

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

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THE long-looked-for appeal to the judgment of the new Parliament on the question of the franchise for women was made on April 7th, and the result is regarded on all hands as highly favourable to the prospects of the measure. Although the second reading was lost, the majority against it was so greatly diminished as to afford a presumption that the present House of Commons is more favourable to the principle than was its predecessor, and the Bill enjoys the distinction of being the only question of practical reform which has appealed to the new Parliament with greater success than to the former one.

On Wednesday, April 7th, Mr. FORSYTH moved the second reading of the Bill in an able and judicious speech, which was listened to with great attention in a House unusually full for that hour. Mr. STANSFELD, who seconded the motion, reserved his speech for a later period of the debate, and Mr. CHAPLIN followed Mr. FORSYTH by moving the rejection of the Bill. He was seconded by Mr. LEATHAM, who had been the first to give notice of opposition, but who, for some unexplained reason, yielded his place to Mr. CHAPLIN. Mr. SMOLLETT opposed the measure in a speech which, according to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was characterised by "incredible coarseness." After him came Mr. STANSFELD, who was followed by Mr. BERESFORD HOPE and Mr. NEWDEGATE, in opposition, and by Mr. O'SULLIVAN, and Mr. H. M. JACKSON, in support of the Bill. The last word of the debate was spoken by Sir HENRY JAMES, whose utterances were prolonged so nearly to the hour when by the rules of the House, the debate must have been suspended as to deprive the supporters of the measure of the opportunity of reply. A few words of explanation on a technical point were all that Mr. FORSYTH could give by way of rejoinder, and the question was put about half-past five, when there appeared for the Bill 152, against 187, majority 35. The announcement of the numbers was received with cheers by the promoters of the Bill.

The result is all the more encouraging, inasmuch as the debate took place under unfavourable circumstances. It was but the third day after the termination of the Easter recess, and many of the warmest friends of the

cause who had had occasion to visit their constituents during the interval were unable to return in time to be present at the division. This was more especially the case with regard to the Irish and Scotch members, among whom are found a large contingent of the supporters of the measure. Had the division occurred a week later there is no doubt that a considerably larger number of votes would have been recorded in favour of the Bill, and though there might also have been more votes against it, there is no reason to suppose that the majority would have been larger. Besides the cause we have mentioned, there was the counter attraction of the launch of the *Alexandra* at Chatham to thin the ranks of members, yet in spite of these drawbacks the House was very well filled, and the division was one of the largest that has taken place this session.

The division was in no sense a party one. The Government treated the question as an open one, and the PRIME MINISTER voted for the Bill along with many of his most distinguished colleagues, while other occupants of the Treasury bench went into the opposite lobby. The ex-Ministerial bench was also divided, the most prominent supporters among the members of the late Government being Mr. STANSFELD, who seconded the motion for the second reading, and Dr. LYON PLAYFAIR. Mr. GLADSTONE was present during a considerable part of the debate, but did not vote.

It will be seen by comparison with the last division that while the supporters of the Bill remain at about the same number as in 1873, the number of opponents shows a considerable diminution. During the four divisions in the last Parliament the forces yearly led by Mr. BOUVERIE remained persistently at the numbers 220 or 222. But the spell has been broken under Mr. CHAPLIN'S lead. The numbers of the enemy have diminished to 187, and the majority against the Bill has been reduced from 67 to 35. This was not for want of the most strenuous efforts to beat up opponents. A "three-lined whip," signed by four Liberal M.P.'s, earnestly requesting members to vote against the Bill, was sent to every Liberal; and a similar document, signed by four Conservatives, was

sent to members on that side the House. Mr. NEWDEGATE, as we are informed, sent out a special "whip" against the Bill on his own account. If members did not come up in sufficient numbers to swamp the Bill, it was not for want of asking; the leaders left no stone unturned in order to give Mr. FORSYTH a decisive defeat, and we may regard the division just taken as a fair test of the measure of their strength.

Counting tellers and pairs in the division of April 7th, there were for the Bill 170, against 205, absent 283; of English members there were for the Bill 121; against, 165; absent 174. Welsh, for 4; against 7; absent 19. Scotch, for 22; against 15; absent 22. Irish, for 20; against 18; absent 65.

The following table shows the numbers for and against the Bill in five divisions beginning with 1870:—

1870.			1871.			1872.			1873.			NEW PARLIAMENT.—1875.						
FOR THE BILL.			AGAINST.			FOR THE BILL.			AGAINST.			FOR THE BILL.			AGAINST.			
Liberal.	Con.	Total.	Liberal.	Con.	Total.	Liberal.	Con.	Total.	Liberal.	Con.	Total.	Liberal.	Con.	Total.	Liberal.	Con.	Total.	
Votes ...	60	34	94	137	83	220	96	55	151	118	102	220	105	38	143	114	108	222
Tellers ...	2	—	2	2	—	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
Pairs	17	6	23	11	11	23	3	3	6	4	2	6	7	11	18	8	10	18
	79	40	119	150	94	245	100	59	159	123	105	228	113	50	163	123	119	242
Votes ...	109	46	155	116	106	222	89	63	152	72	115	187	89	63	152	72	115	187
Tellers ...	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	—	2	2	1	1	2	—	2	2
Pairs	11	4	15	6	9	15	9	7	16	4	12	16	9	7	16	4	12	16
	121	51	172	113	116	239	99	71	170	76	129	205	99	71	170	76	129	205

The Irish Home Rulers, of whom twelve voted for the Bill and seven against, are here classed as Liberals.

The above table shows that in the successive divisions the number of opponents has gradually declined and the number of supporters gradually increased; also, that this increase of support has been from both sides of the House.

The number of Liberals who voted for the Bill steadily increased up to the last division in the old Parliament; and if there appears to be a diminution in the numbers now, it is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that there are not nearly so many Liberals now in the House to vote. But though the actual number of Liberal supporters is less, the proportionate number is greater. For the first time in the Parliamentary history of the Bill, it has obtained a majority of the Liberal votes recorded. There is a gain also on the other side. There are more Conservatives in the House than there were in 1873; consequently more Conservatives voted both for and against the measure. But the proportion of friends to opponents is considerably increased. In 1873 about three-quarters of the Conservatives who took part in the division voted against the Bill. This year less than two-thirds of the number who voted opposed the measure, and this out of a larger total of votes.

It is another hopeful circumstance that a majority of the new members, not in the last Parliament, who took part in the division, voted for the Bill. The number of members returned to the House of Commons since April, 1873, who voted on Mr. FORSYTH'S Bill is 141. Of these 78 voted for the second reading, and 63 against, being a majority of 25 new members in favour of the Bill. The strength of the opposition appears to lie in the remnant of the old House of Commons, and it must be our task to persuade and convince the people, in order that they may send to Parliament in future men who are willing to support our claim.

THE articles which appeared in the London newspapers respecting the division afford a gratifying proof of the advance of the question in public opinion. The *Daily News*, *Standard*, *Globe*, *John Bull*, and *Echo* contained articles supporting the Bill, while other papers which still maintain an attitude of resistance to this claim, recognised the result of the division as a decided gain to the cause. We have made a step forwards, and the world acknowledges the fact. It rests with those who believe in the justice of this claim to pursue the path until it leads them to the goal of success.

THE number of petitions presented in favour of the Bill shows a large proportionate increase over the petitions of last year. The Bill remained on the order book of the House of Commons till nearly the end of last session, and during the whole of that period there was a constant

stream of petitions in its favour. The signatures sent in the five months ending August 7, 1874, were 430,343. In the two months of the present session, ending April 16th, there have been 408,844 petitioners for the Bill. Next year it is hoped that even these numbers may be exceeded.

The right of petition for the redress of grievances is an ancient constitutional privilege, highly prized by the people and jealously guarded by the House of Commons. It is as freely open to women as to men, and the humblest woman in the land may lay her complaint before Parliament in this way. If her petition is couched in temperate and respectful language, and is otherwise in accordance with the rules of the House—and we believe that none of the petitions presented or promoted by women have transgressed in these particulars—she may be sure that any member to whom she may think proper to entrust it will take care that it is presented, and that it will be considered in due course. The right of petition is the one shred of constitutional privilege which connects women with the House of Commons. Hundreds of thousands have availed themselves of this right during the present session, and we respectfully suggest to those honourable members who reject their votes that it would be a grievous thing if women should be made to feel that their wishes and sentiments, presented to the House of Commons through the only recognised constitutional method open to them, and in a manner void of offence, were treated with the slightest appearance of levity or scorn, and that the grievances of which they complain did not receive the most attentive and serious consideration.

A REVIEW of the debate that has just taken place does not reveal much that is new or striking in the objections put forward by opponents. The old familiar scarecrows were duly marshalled without even the ceremony of dressing them up afresh. Mr. CHAPLIN, who moved the rejection of the Bill, said that he had always been one who regarded the question as scarcely deserving the serious consideration of Parliament. He objected to the Bill because it "would bring about a complete revolution in all the social relations and all the political laws by which the whole world had been governed since history began, or even since the creation of man." This is truly appalling. It would have been no wonder if members, breathless with the dread of such a terrific catastrophe, had all rushed into the lobby to vote against the Bill, without pausing to

inquire whether social laws and political relations which had lasted since the creation, could be overturned by the votes of a few women householders. We suppose that the parliamentary franchise for men has not existed since the creation—there must have been a time when household suffrage, like dry champagne, was invented, and if there had been any opposition to the innovation it is just possible that the Mr. CHAPLIN of the period might have indulged in equally alarming prognostications with as much or as little reason as his antetype of the present day.

Mr. CHAPLIN denied emphatically that there was any wish on the part of members of Parliament to deal out less than equal justice to women. We fully concur in this sentiment, but we affirm that the passing of this Bill will put into their hands an instrument for carrying their wishes into effect. We have the high authority of the late PRIME MINISTER, whom we cite on this occasion as a disinterested witness whose opinion commands respect in the assembly to which he belongs, that the English law does much less than justice to women, and that great mischief, misery, and scandal are the result. It is for the opponents of representative government for women to show why, with that wish to do them justice for which we are ready to give honourable members the fullest credit, they have as yet failed in carrying their amiable desires to a practical conclusion.

Women are by far the greatest sufferers, both as to the numbers of victims, and as to severity of the tortures inflicted, from crimes of violence unaccompanied by robbery. An honourable member lately inquired whether the Government were prepared to introduce a Bill aimed at the repression of this particular species of crime. To this inquiry the SECRETARY of STATE gave the off-hand reply that "Temple Bar was overcrowded." This appears to be the usual state of the thoroughfare when a passage is claimed for measures to benefit an unrepresented class. The moans of the bruised and bleeding victims fall on unheeding ears, and these, the true "shrieking sisterhood," are left to the tender mercies of the clogs and fists of their "natural protectors," while Parliament turns its attention to the condition of the equine clients of the honourable member for Mid-Lincolnshire, who have the good fortune to be "property."

The next objection was that Mrs. MILL was stated to have somewhere declared that "the proper sphere for all women is the highest to which they can attain," and that they ought to have complete liberty of choice. From which premises the honourable member straightway

deduces the conclusion that Mr. and Mrs. MILL contemplated that at some time or other women would be elected members of Parliament. A little further on Mr. CHAPLIN professes a profound reverence for women, and "the unerring instinct by which their aspirations are guided." If this language be anything more than a figure of speech, one would think he might trust this "unerring instinct" not to lead women into occupations unsuited for them, even supposing they possessed complete liberty of choice.

After enumerating these objections, Mr. CHAPLIN finally bases his opposition on the allegation that the agitation reflects not the opinions of the vast majority of the women of England, but the "restless discontented longings and desires of a few," "perhaps neither the happiest nor the most favoured of their sex." Honourable members appeared to find some joke, the point of which we do not see, in the fact that some women are not happy and some are not favoured; but setting this aside, let us take the first part of the indictment, and boldly reply, What if it does? Will the honourable member deny that every improvement in the condition of mankind has originated in the "restless, discontented longings and desires of the few?" The vast majority of men are content to lead lives of thoughtless ignorance or selfish indulgence; it is the restless longings and desires of the few that have won for the human race every conquest that has yet been made over the powers of nature or of wrong. The movement for the enfranchisement of women follows the same law as movements for the benefit of men. The few bear the burden and heat of the day, the many enter into the fruits of their labours. So it ever has been and ever must be, while human nature remains the same.

The special scarecrow of Mr. LEATHAM is that very venerable one—"the immemorial usage of mankind." From the excessive devotion to the ways and customs of his ancestors displayed by the hon. member for Huddersfield, and his horror at the idea of trying a political experiment which he avers has never been thought of before, one would imagine that "his father must have been a Mede and his mother a Persian." We respectfully submit that if the promoters of discovery in science and improvement in politics were limited in their theories and experiments to those which somebody had done or thought of before, society would not be much the better for their labours. We do not ask for the adoption of any principle because it is new, but if that for which we contend were really as new as Mr. LEATHAM assumes it to be, instead of being

merely the application in a fresh direction of a principle which has existed uninterruptedly during the thousand years of history which he professes to have explored—the principle, namely, that women should share in some degree in the government of this country—we should still contend that it was not the part of wisdom to reject it without examination, merely on the ground that it had not been thought of before.

We once saw a letter from a learned Brahmin deprecating the proposal to teach Hindoo girls to read, on grounds curiously similar to those taken up by Mr. LEATHAM. It was contrary to immemorial usage to cultivate the intellectual faculties of women, and nature had evidently designed them for lives of dependence and seclusion. The vast majority acquiesce in this arrangement, which it would be wrong to disturb for the sake of a few restless and discontented individuals. We do not know whether the honourable member for Huddersfield would admit the force of this reasoning in the question of improving the social condition of the women in Her Majesty's Oriental domains. But we are much mistaken if objections such as these will be long suffered to bar the acceptance by the Legislature of measures for improving the political condition of the women of these realms.

WE beg to call attention to the announcement in our advertising columns of the Annual General Meeting of the Central Committee, to be held at their offices, 294, Regent-street, at three o'clock in the afternoon, on Saturday, May 29th, under the presidency of Mr. FORSYTH, M.P. In the evening of the same day, a public meeting will be held in St. George's Hall, London, at which Mr. GEORGE DIXON, M.P., will preside, when ladies will reply to the speeches delivered in the House of Commons in the debate on the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN THE ISLE OF MAN.—In the popular branch of the Manx Legislature, the House of Keys, a Bill has been introduced containing powers which will completely revolutionize the electoral system of the Isle of Man. The ballot has not yet been introduced, and the franchise is at present in the country districts £10, and in town £8. The Bill not only introduces the ballot, but women's suffrage, and so considerably reduces the franchise that it will amount practically to household suffrage. Popular election has only existed ten years in the island, and the spirit is so Conservative that the Bill is expected to create considerable opposition.—*Times*.

A LADY ELECTED AS A POOR-LAW GUARDIAN.—Miss Martha Craufurd Merington, a gentlewoman residing in Pembroke Gardens, has been returned in the election as guardian for the parish of Kensington.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
April 7th, 1875.

WOMEN'S DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

On the order of the day for the second reading of this Bill—Mr. FORSYTH said: I rise, sir, to move the second reading of this Bill. It is extremely short, consisting only of a single clause. Its object is to enable women who are not under the coverture of marriage, if they are rated householders in boroughs, or possess sufficient property qualification in counties, to vote at elections for members of Parliament. I say emphatically women not under the disability of coverture, because I am strongly opposed to the claim of married women to vote, and there is nothing in my Bill which would enable them to do so. My Bill does not remove the disqualification and disability of status, but it does remove the disqualification and disability of sex. If there could be the shadow of a doubt on the point in the mind of any person—although there can be no doubt whatever in the mind of any competent lawyer—I will prove conclusively that such is the case. In the year 1869, an Act was passed for shortening the period of residence, as a qualification for the municipal franchise, and section 9 of that Act enables women to vote at municipal elections. Now I wish to draw the attention of the House to the words of that section. It says:—"In this Act, and the Act herein recited of 5 and 6 William IV., chap. 76, and the Acts amending the same, wherever words occur which denote the masculine gender, the same shall be held to include females, with regard to all matters in reference to the right to vote for councillors, auditors, and assessors." Well, it has been decided by the Court of Queen's Bench that under the words of that section, married women cannot vote. The case came before the Court on a *quo warranto*. In the town of Sunderland, an election took place, and the town councillor who was successful won the election by a majority of one vote. Of those who voted for him two were married women. One was a woman who lived apart from her husband, and who occupied a house in the borough, and paid rates and taxes; the other was a woman who was not married at the time she was put upon the register, but who had married a short time before the election. It was contended that under the words of the 9th section of the Act of Parliament these women were entitled to vote, but the Court of Queen's Bench held that they were not. They held that the disqualification was a disqualification of status, and that it was not removed by the words which I have just quoted. The Lord Chief Justice of England said:—"I cannot believe it was intended to alter the status of married women. It seems quite clear that this statute had not married women in its contemplation. Nor can it be supposed that the subsequent statute (Married Women's Property Act)—has by a side wind given them political or municipal rights." And Mr. Justice Mellor said: "Section 9 of 32 and 33 Vict., c. 55, only removes the disqualification by reason of sex, and leaves untouched the disqualification by reason of status." Last session, when I brought forward a Bill on the same subject I added to it a proviso which distinctly stated that married women should not be allowed to vote at Parliamentary elections. I will tell the House why I formerly put that proviso in and why I omit it now. I put it in because during all the debates which took place in this House in former years there has been a most lamentable confusion in the minds of many hon. members who discussed the subject. There was much declamation on the part of the opponents of the measure, on the ground that it would break up the foundations of society, that it would introduce discord into married life, and that it would altogether

alter the relations between the sexes domestically and socially. All that, however, was entirely irrelevant, and had no hing to do with the real question before the House, but the effect was such that even a man as astute and sagacious as the late member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) was puzzled. I will refer to a letter which he wrote to the Editor of the *Times* the day after a debate on this subject in this House. Mr. Baines said that he was so puzzled and confused by what he heard, that he thought it was intended to give votes to married women, and therefore, instead of voting for the Bill, as he intended, he voted against it. If a gentleman like Mr. Baines was so confused, it is no wonder that the minds of other hon. members were confused, considering the course adopted by the opponents of the Bill. Therefore I was determined, as regarded my Bill of last session, that there should be no mistake at all, because I am inflexibly opposed to the idea that married women should vote for members of Parliament. I was told by several friends that they wished to leave this disqualification to the common law, which was quite sufficient, without enacting disability by statute; and as I know it will not make the slightest difference, I have now omitted the proviso. Still, if any hon. gentleman thinks I am not acting *bonâ fide*, he may move in committee the very words of my proviso, and I shall not oppose its introduction. Yet, notwithstanding what I have said, Mr. Goldwin Smith, in a pamphlet which has been industriously circulated, says:—"The framer of the Bill, in fact, himself tells his dissatisfied supporters that the limitation to unmarried women is introduced only to hoodwink the House of Commons, which must be very manageable if it can be so easily duped." I want words to express my indignation at a statement so calumnious as that. I utterly and indignantly deny it, and I feel assured that no one who knows me will say that I wish to deceive the House of Commons by telling them one thing while I tell my supporters another. (Hear, hear.) I never thought and I never said such a thing; but to what straits must not the ex-professor of Oxford be reduced when, as an argument with which to refute the supporters of the measure, he resorts to an assertion so absolutely untrue? I have not yet finished with Mr. Goldwin Smith. Before I sit down I shall have something more to say about him, but in leaving this part of the question I would remind the House that if my opponents to-day indulge in declamation about married women, and the disruption of the relations which ought to subsist between husband and wife, they will be simply wasting their breath; and I shall assume that they have no real argument to adduce against the measure. This is no party question, as is clearly shown by the names on the back of the Bill. There is my own name and the name of my right hon. friend the Recorder of London, and we both of us sit on the Conservative side. Then there are the names of my right hon. friend, the member for Halifax, a distinguished cabinet minister in the late Government, and of my hon. friend whose absence on account of illness I deplore, the hon. baronet the member for Fife. Thus the Bill is indorsed by two Conservatives and two Liberals. Again, who are the members who contend for the honour of rejecting my Bill? My hon. friend the member for Lincolnshire, who is a Conservative; and the member for Huddersfield, who is a Liberal. Moreover the whole history of this question and the divisions in this House, show that it is not a party question. The truth is that it is impossible to predict from the political bias and general opinions of any member what vote he will give upon this question. I believe however that a majority of the unmarried members of the House will vote against my Bill. I do not stop to explain the circumstance, though I think I could do so, but it will be found when the division takes place that what I say is correct. No, sir, I should be ashamed to

make this a party question. I agree with the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, who, speaking on this subject in 1871, said:—"I would set aside altogether the question whether the adoption of such a measure as this is likely to act in any given sense upon the fortunes of one political party or another. It would be what I may call a sin against first principles, to permit ourselves to be influenced either one way or the other by any feeling we might entertain on such a point." (Hear, hear.) Contrast that with the language used by the ex-Professor Mr. Goldwin Smith, who remarks:—"In answer to appeals to party allegiance I have to say, in the first place, that the Bill for removing the electoral disabilities of women comes from the Conservative side of the House, and is, apparently, like the enfranchisement of the residuum, not unconnected with the objects of a reactionary policy." I may mention that Mr. Goldwin Smith had been all his life, before I announced my Bill, a strong advocate of this measure. It will now be interesting to notice the growth of public opinion upon this question. I assert fearlessly that there has been no other question which in so short a time has made so rapid and so large a progress. I do not believe that even the anti-Corn-Law agitation increased with such accelerated velocity as this question has done since it first came before the House. I will quote a few figures on the subject. I believe the Bill was first introduced in 1867 or 1868. In the latter year there were presented in its favour 75 petitions with 50,000 signatures. The numbers of the petitions in favour of it, in subsequent years, were as follows:—257, with 126,475 signatures, in 1869; 621, with 134,566 signatures, in 1870; 622, with 186,976 signatures, in 1871; 843, with 355,801 signatures, in 1872; 919, with 329,206 signatures, in 1873; and 1,404 petitions, with 430,343 signatures, in 1874. This year, although hardly two months had elapsed since Parliament met, 900 or 1,000 petitions had been presented in favour of the Bill; and up to the 19th of March there were more than 219,000 signatures to the petitions. No question was ever brought in by a private member which has received so large an amount of support as mine has. Still I must not only give the credit side of the account but the debit side also, and the House will naturally want to know how many petitions against the Bill have been presented. I will tell the House how the matter stands as regards that. From 1869 to 1873 there were presented against this Bill exactly four petitions. (Hear, hear, from Mr. Beresford Hope.) All these four petitions came from Scotch municipal burghs, where women have no votes at all. Last year there were three petitions against the Bill from the Town Councils of Elgin, Nairn, and Linlithgow—immortal burghs which are destined in the history of this question to be as famous as the "Three Tailors of Tooley Street." (Laughter.) They remind me of Mrs. Partington in her pattens and with her mop trying to push back the Atlantic. I venture to say that this Bill will not be lost in consequence of the opposition of these three trim-perry Scotch burghs. (A laugh.) This year thirty town councils in Scotland have petitioned in its favour, and there is not one single petition against it. ("Hear, hear," from Mr. Beresford Hope.) My hon. friend the member for Cambridge cries "hear, hear," but will he say that women are so indifferent to this question, that they do not care whether it is passed or not? Or will he say that they won't take the trouble to petition against the Bill because they do not like to put themselves forward? Is it the fact that women will not petition Parliament on questions which interest the sex? Let me call attention to what has taken place this session with regard to two Bills. One is a Bill which my hon. friend the member for the University of Cambridge has bitterly opposed, namely, the Bill to legalise marriage with a Deceased Wife's

Sister. The other is the Bill to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act. Now what has happened with regard to these two measures? Why 2,000 petitions were presented in favour of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill; 700 petitions were presented against it, and a great many of them were signed by women. So it was also with regard to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. I myself should oppose the repeal, but still there are nearly 800 petitions signed largely by women in favour of its repeal. I say, therefore, it will not do for hon. members to allege that women are indifferent in this matter, or that the retiring modesty of women will not allow them to sign petitions against the Bill. The only rational explanation of their not petitioning is that they do not believe in the assertion made for them in this House, that the Bill will injure the interests of the sex socially and domestically. I will next mention what has been the attitude of members of the late and of the present ministers with regard to this Bill. In 1867, four members of the late Government voted for the Bill, and seven against it. Of the members of the present Government only one voted for the Bill in 1867, and eleven against it. In 1873, three members of the late Government voted for the Bill, and eleven against it, whereas, of the members of the present Government, eight voted for, and eight against it. While speaking of ministers, I should like to quote to the House what was said by the present Prime Minister on two occasions, with regard to this measure and the principle it involves. The right hon. gentleman who is now the First Minister of the Crown, in the course of a speech delivered in this House, in 1866, remarked:—"I say that, in a country governed by a woman, where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right; for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden, and overseer of the poor—I do not see where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote." The right hon. gentleman also addressed the following reply to a memorial from upwards of 11,000 women of Great Britain and Ireland, which was presented through Mr. Gore Langton, in 1873. "Dear Gore Langton, I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the memorial, signed by 11,000 women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament." Now, with regard to the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone), I cannot quote him in terms of such strong approval; but in 1871 he made a speech, distinguished not only by its eloquence, but by its candour and its fairness, and well worthy the attention of the House. The right hon. gentleman said:—"I will not give any positive opinion upon the subject, but I have never heard any conclusive reason why we should not borrow a hint from the law now existing in Italy, under which a woman is allowed to exercise the franchise if she is possessed of a qualification, subject to the condition that she shall only exercise it through a deputy, some friend or relative specially chosen for the purpose. That may be found on examination to be a good or a bad plan, but it is one worthy of discussion. I admit at any rate that as far as I am able to judge there is more presumptive ground for change in the law than some of the opponents of the measure are disposed to own." These are weighty words, and I am thankful the right hon. gentleman went so far as that.

Now, sir, I propose to give, as shortly as I can, some of the reasons on which I shall ask the House to vote for the Bill, and I will glance at some of the objections to it as briefly as possible. I will do this because I do not know whether I shall have an opportunity of reply, for I do not wish the Bill to be talked out, but that there should be a division on it. I ask the House to assent to the second reading, first, because it is a constitutional principle, which no one will deny, since the passing of the Reform Act, that taxation and representation are reciprocal and correlative terms, and that no class ought to be taxed without having a voice in the selection of the persons who are to tax them. At present only six classes of persons are excluded from the franchise—paupers, lunatics, criminals, minors, idiots, and women. Of these classes the first four may gain or recover the electoral status, and only two are permanently excluded from the political franchise—namely, idiots and women. I do not think that women will consider themselves flattered by being placed in such a juxtaposition. (Hear, hear.) Why is it that no class in the country as a class ought to be excluded from the right to the political franchise? It is because the classes which are excluded are sure to have their interests neglected. Let the House compare the position of the working classes now with what it was before they had the franchise. At present no barometer is more sensitive to the influence of the weather than hon. members are to the interests of the working classes. As for women, I say that for centuries their interests have been neglected. I assert that the legislation of man towards woman has for centuries been the legislation of the strong against the weak, and that man has said in the proud consciousness of physical superiority, *Hoc volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*. Up to 1870, while man lost the control of his property only through the crime of felony, woman lost all control over hers by marriage, and could not assert her right to the custody of infant children, her right to appoint guardians to those children, her right, though a widow, to a voice in the religious education of those children, her right to dispose of her property by will, and her right to protection against excessive employment in factories and degrading employment in coal mines. These rights were disregarded, and only of late years has tardy and imperfect justice been done. The obvious reason why woman has so long been placed at a disadvantage is that she has been a cypher in political arithmetic, and that men have disregarded her wishes because she cannot give effect to them by voting. For how many years did not Serjeant Talfourd labour in this House to give a mother the custody of her infant children against a drunken and profligate husband? When the mother had been given the custody of them up to the age of seven, thirty years elapsed before the age was increased to sixteen. Even now a woman cannot appoint a guardian for her own child. In a case in which father and mother are of different religious persuasions, although the children may have been educated up to the age of ten or twelve years in the religion of the mother, yet, after the death of the father, any relative of the children may go into court and have them brought up in the religion of the father. Take, again, the case of women farmers. We know the difficulty experienced by the widows of farmers in obtaining farms, and the reason is simply this, that they have no votes, for even under the Ballot landowners hope by the influence of property to secure the votes of their tenants. On this ground, as is stated in a letter which I have received from Scotland, there is a strong feeling in that country in favour of the Bill. The exclusion of women from the franchise is unjust, because they are called upon to bear local burdens equally with men. Some time ago the borough of Bridgewater got into

trouble in consequence of bribery. A Royal Commission reported that extensive bribery had prevailed, and the expense of that was to be borne by the ratepayers. There was a rate of 3s. in the £ imposed upon the women as well as upon the men. The women said: "Oh dear no, you ought not to make us pay this rate, because we have no votes." But Mr. Secretary Bruce replied: "As you are ratepayers we cannot exempt you, but you must bear the burden." I say it is unjust in the highest degree that women should be compelled to bear the burdens of the ratepayers while they do not enjoy any of their privileges. (Hear, hear.) Among the public questions in the settlement of which women are entitled to a voice, there are the custody of infants, marriage and divorce, marriage with a deceased wife's sister, infant life preservation, sanitary legislation, factory legislation, Mines Acts, Workshop Acts, local taxation, and education. Four-fifths of the measures which are now before Parliament are such as directly affect women, on which they are entitled to be heard, and on which their opinion would be extremely valuable. When a large number of persons make demands which are not in themselves unreasonable, they ought, as far as possible, to be conceded; and it is impossible to deny the fact that a very large number of women desire to possess the political franchise. My hon. and learned friend the member for Taunton (Sir H. James) has talked of the demand being the crocheted of a noisy few, whom he denominated "social failures;" but what does he mean by that term? Is a woman a "social failure" merely because she is not married? Surely the hon. and learned gentleman would not apply the term to Miss Rye, or Miss Florence Nightingale. Was Mrs. Somerville a "social failure?" Will he maintain that the ladies who have signed petitions in favour of the Bill, such as the Dowager Countess of Buchan, Vicountess Combermere, Lady Mountcashel, Lady Helen Stewart, and the Hon. Miss Canning, are "social failures?" Can any hon. member be surprised at the number of women who desire the privilege, or rather as I should say, the right, which it is proposed to confer upon them by this Bill? There are no less than 3,000,000 of women in this country who are earning their bread, either by their brains or their hands, and are entirely self-supporting. In this metropolis alone, there are upwards of 4,000 female employers of labour, all of whom have to exert themselves in business for the purpose of earning their livelihood. I dare say I shall be told that in the society in which hon. members of this House move there is no such desire as that to which I allude; that in the drawing rooms of London not only is there no opinion in favour of the Bill, but on the contrary, the majority of opinion would be found to be in opposition to it. I entreat the House not to be led away by any statement of this kind. It is not those who are nursed in the lap of wealth, who live in luxurious drawing rooms, who are protected by fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, who feel the pinching necessity of the case. I care not for the minions of fortune and those who are sheltered from the storms of adversity by the possession of rich and happy homes, but I plead for the tens of thousands of women who, unsheltered by marriage, are obliged to fight the hard battle of life for themselves. (Hear, hear.) Another of my reasons for urging the House to pass this Bill, is that its principle has already been conceded by the House in granting the municipal franchise to women. It has been said (indeed I myself heard the observation made by a Cabinet Minister), that Mr. Bruce was asleep when he allowed that clause to pass. This may have been so, but at any rate Mr. Bruce was not asleep when he afterwards opposed a Bill like mine, and in the strongest terms, while asserting the right of women to the municipal franchise, denied that they had any right to use the political franchise by voting in the election of members of Parliament. If it is not improper in me so to

speak of a gentleman who was then a Cabinet Minister, and a Home Secretary, I should say that the arguments with which Mr. Bruce supported his proposition were weak and childish in the extreme. The then Home Secretary stated, among other arguments against the Bill, that he had never heard of a woman who was a great musical composer, and women had not stood by the mailed Barons at Runnymede, when they wrung the Great Charter from King John. If there is any force in such an argument as this, the maimed, the crippled, and the blind ought not to vote for members of Parliament, while the voting power of soldiers and sailors ought to be proportionately increased. It would be just as wise to say that women ought not to vote because they did not shoot partridges or smoke tobacco. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I will propose a test to those hon. members who think that the Bill giving the municipal franchise to women ought not to have been passed. Let any one of them bring in a Bill to repeal the clause in the Act which conferred this franchise, and I venture to say that he will not find five other members to go into the lobby with him. The last reason on which I ask the House to support this Bill is that the Ballot Act has been passed, and thereby the most plausible objection to giving the franchise to women has been removed. The right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, in his speech upon the question, stated, among other things, that in Italy, where the women vote by deputy, the ballot has not been adopted. Before the Ballot Act was passed, the fact of women being required to attend at the polling booths and vote openly would have rendered them liable to interruption, and sometimes perhaps to abuse—at all events it might have been thought unfeminine in women, to be going openly to polling booths. But under the Ballot Act a woman can go and vote as quietly as she can go shopping, and as no person can tell how she intends to vote or how she has actually voted, there is no earthly excuse for molesting her. All those who have witnessed elections since the passing of that measure, the Ballot Act, must have remarked the quiet and decorum with which elections are now conducted as compared with former times. The voting is as solemn as a funeral, and as quiet as a Quakers' meeting. I do not know whether anyone in this House will again urge the old argument against the Bill, which is based upon a supposed inferiority of women. One never hears of it outside the House of Commons, and I hardly think any hon. member inside Parliament will be bold enough to say that women are intellectually so inferior to men as not to be fit to have a voice in the selection of members of this House. I do not contend that women have the same average amount of brain power as men; but that is not the question: the question is, whether are they so inferior as to be incompetent to form a judgment, and to be disentitled to have a fractional share in the choice of members of this House. (Hear, hear.) Many examples could be mentioned of women whose names are honourably placed in the temple of fame by their achievements in history, biography, mathematics (pure and applied), political economy, fiction, and almost every other department of literary and scientific study. I now pass on to what I believe to be the most serious and formidable of the objections which will be urged against this Bill. I regard the objection as formidable because it is based mainly on sentiment, and objections of that kind are difficult to meet by argument and logic. It is said that the effect of this measure will be to change the nature of woman for the worse by making her too masculine, and giving her something of the roughness without investing her with the dignity of man. Now, sir, I yield to no man in my desire to preserve that which is the distinctive charm of woman—her

softness, her purity, her grace. I wish the feelings of woman towards my own sex, in all domestic and social relations, to be those so beautifully expressed by Portia, in Shakspeare, in the words:—

Happiest of all is, that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.

If I thought that the effect of this measure would be to change the nature of woman for the worse, and to deteriorate her character, while I should consider her claims to be just, I should also consider that her rights were purchased at too dear a price. But I have no such fears. I believe them to be the offspring and the phantoms of mere imagination. It would be just as reasonable to say that a man, because he has been vaccinated, becomes a cow, as to say that a woman, because she has a vote, ceases to be a woman and becomes a man. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Does the House suppose that in granting votes to women it will be transforming them into active and ardent politicians. What is the case in our own sex? Anyone inquiring into the matter will find that it is often extremely difficult to arouse men who have votes to anything like activity in politics, and even at a general election it is impossible to induce many electors to take the trouble to vote. Take the borough of Marylebone, for instance. Although at the last general election the fate of a ministry was at stake, there were no less than 11,000 electors whom it was impossible to induce to vote on either side. If that is the case with men, why should it not be the case with women also? Because a certain class of women may have no desire to take part in politics, why should women of intelligent views, who wish to express their opinions by their votes, be debarred from doing so? Let it be remembered that the duty of an elector is to vote for a candidate who shall not be a mere delegate, but shall be a man of ability and character in whose judgment he can place confidence, and in whose political opinions he generally agrees. Women are, as a general rule, very good judges of character, and all they ask Parliament to do now is to enable them to judge and decide between opposing candidates who desire to represent the constituencies. Another objection which is made to this measure is, that its supporters have ulterior views—and that this is simply the thin end of the wedge. That is an argument always used by the timid opponents of any measure. I personally have no ulterior views. I steadily oppose the idea of married women having votes, and I deride the idea of women sitting as members of the House of Commons. Just consider what is the use of that argument as applied to other measures. If you are not to grant what is right because something which is wrong may be asked for afterwards, it would be impossible to advance in legislation at all. My contention is that you stand upon a higher vantage ground for refusing what is wrong and unreasonable, if in the first instance you have granted what is reasonable and right. One of the strongest arguments used by the right hon. member for Greenwich, when he proposed to disestablish the Irish Church, was that an established Church in Ireland was in itself a wrong, and that, having disestablished it, the hands of Parliament would be stronger to resist any further proposals which it deemed to be wrong in themselves. If we admit his premiss—which I for one do not—we must admit also that the deduction he drew from it is logically unanswerable. I therefore maintain that what is called "the thin end of the wedge" argument ought to have no weight in this House. Of course in one sense there will be ulterior views. The women of this country do not want the franchise as an ornament or a toy, but they want it in order that members may be returned

to Parliament who will enable the House to take a more broad and comprehensive view of the rights of women and of political questions affecting them than is the case at present. It is said that the time may come when some question will arise on which the votes of women would turn the scale. Suppose that were so, the very fact would prove that questions may arise in which the opinions of men being equally divided, and the interests of women peculiarly involved, the women themselves ought to have the power of turning the scale. My right hon. friend Mr. Bouverie in opposing this Bill on a former occasion, used as a weapon the case of America, and stated that in that country the game of women's suffrage was nearly played out. The right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) has recently been in America, and I find in a speech made by Mr. Garrison, in Massachusetts, in the month of February of the present year, an account of an interview which he had recently had with the right hon. gentleman on the subject. He (Mr. Forster) asked for information as to whether the movement was dying out in America, and Mr. Garrison replied that so far from dying out, the movement was never so far advanced as at the present moment, and was never so thoughtfully considered, fairly appreciated, and readily accepted, both by classes who had formerly opposed it and by the press. I can quite understand hon. members being frightened by the idea of having our institutions Americanised. I have no particular love for American institutions, or for some points in the American character; but America is not England, nor is this country the United States. Everything in America seems to run to exaggeration. This House is not now asked to legislate for American, French, Italian, or German women, but for Englishwomen, in whose common sense I for one have unbounded confidence. (Hear, hear.) I now come on to my hon. and learned friend the member for Taunton (Sir Henry James) whose vote I claim for this Bill in pursuance of a promise which he has given. In a speech at Taunton, he told the electors that if half the ladies in the town appealed to him to support female suffrage he would do so, for he should then know he was acting according to the wish of the ladies. Since that time my hon. and learned friend has presented to the House a petition in favour of this Bill, signed by more than half of the ladies of Taunton.

Sir H. JAMES: The petition was not that of ladies simply, but of householders.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then if half the householders in the borough of Taunton happen to be women the hon. gentleman is bound by his pledge to support a Bill which at one time he so bitterly denounced on the ground, as he alleged, that it would transform England into a sort of Pandemonium, by creating discord and untold miseries in the families of the country. Yet holding these opinions, my hon. and learned friend has pledged himself to support the Bill if asked to do so by half the women of a small borough in the West of England. Let the House test the strength of my hon. and learned friend's arguments—for no doubt he will speak in opposition to this Bill—by the offer he has made. My learned friend also told the House on a former occasion that the sympathetic element in women was apt to deprive them of all logical power. I deny the fact, and further I say that if my learned friend thinks that the majority of the male electors are logical, I cannot possibly agree with him. Women may not be good logicians, but they have an intuitive perception of right and wrong, and all the House is now asked to do is to enable women to vote for the men who will support the measures best calculated for the interest of the country. Adverting to the speech of the hon. member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) on a former occasion, when he asked the House to reject this as an ultra-Radical measure, I may remark

that on this, as on other questions and occasions, extremes meet. Mr. Newdegate is a staunch Conservative, and Mr. Goldwin Smith is an advanced Liberal, but on this question they row in the same boat, and agree in regarding this as a Radical revolutionary measure. Mr. Goldwin Smith says, "The question whether female suffrage on an extended scale is good for the whole community is probably identical, practically speaking, with the question whether it is good for us to have free institutions or not." Further on in the same pamphlet, Mr. Smith says: "There can be little doubt that in all cases, if power were put into the hands of the women, free government and with it liberty of opinion would fall." I shall not condescend to answer the absurdities of Mr. Goldwin Smith on this question. If any hon. member believes that by giving women votes the free institutions of this country would be destroyed, he is beyond the power of argument. I will, however, be more courteous to the honourable member for Warwickshire, and ask him whether the character of a woman has in it elements of a revolutionary nature; whether her submission to authority, her reverence for religion, and her regard for law are the elements out of which he would be likely to get an ultra-Radical revolutionary measure. Unless the hon. member can answer this question in the affirmative, I confidently ask him to give his vote for the Bill now under consideration. The supporters of the Bill sometimes have to meet with ridicule. Arguments I can meet, but misplaced ridicule I despise. Not that I object to wit, especially if it is used to feather the arrow of argument and give buoyancy to its flight. I should be the last to quarrel with Horace for saying *Ridentem dicere verum Quid vetat?* I suppose the hon. member for the University of Cambridge will favour us with a quotation from Tennyson's "Princess." In case such is his intention, I will anticipate him by quoting the lines myself:

Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl graduates with their golden hair.

But in this House, an assembly of gentlemen, I do not believe that any member will descend to low and vulgar ridicule, or that we shall hear in the course of this debate of "the shrieking sisterhood," which I was ashamed to see not long ago in a newspaper which calls itself an enlightened instructor of the people. Now, sir, I have done. I have pleaded this cause with all the earnestness of settled and deliberate conviction. I wish I could have pleaded it with more eloquence and power. When I was first asked to undertake this cause, I refused, for I thought it ought to be in the hands of some person of more experience and authority than myself; some one like Mr. Jacob Bright, whose name is so honourably associated with the advocacy of this cause. But I was pressed to undertake the task, and I felt that I ought to allow others rather than myself to be the best judges of my fitness for the task. In this House, in this the second session of a new Parliament, there are many members whose opinions on the question are not known, and there are many who are wavering upon the subject, for many have come to me and said that their votes would be determined by the arguments used in this debate. To such members I appeal. No new measure can be brought forward against which some plausible arguments may not be offered, and this Bill of mine is no exception to the rule. All I ask is that the arguments may be fairly weighed, and that those hon. members who think the preponderating weight is in favour of the Bill will have the courage of their convictions and vote for the Bill. If they do this, they will gratify a very large portion of their fellow-countrywomen by saying to them that they ought no longer to be under the stigma of inferiority, and that their nature is not likely to

be deteriorated by the possession of a vote. In the days of ancient Rome the Social War was caused by the refusal of the Roman people to grant to the inhabitants of the provinces the *jus suffragii*—the rights of free citizens. They were compelled to serve in the Roman armies, and to bear the burdens of the proud Republic; but they were not allowed to vote in the election of a Roman magistrate. The result was, as you all know, that the provincials were victorious in the contest, and by their loyal allegiance they enabled Rome to become the mistress of the world. If you reject this measure you will not have a social war, but you will have widespread discontent. Women will naturally ask why they alone, of all the subjects of a sovereign who is herself a woman, should be denied the rights of free citizenship under the constitution. Of this you may be sure, that this agitation will never subside until the unjust restriction is removed. That it will be removed sooner or later I have not a shadow of doubt, and if so, better soon than late. (Hear, hear.) The history of all legislation shows that it is better to give way in time than to wait until you are shamed or terrified into submission. This measure is right, just, and expedient, and in the name of right, justice, and expediency, I earnestly ask the House of Commons to consent to the second reading of the Bill. (Cheers.) The hon. and learned gentleman concluded by formally moving the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: I hope the House will excuse me for intervening at this point. I am one of the most ardent supporters of the Bill, and should have contented myself with giving a silent vote, but that I cannot allow a remark which fell from the hon. and learned gentleman to pass unchallenged. I believe it is one of the rules of this House that no remarks shall be made in debate which tend to reflect upon individual members. This is a good rule, and should, I think, apply also to the constituencies which hon. gentlemen represent. I regret very much—

Mr. FORSYTH: I beg to withdraw the expression which I used in haste. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHAPLIN, on rising to move the rejection of the Bill, said: Perhaps the House will allow me in the first instance to express my sense of the great courtesy of the hon. member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) in giving me precedence in opposition to this Bill. I am thankful to him for this, principally because it enables me to give the most practical contradiction in my power to the suggestion that members on this side of the House are, generally speaking, in favour of the Bill now under consideration. It is by no means at my own wish that I occupy the position which I fill at this moment, and I cannot but feel that in rising to move the rejection of this Bill, I labour under some disadvantage. The ladies who have made this cause their own are, in my opinion, favoured by fortune in the man whom they have selected to advance and further their views on this side of the House, and who is no unworthy successor of the champion who, by the fortune of an election, they have recently lost from this House. I, on the other hand, cannot pretend for a moment to vie with him who was lately their chief opponent, either in his power and practice in debate, or in the weight and authority with which everything coming from Mr. Bouverie was received in this assembly, in which he had a long-honoured, honourable, and useful career. (Hear, hear.) I know there is little that is new to be said in discussing this question. My hon. friend, the member for Marylebone, has supplied us with a number of reasons for regarding this question in a serious light, and I am bound to confess at the outset that I have always been one of those who regarded the question as one scarcely deserving the serious consideration of Parliament. But when I know that many

members of this House, whose opinions I cannot but value, have at one time or another voted in support of this question—when we see, as we have seen in this House, leaders on both sides giving either their absolute or qualified adhesion to the principle of this measure—then I am no longer prepared to deny that it is a serious question, and one which deserves the anxious and careful attention of this House. Viewing it in that light, I am prepared to consider the question in a careful and earnest spirit, notwithstanding the somewhat inadequate, narrow, and limited grounds on which Mr. Forsyth has dealt with it. I shall consider the question not alone with regard to its more immediate issues, but with regard to its future bearings and aspects, of which I think the importance can scarcely be overstated, for if carried to its logical ends the Bill would, in my opinion, bring about a complete revolution in all the social relations and all the political laws by which not only we in this country but the whole world has been governed since history began, or even since the creation of man. (Hear, hear.) I object to the Bill, first, because in giving direct political power to women we should be making an experiment for which in history so far not one single precedent can be found—a precedent which, however it may be regarded by dreaming philosophers or philanthropic professors, has no place in the world of practical politics—(hear, hear); and object also to such an experiment, which I regard as political quackery, being tried upon such a constitution as our own; *fiat experimentum in corpore vili*. (Hear, hear.) Convincing proof of some urgent and imperative necessity should be afforded before the British House of Commons repudiates the collective wisdom of ages, the teachings of all religions in every form, and the instinct of the whole human race. (Hear, hear.) No such necessity has been established. (Hear, hear.) I oppose the Bill on another ground—because it is an attempt to disturb and enlarge the existing franchise. Modest as are the dimensions of the Bill, it is really a new Reform Bill, which will add an indefinite number of voters in boroughs and counties. A proposal was made last Session, and another will be submitted in the present Session, to introduce household suffrage in the counties; yet this is only the second Parliament elected under the present Reform Bill, and the first elected under the Ballot. It is unwise for any country, especially an ancient country like our own, to be for ever tampering with its constitution or speculating upon organic changes in it. (Hear, hear.) Last year the Prime Minister expressed an emphatic opinion upon this point, and met with the cordial support of a majority in this House. Upon this ground alone, entirely apart from the general question, I shall certainly think it my duty to resist the present proposal. Passing to the more specific object of the Bill, I find it hard to believe that the united experience of the whole civilised world, from the very commencement of time, is in this respect altogether erroneous. Yet no other conclusion could be come to if the Bill of the hon. gentleman be accepted. Some stress has been laid upon the number of petitions and signatures in favour of the Bill. What, however, can be said of the ominous silence of the millions of women who have not petitioned? (Hear, hear.) If the women of England labour under so galling a thralldom as has been represented, they would have petitioned by millions instead of by thousands. (Hear, hear.) Then we are told that the law as between men and women is unequal, and that it is hopeless for women to expect justice or equity from a Parliament elected solely by men. If there was a shadow of foundation for the statement I should be the first to admit that there are strong *prima facie* grounds for the demand; but I deny that it is so, and I protest strongly against the doctrine that there is any wish on the part of the members of this House

to deal out less than equal justice to women. (Hear, hear.) The Imperial Parliament desires to deal out full and strict justice to all, rich or poor, young or old, of either sex. (Hear, hear.) Other plausible reasons are that women pay rates and possess the same qualifications as men; that peeresses in their own right can hold manorial courts; that women are elected as overseers and churchwardens; that they can vote for and sit as members of School Boards; and, lastly, that a woman sits upon the throne of these realms. If, however, these facts are admitted as adequate reasons why women should vote for members of Parliament, they supply a still stronger reason why women should themselves sit in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) My hon. and learned friend looks upon this as a proposal which no one contemplated in earnest. Now, it is true that Mr. Mill, the author of all this agitation, showed that the exercise of a trust was distinct from the trust itself. But, as he went on to argue, to ordain that any persons should not be physicians, advocates, or members of Parliament was to injure, not only them, but all who employed physicians or advocates or elected members of Parliament. Mrs. Mill also denied the right of any portion of the species to decide for any other what was its proper sphere. "The proper sphere of all women," she added, "is the highest to which they can attain," and she asserted for them complete liberty of choice. Both Mr. and Mrs. Mill, therefore, contemplated that, at some time or other, women would be elected members of Parliament. This is a most material point of the question, and should be borne in mind in all future discussions of this Bill. (Hear, hear.) I have a reverence for women, a deep respect for their peaceful and unselfish lives, the purity of their thoughts, and the unerring instinct by which their aspirations are guided; and if I were really convinced that the majority of the women of England were in earnest in demanding the suffrage, it would be difficult to resist their application. But I oppose the Bill because the agitation reflects in no way the opinions of the vast majority of the women of England, but rather the restless, discontented longings and desires of a few—perhaps neither the happiest nor the most favoured of their sex. (Laughter.) Claiming then, as I do, to speak in the name and on behalf of an overwhelming majority of the women of my own country, I move, with confidence, the rejection of this most unnecessary and uncalled-for measure. (Cheers.)

Mr. E. A. LEATHAM said: The hon. and learned gentleman who brought the Bill before the House has complained that some of those who dispute the claim of women to co-ordinate political authority with men have indulged in sarcasm and ridicule in the place of argument; but when it is proposed to set aside the immemorial usage of mankind, surely the burden of proof rests not with those who resist the change, but with those who urge it; and when something is proposed so strange that it has never yet occurred to any member of the human family until we arrived at the enlightened generation of the hon. and learned gentleman to suggest it, the *prima facie* irony of the situation is surely more crushing than any sarcasm which human ingenuity can devise. (Cheers.) Does the hon. and learned gentleman think that while mankind have been exploring for thousands of years every nook and corner of political experiment, yet that it has never occurred to any one to suggest the right of women to equal political authority with men, is or is not an argument against his Bill? Perhaps the hon. and learned gentleman will say that the immemorial custom of mankind to the present hour has been founded upon sentiment and not upon reason; but it would be an evil day for us all when we discard sentiment from legislation, especially in dealing with our relations with the other sex. Sentiment is the result of a variety of forces, of which reason is only one; of

respect for authority, of conscience, common sense, observation, and experience. I do not hesitate to say that the concurrent sentiment of both sexes is entirely opposed to the principle of the Bill. When an hon. member bases his vote upon the concurrent sentiment of both sexes, backed by the immemorial usages of the species, he need not be under any very violent anxiety, even if he permit his reason to repose. But I should be content to base my opposition to the measure upon the attitude towards it of the very sex for whose benefit it is sought. The hon. and learned gentleman has admitted that nature has denied to woman the faculty of very close reasoning; but nature has given her another faculty which, perhaps, in her circumstances is equally important, and that is the innate unreasoning sense of what is womanly—(cheers)—and with all the vehemence of an intuitive perception, that sense rebels and protests against the principle of this Bill. Does the hon. and learned gentleman deny this? Why, only the other day he read a letter, written by one of the ardent supporters of the Bill, in which the writer bitterly and passionately upbraided her sex for their almost entire indifference to this question, and said that not one woman in a hundred could be induced to take any interest in it? Is it possible to conceive a more crushing condemnation of the measure? Every appeal had been made to the foibles of the sex—to their vanity, to their love of novelty, and to their vague notion of the oppression of man; yet their sense of what is womanly stood firm, and the sex set their faces resolutely against those who claimed to be their benefactors. The hon. and learned gentleman has spoken about petitions. Never was there a more conspicuous failure. We all know how petitions are got up. Let us count the women in the constituencies we represent, and compare them with the number who had signed petitions in favour of this Bill. I have opposed the Bill before, and have drawn down upon myself the full stream of the hon. and learned gentleman's agitation. Meetings have been held in my constituency, and women, charming in everything but the false position they were induced to assume upon a public platform, have addressed sympathetic audiences, who have admired their oratory through lorgnettes. (A laugh.) We know the result. I have received a memorial signed by 130 persons in favour of the Bill; but I represent a constituency of 12,000 electors, and containing 80,000 persons; and I today presented a petition against the Bill signed by 6,000 persons—that is to say, one in every twelve throughout the constituency. (Hear, hear.) Let the hon. and learned gentleman convince the clients on whose behalf he professes to appear before he attempts to convince the House. Because the opponents of the Bill confront the hon. and learned gentlemen with sentiment, and, if he will, with ridicule, let it not be supposed that they were unwilling to meet him in fair argument. He has been met in fair argument already by the brilliant speech of the hon. gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill; and, like my hon. friend, I altogether decline to argue this broad question upon the narrow and artificial ground selected by the hon. and learned gentleman. The question before the House is not whether a few spinsters and widows should be admitted to the franchise, but whether woman should be declared the political equal of men—(hear, hear); and the House may at once gather what is the real scope and object of this whole movement by what took place last year. The hon. and learned gentleman has told us that last year he inserted in his Bill a proviso formally excepting all married women from the franchise. What was the result? There was an immediate exclamation—he would not call it a shriek—(a laugh)—from the sisterhood, a general erasure of names from the committee, and angry letters written to the newspapers,

in which the writers stated, with that freedom and courage with which some women approach certain questions, that if the Bill passed in that shape it would be a Bill for the enfranchisement of that class of women whose public virtues greatly outshone their private ones. (Laughter.) The hon. and learned gentleman has admitted that if we passed this Bill it would establish the same franchise as that which would have been established by this Bill with the proviso of last year. Is then the House asked to pass a Bill which, in the language of supporters of the hon. and learned gentleman, would be a Bill for the enfranchisement of women of easy virtue? (Hear, hear, and oh, oh.) And is that what the hon. and learned gentleman means by the removal of the disabilities of women? The House will arrive at the same conclusion with regard to the object of this movement if it refers to its history. A few years ago, with that indifference with which the House appears to regard all matters of a purely municipal character and at three o'clock in the morning, it yielded the municipal franchise to the clamour of these agitators; and almost simultaneously it gave them the school-board franchise. The House was told at that time that they were not touching in any way the far wider question of the imperial franchise. But the municipal franchise was no sooner given than the imperial franchise was demanded. We are now told that we are not touching the far wider question of the enfranchisement of women irrespective of marriage; but I am prepared to show that an agitation for the giving of franchise to married women has already commenced. I have here a letter addressed a few months ago to a friend of mine in this House, in which the writer says, "I am writing to ask whether you will allow your name to be inserted in the list of vice-presidents of an influential Liberal-Conservative Association, the object of which is to extend the school board franchise to the wives of male electors;" and the anomaly was pointed out of excluding respectable mothers of families from a trust which had already been conceded to ratepaying spinsters. If the argument were good in that case, would it not equally apply to the municipal and the imperial franchise? Of course I shall be told, as the hon. and learned gentleman has suggested, that married women could never be enfranchised in this country, because by the common law the married woman was placed in a position of subordination to her husband and dependence upon him, and that it was of the very essence of our electoral system that electors should be independent and free. And this leads me to the centre and kernel of the whole question. It is impossible to discuss it apart from the question of the relation of the sexes in marriage. If marriage were a mere accident or incident in the career of women they might do so; but when marriage was the normal condition of women—when, as I think it is, Miss Becker herself who told us all women regarded it from the side of experience or expectation—(laughter)—it is simple folly to discuss the question of female suffrage apart from the consideration of the position of married women. If we give the franchise to women at all, we should give it first to those women who are discharging the sovereign responsibilities of the sex as mothers of families, and have given precisely those guarantees to law and order which it was the intention of the legislature, in enacting household suffrage, to demand from men. But if the sexes are to be placed in a position of political equality, equality of rights involves equality of obligations, and the right of voting involves the right of being voted for. Political equality means a great deal more than equality from an electoral point of view. It means, also, equality from a legislative, from an administrative, and from a judicial point of view. If women are admitted to vote, they must be admitted to seats in the House, on the

Treasury Bench, and on the Judicial Bench. The hon. and learned gentleman said the idea of women sitting in the House was absurd; but grant political equality and I challenge the hon. and learned gentleman to fix the point at which the absurdity begins. It is not mere sentiment; it is not prejudice, it is not the desire of one sex to domineer over the other, but the suggestion of the highest economy based upon the divine law itself, which resolves the whole sum of human duties into two distinct spheres, not antagonistic, not one inferior to the other, but complementary and representing together the ideal of humanity, which was dual, not single—the one-half incomplete without the other. Under this arrangement those duties which are rugged and external, and which appeal to that practical sagacity which can only be acquired by free intercourse, have fallen to the more rugged sex; while those which were best exercised in the privacy of home, and which appeal more to the heart, have fallen to that sex whose shrinking modesty is the essential part of its virtue, and who in all matters connected with the heart, I freely admit, were a higher and purer sex than ours. (Cheers.) But when we talk of the duality of the species we are assailed with statistics which show that there are a number of women in this country who in the nature of things can never marry; and we are asked to provide for them, therefore, a masculine career. But because a woman from one cause or another fails in the rôle of her own sex, is that any proof of her ability adequately to fill the more difficult and less congenial part of man? (Laughter.) It displays a strange poverty of resource to argue in this way. In spite of the march of civilisation, there is enough of human sorrow left in the world to call for all the soothing influence of women. It is in this field that the best women in all ages have been able to satisfy the loftiest ambition, and to raise themselves together with their sex to a pinnacle of greatness which the best men have envied in vain. (Hear, hear.) Nor is it any argument to say that there have been women whose political capacity has been equal to that of any man. As there are always male birds in every pheasantry, so there are always women who, in the words of Shakspeare, "If they be not caparisoned as a man have a doublet and hose in their disposition." (Laughter.) But what should we think of the logic of the logician who argued that because there have been men the equals of any women in the management of children, or of the "*batterie de cuisine*," therefore the nursery and the kitchen is the proper field for the exercise of masculine energy? The Queen, even, had been dragged into this discussion. I wish to speak of Her Majesty with that deep respect and loyalty which I feel. But I would put it to the hon. and learned gentleman whether that was a good illustration? Is the Queen a politician? Is she a partisan, or has she to choose between rival policies? No; she ruled by the advice of her ministers, who, thank God, are at present men not women. (Cheers.) I will not enter into the invidious controversy as to the comparative political capacities of men and women; but I would ask the hon. and learned gentleman how he explains the fact that we were the only race—I mean the Anglo-Saxon race in England, America, and the Colonies—that are able to point to the permanent success of representative institutions based upon the popular voice? Is it not that we are the most practical and the least emotional of nations? Is it not that we are free from those paroxysms of passion and caprice which have again and again made women of the Latin races? But in proportion as we introduced into our electoral system the elements which distinguished the Latin races and which distinguished the whole race of women, did we endanger everything in this country of which we have most reason to feel proud. What, then, becomes of the argument based on abstract

right? When Mr. Jacob Bright was a member of the House and had charge of the Bill he was wiser in his generation than the hon. and learned member for Marylebone, for he acknowledged that he could not base it on abstract right. But the arguments of the hon. and learned gentleman have been based on abstract right from one end to the other. I would formulate the hon. gentleman's arguments in this way. If sex be no ground for relieving women from the burdens of citizenship, then sex could be no ground for refusing to women the right of citizenship. Well, but sex is a ground for relieving women from many burdens of citizenship. For example, they are relieved from personally assisting in the defence of the country. They are relieved from the obligation of assisting the police in the discharge of their duties, and also from the onerous duty of serving upon juries. We are told that as women paid taxes they ought to have votes on the ground that representation and taxation go together, and some women have gone the length of refusing to pay the Queen's taxes on this ground. I wonder that those women did not renounce the protection of the Queen also. (Hear, hear.) Do they forget that all women, especially unmarried women, receive the protection of the law to an extent far beyond that which is extended to men? Did they forget that, as Shakspeare said, "Beauty provoketh thieves as much as gold?" (Hear, hear.) The case of Bridgewater has been referred to; and it appears that certain women there refused to pay rates enhanced by the costs of an election inquiry in which it was ascertained that bribery had been committed, the ground of refusal being that they had nothing to do with the bribery; but just as well might they refuse to pay police rate on the ground that they were not pickpockets. We have been told that the suffrage is based on property, and that it is the property which had the vote. But in this country the suffrage is not based on property. If it were so, the number of a man's votes would be in proportion to the value of the property of which he is in possession. (Hear, hear.) Nor yet was the suffrage based on the payment of rates, or why have we the lodger franchise? It cannot be that the discharge of a municipal obligation confers an Imperial privilege. If I rightly remember the feeling of the House when the Representation of the People Act was passed, the object was to draw a line somewhere, to establish a hedge on the other side of which it might be assumed that no one had reached that position of independence and intelligence which would justify Parliament in giving him the suffrage. (Hear, hear.) It is no doubt true that representation was originally based upon taxation; for Parliament in those days had no higher function than to vote the supplies, although they sometimes undertook to give some sound advice to the monarch. But we have now drifted far away from that state of things, and it was trifling with this question to argue it as though we were living in the days of the Plantagenets. (Hear, hear.) The questions which now come before Parliament are of the utmost importance, and frequently of a complicated and technical character. There are questions of the administration of the army and the navy; questions of finance; questions of ecclesiastical policy; questions of judicature, and the business of the courts of law. What information could women bring to us on those points? (Hear, hear.) Yet, the hon. and learned gentleman argues as if this great Parliament was assembled for no higher purpose than to legislate about the custody of infants. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) By all means let those questions be fully considered; but do not let the House remodel our whole electoral system with an eye to the interests which it is supposed—I say supposed—that unmarried women take in that loathsome and disgusting question which has been hinted at by the hon. and learned gentleman. (Hear, hear.) We have been told that

there were certain women's grievances which would never be redressed until women were represented in this House; but scarcely any of them were grievances which affect the women whom it was proposed by this Bill to enfranchise. (Hear, hear.) It is very much as though the member for the Border Burghs were to advocate the extension of the franchise in counties on the ground that the grievances of the agricultural labourer would never be redressed until he was enfranchised, but should frame this Bill so as to enfranchise no agricultural labourer. If those grievances are so pressing and patent, why does not the hon. and learned gentleman devote some part of the redundant energy and that overflowing eloquence which characterise him to their advocacy in this House? (Hear, hear.) The reason probably is that if he were to do so, those grievances would be discussed by the House, and the House would either decide that they really were grievances, and redress them, or it would decide that they were not grievances, and would dismiss them. Either course would be fatal to the case of the hon. and learned gentleman in support of this Bill. It is sought to advance this Bill by speaking of women as a class apart from men. But they do not constitute a class apart, like agricultural labourers. For all practical purposes women are represented already in the House by their husbands, sons, and brothers. (Cheers.) But no one will contend that working men are adequately represented by their employers, or that the agricultural labourers are represented by the farmers. The last argument was that to which the hon. and learned gentleman referred in connection with the ballot. He said that the ballot had removed the greatest obstacle to female suffrage, as it had put an end to scenes of violence at the polls. Well, I am interested in the success of the ballot, and I am very glad to hear so favourable a testimony borne to its working by the hon. and learned gentleman. The advocates of the ballot hoped and thought it would put an end to intimidation, and, among other forms of it, to violence at the polls. In view of that they were willing to disregard by comparison that general treating before the poll which the experience of Australia led them to expect. Now, although violence at the poll may have disappeared, I do not want women to be subjected to the other evil which the ballot system may have substituted—that of general treating before the poll. (Hear, hear.) I have spoken at great length, because I wish to relieve myself from the imputation of dismissing the question lightly. I do not think it ought to be measured by the amount of emotional and hysterical incoherency which has been thrown into the agitation; because it is a question which goes down to the very roots of political principle. (Hear, hear.) I have heard that it is part of the movement to demand for women a participation in the distribution of garters and ribbons. (A laugh.) By all means let them have garters and ribbons—(laughter)—but if we value the manliness of our institutions, and if we value the manliness of our policy, let us keep all the springs and sources of them manly. (Cheers.)

MR. SMOLLETT: I believe that the first motion for removing the disabilities of women was made in the year 1867, and I believe I am justified in stating that when the matter was first mooted in the House the discussion was thought to be a sorry jest. In 1867, the House was engaged in the discussion of a huge Reform Bill, which was characterised by its authors and promoters as "a great leap in the dark." Members of Parliament at that time could hardly bring themselves to believe that women, who were generally wide awake to their own concerns, could have endured these supposed wrongs for so many generations and through so many centuries, and that these wrongs had then been discovered for the first time by a portion of their sex. But what then seemed a sorry jest has

now proved a great reality, for *dilettanti* statesmen and idle legislators seem determined that in every session a Wednesday shall be wasted in the discussion of this question. If this Bill is read a second time many days must be occupied in its discussion, to the detriment of the labour of the session. The Bill, the second reading of which has been moved, is one of the tiniest and puniest measures which it has ever been my duty to observe. It states no grievance; it has no preamble. The right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich has referred on a former occasion, in terms of depreciation, to the great change which would be produced by the adoption of such a measure; but, as the right hon. gentleman is "everything by turns and nothing long," I do not know whether the promoters of the Bill may expect that he will promote the second reading. The earnest promoters of this Bill said that it would obliterate distinctions which had been recognised since the commencement of the world. When "Adam delved and Eve span," Adam was a bread winner, and Eve attended to her domestic duties. (Laughter.) This is a Bill for organic change. It tends towards universal suffrage. And yet this Bill is compressed in six short lines. It simply declares, of a certain Act of Parliament, that whatever words import the masculine gender shall be construed to mean the feminine gender. This is the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. In 1860 Lord John Russell introduced a large Reform Bill, composed of five or six pages of printed matter. It did not propose to enfranchise more than the present Bill, but it was nearly snuffed out by an observation of Mr. Edwin James, that his clerk would draw a better Bill for a remuneration of three guineas. The laughter which followed nearly destroyed the Bill. I suppose it is intended that this Bill shall pass, and I think it might be well paid for by a small sixpence, which is at the rate of a penny a line. (Laughter.) This Bill throws a stigma on married life. (Laughter.) It is to be declared that when a woman marries she is to lose her rights of citizenship, that her duty is to bear children, that she is part of the goods and chattels of her husband, and that her *role* in life is "to suckle foo's and chronicle small beer." Under this Bill elderly virgins, widows, a large class of the *demi-monde* and of kept women, whose name in this great town is legion, will be enfranchised, while married women and mothers, who form the mainstay of the nation, will be excluded. I stated at starting that it was only in 1867 that notice was taken of the disabilities of women in this House, but I am aware that the agitation was carried on in the country for many years before. I believe that that agitation was brought into this country by an importation of turbulent women from America, where this agitation has been going on without any good result for something like half a century. The ladies who came over from America as the champions of women's rights, proclaimed the equality of the sexes, and to prove that they had some right to do so, they assumed, or rather they usurped, male attire and clad themselves in breeches. (Laughter.) They called themselves "Bloomers." That fashion lasted but a very short time. And why? Because women as a rule covet admiration, and the admiration they love and covet is that of the male sex. Every woman who enters into life believes and hopes that she will one day be a bride—the mistress of a house—the mother of a family. They use dress as an attraction to the male sex, and indeed there is nothing so pleasing to the latter as to see a well dressed woman. (Laughter.) The women soon discovered that male attire was not attractive. They saw that the pectoral, abdominal, and fundamental development of their sex looked grotesque in male habiliments. (Laughter.) That style of dress was therefore soon abandoned. But although their

distinctive dress was abandoned, the type of these turbulent women still survived. They formed a great organisation in this country, but not one that could in any respect be termed formidable—it was nothing like so troublesome as the Tichborne organisation that is now going on. But associations have been formed by the ladies in almost all the large towns, and lecturers have been sent round the counties who talk a vast amount of rubbish in association with some vain men, and meetings are constantly called to champion what are termed "women's rights." These women take up a vast amount of questions which they say appertain solely to the female sex, and they have entered into an hysterical crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts. (Laughter.) They champion the rights of their fallen sisters to spread broadcast disease among the brave defenders of our country in seaport towns, in garrisons, and in camps. (Laughter, and cries of "Question.") The only consolation we have is that the race of such women in this country is not a large one, there are very few of our women who take upon themselves to champion these so-called rights—not one woman in fifty but was ashamed of those of their own sex who took up these questions. The married women, as a rule, care not one straw for this Bill, because they believe in the old scriptural adage, that man wants a helpmate, and that woman wants the support and the assistance of her husband. (Hear, hear.) And yet in all the meetings that are held throughout the country championing the Women's Rights Bill, the great argument used is that married women ought to have a vote on the ground that the sexes are equal—nay, that women are superior to men. I am not in the habit of attending at any of these meetings—(hear, hear, and laughter)—but I have read the lucubrations of some of the speakers at those meetings, and have seen their arguments discussed in the public press, and with the permission of the House I will occupy a few minutes in showing what is claimed on behalf of women at these assemblies. Some years ago a meeting was held at Edinburgh—for Edinburgh is the hot-bed of this agitation, it is the town where strong-minded women most do congregate. (Laughter.) The meeting in question was perhaps one of the most respectable that has ever been held upon this subject—it contained a sprinkling of members of Parliament, I believe their families were present with them, a number of professors of the University, and a considerable body of citizens. What the orators said at that meeting was most sensational, and it was to this effect. Women were described as being, as a rule, only inferior to angels, men of the middle and lower classes as being brutal and debased, and the rights of married women to vote in contradistinction to their husbands was insisted upon by almost every speaker. One of the orators present discoursed in something like the following language:—"Go into the wide world, and what is the common language we hear every day? It is that women, as a rule, are as administrators vastly superior to men. From the Newhaven fishwife to the highest lady in the realm, women do every duty they undertake far better than men. If we go into general society, what is the purport of the conversation that we hear the next morning at the breakfast table? It is this,—that the man in the house where the previous evening was spent is a very ordinary fellow—a poor creature, but that the gray mare in that household is the better horse. (Laughter.) What is the language which every day meets our ears in ordinary life? It is this, "That woman has made a good wife to him;" that the woman is the real bread winner, the real head of the household; that but for her labours and her exertions, that fellow of a husband would have gone to the gaol, or probably to the gallows. (Laughter.) All this is admitted by society, but what says the

law? The law, as at present constituted, says that the nobler vessel, the woman, shall be plundered, rifled, robbed by a thief of a husband. (Much laughter.)

Dr. PLAYFAIR: Will the hon. member tell us whether he is quoting a speech?

Mr. SMOLLETT: I am quoting the purport of the speech. To quote the speech itself would take some hours. The speech itself is to be found in the newspapers.

Dr. PLAYFAIR: Who is speaking, may I ask?

Mr. SMOLLETT: You may refer to the newspapers of the time. It was a member of Parliament. The orator proceeded thus. "The man never did, never could gain his livelihood, but no doubt he has a vote, and he is ready to sell it for a pot of beer." All that, of course, the orator added, required reform. We wanted a new Reform Bill, and here we have it—the Bill of the hon. and learned member for Marylebone. But this is a Bill which will not give a vote to the wife, the husband will still have it, and therefore it will not meet the grievance of which the orator so pathetically complained. (Hear, hear.) Another speaker at the meeting expressed himself in the following phrases:—"No man can truly represent a woman's interests and feelings. John Stuart Mill may write of their wrongs; Professor Masson may make an eloquent harangue in their favour; but no one savè a woman herself can find out what is a woman's will." (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Lord Byron says:—

Men with their heads reflect on this or that,
But women with their hearts on Heaven knows what.

But if Lord Byron had lived at this day, he would have found out that what women set their hearts upon was the lodger franchise. (Laughter.) If those remarks are true, that no one but a woman can represent the feelings and interests, women ought to sit in this House. The same speaker went on to say that the cleverest women in Great Britain were lodging-house keepers—(laughter)—and, no doubt, he seemed to have a large acquaintance with that portion of the community. He said very truly, that there were whole streets of lodging-houses in great towns, kept generally by women who were married. Of course, they had drunken husbands. One would have supposed that the meeting had been convened by the hon. member for Carlisle, and that the remedy for the evil complained of would have been the Permissive Bill. (Laughter.) But no. The speaker said that those drunken husbands spent all their time in the alehouses, leaving their wives to carry on the whole duty of the household—that they were capital women of business, but his chief complaint was that the wives had no votes, though they certainly deserved them much better than their drunken husbands. But this Bill does not propose to give them votes, and therefore if it were passed every one of these excellent women would be just as badly off in this respect as she is now. (Hear, hear.) I shall not go into the subject at any greater length, but I shall merely say in conclusion that if we are to have agitation on this subject—if we are to have further legislation for the removal of the disabilities of women, this is not a straightforward, honest, and manly way to meet the difficulty. If women as a rule are trampled upon, thrust aside, and tyrannised over by the male sex, let us freely admit the fact and make them ample reparation if society will permit us to do so. If women no longer desire to be helpmates to men—if they think that their *role* in the world is to compete with and to surpass men in all the walks of life, let all the universities and the institutions of Great Britain be thrown open freely for the entrance of young women as well as of young men, and let all existing restrictions that prevent the former from competing for the honours of university life be removed. Let the doors

of the liberal professions be thrown open to women as well as to men—permit them to be called to the bar, to accept livings in the Church, let them practice medicine and every other profession that can be named, let them be named as grand jurors, let them be appointed to the bench of magistrates, and compelled to serve on petty and special juries, as occasion may require, and even on coroner's inquests. They should not merely be permitted to vote, they should be admitted to take their seats on the benches of this House in the flesh, and not be kept cooped up as they are now in the cage above the chair. Peersesses by creation or descent ought to be summoned by Her Majesty to take part in all the great business of the nation, along with the Lords Spiritual and Temporal. Nay, more. If this claim is just, this House would not be stepping outside its functions by going up with an humble address praying Her Majesty to create a batch of peersesses to take part in the discussions of the Upper Chamber. And if the administrative power, the genius, the eloquence of women should prove of great service in the Upper House, if they should succeed in leavening the mass of that august but inert assembly, then we may devise means by which a considerable number shall be brought into the House of Commons at the next general election. That is the sort of legislation we ought to take in hand, if the rights and wrongs of women be as they have been stated by their advocates. But first of all let us get rid of this abortion of a Bill—a Bill that said that men meant women and women meant men, and which expresses this in language that "no fellow," not even Lord Dundreary "could understand." (Cheers.)

Mr. STANSFELD: I do not rise to reply to the speech of the hon. member who has just addressed the House. Attacks which are coarse without being humorous—(loud cheers)—defeat their own purpose, and damage the cause which they are meant to promote. The hon. member has spoken of the women who rightly or wrongly are interested in this question in terms which I will not condescend to discuss. (Cheers.) He has spoken of this question as having been imported by turbulent, fantastically-dressed women from beyond the Atlantic, and has said that it would largely enfranchise women of bad character. If it were necessary I could meet the hon. member upon that ground, and I should be willing to undertake to expurgate from the Bill any words that could confer such a franchise, and insert others which would prevent its being conferred, on one condition, that the men who frequented the habitations of these supposed future voters should also be disfranchised. (Cheers.) The hon. member has had the courage to refer to the question of the Contagious Diseases Acts. In my opinion those Acts form a piece of grossly unjust, unconstitutional, and immoral legislation. (Cheers, and cries of "No," and "Question.") No, I beg the hon. member's pardon, I have not raised this question, it was raised by the hon. member opposite. Those acts would never have been passed if women's voices could have been potentially heard through representatives whom they might elect to this House. But I am not about to discuss that question. It is not before us to-day, and I have only referred to it on this occasion to object to its having been introduced by the hon. member. It will come before the House on a future day, and if the hon. member will be here, and will do me the honour to listen to me upon that occasion, he shall hear in no uncertain terms what I believe I can prove of the character, the operation, and the immorality of those acts. But I pass with pleasure from the speech of the hon. member to those of the hon. members for Lincolnshire and for Huddersfield. Both those speeches were distinguished by argument, by eloquence, and by brilliancy, and against neither of them have I a word to say—with one reserve, that I should have been glad if my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield could have

prevailed upon himself to resist the temptation to utter a few *bon mots*, which it would have been better not to have given utterance to. Those hon. members stated in their speeches much that was of a remarkable and a hopeful character. They both opposed the proposed legislation, on grounds which would make it impossible for them logically even to entertain a proposal of this kind, and yet both of them gave the House to understand that although they did not believe that there was any evidence of women desiring such legislation, yet if a proposal of this kind were generally supported by the women of this country, they might modify their views on the subject, and would vote for the Bill.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I beg the right hon. gentleman's pardon. What I said was that there would be a difficulty in resisting the application.

Mr. STANSFELD: I did not take the hon. member's exact words down. I understand, now, that what the hon. member means is that it would increase the difficulty of resistance, and not, as I understood him, that it would have an operation upon his own mind.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I had no intention to convey that impression in the language I used.

Mr. STANSFELD: I accept the explanation of the hon. member. Both of the hon. members said, and said quite reasonably, that it was for the supporters of the Bill to prove their case, and called upon them to show that there was a claim of right or expediency, and that there were conditions of sufficient urgency to justify Parliament in acceding to the demand. Well, I will endeavour, and, I hope, not at great length, to comply with this reasonable demand, because I for one seriously believe that what we now ask for would improve the conditions of the representation in this country, and would exercise a beneficial influence upon our imperial legislation. I will not enter into the question of abstract right. If the House of Commons is not prepared seriously to entertain the proposal before it, no demonstration on my part of the abstract right will serve to convince it. But if, on the other hand, the time should arrive when, in consequence of the urgency of the demand, or of new political motives, hon. members are more prepared to entertain this question than they now are, I have no doubt that ideas of abstract right will very rapidly and easily range themselves on the side of events to come. The ground of abstract right, however, was one which the hon. and learned gentleman, in introducing this measure, was bound to put before the House. There is also the ground of a large expediency, the advisability of satisfying a not unreasonable desire and demand, the expediency of bringing new influences to bear upon the legislation and the administration of the country. But there is another aspect of the question which to my mind is more practical and more fitted for our consideration, and that is that we should ask ourselves on what grounds we are to refuse the present proposal, why we should desire to refuse it, and what there is to fear in granting it. I listened to the debate in some respects with considerable satisfaction, because in the course of it I found that many of the objections that formerly were raised to the enfranchisement of women have disappeared. It was not without satisfaction that I found that no hon. member referred to the pamphlet by Mr. Goldwin Smith, in which that able writer states that the enfranchisement of women by this Bill would lead to the enfranchisement of a law and liberty disliking class, and would end by overthrowing all our free institutions. A view so extravagant is not worthy of a writer of Mr. Goldwin Smith's ability and eminence, and I am glad that it has not been put forward to-day. Then, again, we have heard much less of the physical unfitness of women to exercise the franchise. There is no doubt that there is a

radical difference in nature and in constitution between men and women, but that is a difference which will endure whatever our legislation may be, and I should be glad to see hon. members put more faith in this constitutional difference between the sexes which the laws of nature have provided. But although it may be true that there is this constitutional difference between the sexes, yet there is this distinction to be borne in mind—that although there may be an unfitness on the part of women for certain careers in life, such as that of the bar, or that of politics, or to be members of a legislative assembly, or of an Imperial Government—that is not the question we have to discuss to-day—the question we are called upon to determine, and in my opinion it is impossible to dispute it, is the competency of women once in every three or four years to vote by ballot at the election of a member to serve in this House. Women have by the common law a local vote, and of late years we have given them the municipal and the school board franchise. It has been said that we gave them the municipal franchise by surprise, but no proposal to withdraw that franchise from them has been brought forward, and I challenge any hon. member who holds the view that they ought not to possess it, to propose a repeal of the law in that respect. If that law is not to be repealed, then I say that the distinction you endeavour to draw between the exercise of the local and the imperial franchises is not founded either in reason or in fact. I hear such expressions as these used—that it is not the function of woman, and she is not trained nor educated to rule great empires. But is the bulk of the male population trained and educated to rule great empires? (Hear, hear.) Can we not draw a distinction between the function of voting for a representative, and the function of representing those who vote. (Hear, hear.) I would further ask hon. members to bear in mind the fact that women are gradually accustoming themselves to the exercise of the privilege of voting in consequence of their possessing the local franchise, and that their thus having a share in local government tends to enlarge and elevate their character, and that any distinction you may choose to draw between the exercise of the local and imperial franchise is one that is destined to diminish and to disappear. So much for the objections that have been raised against the Bill; and I think that I have shown that I am justified in saying that the hon. and learned gentleman is entitled to ask the House to come to the consideration of this measure upon its merits, without being too much alarmed at the bugbears and the ulterior results to which this proposed legislation may be supposed by some as likely to conduce. As I understand the arguments of those who oppose the measure they come to this: that on the one hand the Bill is not a genuine practical measure of reform, because it would only enfranchise a small proportion of women, and not those who, if women were enfranchised, ought to be placed on the register. The second objection is that this measure, having no sufficient practical justification in itself, ought to be regarded simply as a stepping stone to something further intended to be accomplished by the hon. member at some future day, but when it is impossible to say. I take issue upon these objections. As to the first objection, it is perfectly true that the franchise would be conferred by this Bill only upon widows and unmarried women, and not upon married women who are not widows; but it does not, therefore, follow that the views of women would not be fairly represented upon every question affecting their interests. What is our experience upon this point. There is a remarkable logic in the course of political events connected with the franchise. As soon as you remove the political disabilities of a certain class, it is not necessary that that class should be represented in proportion to its numbers, or even so as to

alter practically the composition of this House. The mere fact that the disabilities of a class have been removed alters its condition, and raises its status in the public and in the legislative mind, and brings those questions in which it is interested to the front with a fair chance of their competing with others for precedence, and in these days the chief question is one of competing for precedence in legislation. Take for instance the case of the admission of the working-classes to the franchise in 1867. The great blot upon the escutcheon of the middle classes of the Parliament of 1832 was that they failed in their legislation to provide for the education of the working-classes, but the moment you introduced household suffrage, although it applied only to the towns and not to the counties, a complete change came "o'er the spirit of our dream," with reference to the question of education, and we made an enormous stride in that direction. (Hear, hear.) We were told that we must educate our future masters—that we must educate those whom we enfranchised. The same thing will follow if women are enfranchised by virtue of those among them who are placed upon the register, and whether the widows and unmarried women care much or little for the education of female children, I firmly believe that the logical and practical and proximate consequence of passing this measure would be that we should be compelled to do an act of large justice to women with regard to their education, and that they would be able to make a demand upon the imperial and local funds and endowments of the country such as would, if acceded to, bring about something approaching justice and equality in their educational treatment as compared with that of boys. (Hear, hear.) As to the second objection, that this measure is not a resting place—that it is a mere stepping stone to further legislation—I distinctly deny and disbelieve that proposition, and I will state to the House my reasons for doing so. One reason is that which I have already endeavoured to place before the House, namely, that this Bill will give to women a *bona fide* representation, although only a portion of the sex would be enfranchised by it, and would affect sensibly the order and precedence in which we should approach questions in which they are interested. But beyond that I believe that this measure, if carried, would positively conduce to finality and permanence in our representative institutions, which the House and the public accepted and adopted in the Reform Act of 1867. The hon. member for Huddersfield has said that it is not the possession of property, nor even the occupation of property, that ought to confer a right to the franchise, and that the base and principle of the measure of 1867 was the representation of the household. I ask you to go a step further, and to say that the household should be represented through its chief and head, whether male or female. You will then be on the lines of your own legislation; you will be adopting, not a radical and revolutionary, but a conservative view of the subject, and you will have a chance of obtaining something like a firm and stable basis for your future representation. There are other objections which have been raised by those who oppose this Bill which are quite as fundamental as those to which I have already referred. The hon. member for Huddersfield calls us theorists. That charge I retort. I say that those who oppose this practical and moderate measure are the theorists, because, after all, when we probe them to the very bottom of their thoughts, upon what grounds is it that they oppose this proposal? It is because they entertain certain *a priori* notions as to the place and functions of women in the world. The views of hon. members who repudiate this proposal are based upon an *a priori* and supposed consequences to flow from it that are entirely inconsistent with modern facts. They would be consistent only with a condition of society which should combine the primitive relations of

pastoral life with all that is most elevating and progressive in modern civilisation. They deal with the question as though every woman in society in this country had a husband, a father, or a brother to protect her, and as though her functions were exclusively confined to the home. I say that that is not a practical view, based upon the facts of the world in which we live. The hon. and learned member in bringing this Bill before the House referred to certain statistics to which I propose to add a few figures. It may be well that I should remind the House of the large surplus population of women as compared with men, many of whom have no choice but to remain unmarried, and are forced to maintain themselves by their own exertions. I find the figures on the point are these. The surplus number of women in the United Kingdom is 925,764; against whom ought to be set 200,000 soldiers and sailors who are absent from the country, leaving a preponderance of 700,000 women over men. I know how that fact may be used against this measure. It may be said that women form the majority in this country, and now you are about to hand over the representation of the country to them; but I deny the truth of that proposition, because all that you will do by this Bill is to complete your household suffrage. I find that of the total female population about 487,000 are widows, who having no man upon whom they can depend for assistance and protection have to earn their own livelihood, and have to rough it in the world and to maintain families left to them by their husbands who are dead. Going through the list of trades in which women are engaged, I find that the number of women so employed is about two and a half millions, not existing under the ideal conditions of which we have heard, but having to maintain their own in their unequal struggle, sometimes the cruelly unequal struggle for bread for themselves and their children, against the stronger sex. I find such figures as these—women who maintain themselves by working in the various textile manufactures, 517,000; school teachers, 94,000; shopkeepers, 18,000; and farmers and graziers, 24,338. I wish to ask the House how, having already household suffrage in the boroughs, and it looming in the not very distant future for the counties, we can admit every labourer in the country to the franchise, and yet shut out from it these 24,338 women farmers and graziers. Of about 6,000,000 of women some 3,000,000 are supposed to remain at home as daughters and wives, 1,000,000 partly support themselves, and two and a half millions are engaged independently in supporting themselves. These are facts which to my mind are entirely inconsistent with the theories and the *a priori* on which hon. members oppose fundamentally any proposal of this kind. But we have been asked, and it is a fair question, "What will this measure lead to?" Well, I do not pretend to be philosopher enough to tell you. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) But I will put another question instead of answering that, "Can you tell me what will your persistent resistance to this measure lead to if you succeed?" To me it appears that the future place of women in political and social life is not the question we have to determine to-day, and that whatever conclusion we may arrive at will not exercise much influence upon the ultimate solution of this question. By opposing a moderate measure of this kind hon. members may precipitate the results they apprehend; they will not prevent them if they are coming in the great order of events, but in any case I have no fear that nature's laws will assert themselves however Parliament may legislate, and the great distinction between the sexes will be on the whole preserved and maintained. We are told that the lodger franchise presents a difficulty, but the lodger franchise is but an insignificant part of this question. In the cities and boroughs of England and Wales the number of persons who vote as occupiers of houses

is 1,280,000, while the number of lodgers voting is only 5,257. The number of female lodgers would be still more insignificant. The number of male persons voting in Ireland as occupiers is 43,000, and of lodgers only 774, who principally reside in Dublin. In Scotland the number voting as occupiers is 161,750, and of lodgers only 76. Under these circumstances the lodger franchise for women is utterly insignificant, and I am perfectly willing to abandon it to the tender mercies of the hon. members who oppose the Bill. Then as regards the other point as to the proviso which was in the other Bill excluding married women from the franchise, I am bound to say that the hon. and learned member has been well advised in omitting that proviso from the present Bill, for in doing so he acted to some extent on my advice. Should, however, any reasonable doubt be entertained as to the possible effect of the measure with respect to married women when the Bill gets into committee, I shall have no objection to words being inserted which shall remove all doubt, and shall exclude married women from the franchise. In conclusion, I say that the object of the Bill and of its promoters is definite and clear. They do not introduce a measure which is to be a stepping stone to anything else, but they seek to confer the franchise upon a portion of a sex which they believe would be virtually and effectually represented under this Bill. I believe it to be untrue that it will be no satisfaction to the claims which women make, because its practical result will be to lead the Legislature to the study of the subjects that interest women especially, and lastly, I submit the Bill to the House on the ground that it is a corollary of the principle and object of the legislation of 1867, and that it will make household suffrage a fact as well as a name. It will confer the franchise on the head of the household, upon the bread-winner, whether a man or a woman; and if the House passes this Bill there will be a prospect for the first time of getting upon that firm and stable ground and basis which the House sought to arrive at in the legislation of 1867. (Cheers.)

MR. BERESFORD HOPE: The right hon. gentleman who has just spoken with an ability and fairness on which I compliment him, has asked what a persistent opposition to this Bill will lead to. I will tell him. Hitherto I believe that England, like all other civilised countries, has followed in the order of Nature in the order of Providence, and in the order of the human race, created as it is, male and female. Following in that order we have advanced in civilisation, liberty, education, power and dominion, and a persistent resistance to measures of the present description will keep this country in the line of that great advance. But if we give up that resistance we shall plunge into an unknown future of mere theoretical philosophy. I was rather interested in the only two speeches we have yet heard in favour of the Bill, namely, that of my hon. and learned friend the member for Marylebone and that of the right hon. gentleman opposite. I noticed the very different ways in which they tried to grapple with the same bewildering fact that the Bill before the House will not effect the object which its sweet-voiced advocates out of doors have at heart. Press it forward as you like they look upon it with ridicule. You may clothe it in philosophical generalisations, as the right hon. gentleman opposite did, but still the fact remains that the cry raised in the country has been for the enfranchisement of women as women, while the nostrum we are asked to swallow is the enfranchisement of the householder if that householder happens to be Mrs. (widow) or Miss and not Mrs. (wife). The two proposals are diametrically opposite. My hon. and learned friend the member for Marylebone took a flying leap over the difficulty. Every word of his speech was in favour of a broad and consistent proposal,

and then he called upon us to support a narrow and inconsistent one. He rode off on a variety of subjects, and said the interests of women had been for centuries neglected in consequence of the domination of the strong over the weak, and he also spoke of women being cyphers in political arithmetic. My hon. and learned friend likewise referred to vaccination, and there I must own his cow jumped a great deal too high over the moon for the House to follow it. (A laugh.) The right hon. gentleman opposite perceived this logical inconsistency, and constructed an argument which, as a piece of ingenious and fantastic Conservatism, I think is one of the ablest I have ever heard. When we passed the Reform Act, a few years ago, we accepted household suffrage in a sort of rough and ready way. On this the right hon. gentleman constructed his theory. He said the House would virtually enfranchise all women if it enfranchised women householders. But he saw the weakness of his case, as the single women he would enfranchise might be lodgers and not householders, and then he produced figures to show that the number of lodger voters in this country was so small that they might be struck out of the equation. He said they need not give any trouble at all, and that we might create the household idea by letting in the widows. The result of that is that a woman, when she enters into the contract of marriage, is to lose her political status, which can only be revived again on the condition of her suffering the greatest of all possible domestic and social calamities. As long as she remains a spinster she is to have the franchise, but when she performs the greatest and highest duty of woman she is to be deprived of her political privilege. If the performance of that highest duty is cut short by the visitation of Providence, and she is reduced to that position of comparative helplessness which a widow must normally fill, she will again become entitled to the franchise. How long would the marriage state, as we know it in England, in its religious, social, political, and legal character, continue as it is now? Once make the condition of marriage a political stigma to a woman, and how long do you suppose the women—if, as I do not believe, they care so much for the franchise as the right hon. gentleman states—would allow the idea of a household and a family to exist, when the price of that idea was a political degradation? A great many other things would be thrown into confusion by the Bill, which would impart a perfect revolution into the social relations. Look at the theory of the right hon. gentleman that the whole of womankind will consent to be vicariously represented merely by spinsters and widows. They, no doubt, may be as able, as virtuous, as well informed, as fit to vote and sit in this House, and to take the chair at public meetings, as the married women of the country; but they would be a fantastical and an accidental representation of their sex. Now, if anything could be a qualification of accident and not of reason, it would be the qualification of not succeeding in getting married, or of being deprived of one's husband and protector. The whole thing is so pedantic and unreal that I am surprised that a person of such known ability as the right hon. gentleman opposite should attempt to build up any argument upon it. As for the idea that ladies do not want to sit in Parliament, how will the right hon. gentleman meet the fact that the ladies who cannot sit here on one occasion held a counter debate to ours. This Bill was before the House two or three years ago, when speeches more or less effective were delivered against it. Well, a public meeting was afterwards held, and against each hon. member who had spoken in this House a distinguished female orator was put up. I have here a ticket of admission to the meeting. It says:—"Women's Suffrage.—A public meeting will be held in the Hanover Square Rooms, on Friday, May

the 10th, which will be addressed by ladies, in reply to the speeches delivered in the House of Commons against the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill." Then follow the names of the ladies, which I need not read. It goes on:—"The chair to be taken at 8 o'clock, by Dr. Lyon Playfair, M.P." (Laughter.) I do not see the right hon. gentleman now in his place; but if this occurred two years ago in the borough now represented by my hon. and learned friend (Mr. Forsyth), he need not be so sceptical and contemptuous as to what may take place at no very distant future. If you pass this Bill in any shape you make it impossible that in any future extension of the franchise, men and women should not march *pari passu*. I have here a short report of a meeting held on the 15th of last month:—"Yesterday, a meeting of the committee of the London National Society for Women's Suffrage was held for the purpose of receiving a deputation from the Manhood Suffrage League, the object being to acquaint the former Society with the difficulties, unpopularity, and prejudice when working men, agitating for an extension of the suffrage, attempt to sustain the claims of women." It was in fact an appeal from the "men's men" to the "women's men" to behave a little better. Certain eminent members of the Adult Suffrage Society met several distinguished advocates of women's suffrage. The spokesman of the women's party was Mr. Hare, a gentleman well-known as the most ingenious though not the most practical philosopher who has attempted to grapple with the franchise in our time. The report says, that "Mr. Hare, on behalf of the Women's Suffrage Society said, that it had recognised with the utmost satisfaction the higher principle which had been adopted by the Adult Suffrage League in substituting the claim for a franchise unrestricted by sex, in place of the comparatively poor and selfish, and, he hoped he might say, worn-out cry for 'Manhood Suffrage'." Mr. Hare is converting himself in short to Universal Suffrage; that is, to Manhood Suffrage *plus* Women's Suffrage. Two gentlemen who represented the Adult Suffrage League, Mr. Smith and Mr. Shipton, expressed a doubt whether, if the more popular demand of manhood suffrage were adopted, they would not obtain more present support; but acquiesced in the view that the true policy was always to insist on the principle which was abstractedly the most just and right." These gentlemen and Mr. Hare shook hands over the universal suffrage of every man and every woman. It may be right to enfranchise woman, but the assertion that they will be content with the narrow and fantastical limit proposed by this Bill is mere straw and rubb'ish. The voice may be the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. (A laugh.) Pass this Bill and at no very distant date, the ladies who lately met in Hanover Square Rooms will not be content to answer outside of this House the speeches delivered by hon. members within it. (Hear, hear.) On these grounds I shall support the amendment.

MR. W. H. O'SULLIVAN said he had listened with particular attention to the debate on the question before the House. As it was a matter on which he had not had his mind fully made up, he was not pledged to the promoters of the Bill; neither was he promised to the opponents of the Bill—therefore any remarks made by him on the question were quite free from bias or prejudice of any kind. (Hear, hear.) He had heard a good deal in favour of the Bill, and on the other hand he confessed he had not heard a single argument against it which should warrant him in opposing its further progress. (Hear.) He should say he considered the arguments brought forward against the Bill weak and impotent. One hon. member had told the House that women were not fit to be members of Parliament, and should not be allowed on any terms to enter that House. Well,

that argument he would call a mere ninepin, which was put up simply for the purpose of knocking it down again, as the promoters of this Bill did not even ask for such a measure. (Hear, hear.) If they did make such a demand they would find an opponent in him as well as in the hon. member who opposed the Bill on those imaginary grounds. (Hear, hear.) Another hon. member had opposed the Bill on the ground that it would take up the time of women, and distract their attention from their household work. Well, all he need say in reply to that argument was that under the Ballot Bill, polling places were now brought to the doors of electors, or, at furthest, within an hour's drive of every elector, and when they recollected that electors were not called on, on an average, more than once in seven years to make use of their privilege as electors, then, all he would say was, that if a woman made good use of her time during the remainder of the period, her household could well afford to spare her one hour in the seven years to devote to the interests of her country. (Hear, hear.) He merely illustrated those things to show the absurdity of this part of the opposition given to the Bill. (Hear, hear.) He would now deal with what seemed to be the real and substantial opposition to the Bill—that is, that being women they should not possess votes—(hear, hear)—that they belong to man. He could well understand this argument, if they enjoyed the same electoral law as was enjoyed by the subjects of either France or America, for in those countries it was man and not property that was represented. (Hear, hear.) But what was the state of things in this country to enable any hon. member to make use of such an argument. Was it not a well-known fact that if the greatest statesman that ever lived, the bravest general that ever led an army to victory, or the most brilliant orator that ever adorned the pages of history were to live in this country, or if the three were rolled into one, he could not vote for a member of this House unless he occupied a certain amount of property in houses or lands. (Hear.) Therefore it was property that voted in this country and not man. (Hear.) They honoured property far beyond man. If John Brown lived in this townland or that street and occupied houses or land value for a certain amount, he voted for a member of Parliament, not because he was John Brown, but because he represented so much property. Then for the life of him he (Mr. O'Sullivan) could not see why it was if Mary Smith held land or houses in the same street or townland and had no husband, father, or brother to represent her, she should not be allowed to vote out of her property as well as her neighbour. (Hear, hear.) Then, again, in this respect their laws seemed completely out of joint. They allowed women to vote for Poor Law Guardians; they allowed them to vote for municipal councillors, and they allowed them to vote for members of School Boards, yet they refused to allow them to vote for the men who taxed *their* property as well as the property of men, and who made laws to which woman should be subject, though she had no voice in the making of those laws. (Hear, hear.) Then, again, their laws were quite inconsistent in this respect. That property had many rights in this country was admitted, and among those rights was the right which it gave to the party holding it to vote at elections. Then, if they continued this bar against their voting out of the property they held, to make their laws consistent they should pass a law to debar women from holding property at all. It was clear they should pass such a law if they continued the present state of things. Before he concluded, he would appeal to them, as a body of honourable men who represented the feelings of the people, or every class and creed, not to be so narrow-minded or jealous as to oppose this measure of justice. It was simply the weak appealing to the strong to grant them a small boon, to which

they were justly entitled. Would the strong refuse that right to the weak, and have themselves branded as unjust, unfair, and unmanly? He asked them for the credit of that great assembly, and for the credit of the position they occupied, to pass the second reading of this Bill. (Applause.)

Mr. NEWDEGATE: Nothing can be more remarkable in the arguments of those who have supported this Bill than the attempt to avoid the issue which is really raised. This House is asked to sweep away the limitation of the franchise which is preserved not only in this country as between the sexes, but also in the United States and in Italy. The right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax it is well known has taken a great interest in Italy, and to glory in the enfranchisement of the Italian people; but, in Italy, although women were permitted to take part in matters of Parliamentary elections, there was a positive limitation to their action, they were compelled to vote through the intervention of male delegates. In this limitation there is a recognition of the law of Nature, that man shall go forth to warfare and to labour, supported by, but for the sustenance of woman. The right hon. gentleman admired this arrangement for Italy, but proposed nothing of the kind for his own country. (Hear, hear.) When pressed as to whether the inevitable consequence of the step we are now asked to take will not be the enfranchisement of all women, he promises that the proviso which existed in the previous Bill, excluding married women who are already represented by their husbands, should be restored; and thus, while asking us to sweep away the natural limit admitted throughout the world by which women are disqualified, he proposes another artificial limit by which when enfranchised a female voter shall be prevented from voting. Is it not manifest that the whole object of the right hon. gentleman is to grind the edge of the wedge as thin as possible, so that it may be the more easily inserted in our political system? My hon. and learned friend who introduced the Bill was shocked at my having called it a revolutionary measure. But I did not say that solely on my own authority. My hon. and learned friend who introduced the Bill is shocked to hear it styled a revolutionary measure. But what was the opinion expressed by the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, speaking in reference to a similar measure. "I cannot," said the right hon. gentleman, "recognise any necessity or desire for this measure which would justify the unsettling, not to say the uprooting of the old landmarks of the constitution." (Hear, hear.) For my own part I cannot but think that the measure has a socialistic origin, and would lead to results little contemplated, and which would be very much regretted by my hon. friend who introduced it. It is said that the movement is making progress in the United States. I, for one, do not believe it is. The manly intellect of the American republicans understand too well the limits of safety necessary to their institutions to admit of a measure which had so socialistic a tendency. Mr. Goldwin Smith has warned us—and he knew the United States—that the effect of this agitation in America has been to lead women not merely to attack the limits of universal suffrage, but to make war upon marriage, and that in some of the States the power of divorce has become so wide that it threatened the most sacred of their institutions. The hon. and learned member for Marylebone complained of the laws regulating the property of married women. But has not this House attended to these claims? We need no women here to teach us our duty. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) This Bill casts an unjust reflection upon the conduct and intentions of Parliament; but I will admit that this House and Parliament have, in some respects, been slow in providing legislative protection for women. The House has been dilatory in con-

sidering the laws, which in all other countries have been enacted, for the regulation of conventional institutions, and in the adoption of some analogous provisions. (A laugh from some of the Irish members.) Will the hon. gentlemen who seemed inclined to treat that circumstance with derision deny that laws regulating conventual institutions exist in all or in almost every European State except the United Kingdom? There are, it is true, no such laws in the United States; and may not this account for the Socialistic disposition manifested by some of the American women?—the progress of which seems to commend itself to some of the advocates of this Bill. I ask the House whether it is proposed to have universal suffrage not limited to men, but to include women—whether it is proposed to consider all the limits of the present franchise fictitious and temporary; and if they are not prepared to do that, I ask you to pause ere you sweep away the one limit to the franchise which is coincident with the relations and functions of the sexes, and has existed from the creation of the world to the present time. Is not this limit consecrated by an acceptance, by a ratification, and by a sanction which no other limits which we could assign to the franchise would possess? It has been urged that because women have been admitted to the municipal franchise they should be admitted to the electoral franchise. But is there no distinction between the functions of a municipality and the functions of an Imperial Parliament? It is well known that women were admitted to the municipal franchise by an accident, and not by the deliberate intention of Parliament. ("Oh, oh," and hear.) They have exercised the franchise on social matters, but social matters are matters of family and domestic economy, and totally separated from subjects of Imperial legislation. The care of the poor and the sick, and the management of their homes, are matters which belong to women as well as to men. This Bill emanates from the school which has deified the principles of equality, and would be satisfied with nothing less than the dead level of democratic equality in everything. The misguided ladies who carry on this agitation are urged on by those who entertain ulterior views, and I believe that that is the opinion of the great mass of my countrywomen, who have abstained from lending their sanction and their voices to this cause. This Bill will break down the natural distinctions between the proper functions of the two sexes and the limit which divides the duty of men and women. It casts a most unjust and unworthy reflection upon the feelings of men and gentlemen, and a most unworthy reflection upon the views and intentions of this House and of the Imperial Parliament. (Hear.)

Mr. JACKSON: Sir, I shall occupy the time of the House but a very few minutes, but I wish to call the attention of the hon. and learned gentleman who has introduced the Bill to the manner in which it expresses the intention he has in view. I came down here to-day not knowing whether the hon. and learned gentleman was or was not in favour of conferring the franchise on married women. After carefully reading the Bill and comparing it with existing statutes on the subject of the electoral franchise, I am of opinion that it would not limit the franchise to unmarried women. I quite accept the construction which the hon. and learned gentleman has put upon the Bill, but I think it right to say that should the Bill be read a second time, as I hope it will, and get into committee, I will move an amendment, having for its object the putting an end to all doubt about that important matter, as I think that under the Bill as it now stands, married women would in exceptional cases have the power of voting. That however, sir, is a very small matter compared with the real question before the House this afternoon. (Hear, hear.) This question

I cannot but think has been debated in too high a key. The point we have to decide is whether those women who satisfy the definition of a qualified voter with regard to men, have made out a case to be admitted to the franchise notwithstanding that they are women. With the exception of the hon. member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin, in his splendid speech, every hon. member who has spoken against the Bill has avoided that question. (Hear, hear.) In language more or less eloquent or fanciful they have dealt with a different state of things. In spite of the disclaimer of the hon. and learned member for Marylebone and my right hon. friend the member for Halifax, hon. members have persisted in seeing nothing in the Bill but a first step to the conferring of the franchise upon all women, co-extensive with the granting of manhood suffrage. But there is no such proposal before the House. (Hear, hear.) Such a dream may be entertained by certain political philosophers, but it has never been clothed in the language or assumed the form of a practical political question. If it ever does the House will know how to deal with it. (Hear, hear.) The whole argument against the Bill amounts to this, that the Bill means something different to what it says; and however much we may protest we are not believed. Again and again this chimera is put up, merely for the purpose of being knocked down. (Hear, hear.) What is the true and only object of the Bill? In fact the Bill is meant to confer upon certain persons who happen to be females the right which they would have but for their sex, and the only answer that can be given to this claim is that which has been candidly offered by the hon. member for Lincolnshire, that there is in women either by divine ordinance or from the habits of mankind some personal disability unfitting them for the exercise of the franchise. But is that true? Experience answers in the negative, because women now exercise an inferior franchise, and there is no inherent difference between the inferior and the superior. The hon. member said that the experience of mankind from the creation down to the year 1875 was uniformly the other way; but at the same time he admits that the experiment we now ask for has in fact never been tried. (Cheers.) What, then, is the weight of the argument derived from experience. (Hear, hear.) Surely sir, this Bill is only one more step in the series of legislative measures which have characterised the political movements of the present generation. Parliament has first dealt with the claims of the middle classes, then of the working classes in towns, and is now considering the claims of another grade of the working classes. To each of these classes in its turn the franchise has been or will be conceded; why then should the House of Commons now refuse the full rights of citizenship to women who are qualified to exercise them within the limitations imposed by the Bill? To that question no satisfactory or conclusive answer has yet been given. I contend that whether as a matter of abstract right or as a matter of political convenience and for the safety of the state, the just claim made by the limited class of women who have the qualifications which are deemed sufficient in the case of men, should be at once recognised. (Cheers.) They satisfy the conditions laid down by Parliament, and they have a right to know on what ground they are excluded. No attempt even has been made to give an answer to that question. It is on that ground and because I adopt to the full the views so ably urged by my right hon. friend the member for Halifax, that by making this concession you will establish the principle of the finality of the household as the basis of the suffrage, you will widen and enlarge that stand-point on the validity of which we all rely, as one means of checking the threatening wave of democracy, that I think the House would act wisely by reading the Bill a second time. But we are asked, *cui bono?* What is the object of the measure? We

are told that Parliament is always ready to redress grievances, and to a great extent that is so; but I do not think that those who support the Bill are called upon to show that any immediate or radical result would be the outcome of the Bill if it were passed. It is enough to say, as I, for one, conscientiously believe, that the result of the contemplated addition to the voting power of the country would be almost entirely for good. If we compare the class of women who would be admitted to the franchise with the same class of men voters among the humbler classes, the comparison will be in favour of the former. Of this I am sure, that women who in this nineteenth century engage in the hard struggle of life and notwithstanding all obstacles can maintain a household as well able and well entitled to exercise political power as men in the same rank and condition. (Hear, hear.) So far from being a source of danger, the Bill offers a guarantee for safety, but above all it will afford a lever which will assist in obtaining for women that open career and means of obtaining their livelihood for which their disposition and talents fit them, and which I believe is the object most aimed at by those most intelligent women who mainly support this agitation. We have seen how the cause of education has been advanced by women, and I believe that we would, in perhaps a small degree, but still appreciably, find the sphere of work and capacity of women for benefiting the State enlarged if we confer upon them the privilege for which they now ask. (Hear, hear.) For these reasons I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. (Cheers.)

Sir H. JAMES said: I should have preferred, sir, for several reasons, to have taken no part in this debate, but my hon. and learned friend who introduced this Bill, referred to me so frequently and pointedly in the course of the speech in which he submitted this measure to the House, that I trust the House will allow me very briefly indeed to occupy their time while I state the reasons for the opposition which I have hitherto given to this measure, and to vindicate the vote I am now about to record against it. Before discussing the effects of this Bill it will be well for us really to know what are the provisions contained in it. There are in it some words which have been clearly and distinctly printed in plain ink, which we can all read, but a great deal has been printed, too, in invisible type, which causes it to be necessary to hold this Bill up to the light before those words can be clearly read. Even as the Bill stands it is clear my hon. and learned friend was the subject of a deception when he yielded to the request made to him to remove the proviso he inserted in the Bill last year, in order to carry his intention not to give the franchise to married women into effect. I fancy there was somebody who knew more about the effect of that removal than he did, for, if he will look at the Representation of the People Act he will find that by the removal of that proviso every married woman having property to her separate use will be enabled to vote under this Bill. (Hear, hear.) He will find that every married female lodger, whether separated from her husband by an express judicial decree or by actual deed of separation, so that her occupation as a lodger becomes a *bona fide* occupation, will be entitled to vote. My hon. and learned friend admits that he had no such intention in removing the proviso. How those ladies who knew its effect must have laughed.

Oh! the good man little knew
What that wily sex can do.

(Laughter.) It is the consequences of this Bill which I would ask the House to consider before they sanction it. We have heard to-day from my hon. and learned friend and my right hon. friend (Mr. Stansfeld) a doctrine which I would ask the House to weigh. We are told to look at the immediate consequences only, and not at the ultimate effect of this measure.

What manner of statesmanship is that? (Hear, hear.) Do not let it be regarded as my protest—it would be presumptuous in me to protest,—but as the protest of every member of this House, that we bear the responsibility of looking at the ultimate result of every measure. Is it to be said that the man who sets the stone rolling at the hill-top is not to look to its effects in the valley—that, because the stone has been moved, and met with nothing in its first motion, we are not to consider its ultimate destination? (Hear, hear.) On the same principle, when the municipal franchise was granted in 1869 without consideration, without even the knowledge of nine-tenths of the members of this House that it was being granted, we should have been told then, if the matter had been discussed, that we should look only to the immediate consequence, that it was only to confer the municipal and not the Parliamentary franchise; but how is it used against us now? This argument has been employed to-day—that as you conferred the municipal franchise on women, can you deny them the Parliamentary? (Hear, hear.) There is as great a distinction between the two as there is between married women and single. On what principle is it that you who have spoken of the weaker sex have introduced a Bill to confer this right on single women, and refuse it to married women? Is it right and politic to tell a woman who desires to bear her part in political life, that if she marries she shall lose her right? (Hear, hear.) It stands now as a natural consequence of this Bill, and I have a right to argue upon its natural consequences, and to ask whether you mean to give full and equal electoral rights to all women? I do not know whether that is the intention of hon. members who support this Bill—I know it is not the intention of my hon. and learned friend, because he has said it is not; but the fact remains that, let this Bill once pass through his exertions, and his wishes then would have but little weight as to its ultimate effects. Let me quote a greater authority even than my learned friend. It is a letter written on the 4th April last year, shortly after the introduction of his Bill, signed by a lady bearing an honoured name, “Ursula S. Bright,” and one who has a right to speak on this subject. She said, “Some of us would be glad to know on what grounds Mr. Forsyth proposes to exclude those married women who have freehold property or other qualification from exercising the right he wishes to confer on unmarried women who are in the same position. The various societies for women’s suffrage are united for one object, which is to obtain for women the right to vote for members of Parliament on the same conditions which entitle men to vote. Mr. Forsyth’s Bill, therefore, does not meet their case, and unless a suitable amendment should be carried in committee, the agitation will go on after the Bill is passed without any more interruption than may be necessary to enable the societies to congratulate each other on their partial success.” (Hear, hear.) Now, that is a pretty fair declaration of war on the subject; and, after reading that, and looking to the natural just sequence of passing this Bill, need I trouble the House by answering the statements of my hon. friends when they say, “Be blind as to the results; read its four corners only, and do not trouble?” (Hear, hear.) Let me take the four corners as it stands, and what is the result? If you pass this Bill, when the time comes, which many members—especially on this side of the House—anticipate, when the property qualification will be abolished, and when every citizen of the State will have a right to take part in electing those who govern, we must let women have an equal share with their husbands in the franchise, and give them the same full electoral rights, and under such circumstances this nation is to be governed and endeavour to hold her own amongst the nations of the world. (Cheers)

As to the flimsy protection this Bill would afford in the case of a voter, there are many hon. members on both sides of the House who are anxious to alter the law affecting the right of married women to hold property; and I will say, let that law be altered as you desire, and let married women have the same right to property as married men, and they also will get the right of voting without one word being added to our statute-book. Such being the effect of this measure it is admitted to be a great and a radical change. I don’t tarry here to talk about the “burden of proof.” That is a lawyer’s term, and is not worth consideration here; but if this alteration is to be effected we ought to be quite certain that it will do good. (Hear, hear.) I will refer shortly to the arguments mentioned this afternoon. The word “right” has been used more than once, and there has been a little confusion in reference to the rights of property and of individuals. Can we seriously say that there is any right in property to be represented? To say that any such right exists is to go back to the old saying, that it is not every man who holds a house, but every house which holds a man, that is entitled to a vote. If, then, you do not for one moment say property is to be represented, you come to the question whether a woman has an absolute right to claim the franchise. On what terms? She can claim to be a citizen only if she is willing to bear the burdens as well as accept the advantages of the position. (Cheers.) As was said in that most able speech of the member for Huddersfield—delivered, I am sorry to say, when the House was not quite so full as it is now—when you are discussing the question of a woman who says: “Give me this, because I demand it as a right,” you must ask if she is content to be classed on an equality with men. (Hear, hear.) What are the primary obligations of citizenship? Will women accept that very natural one of enrolling themselves in defence of their country? (Hear, hear.) Are they willing to accept a conscription if one should be enforced? (Hear, hear.) Are they willing to assist as special constables? Are they willing to sit on the magisterial bench? Are they willing to accept the obligation of jurors? If they admit their inability to bear these burdens while they say, “Give us all those rights and privileges,” surely their claim of right cannot be supported, and they must make it on other grounds. (Cheers.) But abandoning this claim of right, you say that it is well for the State that this should be. How is it to be supported? It is an exceptional question, and it must be supported by clear argument that the State would be benefited. (Hear, hear.) I have heard to-day much that appears to me to be a concession—in, for instance, the admission of women’s inferiority for a political career. (Hear, hear.) It is only carrying out that which has been said, strongly enough, by my right hon. friend, as to the view of nature. It is only carrying out the mere corollary of physical weakness under which, for some purposes, nature has assigned that women should suffer. (Hear, hear.) I know that in the work of Mr. Mill there is an argument addressed very much to the point that there ought not to be a weaker sex. (Laughter.) The question whether there ought to be a weaker sex I decline to enter into. (Laughter.) It is, in fact, too late to argue whether there ought to be a weaker sex or not—(laughter)—and, therefore, hon. members must excuse me if I do not engage in that contest. (Laughter.) They must argue, not with me, but with nature; and, as Mr. Squeers says, you will find nature a very “awkward customer to deal with.” (Laughter.) If there is this physical weakness, and I presume it is admitted, it cannot be an accident or the result of training or education. It is a weakness found in every animal life, and given in the case of women in order that they may adapt themselves to a different description of life to

men. (Hear, hear.) As had been expressed by one who read human nature, and wrote of it perhaps better than any Englishman who ever existed, where he makes Katharine, at the conclusion of a struggle in which she endeavoured to take the position of man, acknowledge the errors of her ways:

Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,
But that our soft conditions and our hearts
Should well agree with our external parts?

(Cheers.) My right hon. friend, with strange frankness, has said, “I admit women are weaker than men for the purposes of a political career.” It is a political career we are discussing at this moment. If they are not fitted to sit in this House—if, as it is admitted by my right hon. friend, they are not fitted to take part in the fair burdens of political life, how do you establish that they are competent to give a vote in the return of members? (Cheers.) What is this career of politics composed of? What is that we have to deal with here in the course of our political career? We ask for the practical experience of men. We listen with attention to men in particular professions when they speak on special questions. We ask for men in the army and navy to guide us in matters military and naval; we ask for commercial men and lawyers to assist us in other directions; and from every one of such pursuits women are practically shut out, and to a certain extent ever must be shut out. When you speak of the unfitness of women for political life it is not because their minds are somewhat different, it is because their habits and instincts prevent them from acting in these particular occupations. (Hear, hear.) The effect of this Bill will be to drive women to consider subjects connected, I will not say with sentiment, but at all events not always with good government. Were female franchise introduced into France, what would be the question affecting the elections in every department of that country? The question would be whether there should be war with Italy to restore the temporal power of the Pope. (Hear, hear.) As to what would be the question in this country, we need not speculate. We have had practical proof of that. Of all questions more immediately affecting the law, we hear little of women’s influence or interest. If the hon. member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) were to hold a meeting on the county franchise, or the hon. member for Birmingham (Mr. Dixon) were to have one on the 25th clause of the Education Act, they would find but few women to attend them. But we find that the effect of women only hovering on the very threshold of political life has been that that has occurred now which would not have occurred a few years ago. We find this class of political matrons willing to leave these “simple maidens in their flower,” who, we have been told, “are worth a hundred coats of arms,” and to go and hear from gentlemen the details of the Contagious Diseases Acts. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) We learn from their petitions and their statements that they thoroughly understand the subject, and know the effect it has alike on the physical and moral health of the community. (Hear, hear.) That is one of the effects of the entrance of women on political life. The question is, whether you would wish to see it continued. To what it might lead us no one can tell. The hon. and learned member (Mr. Forsyth) does not attempt to do so; but he does tell us that it will remedy injustice, and will cause justice now, for the first time, to be afforded to women. What charge is it that the hon. and learned member brings against us? and what are the measures he wishes to see remedied? Has the hon. and learned member done his part if he has not brought forward proof of the injustice these injured women have endured? (Hear, hear.) What proof has he that other members are not equally inclined to remove their grievances if they only knew

them? It is odd indeed for him to say that this House is so unjust that women cannot obtain fair legislation for themselves, and at the same time to tell us that, so confident is he in the justice of his case, that he is certain he will carry it by a large majority. (Hear, hear.) If this House is so just as to pass this Bill, it might be relied on to be equally so to remedy these grievances. May I venture now to say one word in regard to a personal matter, and I beg to apologise to the House for referring to it? My hon. and learned friend has claimed from me the performance of a promise I made. I reject his claim; I shall not vote for the Bill; I shall cheerfully give my vote against it. He says that, in the heat of an election contest, I stated that if half the women of my constituency asked me to vote for this measure I would do so. The recollection I have of the words I used—though I do not care to raise any question as to what these were precisely—is that I said that if half the women in the town—who, I supposed, would be fairly representative of the women of the country—showed themselves in favour of this Bill, I would reconsider my very definite opinion. Now, however, my hon. and learned friend tells us that because in a town where there are 8,000 or 9,000 women a petition was signed by upwards of 300, I am to vote for the Bill. (Hear, hear.) That, surely, is not the half of the women of my constituency; and I don’t recognise that it is a petition even of 300 women. We have heard a good deal lately about the way petitions are procured; and when you pay so much for every signature, it is an easy matter to get petitions up upon any subject. My hon. and learned friend suggests that I ought not to have referred to the female supporters of this Bill as women who endeavoured to become political successes because they had been social failures. If that statement gave pain or annoyance to any lady in the land, I deeply regret it, and I would even apologise for it to those to whom I more immediately applied it. Let me, however, remind those who have gone through Parliamentary elections that they may never have had two ladies dogging their steps in their canvass—(hear, hear, and laughter)—and entering after them into the habitations of the electors, and telling their wives that they were oppressed by a tyrant, and that I was one of the oppressors. (Laughter.) Under these circumstances, if I did use strong language, I think there was some little excuse for the inadvertence. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) My friend has read a long list of aristocratic names—with which he is better acquainted than I am—and asks if these are the women I want to insult.

Mr. FORSYTH: I did not say “insult.”

Sir H. JAMES: But surely it would have been an insult if I had applied the language to them. As I have said, I did not know the majority of the names, but there was one which I did recognise, and as he read it I could not help thinking he read a strong and conclusive argument against this Bill. I refer to the name of Miss Nightingale—(hear, hear)—and in regard to her I venture to say that if her early years had been passed in preparing for political strife and party warfare, she would never have been the Florence Nightingale she has been—(hear, hear, and cheers)—that tender ministering woman, who gained more than a hero’s glory, and more than a statesman’s renown. (Loud cheers.) I would only add one word, and that is how earnestly I join in the hope and belief that this question will never be made a party question. (Cheers.) But if it should be, with what confidence might I not appeal to every party in this House. If this measure must be opposed to the Liberal views of those who desire the progress of our constitution, with what greater confidence may I appeal to those who now, in the pride of their majority, represent and accept the duty of maintaining and preserving our constitution,

based, as it must be, in its integrity and strength, upon that home life of England ever influenced by that woman's power which it is now sought to interfere with. You, Mr. Speaker, sit in that chair without care of political struggles and without regarding the success of either party—your only object is to maintain the peaceful performance of our duty within this chamber. You, sir, sitting in that chair are the very type and representative of a great power and class in this country. Between the two great conflicting parties in the state, stand those who are careless of which of those parties succeeds, of which is in power, or which of them has the greater strength. They demand simply that their laws shall be so framed by us as to preserve to them the peaceful enjoyment of their domestic life, and ere this Bill passes into law, with a voice ever clear because it speaks the instincts of the people, they will demand that we shall cast it from the table; lest by the acceptance of it in a fitful moment we endanger the happiness of the people, and imperil the greatness and the stability of the empire. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. FORSYTH: At this hour, I do not propose to make any reply to the arguments that have been used in opposition to the Bill, and I merely propose to make one observation in answer to the statement of the hon. and learned gentleman who has just addressed the House. The hon. and learned gentleman has said that the form of this Bill is such that if passed it will enable married women to vote. I tell him, as a lawyer, that such is not the case, but, if there is the slightest doubt on the subject, I shall have no objection to the insertion in committee of the strongest words that the Legislature can employ in order to prevent married women from having such a right.

The House then divided, when there appeared
For the second reading 152
Against 187

Majority against 35

The announcement of the numbers was received with loud cheers from the promoters of the Bill.

DIVISION LIST.

Order for Second Reading read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Amendment proposed to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months:"—(Mr. Chaplin)—Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question;"—The House divided: Ayes 152, Noes 187.

AYES.

- Adderley, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
- Allen, W. Shepherd (Newc. U.L.)
- Anderson, George
- Anstruther, Sir Windham (L'k)
- Antrobus, Sir Edmund
- Ashbury, James Lloyd
- Backhouse, Edmund
- Bateson, Sir Thomas
- Bathurst, Allen Alexander
- Bazley, Sir Thomas
- Beaumont, Major Fred. (Durh. S.)
- Beresford Col. M. (Southwark)
- Biggar, Joseph Gillis
- Bird, Thomas William
- Bousfield, Major
- Briggs, William Edward
- Brise, Colonel Ruggles
- Brooks, Maurice (Dublin)
- Brown, Alexander H. (Wenlock)
- Browne, George Ekins (Mayo)
- Bruce, Rt. Hon. Lord Ernest (Marl)
- Bruce, Hon. Thos. (Portsmouth)
- Burt, Thomas
- Callender, William Romaine
- Cameron, Charles (Glasgow)
- Carter, Robert M.
- Cawley, Charles E.
- Chadwick, David
- Charley, William Thomas
- Clarke, J. Creemer
- Clifford, Charles Cavendish
- Cobbold, John Patteson
- Collins, Eugene
- Corbett, John (Droitwich)
- Corry, James Porter (Belfast)
- Cowan, James (Edinburgh)
- Cowan, Joseph (Newcastle)
- Cross, John Kynaston (Bolton)
- Cubitt, George
- Dalway, Marriott Robert
- Deakin, James Henry
- Dickson, Major Alex. G. (Dover)

- Dickson, Thos. A. (Dungannon)
- Dilke, Sir Charles Wentworth
- Dillwyn, Lewis Llewelyn
- Disraeli, Rt. Hon. Benjamin
- Dixon, George (Birmingham)
- Earp, Thomas
- Elliot, Sir Geo. Dur. Co. (N.D.)
- Elliot, George (Northallerton)
- Elphinstone, Sir James D. H.
- Eslington, Lord
- Ewing, Archibald Orr
- Fawcett, Henry
- Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
- Fordeyce, William Dingwall
- Forester, Cecil Theodore Weld
- Forster, Sir Charles (Walsall)
- Fraser, Sir William Augustus
- Gardner, James T. Agg. (Cheltnm)
- Gardner, R. Richardson (W'son)
- Gordon, Rt. Hon. E. S. (Glas. U.)
- Gorst, John Eldon
- Gourley, Edward Temperley
- Greenall, Gilbert
- Grieve, James Johnstone
- Gurney, Rt. Hon. Russell
- Hamond, Charles Frederic
- Harrison, Charles (Bewdley)
- Harrison, J. Fortescue (Kilm'k)
- Henley, Right Hon. J. W.
- Hernon, Edward
- Hervey, Lord F. (Bury St. Edm.)
- Heygate, William Unwin
- Hill, Alex. Staveley (Staff. W.)
- Hill, Thos. Rowley (Worcester)
- Hodgson, Kirkman D. (Bristol)
- Holker, Sir John
- Holms, William (Paisley)
- Hopwood, Charles Henry
- Ingram, William James
- Jackson, Henry Mather
- Jenkins, David James (Penryn)
- Jenkinson, Sir George S.
- Johnston, William (Belfast)
- Kinnaird, Hn. Arthur Fitzgerald
- Laing, Samuel
- Lambert, Nathaniel Grace
- Laverton, Abraham
- Legard, Sir Charles
- Lloyd, Morgan (Beaumaris)
- Lush, Dr.
- Lusk, Sir Andrew
- Mackintosh, Charles Fraser
- McArthur, Alexander (Leic.)
- McKenna, Sir Joseph Neal
- McLagan, Peter
- McLaren, Duncan
- Manners, Rt. Hon. Lord John
- Marten, Alfred George (Cam. B.)
- Mellor, Thomas W.
- Mills, Arthur (Exeter)
- Morley, Samuel
- Mulholland, John
- Mundella, Anthony John
- Neville-Grenville, Ralph
- Noel, Ernest (Dumfries)
- Nolan, Captain
- Norwood, Charles Morgan
- O'Clery, Keyes
- O'Shaughnessy, Richard
- O'Sullivan, William Henry
- Palmer, Charles Mark
- Pender, John
- Pennington, Frederick
- Perkins, Sir Frederick
- Phipps, Pickering
- Pim, Captain Bedford
- Playfair, Rt. Hon. Dr. Lyon
- Polhill-Turner, Captain
- Power, Richard (Waterford)
- Price, Wm. E. (Tewkesbury)
- Puleston, John Henry
- Ramsey, John
- Richard, Henry
- Richardson, Thomas
- Round, James
- Ryder, Granville Richard
- Samuelson, Bernhard
- Sanderson, Thomas Kemp
- Sandford, G. Montagu W.
- Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir Henry J.
- Sherriff, Alexander Clunes
- Shute, General
- Simon, Mr. Serjeant
- Smith, Eustace (Tynemouth)
- Spinks, Mr. Serjeant
- Staeppole, William
- Stewart, Mark John (Wigton)
- Sullivan Alexander M.
- Taylor, Peter Alfred (Leicester)
- Tennant, Robert
- Tillet, Jacob Henry
- Torrens, W. T. M'Callagh
- Trevelyan, George Otto
- Villiers, Rt. Hon. C. Pelham
- Wait, William Killigrew
- Watkin, Sir Edward W.
- Wilson, Chas. (Kings. upon Hull)
- Wilson, Sir Mathew (Yk. W. R.)
- Yeaman, James
- Yorke, John Reginald (Glou. E.)

Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Stansfeld.

NOES.

- Adam, Rt. Hon. William Patrick
- Agnew, Robert Vans
- Alexander, Colonel
- Allen, Major (Somerset, E.)
- Allsopp, Henry (Worc. E.)
- Arkwright, Aug. P. (Derby, N)
- Ashley, Hon. Evelyn M.
- Baggallay, Sir Richard
- Balfour, Arthur Jas. (Hertf. Bo)
- Barclay, Alex. Chas. (Taunton)
- Baring, Thomas Charles
- Barrington, Viscount
- Bass, Arthur (Staffordsh. E.)
- Bassett, Francis
- Bates, Edward
- Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Glo. E.)
- Bentnck, G. Cavendish Whit'n
- Bentnck, Geo. W. P. (Norf. W.)
- Bolekow, Henry W. F.
- Brassey, Thomas (Hastings)
- Bright, Rt. Hon. John (Birmingham)
- Bristowe, Samuel Boteler
- Butt, Isaac
- Campbell, Colin
- Campbell-Bannerman, Henry
- Carington, Hon. Colonel Wm.
- Cartwright, Fairfax (Northamp)
- Cartwright, Wm. C. (Oxfords.)
- Cavendish, Lord G. (Derbysh. N.)
- Cecil, Lord Eustace H. B. G.
- Chaplin, Col. E. (Linc. City)
- Clive, Col. Hn. G. Windsor (Lud.)
- Clive, George (Hereford)
- Close, Maxwell Charles
- Cochrane, Alex. D. W. R. Baillie
- Colebrooke, Sir Thomas Edward
- Cordes, Thomas
- Corry, Hn. H. W. Lowry (Tyrone)
- Cowper, Hon. Henry F.
- Cross, Rt. Hon. Rd. A. (Lanc. S.W.)
- Dalkeith, Earl of
- Dalrymple, Charles
- Davenport, W. Bromley
- Davis, Richard (Anglesey)
- Denison, W. E. (Nottingham)
- Dick, Fitzwilliam

- Dodson, Rt. Hon. John George
- Duff, Mount. Elph. Grant (Elgin)
- Duff, Robert William (Banfsh)
- Dunbar, John
- Dyke, William Hart
- Dyott, Colonel Richard
- Eaton, Henry William
- Edmonstone, Admiral Sir Wm.
- Edwards, Henry
- Egerton, Adm. Hn. F. (Derby E.)
- Egerton, Hon. Wilb. (Chesh. M.)
- Elecho, Lord
- Errington, George
- Fielden, Joshua (Yk. W.R. (E.D.))
- Ferguson, Robert
- French, Hon. Charles
- Gallwey, Sir William Payne
- Garnier, John Carpenter
- Goldney, Gabriel
- Goldsmid, Julian (Rochester)
- Gooch, Sir Daniel
- Gordon, William (Chelsea)
- Gore, J. Ralph Ormsby (Salop N)
- Gore, Wm. Rd. Ormsby (Leitrim)
- Gower, Hon. E. F. Leveson (Bod)
- Greene, Edward
- Gregory, George B.
- Hall, Alexander William
- Halsey, Thomas Frederick
- Hamilton, Lord Cl. J. (King's L.)
- Hamilton, Ion Trant (Dublin Co.)
- Hamilton, Lord George (Midd'x)
- Hamilton, Marquis of (Donegal)
- Hankey, Thomson
- Harcourt, Sir W. Vernon
- Hardy, Rt. Hon. Gathorne (Oxf. U.)
- Hardy, John Stewart (Rye)
- Sherriff, Alexander Clunes
- Shute, General
- Simon, Mr. Serjeant
- Smith, Eustace (Tynemouth)
- Spinks, Mr. Serjeant
- Staeppole, William
- Stewart, Mark John (Wigton)
- Sullivan Alexander M.
- Taylor, Peter Alfred (Leicester)
- Tennant, Robert
- Tillet, Jacob Henry
- Torrens, W. T. M'Callagh
- Trevelyan, George Otto
- Villiers, Rt. Hon. C. Pelham
- Wait, William Killigrew
- Watkin, Sir Edward W.
- Wilson, Chas. (Kings. upon Hull)
- Wilson, Sir Mathew (Yk. W. R.)
- Yeaman, James
- Yorke, John Reginald (Glou. E.)
- Mils, Sir Chas. Henry (Kent, W.)
- Monckton, Francis (Staffordshire)
- Monckton, Hon. Geo. (Notts.)
- Monk, Charles James (Glouc.)
- Moore, Arthur
- Mowbray, Rt. Hon. John Robert
- Mure, Colonel
- Naghten, Arthur Robert
- Newdegate, Charles Newdigate
- Newport, Viscount
- North, Colonel
- O'Connor, Denis M. (Sligo Co.)
- Onslow, Denzil
- Parker, Lt. Col. Windsor
- Peel, Arthur Wellesley (Warw.)
- Peel, Rt. Hon. Sir Rob. (Tamworth)
- Pell, Albert
- Peploe, Major
- Plunket, Hon. D. R. (Dublin Univ.)
- Plunkett, Hon. R. (Glouc. W.)
- Præd, Chas. Tying (St. Ives)
- Praed, H. Bulkeley (Colchester)
- Raikes, Henry Cecil
- Rendlesham, Lord
- Repton, George William
- Ritchie, Charles Thomson
- Robertson, Henry
- Roebuck, John Arthur
- Rothschild, Nath. M. de
- Russell, Lord Arthur (Tavistock)
- Scott, Montagu D. (Sussex, E.)
- Shaw, Richard (Burnley)
- Sidebottom, T. Harrop
- Simonds, William Barrow
- Smith, Wm. Hen. (Westminster)
- Smyth, Richard (Lond'dy Co.)
- Smollett, Patrick Boyle
- Stafford, Marquis of
- Stanhope, Hon. Edw. (Linc. M.)
- Starkey, Lewis R. (York, W. R.)
- Steele, Leo
- Stuart, Colonel (Cardiff)
- Sykes, Christopher
- Talbot, John Gilbert (Kent, W.)
- Tracy, Hn. Chas. R. D. Hanbury
- Tremayne, John
- Turner, Charles (Lanc. S.W.)
- Turnor, Edmund (Linc. S.)
- Kay-Shuttleworth, Ughtred Jas.
- Walker, Thomas Eades
- Wallace, Sir Richard
- Walpole, Hon. Fred. (Norf. N.)
- Water, John
- Waterhouse, Samuel
- Waterlow, Sir Sydney H.
- Weguelin, Thomas M.
- Welby, William Earle
- Wellesley, Captain
- Whalley, George Hammond
- Locke, John
- Whitebread, Samuel
- Whitelaw, Alexander
- Whitwell, John
- Wilmot, Sir Henry (Derbyshire S.)
- Wilmot, Sir J. Eardley (Warw. S.)
- Winn, Rowland (Linc. N.)
- Wolff, Sir H. Drummond
- Woodd, Basil Thomas
- Wynn, Chas. W. Williams (Mont)
- Yarmouth, Earl of
- Yorke, Hon. Eliot (Camb. Co.)

Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Chaplain and Sir Charles Russell.

PAIRS.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| For. | Against. |
| Sir W. Lawson | Lord R. Churchill |
| Sir F. Davie | Lord R. Churchhill |
| Mr. Plimsoll | Mr. S. Lloyd |
| Lord Conyngham | Captain Hayter |
| Mr. W. Hunt | Mr. Childers |
| Mr. F. Arkwright | Mr. E. Allsopp |
| Mr. J. F. Leith | Mr. Pemberton |

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| For. | Against |
| Col. Gilpin | Sir J. Astley |
| Mr. Birley | Mr. Cotes |
| Sir M. Lopes | Hon. A. Egerton |
| Mr. Meldon | Mr. A. Smith |
| Mr. Powell | Mr. Estcourt |
| Mr. Dodds | Mr. Watney |
| Mr. Fothergill | Mr. Herschell |
| Mr. Chapman | Mr. Walsh |
| Mr. Blennerhasst | Mr. S. Cave |

THE ENEMY'S WHIP.

The following circular, signed by four Conservative members, was sent to members on that side of the House:—

CERTAIN AND IMPORTANT DIVISION.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL.

You are earnestly and particularly requested to be in the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 7th, by four o'clock, to vote against the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill, the rejection of which will be moved by Mr. Chaplin.

- HENRY CHAPLIN.
- A. J. B. BERESFORD HOPE.
- J. H. SCOURFIELD.
- CHARLES RUSSELL.

The following is the opposition Liberal whip:—

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL.

Your attendance in the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 7th, to vote against the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill is earnestly requested.

- E. A. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN.
- HENRY JAMES.
- E. A. LEATHAM.
- SAM WHITBREAD.

SIR HENRY JAMES AND THE LADIES OF HIS CONSTITUENCY.

The following letter from "A Lady Ratepayer of Taunton," appeared in many London and other papers:—"I observe that Sir Henry James in his speech in the House of Commons, attempted to throw discredit on the petition from women householders of Taunton, which he presented in favour of Mr. Forsyth's Bill, by saying that there were 9,000 women in Taunton, and that he could not accept the petition signed by 300 as an expression of opinion from the majority. As one of the ladies who signed the petition, I beg leave to explain that the signatures were limited to women who were householders and ratepayers, and who would have votes if Mr. Forsyth's Bill became law. Of such women there are about 500 within the borough, and 300 of these, being a clear majority, signed the petition. Sir Henry James speaks of his constituency as containing 9,000 women. The total population of Taunton is 15,466, and as it is usual to estimate the adults of either sex as one quarter of the whole number, I fail to see by what process of calculation the honourable gentleman has arrived at the figures which he quoted to the House of Commons."

SUMMARY OF PETITIONS PRESENTED UP TO APRIL 20th, 1875.

	No. of Petitions signed Officially	Total No. of Petitions or under Seal.	Total No. of Signatures.
Women's Disabilities Bill—In favour	78	1,250	409,824

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

BIRMINGHAM.

The annual meeting of the Birmingham Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage was held on March 3rd, in the secretary's office, Midland Institute. Alderman Hawkes presided; and among those present were—Councillor Martineau, Professor Massie, Mrs. William Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Osler, Mrs. S. Bartlett, Miss Beddoes, Mrs. Archer, Mrs. W. H. Tyndall, the Rev. T. G. Crippen, the Rev. Wynn Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Impey, Miss Osler, Mr. Ainge, Mr. William Rogers, the Rev. A. O'Neill, Mrs. Saxelby, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. W. B. Smith, Mr. Jesse Herbert, and Miss Sturge (hon. sec.). Miss Sturge read the sixth annual report, and the statement of accounts, from which it appeared that the expenditure during the year had been £83. 4s. 9d., leaving a balance of £18. 13s., due to the treasurer. The chairman moved the adoption of the report, which was seconded by Professor Massie and carried. The Rev. T. G. Crippen proposed, and Mrs. Bartlett seconded, the nomination of the committee for the ensuing year. Mrs. William Taylor moved the re-election of the officers, and Councillor Martineau seconded the motion. Both motions were carried. Mrs. Alfred Osler proposed the adoption of a petition to the House of Commons. She said:—The principal argument employed against the movement was that women should not have the rights, because they had not the liabilities, of men. For instance, they were told they could not be called upon to fight the country's battles. But now, even the men discharged that duty by deputy, employing soldiers and sailors for the purpose; and she was not aware that women taxpayers, as well as men, were not required to support the army and the navy. (Applause.) There was another kind of fighting, however, which was always going on—namely, against ignorance, dirt, disease, crime, and the misery which sprang from those sources. She was not sure, indeed, if the battle was not as important and keen against fevers as foreigners, against small-pox as small arms. (Applause.) Such were some of the enemies against which women as well as men at all times needed to fight, and the warfare would go on while ignorance had to be removed, disease to be exterminated, and misery put to flight. In carrying on that work women had already shown they were good citizens. In Birmingham they had a Ladies' Educational Association, a Ladies' Sanitary Association, and a Ladies' Liberal Association, all doing a work for which, she thought, there was no reward or privilege too high to be bestowed. (Applause.) But a stronger argument than that of abstract right in favour of the movement was to be found in the fact that at present the unjust laws which pressed upon women received no serious consideration from the House of Commons; Parliament even denied to women the control of themselves, their earnings, and their children. Indeed, it might be called a Select Committee for the Suppression of Women. (Laughter.) That state of things, she believed, would remain unaltered until the present Bill was passed, and women could show their power in the polling booth. (Loud applause.) Mrs. Archer seconded the motion, which was adopted. On the motion of Mr. Jesse Herbert, seconded by Mr. Robert Impey, a cordial vote of thanks was awarded to Alderman Hawkes for presiding, and the meeting then separated.

BEWDLEY.

On March 12th a meeting was held in the British School, Wribbenhall, Bewdley, John Nicholls, Esq., J.P., in the chair. Miss Sturge and Mrs. Ashford addressed the meeting, and peti-

tions to both Houses of Parliament were adopted in favour of Mr. Forsyth's Bill.

BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

On Thursday, April 1st, a public meeting was held in the Athenæum Hall, Bury St. Edmund's, in support of Mr. Forsyth's Bill. The hall was well filled by a numerous and attentive audience, which included many families of influence living in the town and neighbourhood. The chair was taken by Geo. Thompson, Esq. (mayor), and there were also on the platform G. H. Nunn, Esq., of Eldo House, and W. Salmon, Esq. Miss Becker and Miss Beedy attended as a deputation. Mr. G. H. Nunn moved the first resolution, and said that in the last election of a town councillor, a very large number of ladies came and voted. Among the voters he found several illiterate men, but not one illiterate woman. After addresses from Miss Beedy and Miss Becker, the resolutions affirming the principle, and adopting petition and memorial, were carried unanimously, and the meeting concluded with the usual votes of thanks.

KEIGHLEY.

CONFERENCE OF LADIES.

On April 21st, a conference of ladies was held in the exhibition-room of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute, on the subject of women's suffrage. There was a large attendance, and the liveliest interest in the subject was displayed by the audience.—Mrs. McLaren, of Edinburgh, was unanimously voted to the chair, and in her opening remarks expressed the greatest satisfaction at the number of women who in the late school board election at Keighley had exercised their right of voting. After referring to the various laws which press unequally upon men and women, and declaring her belief that the Parliamentary franchise is the key to the redress of this injustice, she called upon Miss Le Geyt, of Bath, to address the audience. Miss Beedy followed, and Miss Lucy Wilson submitted a resolution thanking Sir Mathew Wilson for his vote in favour of Mr. Forsyth's Bill, and requesting Lord Frederick Cavendish to support the same. Mrs. Milner seconded the resolution, which was put from the chair and carried unanimously. After some general discussion, a vote of thanks to the chair, proposed by Mrs. Kennedy and seconded by Mrs. Roberts, was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

On April 22nd, a meeting called only by placard on the previous evening, was held in the hall of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute, to consider the claims of women householders to the Parliamentary franchise. The hall was well filled. The chair was occupied by Mr. John Clough, and on the platform we observed, amongst others, Mrs. McLaren, Edinburgh; Miss Beedy, an American lady; Miss Le Geyt, Bath; Mrs. Atherton, Miss Robinson, the Rev. I. Ambler. Messrs. W. A. Robinson, J. W. Laycock, W. B. S. McLaren, Wm. Laycock (Woodville), Daniel Smith, John Bottomley, &c. The meeting was addressed by the chairman, Mr. W. A. Robinson, Mr. Daniel Smith, Mr. McLaren, Miss Le Geyt, Miss Beedy, Mr. John Bottomley, and Mr. W. Laycock, and the usual resolutions were carried unanimously. Votes of thanks concluded the proceedings.

BIRKENHEAD.

On March 8th a meeting in favour of the women's suffrage movement was held in the Queen's Hall, Birkenhead, the Rev. Dr. MacLeod presiding. There was a good attendance. Amongst those on the platform were Miss Becker, of Manchester, Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Binns, Miss Finch, Mrs. O'Brien, the Rev. W. Binns, Mr. Calvert Varty, Mr. Batkin,

&c. Mrs. Holland, president of the Birkenhead Women's Suffrage Society, moved, and Mrs. Yates seconded, a resolution affirming the principle, which was supported by Miss Becker, and carried with one dissentient. On the motion of the Rev. W. Binns, seconded by Mr. Calvert, and supported by Mr. Batkin and Mr. W. Jones, a petition to Parliament was adopted in favour of removing the electoral disabilities of women. The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Miss Becker and the Chairman.

The following meetings have been held in connection with the London National Society for Women's Suffrage:—

READING.

A meeting was held in the Town Hall, Reading, on March 18th, when Mrs. Ronniger attended as a deputation, and delivered an address. The Rev. J. Wood occupied the chair, and was supported by Mr. G. Palmer, the Revs. J. M. Guilding (Vicar of St. Lawrence), C. D. Du Port (H.M. Inspector of Schools), Mr. and Mrs. Colebrook, and Mr. J. S. Salmon. The Rev. C. D. Du Port proposed the adoption of petitions to both Houses of Parliament. The Rev. J. M. Guilding seconded the motion, which was carried. Votes of thanks concluded the proceedings. A copious report appeared in the *Berkshire Chronicle*.

WOODSTOCK.

A largely-attended public meeting was held in the Town Hall, on March 19th, when Mrs. Ronniger delivered a lecture, which was listened to without applause, but with the deepest attention. The Rev. J. H. Abrahall, Vicar of Combe, occupied the chair, and the Mayor of Woodstock and Mr. Godding spoke in favour of the question. Petitions to both Houses of Parliament were adopted, and the usual resolutions passed.

BANBURY.

A meeting was held at the Town Hall on March 24th. The Mayor presided, and Mrs. Ronniger, deputed by the London National Society for Women's Suffrage, delivered an address upon the question. A petition to both Houses of Parliament in favour of the Women's Suffrage Bill was carried unanimously. Alderman Edmunds, in moving a vote of thanks to Mrs. Ronniger, said he sympathised entirely with her views. Mr. Bunton seconded the motion, which was carried.

DAVENTRY.

A lecture was delivered in the Assembly Hall, Daventry, on March 25th, by Mrs. Ronniger. Mr. Councillor Roddhouse occupied the chair, and on the platform were the Rev. T. Adams, F. A. Briggs, Esq., Mr. P. O. Hillman, and Mr. Berry. A letter from the Rev. P. Hales, of the Grammar School, Daventry, was read by the Chairman, expressive of sympathy with the movement, and regretting his inability to be present. Petitions to both Houses of Parliament and the usual resolutions were unanimously adopted. The *Daventry Spectator* contained a report of the proceedings.

ROTHERHAM.

On March 30th, a meeting was held in the Mechanics' Hall, Rotherham, when Mrs. Ronniger delivered an address. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. C. Morgan, who said he could speak from personal experience of the way in which the ladies voted at the municipal elections in Rotherham, as he had had the management of almost every election since the borough was incorporated, and his conviction was that the women electors exercised their right to vote even more judiciously than the men. Mr. W. Corbitt proposed the adoption of petitions to both Houses of Parliament in favour of the removal of the disabilities of women. The chairman seconded the proposition, which was carried with only one dissentient. The *Rotherham Advertiser* contained a full report of the meeting.

NEWARK.

SPEECH BY MR. EARP, M.P.

A public meeting was held on March 31st, at Newark. Mr. Earp, M.P., presided, and on the platform was Mrs. Ronniger, deputed to speak on behalf of the society, and Mr. J. Bullen. The chairman cited the occupation of women in textile manufactories, the arts of pottery, &c. So long as such were the case, he remarked that women must occasionally have a very great interest in political questions, because there was a growing tendency on the part of the Legislature to interfere in the way in which trade was carried on. If they had women largely engaged in trade, then it very frequently might arise that women would have a deep interest in the election of that body, which should, perhaps, impose burdens on that trade, or relieve it from certain burdens already imposed. So that, as the interests of the female portion of the community were directly bound up with all that concerned the manufacturing or national prosperity, on that ground alone he maintained they had a claim to say, "We, being so deeply interested in all that concerns the country, wish to have the chance of saying to a representative who shall present himself to a constituency, we desire your action in such a direction." These were the views which had influenced him in arriving at the decision that it would be a wise and just measure to give the franchise to women. Mr. John Bullen moved the adoption of petitions. This motion was seconded by Mr. Thos. Pinder, and carried unanimously. Mr. Norledge moved, and Mr. Councillor Mackenzie seconded a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Earp, M.P., and which was carried with applause. Votes of thanks terminated the proceedings.

STAMFORD.

On April 1st, a meeting was held at the Assembly Rooms, Stamford, when Mrs. Ronniger attended in behalf of the London National Society. Mr. W. Langley occupied the chair. At the close of Mrs. Ronniger's address, the Rev. H. Macdougall, Rector of St. Michael's, moved that petitions to both Houses of Parliament should be sent from the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Luke, and carried unanimously. The meeting was largely attended.

LOUGHBOROUGH.

On April 2nd, a meeting was held at the Town Hall, Loughborough. The Rev. J. Lemon presided, and Mrs. Ronniger, the Rev. T. Stevenson, and others spoke in favour of the movement. The meeting was principally attended by ladies, and at its close, petitions were adopted and signed by the Chairman in favour of Mr. Forsyth's Bill. Votes of thanks terminated the proceedings.

LUTON.

On April 5th, a meeting was held in the Town Hall, Luton. The chair was taken by the Rev. Edw. R. Adams, Legrave Rectory, and Mrs. Ronniger delivered a lecture in advocacy of the question. On the platform were also Mr. Gustavus Jordan, and Mr. Stomer. Mr. Gustavus Jordan moved the presentation of petitions for the passing of the Bill now before the House, which was seconded by Mr. Stomer, and carried.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD.

On April 6th, a largely attended meeting was held in the Assembly Room, Leighton Buzzard, when Mrs. Ronniger delivered a lecture. The Rev. J. Palmer presided. Mr. Glaisyer moved that petitions be presented to Parliament in favour of removing the political disabilities of women. Mr. Honiborne seconded the motion. Mr. Eeles, in opposing Mrs. Ronniger's arguments, proposed an amendment, but the original motion was carried by a large show of hands. The usual complimentary votes terminated the meeting.

MANCHESTER NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING APRIL, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Jacob Bright	100	0	0
Mr. Arthur Pease	10	0	0
Mrs. William Hargreaves	5	0	0
Mrs. Scholefield	2	2	0
Mr. Francis Peek	2	0	0
Mr. Thomas Dale	2	0	0
Mr. J. Peiser	1	1	0
Lady Emerson Tennant	1	1	0
Mrs. Rhys	1	1	0
Mr. H. C. Stephens	1	1	0
Mr. A. Ireland	1	1	0
Miss E. Colling	1	0	0
"Peeress"	1	0	0
Dr. Gregson	1	0	0
Miss Adamson	1	0	0
Miss Marshall (Edinburgh)	1	0	0
Mr. J. Atkinson	1	0	0
Mr. Arthur Steains	1	0	0
Dr. Gammage	0	10	0
Mrs. Ridley	0	10	0
Mrs. J. W. Richardson (Newcastle)	0	10	0
Mrs. Mawson	0	10	0
Miss Atkinson	0	10	0
Mrs. Maria Atkinson	0	10	0
Mr. J. G. Blumer	0	5	0
Miss Gooch	0	5	0
Mr. A. Webb	0	5	0
Miss Crook	0	5	0
Mrs. Bruce	0	5	0
Miss Hewison	0	5	0
Mrs. Leathart	0	5	0
Mrs. Alexander	0	5	0
Mr. John Thompson (Kendal)	0	5	0
Miss Lucy Boulton	0	5	0
Rev. J. Page Hopps	0	2	6
Mrs. Busby	0	2	6
Mr. J. Paterson	0	2	6
Mrs. Thomas	0	2	6
Rev. J. M. Dixon	0	2	6
Mr. A. C. Pratt	0	2	6
Mrs. Chattaway	0	1	0

£139 13 0

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL.

Cheques and Post Office Orders should be made payable to the Treasurer, Rev. S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, and may be sent either direct to him at 107, Upper Brook-street; or to the Secretary, Miss BECKER, 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND SOCIETY.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED SINCE MARCH 20th, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Miss Estlin	5	0	0
H. S.	5	0	0
Mr. G. P. Armstrong	2	2	0
Mrs. Coates	1	1	0
Mrs. H. B. Clark	1	1	0
Mr. T. W. Dunn	1	1	0
Rev. Ed. Harris	1	1	0
Mrs. Griffith	1	0	0
Mrs. Robberds	1	0	0
Miss Schaw Protheroe	1	0	0
Miss Thomas	1	0	0
Mrs. Warren	0	11	6
Mrs. Black	0	10	6
Miss Carpenter	0	10	0
Miss Ellaby	0	10	0
A Friend	0	10	0
Mr. Hill	0	10	0
Miss Hall	0	10	0
Mr. R. D. Robjont	0	10	0
Mrs. Sibley	0	10	0
Ditto	0	10	0
Mr. Wedmore	0	10	0
Per Walker Dunbar	0	10	0
Mrs. Miller	0	7	6
Mr. Edward Branth	0	5	0
Mrs. W. H. Budgett	0	5	0
Rev. J. W. Caldicott, D.D.	0	5	0

CONTRIBUTIONS (continued).

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. J. H. B. Carslake	0	5	0
Mr. H. Davies	0	5	0
Mrs. Field	0	5	0
Miss Luke	0	5	0
Dr. Martyn	0	5	0
Miss Parnell	0	5	0
Miss Phillips	0	5	0
Mr. Henry Smith	0	5	0
Mr. Thornton	0	5	0
Miss Ella Thompson	0	5	0
Mr. Weir	0	5	0
Mr. Willis	0	5	0
Miss Evelyn Thompson	0	3	0
Mr. Alexander Thompson	0	3	0
Mr. and Mrs. Andrews	0	2	0
Mrs. Thompson	0	2	0

£31 0 6

ALICE GRENFELL, 5, Albert Villas, Clifton,

Office: 53, Park Street, Bristol.

Treasurer.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Contributions to the funds of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 294, Regent Street, London, W., from March 20th to April 20th, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
Miss L. S. Ashworth	20	0	0
Miss Williams (second donation)	10	10	0
Mrs. Glover (donation and subscription)	10	0	0
Lady Anna Gore Langton (third donation)	10	0	0
Mrs. Thos. Taylor (second donation)	5	0	0
Miss Ashworth (second donation)	5	0	0
Miss J. Boucherett	5	0	0
Miss Cobbe	5	0	0
Miss Courtenay	5	0	0
Mrs. Lynch, collected by	5	0	0
Mrs. F. Pennington (second donation)	5	0	0
Mrs. Stansfeld	2	2	0
Miss Courtauld	2	2	0
Mr. George Sims	2	0	0
Miss C. A. Biggs	1	1	0
Miss Craig	1	1	0
Miss E. Ellis	1	1	0
Mrs. Lucas	1	1	0
Miss Rigby	1	1	0
Mr. A. J. Williams	1	1	0
Mrs. Morgan Williams	1	0	0
Mr. Thomas H. Bastard	1	0	0
Mrs. Nassau Senior	0	10	6
Mr. Tyssen	0	10	6
Mrs. A. Abercombe	0	10	0
A Friend	0	10	0
Miss Gurney	0	10	0
Mrs. Scull	0	10	0
Miss Travers (London)	0	10	0
Mrs. Pickering Clarke	0	5	0
Miss Grove	0	5	0
Mr. Lapworth	0	5	0
Miss Slatter	0	2	6
Miss Mondy	0	2	0

£154 0 0

ALFRED W. BENNETT, Treasurer.

EDINBURGH SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE JANUARY 20th, 1875.

	£	s.	d.
The Misses Craig	10	0	0
The Misses Hunter	10	0	0
Mrs. McQueen	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Ord	3	3	0
Miss Gibson	2	0	0
Countess Dowager of Buchan	1	0	0
Mrs. Fergusson Home	1	0	0
Miss Harkness	0	10	0
Mr. S. Dixon	0	10	0
Miss Black	0	2	6
Collected in small sums	3	1	6

£36 7 0

6, Carlton Street.

AGNES CRAIG, Treasurer.