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1890 - 1892

Women's Suffrage Pamphlets.

Women's Suffrage. Report of Great Meeting. London 1892

Why Wyoming is to be congratulated London.

Friendly Words to Christian Women on Religion & Politics London

Women's Suffrage Speech by Mrs Wynford Phillips London

Women's Enfranchisement Bill by Mr McLaren, M.P. Bristol

The Progressive Party in the Women's Liberal Federation London

25 Reasons for Supporting Women's Suffrage London

The Women's Liberal Federation + Women's Suffrage  
by T. Morgan - Browne London 92

Difference of Sex by the late Sheldon Amos M.A. London

Women's Progressive Society. Bibliographical Leaflet V. London 2

Opinions of liberal leaders London

Appeal to Members of the House of Commons  
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The History of the Women's Suffrage Controversy  
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 Women's Suffrage. Leaflet N° 1. Affiliated Societies  
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 Female Suffrage. The Letter... to Samuel Smith, M.P. London 1892  
 Female Suffrage. A letter from Right Hon W.E. Gladstone  
 to Samuel Smith, M.P. London 1892  
 A Reply to the Letter of Mr Samuel Smith, M.P. on  
 Women's Suffrage. By Mrs Fawcett London 1892  
 Pall Mall Gazette: Women's Work & Women's Vote London 1891  
 The Political Enfranchisement of Women by Justin  
 McCarthy, M.P. London 1890  
 The Civil Rights of Women by Eva McLaren London  
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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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REPORT

OF

GREAT MEETING

IN

PRINCE'S HALL, PICCADILLY,

February 25th, 1892.

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*Reprinted from the "Woman's Herald."*

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Issued by

THE CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S  
SUFFRAGE

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HEAVY

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

GREAT MEETING IN PRINCE'S HALL, PICCADILLY.

ON FEBRUARY 25, 1892.

A MEETING for the promotion of the cause of Women's Suffrage was held on Thursday night in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, London. The chair was occupied by the Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P. The hall was crowded, and among those on the platform were Mrs. Fawcett, Mr. W. Summers, M.P., Mr. A. Webb, M.P., Mr. Caleb Wright, M.P., Mr. C. A. V. Conybeare, M.P., Mr. W. McLaren, M.P., Mr. and Mrs. Russell-Cooke, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hancock, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Mrs. Müller, Miss Cons, Mrs. Bateson, Mrs. Frank Morrison, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, Miss Brown, Mrs. Pennington, Mrs. Morgan-Brown, Mrs. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mrs. and Miss Garrett-Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Broadley Reid. The platform was decorated with much taste with flowering plants, ferns and palms, by the Women's Gardening Association. Previous to the meeting a selection of music was performed by the La Cigale Band, composed of ladies under the conductorship of Miss Mukle.

Letters of apology were read by Mr. Walter McLaren, M.P., from the following: Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P., who said:—"I am sorry that pressure of public engagements will make it impossible for me to take part in your meeting upon the 25th, which I trust will be a success."

Mr. JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M.P.:—"I am sorry to say that owing to the urgency of Parliamentary and other engagements, I see little hope of my being able to attend your meeting to-morrow evening. I am sure, however, the cause will be well advocated. I need hardly tell you it is a cause which has my deepest sympathy and which carries with it my full conviction."

Earl COMPTON, M.P.:—"I very much regret to find that I have made an engagement for February 25th, which will make it impossible for me to attend."

Mr. WOODALL, M.P.:—"I find my business will require my attention in Staffordshire, and therefore must ask you to excuse me."

Professor STUART, M.P. (telegram):—"Am engaged attending a County Council meeting. I warmly support the Women's Suffrage cause."

Lord Coleridge, Sir Lyon Playfair, M.P., Sir Edward Grey, M.P., Sir Algernon Borthwick, M.P., Sir Lewis Pelly, M.P., Mr. Charles Schwann, M.P., Mr. H. P. Cobb, M.P., and many others also wrote.

The CHAIRMAN, on rising to open the proceedings, was received with loud cheers. He said:—"It is, of course, a matter of regret that all our friends are not present on this occasion; but despite the loss we have in their absence, I cannot help thinking that you will agree with me that we friends of Woman Suffrage stand to-day in a position upon which we may congratulate ourselves. (Cheers.) We have a good position from the Parliamentary point of view. We have been for several sessions now somewhat unlucky. The wisdom of Parliament is not always shown in its own procedure, and it is certainly a remarkable fact that the question what subjects we are to take up and discuss, and what persons we are to hear, should for the half of our sittings—those especially which are given over for the benefit of private members—be determined by pure chance. Luck and not selection rules the House. There may be some subject that a very large section, even a majority, of the House of Commons would wish to discuss; but if the persons who have put their names in the lucky box for the discussion of that question do not get their names drawn in the first select few, all chance of discussion is gone. But now the wheel of fortune seems to have turned, and two good places have been secured by two good friends of the cause, Mr. Walter McLaren—(cheers)—whom we see here to-night, and Sir Albert Rollit—(cheers)—whom I had the pleasure of seeing in the House of Commons just before I left, and who charged me to convey his regret that he was not able to come here. I do not think the malice of enemies can well take away both those days, and I think the difficulty of taking away both will probably prevent all intrigues to take away either. It is, no doubt, true that in one sense the Parliamentary future is doubtful. Our lives are numbered. The "blind Fury with the abhorred shears" may at any moment intervene and cut through the thin-spun life. But even, I venture to believe, the possibility of a Dissolution may be lost sight of when we look to the days we have secured. The probability is great that we shall be able to bring on our question; that we shall get a good vote of the House of Commons upon it; and I am not without hopes that our action will be carried farther, and that before that event happens something may be done to secure to women votes in the approaching crisis. (Cheers.) Though we have been thus unfortunate in trying the chances of Parliament during

the last two or three years, there are compensating circumstances which cannot be overlooked. Those years have not been unfruitful. They have been remarkable in a very extraordinary degree by the increase of the political activity of women. (Cheers.) Even before the present Parliament began, women had votes in the election of Town Councillors. They had votes in the election of School Boards; they had votes in the election of Boards of Guardians; and they might even sit upon School Boards and Boards of Guardians. Well, it was a pretty strong thing to say that women were qualified to vote in all those elections, but were not qualified to vote for members of Parliament. It is an obvious remark that members of Parliament had some interest in the last vote, and perhaps the gaiety of heart with which they enfranchised women in respect of other elections deserted them a little when their own particular prospects were involved. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) I never could see any reasonable defence of the anomaly; but so it stood at the commencement of this Parliament. They had added to that line of argument by giving women votes for County Councils, and in the Bill now before Parliament giving County Councils to Ireland the same principle is involved. But we have done much more. There is no section of political life which has not enlisted the active co-operation of women. All have asked for their work; all have asked for their help; all have enlisted their zeal. The Primrose League was the first in the field, and dates before the present Parliament. But we have now Women's Liberal Associations and Women's Liberal Unionist Associations—(cheers)—and whenever there is an election, entreaties come faster and faster to the organisers of those associations to "Send the ladies down" to the district or districts where the elections are taking place, to aid in educating the voters and in bringing them to the poll. Now, what does this amount to? It may not have been done with the hearty good will of every politician of every party, but it amounts to a confession by the leaders of each political party that women are able at least to form an opinion upon political questions. They are able to do more. So excellent is their judgment that they may be trusted to guide others in the formation of their opinions—(cheers)—and we have now the singular spectacle, on the part of some politicians, of asserting that women may be trusted to instruct others how to vote, but they are not to be trusted to instruct themselves. Now, did you ever hear of such a contradiction as that? Generally, those who teach are most expert in practising what they teach. Can you imagine a person teaching swimming who did not know how to swim, or teaching the rudiments of horsemanship who was entirely ignorant of riding? But here are the women sought for and women's meetings held and women

appealed to, to "come here" and "send there"; "give us your literature," "give us your arguments," "give us your canvassers." But there the matter stops. You must not "give us your votes." I believe it will be impossible to withstand the argument afforded by the experience of recent years, and now that all parties are indebted to the political co-operation of women there is no ground for denying them participation in electoral rights. (Hear, hear.) There is only one suggestion, I think, which can be raised; and that suggestion is sometimes, but rarely, avowed. Generally, it is almost indignantly disavowed. There is a feeling, no doubt, on the part of some persons, that if women had votes, those votes would be exercised against the party to which they belong. Well, if there are persons who hold this opinion—and I know privately, at least, that there are a few—it is held privately by most, because it is an opinion people are ashamed to confess. (Hear, hear.) That women capable of voting, qualified to vote, having all the interests involved in a political crisis at heart, and being concerned in all questions of national welfare, should be denied their vote because it is thought the opinion of the majority of them may be adverse to this or that political party, is a doctrine too shameful to be openly avowed, and I hope too cynical to be secretly acted upon. (Loud cheers.) But, to reason with such persons on their own ground, I venture to express the opinion that they are entirely deluded in their opinions. There is no reason for supposing, as between political parties, that the action of women will prevail more in favour of one than the other. We have seen something of it in municipal elections. We have seen more of it in School Board elections. In the questions which are dearest to women, I believe it is impossible for the keenest of party managers to say on which side the majority of women's votes are cast in the matter of these elections, and I do not believe that any person can speak with any confidence of the future as to the way women will vote with the majority—Conservatives, or Liberals, or Nationalists, or Liberal Unionists, or in any other connection. Women are divided in their political opinions as men are. The one thing in which I think they would be united, and with which they have in the past united, is something quite independent of party; it is a determination on their part to secure men of probity, of integrity, and of honour—(cheers)—to whatever political party they may belong. It is in the influence of the character of Parliamentary candidates and of Parliamentary representatives that I believe the influence of women will tell; and I hail, and I am sure you will all hail, that influence if it is so exercised. (Cheers.) The reflex action upon women themselves I will not enter upon. It is a matter which to me has always been the prime motive for advocating

this enfranchisement of women. If we give them the vote we shall do something to enlarge the range of their sympathies, to raise the level of their character, and they, in turn, will do much to elevate and to purify our political life. (Cheers.) I now call upon Mr. Summers to move the first resolution. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. W. SUMMERS, M.P., said: I rise with very great pleasure to move the resolution on the paper:—"That in the opinion of this meeting the Parliamentary Franchise should be granted to women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men; and further, considering that this question has been agitated in the country and in Parliament for twenty-five years, and that during all this time women in ever increasing numbers have shown their desire for enfranchisement as well as their fitness for it, this meeting declares its opinion that a measure, embodying the above principle, should now be passed into law." It has been very well said that the test of civilisation is the place that it affords to women. (Hear, hear.) This, it may be observed, is that which distinguishes the East from the West, and ancient from modern times. Mr. Chairman, you truthfully observed that during the last quarter of a century no cause had made such progress as that which is concerned with the position of women. (Cheers.) As I read contemporary history this advance has been made all along the line. You may see the signs and tokens of this advance, not only in the utterances of those who support, but even in the utterances of those who oppose the movement for what is called the emancipation of women. Now, to prove that point I would refer you to a very able and interesting article that appeared a few months ago in the *Fortnightly Review*. The author of that article is a gentleman whom I very highly respect, Mr. Frederic Harrison. (Cheers and hisses.) Now, the main argument of that article is that with which we are all familiar, namely, that women ought to stay at home and attend to their domestic affairs. (Cheers, and a voice: "Quite right, too.") But if you will read this article carefully, from the beginning to the end, you will see that Mr. Frederic Harrison is inconsistent with himself, because what does he do? He protests against the old-fashioned view that women ought to be educated in a different way from men. "No," he says, "we can never rest satisfied with the current prejudice that assigns to women, even to those with ample leisure and resources, an education different in kind and degree and avowedly inferior to that of man." ("Oh.") What does that come to according to Mr. Harrison? That we ought to promote by every means in our power the higher education of women. (Hear, hear.) Now, I suppose that there is no subject more interesting and important than the study of history—a study of the

doings of the human race upon the planet on which we live; and what, ladies and gentlemen, is history but the politics of the past, and what are politics but the history of the present? It comes, then, to this, that women ought to study and ought to have correct views upon historical and political questions, but that they may not give expression to those views by going once in three years, or once in five years, or once in seven years, to the polling booth and placing a piece of paper in a ballot box. It is admitted on all hands by the formation of the Primrose League, of the Women's Liberal Association and the Liberal Unionist Women's Associations, that women ought to take the deepest possible interest in political affairs. (Cheers.) Politics are the science of good government, and it is upon good or bad government that, to a very large extent, the happiness and welfare of women as well as of men depends. We are sometimes told that there is in this country one law for the rich and another for the poor. (Hear, hear.) I don't know how that may be, but this much I will say, that there is in this country one law for women and another for men. (Cheers.) In the old days preceding the democratic days in which we live there were men who went about the country saying that the people had nothing to do with the laws but obey 'em, and nothing to do with the taxes but pay 'em. (Laughter.) That is pretty much the attitude still taken up by a large number of intelligent persons in this country with regard to the political enfranchisement of women. In local matters we know women are allowed to have the means of giving expression to their opinions. They may vote for School Boards. They may even say upon the School Boards that education in its proper and widest sense is not to be restricted merely to primary education. I am of opinion that if women had enjoyed political rights and privileges, we should not have seen the present state of our secondary and higher education, when almost all the endowments of our great universities of Oxford and Cambridge are devoted to the education of only one sex in the community. (Cheers.) The time has come when not only the local franchise, but the political franchise also, should be conferred on duly qualified women. (Cheers.) Therefore, the only question that remains for me to ask is: on what terms the Female Suffrage should be granted? I think the resolution sounds the right note. I cannot for the life of me see why a single woman who holds sound views upon political questions ceases to hold sound views upon political questions when she enters into the holy estate of matrimony. (Laughter and cheers.) Suppose you reverse the position and maintain that only bachelors and widowers should have the Suffrage—I wonder what married men would have to say to that? Well, then, that is the sound principle. If Household Suffrage is the Suffrage in this country,

all duly qualified householders, male or female, should have political rights conferred upon them. We are ripe, then, for a discussion upon it within the walls of the House of Commons. Two hon. gentlemen, one representing one of the great political parties in the State, the other a member of the opposite party, have been successful in obtaining the first place on Wednesday, April 27th and May 18th of the present year. I do not know whether this Parliament will be in existence on either of those days—(a voice: "I hope not," and laughter)—but if it should be, your chairman was perfectly right when he said that no amount of intrigue should be allowed to prevent one or the other of those hon. gentlemen from bringing this subject before the notice of the House of Commons. It is not the day of judgment of which you are afraid, it is the day of no judgment. (Cheers.) You want, and I believe you will obtain, a discussion on this matter, and the more discussion there is upon it the more you have to gain and nothing whatever to lose. I have the greatest pleasure in moving this resolution. (Cheers.)

✓ Mrs. FAWCETT, in seconding the resolution, said: I will endeavour to confine my remarks to one point, and that point is that wherever there has been experience of Women's Suffrage, there all opposition to it has been absolutely annihilated. I will take our own experience in England first. Our chairman and Mr. Summers have reminded us of the various votes possessed and exercised by women in various municipal and local affairs. I appeal to you to say whether the result of experience has not been that all opposition to the extension of this principle has been absolutely annihilated. You remember that when Mr. Ritchie introduced his Local Government Bill for England, he was asked in the House of Commons whether he intended to extend the franchise to women. He answered, "Yes, sir," and that announcement was received with cheers from all parts of the House. Some members of the Nationalist party in Ireland introduced a bill for the regulation of the municipal franchise in Ireland, which proposed to extend the municipal franchise for women in Ireland; and when that bill was introduced with that principal feature in it, the House of Commons presented the unusual spectacle that that provision was supported not only by both sections of the Nationalist party, but by the Liberal Unionists from Ireland, and the Tory Orangemen, and by gentlemen from the Government. Let us take a more recent example still—the Irish Local Government Bill which has been introduced by the Government. Whatever our differences of opinion may be I am sure we are all agreed in this, that that bill is not likely to suffer from any lack of frank criticism. (Laughter.) But whatever floods or oceans of criticism have been poured upon that bill already, I have searched in

vain for one particle of criticism of that provision of the bill which extends the local franchise to women. Having had experience among women I say there is absolutely no opposition whatever to its extension in any form from them. If it had been possible to assert that the local suffrage as exercised by women had worked injuriously, how gladly would not our Goldwin Smiths and our Samuel Smiths and other members of that numerous and influential family—(laughter)—have used the opportunity thus afforded them to emphasise their opposition to the principle of Women's Suffrage. (Cheers.) I think it is absolutely proved in this case, at any rate, that experience of Women's Suffrage has absolutely destroyed the opposition to it. Now, if we turn to the experience of other countries we see the same thing. Take the experience of Wyoming in the United States. They have had twenty-five years' experience of what we should call Parliamentary Suffrage being enjoyed by women. Lately there was an application made by the territory, as it then was, of Wyoming to the Court of the United States to be admitted as an American State. It was necessary, before this could be done, that the Constitution of Wyoming should be referred to a *plebiscite* of the whole people. The people of Wyoming were told that if they retained the principle of Women's Suffrage it would very seriously endanger the success of their petition to be admitted as a State of the American Union; but so strongly were the people of Wyoming convinced of both the justice and the expediency of Women's Suffrage that, notwithstanding that fear, they voted for their constitution including Women's Suffrage by the vast majority of eight to one. We have, besides this, absolutely conclusive evidence of the destruction of opposition by experience. We have the personal testimony of an Irishman, Mr. Horace Plunkett, who has lived in Wyoming. He was not like one of those travellers described by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in his paper, "Paget, M.P.," those travelling politicians who spend three weeks in a country and then write an exhaustive treatise on its social and political affairs. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) He went to the territory of Wyoming with an absolutely unbiassed mind on the subject of Women's Suffrage, and after residing there five years he published the conclusion he had arrived at upon it. He said absolutely not one of the evils predicted of it had marred its history; on the contrary, he said much positive good had resulted from it; and I am sure our chairman will be glad to know that his view is confirmed by Mr. Horace Plunkett's experience. (Cheers.) He said it had had this effect—it had elevated the character of the men who were selected by all parties to be their candidates in the political arena. Mr. Plunkett said the operation of Women's Suffrage had not been to strengthen this or that party, but it had elevated and purified

all parties by introducing a purer element into politics, namely, the home element, which he thought must be admitted to be the purest element morally in the community. (Cheers.) The result has been that in Wyoming those who were opposed to Women's Suffrage are now among its warmest advocates and supporters. They have been convinced by experience that their opposition was groundless. Coming nearer home, in the Isle of Man they have had twelve years' experience of Women's Suffrage, with precisely the same result as I have endeavoured to sketch to you in Wyoming. Those who were once opposed to it have confessed their fears were groundless, and have become firm advocates of Women's Suffrage. Sir Henry Loch, now Governor of the Cape, was Governor of the Isle of Man when the Women's Suffrage Bill was passed there. He was opposed to it before he had experience of it, but having had experience of it, he told me himself his views were entirely altered, and he is now a supporter of Women's Suffrage. The late Bishop of Sodor and Man must be mentioned in the same connection, and Mr. Stevens, the member for Douglas, states that it works satisfactorily and without any of the disadvantages that used to be predicted. Now I have passed in review the chief instances which have occurred in the practical carrying out of Women's Suffrage. Some time ago Mr. Gladstone—(cheers)—in one of his eloquent speeches on the Eastern question said: "Show me the spot on the map of Europe where Austria has done good." We may paraphrase this and say, with more justice and confidence, show us the spot on the map of the world where Women's Suffrage has done harm, and where it has not been found to produce beneficial results. (Cheers.) Several attempts have been made, it is true, to throw discredit on the various experiments that have been made in regard to Women's Suffrage, but those examples have been of the nature referred to by the American humourist when he said, "It is better not to know so much than to know so many things which ain't so." (Laughter and cheers.) Those examples which have been given to us from time to time of the unhappy and mischievous effects of Women's Suffrage belong to the character of 'those things which ain't so.' (Hear, hear, and cheers.) The so-called facts turn out to be fictions coined by somebody who imagines that the primæval institutions of society will go to pieces unless he supports them by his little buttress of fictions. (Cheers.) I now turn to the practical application of my text. We have two bills before Parliament, the one that is to come on on the 27th April, and the bill of which notice has been given by Mr. Walter McLaren, M.P. (Cheers.) We must work as we have never worked before to secure a good majority for the second reading of whichever bill comes on first. (Cheers.) We must show that we are

women's women first, and party women second. (Cheers.) I think there are plenty of women who are willing to show this. If I may be permitted to speak for myself I may say that I am not a member of the society which has had the honour and pleasure of calling this meeting together, but I am anxious to show that women can work together for a great political object, and I am only too delighted to have this opportunity of addressing a meeting which has been called together by a society to which I have not the honour to belong. (Cheers.) Those of us who belong to various suffrage societies will no doubt take our cue from the advice which we receive from our societies, and those of us who do not belong to societies—what shall we do? I think in regard to this we may quote the proclamation that was issued by Nelson just before his last fight at Trafalgar. His notice to his captains ran thus:—"As for those captains who during the engagement are not able to perceive the Admiral's signal, they will not do amiss if they lay their vessel alongside the vessel of the enemy." (Laughter and cheers.) I think none of us will do amiss if we endeavour to lay our little craft alongside the vessel of the enemy. (Cheers.) Some will say that the time when you ask them to pass this bill is an inconvenient season. You must say that no season is inconvenient for doing justice. (Cheers.) There are others who will say—and I have heard this already in one quarter—that to give the suffrage to women will "overweight the ship." I cannot help thinking that the nautical simile is unfortunate. The tradition of British seamanship has always been—save the women first. (Cheers.) Surely neither of the two great historical parties of England will give the fatal and cowardly example of being willing to throw them overboard. (Loud cheers.) I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

✓ Mr. ALFRED WEBB, M.P. for Waterford, in supporting the resolution, said it was with mixed feelings that he heard he was to follow Mrs. Fawcett, and they would draw their own conclusions in view of the objects of the meeting when they compared his speech with hers. (Laughter.) Thirty years ago, at the inception of this movement, the question was untried, and it was natural that there should be a great deal of prejudice against the extension of political power to women. It was true that they had already had examples of women who had taken part in great philanthropic objects, but that was hardly politics. As he had said, the question was then untried, but in what an entirely different position they now stood. (Hear, hear.) Gradually the universities had been opened to women, and they had seen how women had taken advantage of those openings. Women had distinguished themselves in the very lines of life and in the very studies in which it was supposed by many that women would not be capable of excelling. In

the exercise of the franchise, in Boards of Guardians and in municipal affairs and School Boards, women had proved their entire capacity to exercise that right, and he did not think that anyone in the present day would suggest even in the smallest degree that it was a mistake to confer that franchise upon them. (Hear, hear.) He regretted that those rights were not so widely conferred in Ireland as in England. It had been remarked by previous speakers as to the striking example they had had in the present Parliament of the march this question was making, that they had two most important bills brought in, one by the Nationalist party, and the other by the Government, and both containing provisions for extending the franchise to women. (Hear, hear.) In all the discussions he had heard in reference to these bills he had heard many objections, but not one, in public or private, to the clauses which extended the franchise to women. (Cheers.) It was at the present time said that the franchise was withheld only from idiots and women. They might like to know that the Irish Bill extended the franchise to peers and women. (Laughter.) He would like to say how thoroughly he endorsed the words of the resolution, and how entirely he agreed with Mr. Summers that to exclude married women would be wrong and a mistake. (Hear, hear.) A member of Parliament—he would not mention names—last year issued a pamphlet, which was widely circulated, against women being enfranchised. In his (the speaker's) opinion that pamphlet was one of the strongest arguments in favour of the franchise being extended to women, and if in the pamphlet the word "man" were read for "woman," it would be seen that the arguments were the same as those used against the further extension of the franchise to men. (Hear, hear.) He thought it was more important than ever now that women should have these powers, because Parliament was more and more interfering—and he thought properly so—with the daily affairs of life. (Hear, hear.) More and more a large number of men were not prepared to take upon themselves the support of women, and he thought it was best that women should exercise their faculties in making their own way in life as well as men, by putting their views forward. (Loud cheers.)

Miss GITTENS also supported the resolution. She said, at a time of crisis like the present—just before a General Election—the sight of such an audience was peculiarly noteworthy. (Hear, hear.) All parties, irrespective of politics, were present that night and had thrown aside political feelings in one common desire to attain their purpose. (Cheers.) When, in 1265, the first Parliament of England met, the principle for which they were that night contending was established, and a poet of the time wrote:—"It concerneth the community to see

what sort of men are justly to be chosen for the weal of the realm." Class after class had been brought under protection since that time, but still the great class of women stood without, and, said the speaker, it "concerneth them most seriously what sort of men are chosen for the weal of the realm." (Cheers.)

Mrs. SCATCHERD, who rose from the body of the hall, wished to move a rider.

Mr. McLAREN, M.P., who occupied the chair—Mr. Courtney having left the meeting—said he had seen the rider, or amendment as it practically was, and he had consulted Mr. Courtney at the beginning of the proceedings as to whether one on those lines would be in order, and Mr. Courtney said it would be out of order, and he would support that decision.

Mrs. SCATCHERD: Will you, sir, please read the rider?

Mr. McLAREN then read as follows:—"That any bill extending the Parliamentary Franchise to spinsters and widows, which does not also include duly qualified married women—thereby sanctioning a disability for women not existing in the case of men—is directly subversive of the purpose for which the Women's Suffrage Societies were originally founded, namely, to secure for all women the electoral franchise upon the same terms as it is or may be granted to men."

The CHAIRMAN then invited Mrs. Scatcherd to speak briefly, and she went on to point out that under the bills mentioned that evening no provision was made for the enfranchisement of duly qualified married women, and she said that the National Society was being used for purposes never contemplated.

The CHAIRMAN said he was sorry to interrupt the speaker, but as a matter of fact the bills were not yet printed and it was impossible for Mrs. Scatcherd to know what they contained. They were there to discuss the general principle.

Mr. JOHNSTON, M.P., said he had come there that night, scarcely getting permission from the Whips to leave the House of Commons, to show his warm and continued attachment to the cause of Women's Suffrage. He thought that in carrying that cause to a successful termination it would be well at such meetings as that to avoid the discussion of political and party objects. Some were Liberals and some Conservatives, but those who were desirous of carrying to a successful termination the objects for which they had assembled ought to keep their party politics in abeyance and to press forward only upon the question of Women's Suffrage. He wanted to assure his hearers that they had friends on both sides of the House. It was right that the vote should be conferred upon women utterly irrespective of consequences, and therefore he was there that night. Did it not seem

absurd that according to the Constitution a woman might be Queen, but that a woman might not have a vote? He heartily and cordially supported the resolution. He trusted the present session of Parliament would see the question carried to a successful termination. He asked the franchise not as a suppliant on bended knee, but he made an emphatic demand in the name of justice and right. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then put and declared carried, with only one dissentient.

Mrs. WYNFORD PHILLIPS next moved:—"That a petition to each House of Parliament in terms of the above resolution be signed by the Chairman." In so doing she said that if the great political parties would only adopt the motto, "Be just and fear not," then Women's Suffrage would soon be an accomplished fact. But instead their motto was "Be just a little afraid." (Laughter.) Proceeding to deal with the objections against the demand, she said that it was said by some that if women had the vote they would be so indifferent to politics that they would stop at home and not vote at all; whilst, on the other hand, it was said that they would be so eager to take part in political warfare that they would never be at home. (Cheers.) There was a strong party argument that women would be Conservatives, and another that they would be Radicals and rush to extremes. Then they had the argument that women were far too silly and too ignorant, and on the other side that women were far too sweet and too angelic to have anything to do with politics. (Renewed laughter.) In advocating women having the vote, she did not say they were going to exercise it in a better way than men. She wanted women to have the vote, not because they would vote as angels, but because they were human beings. (Cheers and laughter.) Another argument was that women would be governed by everybody, and an even greater objection was, that they would be against all government altogether. (Renewed laughter.) At any rate, even if women should be under the influence of the clergy, they would not be under the influence of the publican—(cheers)—and if there was one point upon which all women of all political parties could be relied upon to unite, it was to do away with the public-house. (Cheers.) Then it was said that women lacked force of character; on the other hand, that they had so much force of character that they would govern the men, and then what would become of them? (Loud laughter.) But the real argument was that for political purposes the world was not divided into men and women, but into those of one set of opinions and those of another. Shelley had well said, "Can man be free, whilst woman is a slave?" (Cheers.) Then it was said that women were so like men that it was not necessary to supplement man by woman. The point

was not whether men and women were equal; it was that men and women were of equal importance. Miss Cons touched the right point in her appeal about women County Councillors when she said women should be County Councillors, not because they were the same as men, but because they were different. (Hear, hear.) Men made very good fathers of the nation, but they made very bad foster-mothers. (Cheers.) Having replied to some criticisms in *Truth*, which she described as a journal with a singularly inappropriate name, Mrs. Wynford Philipps went on to argue that the safeguard society would have, if women got the franchise, would be that they would have all the best men of the nation to back them up. An argument used against the Suffrage was that women were so peaceful. There would, in the minds of some of them, be no harm in strengthening the peace party—(cheers)—and it was said on the other side that they were so warlike and liable to panics. There were such things as holy wars, and in America women had in such wars played a noble part. (Cheers.) The laws in this country had always been unjust to the weaker sex, and men had not been found to help hard-struggling women in the labour market. Appealing for support to the Suffrage movement, the speaker said the utterances of their friends became strong just in so far as they were the voice of the women of the country. No matter whether they voted as Liberals or Conservatives, they could support both parties in the State in a noble rivalry to deal with giant wrongs. (Cheers.) She concluded an eloquent speech by moving, "That a petition to each House of Parliament in the terms of the above resolution be signed by the Chairman."

Mrs. BATESON, in supporting the motion, said she did not advocate Women's Suffrage for the use of the wealthy. She pleaded for the vote to be given to women for the protection of the weak and not as a privilege of the strong. They sometimes heard the argument used that if the vote were given to women they would be the majority. That was a strange argument to use in a constitutional country. She had always thought that our Constitution was based on the representation of majorities. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then carried.

Mrs. RUSSELL-COOKE proposed:—"That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P., for his conduct in the chair and for his many services in the cause of women," which was seconded by Mr. WESTLAKE, Q.C., and the proceedings then terminated.

## WHY WYOMING IS TO BE CONGRATULATED.

A few words of explanation concerning Wyoming may be interesting. Last summer a Bill for the admission of the Territory of Wyoming as a State into the union of the United States of America, was passed by both Houses of Congress at Washington, and was signed by the President on the 8th of July. What makes this a memorable date to women is the fact that the Constitution of this new State confers the full Suffrage upon women on the same terms as on men. In 1869 the then Territory of Wyoming had granted the suffrage to women, and it had proved to be such a complete success, that, upon becoming a State, the citizens were unwilling, after twenty years' trial of it to give it up. A great deal of opposition was made in both Houses of Congress against the admission of a State into the Union with the principle of Women's Suffrage embodied in its Constitution, but the cause of right and justice triumphed, and the victory for women was won.

As a *Territory* the vote of the citizens of Wyoming, both male and female, extended only to municipal and territorial affairs, and to the election of a representative to the National Congress at Washington, who could sit in the House of Representatives but who had no vote.

As a State, the vote of the citizens, both male and female, extends to every matter, both State and National, upon which the vote is ever cast by any voter in the United States. All the women, therefore, of adult age in the State of Wyoming, which is larger than the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, have the vote on exactly the same terms as the men. They are also eligible for all public offices to which men are eligible, even for that of Governor of their State, or for President of the United States.

As a result of this complete equality of men and women before the law, the pay of teachers in all schools supported by State money has already been made the same by law for women as for men. Also, as a further result, the statistics prove that illiteracy is less in proportion in Wyoming than in any other State in the Union.

The recognition of the complete equality before the law of men and women being thus an accomplished and successful fact in the United States, it can be now only a question of time before all women in all the world shall share in a similar recognition. We call upon women everywhere to join us in sending congratulations to this pioneer State of Wyoming; and beg them to work on in the sacred cause of Women's Suffrage with unfailing courage and unflagging hope.

Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1s. 6d. per 100, post free.

expedient and the Beatitudes to Materialism and  
self-interest.

FRIENDLY WORDS TO CHRISTIAN WOMEN

ON

RELIGION AND POLITICS.

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**T**O be religious is to be doing our utmost to learn what is the will of God, and how to do that will. A partial glimpse of what God would have us do is given to us in the Ten Commandments; a yet deeper insight is revealed to us in the Beatitudes. All our public and private worship, our Bible reading, hymn-singing, prayers, and communion in spiritual things, are not ends in themselves, they are means to an end; and the help, encouragement, education, strength, and inspiration we receive through them are to the end that we may the better do God's will ourselves, and the more lovingly teach, and help others to do it.

Politics are the doing of God's will by the nation, just as religion is the doing of it by the individual. When therefore we hear of the "mud and mire of politics," we may know that it means, if true, that the heavenly will has been trampled under foot, and wicked or ignorant men are in power to work their own unholy desires. We shall also know that under these circumstances, the Ten Commandments are subordinated to

expediency, and the Beatitudes to Materialism and self-interest.

Man is finding out age by age that God is good, and that not to be Good is to be Evil, and in opposition to God, and to be breaking His laws instead of keeping them.

A nation whose politics are bad is on the high-road to destruction, and can only be saved from ruin by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.

Women are as much part of the nation as men are, and no excuses can absolve them from sharing the responsibility with men of permitting the political life of the nation to be at enmity with the religious life of the individual.

"Women have nothing to do with politics," "I do not mix myself up in matters that are not my business," "I leave these things to men whose place it is to look after them," "my work is purely religious, it has nothing to do with worldly matters," are remarks that are often heard from lips, still warm with the prayer—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

That the Houses of Parliament should do the will of God in the laws made and passed by their members, and the right people be appointed to carry out those laws, is as much the business of every devout religious woman as it is of every devout religious man; and no pleading that women are the mothers and home-keepers of the nation can exonerate them from the duty, but on the contrary, rather enhances its urgency.

There is not a corner of home-life that the law does not enter, and rightly so; for even fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, mistresses and maids, cannot always be trusted to be a law unto themselves.

If men who have been dishonest in their business, and grown rich by fraudulent speculation, or "sweating," are in power they will not be likely to vote for laws that

secure rights of property to wives and daughters, her due wages to the maid, and a just share of liability to the husband.

If cruel, hard men have seats in Parliament, or even dull, feeble men, devoid of imagination, they will not frame and support laws for the protection of children, unless the voters make them; and if ever motherhood was wanted in one way more than another, it is in the assertion of its divinely dowered right of securing that the will of God shall be done on behalf of these little ones. It is wanted to end the Reign of Terror under which many children live; children whose tiny shrieks of piteous agony under the torture of horsewhip, leather-strap, red-hot poker, birch, and hob-nailed boots, go up to God from every corner of our Christian land.

If impure men hold the reins of Government, happy home-life is impossible for the whole of the nation; for they are interested in the hushing up of scandals that can only be stopped by being exposed, of maintaining in our midst an outcast class whose rights as human beings they ignore, and of winking at the traffic in white slaves that is going on to-day between so-called Christian countries.

If men whom the liquor trade has made wealthy are in places of authority, it is hardly to be expected that they will vote for measures that will lessen their incomes, and champion the cause of their victims against the very trade which has placed them where they are.

Christian women are as deeply interested in these things as ever men can be, and they ought to feel the shameful injustice that is done them, and the terrible wrong to the victims of cruelty, licentiousness and greed, by their being denied a voice in the election of those who they think will pass laws in accordance with the will of God in these matters.

Furthermore, it is no justification of the attitude of so many professedly religious women in our churches towards the enfranchisement of women, that the cause of Women's

Suffrage has been upheld by many women avowedly outside the churches ; it only shows that some of the latter are trying to do the will of God under another name, and that some of the former are content to have the name without the doing of His will who owns it.

As Christian women we are "to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and we are not free if our sex is made a fetter by men, and ourselves, to hold us back from labouring in any and every direction for the doing of the will of God.

It is the duty of Christian women to labour for their enfranchisement, their recognition as citizens possessing the same responsibilities and rights as men. It is at the peril of their womanhood, motherhood, and Christianity, that they hold back from attaining the power to secure that the law of their country shall be the law of God.

✓ L. ORMISTON CHANT.

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Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1s. 6d. per 100, post free.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

FROM A SPEECH BY

✓ MRS. WYNFORD PHILIPPS.

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A great writer has said that in a world that exists by the balance of antagonisms, the respective merits of conservator and innovator must ever remain debateable.

So many exquisite women have lived in the past that I do not wonder that some men wish to conserve the old feminine ideal, but when we look to future and see the developed intellect and the dignity, born of perfect freedom, added to every other charm, I do not wonder that others hasten to advance.

But the *ideals* of both ages are worthy sisters of one another ; what reason then, makes us feel bound to come forward from our quiet and secluded homes to urge with energy, ardour, and enthusiasm that the condition of women needs to be changed.

It is this: we look at the condition of the *average* woman of our country, and see that the condition of her life urgently needs reform.

The ideal man or woman we need not legislate for, it is they who rule us, they can break the bonds of convention and grow and expand even in the poisoned air of bad institutions; but the ordinary average work-a-day mortals cannot develop, cannot do justice to themselves and to their fellow creatures if we shackle them with arbitrary restrictions.

What is a woman's duty in the world?

The Power that gives us power signifies by its very existence that it should be used, and it is a woman's duty, just as it is a man's duty,—it is a human duty, to develop every gift and make the most of all moral, mental and physical muscles.

Yet women, like the Chinese ladies who toddle helplessly on maimed perverted feet, have been taught that they should limit and dwarf their understanding, till the world at last comes almost to believe that they cannot support themselves, and cannot advance alone.

But I am not here to say what woman should do, but to tell you what they *do* do and must do, and then to ask you this: "Since men are allowed a voice in the making of the laws, in order that the laws may be suited to their necessities, and in order that they may be able to secure and extend the rights and privileges on which their happiness and their prosperity depend, will you not allow these other human beings called women to have a voice in shaping the laws they are bound to obey, in order that they too may have a chance of bettering their condition, of giving voice to their necessities and of securing and extending their rights and privileges?"

"But women should stay at home and grace their homes," say the conservators; the innovators make the startling suggestion—"Let us look at their homes!"

There are over three million women who work for wages in England who leave their homes early in the morning, and toil at honourable work till late at night. And what do they work at? According to the old idea, sewing was one of the few suitable feminine occupations. Yes, they might work as "prisoners work for crime."

"Band and gusset and seam  
Seam and gusset and band,  
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumbed  
As well as the weary hand."

Have you ever heard of a sweater's den, or followed a poor needlewoman to her lonely garret, where she stitches her soul away to save herself from starvation?

But things are no longer so bad as they were, because the advocates of women's higher education, because the advocates of *women's rights* have opened up new fields for occupation of women in all directions.

There are thousands of women employed in the Civil Service, as telegraph girls, engravers, copyists, waitresses, hairdressers, law stationers, printers, publishers, painters, tradeswomen, &c., and women in a higher sphere have proved that they can be doctors, lawyers, landscape gardeners, lecturers and artists.

These women have had a highly technical training, these women live in a corporate body of fellow-workers and are affected in their work by all the stirring national questions. All questions of taxation, emigration, peace and war concern them. They *must* run in

the race of life, and the race is not run with an equal chance, because the weaker competitor is handicapped by the heavy weight of Electoral Disability. The struggle grows daily more and more pathetic as women with the world against them earn their difficult wages, but the women who have won a position, help those who are struggling. Peaceful Trades Unions testify that women can unite in a common cause, that they understand that true spirit of self-dependence and inter-dependence that can make them useful members of a community working for a common cause.

Many men deplore the fact that women have to work at all, but work in itself is no calamity, women from the beginning of time have washed the wounds and wiped the tears of poor Humanity and it is a truth of creation that women go through long agony that men may live and work. Prevention is much better than cure, and when women with clear eyes see the cause of the world's suffering, can you deny them the right to help to make the laws that will prevent it?

It is a woman's duty to visit the dwellings of the poor, and it is her right to help to frame the laws that lessen poverty; it is her duty to nurse the sick, it should be her right to add her voice in favour of a measure that may cause disease to disappear; it is her duty to teach temperance, she should be allowed to vote with her fellow men and women to control the drink traffic.

Bacon says "Without Philanthropie, Humanitie, Man is a busie, mischievous, wretched thing. In charitie there is no excess but error."

Now how can our benevolent women administer charity without error? Only by cultivating their minds and studying deeply the social questions of our day.

The benevolent lady of the good old times gave alms to the swarms of beggars at her gate; the woman of the future, with eyes as tender but with wisdom more profound, will seek to lessen the suffering in the world, not only to minister to the sufferers?

The great philanthropic institutions that assist our sister women have, many of them, been started and most of them supported by women who have had a so-called man's training and done a man's work. The National Health Society, which teaches poor women the laws of health and how to apply them in their own homes, was started by a woman who studied as a doctor, so was the East London Hospital for Children and the Public Dispensary for women and children.

Time is short and I am trying shortly to show that women by the circumstances of their very condition have a vivid interest in the government of the country; by refusing them a vote you do not prevent them from feeling this interest, you do not prevent them from expressing it, but you do prevent them from expressing it in the legitimate, in the most effective—let me say in the most womanly—way.

The fine ladies who come together and say prettily "We don't want the vote, we know nothing of politics, we can exercise influence in a more feminine manner" remind one of the French Princess who said that the poor need not starve for lack of *bread*, they could eat *cake*. That Princess heralded a revolution. There are

thousands of wage-earning women who toil for their living and you tell them to eat the cake of an unwholesome back-stairs influence, when they want the honest sustenance that is a benefit to the constitution, that crumb of legitimate political influence, the vote.

John Bright, the father of an extended Franchise, thinks that women should not vote. He says if the husbands, fathers, brothers of the country do not legislate fairly and justly for women, it is the fault of our civilization and not of our laws. I agree with him. It *is* the fault of our civilization. There is a country where women, according to men, have no souls, and I daresay the laws are suited to soulless creatures. In our country it is assumed that they have no mind; they are classified with lunatics, paupers, and children, in order to be branded with electoral disability. But we are getting civilized very fast. And now that this error, by the effort of women and of men who believe in them, has been rectified, now that women are seen to possess souls and minds, the husbands, fathers and brothers *are* going to legislate justly, they are going to allow them a voice in making the laws they are bound to obey.

There are 300 friends of the Women's Enfranchisement in the House of Commons and friends too in all parts of the House. It is not a party question only, but a human question that affects the welfare of more than half a nation. But there are party reasons too; many Conservatives will vote for women because they belong to the party of Law and Order, the Liberals will

support them because they belong to the party of Peaceful Reform.

It has been well said the world can only remain uninfluenced by women so long as it is uncomprehended by women.

Much has been said of the danger of enfranchising married women, because of the domestic difficulties that would ensue. Ladies and gentlemen, once it was said that a man had a right to his wife's *person*, then it was held he had a right to her *property*, and it is still held that he has a right to hold his wife's *opinion* and should not allow her to hold her own. But men no longer wish their wives to be a mere "mush of concessions" but wish them to give their devotion from the fulness and not from the poverty of their lives. You will not make unmarried people quarrel by Act of Parliament and you need not fear such a dumb method of expressing opinion as the vote confers.

The truth remains that when people feel strongly they fight, or they speak, or they vote. You get a Joan of Arc, a Maid of Saragossa, an Emily Plater of Poland, with whole nations to follow them. You get women of the Primrose League and ladies of the Liberal Federation, and a whole Parliament of men to make use of their services. The reform that, we need is, that what *is* done, and what *is* recognised and accepted, should be ratified and made effective by law.

At first it may seem hard, because injustice is never fully realised until it is done away with. According to the old Bavarian Code a man was allowed to chasten

his wife moderately. I can imagine how the supporter of women's rights in those days had to struggle before the word "moderately" was inserted. According to our law at the present moment, (witness the recent police case at Bacup,) a man can kick his wife nearly to death, and be sentenced to only two months' imprisonment for doing so. But men and women get accustomed even to bad laws; they will not quarrel with the law when it is good.

Now every argument for the enfranchisement of single women applies with intensified force to married women. But it is quite right for those who think domestic happiness would be interfered with to vote against the larger measure and advocate the extension of the Franchise to single women only, just as it was quite right for the Bavarian to chastise his wife moderately if he really thought it was for her good. We must pray for more light.

We may be sure of this, when sex is no longer a political disability the relations which depend on sex alone will no longer be regarded as a cause for disenfranchisement.

The real governors of the world, its greatest thinkers, have decided that women shall be free, and the time has come for the legislators to translate that great thought into action.

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Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 2/6 per 100, post free,

## WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

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✓ SPEECH BY MR. McLAREN, M.P.

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On May 7th, a Public Meeting was held in the Liberal Federation Hall, Bridge Street, Bristol, for the purpose of considering the present position of the Bill for Extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women. Mr. Charles Townsend, J.P., Liberal Candidate for North Bristol, presided.

The Rev. U. R. THOMAS proposed the following resolution :

"That this meeting expresses its regret and indignation at the policy pursued by the House of Commons to prevent the Women's Enfranchisement Bill from being brought forward, and at the opposition or indifference to a measure embodying a Liberal principle shown by those Liberal members who voted in the hostile majority. This meeting further expresses its gratification at Sir Joseph D. Weston's vote, in accordance with the spirit of his promise at his election and with the principle of justice."

Mr. HERBERT THOMAS, J.P., seconded the resolution.

Mr. WALTER McLAREN, M.P., speaking in support of the resolution, said : Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The very strong interest which I take in the question that is before the meeting is the reason why I was only too glad to come down and bear my testimony in support of the resolution—a resolution which

I cordially adopt, and which I should be sorry to see weakened in any way whatever. (Hear, hear.) I think that the women of this country have the very strongest reason to be, not merely disappointed, but angry, at the vote of the House of Commons on the 30th of April. It is a great disappointment, but it is not the first time during this Parliament that the women of this country and their friends in the House of Commons have been deliberately cheated out of their right to bring forward the measure for discussion. The same prominence has never been given to the wrong before, because this is the first time that, by the action of the House itself, the friends of women in Parliament have been deliberately jockeyed—to use the phrase of the *Pall Mall Gazette*—out of their day, though it is not by any means the first instance in which the same thing has been done by other methods. You are aware that during the whole of this Parliament we have never once succeeded in bringing forward the question of Women's Suffrage for discussion. We have tried. We have obtained days for Bills and resolutions on the subject, and have done everything that it was in the power of members of Parliament to do to obtain a discussion. Each year we have been deprived of our opportunity when we were on the very eve of the debate. I know that some ladies think that we in the House of Commons have not done our duty by them, that we have not done everything we could to bring the suffrage on, and they have asked, "How is it that time after time our friends fail us in this way?" (Laughter.) It is, perhaps, natural they should have taken that view, but the failures to bring forward this measure in the House of Commons have not been due to those who had charge of it. They have

been due, I say deliberately, to intrigues, to plots, and to a determination on the part of our opponents and some of our professed friends that this measure shall be burked. Take 1889, two years ago. Mr. Woodall had then first place on the Wednesday before Easter. It had been intended at one time that the House should sit upon that day, but a few days before the time for the discussion, intrigues were started between some persons on the Liberal side and the Conservative whips, with the result that the House adjourned on the Tuesday evening. I believe the bargain made upon that occasion was, that if the Government would get the House to adjourn on the Tuesday, and so rob us of our opportunity, Mr. Labouchere and his friends would allow a certain number of votes in Supply to be taken with practically no discussion. ("Shame.") Those Radicals who pose as guardians of the public purse, and spend days and weeks in the discussion of the Estimates, allowed a certain number of votes to go through in comparative silence as part of the bargain for depriving women of their opportunity for having the question discussed in the House of Commons!

Somewhat similar intrigues occurred last year. On three separate occasions we obtained a first place for a motion on this subject. The first time, the day was taken away in order to make room for a debate on the result of the Parnell Commission. That, perhaps, was inevitable, because it was a sort of big debate and the House wished it to go right on. On the other two occasions, which, if my memory serves me rightly, were the Tuesday and Friday immediately after the Whitsuntide recess, the Government brought forward a motion for taking the whole time of the House for

their business, to the deprivation of all private members' rights; and it was agreed between our enemies and the Government that, provided the Government took the days that were to have been devoted to the discussion on Women's Suffrage and so burked discussion, no serious opposition should be offered to their taking as many more private members' days as they wanted. Then we come to this year. We had an exceedingly good day, a day when the House was practically sure to sit—next Wednesday. It had been distinctly stated by the Leader of the House that the House would not adjourn for the Whitsuntide until after the 13th of May, and he further promised that, unless any unforeseen circumstances occurred, he would not ask the House to give him the 13th of May for Government business. In pursuance of that understanding, Mr. Haldane withdrew a motion on the subject which was down for the 24th of April, and we determined to adhere to the 13th of May for discussion on the Bill. I will say for the credit of Mr. Smith and the Government that they did adhere to the understanding that had been come to. I don't think they were particularly sorry when the House relieved them of the obligation. (Laughter.) I think they rather invited the House to relieve them of their obligation; but at any rate, they did adhere to it to a certain extent. When Mr. Smith came to the House and asked to be allowed to take the Irish Land Bill in Committee on Tuesdays and Fridays and on any Wednesday on which it might be set down for discussion, he said he did not propose to set it down for discussion on the 13th of May. That was perhaps all that could be expected. He said that he did propose to

take Wednesday, the 6th of May, for the discussion of the Land Bill; but they cared so little about that day that, if Mr. Gladstone desired it, they would exempt Wednesday, the 6th of May, also, and it practically was left with Mr. Gladstone whether the 6th and the 13th of May should be left for the discussion of private members' bills. Mr. Gladstone rose and said that, so far from urging that the 6th and 13th of May should be let alone, he thought they should act uniformly against all private members and take the 13th as well as the 6th. Uniformity would have been obtained by leaving these two days free, as well as by taking both; but there was a determination on the part of the Liberal front bench to burke the Women's Suffrage Bill. That determination was speedily evinced, and there was soon evidence that Mr. Labouchere and those who worked with him below the gangway were of the same opinion. Though Mr. Gladstone spoke merely of getting on with business, and uniformity of treatment, the moment that Sir Henry James came to the front and moved an amendment to compel the Government to take more time than it wanted for the Land Bill, then those members who had been opposing the Land Bill for some weeks urged the Government to push it forward. (Laughter.) The Government did not ask that the Land Bill should be taken on the 13th of May, but many members of the Liberal Party flung the 13th of May at their heads and compelled the Government to put down the Irish Land Bill as long as it remained in Committee on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and so they were forced to push on with the Bill. It has been said in the papers, that in the event of the Land Bill being finished before the 13th of

May, that day will be at the disposal of Mr. Woodall for the discussion of Women's Suffrage; but the enemies who have landed us in this difficulty will take care that the Bill shall not be finished by the 13th of May, though the Government seem to expect that it will be finished by the 14th or 15th. It certainly is well understood that as soon as the 13th is safely past, the progress with the Bill will be much more rapid, and there will be no more unnecessary delay.

I should like to consider for a moment what is the reason of this conduct with regard to this Bill. These tactics are not employed with regard to any other measure. There are measures on which parties are opposed, like Local Option and Sunday Closing; but no other measure is burked as this is. Members are not afraid of other questions being debated, and of letting their votes be recorded in the lobby; but with regard to Women's Suffrage, there seems to be a terror of it being discussed. It was not so in former Parliaments; it was then discussed, and in 1886 the Bill passed the second reading. Sir Henry James tried to defeat it, but it passed the second reading without a division; and but for the dissolution, there is little doubt it would have become law. But now new tactics are resorted to by our opponents, and as they are not strong enough to defeat the Bill by fair means, they have not scrupled to have recourse to unfair ones, and the Bill is the subject of the most discreditable intrigues to prevent it going on. On whose part were these intrigues carried on in former sessions? I have said they were carried on by Mr. Labouchere, and I have not said anything to which he would object. If anyone were to write and ask him if he had taken a

share in preventing the subject of Women's Suffrage coming on, he would write back and say "Certainly!" and that he meant to do it again if he could. (Laughter.) But these things passed unnoticed in former years, as they were not the subject of discussions; but now the House—and by the House we mean the majority—on the 30th of April, for the first time, has taken part in this discreditable attempt to shelve an inconvenient subject. (Hear, hear.) I am not altogether sorry for this; I am glad, if the subject was to be burked, that it should be done by all the members who voted on that occasion, so that the attention of the public should be called to the scandal, and women should see who voted for and against them. At the same time, I would not for a moment admit that all those who voted in the majority are against Women's Suffrage, nor that all those who voted in the minority are in favour of it. We had some of our strongest opponents voting in favour of the discussion of this measure. Mr. Goschen voted for the Government, as he is a member of the Government. There are instances in which Mr. Goschen votes in favour of things he is opposed to. He has always been opposed to Free Education. (Laughter.) In this matter, however, his vote is not a sign of conversion. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach voted in the minority, and a number of Conservatives, because there had been an honourable understanding. And again, some of our strongest supporters voted in the majority, such as Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Healy, Mr. William Abraham, and other members of the Nationalist Party; for the amendment was so astutely framed by Sir Henry James, that the Irish members were obliged to vote to push on the

Bill for Irish Land Purchase, and they could not vote against a proposal for giving facilities for that Bill. Why many of our Liberal and Conservative supporters voted against us, is a matter which I trust will not be left entirely to their own consciences. I trust their constituents will inquire of them why they voted against us. (Hear, hear.) It is not according to my notions of political morality, when a man is pledged to vote in favour of a Bill, that he should be willing to keep this pledge to the letter, but breaks it in the spirit by voting against the Bill coming on. (Cheers.) I trust if there is a Women's Association—whether Tory, Liberal Unionist, or Liberal—where the member voted in the majority, they will make searching inquiry into the reason of the vote. (Cheers.) The majority were divided into two sections: out and out opponents, who may be expected to prevent the Bill coming on in any way they can; and there is that other section who are nominally in favour—many of them, I dare say, to a greater or a less extent are really in favour—of Women's Suffrage, who admit fully the justice of the principle, who are anxious that women should work for them at the next election, but who certainly by their votes have shown that they are not anxious to do anything for women in return. They are prepared to let women work for them, to speak at Women's Liberal Association meetings, to urge women to canvass at elections, and then they are prepared to defraud women of the day for the discussion of the Women's Suffrage Bill in return!

They have urged women to go into political life, they have urged women to form their political associations, they appeal to them to go and canvass at elections,

they appeal to them to help them in every political way by promises that they will give them their political enfranchisement in future; and when they have so used women, they cast them aside and betray them in the division lobby of the House of Commons! I think women ought to resent conduct of this sort. It is not honourable on the part of members of Parliament, and it saps the very foundation of honourable understandings between a member and his constituents. There are no words I can find too strong to express my condemnation of conduct such as this. There is only one light in which we may possibly regard these tactics as satisfactory, and it is this: that our opponents, whether open or secret opponents, are so afraid of the subject coming forward, that they dare not face a debate and a division, especially just within a year, or it may be a few months, of a General Election. (Cheers.) They dare not register their votes against the enfranchisement of women, because many of them know they would have to reckon with the hostility of women when next they come before their constituents. They are too keenly alive, especially in cases where they hold seats by narrow majorities, to the advantage of having women canvassing for them. The fact is, much as men say they are against women entering the turmoil and drudgery of political life, it is notorious that the canvassing is largely relegated to women now, and men who are so anxious that women should not be defiled by political life are only too glad to send them into the slums to canvass the male voters. (Cheers.) Therefore, it is to some extent satisfactory that these men dare not record their votes against Women's Suffrage. It is equally satisfactory that they dare not meet us in open debate in the House of Com-

mons, because they know the whole of the argument and reason is upon our side. (Cheers.) When their objections are subjected to the searching test of a debate in the House of Commons, they would be made to look ridiculous and foolish. Therefore, I am glad to think that there is, at any rate, fear in the minds of our opponents. (Cheers.) Some members possibly may be unwilling to redeem the pledges they have given on the subject. I, at any rate, hope not very many members would have the hardihood to break their pledges. There is one member (I don't know if you have seen a long letter which he wrote to the papers a week or two ago)—Mr. Samuel Smith, member for Flintshire, an extremely estimable man in many ways—who has always been an opponent of Women's Suffrage. Although a great professor of morality and religion and everything that is good, he has seen fit to write a letter to the papers, urging members to break their pledges. How he can reconcile that with the moral doctrines he repeatedly advocates upon the public platform, is not a matter for me to discuss. He has offered, in effect, to relieve all members of their pledges on the supposed ground that they gave them before they had fully considered the question in all its aspects. (Laughter.) I don't think there are a great many members who would avail themselves of that indulgence offered by Mr. Smith; but, at the same time, it is undoubtedly the fact that there are a great many members who are not anxious to redeem their pledges, although they would not go the length of breaking them.

I trust one effect, a salutary effect, of the disappointment we have had will be to teach women a lesson. If women cannot learn a lesson from the

division of last Thursday, they are very hard to teach indeed. (Laughter.) The lesson they ought to learn from that is, that they must redouble their efforts between now and the General Election; that they must not be satisfied with vague assurances and general understandings of support, but that they must press this question home on their candidates strongly and earnestly before the General Election takes place. (Cheers.) It is generally too late to deal with a candidate after the election is over. If he is defeated, he does not care any more about it; if he is elected, he is in a position to ignore you and snap his fingers at the question. But so long as he is a candidate, it is the duty and the right of electors and non-electors to discuss questions with him, and try to win him by reason to a sound view on those questions. (Cheers.) I do not think any candidate, even if he is opposed to women on the point, would refuse to discuss the question in a fair and reasonable spirit, and to hear all the arguments to be adduced upon it. I go, however, further than that: I say that when women have exhausted every means of persuading a candidate that it is his duty, from every point of view, to give his loyal and cordial support to the principle of the enfranchisement of women, if they find he is obdurate and will not on any terms promise to vote for Women's Suffrage, I say it is the duty of women who respect themselves to abstain from giving that candidate their support. (Cheers.)

I am not asking women to do anything which men have not always done before them. I think we are on very safe ground when we ask women to follow men in that respect. (Laughter.) At any rate, if we are not on safe ground, it is not for men to find fault; and whenever the enfranchisement of men has come promi-

nently before the country, it has been always a test-question at the elections.

In 1832, in 1865, in 1866, in 1867, in 1883, in 1884, when the franchise agitation was at the front, it was the question before the electors, and no Liberal candidate would have expected the support of the unenfranchised Liberal men unless he was prepared to vote for their enfranchisement, nor would a Liberal candidate have come before the country unless he was prepared to vote for the enfranchisement of men. (Hear, hear.) And when I ask women to make this a test-question, I ask them to do only what men have always done for their own enfranchisement; and if women will take this position, which is a sensible one, and the only one they can take with self-respect, they will find the suffrage carried through the first session of the next Parliament. (Applause.) I do not hold out any hopes whatever that the Bill will be carried through this Parliament, even if we sit for a whole session next year. We might get a vote on it, and I hope we may force the House of Commons to give a vote, though we have lost our opportunity this year. You are often asked to keep this question back because of Home Rule. There is no need to do this, as there is no fear of it becoming law this Parliament. There is no reason why women should be asked to keep back their enfranchisement because of Home Rule. That is not urged in the case of "One Man, One Vote." The Liberal Party are going up and down the country pledging themselves to the principle of "One Man, One Vote;" and a resolution in its favour was moved by one of the front Opposition Bench—one of the best friends of women, Mr. Stansfeld (applause)—and no one said this great principle should be kept back

because of Home Rule. No one says Welsh Disestablishment should be kept back because of Home Rule; and yet we shall lose votes at the next election on account of it, as there will be some Liberal Churchmen who will not vote for us because of Disestablishment. They will say, "Our Church first;" and yet that does not keep the Liberal Party from saying this reform shall be on their programme. So with every other question on the Liberal programme. Every other question is being pushed forward, and no one says of any subject but Women's Suffrage that it should be kept back until Home Rule is carried. I had a letter from a Liberal Women's Association, and they said, while their association was in favour of Women's Suffrage, they would not press it forward until the Irish Question was forever settled. I wrote back that there was no need it should be deferred; and I do not see why this question, which, though important, is not of great bulk, should be kept back until Home Rule, which is several years off at any rate, should be carried. (Applause.)

There is no reason why we should not press forward this question, so that when the new Parliament is elected they shall be ready to discuss it. But if women are not ready to exact the strongest pledges from candidates, I say to you, from the experience I have had in the House of Commons of past years, and the amount of evasion used, and the mild efforts put forth by members supposed to be in favour of it, you will be cheated in the new Parliament as you have been cheated in this one. (Applause.)

Well, I don't know what attitude the Liberal leaders mean to take upon it. I cannot really believe they are going to offer any pertinacious resistance to the measure. I have been greatly pleased to see in the *Pall Mall Gazette*

an extract from a letter written by Mr. Gladstone to Lady Florence Dixie on the subject, in which he says Lady Dixie may rest assured that if he discusses this question of Women's Suffrage it will be in a serious and considerate spirit; and, further, that it is not his opinion that if women were enfranchised their votes would be given to any extent to the Conservative Party; and that many rumours which have been spread as to his attitude on the question were inventions. (Cheers.)

I think it is Mr. Gladstone's duty, if I may presume to tell him what I think his duty is, to tell the women what his opinion is on Women's Suffrage. He is the leader of the party; his wife is the President of the Women's Liberal Federation, and they know perfectly well that the Council of the Federation a year ago passed a resolution by about four hundred votes to twelve that the time had come when Women's Suffrage should be taken up, and expressing an opinion in favour of the Suffrage. A copy of that resolution was sent to Mr. Gladstone, who acknowledged its receipt; so he knows all about it. He has had twenty years to consider the question, because it is more than twenty years since John Stuart Mill first brought it before the House of Commons.

Mr. Gladstone has been in a responsible position of high authority during the whole of that time. He is responsible for having on various occasions urged women to come forward in political life. He is going to address a great meeting of women in London, in connection with the Women's Liberal Federation, before the end of this month. No doubt he will urge women to come and help him to settle the Irish Question, and take part in the next election as canvassers and supporters of himself and his friends; but it is his

duty not to keep the women in suspense. It is above all things his duty not to deceive them—not to let them think he believes one thing when he believes another, but to make his attitude perfectly clear on the subject. If he is against Women's Suffrage—which I don't believe,—it is his duty to tell us so, and to see if women are going to support him on those terms. (Cheers.) It will be for them to decide whether they will support him. If he should be against the Suffrage—I should extremely regret it—it will be their affair, not mine. I don't believe it possible he would put such a strain on their loyalty, nor that a man of his great mind and sense of justice could adduce any arguments against a measure so just in itself as this. (Cheers.) I am convinced if he could be induced to speak to the women, on the 27th of this month, on the question of the Suffrage, it would be a frank expression of his opinion that there are no solid arguments to be brought forward against their enfranchisement. If that is his view, women have a right to know it. (Cheers.)

I think the Women's Liberal Associations could not occupy themselves better during the next month than by sending memorials to Mr. Gladstone asking him to give his opinion, as the leader of the Liberal Party, on this great question. The Liberal Party have no right to keep us in the dark, or to play with this question, or to urge women to come forward and work for them when they have not the courage to tell women whether they are in favour of their enfranchisement or not. (Cheers.) If they are against it, as is Sir William Harcourt, then to ask for the support of women is to take a position utterly inconsistent, and one that ought to be exposed. I don't believe the Liberal

Party—which has always been a party to encourage the enfranchisement of the people, which has placed confidence in the people, and is responsible for giving women Municipal and School Board votes, allowing them to be elected to Boards of Guardians and School Boards—will turn its back and be against this great measure of justice. (Cheers.) Be that as it may, women have the right to know, so that they may shape their action with the full knowledge of what they are doing. If associations such as this, which is one of the most active and enlightened in the whole country, will take the initiative in the matter, and urge other associations to memorialise Mr. Gladstone on the subject, I cannot believe but it will have a marked effect, and that we shall receive a declaration from him which will go far to bring Women's Suffrage to a triumphant issue. (Loud cheers.)

## The Progressive Party in the Women's Liberal Federation.

*Reprinted by permission from the "Bedfordshire Mercury."*

June 20th, 1891.

SIR,—The healthy interest which is being felt more and more by Liberal Women in the great issues which are before the country, makes the Women's Liberal Federation, of which Mrs Gladstone is the loved and honoured president, a body of ever increasing importance. As one who has been actively interested in it since its birth, and a delegate at most of its meetings, may I bring the claims of at any rate one section of its members, before your readers.

The Federation is a Union of all the Women's Liberal Associations throughout the country which care to band themselves together. Its annual Council Meeting is composed of delegates from all these Associations, of which there are about 140; each Association sends delegates in proportion to its size, but 5 is the maximum number. At the last Council, about three weeks ago, there were 500 delegates. These figures will give an idea of its importance, and I may add there are about 60,000 members in the Association.

All the members and all the delegates are of course warm supporters of Home Rule and of the general policy of the Liberal Party. But at this point there is a cleavage. One section of the Federation is

“only this and nothing more.” They seem to think that they have been called into existence to work for the Liberal Party, to canvass at elections, and to hold meetings and support merely those measures which the Liberal Party have officially adopted. And thus, although one of the avowed objects of the Federation is to obtain just legislation for women, the members of this section regard that object as being limited to only such just legislation for women, as the Liberal Party leaders have sanctioned. Hence in the hands of this section, the Federation and the Associations would be little better than a mere party machine. The other section, however, wishes to proceed further, and its members are therefore known as the Progressive Party. While not yielding to their colleagues in their devotion to the Liberal cause, they say that in addition they must never forget that they are women, and perhaps were women first and Liberals afterwards. Hence they insist on placing a distinct meaning to the avowed object of obtaining just legislation for women.

In a word, they say that unless the Federation, as such, demands the Parliamentary Franchise for women, it is inconsistent and stultifies itself. They argue that for political women not to work for the Suffrage is absurd. They are expected to canvass and tell men how to vote, and yet they may not vote themselves. They are in favour of Home Rule and they want to vote for it. And above all they take the strong ground that sex should not be a political disqualification, and that the extension of the franchise to women is in harmony with every Liberal principle. Therefore, they say, let us make the Federation a great women's organisation, helping to raise the position of women in every way, for by so doing we can also give the greatest help to the Liberal cause.

The division which arises from these opposing views runs through every portion of Federation work, so far as one can judge from the Council meetings and from the reports of the Committee meetings in the *Women's Gazette*. The two parties are as clearly divided as are the Tories and Liberals in the House of Commons.

When a division takes place in the Committee, I noted the same names in the majority and minority respectively on each occasion; and I deeply regret that the Progressive Party are in a small minority there. I do not believe it possible that they are in a minority among the 60,000 members, but in too many Associations there are a few active party workers at the head whose only desire is to make the Association devote its whole energies to party organisation and electioneering.

I believe that the rank and file of the members never get to know the vital issues which are dividing the Committee and the Council. If they did, their common sense would at once lead them to declare heartily for the policy which includes Women's Suffrage, for I am certain that not one per cent. of the members are opposed to that great reform. Why then should the action of the Federation be checked and its voice stifled? To please whom? I do not know; but the fact remains that it is so, and that the greatest pressure is put on delegates by leading members of the Federation to induce them to vote against any action in favour of Women's Suffrage.

By these means, and these alone, they defeated, by 60 votes, a resolution instructing the Executive Committee to press the question on Parliament and the country. A most sensible resolution, you will say. Of course it was; and for a body of women politicians to refuse to press the Suffrage on Parliament and the country is to make themselves the laughing stock of their opponents in Parliament, and goes a long way to justify Mr. Labouchere when he said in effect that women were no better than rabbits; and you might as well give votes to one as to the other.

I hope, Sir, you will give us the aid of your paper to remove this reproach at the earliest opportunity; but I feel sure we shall not do the good we ought to do until we very materially change the composition of the Executive Committee, and put the present majority into a minority.—I am, yours truly,

London, June 17, 1891.

PROGRESS.

An important letter on Women and Politics appears in this paper,—a letter which is as important in itself, although signed by the name "Progress," as if it bore the name of the influential personage who has thus written to us. The subject is of vital interest to women, for it concerns the welfare of women in a most important particular. Their powers as thinkers, readers, intelligent beings, property holders, are, taking one thing with another, on a par with those of men; they may paint, sing, act, nurse, travel; they may be taxed precisely as men are taxed—without their consent, or even a pretence of consent; they are capable of advising men how to vote—yet those who use that advice say that they are not to vote themselves! Could anything be more absurd? If they are fit to be taxed, they ought to have a voice in saying whether or how they will be taxed. While if they are capable of using their intelligence to advise men how they should vote, the same intelligence would be amply sufficient to enable them themselves to vote. This must be obvious to the most ordinary observer, and yet, like many other obvious things, it needs to be said. But our correspondent presumes all this, and we trust our readers, men and women too, will follow "Progress" to this extent. Then, however, the writer comes to deal with the policy of the Women's Liberal Federation, an institution representing 60,000 members up and down the country. There are—or it seems very much as though there are—two sections in this Federation,—one of principle, one of expediency; and the question is, which should be supported? If there are two such sections, and though they may not be very clearly defined they may nevertheless thus be definable, they should make the position clear to their own minds. Too much nebulosity of ideas is not good. Let the Liberal women of the country make up their minds to come to an issue. It is weak to dally, when principle is at stake: if they do not approve of women "going in" for politics, then they should at once leave all political associations; for to be willing to act as "touts" for husbands and brothers, and yet to discredit

their own fitness for dealing with political questions is neither creditable to the minds nor morals of women. If women are not fit to discuss politics, then they are not fit to advise men how to vote; but if they are fit for the latter they are entitled to all the responsibilities and duties which belong to political life. Merely to say—"Oh yes; we are in favour of women having the vote, but we will not ask for it until the leaders of the Liberal 'party' nod their heads in favour of it," betray, weakness and want of principle. There is too much of the old *caucus* wire-pulling in such a position. The Women's Federation is not to be an echo of any one set of men's notions, however honoured those men may be; but to be a courageous society, asking for justice and liberty for men *and for women* in every particular. If they degenerate into a parcel of mere party pleasers—first cousins are they to place-hunters—it would have been better for them never to have been called into existence as a Federation at all. But we believe better things of them; they are simply a wee bit fearful of offending somebody or a few somebodies. If they act on sound reasonable principles they need fear neither any person nor any thing.

WOMEN'S LIBERAL FEDERATION.

Sir,—I read with great interest and pleasure the letter in your issue of June 20th, signed "Progress," on the policy of the Women's Liberal Federation. I was very glad to see the subject brought forward, and speaking as a member of another Women's Liberal Association, who has watched the movement almost from the beginning, may I say that I heartily endorse all that your correspondent says, and, even more, your editorial on the subject. It would indeed be a suicidal policy for us to allow our splendid organisation to be turned into a mere bit of party machinery, and that the noble possibilities latent in this union of 60,000 Liberal women should result in nothing but an elaborate system of second-fiddle wire-pulling. I would earnestly beg all Liberal women to give their serious attention to this matter. I would not press them to decide hastily if they

have not yet seen our point in pressing forward the question of Women's Suffrage, for I feel that what we want are carefully considered and well thought out convictions, not hasty opinions formed in a moment of enthusiasm.

What I ask of Liberal women is to look into the matter fearlessly for themselves—fearlessly, I say—for that is the only truly Liberal way of looking at great questions, and fearlessness is not rashness. Therefore do not listen to those who say that we must not press questions that we have at heart, for fear some may leave us, for fear this or that member of Parliament may not be returned, for fear Mr. Gladstone or any one else may not approve, or for any other fears. When you hear those sort of arguments, be on your guard, they are Tory arguments, not Liberal ones, they have no place in our creed, and we may be sure of failure if we allow the policy of fear to influence us. On one point only may I join the issue with your correspondent. I did not like the expression “women must never forget that they are women.” I would prefer to say let us never forget that we are citizens; it is as citizens that we feel our responsibilities and desire to exercise them; it is as fellow citizens that we desire to work for other women, and we want men to work for them equally on the same grounds. The idea of a separate women's party opposed to men is one of the favourite bogies of our opponents, and while regarding this as baseless as other bogies, I regret any expression which seems to suggest such an idea. With this slight criticism I fully agree with your correspondent, and I feel very grateful to you for having given myself and others an opportunity of seeing the matter so clearly and definitely put before us.

I am, yours faithfully,

✓ A LIBERAL WOMAN.

Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1/6 per 100, post free.

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## REASONS

FOR

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

1. Because it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law should be able to have a voice in choosing those who make the law.
2. Because it is the foundation of the British Constitution that taxation and representation should go together.
3. Because Parliament should be the reflection of the wishes of the people.
4. Because Parliament cannot fully reflect the wishes of the people, when the wishes of women are without any direct representation.
5. Because most laws affect women as much as men, and some laws affect women especially.
6. Because the laws which affect women especially are now passed without consulting those persons whom they are intended to benefit.
7. Because some of those laws press grievously on women as mothers.
8. Because some press heavily on the condition of women's labour.
9. Because some set up a different standard of morality for men and women.
10. Because such laws are thereby rendered inefficient for protecting women from wrong.
11. Because while a vote is already within reach of men of ordinary honesty and industry, it is inaccessible to every woman, however upright and industrious.
12. Because the removal of those inequalities which hindered some men householders from the exercise of the vote, while continuing to exclude all women householders, works great injustice on a large number of law abiding persons.

13. Because every extension of the franchise is followed by an increase of domestic legislation.

14. Because women have experience which should be helpfully brought to bear on domestic legislation.

15. Because the enfranchisement of women is a question of public well-being, and not a help to any political party or sect.

16. Because while it appeals to Tories as representing the interests of property, it appeals equally to Radicals as representing the interest of individuals.

17. Because there are about 4,000,000 women earning their own living, and about 700,000 women householders, in England and Wales.

18. Because the Representatives of the people in Parliament consider the wishes of the householders who are electors, and whom they represent directly, before they consider the wishes of the householders who are non-electors, and whom they only represent indirectly.

19. Because owing to their having no political vote, women are often rejected as tenants.

20. Because to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in the common estimation of men.

21. Because the possession of the vote would increase the sense of responsibility amongst women towards questions of public importance.

22. Because public-spirited mothers make public-spirited sons.

23. Because large numbers of intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working women desire the Franchise.

24. Because the objections raised against their having the Franchise, are based on sentiment, not on reason.

25. Because—to sum all reasons up in one—it is *just*.  
(*The above appeared in the "English Labourer's Chronicle."*)

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Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1/0 per 100, post free.

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

✓ BY H. MORGAN-BROWNE.

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What place in the programme of the Women's Liberal Federation ought the question of Women's Suffrage to hold? Let us consider.

Unlike the Primrose League, the Women's Liberal Federation was created for *use* and not for *ornament*. Further, unlike the Primrose League, it is not a mere appanage of one of the political parties of the state but a great political organization, completely in sympathy it is true with the Liberal Party, but having also a special and supplementary purpose of its own. Its two main objects are:—

1. "To promote the adoption of Liberal principles in the Government of the Country.
2. "To promote just legislation for Women and to protect the interests of Children."

Thus the *first* object is to press forward those reforms which have been embodied in the programme of official Liberalism—the *second*, or rather accompanying object, is to enrich that programme with reforms of which from its nature it may be deemed to have special cognizance—while running through all definite objects of Liberal policy is the earnest desire for the greater political usefulness of women. Let not women fear that the cause of Liberalism will suffer through their enfranchisement, **for the requirements and the sympathies of women, beginning with their own emancipation, are**

more in accord with progress and enlightenment than with the conservation of old-world prejudices and retrograde legislation. Members of the community who attain their legitimate freedom through the application of Liberal principles are not likely to use that freedom to the injury of those principles. History proves what common sense would suggest. Remember this when hostile critics cloak their hostility under the specious but ignoble argument that Women's Suffrage means a new lease of life to the Tory party.

Now the prosecution of the two ends for which the Women's Liberal Federation was formed, demands that **women shall bestir themselves in politics.**

It means two things:—

- (i) That women shall help strenuously by every means in their power all good men who are true to the principles which women have at heart.
- (ii) That women shall endeavour to make those means more practically helpful, so that the party of progress and reform may find in Liberal women not only willing and useful servants but efficient and powerful allies.

Remember that in Representative Government the vote is the greatest power in politics, **but that women are without this power.** If women are earnest in their desire to help on political reform, if they believe that the influence they possess can be exercised for good, if only they have sufficient confidence in their own powers, sufficient self-respect for their own human nature, then must they desire to make that help more practical and to wield that influence more effectually.

Shall women only play at politics? Shall they remain the amiable servants of this or that political party—the useful drudges of a Parliamentary election, a negligible factor in Parliament? Surely not! Men have the vote not because they are stronger, or cleverer, or better than women—nor indeed because they are strong or clever at all—but *because* the principle of our constitution is that taxation and representation should go together and that those who must obey the laws should have a voice in the making of those laws.

Ask for the vote for women, not to the exclusion of other reforms but that these other reforms may the more speedily obtain a due effect.

Are women anxious to secure *justice for Ireland*? Let them assist the great Liberal party in their difficult task and let

them ask for votes in order that their suffrages may lighten that task.

Are women in favour of the promotion of *Temperance*? Let them assist that party in the State which is agitating for Temperance Reform and let them ask for votes in order more effectually to overcome the opposition of vested interests.

Are women interested that all men and women should have *healthy homes*? Let them use their present influence in that behalf, and ask for votes to make that influence forceful and successful.

Do women desire that *Taxation* should fall *equally* on all men, that *Education* should be not only *free* but *sound*, that their fellow citizens in *Wales* should be freed from the irksome ministrations of an unsympathetic *Church*? Let them dally no longer! Not as idle spectators, but as able workers let them press forward to the realization of every great Reform and to the undoing of every social wrong.

Two things will be said about you—"To ask for the vote will embarrass the Liberal Party" and "You must not turn the organization of the Women's Liberal Federation into a Women's Suffrage Society." The first of these statements is untrue and the second has no foundation in fact.

No reform which is *just* can really embarrass the Liberal Party. Your demand (**and a very short Act of Parliament will make you electors**) is that you may be entrusted with better weapons in the stern fight with ancient prejudices and vested interests—and no man may call that *embarrassing*.

As to the second slander, your programme contradicts it,

JUSTICE TO IRELAND  
TEMPERANCE REFORM  
EQUAL TAXATION

ONE MAN ONE VOTE  
HEALTHY HOMES  
GOOD SCHOOLS

DISESTABLISHMENT FOR WALES.

And among these reforms, and the sooner the better as assisting the others—

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ON

DIFFERENCE OF SEX

AS A

TOPIC OF JURISPRUDENCE & LEGISLATION.

BY THE LATE SHELDON AMOS, M.A.

*Of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law :*

*Professor of Jurisprudence, University College, London :*

*Lecturer on Jurisprudence, Roman Law and Constitutional Law to the Inns  
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*Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeal, Cairo.*

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Are women in favour of the promotion of Temperance? Let  
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Are women interested that all men and women should have  
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As to the second slander, your programme contradicts it.  
Justice to Ireland. Temperance Reform. Good Schools.  
Disestablishment for Wales.  
And among these reforms, and the sooner the better, as  
assisting the others—

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## PREFACE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S letter against Sir A. Rollit's Bill will call forth many answers, comments, and expressions of admiration. All must recognise his logical fairness both as to married women, and as to the inevitable connection between the right to elect and that to be elected, with all that follows from it. I have always deprecated a piecemeal dealing with the subject, and recognise that Mr. Gladstone has rendered the suffrage cause a great service on those two points. I should, however, think that he had pushed back the granting of the suffrage to women for some years did I not know that the force of the women's demand for citizens' rights is greater and more rapidly growing than he believes. The demand made by women during the last thirty-five years is very much stronger than that made by Agricultural Labourers before their enfranchisement, and incomparably stronger than that made by men-servants who now have votes.

Arguments in our favour have an overwhelming cogency that must soon prevail against the hesitations of the most loyally-followed leader. Some of these arguments, in the dress given them by my husband, 22 years ago, may be useful to-day, and I therefore reprint them, with omissions due to the reforms he advocated—it will at least aid the thorough consideration which Mr. Gladstone advocates. Woman's Suffrage will be pressed to the front of the Liberal programme when once Home Rule is arranged, because it concerns so large a mass of the population; because it will begin the remedying of wrongs perpetrated for so many centuries, and crying all over the world for redress; and because it will be so beneficent for all ranks and classes of the community.

I think that the principles stated in this pamphlet abolish many doubts and difficulties sincerely held by frank foes and timid friends.

S. M. A.

# DIFFERENCE OF SEX

AS A

TOPIC OF JURISPRUDENCE AND LEGISLATION.

## I.—INTRODUCTION.

It might almost have seemed a position too obvious even to insist upon that all particular legislative questions affecting women, as distinguished from men, must give place to a prior discussion as to the true place which women must finally occupy in the general organisation of society. Now, any idea of such an organisation presupposes a distinct theory of the nature and function of marriage, as the critical fact upon which all social organisation, of whatever degree of development, ceaselessly hinges. And yet it strangely happens that modern political philosophers have, with few exceptions, hitherto begun at the other end. They have ventured upon no broad conception of social organisation. They have enunciated no consistent and comprehensive theory of marriage and divorce. They have only brought to light particular injuries which women have long suffered, and they have invoked one and another legislative measure for the remedy of those injuries. It is unfortunate that thus much of the best work by which the minds of men and women have been quickened has to be done over again from the very first. The true position of women in relation to men has to be ascertained and defined, and thereupon the extent to which law can usefully co-operate with other more delicate and potent instruments finally determined. The question lies at the very threshold of the sciences of Jurisprudence and Legislation, in the broader sense of this last term, in which it is nearly synonymous with general politics. It is concerned with one narrow, though deeply momentous fact, out of all the jointly physical and ethical facts to which the jurist, who deals with the formal structure of all possible systems of law, and the politician, who deals with the materials of which a particular legal system ought to be composed, are alike compelled to attend.

Laws affecting to regulate the relation of the sexes to each other have probably been, in all countries, more completely determined by unreasoning instincts and savage usages than any other laws whatever. Owing, also, to the marvellous tenacity and complication of sentiment which at once exalts and embarrasses this matter, there are no laws which are so

difficult to change. Here, more than anywhere else, the modes of feeling of the whole community have to undergo a decisive alteration before bare logical reasoning on the subject can be so much as even tolerated. Criticism of the existing law must be accompanied by an ever-widening and deepening apprehension of the true condition of things which the law promotes and substantiates. In order to bring about a beneficial change in the law, a clear and popular conception must be formed of what is wanted in the future, together with a precise recognition of the limits of the provinces of law and moral authority to be observed in providing for that future. It is proposed here to sketch out the lineaments of a true human society, such as, the more nearly it is attained, by developing and exercising to the full all the latent possibilities of the race, will elevate, rather than debase and corrupt, every individual man and woman. The history, ancient and modern, of the political philosophy of sex will afford at once the best possible example and condemnation of erroneous methods of approaching the more universal problem.

## II.—SOCIAL ORGANISATION.

The customary form in which English writers have propounded the problem involved in the present enquiry has been the following. It has been noticed that in all countries and all times (with the rarest exceptions) woman has been treated, both socially and legally, as in nearly every respect subordinate and inferior to man. Public opinion, domestic manners, political institutions, and positive laws have unanimously stamped and riveted this conception of the inequality, for nearly every purpose, of the two sexes. It is argued upon these facts that (1) this historical subordination of one sex to the other was the result of nothing else than a gross and arbitrary usurpation of power on the part of the physically strong over the physically weak; that (2) whatever actual differences exist at this day between the mental and even some of the physical capacities of men and women, may reasonably be attributed at least as much to the fact of such diversities of social and political treatment as to differences of physical or mental structure, or to any other actual differences of a less palpable kind; and that (3), if hereafter women be treated, for the purposes of law, political action, and social existence, in the same way exactly as men, the differences between the sexes will finally be reduced to the smallest possible amount.

Now, the historical facts assumed in the above reasoning are undoubtedly true, and the cause found for those facts in the tyrannical and selfish habits of mankind is a "true cause" likewise. There lurks, however, a very serious and pernicious error in the implied, though not expressed, propositions, to the effects that differences between the sexes are in themselves an evil, and that the tendency of equal and uniform legislation for the two sexes is to eradicate those differences rather than to deepen and intensify them. It is here contended, on the other hand, that (1) while the alleged inequality between the sexes is a cruel and dangerous imposture dating from the most barbarous times, nevertheless differences between the sexes, in the nature, function, and quality of mind and spirit, as well as of bodily structure, is an element in the constitution of social life so precious and excellent that apart from the plenary recog-

niton of it any high degree of civilisation would be simply impossible. It is contended, again, (2) that legislation has hitherto erred by confusing the true character of differences separating the sexes, and that only by the greatest attainable uniformity of legislation for both sexes can the essential differences between them manifest and express themselves in the most effectual and unmistakable way.

Contrasting a very primitive state of society with a highly advanced one, the former is seen to be composed of elements atomic, mutually repulsive, hateful, and hating one another. The latter is pervaded by facts and notions implying every degree and kind of reciprocity of function, mutuality of sentiment, and relationships indefinitely multiplied in the most variegated forms.

These last facts and notions are not confined to the grosser fields of economic policy and merely social co-operation. The whole life of the nation, in its subtlest form, hangs in suspense upon them. A thousand modes of sensibility are kept in assiduous action through nothing else than their prevalence. It is not only that under these social conditions men do more work, and do it more quickly and effectually, but that, in and through the very process of working, they learn to experience an indefinite number of complicated emotions in respect of each other which, in their aggregate, constitute the corporate energy of the nation. Politics, law, industrial and commercial interests, as well as literature and the conscious communication of thought in all forms, are only the cloaks and instruments of this magnificent, though constantly secluded, activity. This illimitable range of reverberating sentiments is the most characteristic product and last expression of social organisation at its culminating point. The history of a progressive nation is the story of its efforts to reach this. So far as it has failed to reach this, so far is it yet removed from the last attainments of civilisation.

Now, it is not saying too much to allege that the main lever by which a nation is lifted out of its primitive savagery is difference of sex. This is the sole disciplinary fact which, in addition to the ruder one implied in the necessity of dividing labour, serves to teach a primitive race that human society is not a sum of competing atoms, each servilely reproducing the other, but that, rather resembling a building, a vegetable product, or an animal body, it is made up of reciprocal parts no one of which can be dispensed with in the interests of the whole, and no one of which can dispense with every one of the rest. In primitive marriage and the birth of children, irregular and undisciplined as these facts are at the first, lessons are being ever noiselessly taken in, through the hourly play of the simplest and tenderest emotions, which become gradually crystallised into national sentiments, and which nothing short of the most obnoxious laws and institutions can succeed in crushing out.

It is quite true that ignorant legislators, reflecting too often the worst and not the best conceptions of their day, have done what in them lay to confound the true differences of sex. These differences are far too deep and subtle to admit of the application of coarse methods of legal description and forcing. Every law or political institution that has fixed and perpetuated any differences between men and women, except by way of recognising marriage as the foundation of family life or of protecting

physical weakness, has retarded civilisation. Notwithstanding all this, the fact of opposition of sex, so far from being an evil in itself, is the source, centre, and symbolic image of all the other oppositions from the multiplication of which a nation grows to maturity. The question of questions for a wise politician is how to legislate so as to remove all the physical barriers which impede the free play upon each other of all such oppositions, whether due to contrarieties of structure, situation, disposition, or competitive interest. Above all, the most diligent care has to be taken that laws do not help in crystallising the partial and pauperised conceptions of a passing day. The politician cannot too anxiously guard himself against the temptation of trying to do by force what can alone be brought about by the healthy, though systematic, action of native human forces. His work is to enable and to facilitate, not to hamper and to provoke.

Such is the general position of the fact of difference of sex in the treatment of the whole problem of social organisation. The particular modes in which the fact of such difference calls for the interposition of the legislator come on now for special consideration.

### III.—MARRIAGE.

#### I. AS RESPECTS STATUS.

It has been alleged, and it is hoped established, that the ground, origin, and instrument of all social organisation is to be looked for in the essential opposition presented by difference of sex. The special mode in which the fruits of this opposition are realised and economised is discoverable in the institution of marriage. For the purposes of the jurist and the legislator, the following are those more prominent aspects of marriage which cannot be safely left out of consideration. Like all other leading social facts, marriage has a physical and what may be called here, without fear of misapprehension, a spiritual side. It is a striking and unique witness of the jointly material and immaterial, the individual and social, constitution of man. It is from neglect of one or other of these bearings of marriage that all the fallacies, moral and political, by which the subject has been haunted in all ages have flowed.

On the one hand, the special union of sexes indicated in marriage is stimulated, or even primarily suggested, by functions which mankind shares in common with the large mass of the animal kingdom. On the other hand, the exercise of these functions in the case of mankind renders possible, and when duly disciplined goes far to promote, the development of a long train of very peculiar reciprocal feelings and subtle sentiments of relationship in the parties to the marriage, as between themselves and between them and their children. These feelings and sentiments in their normal stage admit of being intensified to such an extent as to dominate over all the impulses which in a primitive social state enter more largely into the conception of marriage; and they are susceptible of being happily and evenly distributed over the whole joint lifetime of the parties, as well as diffused, in their secondary influences, over numberless persons more or less closely connected by consanguinity and affinity with the married pair.

Such is the complex fact of marriage as it presents itself to the passionless gaze of the jurist and the statesman. The first reflection is that if the family, as thus originating in marriage, be in truth the main-spring of all those vehement and precious emotions upon the quality and strength of which the nation ultimately depends for its highest life, then no political duty can be more cogent than the protection of the integrity of family existence. This integrity implies the immunity of each family from confusion with others, and the continuity of its own life in order that the feelings and sentiments appropriate to every epoch may be successively called forth. These two conditions are expressed in the conceptions of monogamic marriage and the irrevocable character of marriage. To insure the habitual prevalence of these conditions must be the ultimate aim of the wise politician, whether the means he employs be direct or indirect. The question is, how far he is entitled, and how far it is expedient for him, to employ for the furtherance of this aim the direct instrument of law. In other words, it is asked, What are the grounds for having a law of marriage at all?

It is to be noticed that the question is never actually presented to the statesman in this dry and abstract form. In every country where conscious legislation on these matters is being attempted certain maxims and laws regulating marriage have invariably been in force for centuries. These maxims and laws have created, after their own likeness, a public opinion and a set of private habits, which opinion and habits, so artificialised by a long series of governmental acts, are the materials with which the statesman has to deal. While preparing for the future, he has to remedy the past; though in remedying the past he has, above all, to beware of sacrificing the future.

Apart from the real grounds for taking marriage under the cognisance of law, which will be adverted to immediately, there is an historical ground, which is due to the peculiar structure of all primitive society. According to the simple conceptions prevalent in such a society, the governing body assumes direct jurisdiction over all matters that seem to be essential to the existence of the community. The distinction between the provinces of law and moral influences is at such a time not so much as dreamed of. The functions of the king and the priest, of the counsellor and the soothsayer, are inextricably blended together in the popular imagination and in the national institutions. But the march of national life, as it implies a general differentiation of function in every field, more especially implies the limitation of the region of direct command and the extension of that occupied by organised and unorganised moral force. The problem incessantly perplexing each nation, at every moment of its progress, is where the line between the allied regions ought to be drawn. The question, then, as to marriage is whether the constrictive force necessary to ensure the accomplishment of its highest purposes is to be sought for in the one region or in the other,—in that of purely moral discipline or that of compulsory law.

Now it may be laid down universally that the only region in which law can safely, beneficially, or effectually work is that in which, by the use of a hard command, it forcibly secures the maintenance of such purely physical conditions as are indispensable to the action of moral

influences, to the free and unfettered play of social relationships, and to the culture of sentiments of the most beneficent and exalted class. In order to attain these ends, the statesman holds himself compelled severely and arbitrarily to restrict the action of the subjects of his government in respect of such matters as (1) the constitution and administration of the State, (2) ownership, (3) contract, (4) civil injuries and so-called 'crimes.' But the persons to whom laws on these several matters are addressed cannot, in a large multitude of cases, be considered apart from the families to which they belong. This is obviously true in respect of laws regulating the rights and duties of that part of the population which has not yet reached years of discretion. It is also especially true in respect of laws dealing with succession, testamentary disposition, relief of the destitute, taxation, certain fraudulent offences, as bigamy and abduction, and with national character and domicile. Furthermore, the very intimate relationship existing between man and wife implies special rules for the regulation of their several or joint liability on contracts entered into by either of them, and even occasionally special principles for the determination of their moral responsibility severally on the occasion of one or other, or both, committing a civil injury or a crime. Now, inasmuch as the family to which a person belongs is usually signified by nothing else than the marriage to which he owes his birth, the fact of marriage becomes a matter of the greatest concern to the statesman. He is thus entitled to demand the greatest possible notoriety for this fact in all cases whatever. He is entitled either to recognise existing forms of marriage, or to impose a general form better likely to satisfy his ends than all existing ones. He may further define the persons between whom, in respect of consanguinity, he will permit marriage, though he ought, in making such definitions, to be guided by no consideration whatever except severely juridical considerations above enumerated. If he attempts here or elsewhere violently to enforce any moral theory whatsoever, he strays from his true path, and seals, it may be for ever, the imperfect conceptions of his own age. The only other points on which legislation is necessary or permissible are (1) the amount of physical authority which parents shall have over their children, (2) the grounds (if any) of 'judicial separation' and divorce, and (3) the rights and duties of the married persons in respect of ownership. The two latter topics demand special treatment in this place.

#### 2. AS RESPECTS DIVORCE.

It has already been insisted on that the type of marriage ever to be kept before the eyes of the statesman, as essential to the accomplishment of its social purpose, is that of a union lasting during the joint lifetime of the parties. Towards the enforcement of a national habit of forming unions of this type every moral and educational influence in the community must be fixedly turned and strenuously exerted. The most perplexing of all questions to the statesman is, how far he ought to recognise in his legal system the possibility of any other marriage than one of this permanent kind.

It is true that, so far as such a possibility is recognised by law, the law throws in all the weight of its indirect moral authority against

the rival and direct moral authority which pronounces the indissolubility of marriage to be an axiom of social organisation. As often as laws provide for the marriage tie being broken, so often do they teach that this tie may, and in some cases ought to, be broken. To this extent the admission of a legal doctrine of divorce is, on the face of it, mischievous.

But there is another set of considerations which operate on the statesman in a different way. In the present state of civilisation, and owing to the weighty inheritance of a faulty or vicious past, there are ever found in existence a certain number of marriages in which the true purpose of marriage, as a social instrument, is wholly or partially frustrated. This may be due to the shortcomings of one or both of the parties, or to accidental circumstances for which neither, or only one, of the parties is responsible. Where this happens, there is often present a vehement temptation, amounting in some cases to a species of alleged necessity, for one or both of the parties to recombine in some fresh union more hopeful than the existing one.

Now, it must be broadly stated that any social theory which treats marriage as a transient connection, liable to be dissolved at the will or caprice of either or both parties, surrenders the essential conception of marriage altogether. There is no intermediate stage between the treatment of marriage, on the one hand, as a casual animal association or temporary partnership, and, on the other, as a peculiar condition unlike any other condition whatever, born out of a solemn engagement entered into, not only as between the parties themselves, but as between the parties and all other persons, or rather as between the parties and the State, as the formal embodiment of all the persons, past, present, and future, of whom the integral community is properly composed. Now, the unmistakable sentiments of the best portion of the human race, and the dictates of the loftiest expediency, concur in repudiating the former conception, and thus drive the statesman upon the latter. Hence he is compelled resolutely to maintain the position that marriage is indissoluble, and yet to provide for cases in which that theory has, or in practice might appear to have, miserably broken down. There are three courses before the statesman. He may (1) disallow divorce altogether, or (2) he may allow it on certain distinctly alleged and established grounds, or (3) he may allow it without restrictions of any sort, on the simple expression of the wishes of one or both of the parties.

If (1) he adopt the first course, he permits a whole mass of persons and relationships to emerge into the body of society for which the existing laws regulating family order, succession, testamentary disposition, domicile, poor relief, and the like, make no adequate provision. A large body of questions, on the impartial adjudication of which the regular action of the community depends, are, to this extent withdrawn from the operation of the general law. Accident, negligence, thoughtlessness, ignorance, dominate over the fortunes of numbers of innocent persons, and all sorts of practical hardships and moral inequalities mark the reign of chaos which has set in. For numbers of persons in the community large branches of the law are thus abrogated altogether.

(2) The second course before the statesman is the one practised at this day in England. It is likely, with some modifications, to maintain its

ground for some time to come, but its disadvantages should be carefully noted. The practice of allowing a divorce on the ground of certain exceptionally aggravated offences committed by one or other of the parties must needs act, in many cases, as a direct premium on the commission of such offences, and is, at the least, a serious temptation to connivance of a kind which no judicial caution can efficiently guard against. Again, the process of investigating the story of such offences is in the highest degree pernicious to public morals, fosters a crop of spies and informers of the most pestilential description, and implies the production of evidence of a minute and indirect kind little fitted for the rude manipulation of even the best administered court of justice. It is not necessary to do more here than advert to the scandalous and misleading inequality in the English law as to the different grounds for granting a divorce to a woman and to a man. The history and grounds of the difference afford no excuse whatever for its continuance.

(3) The third course before the statesman is the only one left for consideration: and, however repulsive this course naturally seems at the first blush to those whose conception of marriage is the loftiest, it is, in truth, the only political course which, in the end, is wholly favourable to the universal culture of marriage in its most un mutilated and unexceptionable forms. This course is, as was said, to allow divorce at the wish of either of the parties, trusting entirely to moral agencies of all sorts to render such divorces as infrequent as possible. The shock, indeed, of the sudden introduction of such a system of legislation would be great and hazardous. But it is here only of moment to estimate what the final effect of such legislation would be. The State would, thereupon, publicly abnegate that function, which it can never fill, except in the most lame and clumsy manner, of being the direct moral illuminator of the nation. All educational and spiritual agencies in the country, the Church, sectarian bodies of every grade, the voices of home, of great men, great books, and great histories, would then step into their true place and give a value to marriage which, so long as a compulsory legal bond is the absorbing idea, it can never aspire after. The State does, under this last system, no more than aim at securing publicity for the act of marriage and for that of divorce, and that suitable provision be made for the guardianship and support of children in the several cases calling for it. So much the State, on its temporal and legal side, has a moral claim to insist upon, and not a whit more. Just as the State, on that side, wholly lacks the capacity of training young men and women to the acquisition of a spiritual insight which shall guide them aright in entering into the marriage union, as it further lacks the capacity to direct the wandering or engender penitence in the sinning, so is it only usurping a moral right which does not belong to it, and which it can never beneficially exercise, when it affects to define the grounds upon which a marriage shall or shall not continue.

#### IV.—SPECIAL LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN.

A sense of the actual differences in physical conformation, functions, and strength between the sexes, and a certain intuition that these differences really point to still deeper grounds of true opposition not fully to

be discovered till civilisation had greatly advanced, have led in all countries to marked differences in legislation for the two sexes severally. Among the topics as to which these differences have been, and are, most commonly found the following may be roughly classified:

- (1) Guardianship of women.
- (2) Restrictions in capacity of owning and of succeeding to rights of ownership.
- (3) Educational endowments.
- (4) Limitation of occupations.
- (5) Employment of women in factories.
- (6) Inspection of conventual establishments.

It is not necessary to go into the majority of these heads at great length, as the whole argument of this treatise is mainly directed against that mechanical and arbitrary view of the difference between the sexes upon which alone the large bulk of all this special legislation for women can alone rest. Most of the laws applicable to these several topics are very ancient. Some few of them are alleged to be the most recent discoveries of modern sagacity. Some of them, again, are the mere offshoots and corollaries of peculiar political institutions. Others are confessedly founded upon, or defended by reference to, nothing else than the barest expediency. Thus, (1) the whole doctrine of the perpetual minority of women in Roman law was a mere branch of the general system of the Roman family, in which there was always one male head who acted as representative of the whole, and everyone else—men, women, and slaves—within the limits, natural or artificial, of the family, was in a condition of greater or less subordination. Thus every woman, for the whole course of her life, was subject, in some degree or another according to circumstances, to her father, guardian, or husband. So, (2) as to a woman's capacity to succeed, by English law, to land where the previous owner has made no will, the rule is determined by considerations drawn from the leading principles of the feudal system. She "takes" only as a "coparcener" or jointly with her sisters, if any. The ground of this, no doubt, was that, whereas a son was always sought for to stand in his father's place and to perform the services due to his lord, the daughters were all equally valueless to him, and if, by custom or otherwise, they inherited at all, there was no feudal ground for preferring any one of them to another.

As (3) respects educational endowments, the founders of them in this country were often wiser and more far-seeing than their descendants. Property was often left for the education and sustenance of boys and girls alike, yet, owing to the long prevalence of the superstition as to the respective functions in the State of men and women, the mass of the property has, in too many cases, been absorbed by the boys, and only a nominal portion applied to the education of girls.

Akin (4) to this abuse, and at once the cause and effect of it, has been the sharp legal demarcation between the occupations of men and women, especially in the higher, or what is called the "professional" departments of human action. This class of restraining laws will again come on for consideration in treating of the political capacity of women. In the meantime it must be noticed, that all those

protective laws which affect to predict what class of work women are or are not fitted for, are open to all the objections which have here been throughout so strongly insisted upon, of making false and artificial divisions, confounding real distinctions, and substituting the hard maxims of ignorant law-givers living at a particular epoch for the true and spontaneous revelations brought about by a long line of living attempts, experiments, disappointments, corrections, and successes.

The laws (5) regulating the modes and times of employing women in factories have this advantage, that they, professedly at least, have in view the protection of the weak against the strong. It is not the place here to discuss at length the general policy and proper limits of such protective legislation. As regards the English Factory Acts, there is little doubt that they have done much good in the way of arresting the course of tyranny and extortion, and of generally raising the standard of moral responsibility among employers. It is, however, open to doubt whether by fixing the standard of legal responsibility at a certain definite, though high level, such laws do not prevent a still more cogent sense of the moral responsibility involved in the relation of employer and employed being hereafter attained.

As respects (6) the claim advanced in some quarters in favour of the public inspection of conventual establishments, nothing but the substantiation of facts amounting to widespread habits of criminal conspiracy and persecution can justify such an inroad on the liberty of women to organise themselves in any form and for any purpose they choose, not incompatible with the direct safety of the State. It is derogatory to the character of womanhood, and to the ideal of that character the statesman must ever keep before his eyes, to suppose that women need more protection than men do against the consequences of their own acts deliberately performed after reaching years of discretion. It is nothing to the purpose that, as things now are, and owing to a vicious policy and perverted social feeling in the past, the majority of women are, at the present moment, less competent to take care of their interests than men. It is this very imbecility that has to be provided against in the future, and no enervating protective policy can provide against it. So soon as the whole education and civic training of women is habitually assimilated to that of men, any special protection of women who deliberately choose to live a collegiate life in seclusion by themselves, will be seen to be the glaring anomaly and anachronism it in truth is.

#### V.—POLITICAL CAPACITY OF WOMEN.

It is true that, up to quite modern times, the notion of conceding to women any appreciable share in the government of the State was not so much as even guessed at, except here and there in the more or less neglected pages of a political utopist. It is not necessary to search far for reasons for this. If it is not true that nothing but physical force applied from without induced men to enter upon a career of civilisation, it is at least unquestionably true that, in primitive times, the main work of government is that of maintaining the rudest form of order within and defending the integrity of the nation against rivals without. At such an epoch physical courage, habits of vehement self-assertion, unscrupulous hardihood, are rather in demand than subtlety of

thought, delicacy of insight, and accurate habits of balancing one against the other the competitive claims of the present and the future, of one set of persons and another, and of one set of purposes and another. These archaic facts and necessities explain the unruffled complacency with which semi-civilised nations confine all the functions of government, even the most passive ones, to men. These deeper reasons, however, of the nullification of women as a political element are, of course, reinforced by the same coarse and rude influences, which for ages tend to narrow the basis of government, even when all share in it is confined to men. Selfishness, jealousy, contempt of the weaker and less aggressive or materially potent members of society, and like persistent foibles or vices, as they long maintain the prestige of aristocratic or plutocratic forms of government, so do they tell with peculiar force against the possible claims of women.

But there is yet a further and new obstacle in the way of equalising the political situation of men and women, and which, strange to say, is the very product of a high degree of civilisation itself. There comes a time when, in most quarters an indeterminate instinct, in some few a rational conviction, begins to gain ground that the marriage union is the true symbol and type of a perfectly organised society, and that the reciprocity of function and mutuality of sentiment implied in that union have their exact counterpart in the reciprocal obligations of the several citizens composing the State. As this conception gains force and consistency, it is seen that, in order to economise to the full this reciprocity of obligation, the State must undergo a twofold organisation. Of one branch of this organisation the governing instrument is the might of concentrated moral influences; of the other, coercive and imperative law. It becomes clear also that the department of the whole controlling forces in the nation which wields this instrument of law has or will have a far narrower and poorer province than the authorities composing the other department, which affects directly to instruct and discipline the spirits and wills of men. It is further noticed that no greater honour or dignity is rightly attached to those who dominate in one region of national government than to those who dominate in the other, and that, of the two, the loftier and finer qualities of man's nature are rather called forth in the spiritual than in the temporal domain. So far, the facts and reasoning are, it is believed, irrefragable.

But just at this point begins all the false reasoning which has invariably infected the history of legislation affecting to describe the respective provinces of the sexes. It has been urged that, because women generally, as contrasted with men, seem to possess in the most conspicuous degree the moral and intellectual qualities which are needed to operate effectually on the characters and tempers of men and women, therefore women ought to be hemmed in by law within the precincts so pointed out, and forcibly excluded from competition with men in the other region of temporal government. This is the old protective system of legislation, which has done such incalculable mischief in the way of confounding the true relations of the sexes. It would be just as reasonable to attempt an arbitrary distinction, for purposes of conceding poli-

tical rights, between men possessed of the higher mental qualifications and other men scarcely less signally endowed as between all men and all women.

Over and above this general objection to the reasoning of those who seek by law to restrict the political action of women, it must never be forgotten that, whatever class of special work women may hereafter generally undertake as most likely to conduce to their public usefulness, the duty and right of exercising the suffrage cannot but be distinctly beneficial both to themselves and to others in a variety of ways. All speculation and feeling is apt to be indecisive and aimless if dissociated from action. The staring necessity of saying "aye" or "no" in a critical moment, when material consequences will follow on the judgment, is, for some of the most conscientious and scrupulous minds, an indispensable stimulus to steady and thorough thinking. A large measure of the weakness and uncertainty of belief which pervades modern literature and speech is due to the sedentary habits peculiar to a badly constructed system of national life, in which action and thought are driven to opposite poles of the social scale. Men either enervate themselves by isolated thinking or brutalise themselves by never-ending work. The more cogent is the proof that to women belong the highest functions in the task of social organization, the more inexorably it follows that the liberty of exercising the suffrage should be conceded to them by way of enabling them to perfect their qualifications for their nobler office.

But there are additional grounds, both in the interests of women themselves and of the whole community, why no arbitrary line should be drawn between the political capacities of men and women. Unless a woman learn, through personal moral trial, what is the nature of an ordinary citizen's public responsibility, there is little likelihood of her attaining that amount of political education which she needs in order (1) to stimulate men in discharge of the duties cast upon them, (2) to train up the coming generation to a grave and prevalent sense of their civic vocation, and (3) to secure peace and rest for herself amid the conflicting waves of family anxieties and personal disappointments, in the only way in which any human being can secure them,—that is, in absorbing and self-sacrificing efforts for great and lasting human ends. If women are excluded from performing the acts of citizens, it will never be generally expected that they should understand the character of those acts, and the existing temptations to political ignorance and indolence are already insuperable enough without intensifying them by positive laws.

The consequences to the State of restricting the political privileges of women are even more pernicious and far-reaching than to the women themselves in their personal capacity. Not only are those questions in which women have, and must ever have, an apparently or really opposite interest from men likely to be neglected by a legislature elected wholly by men, but a large class of questions of yearly increasing moment specially need all the light that the best men and women can jointly shed upon them. Politics are daily becoming a less coarse and cunning art, and their practice is more and more determined by severely scientific conceptions and habits, as well as irradiated by a novel class of complex sentiments

and aspirations. Furthermore, a class of interests is daily becoming matter of more and more serious consideration,—such as the administration of poor relief, pauper hospitals, criminal law amendments, reformation of criminals, international relations in respect of marriage, national character, domicile, and war,—which, for their treatment, make peculiar claims on the very characteristics designated by some, whether contumeliously or not, as "feminine." All such topics do indeed demand in those who approach them a certain freshness of sensibility, a practical tenderness towards obscure and neglected members of the human family, an enlarged conception of a future comprehensiveness of relationship reaching to all members of that family in all lands, such as women have universally exhibited in at least an equal degree with men.

On all these grounds the exclusion of women from a share in practical political life can never be justified in reason; and, if this is so, it only needs time and habit to make people so far familiar with the opposite conception to express it in action. There are some, indeed, who timorously apprehend all kinds of confusion in marriage relations from the opening supposed to be afforded through political equality to discussion and wrangling between the parties to a marriage. This fear touches on one alone of the myriad problems of marriage by which only, out of duality and opposition, the highest possible unity is attainable. The solution is to be found in the increase of congenial marriages based on spiritual sympathy rather than material motives, in the legitimate moral influences of each of the parties on the other, and, lastly, in that elevated degree of self-abnegation which would lead each of the parties then most to respect and love the other when the conscience of that other most practically confessed its loyal subjection to what was higher than both.

#### VI.—CONCLUSION.

It has been attempted, in the foregoing pages, to determine the actual forms in which difference of sex has been recognised in all legal systems; and, furthermore, to ascertain the true principles which ought to guide the recognition of such difference. The one part of the enquiry thus belongs to the region of Jurisprudence, or the science which deals with law in its necessary bearing on the universal facts of human life and the natural world; the other part belongs to Legislation, in that sense of the term which it is nearly convertible with general politics. It has been seen that, excepting the case of marriage and the occasional need of special protection due to real physical weakness, the sole roots of exceptional legislation for women have been either a belief in an absolute inferiority of one sex to the other, or else a series of impotent efforts to map out, by arbitrary prescription, the several regions of men's and women's occupations and interests. The underlying assumptions have been false and disastrous in either case.

In the first place, whatever apparent inferiority attaches to women either is only another name for the peculiarity of nervous structure, which renders a woman's true strength less palpable to the coarse intelligence of the vulgar, or else may be properly attributed to the tyrannical and contemptuous treatment to which, during the infancy of national life, women in all countries have been submitted.

In the second place, it is a hopeless and suicidal effort to attempt to prescribe, by legal limitations of any kind, direct or indirect, the functions of the sexes severally. This has sufficiently appeared from considerations of the following kind. Those who believe most vehemently in the actual opposition of the two sexes to each other, and who look to the innumerable and indefinite reactions of the two sexes upon each other as the sole ground and possibility of civilisation, are entitled to maintain, that this opposition and these reactions must be allowed freely to exhibit themselves in the most minute and subdivided departments of thought, feeling, and action. It is a desertion of this position to attempt rudely to distinguish between one class of matters and occupations as exclusively belonging to men, and another as exclusively belonging to women. Even did such a distinction really exist, any effort to express it in law can only be directed by the coarse estimate of a particular set of lawmakers, actuated by the sentiments common in their own age. The law, being once made, creates a need for itself, and men and women gradually become unfitted for the tasks from which they are forcibly expelled.

The injurious effects of shutting out women from large regions of interest have told quite as heavily upon men as upon women themselves. There are many pressing questions of social order and progress which men have become incompetent to gaze upon in their true colours, from the life-long habit of never discussing them in the presence of women, or hearing them discussed by women. The result is that vicious legislation, thus proceeding solely upon men's view of the matter, goes far to perpetuate itself. Bad laws are made, the sexes are driven more and more asunder, and, in the place of a high social unity being perfected through a development of true differences and oppositions, false or imaginary differences are intensified, and startling gaps are opened up in the middle of the body politic, which nothing short of a wholesale sacrifice of the most cherished and antiquated superstitions about the several functions of men and women can ever close.

The conclusion is, that it is for the highest and best interests of all—men and women alike—that upon every one of the urgent problems of the day whether presented in the family, the State, or the brotherhood of nations, the mind of both sexes, and not of one only, be equally turned. Neither sex can see truly unless illuminated by the supplementary light contributed by the other; neither can feel truly unless quickened and steadied by the reciprocating sympathy of the other. Where law obtrudes its presence, and affects to separate what is eternally joined together, artificial disunion forthwith takes the place of a living moral co-operation. Admit and encourage such moral co-operation to the full by law, by the elevation of “public opinion,” by the formation in private circles of generous and intelligent sentiments, a new creation will displace the grating memories of the effete and turbid old. The men of the future will be greater as men, the women as women, than the men and women of the past; while the true fields in which men and women severally can most ably, usefully, and happily labour will manifest themselves with a clearness to which the definitions of law-givers bear about as much resemblance as the cavern torchlight to the mid-day sun.

## WOMEN'S PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY

Hon. Sec., MRS. GRENFELL.

12, JOHN STREET,  
BEDFORD ROW,  
W.C.

LEAFLET No. V.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

A List of 100 selected Books, Articles, Pamphlets Leaflets, Speeches and Tracts, on WOMAN, from the following standpoints :

1. Political.
2. Legal.
3. Economic.
4. Philosophic.
5. Historic.
6. Sarcastic and Caricatured.
7. Utopian.
8. Miscellaneous.

N.B.—Only recent articles, pamphlets, etc., are selected, unless

- (a) They display Historic or antiquarian value
- (b) They are the latest authority published on their particular subject.

The pamphlets, leaflets and tracts mentioned cost generally one penny each, rarely twopence.

Any one over 21 years of age can read in the Reading Room of the British Museum, Bloomsbury, W.C., for purposes of research and reference on obtaining a *Ticket*, which must be applied for at the Museum, and signed by a householder on personal knowledge of the applicant. The *Ticket* is gratis, and not transferable.

## I. POLITICAL.

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	DATE.	FORM.	WHERE CAN BE OBTAINED OR READ.
1 The History of Woman Suffrage	Stanton, Anthony, and Gage	Vol. I. Vol. II., 1861 } pp. 952, 1876 } Vol. III., 1876 } pp. 1013, 1885 }	Book, 3 Vols.	25, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden British Museum Reading Room
2 Speech on the admission of women to the Electoral Franchise, spoken in the House of Commons	John Stuart Mill, M.P.	May 26th, 1867	Published as Pamphlet	Trübner & Co., 'Times' etc.
3 The Enfranchisement of Women the law of the land	Sidney Smith	1879	Pamphlet	Trübner & Co.
4 The Political Emancipation of Women	Mr. W. S. B. McLaren, M.P.		Article in 'Westminster Review,' printed as a Pamphlet	Secretary Women's Suffrage Society, 29, Parliament Street, S.W.
5 The Political Enfranchisement of Women	Mr. Justin McCarthy, M.P.	February, 1890	Speech delivered at Bedford, printed in Pamphlet Form	Women's Suffrage Society, 29, Parliament St., S.W.
6 The Emancipation of Women (No. 3). Women's Suffrage	Mrs. Elmy	April 22nd, 1890	Leaflet, reprinted from 'Manchester Guardian'	Mrs. Elmy, Congleton, Cheshire
7 The Working of Woman Suffrage in Wyoming	Hon. Horace Plunkett	May, 1890	Article in 'Fortnightly Review,' reprinted as a Pamphlet	Free Library, S. A. Bristol Co., Cheyenne, Wyoming, U.S.
8 Address by Lady Carlisle	Lady Carlisle	July, 1890	Speech delivered at Carlisle, printed in Pamphlet Form	Hon. Sec. Paddington Women's Liberal Association, 32, Talbot Rd., W.
9 Should Women have the Vote?	Henry Dunckley, LL.D.	1890	Pamphlet	Women's Suffrage Society, Queen's Chambers, John Dalton St., Manchester
11 Woman in Politics and Jurisprudence	Mrs. Isabella Beecher Hooker	1891	Washington, printed in Pamphlet Form.	Tribune, Washington, D.C., United States
12 The New Reform Bill. Sections 5 and 6	Fabian Society	February, 1891	Address, printed in Pamphlet Form.	Ditto
13 Dialogue between a member of a Women's Liberal Association, and a Liberal M.P.	Mrs. Pumphrey	1891	Tract	Fabian Society Office, 276, Strand, W.C.
14 Are Women wanted as County Councillors?	W. L. F.	May, 1891	Leaflet	Trübner & Co.

## II. LEGAL.

1 Settlement of the Egyptian sub-priest Uah on his wife	W. M. Flinders-Petrie	XIth Dynasty (1890)	Chapter of Book—('Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara')	British Museum Reading Room
2 Liberté de la Femme à Babylone	J. Oppert	(1891)	Article in 'Revue d'Assyriologie et Archéologie Orientale'	British Museum Reading Room
3 The early History of the Property of Married Women as collected from Roman and Hindoo Law	Sir Henry Maine	(1873)		
4 Recherches sur la condition civile et politique des femmes	Ed. Laboulaye	1843	Book	British Museum Reading Room
5 Women's Rights under the Law	Mrs. C. H. Dell	1861	Book	British Museum Reading Room
6 Difference of Sex as a Topic of Jurisprudence and Legislation	Professor Sheldon Amos	1870	Pamphlet	British Museum Reading Room

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	DATE.	FORM.	WHERE CAN BE OBTAINED OR READ.
7 The Rights of Women. A comparison of the Relative Legal Status of the Sexes in the chief countries of West. Civilisation	Anon.	1875	Book	British Museum Reading Room
8 The Rights and Duties of Women in Local Government	Lydia Becker	1879		Women's Suffrage Society, 10, Great College Street, Westminster
9 The Married Women's Property Act	Anon.	1882	Book	Ward, Lock & Co.
10 The Law in Relation to Women	A lawyer	September, 1887	Article from 'Westminster Review' republished as a Pamphlet	Free Library.—Women's Suffrage Guild, 13, Albert Road, Southport
11 The Status of Women in India	Dayaram Gidumal	1889	Book	British Museum Reading Room
12 The decision of the Clitheroe Case and its consequences	Mrs. Elmy	April, 1891	Pamphlet reprinted from 'Manchester Guardian'	Mrs. Elmy, Congleton, Cheshire
13 Civil Rights of Women	Mrs. Eva. McLaren	1891	Pamphlet	Women's Suffrage Society, 29, Parliament Street, Westminster
14 The Law of Husband and Wife	Lord Shand	April 13th, 1891	Leaflet, reprinted from 'The Times'	Mrs. Elmy
15 The Law as it affects Women	Mrs. Warner Snoad	1891	Leaflet No. 2	Hon. Sec. Women's Progressive Society, 12, John St., Bedford Row, W.C.
16 Married Women and Municipal Elections	W. F. L.	1891	Leaflet	Hon. Sec. Women's Franchise League, 31, St. James's Place, S.W.

### III. ECONOMIC.

1 Le travail des Femmes au XIX. ième Siècle	Leroy-Beaulieu	1873	Book	British Museum Reading Room
2 Woman in the Past, Present and Future	August Bebel	Translated, 1887	Book	British Museum Reading Room
3 Women's Work	Miss Clara Collet	1889	Chaper in 'Life and Labour in East London,' by C. Booth	British Museum Reading Room
4 The Sweating System	Mrs. Charles McLaren	1890	Pamphlet	Women's Liberal Federation, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.
5 Pit-girls		1890	Article in 'Spectator'	Free Library
6 Can Women Combine?	E. P. Wright	June, 1890	'Macmillan's Magazine'	Free Library
7 Trades Unionism for Women	Lady Dilke	June, 1890	The 'New Review' (article)	British Museum Reading Room
8 Women Chain and Nail Makers		April 18th, 1891	Article in 'Pall Mall Gazette'	Free Library
9 Women and Work (two articles)	I. M. Jules Simon II. Miss Clementina Black	September, 1891	The 'New Review'	British Museum Reading Room

### IV. PHILOSOPHIC.

1 An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex	Mary Astell.	1697	Book	British Museum Reading Room
2 Woman not inferior to Man	Sophia, a Lady of Quality.	1740	Book	British Museum Reading Room
3 Vindication of the Rights of Women	Mary Wollstonecraft.	1792 (1891)	Book, reprint with introduction by Mrs. Fawcett	British Museum Reading Room

TITLE.	AUTHOR	DATE	FORM.	WHERE TO BE OBTAINED OR READ.
4 Woman's Rights and Duties considered with relation to their influence on Society, and on her own condition	A woman (Harriet Martineau)	1840	Book	British Museum Reading Room
5 Influence and Office in the case of Women	Harriet Martineau	October, 1851	Letter from Miss H Martineau at Cromer read at Worcester. U.S.	British Museum Reading Room
6 Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge	H. T. Buckle	April, 1858 (printed)	Buckle's Miscellaneous Works. Discourse delivered at the Royal Institution. Also printed in 'Fraser's Magazine'	British Museum Reading Room
7 The Subjection of Women	J. S. Mill	1869	Book	British Museum Reading Room
8 The Morality of Married Life	Montague Cookson	October, 1872	Article in 'Fortnightly Review'	British Museum Reading Room
9 The Future of Single Women		January, 1884	Article in 'Westminster Review'	British Museum Reading Room
10 Questioni Sociali	Signora Cimino Folliero di Luna	1882	Book	British Museum Reading Room
11 The Fitness of Women for the Ministry of Religion	F. P. Cobbe	1882	Chapter of Book: 'The Peak of Darton'	British Museum Reading Room
12 The influence of Women on French Literature	F. Brunetièrre	November, 1886	Article in 'Revue des deux Mondes'	British Museum Reading Room
13 Mental Difference between Men and Women	G. Romanes	May, 1887	Article in the 'XIXth Century Review'	British Museum Reading Room
14 Women and their Sphere	E. Fairfax Byrrne	January & February 1888	Two Nos. of 'Our Corner,' (extinct magazine)	British Museum Reading Room
15 The Woman's Question	Ka Pearson	1888	Three chapters of the 'Ethics of Free Thought'	British Museum Reading Room
16 The Apple and the Ego of Woman	A. Grenfell	April, 1889	Article in 'Westminster Review'	British Museum Reading Room
17 The Position of Women	D. R. Ritchie	1889	Chapter of Book: 'Darwinism and Politics'	British Museum Reading Room
18 Human Selectio	Alfred R. Wallace	September, 1890	Article in 'Fortnightly Review'	Free Library

## V. HISTORIC.

1 Exceedingly small portions of Ptah-Hotep, Herodotus, Caesar, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pausanias, and other ancient writers; no interest apparently having been taken in ancient times, in the condition of Women				
2 The Matriarchate	Mrs. Cady Stanton	(1891)		Office of 'Women's Tribune,' Washington, U.S.
3 Mr. Stuart-Glennie on the origin of Matriarchy	A Nutt and J. Jacobs	(September, 1891)	'Folk-Lore Magazine'	British Museum Reading Room
4 De la condition de la femme dans la famille Athénienne au Ve et au IVe Siècle	R. Lallier	1875	Book	British Museum Reading Room
5 English Female Artists	Ellen C. Clayton	1876	Book, 2 Vols.	Tinsley. British Museum Reading Room
6 Female Warriors	Ellen C. Clayton	1879	Book, 2 Vols.	Tinsley. British Museum Reading Room

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	DATE	FORM.	WHERE CAN BE OBTAINED OR READ.
7 Women of To-day	Lady Catherine Milne-Gaskell	November, 1889	Article in 'XIXth Century Review'	Free Library
8 La Femme Allemande	Mme. Anne St. Cère	June, 1889	Article in La 'Nouvelle Revue'	British Museum Reading Room
9 Women in Spain		June, 1889	Article in 'Fortnightly Review'	Free Library
10 The Position of Women among the Early Christians	Principal Donaldson	September, 1889	Article in 'Contemporary Review'	Free Library
11 Women of Turkey and their Folk-Lore	Miss Garnett	1890	Book, 2 Vols.	British Museum Reading Room
12 Woman's Life in Old Italy	R. Davy	September, 1891	Article in National Review	Free Library
13 History of Human Marriage	E. Westermarck	1891	Book, pp. 644	British Museum Reading Room. Macmillan
14 The Woman's Movement in the South Southern States of U.S.A.	A. D. Mayo	October, 1891	Article, 'New England Magazine'	Boston
<b>VI. SARCASTIC AND CARICATURED.</b>				
1 Lysistrata	Aristophanes.	411 B.C.	Drama	British Museum Reading Room
2 The Hitopadesa, page 88	Translated from the Sanscrit, by C. Wilkins.	Circa 790 A.D. 1885	Book	British Museum Reading Room. Routledge. Morley's Universal Lib.
3 Mundus alter et idem	Joseph Hall.	1606	Chapter of Book No. V 'Viragima'	British Museum Reading Room
4 Les Femmes Savantes	Molière.	1672	Drama	British Museum Reading Room

#### VII. UTOPIAN.

1 Portions of the following:— Republic	Plato.	Circa 380 B.C.	Book	British Museum Reading Room
2 Utopia	Sir Thomas More.	1515	Book	"
3 The City of the Sun	Campanella.	Circa 1629	Book	"
4 Icarie	Étienne Cabot.	1842	Book	"
5 The Princess	Tennyson.	1847	Book	"
6 The Coming Race	Bulwer-Lytton	1871	Book	"
7 Looking Backward	Bellamy.	1888	Book	Boston, Mass.; reprinted in England, 1/-
8 News from Nowhere	William Morris.	1891	Book	Reeves and Turner, 1/-

#### VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

1 The Ancren Riwle, Regulæ Inclusionarum	Translated from Semi-Saxon 1853	13th Century	Book. Printed for the Camden Society	British Museum Reading Room
2 The Letters of Dorothy Osborne	Edited by E. A. Parry 1887	1652-54	Book	"
3 Aurora Leigh	Mrs. Browning	1857	Book	"
4 Nora, or the Doll's House	H. Ibsen	1879	Drama	"
5 Mrs. Carlyle's Letters	Edited by J. A. Froude	1883	Book, 3 Vols.	"
6 The Higher Education of Women	Helen Lange	1891	Book	Appleton & Co.
7 A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt	George Meredith	1879	Article in 'Fortnightly Review'	British Museum Reading Room

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	DATE.	FORM.	WHERE CAN BE OBTAINED OR READ.
8 Three Dreams in a Desert	Olive Schreiner	August, 1887	Allegory in 'Fortnightly Review'	British Museum Reading Room
9 A Lady of the Sea	H. Ibsen	1889	Drama	"
<i>Periodicals.</i>				
10 The Englishwoman's Journal. Changed to	Miss C. A. Biggs, Editor	1858-1866	Magazine	"
11 The Englishwoman's Review	Miss H. Blackburn, Editor	1866-1891	Now a Quarterly Magazine	"
12 The Women's Herald, formerly the Woman's Penny Paper	Miss H. B. Temple, Editor	From January, 1891, October 1888 to January 1891	Newspaper: price 1d., appears weekly	"
<i>Dictionaries.</i>				
13 Women of the Time, being a Dictionary of Authenticated Biographical Records of Eminent Women of the Day	C. F. Rideal	In the Press 1892?	Book	Sampson Low
14 A Cyclopædia of Female Biography	H. C. Adams	1866	Book	
15 Women of the Day	Frances Hayes	1885	Book	
16 A Women's Suffrage Calendar 1892	Miss H. Blackburn, Editor	December, 1891	Booklet, pp, 68	Simpkin & Marshall, price 3d.

December, 1891

ALICE GRENFELL,  
Hon. Sec. W.P.S.

# OPINIONS

OF

## LIBERAL LEADERS

### MR. GLADSTONE.

"All those who live in a country should take an interest in that country, love that country, and the vote gives that sense of interest, fosters that love." . . . "So far as I am able to form an opinion of the general tone and colour of our law in these matters, where the peculiar relations of men and women are concerned, that law does less than justice to women, and great mischief, misery, and scandal result from that state of things in many of the occurrences and events of life."

### JUSTIN M'CARTHY, M.P.

"I have long felt deeply interested in this great question of the enfranchisement—or one might call it the emancipation—of women. . . . With enthusiastic support on both sides of the House and with some of the leading and foremost men on both sides, the success of the measure cannot be long deferred."

### Rt. Hon. SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN, Bart., M.P.

"My own view is that women should have votes, but that neither men nor women should have the property vote."

### SIR WILFRID LAWSON, Bart., M.P.

Speaking of the Women's Suffrage Bill, Sir Wilfrid Lawson said "It was a measure calculated to purify and ennoble and elevate the national life of this country, and to bring in its train those blessings which always attend a policy of freedom and justice."

[P.T.O.]

**Rt. Hon. JAMES STANSFELD, M.P.**

“Women press forward their claims to take part in the making of laws which affect them as well as men, and have given practical evidence of their increasing fitness and aptitude for legislative, administrative, educational, industrial and professional work and responsibility. The same period has seen women successfully undertaking a great and increasing variety of industrial occupations, competing with men for the highest academic honours, forcing their way into the medical profession, to which they have a special right and claim, and taking their part and place in the work of County Councils, School Boards, and Boards of Guardians. It is of the highest importance to maintain their double advance. I am, *a priori*, opposed to all legislative restrictions save those of proved necessity. With regard to that I would quote from the late Lord Derby, “If it is said there are employments or conditions of employments which women ought, in their own interest, not to be allowed to undertake, I answer them that then it is essential that women should first share in the making of laws so seriously affecting them.” I maintain that the existence of such laws and the tendency to make them more stringent is the strongest possible reason for extending to women the Parliamentary franchise.”

CONFERENCE, Dec. 1891.

**The Late Rt. Hon. HENRY FAWCETT, M.P.,  
Postmaster General.**

“Search through the speeches that have been delivered in favour of the enfranchisement of the rural householder, and I say there is not an argument or an appeal that has been made which does not bring into striking relief the injustice of saying that no woman shall be admitted to any share in the government of her country. How often have we heard it said, “Be just and fear not”? Does this maxim apply only to men?”

I believe the demand of women householders to be enfranchised will not rest until it is conceded. You will have to do it sooner or later, and sooner is better than later.”

TOWN HALL, SHOREDITCH, October 13th, 1884.

Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1s. 6d. per 100, post free.

# AN APPEAL

TO

MEMBERS of the HOUSE of COMMONS

ON THE QUESTION OF

## Women's Suffrage.

—:0:—

IT is to be regretted that the subject of Women's Suffrage was not discussed in Parliament this session.\* Various influences led to this unfortunate decision. Some Members, perhaps, were glad of any chance to shirk a question that might weaken, and was unlikely to strengthen, their own position. Some could not resist an appeal for equality of treatment of all motions, if Government were to monopolise the

\* Mr. Haldane had secured a first place for a Motion in favour of Women's Suffrage on 24th April, and Mr. Woodall for his “Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill” on Wednesday, 13th May. But as a Motion and a Bill cannot both stand on the orders it was decided, on the assurance of the Government that facility would be given for the discussion of Mr. Woodall's Bill, that Mr. Haldane's Motion should be withdrawn. The Government afterwards decided to take all Wednesdays for government business, and on 30th April brought forward a motion to that effect, practically, however, leaving it open for them to except the 13th May in accordance with their promise. Sir Henry James met this with an amendment that if Wednesdays were to be taken they should all be taken, and no favour shown to one measure more than another. This amendment was carried, and the question of Women's Suffrage was effectually shelved for the session.

whole time of the House. Others, like the present writer, coming in late to the division, did not fully appreciate the bearings of the question as put from the chair. We had, indeed, a striking instance of the difficulties into which the division bells often involve Members, when in voting what is technically right on a subject of little practical import, they may be throwing serious difficulties in the way of the progress of truth and justice.

A general election cannot be far off. Women's Suffrage is a deeply important subject, on which members should rather seek than decline an opportunity of declaring their views.

Fifty years ago prevalent opinion regarding the sphere of women was widely different from that of to-day. While it was held proper that they should spend their lives in coal mines, behind tavern bars, and on the stage, it was considered unbecoming for them to compete openly with men in public affairs or the higher walks of life. We had indeed advanced considerably upon the time of the Stuarts and Louis XIV.—we had reached the era of Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austin, Emily Shore, the Brontes, Mary Somerville and Mary Howitt, many of whom saw far beyond their time. (I do not mention the names of any of the great American women of the period, unknown to most of the present generation in the United Kingdom.) How widely did the female ideals of the novelists and poets who wrote in the thirties and forties differ from the ideals of these who write at present! "Sweet girl graduates" appeared almost as unreal conceptions as "the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

It is not very surprising that the franchise should then have been withheld from women.

At present, however, we have advanced many steps in this as in many other respects. Numbers of careers then closed are now open to women. They carry off the highest honours at our universities, often in subjects in which it used to be thought the female intellect would never excel. Women are taking their proper place in the medical profession. They vote at municipal and subsidiary elections in England, they sit as guardians at Poor-law boards, they sit on school boards; they take their share in public affairs, and their place on Liberal and Primrose platforms. Much of the good-will that is now happily knitting together Ireland and England is due to the steadfast sympathy and helpful devotion shown by female delegates, many of the more important of whom keenly feel the deprivation of political rights to which the law at present condemns them. No party objects to women coming forward when its cause is to be served. And yet society survives. Mrs. Jellabys are rarer than ever. The broader and loftier are the views women gain of life, and the better they are trained, and the more exact their knowledge, the less likely they are to neglect their nearest duties. The educated woman is a less one-sided character than the educated man. Responsibility is in itself developing.

The more women take their right place beside men, and the greater their equality before the law, the more glaring becomes the anomaly of their being denied the franchise. What more absurd than that a Mrs. Bryant, a Miss Cobden, a Miss Fawcett, should be prohibited

from voting, whilst special provisions are made for the suffrage of men who cannot read and write? There is not an argument put forward against the enfranchisement of women that has not already done service in opposing the extension of the franchise among men. Responsibility ennobles and develops. It is more and more recognised that no class without representation can have its interests properly attended to, or will give its needful intelligent assistance in maintaining the fabric of the state. Yet half the community, whatever their qualifications of property, education, intelligence, and public service, have not collectively the direct legislative power of one drunken, illiterate, disorderly male room-keeper, who may have to be assisted into a polling-booth to record his vote! This state of things is unworthy of the present age; it being an admitted fact that at all eras, and in all countries, the condition of women is the highwater mark of civilisation.

It is pure assumption to say that "most men rapidly and easily take to politics, most women will never do so, because the Creator has made them different." Even the mere right to vote creates an interest in the larger concerns of the state. We cannot wrong women without injuring men. We cannot elevate women and call them to higher responsibilities without elevating men. As the wife is the husband is, holds true as the converse.

Men cannot know, nor can even women themselves, what spheres they are competent to fill until artificial barriers are removed. They show little confidence in the inherent differences in the mental characteristics of the sexes who seek to maintain these barriers.

Politics are not necessarily roughing and degrading, nor is there anything unwomanly in filling up a ballot-paper. A woman is never considered out of place in an emergency, whether loading a rifle or handling an oar. Much of the moral elevation of the movement for the abolition of slavery in the United States was due to the part taken in it by women on both sides of the Atlantic.

If it is better and happier for thousands of women that they should have to earn their own living, often in very rough and toilsome occupations, rather than to be dependent upon men, what becomes of arguments based upon the disastrous effects of anxieties incident to a participation in political interests? Such political cares sit lightly enough upon most men. The worries incident to a narrow life and narrow mental surroundings are more injurious than those borne by men and women with minds open to wide and noble interests.

If we continue to deny women the franchise, we should at least, as far as possible, give them special immunity from taxation.

Men have not hitherto shown such wisdom in the management of the affairs of the world that they can afford to dispense with any of the brain-power and enlightenment of humanity. None suffer more from oppression, from intemperance, from war, from unjust and vicious legislation, than women. The weaker physically they are admitted to be, the more necessary it is that they should not be deprived of any mental advantages.

Practical experience of the evils resulting from unwise legislation would be as likely to influence women

as it influences men. It is absurd to fear that they as a class would embarrass politics by taking up distinct, disturbing, impracticable lines. They are as likely to vary in their views, and to be influenced by friendship and association in political as in religious matters. Their influence in the one is as likely to be elevating as it is admitted to be in the other.

The utterly debased among women would not be more likely to care to qualify for the franchise than the utterly debased among men. The existence of a class of unhappy women given over to vice implies the existence of a far larger class of debased men—all the more dangerous in being unacknowledged as a class, and in permeating more or less secretly, as they do, all classes of society and almost every position in life. A recent publication has shown that the unfortunate class among women, at least in the centre—London—is mainly drawn, not from the working population, amongst which it is most likely women would be qualified for the franchise, but from the ranks of domestic service and those in attendance on the richer classes of society.

Party cowardice more than aught else bars the admission of women to the franchise. Nothing could tend more to warp political life, than to deny justice from fear of its consequences to our own cherished causes. What is morally right cannot be politically wrong. Substantial abiding advancement depends upon the extent to which we base our action upon broad principles of right and justice; not upon the number of temporary advantages we can snatch. Failure to recognise this cardinal truth tends to make political

life undignified and trivial. There are few political settlements that would not be strengthened if based upon a just exercise of the franchise by all classes of the community. I have more confidence in the innate rightfulness of the cause nearest to my heart—Home Rule for Ireland—than to suppose it could be perilled by doing justice to women as to men.

Politics are too often degraded by the readiness of politicians to sacrifice everything to one end. It is true that practical political work depends upon men being willing to subordinate or adjourn the consideration of subsidiary questions to those which they believe are of primary importance. Few, however, carry into political life deep convictions upon but one subject; and I am certain there are a large number of Members imbued with deep convictions regarding Women's Suffrage who could not sacrifice adherence to principle upon such an important issue.

✓ ALFRED WEBB.

*Dublin, 22nd June, 1891.*



Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1/6 per 100, post free.

Women's Printing Society, Ltd., Great College Street, Westminster.

The History of  
The Women's Suffrage Controversy

IN THE

Women's Liberal Federation.

---

ISSUED BY THE HULL WOMEN'S LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

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*Price a Halfpenny each, or 2s. 6d. per 100.*

To be obtained from Mr. WALTER J. BURTON, Bridge House, Anlaby  
Road, Hull; or in quantities of not less than 100, from the WOMEN'S  
PRINTING SOCIETY, Great College Street, Westminster.

THE HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE  
CONTROVERSY IN THE WOMEN'S  
LIBERAL FEDERATION.

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THE acute controversy which is dividing the Women's Liberal Federation on the question of its attitude to the subject of the Enfranchisement of Women, seems to make it desirable that a brief account should be given of the movement since the formation of the Federation in the early months of 1887. Many of the new Associations which are being formed every year find to their surprise that a controversy exists on what seems to them so plain a matter as to admit of no question; and they cannot understand why Women's Suffrage has not been one of the objects of the Federation from the beginning. As they have no means of easily obtaining authentic information on the subject, an additional reason is supplied for the compilation of the following facts, which will be given with only such explanations as are absolutely necessary.

FORMATION OF THE FEDERATION. 1887.

The Women's Liberal Federation was formed during the winter of 1886-7, and was formally constituted at a meeting in February, 1887. Mrs. Gladstone became President, Mrs. Fry and Mrs. Broadley Reid, Hon. Secretaries, and Mrs. Eva M'Laren, Hon. Treasurer. Its primary object was to advance Liberalism by organising Liberal women, but it did not in any way limit itself to working only for such measures as had received the approval of the Liberal leaders, or as had been included in the Liberal programme. Nor has any such limita-

tion ever been adopted by it. To achieve this end the two main objects as originally proposed were :

1. To promote the adoption of Liberal principles in the Government of the country.
2. To promote just legislation for women and children, and to protect their interests.

The first object was unanimously adopted, but the second pleased nobody. A divergence of views was at once apparent. The Suffrage Party objected to classing women with children, and desired an explicit declaration in favour of the enfranchisement of women; while the Anti-Suffrage Party protested against the mention of women at all. The result was that the second object was changed as follows: "To promote just legislation for all". The official record states "After the discussion of several amendments, the present form was adopted, but, in order to meet the objections of some of the minority, it was resolved to reconsider the subject at the first meeting of the Council". The minority were the representatives of Crewe, Bristol, Southport, and Nottingham, and they made a determined stand in favour of the recognition of the principle of Women's Suffrage.

#### FIRST MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At the first meeting of the Council in the summer of 1887, the subject again came up, and the second object was again altered to what it now is, namely: "To promote just legislation for women, and to protect the interests of children". In accepting this, the Suffrage Party held that it included by implication Women's Suffrage, but they maintained that it should be so stated in plain words. This was however the utmost concession that could be obtained from the Anti-Suffrage Party, who were in a large majority.

#### THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE PARTY.

It should here be stated that the term Anti-Suffrage Party, while strictly accurate, does not mean that each member of it was as an individual opposed to Women's Suffrage; on the contrary most of them professed approval of the principle in the abstract; but it means that they acted together as a Party to resist every attempt to make the Federation declare itself in favour of the Suffrage. That attitude they still maintain, and they are against the Suffrage on the Federation. The Suffrage Party on the other hand merely desired to make Women's Suffrage one of the objects of the Federation among all the other Liberal reforms, but they did not desire in any sense to make it a test question; nor, as has been alleged, to "turn the Federation into a Suffrage Society".

#### SECOND MEETING OF COUNCIL, 1888.

As the Anti-Suffrage Party made it clearly known that they did not consider that Women's Suffrage was included in the second object, it was moved at the Council meeting in May, 1888, by Miss Priestman, of Bristol, and seconded by Mrs. Josephine Butler, that the second object should be repealed, and the following one substituted: "To obtain the Parliamentary franchise for women, and to promote just legislation for all". About two hundred delegates were present, but only thirty-one voted for it. A similar amendment moved by Miss Mason, of Ashton-under-Lyne, was also defeated.

#### THIRD MEETING OF COUNCIL, 1889.

During the winter of 1888 and the spring of 1889, the feeling in favour of the suffrage grew rapidly in the Associations, but the change into two distinct parties on the Executive Committee was not seen so clearly till the Council meeting in 1889, when it was accelerated by other causes. At that meeting a resolution in the names of the Ashton-under-Lyne, Bristol, Brixton,

Crewe, Hyde, Ipswich, Newport and S. Monmouth, Nottingham, Plymouth, Southport, Stockport, Wells, and Winchester Associations was moved by Miss Chapman and seconded by Mrs Swan to insert as a new object :—

“ To obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for Women.”

After a long debate, this was defeated by 173 to 90. This showed a great advance on the previous year, when Miss Priestman's motion had been beaten by about five to one.

#### UNCONSTITUTIONAL CLAIM OF ANTI-SUFFRAGE PARTY.

##### FORMATION OF SUFFRAGE PARTY.

The feeling that the supporters of Women's Suffrage were now banded together gave new life to the work, and the question was everywhere asked, “ Shall the Federation exist merely to help the Liberal Party to win elections, or shall it not also help forward the cause of the political elevation and enfranchisement of women ?” The Anti-Suffrage Party began now to adopt a new line of argument which has no justification in the objects or rules of the Federation, nor even in its original intention. They urged that the Federation must take up nothing but what was included in the official Liberal programme; and that while it was bound to support everything that the Liberal programme contained, it must ignore, and even reject, Women's Suffrage, because the Liberal Party had not pronounced in favour of it. The Suffrage Party replied that they were equally anxious to work for the Liberal programme and Party; but that to be limited to this was out of the question, because it would make the Women's Federation a mere party-machine; and besides, no such limitation was contained in the first object, which was merely to promote the adoption of Liberal principles in the Government of the country. They further urged that Women's Suffrage was obviously a Liberal principle, whether adopted by the party-leader or not; and that moreover the second object,

“ To promote just legislation for women ”, was in itself outside and beyond the official Liberal programme, and if those words had any meaning at all, they must include women's suffrage.

#### FOURTH MEETING OF COUNCIL, 1890.

At the Council meeting of 1890, however, they so far modified their former attitude, that instead of endeavouring to alter the objects, they contented themselves with an abstract resolution. Notice was given of it by the following thirty-seven Associations: Atherton, Birmingham, Bow and Bromley, Bristol, South Bucks, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chatham, Coventry, Crewe, Croydon, Doncaster, Guildford, North Hackney, South Hackney, Hampstead, Hornsey, Hull, Hurst, East Islington, West Islington, South Kensington, Kettering, Mossley, Newport and South Monmouth, Nottingham, Paddington, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southport, Stockport, Sunderland, Torquay, Wells, South West Ham, Westminster, and Winchester. It was as follows:

“ That this Council is of opinion that the Franchise should be extended to women on the same terms as to men, and that the time has come when the enfranchisement of women ought to be included in the Liberal Programme.”

#### ATTEMPT TO DRAG IN MRS. GLADSTONE.

It is well known that the Anti-Suffrage Party felt the greatest hostility to this resolution, and that pressure was brought to bear on the honoured President of the Federation, Mrs. Gladstone, to induce her to declare herself opposed to it; while it was freely stated that she would resign if it were passed. Mrs. Gladstone was, however, far too sound a Liberal to yield to such pressure, and the statements about her resignation were as untrue as they were improper. As the honorary head of this great organisation she remained, and will doubtless continue to remain, entirely neutral, and she would never attempt to coerce the free decision of the Associations on a matter of either principle or policy by a threat of resignation.

CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE OF SUFFRAGE PARTY.

The Suffrage Party being anxious to conciliate their opponents, and if possible to secure unanimity, at the last moment modified the resolution, and it was moved by Miss Cobden and seconded by Mr. W. M'Laren, M.P., as follows :

"That this Council is of opinion that the Franchise should be extended to women on the same terms as to men, and that the earliest suitable opportunity should be taken of including it in the Liberal programme."

In this form it was carried with only ten dissentients, about 400 delegates voting for it. The Anti-Suffrage Party supported it on the distinct ground that it did not pledge the Federation to Women's Suffrage, and was merely the expression of the abstract opinion of that Council. In order however to emphasize this resolution as much as possible, Miss Cobden and Mrs. Maitland, members of the Suffrage Party, moved that copies be sent to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury. Whereupon the hostility of the Anti-Suffrage Party again showed itself, for in order to prevent any special prominence being given to the Suffrage resolution, Miss Orme moved, and Mrs. H. G. Reid seconded, an amendment to the effect that the whole Agenda paper be sent to the above named statesmen and other prominent public men. The Council understood the motive and rejected the amendment, carrying the original proposition by a large majority.

THE SUFFRAGE PARTY KNOWN AS THE PROGRESSIVES.

At this Council meeting, the Suffrage Party became more generally known by the name of the Progressive Party, which they now bear. They received this name because they declared it to be their policy that while the Federation must work loyally for the Liberal Party and the great cause of Home Rule as the chief question before the country, they must also go forward in demanding political justice for women, and must not become a mere electioneering machine. They hoped that a majority

holding their views would have been elected to the Executive Committee, on which they had hitherto been in a small minority; but in this they were disappointed. The composition of the Executive remained much as before, the Anti-Suffrage Party controlling it throughout. But the Progressives gained an invaluable addition to their ranks in the Countess of Carlisle, who was elected for the first time.

THE EXECUTIVE STILL IGNORE THE SUFFRAGE.

They were entitled, however, to expect that after the practically unanimous vote of the Council in favour of the principle of Women's Suffrage, the Executive Committee would have given its support in some way to the movement. But such was not the case, and they continued to treat the subject with complete indifference and even antagonism, ignoring the vote of the Council. There can be no stronger proof of this than a vote of the Executive Committee which was given on May 22nd, 1890, only eight days after the practically unanimous resolution of the Council in favour of Women's Suffrage. It is recorded in the *Women's Gazette* for August, 1890, as follows :—

"*Memorial to Members of Parliament and Women's Suffrage.*

Lady Carlisle moved, and Mrs. Eva M'Laren seconded :—

'That the Executive Committee, in their official capacity, urge the Liberal and Irish Members to do their utmost to ensure success in carrying the resolution in favour of Women's Suffrage, on the 3rd of June.'

The following ladies (9) voted for the motion :—Mrs. Bateson, Lady Carlisle, Miss Cons, Miss Cobden, Mrs. Costelloe, Mrs. C. B. M'Laren, Mrs. Eva M'Laren, Mrs. Broadley Reid, and Lady Sandhurst.

Against the motion 10 voted :—Mrs. Bryant, Miss Bryce, Mrs. Buchanan, Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Hancock, Miss E. Shaw-Lefevre, Miss Mundella, Miss Orme, Hon. Mrs. Ponsonby and Countess Tolstoy."

It became therefore clear that unless the Council took some stronger measure in favour of Women's Suffrage, and probably also unless the composition of the Executive was materially altered, there would be no change in the attitude of the Anti-Suffrage Party.

#### FIFTH MEETING OF COUNCIL, 1891.

During the winter of 1890-91 therefore the work of educating the Associations on the question of Women's Enfranchisement was vigorously carried on, and with such marked success that had the Anti-Suffrage Party remained in their old position they would have been completely defeated. The Progressives, recognising that a mere abstract expression of opinion was no longer sufficient, decided upon moving an instruction to the Executive at the Council meeting in 1891; and the following notice was sent in by Croydon, South Bucks, N.W. Durham, Guildford, S. Kensington, Paddington, Wells, Newport and S. Monmouth, Westminster, and Winchester:—

"That in furtherance of the Resolution passed by the Council in May, 1890, approving of the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women on the same terms as to men, this Council now instructs the Executive Committee to lose no opportunity of pressing forward the question both in the country and in Parliament."

#### NOMINAL ADVANCE OF ANTI-SUFFRAGE PARTY.

The Anti-Suffrage Party were fully aware that some advance was necessary to meet the strong feeling of the Associations, and Bradford, Deptford and Marylebone therefore gave notice of the following resolution:—

"That in consideration of the fact that the large majority of the Council voted in favour of Women's Suffrage last May, it is the duty of the Executive, and it be an instruction to them accordingly, to keep the Associations, during the ensuing year, carefully and immediately informed of every opportunity that may arise of promoting the political enfranchisement of women, either in Parliament or otherwise. Such information must state which class of women the proposal affects, so as to enable each Association to take, with full knowledge, such action as it deems desirable."

#### PROGRESSIVE RESOLUTION NEARLY CARRIED.

The resolution of the Progressives was moved by Lady Carlisle and seconded by Mrs. Wynford Philipps; but after considerable debate it was defeated by only 266 to 201, while about thirty or forty delegates did not vote, the total number being about 500. Such a small majority as sixty-five out of some 500 delegates shows the enormous advance which the principles of the Progressive Party have made; for the resolution was probably the strongest that could have been submitted, containing a distinct order to the Executive "to lose no opportunity of pressing forward the question both in the country and in Parliament". Such a resolution may well have been considered a stronger measure than making the Suffrage one of the objects of the Federation. Yet a transfer of thirty-three votes, equal merely to the full voting strength of seven Associations, would have carried the resolution.

Mrs. Bryant then moved and Mrs. Charles Hancock seconded the other resolution; which was carried. The Anti-Suffrage Party continued to have a large majority on the Executive Committee, which gave them complete control of it. Mrs. Bateson, a valued member of the Progressive Party, retired, and the Party also lost the excellent services on the Committee of Mrs. Charles M'Laren; but they gained an earnest worker in Mrs. Wynford Philipps.

#### THE TWO POLICIES.

While the resolution that was carried was for practical purposes of no value, it nevertheless marks a distinct advance even in the attitude of the majority on the Executive from the time when the advocates of the Suffrage could scarcely get a hearing, and when their attempts were defeated by overwhelming majorities. The two rival motions however bring into striking contrast the policies of the two sections on the Federation. The Progressives, seeing that the vast majority of political Liberal women desire the Suffrage, wish that the Federation as a whole

should adopt it as one among the many objects for which it works, and should instruct the Executive Committee as its representative to support the movement. The Anti-Suffrage Party take exactly the opposite view. They use their influence to prevent the Federation from dealing with or adopting the principle in any way; and while as an extreme concession to the Suffrage Party they consent to instruct the Executive Committee to distribute information about it, they have succeeded in preventing it from taking a single step on behalf of the Federation to help on the cause. They do this in face of the fact that in 1890 the Council by 400 votes to 10 declared itself in favour of Women's Suffrage, a practically unanimous vote which accurately represents the views of Liberal women on the subject. Since that time some even of the minority represented by the 10 votes have changed their views, and therefore when there is practical unanimity in its favour, it cannot be seriously contended that there is any good reason why the Federation should not boldly adopt Women's Suffrage as one of its objects.

THE PROGRESSIVE POLICY WILL UNITE THE FEDERATION.

This policy would cause no split and no dissatisfaction. On the contrary it would heal a breach which can be closed in no other way. There is in fact no reason why this cannot be done, save the determined hostility of a few leading members, who while they declare themselves in favour of the Suffrage in principle, resist its adoption by the Federation. And it cannot be too clearly kept in mind that with the exception of two or three whose opinions were doubtful, no single member of the Federation at any Council meeting has ever declared herself otherwise than as personally in favour of the Suffrage. There is therefore a unanimous opinion in favour of the measure in the abstract, and the question which must now be decided is whether, when such is the case, there is any reason to refuse to embody this act of justice to women among the avowed objects of the Women's Liberal Federation.

# Be Just and Fear Not.

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION  
SHOULD THE WOMEN'S LIBERAL FEDERATION  
DECLARE THAT ONE OF ITS  
OBJECTS IS TO OBTAIN THE  
ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN?

---

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# BE JUST AND FEAR NOT.

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

**Should the Women's Liberal Federation declare that one of its Objects is to obtain the Enfranchisement of Women?**

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SHOULD the Women's Liberal Federation declare that one of its objects is to obtain the enfranchisement of women?

This is the question which has agitated the Federation since its foundation, and which will continue to agitate it till it is answered by the Council in the affirmative. To the cause of women's suffrage the opposition of the majority of the Executive Committee of the Federation has been by no means an unmixed evil. Had the Federation at first avowedly adopted women's suffrage, much of the useful agitation of the last three years would never have taken place, and the subject might not have occupied the important position in the minds of the Associations which it now holds. But the time has come when the most serious injury will be done to the cause if the Federation continues to hold back, and an appeal must therefore be made to every Women's Liberal Association, and to the Federation as a whole, to embody this act of justice to women in their programme. This is the more necessary in view of the approaching General Election, because it is only fair to the Liberal Party to let them know that the Liberal women of the country desire that at an early date the claims of their sex to enfranchisement should receive serious consideration, with a view to practical legislation.

## HOME RULE THE ONLY TEST QUESTION.

Let it however be clearly understood that the Progressive Party in the Women's Liberal Federation in asking that women's suffrage shall be declared to be one of the objects of the Federation do not seek to make it a test question. They recognise in the fullest degree that Home Rule is the test question of the next General Election, and if the threats of the Conservative leaders are to be believed, it will also be the test question of even a second General Election. Upon that great cause of justice to Ireland all efforts must be centred. But there is no reason why, in the endeavour to do justice to Ireland, the demand for justice to women should be ignored. The women of Ireland desire justice as much as the men, and they should be allowed to have a voice in framing the laws which a Parliament in Dublin will enact for the Irish people.

## THE PROGRESSIVE POLICY.

The desire of the Progressive Party is merely that the enfranchisement of women should be included among the other objects for which the Federation openly and avowedly works. Surely a very moderate demand, which should cause no offence or difficulty to anyone, and which is the more reasonable because in May, 1890, the Annual Council meeting, by about four hundred votes to ten, passed the following resolution:—

“That this Council is of opinion that the Franchise should be extended to women on the same terms as to men, and that the earliest suitable opportunity should be taken of including the enfranchisement of women in the Liberal programme.”

It is surely somewhat inconsistent for the Federation thus to urge the Liberal Party to include women's suffrage in their programme when it has not yet included it in its own, and placed it among its own objects. The Liberal Party very naturally reply that they cannot place it in their programme till they are sure that the Liberal women are in earnest on the subject, and

that until it is formally and openly adopted by the Women's Federation the required proof is wanting. It is therefore almost entirely the fault of the women themselves that the Liberal Party ignore the question, and in fact treat it with contempt; while not a few Members, who are pledged to support it, take every opportunity of burking discussion in the House of Commons, and preventing Bills and Motions on the question from being brought forward. So long as women, and especially Women's Liberal Associations, treat the question with indifference, it is quite certain that Members of Parliament and party-leaders will do the same.

## THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE POLICY.

The Anti-Suffrage Party on the Executive Committee of the Federation seize this fact and base upon it an argument which is both novel and erroneous. They allege that the Women's Federation must limit itself to working only for such objects as are on the Liberal programme, and that because women's suffrage has not been sanctioned by the party leaders, and formally placed on the programme at the Newcastle Conference or elsewhere, the Federation must not merely ignore it, but must positively reject it; though they admit that individual Associations are free to take it up. Such an argument will not bear examination. It is in the first place inconsistent, because if each Association is free to adopt women's suffrage, then all the Associations acting jointly as a Federation are equally free to do so, notwithstanding its absence from the Liberal programme. To hold the contrary, as the Anti-Suffrage Party do, is to adopt the old Tory doctrine about the law of conspiracy, that what is lawful for a number of persons to do individually, becomes unlawful when they do it unitedly. Moreover, such an argument places the Women's Federation entirely in the hands of the men's National Liberal Federation. It was not Mr. Gladstone who drew up the Newcastle programme; it was the National

Liberal Federation, and Mr. Gladstone afterwards expressed his approval of it. In any case it is not right, and it never was the intention of the Liberal women to place their political consciences at the disposal of Party leaders and organisers, and to limit their action to such objects only as had received their official sanction.

MISS ORME STATES THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE POLICY.

Nevertheless this view was stated by Miss Orme with the utmost frankness at a meeting at Hull in December last. She delivered an address there to the Women's Liberal Association on the "Aims and Works of the Women's Liberal Federation", but she did not during her entire speech refer to the Suffrage, or to what are popularly called women's questions. This omission having been criticised, Miss Orme replied, and, as stated in the *Hull Daily News*, said, "that Women's Liberal Associations were called into existence for a specific purpose, *viz.*, to assist in the promotion of Liberalism, and until the question of Women's Suffrage was placed on the platform of the National Liberal Federation, they could not possibly take it up in the Women's Liberal Federation. At present that question could not even be called a political question, because it was advocated by Conservatives as well as Liberals. Personally she was a strong advocate of extending the franchise to women, and was lecturing on the subject only a few days ago. If the Women's Liberal Federation was an association for advocating the rights of women, it would be a logical position to take up, but at present that question could not be taken up without going outside the objects of the Federation." This extraordinary declaration proclaims the subservience of women without any qualification. Liberal women are not to be consulted, nor are they to have the slightest voice in deciding for what measures or principles they are to work. They are to enter the Federa-

tion and humbly place their political consciences at the disposal of the men's National Liberal Federation to work for whatever it orders, and as long as it ignores a question of vital interest to women, the organised Liberal women of England are absolutely forbidden by Miss Orme and her colleagues to give it their support. A more abject position for the Women's Liberal Federation it would be difficult to imagine. But what is even more surprising than Miss Orme's desire to fetter the Federation, is her confusion of ideas. She says truly that these Associations were called into existence "to assist in the promotion of Liberalism"; but she appears to think that Liberalism is another word for the programme of the National Liberal Federation, whereas Liberalism is a much wider word. While it includes the official Liberal programme, it also includes many great principles of justice, equality and right which Liberals hold dear, but which are not embodied in the specific measures officially adopted by the Liberal Party. Among these great principles is the equality of men and women before the law. So, too, the statement that Women's Suffrage is not a political question because members of both Parties support it, shows confusion of ideas. Are Free Education and Local Government not political questions? Yet both Parties support these. Finally, to say that it would be "going outside the objects of the Federation" to adopt Women's Suffrage, is to ignore the second object altogether, which is "To promote just legislation for women". But this object the Anti-Suffrage Party are only too ready to forget. It is this which clearly shews that there is no need to wait for the sanction of the men's National Liberal Federation, because from the very first the Women's Federation has by this Object declared that it works for the interest of women independently of the Liberal Programme.

THE LIBERAL PARTY WAITING FOR THE WOMEN.

Besides, as has been already shown, while the women profess

to be waiting for the sanction of the Party leaders, it is really the Party leaders who are waiting for the sanction and initiative of the women. It is another version of the old rhyme:—

The Earl of Chatham, with his sword drawn,  
Was waiting for Sir Richard Strachan ;  
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,  
Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

It is useless to continue this state of suspense, and obviously the proper persons to make the first move are the women who desire the reform ; and there is no way in which this move can be so effectually made as by the Federation making it. Such a course is in harmony with all political precedent. The pressure for every reform has always come from those who wanted it and who would be benefited by it, and it has only been when the demand was clearly expressed that the Party leaders have endorsed it and adopted it.

#### THE OBJECTS OF THE FEDERATION.

Nor is there anything in the rules and objects of the Federation to justify the assertion that it must only adopt such questions as are on the Liberal programme. The first object of the Federation is to promote the adoption of Liberal principles in the government of the country. The second is to promote just legislation for women and to protect the interests of children. The remaining three refer to political education, to forming new Associations, and to bringing into union all Liberal Associations which admit women as members. It is obvious that there is nothing in any of these to even suggest any limitation such as the Anti-Suffrage Party are now seeking to impose on the freedom of the Federation. There have at all times been, and there still are, many Liberal principles which are not formally adopted into the Liberal programme, but which, as time goes on, are officially taken up with a view to legislation. Temper-

ance reform and local option were for many years in this position, while the Disestablishment of the English Church still remains among the Liberal principles to which the Party as a whole are not pledged. It is inevitable in Party government that the leaders can only take up for legislation such measures as are pressed on them by opinion outside, and this fact was never more clearly exemplified than in the case of Women's Suffrage.

#### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE A LIBERAL PRINCIPLE.

If then it is in accordance with Liberal principles that women should receive equal justice with men ; that taxation without representation is tyranny ; that the woman who pays her rates, and who fulfils every qualification which the law demands of men as the condition of their enfranchisement, should also be enfranchised, then Women's Suffrage is a Liberal principle, no matter whether the Party leaders recognise it or not. The Ballot, Free Trade, Household Suffrage and Home Rule were none the less in accordance with Liberal principles, though they were ignored by Liberal leaders in years gone by ; and when it is remembered that during the whole of this century the extension of the franchise has been the most cherished principle of the Liberal Party, it is impossible to contend that the extension of the franchise to women is other than a thoroughly Liberal measure.

#### JUST LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN.

But when the second object of the Federation is considered, the absurdity of the contention of the Anti-Suffrage Party is even more apparent. It is of course in accordance with Liberal principles to do justice to women and to protect the interests of children. But it is no part of the Liberal programme to do so. At Newcastle last October, though the Women's Federation was holding an important conference at the same time that the National Liberal Federation was settling the Liberal pro-

gramme, not a single resolution was passed in which women were mentioned. Except in so far therefore as they benefit by all good legislation, women and their special interests have no place in the Liberal programme. Yet the Women's Federation still declares that one of its objects is to promote just legislation for women. And this at once proves that the Federation does avowedly take up and work for objects which are outside the official Liberal programme.

#### WOMEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

One further proof, though it is scarcely needed, may be given. The Executive Committee, acting for the Federation, has supported the claim of women to be eligible for election as County Councillors, and supported the proposal when it was before Parliament. Yet this is no part of the Liberal programme. It ought to be, for it is undoubtedly in accordance with Liberal principles; but the fact remains that the Liberal Party have never placed the measure on their programme.

*From every point of view, therefore, this new limitation, invented by the majority of the Executive Committee for the purpose of retarding Women's Suffrage, is seen to be without foundation. The Federation, by every principle of its constitution, is not merely free to adopt Women's Suffrage as one of its objects, but it is even bound to declare that it has already done so.*

#### IS NOT WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ALREADY INCLUDED IN THE OBJECTS OF THE FEDERATION?

Its object is already to promote just legislation for women. Let every member ask herself this question: Is the enfranchisement of women a piece of "just legislation for women"? Is there a single Liberal woman who will say No? Possibly some may not care for it, but no one will deny its justice. Then Women's Suffrage is already included by implication in the objects, and there need be no objection to avow it openly.

Women do not wish to sail under false colours. They do not wish to use ambiguous language, which means one thing to themselves and another thing to men or to the world at large. They do not wish to gain support by pretending that they do not include Women's Suffrage when they really do, nor by pretending that they do when they really do not. Let their intention be clear and honest in the face of the world. The Progressive Party say that the words "just legislation for women" imply and include Women's Suffrage, and that this should be made clear. If the Anti-Suffrage majority of the Executive Committee deny this, let them ask the Federation at the next Council to say so, and let the ambiguity be removed. *The words either do include Women's Suffrage or they do not; and now that the controversy has arrived at its present stage, it is not honest to use misleading and ambiguous expressions, especially when they profess to state the objects of the Federation.* This is the issue which both sides should face at the next Council. The Federation need not be asked to adopt anything new; but it should be asked to tell the country what its objects really mean. There can be no doubt what the reply will be.

#### MISREPRESENTATIONS OF ANTI-SUFFRAGE PARTY.

But the Opposition now say that the Progressive Party wish to turn the Federation into a Women's Suffrage Society, and that the declaration that the promotion of this measure is one of its objects, would have this effect. Nothing could be more absurd. A Women's Suffrage Society has only one object, namely, the removal of the political disabilities of women. The Federation has many objects, because it supports all Liberal principles, of which the extension of the franchise is only one. And no matter how earnestly it may at any future time come to be in favour of the Suffrage, it can never limit itself to that, but must always work heartily for all those other reforms to which the Liberal Party

are pledged, and which the Progressive Party most strongly desire to see carried. All these other reforms are, without doubt, already included in the programme of the Women's Federation by the mere fact that they constitute the Liberal programme for the entire party. Women's suffrage is the one exception; and it is distinctly because it has not been placed on the Liberal programme, that the Women's Federation should include it among its objects, for otherwise it will be held by the public to have been deliberately omitted, and the presumption will be that women themselves are either hostile or indifferent to it.

#### IMPOSSIBLE TO LIMIT WORK TO SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.

Then it is said by opponents that no doubt it is right to work for the Suffrage, but the work should be done by the Suffrage Societies. These opponents say: "Oh yes, we are also warmly in favour of the Suffrage, and we will work for it in our capacity of members of a Women's Suffrage Society, but we will not work for it in our capacity of members of the Federation." And to prove their sincerity, they join the Franchise League, the programme of which, as embodied in Mr. Haldane's Bill for the removal of all legal disabilities of every kind, is so advanced that it is not likely to become law for twenty years; and then, with an easy conscience and with virtuous pride in their own consistency, they do their very utmost in their capacity of members of the Federation to retard the enfranchisement of women. But what an extraordinary position to take up! You are to support the Suffrage in one capacity, and give it the cold shoulder, or oppose it—the two things are practically the same—in another. Ask Sir Wilfrid Lawson whether that was his policy regarding Local Option. Did he support it on the United Kingdom Alliance, and ignore it or oppose it on the National Liberal Federation? No, Sir Wilfrid and the entire temperance party, Good Templars, Alliance and all, never rested until Local Option in its fullest

meaning was formally adopted by the National Liberal Federation and included in the official Liberal programme. Ask too the Welsh Radicals what they did about Welsh Disestablishment. Were they content in Wales to work merely through their Disestablishment Associations, and did Mr. Illingworth confine his efforts on behalf of the great principle of religious equality to the Liberation Society? Nothing of the kind; they were in earnest, and they soon made it clear that the Liberal Party must adopt the principle for which they contended, and that unless Welsh Disestablishment occupied a very prominent place in the Liberal programme, the Liberal Party would receive a very unsatisfactory kind of support from Wales. But then the Teetotalers and the Disestablishers were serious and meant business, and so they took the direct and straightforward way of getting what they wanted, and they got it. They would have laughed at anyone who told them that they should only work for their great questions through their special societies, and should ignore them in their capacity of members of the National Liberal Federation. In the same way, women who are really politicians will laugh at the doctrine to which we refer, and will tell those persons who preach it that it only shows their own want of either sincerity or earnestness, and that when they are really in favour of Women's Suffrage, as they profess to be, they will act like Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Illingworth and will never rest until the Women's Federation has made the Suffrage clearly one of its objects.

#### SUPPORTING A MEASURE BY RETARDING IT!

But these same remarkable supporters of Women's Suffrage on the Executive Committee and elsewhere, whose method of supporting it is to hold it back lest it gets on too fast, urge upon the Progressive Party that Women's Suffrage must be kept in the background and ignored by the Federation lest it should injure the Liberal Party and retard Home Rule. They

speaking as if the adoption of it by the Federation meant its immediate enactment by Parliament. It is to be wished that such were the case, but it is very far from being so. The Liberal Party are pledged to deal with Home Rule before any other important measure, and even if that were not so, it is clear to everyone that it will take some years of steady work, on account of the peculiar opposition which has to be overcome in Parliament, before women can hope to see their aims realised. But its formal adoption by the Federation will show the Liberal Party that women are in earnest, and this cannot possibly either injure the Party or retard Home Rule. The workers for other great causes, however, are not told to keep them back for fear of retarding Home Rule. It is perfectly well known that because the Liberal Party are pledged to Scotch and Welsh Disestablishment they will lose the votes of many Liberal Churchmen in Scotland and England, who put their adherence to the Establishment before their Liberalism, and thus the cause of Home Rule will be retarded. Similarly the pledge to carry Local Option has lost the votes of many Liberals who are interested in the drink trade, to the detriment of Home Rule. Other instances of a similar kind will occur to everyone, but in no case has the Liberal Party ever refused to work for a reform on the ground that to do so would injure its electoral chances or—what is the same thing in other words—retard some other measure. “Be just and fear not” has always been its motto, and in no case is that motto more applicable than in reference to the adoption of Women’s Suffrage by the Women’s Federation, for happily there is absolutely nothing to fear.

#### THE WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE OMNIBUS.

It is useless for the Anti-Suffrage Party to bring out the old simile that you can’t drive six omnibuses abreast through Temple Bar. That simile refers merely to the passage of Bills

through Parliament, and does not apply to agitation for Liberal measures in the country. There are already far more than six omnibuses in the Liberal procession, and it will make no difference if one more is added to the number. All are agreed that the Home Rule omnibus shall go through Temple Bar first and a good many others will probably also go through before the one which is labelled Women’s Suffrage. But if the Women’s Suffrage omnibus is left in the stable, as the majority on the Executive Committee desire, it is quite clear that it will never get through at all. Let it be brought out now, and with a skilful driver and willing horses, let it make the best progress it can.

#### THE TRUE PRINCIPLE TO BE ADOPTED.

To show still further the fertility of their minds in raising objections, the Anti-Suffrage Party ask how the Federation can go in for Women’s Suffrage till they know what Bill they are to support, and they point to the fact that there are at least three Women’s Suffrage Societies whose policies are not identical. For example, at Newcastle last year, Miss Orme is reported to have said: “They did not even know the women they desired to enfranchise. One man, one vote, and one woman one vote, they would say. She was talking this question over with a friend, and she put that to her, that they did not know the women they wished to enfranchise.” It is a little odd for women who have spent five years in fighting for the principle of Home Rule without any clear knowledge of what the Home Rule Bill will contain, now to declare that they cannot support the very much simpler principle that the disqualification of sex should be abolished until they have seen the Bill that is to place the principle on the Statute Book. These same women are doubtless also strong supporters of the principle of Local Option, but not one of them can say in what way that principle will become law; whether the local option will take

the form of the Direct Veto, or of Licensing Boards specially elected, or of placing the power in the hands of District or County Councils. In like manner they warmly advocate the mending or ending of the House of Lords without considering which of these two widely different alternatives they mean to support. But fortunately the particular difficulty which they conjure up exists only in their imaginations. *The Federation is not asked to join any one of the Suffrage Societies, nor to be responsible for any particular Bill. It has for itself already defined the principle when in May, 1890, it declared, in the formula drawn up by John Stuart Mill more than twenty years ago, that the Franchise should be extended to women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men. That formula admits of neither extension nor contraction. It covers the entire principle.* It is the only demand that women should ever make either in the Federation or elsewhere; and if the Federation desires to promote a Bill of its own, that Bill must clearly be based upon this formula.

#### TORY SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, A SHAM.

Finally the Federation is told that it must not adopt Women's Suffrage because the Tory Party are going to take it up. Of all the shams which the Tory Party have ever palmed off on the country, there has been no sham so complete as the pretence that they are in favour of Women's Suffrage. They have been five years in office and during all that time Lord Salisbury has professed to be a supporter of the principle. But on every occasion when Mr. Woodall or any other Member has had the chance of bringing forward a Bill or even a motion in favour of Women's Suffrage, the Government have deliberately either taken the day for their own business, or have made the House adjourn, or, as in the case of last year, have resorted to a still more questionable device for what the *Pall Mall Gazette* truly called "jockeying the women". That is not the conduct of a Party who are in favour of a measure!

#### THE BIRMINGHAM TORY CONFERENCE.

But it is said that the recent Birmingham Conservative Conference adopted Women's Suffrage as part of the Tory programme. Not at all. What they did was to pass a resolution "that when the question of the representation of the people [that is, the question of one man one vote] is reopened by Parliament, serious consideration should be given to the claims of women to be admitted to the franchise when entitled by ownership or occupation." Now, Parliament will not reopen this question till the Liberals are in power and the Tories consequently in a minority; and therefore the Tories have only voted in favour of "seriously considering" the enfranchisement of women when they are in opposition and are naturally less able to carry it. Mr. Gladstone saw through the imposture at once, and pointed out that the motive was far more to hamper "one man one vote" than to help women. And this was obviously true, because if the Tories wished to give women votes they could do so this year while they are in power, quite independently of any Bill dealing with other points of electoral law. Moreover the Birmingham Conference did not profess to be drawing up the programme of the Party. Among other things it passed a resolution in favour of one form of Protection, which is a doctrine that the Tory leaders certainly do not mean to adopt. No. Women may dismiss from their minds the idea that the Tory Party are going to carry Women's Suffrage. Even if they were to do so, there would be no reason why Liberal women should oppose it. They should rather rejoice that there was at any rate one act of justice and one Liberal principle which that Party was sufficiently enlightened to support. But the Anti-Suffrage Party in their desire to retard the measure do not take this view. At the same Newcastle meeting, Mrs. Byles, one of their leading members, who speaks for the three Bradford Associations, said,

“ Another confession she had to make. A great many speakers on the platform had said they wished for Women’s Suffrage at the earliest possible moment ; but she must make an exception. If Lord Salisbury should bring in a resolution for Women’s Suffrage next Session, she should deplore it.” But why should any Liberal be so illiberal as to refuse an act of justice merely because a Tory Government introduced it? In 1867 Mr. Disraeli introduced Household Suffrage for the avowed object of “ dishing the Whigs”, but the Liberals helped him to carry the Bill, and improved it greatly. During the present Parliament the Liberal Party did not reject County Councils because a Tory Government introduced the Bill. They welcomed Free Education, even though the Tories stole the principle from them. And Mr. Gladstone has repeatedly offered to support a measure for Home Rule, if only Lord Salisbury would introduce it. Therefore the fact that some Tories are in favour of Women’s Suffrage, and that sections of the Party pretend at times that they are going to “ seriously consider” it, need not cause the Women’s Liberal Federation to hesitate for a moment with regard to its adoption.

#### WHY NOT CLOSE THE CONTROVERSY?

*If then, all the objections which have been raised to the declaration that Women’s Suffrage is among the objects of the Federation are seen to be without any force, why should the controversy not be closed by a resolution that would set the matter at rest for ever?* In 1890 the Council of the Federation declared itself in favour of the principle, and resolved that it should be placed on the Liberal programme at the earliest suitable opportunity. In 1891 the Council instructed the Executive Committee that it was its duty “ to keep the Associations carefully and immediately informed of every opportunity that may arise of promoting the political enfranchisement of women either in Parliament or otherwise.” Both these resolutions were passed with a practical unanimity that doubtless represented the

real views of the 60,000 women members. *No single member left the Federation on account of these resolutions, nor were any subscriptions withdrawn. On the contrary, the Federation is larger and richer now than it was before they were passed.* It is doubtful whether any speaker at any Council meeting, or any speaker at any meeting of any Association, has ever declared herself opposed to the principle of Women’s Suffrage. Indeed, whenever the question has been brought forward, the speakers on both sides have declared themselves in favour of enfranchisement. The Federation is therefore practically unanimous on the merits of the question ; or at the very most only an infinitesimal fraction of the members, who now probably number about 100,000, are opposed to the change. And if this small fraction—which possibly does not exist at all—are true Liberals, they will admit that the majority are entitled to rule, and they will acquiesce in its decision, *There certainly will be no split, and no secessions ; and the statement distributed by prominent members of the party who are opposing the adoption of Women’s Suffrage, that the “ Progressives are trying to break up a valuable organisation by pressing forward special questions”, is both unfair and untrue.*

#### THE REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROGRESSIVE AND THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE PARTIES.

These are facts which cannot be denied, and they make it indeed difficult to understand why so very small an advance as a declaration that Women’s Suffrage is among the objects of the Federation should arouse such bitter hostility among the majority of the Executive Committee, and among a few of the Associations that support them. But the reason is to be found in a fundamental difference of opinion between the majority of the Executive Committee and the Progressive Party as to the object for which the Women’s Liberal Federation exists. That difference lies at the root of the controversy, and it is necessary

that sooner or later the Federation as a whole should consider it and decide between them.

The Anti-Suffrage majority on the Committee and those who think with them, maintain that the one and only object of the Women's Liberal Federation is to work to secure the victory of the Liberal Party, or in other words which mean precisely the same, to organize for the purpose of winning elections. To this end their work and their meetings are directed, and they object to the Federation taking up any subject which has not been included in the official Liberal programme. In short, the Federation is to be regarded as a mere electioneering auxiliary to the Liberal Party.

The Progressive Party, who though a small minority on the Executive Committee, believe that they represent the views of the vast majority of the members of the Associations throughout the country, do not yield to the other side in the least in their desire to work for the Liberal Party, and to support their programme. They are equally ardent Liberals, and they recognise that victories at the polls are the ultimate means by which the reforms they desire must be carried. They take their full share in electioneering work of every kind, and they are equally ready to work for Liberal candidates. But their aim for the Federation is not limited to this. It is higher and wider. They can never forget that theirs is a Women's Liberal Federation. Had their sole object been to work for the Party, they could have joined the ordinary Liberal Associations in each constituency. But in forming a Women's Federation they were working also for the elevation of their own sex, and they were conscious that by so doing they were enabling women much more efficiently to help the men. They can say in the words of Lowell (reading the final word to mean women) :—

We owe allegiance to the State ; but deeper truer more,  
To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's core ;—  
Our Party claims our fealty ; we grant it so, but then,  
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.

THE PROGRESSIVE POLICY HISTORICALLY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY  
RIGHT.

They claim with strict accuracy that their position is historically and constitutionally the right one, for the origin of the Federation and its object, "To promote just legislation for women", conclusively prove that it never was intended to be a mere party electioneering machine, but that the special legislative interests of women were to occupy a prominent place in its programme. They therefore protest against the restrictions and limitations by which for the first time the majority on the Executive Committee now openly seek to cramp the efforts of the Federation, and to render of no effect the object above referred to. Indeed, if their policy is imposed on the Federation, its second object might as well be repealed.

ABOVE ALL, A UNITED FEDERATION.

It is the earnest desire of the Progressive Party that the Federation should remain strong and united. It has been most unfairly said, and also circulated in print, that the Progressive Party "are *trying to break up* a valuable organisation by pressing forward special questions". No accusation could be more unfounded. The very reverse is the case. Had the Progressive Party wished to break up the Federation, they could have left it and formed one of their own. But for the sake of unity they have submitted time after time to votes of which they did not approve, knowing well that if women are to enter political life they must learn the power of united action, and that placing the progress of Liberalism above everything they must preserve intact the great organisation of Liberal women. Instead therefore of trying to break up the Federation, they are trying to remove a cause of difference, and to bind the whole more strongly together. It is the Anti-Suffrage Party, and they alone, who from time to time utter threats of resignation if they cannot

get their own way; threats, however, which will never be carried into effect, and which may be entirely disregarded.

#### FREEDOM OF JUDGMENT FOR THE FEDERATION.

The Progressive Party are therefore fighting for the freedom of the Federation to shape its own course in accordance with its existing objects. They ask for nothing new. They ask merely for a plain declaration that the second object means what it implies. They do not believe that the Federation will repudiate this important portion of its work, and they are convinced that it will work with redoubled energy for the great cause of Home Rule, and for the noble programme of the Liberal Party, when it has been made quite clear that justice to women and their enfranchisement are among the objects which it will ever keep in view.

#### APPENDIX.

As it has often been asserted that Women's Suffrage would be a Conservative measure because it was proposed to enfranchise rich spinsters and widows and to leave out the working women, the following facts taken from the Census of 1881 may be interesting (those for 1891 not yet being ready) as showing approximately the classes of women who are earning their own living, and who, therefore, in most cases would be entitled to vote. It may also be pointed out that in any ordinary constituency about three-quarters of the women voters for Town and County Councils live in houses of less than £20 rental, and that therefore they belong to the lower middle and working classes, among whom is the strength of the Liberal Party. It is true that the freehold qualification as such does not confer a municipal vote; but most of the women freeholders are doubtless also ratepayers, living on their own property, and thus are already among the women voters. There is no information to be obtained showing the occupations or rateable value of the women ratepayers of the country; but it is reasonable to assume that among the women who earn their own living are a very large proportion of those who would be entitled to vote. The figures refer only to England and Wales:—

Women landowners	-	-	-	37,800
Women farmers	-	-	-	22,000
Civil service	-	-	-	3,200
Municipal and local government service				3,000
Missionaries and Bible readers, etc.	-	-	-	1,600
Midwives, nurses, etc.	-	-	-	37,700
School mistresses	-	-	-	94,200
Teachers, professors and lecturers	-	-	-	28,600

Musicians and music mistresses - -	11,300
Engaged in hospitals and institutions -	11,500
Washhouses and baths - - - -	176,600
Charwomen - - - - -	92,400
Commercial clerks - - - - -	6,000
" Warehousemen " - - - - -	4,100
Agricultural employment - - - -	40,000
Lodging-house keepers - - - - -	32,800
Bakers - - - - -	7,600
Pastrycooks - - - - -	13,000
Greengrocers - - - - -	6,800
Ordinary grocers - - - - -	26,400
Other shopkeepers - - - - -	25,700

There were, besides these, 1,100,000 women engaged in the textile trades, dressmaking and all sorts of other employments as wage-earners. Among so many there must be a great number of ratepayers who would be entitled to the franchise. The figures as a whole show what a minute fraction the women landowners form of the whole, and how clearly the grant of the franchise would be a measure for the benefit of the women who work for their living.

## A New Scheme of Work

ADOPTED BY THE

### Central National Society for Women's Suffrage.

LEAFLET No. I.

AFFILIATED SOCIETIES.

THE Committee of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage feel that the time has now come for the development and extension of their work, in the direction of combination and co-operation, by means of the affiliation of political Associations to a central organization for the promotion of Women's Suffrage.

Believing strongly that, however inevitable diversity of opinion in detail may be, unanimous and simultaneous action, on the part of the advocates of Women's Suffrage, is absolutely indispensable to ensure speedy success for the cause they support, the Committee desire to recommend to these organizations a practical and effective policy. They wish to concentrate the expression of all opinion which confirms and re-inforces their own; and to win over those Suffragists who differ from them in detail, to pass as lightly as possible over differences, and to keep ever in view the infinitely greater importance of the common agreement and object of all. Scattered opinion and unorganized effort

is found to be powerless for the attainment of any great object. This has been proved again and again in the course of the long struggle of twenty years for the political franchise. In it, many brave and distinguished men and women have, because their efforts were isolated, been beaten back by the combined forces of despotic tradition, ignorant apathy and old-world bigotry and prejudice, often masked under the venerable titles of religion and conservatism. The Committee desire ardently to unite all Suffragists by a bond, which, while elastic enough to allow free play to differences of opinion on this and all other questions, shall yet be strong enough to stimulate and systematize the energy of individual organizations, and to associate them in common and consistent action at the right moment and in the right place.

Suffragists are of all parties and shades of opinion. The aim of the Committee therefore is, to affiliate political Associations of all colours and denominations in every Parliamentary constituency throughout the country, as well as societies whose sole object is Women's Suffrage; and to keep them in touch with the Central Society and, through it, with each other.

Had such a wide-spread and effective organization as this been in existence in April (1891) when those "ignominious means" (*Times*) were resorted to, by which the House of Commons once more "jockeyed the women" (*Pall Mall Gazette*) out of the long postponed discussion on the question of their enfranchisement, it would have been possible, and even easy, to have procured a prompt, universal and emphatic condemnation of that action.

The Scheme of Work now adopted by the Committee of the Central National Society, provides means by which a fresh and vigorous effort for the affiliation of

political Associations shall be made; and also empowers and instructs the Society's officers and speakers to encourage and assist in the formation of new Associations and Suffrage Societies, to be so affiliated, in places where as yet none exist.

The affiliation fee has been fixed as low as 5s. in order that it may present no obstacle to any organized body that desires union with the Central National Society, for the purpose of promoting the Suffrage for women. On payment of this small sum, each affiliated body may freely claim the services of a speaker from the Central Society once a year, and may send delegates to the Annual Meeting of its Council.

The Central National Society will make it a special object to maintain constant communication with the affiliated bodies, and, when Bills or Resolutions in favour of Women's Suffrage are about to be submitted to Parliament, will call upon them to urge the Parliamentary Representatives of their localities to vote for such measures or propositions; thus systematically securing support, as far as may be, from all sides of the House.

During Parliamentary Elections, whether general or local, the Central Committee will call upon the affiliated societies, or those specially concerned, to put questions to the candidates for their divisions or boroughs respectively, as to their views and intentions on the question of Woman's Suffrage. By this means all candidates, whether friendly or hostile, will be compelled to give public utterance to their opinions on the subject; thus, if friendly, strengthening their own and their hearers' sense of its importance and urgency; and, if hostile, subjecting themselves and their opinions to the developing and educating influences of public discussion and of generous popular feeling.

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Another object of the Committee is to obtain the support of the Associations which are affiliated to the Women's Liberal Federation, for the Suffrage resolution of the Progressive Party in the Federation, at its Council Meeting in 1892, so as to secure a decisive majority in its favour. They will also endeavour to procure the adoption of a similar attitude towards their central bodies, on the part of all Unionist Associations, and Habitations of the Primrose League, whose members may be in the main favourable to the enfranchisement of women.

This policy of unanimous and simultaneous pressure of opinion and demand from all sides towards the centre, enabling and requiring the Executives of the various central organizations to bring their full corporate weight to bear on politicians of all parties, in the House and in all parts of the country, the Committee feel to be all important. They desire to press for its adoption by all supporters of the Women's Suffrage movement, because they are convinced that by such a policy alone can that movement be brought to a speedy and successful issue.

When the country is well covered by Suffrage Societies, and Women's Associations and Leagues representing all shades of political opinion, but all united in demanding the enfranchisement of women, and affiliated to a central organization, so as to secure prompt, united, energetic and simultaneous action, we may hope at last to place our claim as a foremost plank in the platforms of all parties in the State; and to make it a leading question for all candidates at all Parliamentary elections. And then, for the first time, we may expect to be able to convince "practical politicians" and "opportunists" that the policy of granting the Parliamentary franchise to women is both practical and opportune.

## A New Scheme of Work

ADOPTED BY THE

### Central National Society for Women's Suffrage.

LEAFLET No. II.

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

ONE of the chief means by which the Committee propose to attain their object of greatly extending the operations of the Society, is that of securing the services of Honorary Members to be called Corresponding Members, in every constituency unprovided, or insufficiently provided, with Suffrage Societies or Political Associations affiliated to the Central National Society.

It is hoped that the Corresponding Members will form centres, round which new Societies will shortly grow, until the happy day shall arrive when the country will be covered with Societies representing all shades of political opinion, but all unanimous in demanding Women's Suffrage;—and so completely organised as to make combined action easy and effective for the end in view.

The office of Corresponding Members will be to ask

every Parliamentary Candidate in their respective districts, at his meetings (through a voter if possible), whether, if elected, he will vote for and support Woman's Suffrage in Parliament; and to report all such questions and answers promptly to the Secretary of the Central National Society at its office, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W.

The question should be addressed to all candidates indiscriminately, whether known to be friendly or hostile to Woman's Suffrage, as much as to those whose views on the subject may be as yet unknown. By this means every candidate will find himself gently compelled to give public utterance to his opinions, and will thus, if friendly, strengthen his own and his hearers' sense of the importance and urgency of the question; while if hostile, he will be brought, unwillingly perhaps, but inevitably, under the developing and educating influences of public discussion and of generous popular feeling. For instance, an aspirant to a seat in the House of Commons wrote lately, in answer to an enquirer, "I am not *at present* in favour of Woman's Suffrage"—the words here italicized indicating that teachable disposition, which the Committee believe to be not uncommon among candidates for the Parliamentary Suffrage.

The Corresponding Members, if unable on all occasions to get the question put to a candidate by a voter, which should always be done if possible, would not be required to ask it *viva voce*, or to support the affirmative, nor to argue it in any way at meetings, unless individually disposed to do so. The question may be merely sent up to the platform in writing, and for this purpose the Secretary of the Central National Society will furnish the Corresponding Members with written forms, as well as with stamped and addressed envelopes—or post cards—for the reports.

These reports from Corresponding Members in all parts

of the country, would be entered by the Secretary at the Central Office in a special book, from which general or particular information would be readily furnished to any of the said Secretaries or Corresponding Members, on application.

In recognition of these services the Central National Society would supply the Corresponding Members, *gratis*, with copies of all leaflets issued by the Society, and with the *Women's Herald*. It will also be proposed at the next Council Meeting, that the Corresponding Members should be invited to attend Council Meetings of the Society in the capacity of *ex-officio* Members, and that they should participate as far as possible in the privileges accorded to the Delegates from affiliated Societies.

FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

THE LETTER

WHICH OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY

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

TO

SAMUEL SMITH, M.P.

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*To be obtained of the Secretary,*  
CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,  
29, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.

—  
1892

*Price One Penny.*

## FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

LONDON, 24 *April*, 1892.

DEAR MR. SAMUEL SMITH,

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

The Bill, it is true, is a narrow Bill, inasmuch as it excludes from its operation all those married women who do not happen to be on the register adopted as the basis of enfranchisement—women, who are not less reflective, intelligent, and virtuous, than their unmarried sisters, and who must, I think, be equal in that great element of fitness, namely, the lifelong habit of responsible action. But if this change is to be made—a change which the growing enlightenment of the age renders of increasing urgency—I certainly have doubts, not dispelled by my experience of former great constitutional changes, whether it could be begun by any measure that would not appear halting and inconsistent.

It is a change which obviously, and apart from disputable matter, ought not to be delayed without the fullest justification and the most deliberate hostility of the nation as well as of the Parliament. Not only is there no such justification, but during the last twenty-five years of continued discussion there has not been even an approach to reasonable and influential hostility. The subject has occupied a large place in the minds of many thoughtful persons for the last twenty-five years, and of these the major portion have become its zealous

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adherents. It is time that just weight should be allowed to their sentiments, and it is desirable that the arguments on their side, and the want of argument on the side of their opponents, should produce their inevitable and proper results; the opposition, of late years at least, has never been other than sectional, the movement finding many and influential supporters in all parties of the State, while those who opposed it have signally failed to impress the public mind at large. Must it not be right, under these circumstances, that this change, based upon fundamental principles of the Constitution, should be adopted? Must not its opponents be deemed to be answered by the evident failure of such arguments as they have seen fit to advance—a failure which of itself alone has adequately demonstrated the true merits of the cause?

I offer this suggestion in the face of the coming Election. I am aware that no legitimate or effectual use can be made of it for carrying to an issue a question at once so great and so simple; but I do not doubt, considering the want of zeal and lack of seriousness which are arrayed in its despite, that the occasion might be made available for procuring a definite pronouncement in favour of a wider and more catholic enactment upon the subject, which I earnestly desire.

There are very special reasons for putting an end to delay, misnamed circumspection, in this particular case. There has never within my knowledge been a case in which the franchise has been extended to a large body of persons without the alleged indifference of those about to receive it. But here, in spite of this alleged indifference, there is, on the part of large numbers of women who have considered the matter for themselves, the most positive demand and strong desire for enfranchisement. Is it not clear to every unbiassed mind that before continuing to maintain as against them what they conceive to be a fundamental disability in their citizen-

ship as women, that is to say, in their Providential calling, at least it should be established, as it certainly cannot be established, that the womanly mind of the country, at present so deeply sensible of the injustice of their position, is in overwhelming proportion, and with deliberate purpose, set upon retaining that disability?

The opponents of Female Suffrage assert that it will produce a fundamental change in the whole social function of woman, not so much on account of what the Bill enacts, as by reason of what it involves. But I will not admit that the removal of the electoral disability from womanhood will produce any fundamental change in the social function of woman. The possession and the exercise by women of the local and municipal franchises have not wrought any such fundamental change, and there is no ground either in history or in logic for supposing that the Parliamentary Franchise will falsify that experience. I make this assertion, taking into view not only what the Bill enacts, but what it involves.

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

So much for what the Bill enacts. Now for what it involves in the way of fair and rational, and therefore of morally necessary consequence—*i. e.*, according to the

opponent's view of the case. Some of these opponents argue to the effect that for a long time we drew a distinction between competency to vote and competency to sit in Parliament. But that long before our electorate had attained to the present popular proportions, this distinction was felt to involve a palpable inconsistency, and, accordingly, it died away. "It surely cannot be revived," they urge; "and if it cannot be revived, then the woman's vote carries with it, whether by the same Bill or by a consequential Bill, the woman's seat in Parliament." These assertions ought to be strictly tested. If they cannot be confuted, at least they ought not to be ignored. But they can be confuted. The distinction still exists. It is sufficient to mention that no clergyman or civil servant is eligible to sit in Parliament, although possessing the vote. Therefore, while we may admit the accuracy of these assertions as a matter of abstract logic, yet this is very far from admitting their practical probability. "The woman's vote carries with it the woman's seat," say the opponents; but even then it would only be where the electors so desire it. "Nor is this all," they continue; "capacity to sit in the House of Commons now legally and practically draws in its train capacity to fill every office in the State." Admitted; but, again, only where, along with legal capacity to fill the office, there exists actual capacity to fulfil the duties of that office. But perhaps nothing more clearly indicates the weakness of their case than that these same opponents should gravely construct an argument against Woman's Suffrage on the admitted impossibility of having two categories of Members of Parliament, the potential necessity for which could only arise—following their own line of argument—out of a contingency not only remote in theory, but still more remote, not to say most improbable, in practice.

Opponents have found it impossible to deny that

there have been, and are, women individually fit for any public office however masculine its character; they have attempted to discount this fact by arguing that there are persons under the age of twenty-one better fitted than many of those beyond it, for the discharge of the duties of full citizenship. In no case does an argument derived from exceptional instances justify the abolition or the retention of a general rule. But here the implications involved in the two suppositions are immeasurably different. In the one, individual judgment and authority plainly would have to distinguish between childhood and manhood, and to specify a criterion of competency in each case, which is now more conveniently fixed by the uniformity of law. In the other, a permanent and vast difference of physical functions, it is true, has been impressed upon women and men respectively by the Maker of both; but their differences of social office rest mainly not upon causes physical, and in their nature unchangeable, but upon legal disabilities enacted by a privileged and opposite sex, and in their nature essentially removable. I for one deem it irrelevant to inquire which of the two sexes has the higher and which has the lower province, if indeed there be a higher and a lower. I recognise willingly the subtle and profound character of the differences between them, but I must again and again, and again, deny that the complete removal of the electoral disability from womanhood, already accomplished in part, would be, in the fanciful phrase of the opponents, "the issue of an invitation by public authority to woman to renounce as far as possible her own office, in order to assume that of man." I do not entertain the fear that in thus enormously benefiting the State, we shall eventually be found to have injured what is yet more fundamental and more sacred—the sanctity of the family; or shall dislocate, or injuriously modify, the relations of domestic life.

As, owing to the paucity of serious opponents, this

could not be made a party question, or a class question, every effort has been made to render it a sex question. I, however, have no fear lest the woman should encroach upon the power of the man. The fear I have is, lest the political domination of man should too long exclude from our public life the delicacy, the purity, the refinement, and the elevation of woman's nature, which are the present sources of the regeneration of the race. It is admitted that men, as legislators, have been most unfaithful guardians of woman's rights to moral and social equality. And I most firmly believe that full justice never can, and never will, be done to women until Female Suffrage shall enable women themselves to protect a woman's rights, and to redress a woman's wrongs. In the Universities, in the professions, in the secondary circles of public action, we have already gone so far as to leave no shadow of plausibility to the present opposition to women's enfranchisement, and this shadow is not made more tangible by the statement that the Parliamentary franchise, as such, will plunge the woman, as such, into the turmoil of masculine life. My disposition has always been to do all for her which is free from danger and reproach, but to take no step in advance until, as in this juncture, I am convinced of its safety. The case is urgent. There is nothing more odious, nothing more untenable, than an inequality in legal privilege which does not stand upon some principle in its nature broad and clear. The opposing arguments are to my mind not clear, and, even if I thought them clearer, I should deny that they were sufficient.

Such being the state of the evidence, and also such the growing maturity of the public mind, I earnestly hope that the House of Commons will not decline to give a second reading to the Woman's Suffrage Bill.

I remain, dear Mr. S. Smith,

Very faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

# FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

## A LETTER

FROM

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

TO

SAMUEL SMITH, M.P.

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LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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## FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

1, CARLTON GARDENS,  
*April 11, 1892.*

DEAR MR. SAMUEL SMITH,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I remain, dear Mr. S. Smith,

Very faithfully yours,

✓ W. E. GLADSTONE.

A REPLY

TO

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

ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

BY

✓ MRS. FAWCETT.

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

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

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1892.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT.

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Of Thursday Evening, December 2nd, 1891.

## WOMEN'S WORK AND WOMEN'S VOTE.

THE civilization of any country is to be gauged, according to a familiar saying, by the treatment of its women. We wonder what view will be taken of English civilization at the end of the nineteenth century when the impartial historian of the future is confronted with such facts about women's work as were laid before the Labour Commission yesterday? Let us take a few instances. There is "one particular jute factory in Stratford" (why was the owner's name not mentioned?), said one of the witnesses, where the women are locked in to their work. "An accident happened two years ago at eight o'clock in the morning, and the women were not let out until the whistle was sounded at a quarter-past eight, the ordinary breakfast time, and then many of the women were found lying on the floor fainting. The sanitary conditions of the factories were very bad indeed." Now for the drink trade. It is no unusual thing, said another witness, for a barmaid to work one hundred hours per week. "In one case a girl went on at 7.30 in the morning and was on duty till 12.30 at night with one hour's rest and twenty minutes for breakfast, dinner and supper." As for the conditions of employment from the point of view of morals, some very sweeping statements were made by the same witness, which we trust the Commission will subject to rigid scrutiny, and have either substantiated or withdrawn. And herein is not one moral of the whole matter abundantly clear? It is impossible effectually to remove or to relieve the abuses and hardships in women's work until the co-operation of women themselves is secured. The formation of Women's Trade Unions is one aspect of the matter. The enfranchisement of women is another. The need for such enfranchisement in some spheres is now becoming generally recognized. Witness after witness pointed out yesterday that it would be impossible to arrive at the full truth without Women Sub-Commissioners, and impossible to prevent ascertained evils without Women Inspectors. Even the most bigoted upholder of the Divine Masculine must admit that in some of the matters

referred to above it would be best to set a woman to inspect a woman.

But while all sections of opinion are coming to recognize the necessity of introducing women here and women there in the working of various laws which affect them and their children, it is strange indeed that so many people stick at the recognition of that plain corollary—that women should have a hand in the making of those laws in the first instance. We have a great regard for Mr. BRYCE's gifts; but we must say that a more illogical position than that which he embodied at the conference of the Women's Franchise League yesterday it would be difficult to conceive. He was all for promoting the education of women, he explained, and their industrial and economical advancement. But he could not give up his well-known and long-cherished prejudice against women's suffrage. The position of professing to favour every attempt to benefit a particular class, and yet of refusing them the constitutional means of winning and securing benefits, is not a new one in politics. It was for years the position of the Tories towards the artisan, and later towards the agricultural labourer. But it is one which Mr. BRYCE himself, most probably, has disproved and ridiculed in his time as well as anybody. "You are for giving them education?" he and the rest of the Liberal party would say to Tories who argued in that way. "Well, then, the only means of political education is the vote. Industrial rights? The vote is the only lever by which to win them. Economic advancement? In the conflict of interests, the ballot is the only way to secure it." The fact is, as Mr. STANSFELD pointed out, such a position is as weak from the practical and historical standpoint as from the logical one. The educational and economic "women's movement" has all along gone hand-in-hand with the political one. Only on the double lines has any success been achieved so far, and right at the root of all future progress by women lies the so-called "fad" and "hobby" of the woman's vote.

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Copies of this leaflet may be had from the Secretary, Miss Cicely Philipps, Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street, London, S.W., at 1s. per 100, post free.

# THE POLITICAL ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

BY

✓ JUSTIN M'CARTHY, M. P.

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AUTHOR OF "*A History of our own Times*," "*Donna Quixote*," "*Miss Misanthrope*," "*Maid of Athens*," etc.

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Copies may be had post free at 1½d. each, 1s. per dozen, or 6s. per 100 on application to the Secretary of the CENTRAL NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 29, Parliament Street, London, S. W.

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THE POLITICAL  
ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

*Speech delivered by Mr. Justin McCarthy, M. P.,  
at a meeting held under the auspices of the Bedford  
and United Bedfordshire Women's Suffrage Society,  
at the Corn Exchange, Bedford, on Wednesday,  
February 26th, 1890, presided over by the Rev.  
Canon Haddock.*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

 I HAVE long felt deeply interested in this great question of the enfranchisement—or one might call it the emancipation—of women. I was drawn into a belief in the movement in the first instance by the influence, the persuasiveness, and the intellect of the late John Stuart Mill (*Cheers.*). His was the influence which first started this movement into life and activity among the English people. I had the privilege and honour of knowing him and of working with him in many great public movements, and I can say of him—as has been said by one better qualified to speak than I—that he was one of the wisest and most virtuous men I ever met or ever hope to meet (*Cheers.*). He, as you know, turned his great intellect very much to the service of this cause of women's emancipation. He brought thoughtful men and women to think about it, to study it, to

look fairly at both sides of the question, and to form their own opinions, and the result was an ever-increasing tendency towards approval of the views of which he made himself the exponent and organ (*Cheers.*). Since that time the movement has grown and grown. When first he lent it his powerful aid, the movement was generally regarded by those of the outer public who knew anything about it, as a mere crotchet, if not a craze. It was thought to be the dream, or crotchet, or craze of some whimsical women and a few men who were led by them, who got into corners and thought they were starting a great enterprise of emancipation. As the movement grew there used to be floods and torrents of ridicule poured over it; all the satirists, all the caricaturists, and all the humourists of the day had something to say about the woman's suffrage, and some stone of ridicule or contempt to throw at it. But, ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced there never was a movement worth thinking of or worth striving for in this world that had not to take its baptism of fire in the way of ridicule and sarcasm (*Cheers.*).

Some of our ancestors in the earliest days, as Julius Cæsar tells us, had a way of flinging their newly-born children into cold streams and rivers, under the impression that those who did not survive were not worth the bringing up; and so we may say of movements like this, if they cannot survive their immersion in the cold waters of contempt or the heated geyser streams of ridicule and sarcasm, they are not worth the trying to bring up. This movement has got over all that, and now we hear never a word of the ridicule and sarcasm, we hear nothing about the "shrieking sisterhood," we do not see characteristic caricatures of elderly women wearing pattens, brandishing huge umbrellas, and dancing on platforms in the fury and passion of their zeal for women's suffrage (*Laughter and Cheers.*).

That monstrous creation of some few persons—the terrible shrieking sister—seems to have shrieked herself into silence,

for we hear no more of her. Since those early days the movement has been steadily growing, broadening, deepening, taking hold of society, of intelligence and of intellect everywhere throughout the country (*Cheers.*). We may almost say that the days of argument about women's suffrage are over. At all events, we may say that the days of argument as to the main principle may be considered to have passed away. We have yet a great deal to do in the way of argument as to details, arrangements, and compromises, and the time when, and the means by which, all these portions and branches of the great centre subject shall be settled. But the principle, the fact that a woman is entitled not to be shut off from what is considered the right of man in regard to the suffrage—that principle, I think, we may count upon to be as nearly established as it is possible that any debatable principle in social life or politics can be.

A curious and impressive argument, I remember, was advanced with great effect by John Stuart Mill with regard to women in politics. He is criticising the great objection made by the opponents of the scheme that voting is not the business of a woman, that to go to the poll would be her degradation, and that woman is designed by the powers above, by her own brain, and every quality about her, to be kept out of the sphere of votes and politics and political discussions of all kinds. He pointed to a striking fact. He said he did not rest his claim on the intellectual equality of the sexes; that had nothing to do with it. Men did not rest their claim on the assumption that each man was as intellectual as everyone else. We might fairly admit that if you were to sum up the intellectual powers of men on the one side and of women on the other, the intellectual powers of the men would be the greater, but that is not the question. Let us test this allegation of woman's political incapacity, as Mill has done.

Mill says that in all departments of intellectual activity, no

matter how we take them, there is only one in which woman has ever shown herself to be quite the equal of man. She has not so far shown herself equal in any of the arts. We have had no woman poet like Shakespeare or the Greek poets; no woman painter like Michael Angelo, no woman musician like Beethoven or Mozart. In all these departments man so far stands absolutely supreme, and he has never had an equal and never a rival in woman. But there is one department in which woman has in several cases shown herself the peer and equal of man, and that is the very department of politics with which we are told she has no capacity to deal. There are certain great queens, Queen Elizabeth of England, Queen Catherine of Russia, and some of the Indian Princesses, who were the equals in every way of any man who ever held the same position. It certainly seems curious that in this country, at all events, there should be any great doubt as to the right of women to take her equal part in the political movements of the world, seeing that in this country we have prospered and thriven under the reign of great queens both in former times and in the present. I suppose prosperity and greatness in this country never reached greater heights than in the days of Queen Elizabeth, Queen Anne, and Queen Victoria (*Cheers.*).

At one period in the history of this movement, after it had grown to be an organization having its parliamentary machinery and action, I may confess that I used to grow sometimes a little disappointed with the slowness of its parliamentary movements, at all events. I can remember on more than one occasion of speaking to one or other of the organizations in London and expressing a little of this impatience at the slowness of their action. Sometimes I grew a little tired of seeing the stone rolled up with great difficulty to its high place towards the end of the session, only then to roll down to the ground once again, and I remember urging upon the

advocates for the cause in Parliament that they ought to be a great deal more active than they were, and I said more than once that nothing much would come of it in Parliament unless the movement began to make itself very disagreeable to the occupants of the front benches on either side of the house. The Women's Rights advocates ought to fight their own corner, take less account of the convenience of the Administration and of the views of the Opposition, and push their own cause forward vigorously, until it began to be a real disturbing force in Parliament and had to be accepted and advanced.

But of late I have begun to think I was impatient, and needlessly impatient as well. I do not think now that the cause has lost anything by the slowness of its movements in Parliament. On the contrary, I think, it has gained by the time given to it for the process of education all over the country, for allowing it to sink and settle deeply into the minds of men and women formerly careless about it, and by the manner in which it is reconciling itself in the minds of the people and in which it is developing itself every day more and more. You see how the cause is growing and establishing itself (*Cheers.*).

Since it began we have arrived at the principle of women's votes being recognised in many public institutions. When this movement began, I do not believe that women had a vote at all, except perhaps in the election of poor law guardians here and there throughout the country. But since that time we have had the School Boards where women not only vote in the elections, but are themselves elected by the voters. We have women voting for municipal councils, voting for the County Council and being elected to the County Council and sitting there and holding their own against a good deal of legal and other opposition (*Cheers.*).

Well, and now we are so far familiarised with the apparition once made so spectral and so terrible, the apparition of a woman daring to go to the polling booth and to give a vote, perhaps opposed to the opinion of her nearest masculine caretaker or guardian (*Laughter.*). We were told that one single vote given under these conditions would unsex not only that woman who gave the vote, but all women for ever. But I do not think we have found that woman is particularly unsexed at the present moment (*Cheers.*). I think she remains just as she was, holds the same place in human affairs, is in no wise made rougher or coarser or more masculine than she was in those pre-historic days, when she never dreamed of taking part in public movements. I believe I may say, as a romancist by trade, that according to my observation love-making goes on just the same as ever (*Laughter.*). I believe poems are still written for women by men and, I hope, occasionally by women to men. The nature of woman is not at all disturbed by the contact, but on the contrary men are a good deal improved by their contact in public life with women (*Cheers.*).

I was told the other day of an interesting incident by a friend, a young lady who takes a great interest in politics and elections, but I will not say on which side, for in this movement we belong to no party but the one to obtain the suffrage. This young lady was very active in fighting an election for her father, and bringing up the electors in her carriage. She brought up to the polling place one who said he could not vote unless she went with him; he could not read or write, was easily puzzled, and could make nothing of it unless she accompanied him and saw him through the terrible ordeal. Being a plucky girl she undertook to do this,—guiding, leading and governing the lordly man (*Laughter.*). The woman was able to read and write, but the lordly man did not possess those desirable accomplishments. She went in with him to the official at the polling booth, and told him the man wanted her to help

him to vote. The official did not speak, but, to her surprise, handed her a placard whereon she read the solemn words: "No women admitted to this room." She immediately left the room, and her friend who was to have voted followed her and his vote was lost, he not having the courage to remain for he did not know what might happen to him (*Laughter.*).

I think, you will say this is not an unhappy or unfitting illustration of a good deal of the stuff talked in our community of men and women. This is by no means the only instance where a woman is far superior to the man, but is met by the chilly intimation "no women admitted here." Women are now happily striving to be admitted to a great many places from which in early days they were excluded. They are allowed to sit on some public boards, and indeed there remains almost nothing now from which they are excluded, as far as voting power goes, except the right to vote for a member of the House of Commons. I ask you how much longer do you think that narrow and absurd condition can exist? Having got so far, is it within reasonable human probability that the movement can stop there? That women should be able to sit on the throne, to vote for the election of members of municipal and County Councils and School Boards (the most important a country can have), to sit themselves as members of School Boards and County Councils, that all this they might have and no more? That they should be told: "You may help to make laws for the education of our children all over the country; you may go into the County Councils and sit there and regulate all our social affairs from the arrangements and management of our cities in all their details, down to the conduct of the Music Halls—all that you may do, but to go to a polling-booth and say whether you think Mr. Smith or Mr. Brown is the better man to sit for a certain electoral division—that is a gigantic task far beyond your strength; *that we will not and dare not entrust to you*" (*Cheers.*). No, of course,

the whole argument is gone when once you admit women to vote for important elections of Local Boards and to sit themselves on School Boards and County Councils. The rest is simply a matter of organization and compromise and time.

Then we are met with some other terrors, and some other spectres are raised up against us. In all forward movements our path is sometimes stopped by these apparitions which affright us. We had the apparition of the shrieking sister and the unsexed woman. These for the time frightened us back. Now we are sometimes asked what we are going to do when the suffrage is extended from a ratepaying suffrage to what we call manhood suffrage among one sex, and womanhood suffrage among the other. Manhood suffrage, it is said, is certain to come. You cannot rest always on the narrow ledge of the ratepaying franchise as you have it; sooner or later it will be struck away in these countries as it has been struck away in many great States and colonies, and you will have the right to vote given to a man simply because he is an honest man untainted by crime (*Applause.*).

Then, they say, if in the meantime, you have given woman that same ratepaying qualification, when the change is made for man, extending his suffrage to what I call a personal suffrage, which puts the onus on the authorities to show why he should not have a vote, you must extend the same great privilege to woman, and she must have a vote as a woman, just as he possesses a vote as a man.

Before coming to that, let me point to a curious argument used by those who endeavour to puzzle and embarrass us in that way. They say, when you have given woman the ratepaying vote you have placed her on exactly an equality with man; she could not possibly want any more than that. The thing is the same in both cases; the man votes because he is a ratepayer and the woman will vote for the same reason,

and there is perfect and absolute equality. But, now, is there? As a matter of fact, we all know that under the actual condition of things it is inevitable that a vast number of women should be cut off from this ratepaying franchise. One has only to think for a moment to see what an immense number of women there are who could not come in for qualification under the ratepaying franchise. And therefore to say that by that condition of franchise we should place them on an equality with men is practically an absurdity. It is as though you were to say: "We will give the suffrage to every human being who attains the height of 5 ft. 6 in., and nobody else shall have it." You argue "*there* is perfect equality; we say nothing about men or women; any creature who attains that height shall have the vote, and we disclaim all wish to exclude women from franchise, wholly or partially." But, as a matter of fact, nearly all men attain the height of 5 ft. 6 in., and, generally speaking, very few women do; and therefore by that ingenious franchise we completely cut off the vast majority of women (*Laughter and Applause.*).

I was looking the other day through that famous collection or show which has now vanished from London, Mr. Barnum's exhibition, and there I saw an interesting freak of nature, not very charming to look at, who was announced as the "Bearded Lady." This fair creature undoubtedly had a beard which many an ambitious youth would be well-disposed to envy. It occurred to my mind that there would be a sort of illustration of the way in which some men propose to deal final justice to women with regard to the franchise. Suppose we started a franchise for all human creatures of both sexes who had beards,— what would be the result? All the grown men would come in, and all the women, except this one I mentioned, would remain out in the cold (*Laughter.*). That is the kind of equality that would be established by the ratepaying franchise if it were to rest on that basis for ever.

Then comes the alarm—when you extend the franchise to all women, you extend the franchise to the majority. Women, they say, in these countries are always in somewhat of a majority; in all civilised and all old established countries they are always somewhat in a majority. What then will you do? If you give them all the suffrage, you leave men in the minority and women in the majority. To begin with, I venture to suggest that in a country like this it seems hardly the fairest and most constitutional kind of argument to say “We will not give the vote to a certain class of voters because they are the majority.” I should think being in the majority is the most extraordinary reason for being refused a vote that the perverted ingenuity of man could well devise (*Cheers.*). But then that majority, as we know, is not a very great one. It is destroyed here and there in a great variety of ways. It does not by any means follow that the number of men who qualify themselves to vote would be much less, or less at all, than the number of women who take the trouble to become voters. I take it, roughly speaking, that men and women would be on much the same level as regards numbers. Then what reason have we to dread the majority either way? If we have reason to dread the majority in that way, how much more reason have women to dread and complain of the majority in the other way (*Applause.*).

If we are dreading that a majority of women may do us men some harm, how can we deny that women, being in the majority, have cause to complain that the minority of men-voters have been ruling over them all this time. Why should we be afraid of what the votes of women will do? First of all, what conceivable reason is there for imagining that on the great mass of public, private, and social questions, women would vote as a block together simply as women, and that men would vote as a block together simply as men. (*Laughter.*) When once this inequality has been removed, where are the questions in which women’s interest stands opposed to the interests of men? In the most complicated

questions of political and social economy and politics, do not the interests of men and women generally go together? How do we find men and women? We find them in families. We do not find a street with houses for men on this side and houses for women on that side. Some of us may see husbands and wives living together, and groups of boys and girls belonging to the same household growing up together. Where is the sharp line to be drawn between the interests of men and the interests of women? Questions will arise again and again, and must arise, on which men and women will take independent views, on which women from that side and from that field of life will join with men on the other side, and men from that side come and join the women on this, and on which the opinions will be as varied and mixed up and indistinguishable, as far as sex is concerned, as on any question of literature or of art or manners.

There will be opinions that men will have, not because they are men, but because the particular man happens to have a particular opinion of his own and finds a great many men and women agreeing and disagreeing with him; but anything like such a terror as is foretold for us—the terror of questions constantly arising on which men and women will break apart and form two opposing hostile camps is the merest phantom and spectre that ever startled to no effect the mind of timid man (*Applause.*). We may trust to the general bond of interest,—the general bond of inextinguishable affection which joins men and women all through the human race. We may trust there will never be tremendous volcanic disturbance caused by the fact that a woman is allowed to have a vote as well as a man. In truth, so far is that from being the case, that the one particular influence which would tend to throw woman into a kind of resolute organised opposition to man would be the continued and arrogant assumption by man that he alone had the right to manage the affairs of the country, and that woman, as an inferior

being, was to be for ever by his management excluded from the vote (*Applause*). If anything could throw men and women into a hostile attitude, that might do so, but the effect of placing woman on an equality with man would be to fuse her interests more completely with his and to remove every sentiment and every thought of a hostile position (*Applause*).

Now, we know, there are great questions coming up—in this country, in every country like this,—there are great social questions coming up which will have to do with all forms of life, questions not mixed up with party politics, but questions deeply concerning the welfare of the country, the welfare of every class, the welfare, I might almost say, of every household. There are great questions about labour, questions about the poor, questions about the overcrowded regions of all our great working cities. There are questions about education of all kinds, general, technical, scientific, artistic. All these questions will come up for settlement. Some of them are pressing very earnestly and eagerly for settlement. Some of them will have to be encountered before long, no matter what else our statemanship may have to put aside. Statemanship will have to concern itself, as it never has done up to this time, with all these great social difficulties and dangers (*Applause*). I have said more than once, when speaking on subjects different from this, that for Englishmen in the coming time, the real Eastern question is the condition of the poor in the East End of London (*Applause*). Well, now, tell me,—will anyone say that legislation on these questions could be safely, wisely, thoroughly, and sufficiently carried on without the assistance and the intervention of women? Does anyone say that subjects concerning the vast myriads of workers, girls and women, in these countries, that subjects concerning their interests physical and moral can be efficiently managed and settled by a council of men alone? I say it is absolutely impossible. If you were to get together a great collective council of all the wisest men and philosophers the world has yet produced,

they could not legislate on questions like that without the assistance and guidance of women.

It comes to this then. Either the influence of women in future on our legislation must be, as Mr. Stuart Mill used to call it, illegitimate—that is an influence produced by persuading and coaxing and cajoling men and bringing them over to their own side, and in that rather ignoble way making them tools and weapons; or what he used to call most justly the legitimate influence,—that is the influence which woman exerts openly and in the face of day and for which she is responsible to the whole public opinion of the country; that is the influence of the vote. The influence which the male voter exerts, that we claim for the women, and not for the women's sake alone by any means, but also for the sake of the men of the country (*Applause*). One might say, roughly speaking, that the early years of all men, of even the greatest men, are passed under the absolute care and control of women. Is it not then of the utmost importance that our women shall be educated as well as possible, and I contend that there is no practical education of any kind that does not show itself in its effects, openly in some kind of movement or policy, thereby becoming responsible to the feeling and public opinion of the whole country (*Applause*). This is the legitimate influence that women in these countries claim for themselves, and which, I am glad to say, the great majority of men are beginning to claim for them just as well.

More than 20 years ago I remember telling an audience in New York city that the cause of woman suffrage was destined to spread more broadly, to advance more quickly in Great Britain than it had done or was likely to do even in the great American Republic. At the time that was thought a strange assertion and even a paradox, but time has justified my words. We have advanced much farther in England and Scotland and Ireland with this women's suffrage question than they have advanced even in the great American Republic,

except in some outlying districts and thinly peopled territories. There has not been any well-marked progress made in America, such as we have made in this country by the election of women to all schoolboards and some county councils.

The final success of our movement is not long to wait for. Parliament at present is very busy but will before long have some time to spare, and then we shall be able to demand with a resolute face that something shall be done to settle this great question. Do not be alarmed at what you read in the newspapers the other day, that the resolution in favour of women's suffrage has lost its chance under Mr. McLaren for the coming Tuesday. That is so. It has been absorbed and swallowed up by a process well known in the House of Commons, by which the time of that much-suffering, sorely-tried, very patient creature, the private member—to whose class I belong—by which his time is annexed. But Mr. McLaren will try again and again. He can take his chance every succeeding Tuesday for another day until, at last, he wins another Tuesday, and then he will carry his motion to a division (*Applause.*). Therefore do not be in the least disheartened by what is now occurring. That particular cause is in good hands in the House of Commons; it will not be allowed to fall into neglect. Believe me, the time is not far distant when its success will come. It belongs to no party (*Cheers.*). It has enthusiastic supporters on the one side and on the other. Whenever I have attended meetings of its Parliamentary supporters in the House of Commons I have found myself constantly in close proximity with men against whom I have been voting in division lobbies since ever I went into Parliament. With that enthusiastic support on both sides, and with some of the leading and foremost men on both sides, the success of the measure cannot be long deferred, and I hope the very oldest living advocate of the cause may see his wishes and his struggles brought to a happy and a complete triumph (*Loud Cheers.*).

THE  
CIVIL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

BY

✓ EVA McLAREN

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