it should not also be beneficial in parliamentary elections, and he therefore withdrew his opposition and became a supporter of the Women's Suffrage Bill. In the same way Sir Henry Loch, as Governor of the Isle of Man, and the Hon. N. L. Andrews, as Speaker of the Wyoming Territory House of Representatives, found that actual experience of women's suffrage convinced them that their fears in respect to it were groundless. The latter has expressly stated that, the more he saw of the actual operation of women's suffrage, the less had his objections been realised, and the more had the thing commended itself to his judgment and good opinion.

Our opponents say that these arguments, based on experience, are valueless, because municipal affairs are far less important than national affairs, and because the circumstances of such places where women have been politically enfranchised, are widely different from our own. It is impossible to deny either of these allegations. I do not wish to strain the parallel between municipal and parliamentary voting, or between Wyoming and Great Britain and Ireland. But I think it can fairly be argued, that if, wherever the experiment has been tried of granting electoral power to women, there have resulted none of those terrible consequences which alarmists predict, we may take heart and proceed in the confident hope that these prophecies of evil will be falsified in the future as they have been over and over again falsified in the past. For it must be remembered that all these dire consequences of the political enfranchisement of women—such as that the relations between the sexes would be revolutionized, and that women would cease to care for their homes and for their children—were uttered with equal confidence with regard to all attempts to improve the education of women, and even with regard to the proposal to build a ladies' gallery in the present Houses of Parliament. The Mr. Goldwin Smiths of that day foresaw that if women were in any way encouraged to listen to the debates in Parliament,



they would throw all domestic duties to the winds, in order to listen perpetually to the entrancing eloquence of the average member of Parliament. Two years ago Mrs. Lynn Linton said that women who had votes would be indifferent to their children's ailments. It is true she has another bogey now, and says if women have political power they will risk a foreign war, and will not hesitate to offend a powerful neighbour and to alienate an important ally in order to bring about a happy marriage between two royal lovers. In one fit of terror, therefore, she thinks women will cast off the most essential of womanly qualities; while in another, the cold fit gone off and the hot fit come on, she thinks that women are so essentially pleased that lovers should be happy, that they will plunge their country into war rather than stop a projected match.

At the bottom of nearly all the opposition to women's suffrage lies a rooted contempt for women. Mrs. Lynn Linton shows it in almost every line she writes about women. A recent writer in the *Times* shows it by comparing foolish and contemptible men with women. "Considering," he says, "the enormous number of old women in male attire" [it would have been shorter to put 'fools' outright] "who already stuff the ballot-boxes at every election, it is really most unreasonable to demand any further representation of the feminine element." Mr. Goldwin Smith shows it in his phrase about the "fatuous woman-worship" in the United States: just as he showed it years ago when, on revisiting his discarded country, he expressed astonishment at the changes that were taking place in the position of women, and said when he returned again he should expect to find "a woman and a horse standing for Southwark." On a piece with this, was the performance of the Edinburgh medical students, who, after their professor had given permission to some lady students to attend the classes, brought a sheep with them into the lecture room. On being expostulated with, they politely explained that they had understood that the inferior animals were not to be excluded.

Mr. Goldwin Smith appears to have a special horror of Irishwomen being enfranchised. Curiously enough, the most active opponents of the further progress of the Women's Suffrage Bill, after it had passed its second reading in the House of Commons in 1886, were the Irish Nationalists. They generally know their own interests, and they were very zealous in their efforts to prevent the Bill from becoming law previous to the general election in that year. It is quite possible that the women householders in Ireland may not be as amenable to the persuasions of the National League as the average male elector. Certain it is that, in a great many instances where conspicuous courage has been shown in Ireland in resisting the League or in giving evidence leading to the conviction of murderers, those who have risked their lives in order to do their duty, have been women. The names of Norah Fitzmaurice, Miss Curtin, Mrs. Blake, of Renvyle, and Mrs. Moroney, of Miltown-malbay, rise at once to the recollection. The two last-named ladies have fought a gallant fight, almost single-handed, against the whole power of the League; working night and day with their own hands, opening stores to supply boycotted persons, and converting their mansions into hotels in order to enable them to hold their own while no rents were coming in. Why should the miserable peasants who were terrorized into a conspiracy to ruin these ladies have the power to vote, while their landlords, who are fighting the battle of law and order for the whole empire, are excluded. Mrs. Blake has narrated how she received intelligence from a woman, the wife of one of her tenants, that £5 had been offered in the sacristy of the chapel to any one who would shoot her. After this her life was not safe without police protection, and she constantly carried arms. Yet the would-be assassin, and the ruffians who provided the money to pay for murder, are entitled to representation in Parliament; while the woman who fought the whole conspiracy out, and finally crushed it in her own neighbourhood, is not.

Mr. Goldwin Smith repeats in his letter in the



*Times* his favourite expression about "flinging home and the female character into the political cauldron." No letter or article of his on women's suffrage would be complete without this well-worn utensil, which will surely find a place in the Toronto museum of antiquities. He and Mrs. Lynn Linton speak with horror of the feminine element being introduced into the government of our country while Russia, Germany, etc., remain thoroughly masculine. "We may bid adieu," sobs one, "to our place among the masculine nations of Europe;" while the other moans, "In the conflict of nations what chance will a nation have under female influence?" It may occur to some of their readers that England took a very decided place among the nations of Europe while Elizabeth was at the helm, and that under no system of government that has ever been invented, even in Turkey or China, has female influence been eliminated. Those who advocate women's suffrage believe that this female influence had better be recognised and made responsible, and that the average female householder of Great Britain and Ireland will be as safe a repository of a very moderate degree of political power, as were the Queens and the mistresses of Kings of former times.

One word more:—Mr. Goldwin Smith says that women have not made laws, because "law rests at bottom on force, and force is male." But the majority of the present electors do not provide in their own persons the force on which at bottom law rests. It would be as reasonable to say that "professors do not make laws, because law rests at bottom on force, and force is not professorial." Women and professional men, and all non-fighting men, whatever their position, provide, or help to provide, the force which ultimately maintains law, by paying for it. We pay policemen to keep order in our streets, and we pay soldiers to defend us from foreign foes. Sometimes a Mrs. Moroney or a Mrs. Blake does something more than this; and women, too, can sometimes help to keep "male force" up to the mark by infusing it with a little feminine enthusiasm. An Irish bailiff was with his wife at a market-

town, when he received intelligence that he would certainly be shot if he tried to go home that night. He communicated the news to his wife, and asked what she thought. She promptly told him to get the gig out and come home like a man. "We afraid of them chaps! never let such a thing be said in the country. Out with the gig, man, this minute, and get your pistols ready, and see if they dar' attack us." This was "female force," and is not without its uses in warfare; but the worthy pair provided themselves with "male force" besides, in the shape of four policemen. The party was attacked, but, being well prepared, they overcame their assailants. One of these turned Queen's evidence, and the other was hanged. Law was maintained, order was restored, and the combination of male and female force was triumphant.

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The above appeared as a signed article in the *St. James's Gazette* of January 7th, 1889.

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DEBATE ON THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES  
BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30TH, 1873.

S P E E C H

OF

JACOB BRIGHT, ESQ., M.P.

PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 9, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

1873.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



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BILL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30TH, 1873

SPEECH

JACOB BRIGHT, ESQ., M.P.

PUBLISHED BY THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 8, BARRACK STREET, LONDON, W.

1873  
THREE ONE PENNY

SPEECH.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT said: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill I am the last person to forget that it has already been three times rejected by the House. It might therefore be said, in fact it has already been asked, “why bring it forward again? Why not wait until another election before troubling Parliament again with a discussion upon this measure?” I think that powerful reasons may be given why I should not be influenced by that advice. In the first place it is a mistake to suppose that the same House of Commons which rejects a Bill will never consent to pass it. I could give many instances of greater or less importance to show that that is not the case. The Parliament which placed Sir Robert Peel in power in the year 1841 was a conspicuous example. In that Parliament my right hon. friend, the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. P. Villiers) asked again and again that the Corn Laws might be repealed, and over and over again the House of Commons rejected my right hon. friend’s proposition. But in the year 1846 the same House of Commons which had refused to listen to him passed a measure repealing the Corn Laws. Then again in 1866 the House of Commons which refused to pass the £7 Franchise Bill, in the year 1867 gave us a franchise Bill of a much wider character. It may be said, however, that on the occasions to which I have referred there was an irresistible outside pressure which does not exist in regard to this Bill. It is perfectly true that no such outside pressure does or ever can exist with regard to this Bill, but, sir, there is a pressure before which the House might yield with quite as much dignity as it showed in yielding on the occasions to which I have referred; namely, the pressure of accumulating reasons which receive no answer, the pressure of opinion in favour of this Bill which is gradually growing



in volume, and which I think many hon. members will admit is making itself felt in their constituencies. I see my hon. friend the member for Bath on my left, and if he should speak during the course of this debate, perhaps he will tell the House what is the state of feeling in his constituency upon this question, because I noticed that the two candidates who came forward to contest the vacant seat for that constituency, both the Liberal and the Conservative candidate, have, as I am informed, given in their adhesion to this question—not that they were much if at all in favour of it before they came forward as candidates, but because they found that the opinion in the city of Bath is so strongly in favour of the principle of this Bill that they felt themselves bound to accept it. If, however, in giving notice of the second reading of this Bill I had been perfectly sure that the House would again reject it, I should not have deviated from the course which I have taken. We are accustomed in this House to discuss a Bill, to vote upon it, again and again endeavouring to carry it if we can, but if we fail to carry it we know that we have accomplished something else. We have taken the best means in our power to instruct the people upon a great public question. The substance of this debate will be carefully reported in the newspapers, the report will go to every town and village in the United Kingdom, and to every English-speaking country under British rule, and therefore we shall secure that, for at least one day in the year, there will be a general discussion on a question so deeply affecting the interests and privileges of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. But there is another reason for bringing forward this Bill, and which I think justifies me in again asking the House to discuss it. No year passes by in this country without producing changes which affect the position of a public question; changes which tend either to hasten or to retard the period of its settlement. Well, sir, such a change took place last year when the Ballot Bill was passed, and I think no one will be more willing to admit that than the hon. gentleman opposite, the member for the University of Cambridge. Men are no longer subject to criticism in giving their votes; they are not answerable to the public or to their neighbours. They have complete irresponsibility. Before the passing of the Ballot Act it was said that a vote was held in trust for those who had it not. That doctrine has been swept away. Now, two millions of men vote in secrecy and in silence. Women are driven further than ever into the political shade, and are more thoroughly severed from political influence than they ever were before. And, sir, if I needed any corroboration of this I need only point to the countless speeches which have been made in

this House to show that this view is correct. The passing of the Ballot Bill, then, has strengthened the claim of women to the Parliamentary franchise. But it has also done another thing. It has removed some objections to the proposed change. We were told that there was great turbulence on the day of election, and that there were scenes of such a disreputable character that no right-minded man would desire a woman to partake in them. The Ballot has now been tried in the largest as well as the smallest of the constituencies. It has been tried in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland, and whatever else it may have accomplished we have found that it has succeeded in securing peace and order at the poll. I believe no one will deny that a woman can now go to the polling booth and return from it with far greater ease than she experiences in making her way out of a theatre or a concert room. Anyone having introduced a Bill into this House very naturally looks with interest to the views of the leaders of the House upon that Bill, and although the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister is unfortunately not in his place, I am entitled to make a few remarks upon his altered position in regard to this question. Two years ago the right hon. gentleman acknowledged that women ought to have a share in political representation; he made an objection to the personal attendance of women at the poll. That seemed to me to be the right hon. gentleman's chief difficulty. The Prime Minister also referred to the Ballot, and said he was as yet uncertain what effect it would have, whether it would produce order at elections or not. If the right hon. gentleman was here I think he would admit that the Ballot has had the effect of producing order at elections, and he would be no longer able to object to the personal attendance of women at an election upon that ground. The right hon. gentleman spoke of the representation of women in Italy, where it is understood they vote by proxy, and said if something of the sort could be contrived for this country he should not object to take such a proposal into consideration; but if women were to vote by proxy they would lose the protection of the Ballot; for, so far as I know, no one can vote by proxy and vote in secret. It appears to me, sir, now that the Ballot has become law, that the speech which the Prime Minister made two years ago puts him in such a position with regard to this question as to render it very difficult for him to say a single word against it again. There is another Bill before the House of Commons which deals with the Parliamentary franchise, and which is in the hands of my hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs (Mr. G. O. Trevelyan). That Bill proposes to equalise the county with the borough franchise,



and if it is carried will give an addition of 1,000,000 voters, whereas this Bill will give an addition of from 200,000 to 300,000 voters. I acknowledge the justice of this Bill of my hon. friend, but if justice demands that 1,000,000 of men should be added to the register, which already contains the names of 2,000,000, justice even more urgently demands the admission of 300,000 women, seeing that up to this time women have not a particle of representation. Now there are members in this House—political friends of mine—sitting near me at the present moment, who are pledged to support the Bill of the hon. member for the Border Burghs, but who persistently vote against this Bill, and yet, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there is not a single argument that has ever been used, or that ever will be used with regard to the County Franchise Bill which does not tell even with greater weight with regard to this Bill. The position occupied by those Liberal members who support the one measure and vote against the other seems to me to be one of great inconsistency; I am bound to say that they have not satisfactorily explained their conduct. We have been told that it is a great anomaly to give votes to persons on one side of the borough line and to refuse them to those whose houses are situated on the other side of the borough line; but, sir, I wish to bring about a state of representative equality between persons who are separated by no line whatever, but who are citizens of the same community. My attention was called the other day to a row of 20 substantial houses in a street in Manchester, and I was told that 16 of those houses had votes, 16 of those families were represented in this House. They had control over the taxes which they were called upon to pay, and had an influence in the making of the laws which they were all bound to obey. But four out of those 20 houses had no votes, four of those families were unrepresented, and the only reason why those four families are unrepresented in this House is because the heads of those four families are women. Now, sir, in municipal matters, and with regard to the School Board elections women, so far as voting is concerned, are placed in exactly the same position as men; and I must remind the House that women have been put in that position by Parliament because they have an equal interest with men in municipal and School Board questions. Those votes were given to women with the consent of the Liberal members of this House, and they were given for the reason which I have stated. But a more powerful reason exists why women should be entitled to a Parliamentary vote. We do not deal here simply with local taxation. We deal with the interests of men and women in the widest possible way; their property, their lives and

liberties are under our control, and hence the necessity of that protection which the franchise alone confers. When this County Franchise Bill comes in we shall be told that the vote will have a considerable influence upon the condition of the agricultural labourer, that it will have an effect upon legislation favourable to him. The land laws and the game laws will have to be dealt with; in fact if the County Franchise Bill becomes law the condition of the agricultural labourer will assume an importance hitherto unknown. All this is true, but will any hon. gentleman say that it is not equally true with regard to the Bill which I hold in my hand. I cannot discuss this question without referring to the County Franchise Bill. I am bound to refer to it because I want to know why that Bill is to be supported and this rejected. I do not want to be put off with reasons that will not bear reflection, but I should like to have reasons given that will have some weight with those who are agitating this question out of doors. It is a common belief on this side of the House, that should the Government meet another session of Parliament the County Franchise Bill will be one of their principal measures. Well, sir, how will the Prime Minister be able to accept that Bill and reject this. It has been said that when he once takes up a position he never goes back. I have explained the position which he has taken with regard to this Bill. He said, two years ago, "that the law does less than justice to women," and added, "if it shall be found possible to arrange a safe and well-adjusted alteration of the law as to political power, the man who shall attain that object will be a real benefactor to his country." That is the language of the Prime Minister. The Bill before the House is supported by a powerful organization. The petitions and public meetings in its favour grow from year to year. The inequalities in the law between men and women, owing to the fact that women are unrepresented in Parliament, are admitted on every hand. Over 200 members of the present Parliament have supported the Bill. These are considerations which should not be forgotten when the Government again undertakes to improve the representation of the people. There are many landowners in this House. If the County Franchise Bill ever passes through Parliament it must be with the consent of the landowners. If there be any of them present now I would like to ask them whether they think it right to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny a vote to the farmer? The census of 1861 shows that there were about 250,000 farmers and graziers in England and Wales, and one-eleventh part of that number were women. The proportion of women farmers would be still greater if women did not labour under political disabilities. In England and Wales there are no fewer than 22,708 women



who are farmers and graziers. The landowners trust their land to these women, who have to provide the rent, to pay the wages, and to look to the whole economy of their farms. I ask the question whether the landowners intend to give a vote to the agricultural labourer and to deny it to those who direct his work. Perhaps some may doubt whether women are really farmers, and in order to satisfy that doubt I will read a short extract from a back number of *The Field*. *The Field* says: "But it may be said, What business have women with farming? It is nonsense to suppose a woman can farm successfully. In answer to this query, the report of the competition for the 100 guineas prize for the best-managed farm in the central districts of England may be referred to. It is published in the last number of the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*. Twenty-one farms competed for the honour. It was awarded to the tenant of Ash Grove Farm, Ardley, near Bicester, as showing the best example of good general management, productiveness, suitability of live stock, and general cultivation with a view to profit. The farm is one of 890 acres, 820 being arable and 70 pasture. 1,000 sheep and 70 cattle are wintered annually. Cake to the amount of £1,200 is purchased yearly. The labourers work by piece work as much as possible, and no beer is given. The judges said the farm was an exceedingly good example of a well-managed one. But, though the Royal Agricultural Society have awarded the tenant the first prize, they refuse to second the honour by the advantages of membership, for the simple reason that—she is only a woman." I would like, in consequence of that remark of *The Field*, to refer for a moment to the general injustice with which women are treated, merely because they are women. I will make another quotation from *The Field* on this subject. "The farmers of England include a very considerable proportion of women among their numbers. These not only labour under the disadvantages which are inseparable from their sex, but are most unjustly, not to say ungallantly, deprived of certain advantages which are enjoyed by their masculine competitors. The Royal Agricultural Society of England confers on its members certain valuable privileges. They can have their superphosphates and purchased fertilisers analysed at a nominal rate by the agricultural chemist to the society. They are protected from imposition in the purchase of oilcake. Their soils can be carefully examined. They can exhibit at the annual meeting under more favourable conditions than strangers. These advantages, strange to say, are denied to those women who are farmers." I entertain the belief that if we wish to get rid of this general practice, and it has been shown to be a general practice throughout the country, of

treating women unjustly merely because they are women, we could use no more effective means than to remove the stamp of inferiority which must attach to them as long as their political disability is maintained. In order to show the House how Parliament—no doubt unconsciously—sometimes treats women with intense injustice I will refer to one fact. The trial of election petitions is now a local one, and the locality is rated in order to defray the expenses of the inquiry. Consider for a moment how that affects women. That law was passed in 1868. This question of the political disabilities of women had then only once been brought before the House of Commons. Had the attention been given to the subject which it has since received it is possible that the House would not have legislated in the manner in which it did with regard to the trial of election petitions. Well, sir, there was an election inquiry at Bridgewater under the provisions of the Act of 1868. After that inquiry, when the Bill had to be paid, the women of Bridgewater, that is the widows and unmarried women of Bridgewater, met together and got up a memorial to the Prime Minister, and this is the only part of the memorial which it is necessary to read to the House:—"We, the undersigned widows and unmarried women of the town of Bridgewater, in the county of Somerset, beg to lay before you, as First Lord of the Treasury, an account of a most heavy and unjust taxation which has been levied on us in common with the other householders of this borough for the payment of the expenses of the commission. We feel that it is unjust, inasmuch as we are not exercising the franchise and have not been concerned either directly or indirectly in the illegal practices, that we should be required to pay not less than 3s. in the pound according to our rental." Now I put it to the House whether a portion of Her Majesty's subjects who have no representation in this House should be subjected to such a tax? We all know very well that members might be returned for Bridgewater or anywhere else who on some questions affecting women might vote entirely against their views. Women could not have participated in any of the practices which led to that inquiry. In replying to this memorial, the Secretary of State for the Home Department expressed his regret that the malpractices of a portion of the inhabitants of Bridgewater should have necessitated the expense of a Royal Commission. He regretted it very much, but added that it was not in the power of the Secretary of State to exempt women owning or occupying property from the imperial or local taxation to which such property was liable. It is, however, in the power of Parliament to give to the property of women exactly the same privileges



which are attached to the possession of every other kind of property, and that would remedy the injustice. In the case of Bridgewater it may perhaps be said that the innocent suffer all through with the guilty; that a great many men have to pay this tax who were innocent of bribery or corruption. That is true; but at least it should be borne in mind that the men had some control over the election, and also had the benefit of representation, whereas the women had not. Whilst speaking on this subject I wish to refer for one moment to the proposition of the hon. member for Brighton. The hon. member for Brighton asked the House to enact that the necessary expenses of Parliamentary elections should be defrayed out of the local rates. I have voted for that proposal, although I am constrained to admit that looking at the proposition from a disfranchised woman's point of view, it would be unjust for Parliament to pass such a law, because we have no right to impose such a burden upon persons whom we shut out from representation. In the last session of Parliament we took great pains on the subject of illiterate voters. It was interesting to see the two Houses of Parliament spending I do not know how many hours in devising schemes by which men who were too stupid to vote without assistance should, nevertheless, be enabled to record a vote. We devised one scheme and one scheme was devised in the other Chamber, and I am bound to say that these unfortunate men have taken advantage of the labour which we bestowed upon them. In the recent elections illiterate electors have shown no reluctance whatever to come forward and express a desire to influence the proceedings of this House. Take for example the last election at Pontefract. 1236 men polled, and out of that number there were 199 persons who declared themselves unable to vote without assistance. That is nearly one-sixth of the whole number of voters polled. Now, sir, am I putting forward an unreasonable claim, or demanding anything very extravagant when I ask the House of Commons which has bestowed so much care in devising means to enable illiterate men to vote not to continue to withhold the suffrage from women of education and property? During these discussions it has not unfrequently been mentioned that the highest political functions of the realm were performed by a woman, and in my opinion it is not of slight importance to the question under debate that this is the case, and I am especially reminded of it by the late Ministerial crisis. We outsiders on that occasion obtained a very interesting glimpse as to how the Royal duties were performed. Judging from the statements made to the House by the two right hon. gentlemen those duties were discharged

with the greatest tact and judgment, and with the utmost anxiety to smooth the way to obtain a Government to carry on the business of the country. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the Oppositions, speaking some time ago at Hughenden Manor, made a very remarkable statement with respect to the duties of the Crown. He described them as multifarious, weighty, and increasing, and remarked that no head of any department of the State performed more laborious duties than those which fell to the sovereign of this country. Well, sir, if this is true, and no one can doubt the correctness of such a statement, when it is made by a gentleman who has himself filled the office of Prime Minister, it appears to me to be a very extraordinary thing that the educated women of this country should not be allowed to do so simple a thing as to record their votes for a member of Parliament. There are some countries where the Salic law prevails, under which no woman is permitted to wear the crown. If anybody should make that proposition here, namely, that after Her present Majesty no woman should again wear the crown of England, I venture to assert that there is not a man in the whole British Empire who would hold up his hand in its favour; and when women come to exercise the franchise—and they will come to exercise it sooner or later—it would be just as impossible to go back to the old state of things as it would now be to introduce the Salic law into this country. There is one reason which operates on this side of the House against admitting women to the franchise, to which I wish to refer; the objection that women are too much under the influence of ministers of religion. There are many influences at work during an election. We have the influence of the large landowners, and of the large manufacturers, we have the influence of the trades unions, and we have the influence of that vast trade which supplies intoxicating liquors to the people; and I would say that the influence exercised by ministers of religion is at least not the worst of these various influences. I think moreover that members show a singular inconsistency in advancing such an argument, when they are in favour of planting a minister of religion in every parish in England and Wales, and approve of the Bishops occupying seats in the House of Peers. Supposing that women were a more criminal class than men, it would perhaps be argued that it would be unwise to admit them to the franchise. But what are the facts of the case? Taking the judicial statistics of England and Wales for the year 1871, and looking at the number of summary trials, I find that the total number was 540,000, but only 105,000 out of that 540,000 were women. Therefore women are clearly not a very dangerous class; and if we look at those cases proceeded



against on indictment, we should find the proportions about the same. The hon. Bart., the member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock), intends to bring in a Bill to apply the Factory Laws to shops. Legislation for factories, the limitations put upon the labour of women, have not interfered with their means of gaining a livelihood, because factories cannot be worked without them. Shops can be managed without them, and therefore a proposition to apply the Factory Acts to shops should be carefully considered. In matters so gravely affecting the interests of women there should be some constitutional means of ascertaining their views. In conclusion I may say that no answer has been made to the case—I do not mean the imperfect case which I have from time to time placed before the House. I mean that no answer has been made to the general case which has been placed before the country by scores of women of education and position who have undertaken to win this battle. I say no answer has been made to their claim, and therefore the demand grows and the agitation becomes more powerful. In the debate which occurred on the second reading of this Bill last year, two lawyers spoke. They stated that they had previously voted in favour of the measure, but intended on this occasion to vote against it. They assigned reasons which, had they been given by a woman, would have been referred to as conclusive proofs of the radical defects of the feminine intellect. My right hon. friend the under Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a very fair speech against the Bill, argued that to give women a Parliamentary vote would be “contrary to the experience of mankind.” Most of us who are endeavouring to improve the condition of the people are in search of a state of things contrary to the experience of mankind, because, up to this time, that experience has been very deplorable. We see many things which are contrary to the experience of mankind. The Colonial Empire, with whose affairs my right hon. friend is connected, extending round the world and bound together by ties of affection and not by force, this is contrary to the experience of mankind, but it nevertheless rightly obtains the admiration of my right hon. friend. It is contrary to the experience of mankind that a Government, the Government with which my right hon. friend is connected, should invite the women of this country to present themselves to large constituencies, to issue addresses and attend public meetings in order to be elected members of Education Boards; and it would be contrary to the *reason* of mankind if my right hon. friend, after being a consenting party to that innovation, should continue to resist the claim of women to give a silent vote at the poll. I am very well aware that long before this debate has ended to-day the Bill I am now submit-

ting to the House will be attacked on the ground that it gives a vote to married women and, also, because it does not give a vote to married women. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Both of these charges cannot be true. There is another thing which has always been said by the opponents of this Bill, and which will inevitably be said in the course of this debate—that women do not care for a vote. It ought to be a sufficient answer to this statement to say that whenever women have been allowed to exercise a vote they have made use of the privilege. We know that they have exercised the municipal vote in many of our populous towns, and that in these cases they have used it in equal proportions with men. As the most recent evidence that women do care for the vote, the House will perhaps allow me to quote from a note I have received from a lady in Edinburgh—a lady who for some years has been of the greatest assistance to this cause. Speaking of the votes given by women at School Board elections she says, that, “In Edinburgh one-seventh of the actual voters are women, and in most of the country parishes *every* woman”—the word “every” is underlined—“who was registered voted. We have four women representing Edinburgh—two for the city and two for the county and fourteen for other towns in the country districts—eighteen in all. Of these *six* were returned at the head of the poll.” Then she says, “We expect some half-dozen more women to be returned in the next board elections.” Surely, sir, this should have some weight with those who say that women do not care for a vote. Scotland is not the least intelligent or the least informed of the various portions of Her Majesty’s dominions, and if in that country you find that women are everywhere interested in public matters and anxious to take a reasonable share in them, the fact ought to have some weight with the House. But when hon. members say that women do not care to possess a vote they ought at least to bear this in mind, that they, as a rule, are in the habit of associating with ladies who are favourably situated—who are surrounded by all the blessings of life. Those hon. members associate with ladies belonging to a rank in which they are not likely to feel the pressure of circumstances. (Hear, hear). They should remember, too, that the women of the upper classes have been better cared for than women belonging to humble life. With regard to questions of property, the Court of Chancery has done as much for them as any statute could have done. During the present session of Parliament a Bill has passed this House which will in all probability be of service to women of the higher class. I refer to the measure which relates to the custody of children. That Bill will have the effect of helping



ladies who are able to meet the difficulties and expenses of Chancery, but with regard to the poorer class of women the measure will be of little use. (Hear, hear.) When I am told that women do not care for a vote I am reminded that two or three weeks ago a friend of mine informed me that he had been talking to a lady of high position in this country. He questioned her as to what she thought of the subject of women's rights. Her reply was "All I know is that I have no wrongs." This was told me that I might reflect upon it and see the error of my position. Sir, I did reflect upon it, and I came to this conclusion, that if that lady, instead of being surrounded by all that can make life happy and even brilliant, had been in different circumstances—if she had been seeking to obtain admittance into an educational institution which she was taxed to support but which shut its doors upon her—if she had been the widow of a farmer and had lost her home and her occupation because she could not vote—if her small property had been dissipated because it was too small to bear the expenses of a settlement and the trouble of a trust; or if she had happened to have lost her husband and a stranger had stepped in and deprived her of all authority over her children, requiring that they should be educated in a faith which was not her own—if that lady had been so placed as to have been the victim of any of these circumstances I think that she would not have been able to declare that she had no wrongs. (Cheers.) And if the members of this House were enabled to look at this question through the eyes of the humble classes—those women who have to meet the difficult struggles of life—I believe it would not be necessary year after year to ask that this moderate Bill should be passed into law; but that on the contrary a single session would suffice to bring about the result we desire. (Cheers.) I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.



PROOF OF DRAFT REPORT.

*M. Schou*

Please return this proof to Miss Becker on or before Friday, 28th instant.

Queen's Chambers,  
5, John Dalton St., Manchester,  
Oct. 25th, 1887.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,  
1886-87.

YOUR Committee have to report that in consequence of the great pressure of Parliamentary business, Mr. Woodall was unable to secure a day during the last session for the discussion of the Women's Franchise Bill.

Parliament was opened on January 27th, on which day Mr. Woodall gave notice for leave to bring in the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill. The Bill was brought in by Mr. Woodall, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. H. H. Howorth, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. W. S. B. McLaren, Mr. J. W. Maclure, and Mr. Stansfeld, and read a first time on January 31st. The second reading was fixed for Wednesday, July 20th, the chances of the ballot having left no earlier date available. The text of the Bill is the same as that of last year.

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

A B I L L  
FOR

Extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women. A.D. 1887.

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

1. This Act may be cited as the Representation of the Short title. People (Extension to Women) Act, 1886.

2. For all purposes of and incidental to the voting for Women to members to serve in Parliament women shall have the <sup>have same</sup> same rights as men, and all enactments relating to or con- <sup>voting</sup> <sup>rights</sup> <sup>as men.</sup> cerned in such elections shall be construed accordingly.

Provided that nothing in this Act contained shall enable women under coverture to be registered or to vote at such elections.



As the session wore on, the business of the Government continued to monopolise the time of the House of Commons, and those members who had apparently been more successful than Mr. Woodall in putting down Bills for earlier days were fated to see these days, week by week, continually appropriated by the Government. In fact, as was stated recently by Mr. Akers Douglas, only three days of the entire session were given to private members' motions.

As the twentieth of July approached, an effort was made to save the day for the Bill. On the fourth of July, Mr. Woodall asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he would exempt the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, which was down for Wednesday, the 20th inst., from the operation of the motion for giving precedence to Government orders. Mr. W. H. Smith said that he feared that if he were to make an exception in favour of the Bill referred to he would at once be met by other demands for exemption from the operation of the rule. He knew the importance which was attached by many members to the subject in which the hon. member was so deeply interested, and if the progress of public business should at some later date render possible the discussion of the measure he should be very glad.

On the 11th of August, Mr. Woodall stated, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, that as he had been informed by the First Lord of the Treasury that there was little chance of his being able to give an opportunity for the discussion of the Women's Franchise Bill this session, the convenience of the House would be best consulted by the withdrawal of the measure. In accordance with this notification, Mr. Woodall next day moved that the order for the second reading of the Bill be discharged. This formal step was not taken until it had become abundantly clear that there was no chance for the Bill to be discussed during the remainder of the session.

In the month of May, your Committee passed a resolution in the following terms: "That the members of this Com-

mittee, who are members of Parliament, be invited to form a Parliamentary Committee in connection with the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage, with power to add to their number." Pursuant to this resolution a meeting of members of Parliament connected with the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage was held in one of the committee rooms of the House of Commons on June 15th, Mr. Woodall presiding. At that meeting it was resolved that it was desirable to form a general Parliamentary Committee of friends of the Bill, and a meeting of such members was directed to be convened. At this meeting, which was held on June 27th, under the presidency of Mr. Woodall, the Committee was formally organised. Mr. Walter M'Laren was appointed secretary. It was further resolved to promote a memorial to the First Lord of the Treasury, expressing the desire that the 20th of July should be left free for the discussion of the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill.

The Memorial was presented to Mr. Smith on Monday, July 4th. The names comprise members of all shades of political opinion, and include seventeen not previously recognised as friends of the measure. Other signatures were added at a subsequent period. The total number of signatures to Memorials asking the Government to afford an opportunity for the discussion of the Bill was 152.

TO THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH, M.P., FIRST LORD OF  
THE TREASURY, &c., &c.

The undersigned members of Parliament desire respectfully to express their hope that Her Majesty's Government may find it practicable, in arranging the business of the House of Commons, to leave Wednesday, July 20th, free for the discussion of the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, which stands as the first order of the day.

W. ABRAHAM (Rhondda)	L. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.)
J. T. AGG-GARDNER (Cheltenham)	H. J. ATKINSON (Boston)
WILLIAM G. AINSLIE (Lancashire N., Lonsdale)	JOHN AUSTIN (York W.R., Osgoldcross)



WM. B. BARBOUR (Paisley)  
 JOHN BARRY (Wexford, S.)  
 HAMAR BASS (Staffordsh., W.)  
 JOSEPH E. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.)  
 ALGERNON BORTHWICK  
 (Kennington, S.)  
 CH. BRADLAUGH (Northampton)  
 F. BRIDGEMAN (Bolton)  
 JACOB BRIGHT (M'chester, S.W.)  
 WILLIAM C. BROOKS  
 (Cheshire, Altrincham)  
 ALEX. L. BROWN (Hawick, &c.)  
 THOS. BURT (Morpeth)  
 W. S. CAINE (Barrow)  
 CHAS. CAMERON (Glasg. College)  
 J. M'DONALD CAMERON  
 (Wick City)  
 P. S. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.)  
 SPENCER CHARRINGTON  
 (Tower Hamlets, Mile End)  
 J. J. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.)  
 G. B. CLARK (Caithness)  
 E. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.)  
 HENRY P. COBB  
 (Warwicksh., Rugby)  
 DOUGLAS H. COGHILL  
 (Newcastle-under-Lyme)  
 BERNARD COLERIDGE  
 (Sheffield, Attercliffe)  
 FRANCIS COMPTON  
 (Hants, New Forest)  
 C. A. V. CONYBEARE  
 (Cornwall, Camborne)  
 E. T. D. COTTON  
 (Cheshire, Wirral)  
 LEONARD COURTNEY  
 (Cornwall, Bodmin)  
 JOSEPH CRAVEN  
 (York W.R., Shipley)  
 WM. CRAWFORD (Durham, Mid)  
 W. CROSSMAN (Portsmouth)  
 DIMSDALE (Herts., Hitchin)  
 JOHN S. DUGDALE  
 (Warwickshire, Nuneaton)  
 F. DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn)  
 ARTHUR DUNCOMBE  
 (York E.R., Howdenshire)  
 J. H. EDWARDS-HEATHCOTE  
 (Staffordshire, N. West)  
 THOS. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire)  
 SYDNEY EVERSHERD  
 (Staffordshire, Burton)  
 HENRY EYRE  
 (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough)  
 R. FARQUHARSON  
 (Aberdeenshire, W.)  
 C. FENWICK  
 (Northumberland, Wansbeck)  
 R. U. P. FITZGERALD (Cambdg.)  
 FRED. FITZWYGRAM  
 (Hants, Fareham)  
 ROBT. N. FOWLER (London)  
 LEWIS FRY (Bristol, N.)  
 THEODORE FRY (Darlington)  
 SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport)  
 EDW. T. GOURLEY (Sunderland)  
 FRED. B. GROTRIAN (Hull, East)  
 R. B. HALDANE (Haddington)  
 T. HUGHES HALLETT (Rochester)  
 T. F. HALSEY (Herts, Watford)  
 ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.)  
 F. D. DIXON HARTLAND  
 (Middlesex, Uxbridge)  
 C. SEALE HAYNE  
 (Devon, Ashburton)  
 M. HEALY (Cork)  
 A. STAVELEY HILL  
 (Staffordshire, Kingswinford)  
 EDWARD S. HILL (Bristol, S.)  
 B. HINGLEY (Worcester N.)  
 ISAAC HOLDEN  
 (York W.R., Keighley)  
 GEO. HOLLOWAY  
 (Gloucestershire, Stroud)  
 W. H. HOULDSWORTH  
 (Manchester, N.W.)  
 H. H. HOWORTH (Salford, S.)  
 JAMES HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.)  
 E. HUGHES (Woolwich)  
 A. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.)  
 LEWIS ISAACS  
 (Newington, Walworth)  
 J. A. JACOBY (Derbysh., Mid.)  
 L. J. JENNINGS (Stockport)

W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.)  
 JEREMIAH JORDAN (Clare, W.)  
 H. SETON KARR (St. Helens)  
 COURTNEY KENNY  
 (York W.R., Barnsley)  
 H. KIMBER (Wandsworth)  
 H. S. KING (Hull, Central)  
 ALFRED LAFONE  
 (Southwark, Bermondsey)  
 R. P. LAURIE (Bath)  
 H. L. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.)  
 WILFRID LAWSON  
 (Cumb., Cockermouth)  
 ROBERT LEAKE  
 (Lanc. S.E., Radcliffe)  
 C. E. LEWIS (Antrim, N.)  
 THOMAS LEWIS (Anglesey)  
 FRANK LOCKWOOD (York)  
 W. LOWTHER (Westm., Appleby)  
 LEONARD LYELL  
 (Orkney and Shetland)  
 CHAS. FRASER MACKINTOSH  
 (Inverness)  
 JNO. W. MACLURE  
 (Lanc. S.E., Stretford)  
 A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester)  
 W. A. M'ARTHUR  
 (Cornwall, St. Austell)  
 JUSTIN M'CARHY (Londonderry)  
 JUSTIN HUNTLY M'CARHY  
 (Newry)  
 JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.)  
 PETER M'LAGAN (Linlithgow)  
 W. S. B. M'LAREN  
 (Cheshire, Crewe)  
 SAMUEL MONTAGU  
 (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel)  
 F. C. MORGAN (Monmouthsh., S.)  
 C. T. MURDOCH (Reading)  
 JOHN P. NOLAN (Galway, N.)  
 R. PEACOCK (Lanc. S.E., Gorton)  
 WM. PEARCE (Lanark, Govan)  
 H. FELL PEASE  
 (York N.R., Cleveland)  
 W. C. PLOWDEN  
 (Wolverhampton, W.)  
 W. POMFRET POMFRET  
 (Kent, Ashford)  
 W. R. H. POWELL  
 (Carmarthenshire, W.)  
 GEO. P. PRICE (Devonport)  
 T. P. PRICE (Monmouthsh., N.)  
 J. H. PULESTON (Devonport)  
 JAMES RANKIN  
 (Herefordshire, Leominster)  
 J. C. RASCH (Essex, S.E.)  
 H. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.)  
 HENRY RICHARD (Merthyr)  
 W. TINDAL ROBERTSON  
 (Brighton)  
 THOS. ROE (Derby)  
 ALBT. J. ROLLIT (Islington, S.)  
 J. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich)  
 J. ROWNTREE (Scarborough)  
 EDWARD R. RUSSELL  
 (Glasgow, Bridgetown)  
 GEORGE RUSSELL  
 (Berks., Wokingham)  
 T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.)  
 THOS. SHAW (Halifax)  
 WALTER S. SHIRLEY  
 (York W.R., Doncaster)  
 JOHN SIMON (Dewsbury)  
 JOHN SLAGG (Burnley)  
 ERNEST SPENCER (W. Bromwich)  
 J. STANSFELD (Halifax)  
 A. COWELL STEPNEY  
 (Carmarthen, &c.)  
 J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton)  
 ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherld.)  
 EDMUND SWETENHAM  
 (Carnarvon, &c.)  
 JOHN SWINBURNE  
 (Staffordshire, Lichfield)  
 C. R. M. TALBOT  
 (Glamorganshire, Mid)  
 THOS K. TAPLING  
 (Leicestershire, Harbro')  
 R. TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham)  
 ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.)  
 WALTER THORBURN  
 (Peebles and Selkirk)  
 F. TOWNSEND (Warwickshire,  
 Stratford-on-Avon)  
 THOS. WARING (Down, N.)



E. W. WATKIN (Hythe)	H. J. WILSON (York W.R., Holmfirth)
THOMAS WAYMAN (York W.R., Elland)	WM. WOODALL (Hanley)
J. BAZLEY WHITE (Gravesend)	CALEB WRIGHT (Lanc. S.W., Leigh)
A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.)	H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.)
CHAS. H. WILSON (Hull, West)	

A meeting of the Parliamentary Committee was held in the Conference Room, in the House of Commons, on August 16th, Mr. Woodall presiding. Mr. Woodall reported that he had had an interview with Mr. W. H. Smith, who had informed him that the state of public business rendered him unable to hold out any hope of the Women's Franchise Bill coming on during the present session. The Bill had, therefore, been withdrawn. Captain Edwards Heathcote was appointed co-secretary with Mr. M'Laren. It was arranged that the Committee should meet immediately on the opening of the next session of Parliament.

The following members form, up to the present time, the Parliamentary Committee:—Mr. Addison, Q.C. (Ashton-under-Lyne), Mr. J. A. Agg-Gardner (Cheltenham), Mr. H. J. Atkinson (Boston), Mr. Bradlaugh (Northampton), Col. the Hon. F. Bridgeman (Bolton), Mr. W. S. Caine (Barrow), Dr. G. B. Clark (Caithness), Captain Cotton (Chester, Wirral), Mr. Courtney (Cornwall, Bodmin), Mr. Craven (Yorks. W.R., Shipley), Baron Dimsdale (Herts, Hitchin), Mr. A. Duncombe (Yorks. E.R., Howdenshire), Col. Eyre (Lincolnsh., Gainsborough), Mr. R. U. Penrose Fitzgerald (Cambridge), Gen. Sir Fred. Fitzwygram (Hants, Fareham), Sir R. N. Fowler, Bt. (City of London), Mr. Gedge (Stockport), Mr. Seale Hayne (Devon, Ashburton), Capt. Edwards Heathcote (Staffordsh., N.W.), Mr. A. Staveley Hill, Q.C. (Staffordsh., Kingswinford), Sir W. H. Houldsworth, Bt. (Manchester, N.W.), Mr. H. H. Howorth (Salford, S.), Col. Edwin Hughes (Woolwich), Mr. Illingworth (Bradford, W.), Hon. Geo. T. Kenyon (Denbigh, &c.), Sir Rainald Knightley, Bt. (Northants, S.), Mr. Lafone (Southwark, Bermondsey), Mr. H. L. W. Lawson (S. Pancras, W.), Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bt. (Cumb.,

Cockermouth), Hon. W. Lowther (Westmorland, Appleby), Mr. A. M'Arthur (Leicester), Mr. Justin M'Carthy (Londonderry), Mr. W. M'Laren (Crewe), Mr. J. W. Maclure (Lanc. S.E., Stretford), Mr. Murdoch (Reading), Mr. R. Peacock (Lanc. S.E., Gorton), Sir W. Plowden, Bt. (Wolverhampton, W.), Mr. W. R. H. Powell (Carmarthen, W.), Sir J. H. Puleston (Devonport), Major Rasch (Essex, S.E.), Mr. H. Byron Reed (Bradford, E.), Mr. J. Round (Essex N.E., Harwich), Sir Geo. Russell, Bt. (Berks, Wokingham), Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.), Mr. Shaw (Halifax), Mr. W. S. Shirley (Yorks. W.R., Doncaster), Major W. Sidebottom (Derbysh., High Peak), Rt. Hon. J. Stansfeld (Halifax), Prof. Stuart (Shoreditch, Hoxton), Mr. W. Summers (Huddersfield), Sir R. Temple, Bt. (Worcester, Evesham), Sir E. W. Watkin, Bt. (Hythe), Mr. A. J. Williams (Glamorgan, S.), Mr. Henry J. Wilson (Yorks. W.R., Holmfirth), Mr. W. Woodall (Hanley), Mr. Caleb Wright (Lanc. S.W., Leigh).

On the twentieth of June, Her Majesty the Queen completed the fiftieth year of her happy reign. Your Committee prepared an address of congratulation, in which they invited the co-operation of the various Committees of the National Society for Women's Suffrage in other districts. The address was in the following form:—

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.  
Madam,

May it please Your Majesty, we, the undersigned, being official representatives of Committees of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, desire humbly to approach Your Majesty with the expression of our affection and loyalty to Your Majesty's person and government, and our heartfelt congratulations on the completion of the fiftieth year of Your Majesty's happy reign.

We desire humbly to thank Your Majesty for having been graciously pleased to accord Your Royal Assent to many measures for the amelioration of the condition of the women of these realms.

During the period of Your Majesty's reign the law has been



amended as to the property and maintainance of married women; as to the custody and guardianship of infants; as to the admission of women to the benefits of university training and degrees, and to the practice of the medical profession, the last named privilege being fraught with incalculable blessings to many millions of women subjects of Your Majesty's Indian Empire. Other advances in law and custom have been made whereby the labour of women, which has been displaced from many great domestic industries by the introduction of machinery and the spread of the factory system, has found profitable occupation in other directions.

Your Majesty has at various times given Your Royal Assent to measures relating to Local Government whereby the ancient rights of women in Local Elections, which have from time immemorial been equal and similar to those of men, have been carefully preserved and extended coeval with the extension of local voting among the people.

Your Majesty has also been graciously pleased to assent to Acts which have restored and confirmed to women ratepayers the exercise of the Municipal Franchise in England and Scotland, and to the Elementary Education Acts, which extend the benefits of education to girls equally with boys, and secure the rights of women both as electors and members of School Boards.

Your Majesty has given Your Royal Assent to an Act of Tynwald whereby the full Parliamentary suffrage in the election of the House of Keys, the representative branch of the Legislature of the Isle of Man, has been extended to women who are owners of qualifying property.

During Your Majesty's reign two measures have been passed relating to the Representation of the People, whereby the controlling power in the election of the House of Commons has been transferred from a comparatively small class to the masses of the people; but in these measures the precedent of the co-equal electoral rights of men and women when similarly qualified, which is the rule in every other form of representative government in Great Britain, has not been

followed, and Your Majesty's subjects of Your Majesty's own sex are still denied the rights of citizenship and the privileges of free and constitutional government.

In the Royal House political power is exercised without restriction of sex, and we recognise with joy and gratitude the principle exemplified in the person of Your Majesty, that a Princess who stands in the legal order of Succession to the Throne is not passed over or disabled by reason of being a woman, but ascends the Throne and exercises the full powers of Sovereignty.

The bright example of Your Majesty in the discharge of the highest political function known to the State is an irrefragable proof that the most arduous political functions are not incompatible with the happiness of domestic life and the highest graces of womanly character. The constant presentation by Your Majesty of the union of political and domestic duties has been a potent factor in the growth of public feeling in favour of the admission of the women of the people, as well as the women of the Royal family, to share the political rights and duties of the men of the class to which they belong.

We pray that Your Majesty may long be spared to reign in prosperity and happiness over the great Empire which owns Your beneficent sway, and that in all the cares incident to this exalted position Your Majesty may be sustained and comforted by the consciousness of the loyalty and love of Your people.

Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage,

ROBERT ADAMSON,

*Chairman of Executive Committee.*

LYDIA E. BECKER, *Hon. Secretary.*

The Address was also signed by representatives of the Central, Bristol, Birmingham, Notts, Hyde, Leicester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and North of Ireland Committees.

The following letter was received by Miss Becker from the Secretary of State for the Home Department:—



“Whitehall, July 2, 1887.

“Madam,—I have had the honour to lay before the Queen the loyal and dutiful address of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage on the occasion of Her Majesty attaining the fiftieth year of her reign. And I have to inform you that Her Majesty was pleased to receive the same very graciously. I have the honour to be, Madam, your obedient servant,

“(Signed) HENRY MATTHEWS.

“The Hon. Secretary,  
National Society for Women’s Suffrage,  
29, Parliament-street, S.W.”

Although no Parliamentary action has been possible this session, your Committee are satisfied that substantial progress has been made during the year. A comparison of the number of Parliamentary friends at the close of the session, with the list as it stood at the same period last year, affords the measure of a very satisfactory advance. Last year the number of known friends was 341; an actual majority of twelve in the whole House. During the year the total number of avowed supporters has increased from 341 to 355, consequently the actual majority in the whole House has increased from twelve to forty.

The supporters of women’s suffrage comprise members of every shade of politics. Of the 354 friends 176 are Conservatives, 108 Liberals, 27 Liberal-Unionists, and 44 Irish Nationalists. All these political parties are represented on the Parliamentary Committee. Nothing could show more clearly than these figures that the women’s franchise question is not in any sense a party one, but one which appeals to the sense of justice that underlies all party divisions.

In the extreme uncertainty of the prospect that the Bill might come on, your Committee did not deem it necessary to make any special effort to promote petitions. Nevertheless there were during the session 210 petitions, with 7,312 signatures, presented in favour of the Bill.

Members of debating societies in the following places have

applied for and received packets of pamphlets, &c.: Tunstall, Portmadoc (2), Hanley (4), Kidderminster, Liverpool (3), Oldham, Forfar, Keswick (2), Otley, Taunton, Great Yarmouth, Manchester (3), London (3), Kendal, Gorton, Leeds, Epping, Llanbedr, Annan, Ruthin, Towyn, Paisley, Derby, Greenwich, Bolton, Hull, Galashiels, Sydenham, Dumfries, Rhyl, Glasgow, Preston, Longsight, Exeter, Devonport, Accrington, Forres.

During the past year your Committee’s Assistant Secretary, Miss Backhouse, has visited the following places: Grimsby, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Derby, Southport, Accrington, Crewe, Macclesfield, Leek, Wigan, Blackburn, Burnley, Liverpool, in addition to office and other work in Manchester and district.

Your Committee have to record with deep regret the loss by death of their valued colleague, Miss Maria Atkinson, whose able and conscientious attendance to the work had been continued for many years. They have also to deplore the loss of Dr. John Watts and Mr. Joseph Phythian, who had given valued and efficient help to their work; and of Mrs. Abel Heywood, who had, from the beginning of the Society, been a constant and faithful supporter, and whose public spirit has enriched the city of Manchester with many munificent gifts.

Early in the year the sudden and tragical death of Lord Iddesleigh sent a shock of grief and lamentation throughout the length and breadth of the land, and deprived the cause of women’s suffrage of a powerful friend. Sir Stafford Northcote, while a member of the House of Commons, continually supported the enfranchisement of women, and Lord Iddesleigh, in his place in the House of Peers, raised his voice to testify to the same effect. Not only by his public speeches did the deceased statesman give help to the cause. He was ever accessible and ready to assist the workers in the cause who sought his counsel, and, even in the midst of official work and anxieties, he found time to receive and advise those who came to him to consult with reference to the movement.



In reviewing the events of the session, your Committee desire especially to express their satisfaction at the formation of the Parliamentary Committee. Such an organisation has long been needed, for no question in or out of Parliament can be effectively pressed without combination among those who support it. As the period of action approaches, the organisation of the party of Parliamentary friends of women's suffrage cannot fail to have a material influence in securing a good debate and division.

In concluding their report, your Committee would urge their friends to make a special effort to strengthen their hands at this critical period of the movement. The list of friendly members would seem to show that the Parliamentary leaders are in possession of a good working majority, and, should fortune favour them in the ballot for a place for the Bill, there is a reasonable prospect of a substantial advance next session. But in order to secure this, it is necessary to keep up the movement with undiminished vigour; and your Committee appeal with confidence and hope to their friends throughout the country for the assistance that will enable them to take every step that may be necessary in support of the action of their Parliamentary leaders, and to appear before you at the next annual meeting with a record of good work done and substantial progress achieved.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

### A RECORD OF PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS

FROM 1866 TO NOVEMBER, 1887.

- 1866.** The first Petition was presented to the House of Commons by Mr. John Stuart Mill, signed by 1,500 women, including many distinguished names.
- 1867.** On May 4th Mr. John Stuart Mill moved his amendment to the Representation of the People Act of that year, "to leave out *man* and substitute *person*." This was lost by 196 to 83.
- 1868.** Many women householders in many places applied to have their names entered on the Parliamentary Register, on the ground that "Man is held to include woman in all statutes where the contrary is not expressed." The Revising Barrister in some cases allowed, in some disallowed, the claim. In Manchester the claims of 5,475 women were disallowed, and an appeal was carried to the Court of Common Pleas. The Court of Common Pleas ruled the claim illegal.
- 1870.** Mr. Jacob Bright introduced the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women. This passed second reading, but was lost in Committee.
- 1871 to 1883.** The Bill was introduced year after year, but thrown out by varying majorities.
- 1884.** Mr. Woodall moved to add a clause to the Representation of the People Bill of that year, which should enable women to be placed on the Parliamentary Register. This was lost, not on the question of the merits of the clause, but of the expediency of the occasion.
- 1885.** Mr. Woodall gave notice to introduce the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill, which was set down on three different occasions for second reading, but Government business absorbed each date in succession.
- 1886.** The Bill passed second reading without a division. The dissolution of Parliament, however, followed before the stage of going into Committee was reached.
- At the General Election in November the number of Members returned, who had expressed approval of Women's Suffrage, for the first time formed a majority of the whole House.
- 1887.** The Bill was again introduced, and set down for second reading on July 20th; but this, like all other private Members' nights at that period of the Session, was absorbed by the Government.
- A Parliamentary Committee, including Members of all shades of politics, was formed to watch and promote the interests of the Bill in 1888.

The number of Members of Parliament who have, up to the present time (November, 1887), expressed approval of Women's Suffrage is 355—being a majority of 40 in the whole House; viz., 176 Conservatives, 108 Liberals, 27 Liberal Unionists, 44 Irish Nationalists.

The number of Women who would be enfranchised by the Bill is reckoned at about 900,000







WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

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The number of Women who would be enfranchised

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

IN IRELAND.

THIRTY-NINE Irish Members of the present House of Commons have voted in support of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women. This Bill, when it becomes law, will give a vote in the election of Members of Parliament to women who possess the same qualifications as men, viz. :

*In Counties*—To all women who are occupiers of land, or of houses and land, rated at the clear yearly value of £12 ;

*In Towns*—To all women who are householders rated above £4 ; or lodgers in separate apartments, at a rental of £10, unfurnished.

There are 4,127 women landowners (of one acre and upwards) in Ireland, or one to every seven men landowners.

It is calculated that the women to be enfranchised by this Bill would be in the proportion of one to seven of the existing electorate throughout the country.

In 1877, 268,428 persons signed Petitions to the House of Commons in favour of the Bill, of whom 3,741 were Irish.

LET ALL PERSONS WHO APPROVE ITS PRINCIPLE DO THE SAME IN 1878.

*Forms of Petition and all information can be obtained from the Hon. Secretaries of the Irish branches of the National Society for Women's Suffrage :—*

MRS. HASLAM, 91, Rathmines Road, Dublin, } Hon. Secs. to  
MISS M'DOWELL, 45, Mespil Road, Dublin, } Dublin Committee.

MISS TOD, 39, Rugby Road, Belfast, Hon. Sec. North of Ireland Committee,

MRS. ADDEY, 69, Patrick Street, Cork, Hon. Sec. South of Ireland Committee.



THE following Irish Ladies and Gentlemen have, amongst others, given their adhesion to the principle of the Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women :—

Richard Allen, Esq.	Rev. Eugene Lynch, P.P., Co. Meath
W. H. Archdale, M.P.	Sir Thomas M'Clure, Bart.
Mir Aulad Ali, T.C.D.	Rev. T. A. M'Kee
Sir Thomas Bateson, M.P.	Sir J. N. McKenna, M.P.
J. G. Biggar, M.P.	Lord Talbot de Malahide
R. P. Blennerhassett, M.P.	Rev. C. L. Morell, Dungannon
Mrs. Blennerhassett	Lady Murray
Rev. F. Briscoe, Kilmessan	Major Nolan, M.P.
Maurice Brooks, M.P.	W. R. O'Byrne, M.P.
Mrs. Brooks	Keyes O'Clery, M.P.
George E. Browne, M.P.	Richard O'Shaughnessy, M.P.
P. Callan, M.P.	W. H. O'Sullivan, M.P.
Hon. E. R. Canning	C. J. Parnell, M.P.
Rev. W. G. Carroll, M.A.	Richard Power, M.P.
Charles Cobbe, Esq., D.L.	W. A. Redmond, M.P.
Miss F. P. Cobbe	J. G. Richardson, Bessbrook
Eugene Collins, M.P.	Rev. Dr. Scott, Meth. College, Belfast
Lord F. Conyngham, M.P.	Abraham Shackleton, Esq.
Miss Corlett	J. Sharman Crawford, M.P.
Sir D. Corrigan, Bart.	Miss Sharman Crawford
M. R. Dalway, M.P.	William Shaw, M.P.
Captain Dawson Damer, M.P.	Sergeant Sherlock, M.P.
James Delahunty, M.P.	Edward Shiel, M.P.
T. A. Dickson, M.P.	Rev. Dr. Smyth, M.P.
Kenelm Digby, M.P.	P. J. Smyth, M.P.
M'Carthy Downing, M.P.	Captain Stacpoole, M.P.
Charles Eason, Esq.	Rev. W. Fleming Stevenson
Nicholas Ennis, M.P.	Rev. James Stevenson
Charles J. Fay, M.P.	A. M. Sullivan, M.P.
Lord Garvagh	J. H. Swanton, Esq., J.P.
Mrs. Gradwell, Drogheda	Ernest G. Swifte, Esq.
A. P. Graves, Esq.	Right Hon. Col. Taylor, M.P.
S. M. Greer, Esq., Recorder of Derry	Mrs. Taylor
Mrs. Hamilton, Killileagh	Lady Emmeline Tennant
Rev. S. Haughton, M.D., F.R.S.	J. F. Waller, Esq., LL.D.
Rev. L. Hope, C.C., Co. Meath	Dr. M. F. Ward, M.P.
Mrs. Johnson, Warrenstown	Alfred Webb, Esq.
W. Johnston, M.P.	Benjamin Whitworth, M.P.
Sir Robert Kane	W. Whitworth, M.P.
Lady Kane	Henry Wigham, Esq.
Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick, D.D.	John R. Wigham, Esq.
The Knight of Kerry	Lady Wilde



Specimen Set  
3.4

## THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP.

THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF THE  
MUNICIPAL AND OTHER FRANCHISES FOR WOMEN.

*A Paper read at the Annual Conference of the National Union of Women  
Workers, Manchester, Oct. 27th, 1896.*

BY MISS MORGAN, OF BRECON.

"Political freedom begins for women, as it began for men, with  
freedom in local government."—LYDIA BECKER.

The motto I have chosen for the opening of this paper sums up in a sentence all the thoughts, which have suggested themselves in connection with this subject. Whether we agree or not as to the justice and wisdom of women being given the Parliamentary franchise, on one point we must all agree, and that is, that there can be no training so excellent for the women, who may in the future be called upon to vote in Parliamentary elections, as the thoughtful, intelligent use of the municipal and other franchises which they already possess. At every election that takes place, in every paper that a woman marks and drops into the ballot-box, a formative influence is going on that is silently building up the character of women as citizens, and the more women can be interested in the local government of their parishes and towns, the fitter they will be for taking part in the government of their country when the time comes for them to do so,



My attention has been drawn to some very remarkable words by Mr. Toulmin Smith, which so admirably describe that freedom which is dear to the hearts of English citizens, women as well as men, that I cannot resist quoting them. He says: "True freedom consists in the continual active consciousness of the position and responsibilities of a free man, a member of the State, and a positive item in it. The free man will feel that he has something to live for beyond the attainment of mere personal ease and comfort; that he has, as member of the State, certain important and active rights and duties and responsibilities co-extensive with them in relation to his fellow-men; that he has faculties beyond the mere sensual ones—the strength of which he is bound to put forth in order to help the great works of human happiness and progress."

The oldest form of local government, that of the parish, with its privileges and responsibilities, has been very ably defined by the same writer when he says:—

"The parish is with us the institution through which the inner life of the people is developed, and in which it should be habitually exercised. The subject of the parish is not, then, a matter of mere local taxation, a question of how to get rid of troublesome burdens. In the exercise of the functions of this institution consists the truest fact of freedom; and the mode of that exercise, the jealous guardianship of those functions from encroachment, and the conscientious discharge of them constitute the test of whether free institutions truly and practically exist and are appreciated, or whether the reality has been or is being lost under vague names and declining forms . . . The parish is the truest school that can exist; it is the school of men in the active business of responsible life—it is the school for the highest moral training. Men may be educated by book-teaching, they can only become men and members of a free state, and true neighbours one to another by the practical school, which such institutions as the parish keep continually open. The true philanthropist and the real statesman will seek to keep these schools in the highest state of continual efficiency. Each of these will seek not to cramp, but to develop the activity and scope of these institutions."—*The Parish.*

*The local elections at which women may now vote are those of Parish and District Councils, Poor Law Guardians, County Councils, Town Councils, London Vestries, and School Boards, and through the limitations of time will not allow me to deal fully with each of these as I should like to do, I must, in alluding to their powers, briefly emphasise the fact, that the carrying out the duties of each of these bodies affects the welfare of women as closely as that of men, and that a very solemn responsibility rests upon us as women to use our votes aright at every election.*

*Parish Councils perform the duties hitherto belonging to vestries, with the exception of specially ecclesiastical duties. They also hire land for allotments, and have power to carry out what are known as Adoptive Acts: viz., The Lighting and Watching Acts, 1833; The Baths and Washhouses Act, 1833; The Burials Act, 1852 and 1885; Public Improvements Act, 1860; and the Public Libraries Act, 1892.*

*District Councils combine the duties of the Sanitary Authorities and Highway Boards, and, in rural districts, the District Councillors are also Poor Law Guardians. They perform sundry duties which were carried out by Justices of the Peace, viz., licensing pawnbrokers, gangmasters, dealers in game, and persons having charge of infants under the Infant Life Protection Act.*

*Poor Law Guardians administer the Poor Law locally, are responsible for the good management of the workhouse and its inmates, and give out-door relief.*

*County Councils have many and varied duties, amongst the most important being the assessing and levying of country rates and police rates, and the application and expenditure thereof, also the borrowing of money.*

*They license places for music, dancing, and stage-plays, and are entrusted with the provision, maintenance, and management of pauper lunatic asylums, and the establishment of reformatories. They have also the administration of the fund granted by the Local Taxation Act of 1890, with a view especially to further technical education. Since*



1891 there has been a rapid extension of technical teaching for boys and girls in connection with County Councils. To name those subjects more especially connected with women's work, grants have been made in a great many counties for dairy-work, cookery, laundry work, horticulture, domestic economy, and bee-keeping.

*Town Councils* appoint the police and regulate the markets. They must see that the town is properly lighted, paved, cleaned, supplied with gas and water. Further, the Corporation has powers, under the Artisans' Dwellings Act, to buy lands for building proper dwellings for the people. Under the Free Libraries Act it can establish free libraries, museums, schools of art, and open spaces for the recreation of the people may all come under its jurisdiction.

The *London Vestries* are the Sanitary Authorities for their respective areas. They also superintend the lighting, paving, watering, and cleansing of the streets. They control common lodging houses, and can suppress houses for improper purposes. They manage, either directly or through Commissioners whom they appoint, the public libraries, the cemeteries, and the baths and wash-houses. They can acquire and manage open spaces. Certain charities are under the control of the Vestry, managed by Trustees whom it appoints. The Vestry has the construction and management of public lavatory accommodation. As regards workshops, it enforces the sanitary regulations embodied in the Factory and Workshop Acts. The London Vestries deal with areas in which the population is as great as that of a large provincial town.

*School Boards* deal with the elementary education of boys and girls.

The enumeration of even a few of the duties of these public bodies shows us that the health and comfort, and even the moral welfare of our towns and villages, is largely dependent on good government; and such government can only be attained by choosing men and women of the highest character and ability to carry it out. The ratepayers have it in their choice, by the exercise of their votes, to decide whether they will seek for high-minded, public-spirited members to represent them on the various councils and boards, or leave their municipal

independence to drift away from them, and their towns and villages to stagnate for lack of improvements.

Surely these considerations appeal as strongly to women as to men, and all women, who think over their duties as citizens either from a personal, a domestic, or a public standpoint, must deeply feel the responsibility and the privilege of making use of their right to vote.

I would deprecate party politics being made the paramount influence in local elections. Whilst fully recognising the value and help of party organisation from an electioneering point of view, I think the standard of local representation will be lowered not raised (as the introduction of women into the conflict should raise it) if character and ability are not put before any mere party qualification in the choice of a candidate.

It is a subject for rejoicing to know, that every year women are awakening more and more to a sense of their responsibility as citizens, and that the result which was anticipated by some, *i.e.*, that women would not take the trouble to vote, being utterly indifferent to the issues at stake, has *not* been realised.

It would be extremely interesting to have a return of the women who voted at the elections, which followed the Local Government Act of 1894, but nothing short of a Parliamentary return could procure such figures; all that is possible is to record some experiences from different parts of the country. Writing from Bath, Mr. S. Hayward, who has had long experience in electoral matters, says: "From inquiries I have made, I gather that the women voters in the rural parishes took an intelligent interest in the election of parish councillors, and especially that the poorer class appeared to pay more attention to the social and moral character of the candidates than to mere party considerations, and this independently of class. In Bath we have found a general disposition to ignore party considerations in the choice of lady guardians even amongst active political workers."

Very similar experience has been furnished from Bristol by Mr. W. H. Elkins, who had good opportunity of knowing the course of the



elections in that city. He writes that in Redland ward, where there was a contest, fully one-third of the votes polled were those of women, and as there were 450 women on the register out of a total of 1,620, this shows a higher percentage amongst the women voters than the men. In those wards of Clifton which were contested, the proportion of women is said to have been still higher. A correspondent in a rural part of Cornwall remarked that the women who were on the register nearly all voted, but that they were so few. Thus in the parish where she herself resided there was but one.

In a Sussex parish, out of nineteen women on the register, twelve came to the poll, and in five rural parishes of the Tunbridge Wells Union, in which there were contests, it appears that the women voted in rather a larger proportion than the men; *i.e.*, out of a total of 165 women on the register 114 (or 69 per cent.) voted. Out of a total of 976 men on the register 514 (or 67 per cent.) voted. Stray facts like these could no doubt be multiplied, and we should find that, take it all in all, the women of the rural districts did not ignore the new opportunities that had come to them.

I will now quote the opinion of competent judges as to the extent and manner in which women have used their votes in towns, and as types I will take Cardiff, which has the lowest percentage of women voters of any town in the kingdom, and Bath, which has one of the highest, Cardiff having a percentage of nine, and Bath of twenty-five.

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

The next letter is from Mr. S. Hayward, of Bath, who has before been quoted: "An experience of thirty years in municipal elections in Bath (where the women voters comprise 1,700 out of 7,000) enables me

confidently to contradict the assertion 'that the great majority of female voters have the strongest dislike for independence' (a statement that had recently been made in the *Speaker*). The municipal elections here have been fought generally on political grounds (I think unfortunately), and hence both male and female voters have been influenced in various ways; but I have found that the women voters have generally attached more importance than the men to the personal moral character and social usefulness of a candidate, and certainly have shown more independence than the majority of the lower class of male voter."

I will conclude with the words of one whose whole brave, beautiful life has been a protest in favour of the freedom of women, political and otherwise,—I allude to Miss Frances Power Cobbe. She says: \* "We now turn directly to consider how stands the duty of women in England as regards entrance into public life and development of public spirit. What ought we to do at present as concerns all public work wherein it is possible for us to obtain a share? The question seems to answer itself in its mere statement. We are bound to do all we can to promote the virtue and happiness of our fellow men and women, and, therefore, we must accept and seize every instrument of power, every vote, every influence which we can obtain to enable us to promote virtue and happiness. . . . We know that the individual power of one vote at any election seems rarely to effect any appreciable difference; but this need not trouble us, for little or great, if we can obtain any influence at all, we ought to seek for it, and the multiplication of the votes of women bent on securing conscientious candidates would soon make them not only appreciable, but weighty . . . we must come to these public duties—whenever we may be permitted to fulfil them—in the most conscientious and disinterested spirit, and determined to perform them excellently well. . . . This, after all, is public spirit—in one shape called patriotism, in another philanthropy—the extension of our sympathies beyond the narrow bounds of our homes; the disinterested enthusiasm for every good and sacred cause. All the world has recognised, from the earliest times, how good and noble and wholesome a thing it is for men to have their breasts filled with such

\* "Duties of Women,"



public spirit; and we look upon them when they exhibit it as glorified thereby. Is it not just as ennobling a thing for a woman's soul to be likewise filled with these large and generous and unselfish emotions? . . . with indignation against wrongs and injustices and perfidies, and with the ardent longing to bring about some great step of progress, some sorely needed reform?"

GWENLLIAN E. F. MORGAN,

*Poor Law Guardian.*

These Leaflets can be obtained at 5d. a dozen, or 3s. a hundred, postage extra, from  
the Office of the Women's Local Government Society, 4, Sanctuary, Westminster  
Secretary—Miss Lindsay.

*New Office, 17 Totterell St Westminster  
Secretary, Mrs Stanbury.*

Home for Backward and Deficient Girls,  
SCOTT HOUSE,  
THE TRIANGLE, HITCHIN, HERTS.

THE girls for whom the above Home is intended belong to the Feeble-minded, a class whose members at one extremity show, in course of time, such evident signs of mental imbecility as to justify detention in suitable asylums, under authorized protection; at the other, they shade off into the extra stupid, and are either flighty and excitable, or are provokingly stubborn, with a rigid, unreasoning clinging to habit, without reference to conditions. The class is unfortunately a large one, and between the extremes specified we find every possible bad tendency; untruthfulness, cunning, dirtiness, low habits. These poor children seem branded from infancy with inherited evil, their pedigree showing a sad monotony of vice, crime, drink, and mental disease, and their continued destitution takes that one form of poverty which is hopeless and despairing, because it arises from lack of mental endowment and power of resistance to evil.

The problem of how best to deal with these unhappy children is a most difficult one. Obviously it is cruel to expect the same from them as from other children, the most that can be done is to classify them carefully, so that those who are the least incapable may be developed under careful and individual teaching and training, while those who prove to be quite deficient, either mentally or morally, should be so placed that they shall be saved from becoming social outcasts, a standing disgrace and reproach to the community, and a source of contamination to others.

The best means of attaining this object seems to be placing the girls in small Training Homes, like the one at Hitchin. If they are left in large schools they do mischief among the other children, they are a heavy drag on the teacher, and when placed out bring discredit on those District School Girls, among whom a certain class of mistresses look for their servants. The records of the M.A.B.Y.S. show how utterly incapable these girls are; some indeed are actually dangerous, and the comment "fallen girls," recurs with painful frequency. When these girls have failed in their places, they are generally sent to the workhouse, with that power of discharge and return which has proved such a fruitful



source of mischief, and they help largely to swell the ins and outs, the most trying class with whom the administrators of Poor Law Relief have to deal. The difficulty is increased by the fact that no special provision is yet made to protect the Feeble-minded from their own weakness. They are not capable of taking care of themselves, yet as they are not truly speaking idiots or lunatics, they are allowed the same freedom as better endowed children. The problem is no doubt a difficult one, but some judicious measure of prolonged and extended guardianship seems necessary for this afflicted class.

At the Home at Hitchin, girls are received either from their own homes, from pauper or other schools, or from service. The inmates at present vary in age from 12 to 19, they have been under differing conditions, and show varying forms of peculiarities and mental deficiencies such as make them an easy prey to temptations. They have, however, two things in common, they are recognised as failures, or as probable failures in the struggle for existence, and they, one and all, possess tempers which constantly show themselves in outbreaks of passion and in unmistakable forms of hysteria. The best remedy for such evils is constant but not too monotonous employment and attention to physical conditions, and these the girls get fully at Hitchin. There is a garden to the house, the girls have sufficient outdoor exercise, and indoors they are trained in all domestic work, including laundry work, from which the income needed for the Home is supplemented. The dietary is sufficient and wisely varied, and as the girls are not under the rigid and unnatural conditions of institution life, but are, as far as possible, treated as belonging to a family, a threatened outbreak of insubordination or temper can often be averted by tactful treatment, or perhaps by musical drill, a form of exercise the girls enjoy greatly, and which is an excellent outlet for the misdirected energy which would otherwise vent itself in passion. Even those who, on account of extra naughtiness, are excluded from the drill itself, watch the rhythmic movements of their companions with softening face.

Besides the difficulties already named, these girls show an intense feeling for self, which passes the ordinary bounds of human selfishness, and forms the basis of that diseased egotism, which is such a prominent note in the insane. This tendency is said to be most deeply ingrained among the girls who have been brought up in institutions, where everything necessary is provided for them by some unseen and mysterious agency, without any effort or thought on their part. In some degree to combat this very false view of life, each girl at Hitchin is provided with an

account-book, with a debit and credit side, on the one side is entered weekly a sum, which stands for wages, or rather the value of work done, on the debit is the cost of food, lodging and clothing. It contains two other items likely to teach valuable lessons. Wasted time is charged against the girls, because in this case they are not entitled to any payment, and destruction of clothing or any other article is also entered. The girls take it in turns to go marketing with the matron, and in every way they are taught the elements of every day routine, which children of keener perceptions acquire with little effort, but which have to be impressed on the dull minds of these girls with infinite patience and constant reiteration.

The Home has not been opened long enough for any placing out, but already the girls show signs of improvements. Some bad habits have been corrected, periods of good temper and restraint show symptoms of becoming longer, and there is good hope that some of the girls will improve sufficiently to earn their living in service or at laundry work.

Failures, of course, there must be, there are these among all classes of children, and these girls are, from the first, so heavily handicapped, that what passes for mere matter-of-course effort among others, must, among them be regarded as praiseworthy achievement. But each one of them, under careful observation, shows the possession of some good feeling which may be used as a lever for higher things. For example, the most hopeless and repulsive of them, a girl with a type of face which shows the worst kind of pedigree, has expressed real affection for a young lady who has happened to visit the Home, and she has been willing to obey her. The feeling may be transitory or it may be fostered into a permanent influence for good, and we must remember that however sad it is to hear of these girls going astray, there is one thing sadder, and which places, or ought to place their sin on our own consciences, and that is that they have not had a fair chance of doing better; that they have been excluded from their share of natural affection and from those wholesome influences, from that firm but kindly rule, which may give strength and courage even to the Feeble-minded.

We are bound to do as much as we can for these girls, because they can do so little for themselves, and if we neglect our duty towards them now we shall only have to face the problem in a more difficult and costly form at a later period.

Much may be done by the careful formation of habit, specially in the case of the young children. But to achieve this,



skilled and experienced teachers are necessary, who understand the special class with whom they have to deal, and who recognize that ordinary teaching is not sufficient; for after the feeble-minded child has been shown how to dust a room perhaps, or to do other domestic work, she must be watched and followed up day by day, or she will contrive to do it wrong, or leave it half done. It is, too, no uncommon thing to find the dusters and aprons needed for the work lying on the floor, the children seize the first thing, whether suitable or not, for their work, and never think of putting things back in their regular place.

Naturally, under these conditions, they need not only a specially trained staff, but also a larger one than would be required for ordinary children. This, of course, means increased expense and we plead earnestly for funds to help these poor girls, bearing the burden of the sins of others; for many this burden may be lightened and all may be saved from adding to it. The task of rescuing them is arduous and difficult, and those who cannot give personal work may aid by saving the workers and strugglers from the additional strain of anxiety as to means.

Contributions for the Scott Home, at Hitchin, should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer,

THE EARL OF STAMFORD,  
18, Buckingham Street,  
Strand,  
London, W.C.

## Shall Women be eligible to serve on County Councils?

BY MRS. CHARLES MALLET.

The fact that—in spite of the need (obvious in itself and attested by actual experience, and by the testimony of those best capable of judging) for the help of women in dealing with the work of County Councils—women are still legally disqualified from serving on these Bodies—seems to call imperatively for a re-statement of some of the cogent arguments on the question.

### WHAT THEN ARE THE DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THESE GOVERNING BODIES?

#### I.—*To County Councils is committed the management and control of Lunatic Asylums in which men and women are received.*

There are in the United Kingdom nearly a million more women than men. The female lunatics in these Asylums are not likely therefore to be in a minority; and we are not surprised to find that in the Claybury Insane Asylum there is accommodation for 1,200 women and 800 men.

In Asylums controlled by County Councils there were living, as we find by the Census returns in 1894,—31,960 female lunatics. No kindly female visitor ever comes to cheer the lives of these poor women; no ray of womanly sympathy lightens the dullness of their gloomy seclusion, except in the case of patients sent on from Union Workhouses. Yet in our Workhouse Infirmaries, where about 900 women are to be found, the watchful care and occasional visitations of some female Guardian are considered indispensable. It has been ascertained by the replies sent by the Clerks of 49 County Councils in England and Wales to questions addressed to them, that there does not exist in these 49 counties, any Committee of Lady Visitors whose duty is to visit the female patients detained in Asylums.

In these Institutions there are also female attendants and many female servants, amounting in all to many thousands of women under the jurisdiction of County Councils in England and Wales.

On all questions concerned with the health, the clothing, the cleanliness, the sanitary arrangements for these persons; on all questions of house-cleaning and household details—in all matters culinary and domestic—County Councils are the only ultimate court of appeal.

Yet on these bodies no woman finds a place, nor is there an opportunity of appeal to any woman outside the Asylum.

#### II.—*County Councils are directly responsible for the management of boys as well as of a few girls in the Reformatories and Industrial Schools.*

*Indirectly they are responsible for a much larger number.*

Countless instances from the experiences of the first female Guardians of the Poor could be adduced of blunders, omissions, and neglect in dealing with pauper children, leading to results disastrous for the health and well-being of these little ones; instances which would be quite inconceivable if they were not proved facts. These blunders were the natural and direct consequence partly of the lack of knowledge on the part of male Guardians, partly of the absolute impossibility of their exercising a close and intimate supervision over the minutiae of the Dormitory, the Wash-house, and the Wardrobe.

Details of a precisely similar character must come within the purview of those who are responsible for the control of Industrial



Schools and Reformatories for the young, yet there is no woman sitting on County Councils to whom an appeal on all such domestic matters can be addressed.

### III.—*Infant Life Protection Act.*

But the fatuity of the framers of the Local Government Act is pushed farther still. It is the duty of male Councillors to appoint Inspectors to visit Baby Farms. It is their business to ensure that hapless infants, whose presence in the world may have been considered undesirable, should be protected from the imminent risk of being hustled away out of existence, or worse still kept in a condition of slow torture and starvation in the out-of-the-way holes and hidden corners of our great cities, or in lonely country cottages. Is not a woman's assistance and judgment especially indispensable in such work as this? is not female inspection imperatively called for here? and is this sufficiently provided for through the appointment by the London County Council of one woman who has to make her report to a Sanitary Committee composed entirely of men?

Perhaps the supreme triumph of legislative inconsistency is to be found in the fact that women who by the Acts of 1894, may be elected to serve on Urban District Councils are called upon to administer this very Act for the Protection of Infant Life, which in the case of County Councils is relegated entirely to the hands of male Councillors.

The list of women who are dependent on male Councillors is by no means exhausted.

### IV.—*To County Councils belong the control and supervision of Theatres and Music Halls—the power of granting or withholding Licences from these places.*

In these so many young girls are employed; their only security for protection against the risk of fire and other dangers—and their only guarantee for the morality and decency of the performances in which they have to take part—lies in the wise regulations and the close supervision of the County Councillors.

To give only one concrete instance: during Miss Cons' short tenure of office on the L.C.C. she discovered in a Theatre a dressing room in which the girls nightly ran imminent risk of catching fire from the quality and position of the lights used, many of which were brought in by the girls themselves. What male Councillor could have penetrated during dressing time to this hidden woman's region of the establishment, and have discovered this serious danger?

To the various classes of women already mentioned in various institutions may be added also a large number of charwomen and caretakers.

So far, we have based our plea for the presence of women on County Councils on the necessity only of their sister-women. But this is to state but a small part of the argument.

The interests of men and women are obviously indissolubly united. One is sometimes even almost tempted to think that the influences of the County Councils are more important and far-reaching over the lives of women than over the lives of men!

But be this as it may, it is certain that if half of the human interests concerned are neglected by those to whom the administering of them are entrusted, the progress and welfare of the nation will be fatally impeded.

Other duties which County Councils have to perform are,

### V.—*The Housing of the Poor and the administration of the Artizans' Dwellings Act.*

Now the first serious attempt to deal with the lowest and poorest homes in the slums of London was made, long before County Councils

existed, by a woman—Miss Octavia Hill—about the year 1865. No sooner was Miss Cons once her co-worker, elected an Alderman of the London County Council than she was put by her colleagues on the Housing Committee of the Council.

### VI.—*The Providing of Open Spaces.*

To the same woman the citizens of London are indebted for the founding of a Society for the Protection of Open Spaces which has made many dull and dreary acres of wilderness in this great city "to rejoice and blossom as the rose." The work of laying out the Metropolitan Gardens is now superintended by a woman.

### VII.—*The Protection of Wild Birds Act.*

The Sky-lark, the Thrush, the Blackbird, the Nightingale, and other species of British birds, are rapidly disappearing from our woods; greed, cruelty, and thoughtlessness are accountable for this. Would it not be well that those who condemn this holocaust should share in the educative work of framing such regulations as will put a stop to this cowardly and ignoble destruction?

### VIII.—*The Regulation of Slaughter Houses.*

Very much remains still to be done in the prevention of cruelty, both conscious and unconscious, in Slaughter Houses. Would it not be well that women should take part in such work as this?

### IX.—*The Rivers Pollution Act.*

This is an Act of Parliament on the due administration of which the health of great cities largely depends, and the prevention of those epidemics of fever and diphtheria which are so fatal to young children.

### X.—*The Act for Regulating Cow-houses and Dairies.*

By which a supply of pure milk from healthy sources is ensured.

Can you exclude the matters which these two last-mentioned Acts are concerned from the purview of women?

It has been well said that County Councils have taken in hand the house-keeping of the nation.

Does it need exhaustive logic to prove that the domestic matters treated of above are scarcely likely to be better understood by the country squire, the busy merchant, the man engrossed with the fluctuations of the Exchange or the Market, than by those persons who, alike by nature, by tradition, and by the practice of many centuries, have become experts in matters of domestic management?

And is not the State—in its character of Guardian of the Community—bound to summon to its councils the best knowledge, the most trained experience, which is at the service of the community?

### *Technical Education.*

Our contention, however, does not end here. In view of the great and ever-growing importance of the question of Technical Education in our Counties, it is absolutely essential that women should sit on County Councils; not merely that they may assist in the carrying out of this work, but especially in order to secure to women and girls their full share in the benefits of those Classes and Lectures from which now they are too frequently excluded.

There is work of supreme importance waiting which may soon double the labours of County Councillors. The Secondary Education of the Country will most certainly be put under their jurisdiction. Are we to suppose that the Educational Board or Committee which must be created to carry out this scheme, will exclude trained experts, if they happen to be women?



A sentence of import so ominous meets us in Sir John Gorst's article in the *North American Review*, October last, that supposing it to record the final expression of the intentions of the Government, we stand dumb-founded in utter bewilderment, unable to form the faintest conjecture as to what that subversive scheme can be which is to revolutionize our present system of National Education!

It runs as follows:—"The County Authority should have both *Primary* and *Secondary Education* under its jurisdiction. It is impossible to draw a line. . . . Two separate authorities would be in conflict from the outset. . . ."

What can this mean? The work of *Primary Education* is being carried on by *School Boards* on which women sit, often by right of having been elected at the head of the poll, in consequence, presumably, of the recognition by parents of the invaluable, rendered by them to the cause of Education in its widest sense.

To County Councils women are at present ineligible. If, therefore, the control of *Primary Education* is handed over to County Councils, and the law is not altered so as to enable women to serve on those bodies, the assistance which women have hitherto rendered as Members of *School Boards* will be at an end.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the different ways in which women on County Councils could be of service, or to catalogue all that County Councils may in the future be called upon to undertake. That the tendency exists to throw more and more work into their hands may be gathered from the recommendations made in 1893 by the Select Committee appointed to consider the compulsory registration of midwives, which advised that "the duty of carrying out locally the Act which will be required should be placed in the hands of the County Councils."

In conclusion: That which we urge as a beneficial measure has stood the test of actual experience. For nearly four months Lady Sandhurst and Miss Jane Cobden—both elected by majorities of about 270 over the next candidate—served on the largest of all County Councils—the London County Council—of 1889, consisting of 118 members. Miss Cons was afterwards elected on it as Alderman. During their very short tenure of office—independently of other duties—Lady Sandhurst undertook the supervision of 23 *Baby Farms*, Miss Cobden the visitation of the *Cane Hill Lunatic Asylum*, and membership of the *Parks Committee*, while the services of Miss Cons on the Committees concerned with the *Housing of the Poor* were felt by her colleagues to be so valuable, that in her absence from London she was elected on six Committees and eleven *Sub-committees*, and after she had been obliged to resign her seat on the Council was invited still to attend the *Sanitary and Housing Committees* as a *Visitor*.

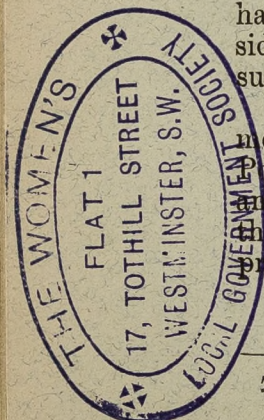
On May 20th, and on June 18th, 1889, the L.C.C. voted by a large majority in favour of presenting to Parliament a Petition in support of the Bill for enabling women to sit as County Councillors.

The experience of the L.C.C. has established beyond dispute that neither the *Electorate* nor those members of a County Council who have had practical experience of women's capability of work as citizens, consider their presence on County Councils as either inappropriate or superfluous.

And we would urge upon all women that they should make the most strenuous efforts, both as private individuals, and as members of *Political Associations*, to obtain the redress of that inequality, the amendment of those anomalous laws which, while granting to women the right to sit on (nearly) every other *Municipal Body*, forbids their presence on *Town and County Councils*.

NOVEMBER, 1896.

This leaflet can be obtained at 1s. a hundred, postage extra, from the Office of the Women's Local Government Society, 4, Sanctuary, Westminster.  
Secretary—Miss Lindsay.



## WOMEN and TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

In 1894 a leaflet was issued by the Women's Local Government Society, consisting mainly of facts gleaned from replies received by the Society to questions sent to the Clerks of all County Councils and County Boroughs in England and Wales. In 1896 a similar set of questions was sent out, from which the following information has been obtained.

Of the 128 County Councils of England and Wales, almost all have appointed a *Technical Instruction Committee*.

The *Technical Instruction Committees* appointed by the Councils may be divided into three classes:—

I.—Those Committees, 61 in all, consisting of Councillors only.

II.—The 46 Committees consisting of Councillors and other male members; and

III.—14 Committees which consist of Councillors and other members, including women.

The 14 which have placed women on their Committees for *Technical Education*, are: the County of London, Gloucestershire, Merionethshire, Somersetshire, and Wiltshire, also *Barrow-in-Furness*, *Bath*, *Kingston-upon-Hull*, *Lincoln*, *Norwich*, *Oxford*, *Stockport*, *Swansea*, and *Walsall*. This is an increase of 5 since 1894

### APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN ON SUBORDINATE COMMITTEES.

It is interesting to compare how the three different classes of *Technical Instruction Committees* have acted as regards the appointment of women as members of subordinate committees. 15 Councils belonging to the 1st class (*i.e.*, about one-fourth) have appointed women on *District Committees*, and so have 3 (*i.e.*, one-fifteenth) Councils of the 2nd class, while 5 (rather more than one-third) of the 3rd class have taken the same action. With regard to the *Sub-Committees*, one-sixth of the Councils of Class I place women on these Committees, only 1 out of the 46 belonging to Class II has done so, while there are women on one-fifth of the Councils in Class III. Women serve on *Local Committees* on more than one-third of the Councils in Class I, on one-eleventh of the *Local Committees* of Councils in Class II, and on less than one-third of such Committees of Councils in Class III; and on *Local Sub-Committees* in less than one-fifth of the Councils of the 1st Class, in one-forty-sixth of the Councils of the 2nd Class, and on more than one-third of the Councils of the 3rd Class.

These facts shew that the Councils which have women on their *Technical Education Committees* are those which are most zealous to obtain the help of women on their *Minor Committees* and *Sub-Committees*; and that the Councils which appoint none but Councillors to serve on their *Technical Education Committees* (and which therefore show no sex-bias in not appointing women thereto) seek the help of women on



their Minor Committees to a far greater extent than do those Councils which, while admitting to their Technical Instruction Committees men who are not Councillors, yet exclude women.

In this comparison, the London County Council is omitted, since it has no Local or District Committees. It is only fair to say, however, that the Council and its Technical Instruction Board (on which there is one woman) have appointed some women as their representatives on the governing bodies of the institutions for Technical Instruction to which the Council makes grants.

Enumerating briefly, and probably incompletely,—1 Council (Norfolk) has a Ladies' Committee appointed by the Council, while 10 have a Ladies' Committee appointed by the Technical Education Committee; 21 have ladies on the District Technical Instruction Committee; 12 have ladies on the District Technical Sub-Committees; and 23 have ladies on Local Committees.

In some places the organisation of Technical Education is in the hands of some existing institution, which may or may not have women on the governing body, but with whose appointment the Council has nothing to do:—*e.g.*, in Reading, funds are given to the University Extension College, which has 3 women on its Council.

Some County Councils specially state that women may be elected on their Technical Instruction Committees, and the Dorset Technical Instruction Committee in its "Instructions to Local Committees" says that the persons selected to serve on Local Committees "may be of either sex, and care should be taken that there is a fair representation of women on all Local Committees."

In Wales, Technical Education is carried on under the Act of 1889 "to make further provision for the Intermediate and Technical Education of the inhabitants of Wales." Experience of the working of this Act shows that women desirous of advancing Technical Education in Wales have scant opportunity afforded to them, and mostly work under circumstances of great difficulty,—*e.g.*, women who are Local Governors have not the full status, are excluded from dealing with finance and from any part of the business which does not exclusively affect girls.

#### PROVISION FOR THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.

"But," it may be said, "the appointment of women as members of Technical Instruction Committees and subordinate Committees is only a means to an end. Inquiry should be directed as to the provision actually made by existing Committees for the Technical Education of women and girls."

The large majority of County Councils supply some kind of Technical Education for women and girls, and, in many cases where the only education of this nature supplied is cooking, dressmaking etc., there are Local Committees of ladies for these subjects only. This is more especially the case in

districts where such classes have been formerly carried on by Ladies' Committees.

In many rural localities the county is divided into districts, and the teaching is mainly itinerant, each teacher giving courses of from 5 to 10 lessons in several districts. In purely agricultural districts, a great number of the Technical Education Classes bear on agriculture, those more specially for women and girls teaching dairy-work and bee and poultry keeping. The districts in which women and girls have few advantages are those in which mining is the chief industry, classes on that subject not being considered "suitable."

Under several Committees, notably those of the County Boroughs, the classes are not wholly Technical. Schools of Science and Art, and Commercial Classes are often included in the "Scheme of Technical Education," while in some other cases the money voted for Technical Education seems to go chiefly in aid of Secondary Education.

As to *equality of opportunity* afforded to the sexes, it is almost impossible to get reliable statistics.

In the majority of cases, men and boys enjoy greater advantages than do women and girls, with regard both to **Scholarships** and to **Classes**.

With regard to **Scholarships**, the inequality is most noticeable in districts where the Council does not itself provide Technical Education, but makes grants to existing institutions. Many clerks say that these grants are given very largely to secondary schools, and that of these there are few for girls in the district, and that but for such paucity the girls would benefit equally with the boys: it would however seem that in any district where this is true the Council ought to provide directly for the technical education of girls, so as to furnish an equivalent for the scholarships given to boys. Again, the number of women farmers in England and Wales is large; but agricultural exhibitions are often advertised as "tenable only by farmers and sons of farmers," which advertisement does not read as if it were meant to include women, and so helps to create a public opinion which would go far to explain the improbability referred to by one clerk who replied that "although the County Council has no regulation expressly excluding women from the exhibitions, it is very improbable that any applications will be received except from men."

With regard to **Classes**, the difficulty of obtaining exact information, as a basis for comparison, is even greater than with regard to scholarships. In many cases the answer to the question "Are all classes open to women and girls?" is "Yes, if suitable," and "If appropriate." This brings us at once to the kernel of the matter. Are men alone the best judges as to what is suitable for girls to learn? To take, for the purpose of illustration, carpentry, now taught in many upper class girls' schools: we find that one or two Technical Instruction Committees approve of carpentry for girls, the majority seem not to do so, and one clerk says, in respect to



girls entering for carpentry, that his Committee "discourages but does not forbid"—so that there is at least one case in which girls are demanding instruction in face of discouragement. Of the 11 councils which have directly appointed a Ladies' Committee, 5 make no distinction of sex with regard to classes—all the classes being open to both men and women.

There is one thing which may safely be said, and that is, that counties and county boroughs which have women on their (central) Technical Education Committees are those in which women's technical education has been most progressive since 1894; there is no instance in which women have been put on the Technical Education Committee in which there has not been activity with regard to women's education. This is, of course, consistent with the fact that in a few large cities possessing Colleges, women's education is at a more advanced stage, even though there are no women on the Technical Instruction Committee.

#### CONCLUSION.

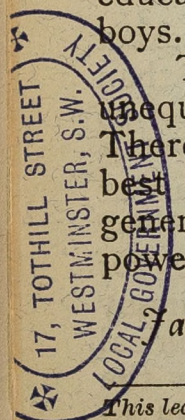
Study of the evidence is cheering, in so far as it shows that the co-operation of women in the provision of technical education is somewhat more widely sought than in 1894, and that the educational advantages offered to women and girls are correspondingly greater.

Yet the principal lesson to be gathered from the evidence is that the large majority of the Councils of Counties and County Boroughs understand better, and are more keen to supply, the needs of men and boys than those of women and girls.

This is but the natural result of the law which excludes women from serving as County Councillors. It is indeed remarkable and highly honourable to our County Councillors that there should be as many County Councils as there are where every effort is made to do substantial justice between the sexes. We have no right to wonder that not all County Councils are so largeminded. Rather should we look ahead, and foresee that if *Secondary Education* be placed in the hands of County Councils, no legal permission to co-opt women on their education committees will, with the majority of Councils, secure such co-option, nor will it prevent the secondary education of our girls receiving less attention than that of our boys.

There is but one way to avoid the consequences of an unequal law, and that is to abolish the inequality of the law. There is but one way to enable County Councils to do the best that human beings can for the education of the next generation, and that is to place at their disposal the varied powers and the varied experience of both men and women.

January, 1897.



This leaflet can be obtained at 1s. a hundred, postage extra, from the Office of the Women's Local Government Society, 4, Sanctuary, Westminster. Secretary—Miss Lindsay.

Reprinted, with amendments up to date, from the Penny Weekly Paper, "The Councillor", being the 22nd Weekly Article supplied to that Paper on behalf of the Women's Local Government Society, under the heading "Women in Council."

## WOMEN AS SANITARY INSPECTORS.

At the present time only four out of the twenty-nine London Vestries, viz., Kensington, Islington, St. Pancras, and Southwark, have appointed women as Sanitary Inspectors. We know that the efforts of Dr. Wynter Blyth in Marylebone in 1893, and of the Sanitary Committee in Paddington in 1894, were defeated by their respective Vestries.

In 1893, the Kensington Vestry led the way. On July 5th of that year a recommendation was submitted to the Vestry by their Works and Sanitary Committee in favour of the appointment of two women inspectors, for a period of six months, to assist in enforcing the sanitary provisions of the Factory and Workshop Acts, and the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, in the several factories, workshops, workplaces and laundries in the parish, where women were employed. This recommendation having been adopted, Miss Deane and Miss Squire were appointed for the southern and the northern districts of Kensington respectively.

To Dr. Dudfield, Medical Officer of Health for Kensington, a great debt is due. It may fairly be surmised that, without effort on his part, the women inspectors would not have been appointed. When they were appointed, he devised a complete system for carrying out and recording their work.

For purposes of registration, they were supplied with books with appropriate columns for recording particulars, register number, date of registration, name of street, etc., name of occupier, description of trade or business, dimensions of each workroom (length, breadth, height, and cubic feet of space), number of gas burners, maximum number of occupants allowed, means of ventilation, number and position of sanitary conveniences, and finally, "Remarks." They were also given pocket-books, ruled and headed to correspond with the columns in the register.



*For recording the results of ordinary inspections* of registered premises, they were provided with books with ruled and headed columns for showing:—date of inspection, number of persons found in each workroom, state of workroom as to warming, means of heating irons, conditions of premises, condition of sanitary conveniences, position and condition of dustbin, drinking-water supply, and “General Remarks.”

Also, *for use when it was their duty to report nuisances* liable to be dealt with under the Acts that I have referred to above, they were given ruled and headed sheets on which to specify:—number of the case, registered number of premises, premises at which the nuisance exists, trade or business carried on there, description of complaint, nuisance, &c., date when written intimation of the nuisance was served, works necessary to be instituted to remove the cause of complaint or to abate the nuisance, time necessary for the abatement of the nuisance, and “Remarks.”

Lastly, the Inspectors were furnished with a *form of notice* to send immediately to the occupiers of premises at which instances of *overcrowding* were observed.

The supervision of the work of the Inspectors was delegated to a Sub-Committee that met every four weeks, the Inspectors attending before the Sub-Committee to submit their “complaint sheets” and to take instructions with respect to each case. It is not surprising that the Inspectors, well selected and well guided, did their work to the entire satisfaction of their employers.

These first Inspectors had not the status of Sanitary Inspectors, and when first appointed they were not qualified for it.

But it speedily became apparent to Dr. Dudfield that their usefulness would be much enhanced did they possess it, and he advised both ladies to take the certificate of the Sanitary Institute, in order to be qualified according to the rule of the Vestry. The reason for this advice, which was endorsed by the Sub-Committee, was that, before the Vestry, as “Sanitary Authority,” can lawfully serve notice on the owner or occupier of a workshop to cleanse or purify the same, they must have “the certificate of a Medical Officer of Health or Sanitary Inspector” that such cleansing, etc., of the workshop is “necessary for the health of the persons employed therein.”

The ladies, thus advised, took the certificate during the first six months, but at the end of that time Miss Deane was appointed a Factory Inspector. Miss Squire was re-appointed (for a while on her old footing), and Miss Duncan was appointed to fill the place of Miss Deane. For some time back Miss Squire has had the status of Sanitary Inspector, but her work in Kensington is now at an end, she too having been appointed a Factory Inspector.

In 1894 Islington, in 1895 St. Pancras, and in 1896 Southwark, appointed fully qualified women, namely, Miss Grey, Miss Thurgood, and Miss Annie Elliott, with the full status.

The Report sent up in October, 1895, to the Vestry of St. Pancras by its Health Committee,—the Report, which led to the appointment of Miss Thurgood,—is so good that I must quote the following important paragraphs:

“Your Committee have further considered the Report of the Medical Officer of Health upon the subject of the Inspection of Factories and Workshops, submitted to the Vestry on the 10th July, 1895, and the Order of the Home Secretary of November, 1892, and the remarks made from time to time in the Annual Reports of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspectors of Factories and the opinions of District Inspectors with regard to the neglect of Local Sanitary Authorities in carrying out their duties of inspecting workshops and workplaces.

“Your Committee wish also to direct the attention of the Vestry to the Factory and Workshop Act, 1895, which has received the Royal Assent since your Committee last reported on the subject—this Act, *inter alia*, adds laundries to the class of premises to be inspected and has extended the provisions with regard to bakehouses—it has also defined overcrowding, made further provisions for ventilating and warming, and made it penal to employ persons in places injurious to health, also for allowing wearing apparel to be made in a place where there is infectious disease.

“Your Committee recognise that the inspection of workshops and workplaces in a systematic manner is a statutory duty



imposed upon the Vestry, and that serious responsibility is being incurred by the delay of which Her Majesty's Inspectors of Factories are complaining annually to the Government, and a risk is being incurred of such complaints calling forth some censure from the Home Office."

As regards the amount of work awaiting the woman Sanitary Inspector in districts where she as yet is not, we can only guess at it by comparing the general character of any such district, its population and their employments, house accommodation, etc., etc., with the character of Kensington, where the workshops employing women have been registered, and are shown, in March, 1895, to have numbered 567, containing a total of 1,168 workrooms. The number of inspections in that year was 1,302, and of re-inspections 522. The number of workrooms found to be overcrowded was 50, insufficiently ventilated 48, and dirty 136. The number of nuisances reported was 277, and the works carried out under supervision are thus enumerated: additional means of ventilation provided 10; rooms cleansed and whitewashed 153; yards, floors, roofs, etc., repaired 49; and sanitary conveniences constructed 18. Workroom cards distributed, showing number of persons permitted in each room, 218; and statutory notices and written intimations issued, 161.

It is worthy of note that, where the woman inspector has the status of Sanitary Inspector, a moiety of her salary is repayable by the County Council to the Vestry.

MARY STEWART KILGOUR.

December, 1896.



*This leaflet can be obtained at 1s. a hundred, postage extra, from the Office of the Women's Local Government Society, 17, Tothill Street, Westminster. Secretary—Miss Lindsay.*

## Why are Women wanted on Vestries?

- Because the Vestries are the Sanitary Authorities, and the matters with which they have to deal concern the public health, and therefore the homes of the people.
- Because the Assistance of Women is essential for the effective Sanitary Supervision of premises to which men cannot suitably be sent, and of public lavatories for Women.
- Because the arrangements for Women in Baths and Wash-houses require the Supervision of Women.
- Because the special provisions made for School Board Children using the Swimming Baths need the attention of Women.
- Because the Vestry has the control of Common Lodging Houses, and can suppress houses for improper purposes.
- Because careful control is necessary in respect to those Open Spaces which are used as play-grounds by children.
- Because the Parochial Charities include such matters as the apprenticing of the daughters of poor parishioners, and the distribution of coals and blankets to the poor.
- Because Women are, in general, accustomed to attend to detail in expenditure, and this tends to economy.
- Because Women and Men are different, and every variety of power ought to be placed at the service of the people.
- Last but not least**—Because the Electors ought to have a free choice of their representatives irrespective of sex.

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BURR & SONS, Printers, 58, Porchester Road, London, W.



continues to accurately represent the position under the Act of 1894.

Office of the Society:—17, TOTHILL STREET, WESTMINSTER.

# POSITION OF WOMEN

UNDER THE

## Local Government Act, 1894,

Popularly known as

THE PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCILS ACT.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

#### PARISH MEETINGS AND PARISH COUNCILS.

The Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1894, makes new provisions for parochial government in all rural parishes, by Parish Meetings and Parish Councils.

#### DISTRICT COUNCILS AND LONDON VESTRIES.

The Act also provides that, not only in rural parts but throughout England and Wales, there shall be a class of Councils, to be termed District Councils, intermediate between Parish Councils on the one hand and County Councils on the other. (i.) In all Rural Districts\* (the Poor Law Union being taken as the unit of area and that part of it which is rural termed "Rural District") Rural District Councils are to be created. (ii) In Urban Districts which are not Boroughs the existing sanitary authority (in most cases a Local Board) is to be reformed, and transformed into the District Council. (iii.) In Boroughs (that are not County Boroughs) the existing Town Councils are to be deemed District Councils, although in most respects outside the operation of the Act. Further, the Act renders possible the reform of the London Vestries, for it decrees that the provisions as to the election of District Councils in Urban Districts which are not Boroughs, and those respecting the qualification of the electors and of the persons to be elected, shall apply in the case of the London Vestries.

#### GUARDIANS.

The Act provides for re-modelling the constitution of Boards of Guardians throughout England and Wales, including London. There will, as heretofore, be a Board of Guardians for every poor law union. There will no longer be ex-officio Guardians.

The Act also provides that in Rural Districts there shall be no separate Election of Guardians, but that the rural District

\* See Map on p. 4.



Councillors shall sit as Guardians for the parishes which elected them as District Councillors, being joined on the Board of Guardians by the Guardians elected by any Urban District within the same poor law union. In all Urban Districts, whether boroughs or not, and in Metropolitan Districts, there will be a special election of Poor Law Guardians.

#### NEW REGISTER.

For the purpose of the election of the above Bodies, the Act creates a new Register, to be termed the Register of Parochial Electors. Parochial Electors, and no other persons, will have the right of voting in Parish Meetings and of electing Parish Councils, of electing District Councils (other than Town Councils), the London Vestries, and Boards of Guardians. It is noteworthy that in all these elections the separate parishes or wards of parishes elect their representatives separately. Whenever a poll is taken voting will be by ballot, and plural voting is disallowed.

#### POSITION OF WOMEN UNDER THE ACT.

The rights secured to women by the Act include, *with one exception*, their ancient parochial rights, and are large, but not equal to those secured to men.

#### ELECTORS.

In respect to the right to vote, women cannot as readily become Parochial Electors as men can. The new Register is to be made up of the Local Government Register and the Parliamentary Register. It follows that all women who can at present vote in County Council elections can be registered as Parochial Electors. Moreover, it is provided that marriage shall not disqualify a woman for voting in elections under this Act, provided that husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property. The provision that marriage shall not disqualify is a great gain, for, with respect to elections under the Act\*, it puts an end to the anomaly of one revising barrister admitting married women's names, and another elsewhere refusing them. The inequality between the electoral rights of men and women under the Act is introduced by the inclusion of the Parliamentary Register. This inclusion newly confers full parochial rights on three classes of men, without conferring them on the same classes of women: the three classes referred to are male owners, male

\* County Council and even Town Council elections are not "elections under the Act."

lodgers, and men enjoying the service franchise. *In respect to elections of Poor Law Guardians, women owners are actually deprived of the right to vote which they have hitherto had.*

#### CANDIDATES.

In respect to the right to be elected, all Parochial electors may be candidates in all elections under the Act, *i.e.*, for the Parish Council, the Council of an Urban District not a Borough, the Rural District Council, the Board of Guardians, and the London Vestry. Residence during the whole of the twelve-months preceding an election is an alternative qualification for standing as a candidate, provided that the residence required shall be in the case of a Parish Councillor residence in the parish or within 3 miles thereof, in that of an Urban District Councillor residence in the district, in that of either a Rural District Councillor or a Guardian residence in the poor law union, and in that of a Member of a London Vestry residence in the parish. Thus, for the first time, it is provided by statute that women, married and single, may be candidates for Local Boards (now "Urban District Councils"), and for the London Vestries.\* As has been seen above, it is easier for a man to qualify as a parochial elector than for a woman, but the residential qualification is equal as between men and women, married and single, and will be invaluable as enabling many married women to give their services as Guardians, as District and Parish Councillors, and as members of London Vestries. There is, again, another qualification, which, as the law stands at present (women being ineligible as Town Councillors), will afford to men, and to men only, a third means of qualifying as Guardians and as Rural District Councillors: the provision is that if in any poor law union a Parish is wholly or partly within a Borough, every person who is eligible as Councillor for the Borough shall be qualified to be elected a Guardian for the Parish and a District Councillor for the Rural District (if any) comprised in the union.

In some Boroughs it has hitherto not been possible for a woman to be a candidate for the office of Poor Law Guardian, but this disability is removed, for the Act repeals so much of any Local Act as relates to the qualification of a Guardian.

Parish and District Councils will choose their own Chairmen. Women are not disqualified.

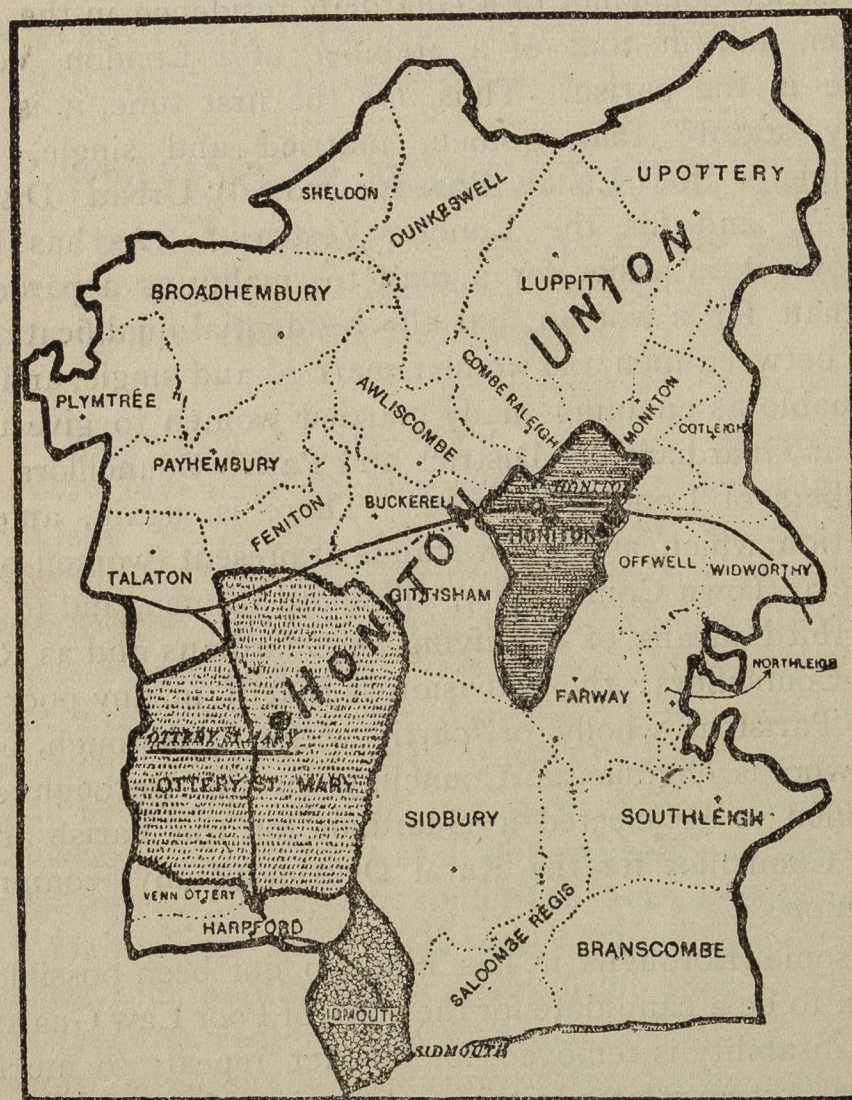
\* Not only are women eligible to London Vestries, but to the District Boards elected by the Vestries of the smaller London parishes, and to the Local Board of Woolwich, the same provisions applying as to qualification of candidates.


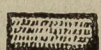


The Chairman of a District Council, "unless a woman," will, by virtue of the Office, be a Justice of the Peace. Women are thus explicitly disqualified from becoming magistrates under this Act.

CLAUSE 84.—(1.)—"The first elections under this Act shall be held on the eighth day of November next after the passing of this Act, or such later date or dates in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four as the Local Government Board may fix."

**MAP**  
of one Poor-Law Union, showing (i.) twenty-five rural Parishes, forming one Rural District; (ii.) two Urban Districts, not being Boroughs; (iii) one Borough.



 Borough of Honiton.  Urban Districts, not being Boroughs.

# Women's Work in London <sup>New</sup>

## Local Government Act, 1894,

UNDER THE  
Popularly known as  
THE PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCILS ACT.

The Local Authorities in London affected by the Local Government Act are the twenty-nine large Vestries, the District Boards (numbering twelve and elected for the parishes in the District by groups of the forty-seven smaller Vestries), the Woolwich Board of Health, and the thirty Boards of Guardians.

It is as regards the qualification of the persons to be elected, the qualification of the electors, and the mode of conducting the elections that these bodies are affected. They will continue to discharge the duties they have already performed. But their constitution is changed in the following way:—"the Ballot Act and the Corrupt Practices' Act are applied for the first time; the property qualification is abolished; and the principle of one person one vote is established." Further, it is now made clear by the Act that women can serve on the London Vestries and the Woolwich Board of Health, and that married women ratepayers can be parochial electors.

When it is remembered that the local authorities of London deal with areas in which the population is as great as that of a large provincial town (e.g., St. Pancras numbered in the last Census 236,258; Lambeth, 253,599; and Paddington, 117,846), and when it is further remembered that the duties of the Vestries include some of the main duties of Borough Town Councils in the country, it is evident that the Act has wrought a vast change in making democratic the constitution of the Vestries and Boards of Guardians.

*What is the work of the local bodies in London which women have to learn, and which demands the co-operation of women?*

The large Vestries and the District Boards are the Sanitary Authorities for their respective areas. They also superintend the lighting, paving, watering, and cleansing of the streets. They control common lodging houses, and can suppress houses for improper purposes. They manage, either directly or through Commissioners whom they appoint, the public libraries, the



cemeteries, and the baths and wash-houses. They can acquire and manage open spaces. Certain charities are under the control of the Vestry, managed by Trustees whom it appoints. The Vestry has the construction and management of public lavatory accommodation. As regards workshops, it enforces the sanitary regulations embodied in the Factory and Workshop Acts.

Of the above, the supervision of the Baths and Wash-houses is a matter much needing the co-operation of women, both in respect of the arrangements for women and also in respect of the additional and special provision frequently made for Board School children to attend the swimming baths. As to Charities, the Act does not necessarily alter the management of those under the Vestries. The Vestry continues to appoint the Charity Trustees, and there is no reason when a vacancy occurs that a woman should not be appointed. Matters such as distributing coals and blankets to the poor, apprenticing sons and daughters of poor parishioners, and granting annuities to aged persons, are certainly affairs about which the judgment of practical women would be valuable. But for some of the other duties briefly named women are at least as much needed.

In addition to these varied and important functions, the Vestry is responsible for the appointment of fit and proper persons to occupy the following positions: Vestry Clerk and Assistants, Surveyor and Assistants, Sanitary Inspectors, Rate Collectors, in some places Assistant Overseers, and such important posts as those of the Medical Officer of Health and Assistants, and the Public Analyst.

There is no statutory sex disqualification for the above-mentioned offices.

All who have read in the Report of Dr. Dudfield what good work the two women Inspectors of Workshops appointed by the Kensington Vestry have already done, inspecting premises to which men cannot suitably be sent, will recognise that women Sanitary Inspectors should be employed in all parishes. Moreover women doctors (in institutions and in private practice), caring in a special way for the needs of women and children, have amply demonstrated that qualified medical women should be appointed to share in the duties that devolve on a Medical Officer of Health.

Overseers

This short statement respecting the work of the Vestry cannot be concluded without mention of those most important Vestry officials, the Overseers, whose chief duty it is to make

and levy the poor rate, and also to make out the lists of parliamentary and local electors. The Overseers must be householders, and are usually nominated by the Vestry. It is amusing to read: "Even a woman may be appointed, though men of discretion and substance are usually preferred!"\* "The Overseers are bound in making out the rate book to enter the occupier's name, although he does not personally pay the rates, and to make proper inquiries for sub-tenants."† The Vestry sometimes itself fulfils the duties of Overseers, and any Vestry or District Board may now apply to the Local Government Board to have these powers conferred upon it. Meanwhile it is likely that women occupiers would have fewer complaints to make of being omitted from the register if one of the Overseers were a woman.

The accounts of the Vestries are audited by elected Auditors. Women can be elected.

The Boards of Guardians in London will continue, as already stated, to fulfil the same duties as heretofore, as the Act does not alter the Poor Law.‡ And as women are already serving as Guardians, the work is familiar to many, and it is unnecessary to show in detail how much it concerns them. But inasmuch as the new Act abolishes the property qualification, which has made it so difficult to secure women as candidates, it is now hoped that a larger proportion will be able to offer themselves for election. It may, therefore, not be out of place, to this larger body of eligible persons, to emphasise the fact that Poor Law Guardian work is virtually "public housekeeping." The care of the aged poor, the proper nursing of the sick in infirmaries, the supervision of the domestic economy of the workhouses, the quality of the food and clothing, the training of the children in the schools and their subsequent apprenticeship to trades or domestic service, are all matters that require the attention of women.

It is hoped that these few particulars will increase the interest of women in the good government of their own locality, and that they will be convinced of the importance of seeing that suitable women are elected in London to serve on the Vestries, District Boards, and Boards of Guardians.

\* "Instructions and Explanations for the assistance of Overseers," published by Shaw & Sons, Fetter Lane.

† "The Parish Councils' Act Explained." J. Theodore Dodd, M.A.

‡ For the qualification of the persons to be elected and the qualification of the electors, see the leaflet entitled "Position of Women under the Local Government Act, 1894," to be obtained of Miss Browne, Hon. Sec. Women's Local Government Society.

Boards of  
Guardians



## LIST OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN LONDON,

With Names of Clerks and Addresses of Offices.

### LONDON VESTRIES.

BATTERSEA.—W. Marcus Wilkins, Battersea-rise, S.W.  
BERMONDSEY.—J. Harrison, Spa-road, S.E.  
BETHNAL GREEN.—E. Voss, Church-row, E.  
CAMBERWELL.—C. William Tagg, Peckham-road, S.E.  
CHELSEA.—T. Holland, King's-road, S.W.  
CLERKENWELL.—R. E. Paget, Upper Rosoman-street, E.C.  
FULHAM.—W. J. H. Denselow, Walham-green, S.W.  
HACKNEY.—George Grocott, Mare-street, E.  
HAMMERSMITH.—W. P. Cockburn, Broadway House, W.  
HAMPSTEAD.—Arthur P. Johnson, Haverstock-hill, N.W.  
ISLINGTON.—W. F. Dewey, Upper-street, N.  
KENSINGTON.—W. Chambers Leete, High-street, W.  
LAMBETH.—H. J. Smith, Kennington-green, S.E.  
MARYLEBONE.—W. H. Garbutt, Marylebone-lane, W.  
MILE END.—Milner Jutsum, Bancroft-road, E.  
NEWINGTON.—L. J. Dunham, Vestry-hall, Walworth-road, S.E.  
PADDINGTON.—F. Dethridge, Harrow-road, W.  
PLUMSTEAD.—Edwin Hughes, Maxey-road, Plumstead.  
ROTHERHITHE.—J. J. Stokes, Lower-road, S.E.  
ST. GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST.—H. Thompson, Cable-street, E.  
ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER-SQUARE.—J. H. Smith, Mount-street, W.  
ST. GEORGE-THE-MARTYR, SOUTHWARK.—A. Millar, Borough-road, S.E.  
ST. JAMES'S, WESTMINSTER.—T. Hensman Munsey, Piccadilly, W.  
ST. LUKE'S.—G. W. Preston, City-road, E.C.  
ST. MARGARET'S AND ST. JOHN'S, WESTMINSTER.—J. E. Smith, Caxton-street.  
ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS.—G. W. Murnane, Charing cross-road, W.C.  
ST. PANCRAS.—Charles Barrett, King's-road, N.W.  
SHOREDITCH.—H. Mansfield Robinson, Old-street, E.C.  
STOKE NEWINGTON.—Geo. Webb, Church-street, N.W.

### DISTRICT BOARDS.

GREENWICH.—J. Spencer, Greenwich-road, S.E.  
HOLBORN.—Matthew H. Hale, Town Hall, Gray's Inn-road, W.C.  
LEWISHAM.—E. Wright, Rushey Green, Catford, S.E.  
LIMEHOUSE.—S. G. Ratcliff, White Horse-street, E.  
LEE.—Geo. Whale, Old Charlton, S.E.  
POPLAR.—W. H. Farnfield, High-street, Poplar, E.  
ST. GILES'.—H. C. Jones, High Holborn.  
ST. OLAVE'S, SOUTHWARK.—E. Bayley, Queen Elizabeth-street, S.E.  
ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK.—W. A. Atkins, Emerson-street, S.E.  
STRAND.—H. Andrews, Tavistock-street, W.C.  
WANDSWORTH.—H. G. Hills, East Hill, S.W.  
WHITECHAPEL.—A. Turner, Great Alie-street, E.

### BOARD OF HEALTH.

WOOLWICH.—A. C. Reed, Town Hall, Woolwich.

### BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

BETHNAL GREEN.—W. T. Howard, Bishop's-road, E.  
CAMBERWELL.—C. S. Stevens, Peckham-road, S.E.  
CHELSEA.—W. Miller, King's-road, S.W.  
CITY OF LONDON.—F. W. Crane, Bartholomew-close, E.C.  
FULHAM.—T. A. Marsh, Fulham Palace-road, S.W.  
GREENWICH.—S. Saw, Greenwich-road, S.E.  
HACKNEY.—J. Owen Perry, Lower Homerton, E.  
HAMPSTEAD.—T. Bridger, Hampstead, N.W.  
HOLBORN.—J. W. Hill, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.  
ISLINGTON.—Edwin Davey, St. John's-road, Upper Holloway, N.  
KENSINGTON.—J. H. Rutherglen, Marloes-road, S.W.  
LAMBETH.—W. B. Wilmot, Brook-street, Kennington, S.E.  
LEWISHAM.—H. C. Mott, High-street, S.E.  
MARYLEBONE.—H. T. Dudman, Northumberland-street, N.W.  
MILE END OLD TOWN.—W. Thacker, Bancroft-road, E.  
PADDINGTON.—H. F. Aveling, Harrow-road, W.  
POPLAR.—C. Herbert Lough, High-street, E.  
SHOREDITCH.—R. Clay, Kingsland-road, E.C.  
STEPNEY.—W. H. Swepstone, York-street West, E.  
STRAND.—C. F. Dorrell, Henrietta-street, W.C.  
ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE.—T. Worlock, Mount-street, W.  
ST. GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST.—J. H. Browne, Raine-street, E.  
ST. GILES' AND ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.—J. Appleton, 57, Broad-st., W.C.  
ST. OLAVE'S, SOUTHWARK.—E. Pitts Fenton, Tanner-street, S.E.  
ST. PANCRAS.—Alfred A. Millward, Pancras-road, N.W.  
ST. SAVIOUR'S.—H. C. Jones, John-street West, Blackfriars-road, S.E.  
WANDSWORTH AND CLAPHAM.—A. N. Henderson, St. John's Hill, S.W.  
WESTMINSTER UNION.—Jas. Bond, Poland-street, W.  
WHITECHAPEL.—W. Vallance, Bakers-row, E.  
WOOLWICH.—Tom Cutter, Woolwich, S.E.

Most of the above Bodies publish Annual Reports, which contain important information. Those of the Vestries and District Boards are published at the statutory price of 2d.

This Leaflet is published by the Women's Local Government Society. Hon. Sec., Miss Browne, 58, Portchester Terrace, W., from whom copies may be purchased at 15s. a thousand, 1/9 a hundred, or 3d. a dozen, postage extra.

Leaflets in the same series are "Women's Work in England and Wales under the Local Government Act, 1894," and "Position of Women under the Local Government Act, 1894," the latter of which gives the qualifications of electors and candidates under the Act.

Leaflet of 1896, of which only the first and last paragraphs are out of date.

New

New Office:—17, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.

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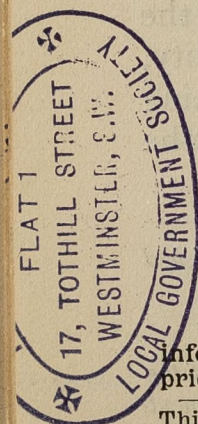
## THE WOMEN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOCIETY.

THE Women's Local Government Society begins the New Year well by increasing its means of activity. The energy that has already been put into the society has had the natural effect of augmenting the work that from day to day has to be done on its behalf. One consequence of this is that the assistance which has hitherto been granted to the hon. secretary now proves inadequate. To meet this difficulty a special effort has been made, and Miss Julia Cameron has been appointed as secretary, so that her services will be available in addition to those of the hon. sec., Miss Browne. An office has also been taken at Dean's Gate, Westminster (in the same building as the office of the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians), and it will be opened immediately after the holidays.

At the beginning of the New Year a re-statement of the position of the society is appropriate.

The society, which is independent of political parties, has for its function the promotion of the legal eligibility of women (i.) to elect to (ii.) to serve on all local governing bodies. It is clear that, viewed narrowly, its work is sharply defined, and it may be well to note that it does not include the promotion of the candidature of individuals. It is the business of the society to call the attention of the public to the anomalous disabilities imposed upon women in local government. Although two have already been mentioned in this series of articles, I will append the following memorandum of

*Succeeded by Miss Lindsay.*





the principal disabilities, as it will be found convenient for reference :—

DISABILITIES OF WOMEN IN RESPECT TO VOTING.

1. Before the Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1894, became law, women owners had votes in the election of Poor Law Guardians. That Act disfranchised them, without any reason having been offered in the House for such disfranchisement. As the law now stands, qualified women occupiers may be placed on the Parochial Register, and thereby become entitled to vote in the election of Parish Councils, District Councils (with the exception of Town Councils) and Poor Law Guardians. What is wanted is that women owners shall have the same rights as are enjoyed both by women occupiers and men owners.

2. Men who have the lodger or service qualification are, in virtue of being on the Parliamentary Register, placed on the Parochial Register, and are thereby entitled to vote in the elections under the Local Government (Eng. and W.) Act, 1894, but the two classes of women occupying the same positions in life have not votes in these elections. [If no sex disability were imposed a large number of laundry women, and some women lodge-keepers, governesses, and others would have the service qualification.]

3. A married woman, having a qualification distinct from her husband's, is entitled to vote in elections under the Local Government Act, 1894, but not in County Council, Town Council and School Board elections. What is wanted is a bill, or clause in a bill, providing that a woman shall not be disqualified by marriage for being on any local government register of electors, or for being an elector of any local authority, provided that a husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property.

4. No woman is entitled to vote in the School Board elections in the City of London. The number of women suffering under this disability is not inconsiderable.

DISABILITIES OF WOMEN IN RESPECT TO ELIGIBILITY.

A. No woman is eligible as a County Councillor.

B. No woman is eligible as a Town Councillor.

It is, of course, the business of the committee to endeavour to get enabling Bills introduced, and to promote their adoption by Parliament.

But if the question be asked, "By what *indirect* means may the society fitly promote its object?" then at once it is seen that the hitherto clearly defined marge of the scope of the society vanishes and the field is limitless. The object of the society is promoted by everything that helps women engaged in the work of local government to do that work well, by everything that helps any woman to take an intelligent interest in local government, and by everything that promotes the friendly co-operation of men and women citizens. Is it thirty, or more, years since Mill said as follows?—

"Is there so great a superfluity of men fit for high duties that society can afford to reject the service of any competent person? Are we so certain of always finding a man made to our hands for any duty or function of social importance that we lose nothing by putting a ban upon one half of mankind and refusing beforehand to make their faculties available, however distinguished they may be?"

And then, again, with the beauty of exact truth :—

"Any limitation of the field of selection deprives society of some chances of being served by the competent, without ever saving it from the incompetent."

The constitution of the society is of the simplest. It consists of all men and women who signify approval of its object, and pay a subscription of any amount. There is an annual meeting of members to receive the annual report and statement of accounts, and to elect the president, vice-presidents, and executive committee. The council of supporters is also elected by the society. The committee elects the hon. secretary and the hon. treasurer. Associations may affiliate and may send representatives to the annual meeting. All leaflets, &c., published by the society are sent to every member and to every affiliated association.

The society has 65 corresponding members, mostly women. Corresponding members ascertain (through an elector when possible) the opinions of the local Member of Parliament touching our cause, and, when an enabling Bill is coming on, endeavour to



arrange for constituents to make an appeal to their Member to support the Bill. The sympathy of every County Councillor should also be sought, for petitions from County Councils in favour of the Bill for Women County Councillors must necessarily carry weight ; and it should always be remembered that the London County Council, the only Council on which women have served, has more than once petitioned in favour of their eligibility. Some corresponding members have furnished our hon. sec. with valuable information as to local arrangements by the County Councils for Technical Education, and with a record of the women members of the local District and Parish Councils. It is also most useful to report to our society should any legal difficulty be alleged in the way of a woman's candidature. The committee would like to have a corresponding member in every Parliamentary division.

In conclusion, let me earnestly invite, on behalf of my society, the co-operation of all men and women who take a broad view of local government. For the maintenance of a secretary and an office increased support is necessary, and we think that our reports, which we shall be glad to furnish, show that we deserve it, for they explain how much has been done with a small income, and with little paid help.

I would like to add that I trust these articles will be understood as not exclusively addressed to women. It is true that one object is to place the experience of some women Councillors at the service of others, but another object is to present to readers of both sexes some outline, however imperfect, of the work that "Women in Council" are doing, and some facts from a woman's point of view ; and, though it is natural that to some points I should specially invite the attention of women, yet even in respect to these the co-operation of men is essential.

MARY STEWART KILGOUR,

*[(Women's Local Government Society.)]*

Office: 4, ~~Sanctuary,~~ 17, Tothill Street,  
Westminster, S.W.

## PAPER

READ AT THE BRISTOL MEETING

OF THE

Central Conference of Women Workers

AMONG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

NOVEMBER, 1892.

BY

MRS. HENRY FAWCETT

ON THE

Amendments Required in the Criminal  
Law Amendment Act, 1885.

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