

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL.

EDITED BY LYDIA E. BECKER.

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"LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY."
A Reply to Mr. Fitzjames Stephen's *Strictures* on Mr. J. S. Mill's "Subjection of Women," by LYDIA E. BECKER. Reprinted from the *Women's Suffrage Journal*. Price 2d. To be had at 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester.

PETITION! PETITION! PETITION!—Friends of Women's Suffrage are earnestly exhorted to aid the cause by collecting signatures during the recess for petitions, to be presented in support of Mr. Mason's Resolution, which may come on for discussion at an early date next session. Petitions from women householders or others who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote are particularly valuable. Special forms of petition to be signed by such women, as well as general petitions, ready for signature, will be supplied on application to Miss BECKER, 29, Parliament-street, London, S.W., or 28, Jackson's Row, Albert Square, Manchester; Miss BLACKBURN, 20, Park-street, Bristol; or Miss KIRKLAND, 13, Raeburn Place, Edinburgh.

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"... Gives a brief account of the laws, enabling, and disabling, which affect the condition of women. It is a useful summary."—*Spectator*, Jan 14, 1882.

A ADDRESS UPON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN WYOMING, delivered at Association Hall, Philadelphia, by Gov. JOHN W. HOYT, of Wyoming Territory, U.S.A., on April 3, 1882. Price Threepence.—Published by the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 64, Berners-street, London, W.

UGHT WOMEN TO LEARN THE ALPHABET? By T. W. HIGGINSON. Reprinted from "Atlantic Essays." Price 3d. A. Ireland & Co., Manchester.

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The question of Woman Suffrage, the rights and status of Woman, has already become one of the vital political issues of the day; therefore, its relation to political, social, and religious questions should be thoroughly understood.

The *Phila. Evening Bulletin* says: "The magnitude of this history prevents us from giving even a sketch of it, but we simply and honestly say that it is a noble production, honourable to its editors and to its subject, and fairly representing the characters of the really great women, like Mrs. Stone, Lucretia Mott, Harriet Martineau, and scores of others in England and this country, who made the claim of equal rights of suffrage a part of their political and religious creeds."

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LATEST INTELLIGENCE FROM THE PLANET VENUS. Reprinted, by permission, from *Fraser's Magazine*. Manchester: A. Ireland and Co., Pall Mall.

THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN THE LAW OF THE LAND. By SIDNEY SMITH. Price Threepence.—London: Trübner and Co. Manchester: A. Ireland and Co. May be had also at 28, Jackson's Row, Manchester.

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

PETITIONS.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.—For Extension to Women.

SEVENTEENTH REPORT, 4—10 July, 1883 (continued).

Table listing petitions with columns for date (July), location (e.g., Bristol, London), petitioner name, and page number. Includes entries like *21493 Bristol (Mr. Lewis Fry) and *21540 Prestwich, Executive Committee of the Liberal Club.

Table listing petitions with columns for date (July), location (e.g., Birmingham, London), petitioner name, and page number. Includes entries like *21541 Birmingham, General Committee of the Liberal Association and *21577 Axbridge, Somerset.

Total number of Petitions 469—Signatures 13575

The Petitions marked thus (*) are substantially similar to that from Plymouth [see 5]. The Petitions marked thus (C) are from public meetings, and are signed officially.

A Bench of Magistrates in Sussex (says the Echo) has been completely floored by an old woman. The party in question let lodgings to single men, and she was prosecuted for selling beer to some of her lodgers without a licence.

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THE annual meeting of the Central Committee took place on July 19th, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, under the presidency of Mr. COURTNEY, M.P.

The meeting was very well attended, and amongst the speakers were the Right Hon. JAMES STANSFELD, M.P., Dr. CAMERON, M.P., Mr. COLERIDGE J. KENNARD, M.P., Mr. W. H. ARCHDALE, M.P., Miss MULLER, Mrs. CHANT, and Miss WILKINSON.

The proceedings included a resolution thanking Mr. HUGH MASON, BARON DE WORMS, Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT, Mr. HENRY FOWLER, Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, and Mr. COURTNEY, for introducing and supporting in the House of Commons the Resolution for extending the Parliamentary franchise to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting, and pledging the Society to support any further steps that may be taken by their Parliamentary friends to obtain the assent of the Legislature to that proposal.

THE interim number published last month gave a record of the meetings that were organised after it became known that Mr. MASON had obtained a day for his Resolution, and also of debates in Town Councils and other important bodies which passed resolutions and petitions in its support—a record which, owing to the exigences of space, did but scant justice to the importance of many of the meetings and to the speeches of the members of Parliament and other eminent men and women who took part in them.

speeches delivered in opposition to the proposal will afford ample material for future discussion. We are compelled to postpone all comment on them, as even the addition of many extra pages to our present issue will not enable us to do more than give the reports and other intelligence of the month; we are, therefore, compelled to omit or postpone many notes and comments on current topics connected with the cause.

THE Saturday Review is a paper which seems to make a special point of accuracy of information, but it makes a strange slip in commenting on the recent debate on women's suffrage. In an article, which appeared on July 14th, the writer says: "Mr. JACOB BRIGHT repeated in spite of frequent exposure the fallacious statement that, according to the census, a large proportion of landowners consists of women. The facts are notoriously opposed to Mr. BRIGHT's assertion, and it has been repeatedly explained that in the census returns men describe themselves by their professions or trades, while women who happen to own land have for the most part no other occupation."

This is an odd jumble of blunders. In the first place, the most complete statistics about the women landowners were given, not by Mr. JACOB BRIGHT, but by BARON DE WORMS, and were not taken from the census returns, but from the new Domesday Book. Mr. JACOB BRIGHT did indeed refer to landowners, but he also said that ten per cent of the farmers in the United Kingdom were women. The figures relating to the farmers were no doubt taken from the census returns, but there is no reason to doubt their accuracy, or to assume that men who are farmers describe themselves in the census papers as following other occupations.

THE statement that a large proportion of landowners consists of women, to which the Saturday Review says the facts are notoriously opposed, is founded on the Return moved for a few years ago, we believe by Mr. BRIGHT,

commonly called the New Domesday Book: This Return gives the names of the owners of one acre and upwards of land for every county of England and Wales.

The total number of such owners in England and Wales is 269,547; of these 37,806 are women—a proportion of about one in seven.

This is the average proportion throughout the country. The actual proportion varies in different counties. It is lowest in Middlesex, where, exclusive of the Metropolis, the proportion of women to men landowners is about one in ten. In Lincolnshire and Northumberland it is about one in nine; in Cornwall, Durham, Huntingdon, Lancashire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Radnor, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, it is about one in eight; in Bedfordshire, Berks, Bucks, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Herts, Kent, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Notts, Staffordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, and Denbighshire, it is about one in seven; in Devonshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Salop, Hampshire, Suffolk, Wilts, Worcestershire, East and North Riding of Yorkshire, Flint, Glamorgan, and Merioneth, it is about one in six; in Cambridgeshire, Cumberland, Herefordshire, Somerset, Westmoreland, Brecknock, Cardigan, Carmarthen, Montgomery, and Pembroke, it is about one in five.

The actual ownership of some of the parcels of land may have changed hands since the returns were made, but there is no reason to suppose that the proportion of women to men landowners throughout the country will have been materially altered. The names of persons owning pieces of land of less than one acre are not given in the Return, but it is not unreasonable to assume that the proportion of women among these is the same as among the larger landowners.

The figures quoted by BARON DE WORMS in seconding Mr. MASON'S Resolution may, therefore, be relied upon as substantially correct, and it may be regarded as a hopeful sign of the weakness of the enemy when such opponents as the *Saturday Review* are reduced to the expedient of denying well-known facts in order to bolster up their opposition to the cause.

ELECTION INTELLIGENCE.

SOUTH ESSEX.

At a meeting on July 23rd, in the Town Hall, Stratford, Essex, Mr. Edward Rider Cook was unanimously elected as the second Liberal candidate. In reply to a question put by Mr. William Crow, the candidate promised to vote for the extension of the franchise to women who are the heads of businesses or other positions of responsibility.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Friday, July 6.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

On the order of the day for going into Committee of Supply, Mr. HUGH MASON said: Mr. Speaker, I must in the first place express my regret that the introduction of this motion has not fallen in the present Parliament, as it did in the last Parliament, upon my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Courtney). I regret it for the sake of the House, and for the sake of the question itself. But, having accepted office under the Government, a substitute has had to be found for my hon. friend, and that substitute has been found in myself. In only one thing do I profess to equal my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury and that is in my sincerity, and my earnestness in hoping that this question may be brought to-night to a successful issue. In all other respects I have to confess that I am very unequal to the task—(no, no)—which has fallen upon me, as compared with my hon. friend; but if the House will be so good as to grant me its indulgence for a little time only, I will endeavour to place my arguments before it as concisely and as clearly as it is possible for me to do. While I feel regret on the one hand, as I have just said, I have considerable encouragement on the other hand derived from the fact that the question I have undertaken to bring before the House is not a party political question. There will be no irritable spirit of partizanship aroused on either side of the House by the discussion on this question. In former Parliaments, when this question was brought forward—for this is the first time in the present Parliament in which it has been introduced,—many right hon. gentlemen who now sit on the Treasury Bench were found to be warm supporters of this motion I now propose, and many who sat on the Treasury Bench in the last Parliament have also proved themselves to be its warm supporters. The motion has had the support on a previous occasion, and will have the support again to-night of every section in that House—of Tories, Whigs, Radicals, the Fourth Party, Home Rulers, indeed, members from every part of the House will be found amongst the ranks of those who support this motion. On the eve of the introduction, many of us hope, of the new Reform Bill by the Government, not in this session, but in the next session, it does seem fitting that this question should be debated in the course of the present session, for in my humble judgment a Reform Bill would be an incomplete measure, unless provision was made in it for granting Parliamentary votes to women ratepayers who were spinsters and widows. I wish to bring this phase of the question very clearly now before the House. An impression, I dare say, has gone abroad and may exist in the minds of some hon. gentlemen present that my motion covers a much wider field than I, for one, have any conception of. I repeat that the words of my motion are intended to cover only women ratepayers who were spinsters and widows. I have not the slightest sympathy with those who advocate the conferring of this vote upon married women, or upon women who are not ratepayers; and I, for one, would wash my hands of this question now and for ever, sooner than I would be a party in any degree whatever to conferring a vote upon any class of women, except the two classes I have named. Now what does my motion mean? It does not mean in any sense a degrading of the franchise, it does not mean the conferring of any fancy franchise which at present is unknown to the constitution; but it simply means the giving of Parliamentary votes to those women who already possess votes for municipal councils, school boards, boards of guardians, overseers, churchwardens, surveyors of parish roads, and some other bodies. And it does seem to me—I will not say illogical in the law, for in my opinion there is nothing logical in the British constitution,—it does seem to me a great act of injustice to the women who discharge the duties of citizenship, who pay rates and taxes, and in many other ways fulfil the obligations which are imposed upon them by the law, it does seem to me a great act of injustice that the voting power which they possess shall stop short of allowing them to vote for members of the House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) I am asked the question again and again, "Pray where do you mean to stop?" (Mr. Warton: Hear, hear.) Well, at all events, I have a notion where I mean to stop. I do not mean to make members of Parliament of women. (Mr. Warton: Why not?) I do not mean to make them soldiers or sailors, or railway

stokers, or colliers, or to give them occupations of that kind. But I invariably answer, when I am asked by a man where I mean to stop, having made those reservations, that I do not intend to go beyond the throne. In this country we have had women as monarchs wielding the sceptre, and discharging the highest functions of the State, wisely and conscientiously, and patriotically, and surely if women are competent to perform those high duties, in the way which I have described, they are worthy of having conferred on them votes which it is the object of my resolution to confer. Now I said women are in a very unjust position. We must either go backwards or forwards. We cannot possibly stand still. I am quite aware that some hon. gentlemen have expressed their doubts and fears as to the consequence of conferring this vote upon women. They have said to me, "Do you wish to make them spouters upon every political platform in the country? Do you wish them to turn their backs upon their homes and their families, and to neglect the discharge of those important domestic duties for which they are highly qualified?" I have no fears whatever of that sort, and the way in which women have hitherto exercised the suffrage in the election of town councils, and other bodies, I think ought to be accepted as complete evidence that they will not abuse or misuse the trust which some of us wish to put in their hands. Now I hold an opinion that the qualification for giving a vote is very much more one of the heart than of the head. Though I do not at all agree with the people who say that women are intellectually or scientifically inferior to men. I will only ask those who take an interest in education to look at Girton and Newnham, and see the positions young women in those important educational institutions hold. I will also ask them to look at the profession of medicine, and ask them to recall the fact that women are making their mark in this important profession, in which they will, in my opinion, continue to make their mark, thus showing that they are well qualified for the discharge not only of duties of this character, but of duties of an equally responsible kind in other vocations. Now we are always told when a reform is sought, that there is no demand for it on the part of those who will be benefited by it. Now that cannot be said in regard to the women on this subject. For many years they have been very well organised. (Hear, hear.) They have most ably conducted their organisation; they have carried on with great ability a public journal, which many hon. members I know read every month; and they have managed their organisation with an amount of economy in funds, which, I must say, puts to the blush many organisations conducted by men. And we are also told, I will not say whether there is any truth in it or not, that the Parliament of England never yields anything to reason or argument, but that it yields only to fears, and threats, and intimidation. Now, we never have seen the women resorting to threats or intimidation; but their organisation, their agitation has been conducted in the most constitutional and the most lady-like manner; they have brought no stain whatever upon their sex, or upon the purity of their minds by using expressions or adopting means which would be a disgrace to themselves or to the question with which they are identified. We are told that if votes are granted to women, they would simply become tools in the hands of the priests; that they will be the victims of the priests. I venture to think that even if that were true, which I deny, it is entirely beside the question. The question really is, Is it just to give them a vote, not, how will they use it, or if they have it will they become the tools of designing men? I will reply to an accusation of that kind by asking, "Do not we see men the victims of priests?" "Do not we hear a great deal about strong-minded women?" And I myself think, judging from the experience—the limited experience, perhaps, I may have had in that direction—that women are as little liable to be victimised by the priests as the men who make the accusations are. Now I have been told in my own borough, by some of my best friends, to use their own emphatic language, "That if I succeed in achieving this reform for the women, it will be at the risk of my seat, for the women will all turn Tories." It has been said to me, "You are giving yourself the greatest slap in the face that you could possibly receive at a future election." Now that does not concern me in the slightest degree. What alone concerns me is not will the women be ungrateful, not whether if they obtain the franchise they will use it for the first time against myself, and against the other hon. gentlemen who will support my motion to-night, but whether they are justly entitled to the vote. I recollect a memorable instance of a large body of men, in the shape of compound householders,

proving very ungrateful. When the compound householder was enfranchised, mainly through the exertions of my right hon. friend the member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), at the very next election, which happened in a short time afterwards, my right hon. friend, who then sat for Manchester, was turned out by the very compound householders whom he had laboured to enfranchise. Manchester has had its punishment since that day, for it has never recovered that proud political position which it then held in the estimation of the country. Now, take the illustration as to the qualifications of women in regard to the teaching of the young. My right hon. friend the Vice-President of the Council (Mr. Mundella), if he were here, would confirm what I am about to say in regard to the board schools at Saltaire. I went through those schools with my friend Mr. George Salt. I saw, in every class-room, mixed classes of boys and girls; I saw that every teacher in every class-room was a woman, and my friend (Mr. G. Salt) told me (if the House will pardon the expression) that the head-master of the school was a woman, and that the managers found very much more progress made—not in education alone, but in good manners, and in every respect which is important to the training of the young—under the teaching of women than they had formerly experienced under the teaching of men. As another illustration of the injustice sanctioned by the law with regard to women, may I mention the bribery which took place at the last general election of 1880; and especially may I refer to the town of Macclesfield, which I am sorry to say is in the north of England, for there bribery prevailed to such an extent that more than half of the voters were proved to have been bribed, and that not a few of them had received bribes from both sides. A Royal Commission was sent down. Many days were spent in the examination of the cases of bribery; the members were unseated, and some of the lawyers who had been agents were imprisoned for the part they had taken in corrupting the electors, and many thousands of pounds were saddled upon the ratepayers of Macclesfield. Who paid those thousands of pounds? Did those corrupt men? No. In the town of Macclesfield there were registered electors 5,500, and there were women ratepayers to the number of 1,589. Those innocent women, being ratepayers and householders, had to pay a considerable portion of the charge which had been levied upon the town of Macclesfield for the bribery and corruption of the men. Is that not a great case of injustice sanctioned by the law? I am quite aware that the injustice falls upon the pure electors just as much as it falls upon the women, but then the pure electors or voters at all events had some compensation and some power which hitherto has been denied to the women. Now there is another illustration which comes nearer home to myself. I have known in manufacturing towns, where I have resided all my life—I have known many cases of honest women having drunken and worthless husbands, who neglected their work, neglected the feeding and clothing of their families, neglected their families' education, and who by their vices had considerably shortened their own lives. I have known those men die; and I have seen their widows left with a number of small children, not one of them possibly able to work; I have seen those women, I will not say manfully, but heroically facing their distressed circumstances, working hard for their children, gradually clothing them, gradually bringing beds and fresh furniture into the houses, for in many cases the furniture in their former homes had been taken away to gratify the vices of their husbands. I have seen them pay their husbands' debts, keep a roof over the heads of themselves and families, educate their children, pay the rent regularly, and yet, because these persons are women, and incomparably superior in every respect to the worthless husbands they had lost a short while before, they are not allowed to give a vote, while the worthless husbands had been allowed that privilege. Will any person venture to tell me that if anyone should have been deprived of the vote, it should not have been the man who so neglected his family and duties, but the woman? Surely, under such circumstances, instead of being deprived of the vote, the woman who had proved herself fully competent to discharge all the duties of citizenship should have all the rights of a citizen conferred on her. Now cases of this kind are continually coming up. The more I see of them, the more I am convinced that this question is a righteous question. (Cheers.) The question is making progress. A great many of the town councils in the country, and in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, have expressed their approval by memorials and petitions. The town councils

of the cities of Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Exeter, Huddersfield, and other towns have expressed their wish by petitions to this House that the vote shall be no longer kept back from women who, I have already said, now possess the right to vote in many other cases. I do sincerely hope, that as regards the limitations of the question, I have made myself perfectly clear, and I hope that the present Government, in the course of the next Session of Parliament, when they bring on what many of us are expecting, namely, a great Reform Bill, will be bold enough to include in it the conferring of the franchise upon women who are qualified in the way I have stated. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the motion which stands in my name: "That in the opinion of this House the Parliamentary franchise shall be extended to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting."

BARON DE WORMS, who was received with cheers, said: I rise to second the resolution which has been proposed by my hon. friend, the member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. H. Mason), and I think that the fact of my doing so affords sufficient evidence that this is, in no sense of the word, a party question. If other evidence of this were required I could give it in the fact that in the year 1866 Mr. Disraeli expressed himself on this important question in these words,—"A woman having property ought now to have a vote in a country in which she may hold manorial courts and sometimes act as churchwarden." Now, sir, those words are clear and definite enough, and they emanate from the late head of the great party to which I have the honour to belong. But, sir, if we want still further evidence of how little this question is mixed up with party considerations, we shall find it in the fact that in the same year in which Mr. John Stuart Mill introduced this question of electoral reform—namely, in March, 1869, Mr. Disraeli said: "What we desire to do is to give to every one who is worthy of it a fair share in the government of the country by means of the elective franchise." I think there can be hardly any dispute that the words "every one" included women as well as men, and that in the few words in which the great statesman expressed himself he clearly showed that he considered it an act of injustice to withhold the privilege of the franchise from women. Well now, sir, I should like to preface the few observations I wish to make by asking the House to consider why the passing of this measure has been so long postponed. I venture to think that the reason may be, perhaps, the fact that those who sit with me on these benches have sometimes considered the change too Radical, while some hon. members on the other side of the House have considered the change too Conservative; so that between the two considerations, the supporters of this question have found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. Those who are justly entitled to the privilege which they do not now enjoy are the sufferers by the diversity of opinion. Now I admit that the argument of the hon. gentlemen who sit below the gangway on the Ministerial side of the House was a very plausible one. For of course it cannot be denied that the admission of women to the privilege of the franchise puts an end once and for ever to any question of manhood suffrage. But still I cannot help thinking that this will scarcely be an argument against it. I, however, do not propose to discuss the question this evening from the point of view of its possible advantages and disadvantages—to the party to which I belong or to the party opposite. All I wish to do is to state, I trust clearly and fairly, the arguments which weigh in my mind in favour of the motion of the hon. member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Mason). Now, sir, it appeared to me that one of the principal arguments why women had not been admitted to the exercise of the electoral franchise was that the men who make the laws of this country are apt to confound the word power with the word superiority. It is undoubted that men as the governing body of the country, and governing voice of the nation, have the power to withhold that franchise from women that they themselves enjoy; and is it not equally true that they are apt to find excuses for withholding that privilege on the ground of supposed superiority, which exists, I am bound to say, purely in their own imagination? Let me for a moment consider the arguments which have been used against this measure. I may begin by saying that I was indeed delighted to hear from the hon. gentleman who proposed this motion (Mr. Mason), that he did not intend to include married women within its scope. I am entirely of his opinion. I would simply grant the franchise to widows

and spinsters, and I think by so doing both he and I would disarm to a great extent those hon. members who urge as an argument against this resolution, that women would be departing from the province of their sex, would be called away from the duties which belong essentially to women, if married women were allowed to exercise the franchise, and thereby to be carried away by the heat and strife of party politics. But what my hon. friend proposes to do—that is a proposition with which I entirely agree—is that those women who have already a right to vote in municipal elections and school boards, where they can also sit, being widows and spinsters, should have a further extension of this privilege, and be enabled to vote for persons such as they may think fit to represent them in the House of Commons. Sir, I am well aware that those who are opposed to this measure are apt to speak of the inequality of women, and in former years alleged against it the deficiency of their education, when they were too prone to embody the view which was expressed by Shakspeare, when he said—

I have no other than a woman's reason;
I think him so, because I think him so.

That argument, supposing it to hold good in the days of Shakspeare, supposing it to have held good in a period nearer to our own, cannot be used in the present day. The educational progress of women is perhaps greater than that of men, and the development of that educational progress has arisen mainly from the fact that many of those barriers which were felt alike by men and women have been removed. Women have now the advantage of going to the great Universities. Have they destroyed the character of those Universities? Certainly not. They have raised their own position, they have developed their own intelligence, they have shown that they are equally gifted with men. They have shown, now they have the advantages they did not have formerly, that they are capable of engaging with men in a fair contest of educational warfare. If this be the case, surely it in itself speaks volumes in favour of the extension of the suffrage to women. We are apt to consider women by the light in which they were regarded in the days of our forefathers; we are apt to remember how the women of a hundred years ago had not opportunities for education, but devoted such energies as they might possess to strumming on the spinet, and exercising their culinary powers in making syllabubs and preserving fruits. All those days are changed; it would be a bad day indeed if we were now obliged to substitute the simple maiden, in the shape of Clarissa Harlowe, for the intellectual giantess, George Eliot. As a matter of fact these two examples illustrate the difference between the women of to-day and those of 100 years ago. And if we admit that women are intellectually superior to-day to what they were 100 years ago, why should we deprive them of the privilege which we enjoy ourselves? What possible argument can be used against it? Why should they not be allowed to express an opinion as to the men who are best fitted to represent them in Parliament? They have a stake in the country, they have intelligence to appreciate their duties and responsibilities to the State. What can possibly be urged against the extension of this privilege to them, which we as men hold and enjoy? Another argument which is used against the proposal is that it is the thin edge of the wedge, that if we allow women to have votes for members of Parliament, the time will not be far distant when they themselves will aspire to the position of occupying seats in the House. (Hear, hear.) My right hon. friend (Mr. Beresford-Hope) cheers that idea. I myself should be the first to oppose anything of the sort, to oppose it strongly, and, I am bound to say, I do not think it in any way follows that because a woman exercises her right to vote for a member of Parliament she would as a natural "sequitur" claim a right to sit in the House of Commons. I would remind my right hon. friend the member for the University of Cambridge that although beneficed clergymen have a right to vote, still they are not allowed to sit in this House, and surely the same power which gives and confers a right to vote to beneficed clergymen and withholds from them the privilege of a seat in this House could grant to women the right to vote subject to the same restriction; otherwise it would follow that whatever might be the profession in which a woman may directly or indirectly engage she would have the right to claim the highest posts in it. Take the case of the army: would any one say that because a woman like Florence Nightingale devoted the best years of her life to alleviating pain on the field of battle, she would have the right to aspire to become a general in the field? Would any one say that

because women have risked their lives at sea, like Grace Darling, and more recently like the brave women at the Mumbles Head, that those women may aspire to be admirals of Her Majesty's Fleet? You might just as well say that because women of the present day pass many weary hours in copying for law-stationers they therefore may aspire to become Lord Chancellors. (A Voice: They are lawyers in America.) I am reminded that women are lawyers in America; but it depends entirely whether clients choose to employ them. I don't see why they should not be lawyers here if they choose. My right hon. friend (Mr. Beresford-Hope) very possibly has in his mind's eye the case of Portia. (Laughter.) Of course the success of women in the legal profession entirely depends upon whether people are willing to employ them. I recollect that some years ago a similar objection was urged with the same persistency against women being allowed to enter the profession of medicine. At the present day there are many ladies who follow with great success the profession of medicine. It is said this is unwomanly and unnatural. It is said that a woman should not be called in to attend a sick man. But they are called in to minister to their own sex, and called to great advantage. I well remember the time when the question was raised whether women were eligible for places on the school board. I remember a meeting being held to protest against women sitting upon the school board, and I equally remember what has been the result. Who is more qualified than a woman to endeavour to educate the young, who more qualified than a woman to look after the training of infant minds? The women who have been elected to our school boards have proved unquestionably the fallacy of the arguments of those who opposed their election. All these things, however, do not in any way necessitate the election of women to this House. Government is carried on here as in all countries by the men of the country. And it does not follow at all that if a woman is duly qualified, and holds similar qualifications to men, she should be debarred because she is a woman from exercising the privileges which attach to those qualifications. We know that in the course, probably of this Parliament, a large measure of electoral reform will be introduced. Now, what is the nature of that reform? Broadly it is to extend the franchise now existing in boroughs to labourers in the counties. We may assume that the labourers in counties are not as highly educated as men in the same walk of life in the boroughs. Still it is intended to extend the franchise to those men, but at the same time to refuse to extend the franchise to those women who may be landowners in the country, and who may actually employ those men. Why is this? Simply because they are women. You give the vote to yokels, but you refuse it to the educated women on whose bread they live. A greater absurdity can hardly be conceived. In point of fact these women who own land are of a very considerable number. In England and Wales, according to the return of owners of land in 1872, called the New Domesday Book, the number of women who were landowners of one acre and upwards was given as 37,806 out of 269,547, a proportion of one in seven. In Ireland the proportion is somewhat less, it is only one in eight, and if we assume the proportion of women householders to men householders to be the same in the non-municipal and the municipal areas, we arrive at a total of between 300,000 and 400,000 women, who, being householders rated for the relief of the poor, would be rightly entitled to this vote. These figures appear to me to speak for themselves. I believe the fact is not disputed that a very large proportion of women are landowners in this country. They have the same stake in the country as men, they pay the same rates, they have the same responsibilities, and, as my hon. friend (Mr. Mason) pointed out, not only have they the same privileges in some respects, but they are subject to the same penalties. They have in other matters the same penalties without the privileges. They are obliged to pay for the keeping of the borough in which they are rated for the poor, but you withhold from them, on account of some inscrutable reason, the privilege which might to some extent outweigh this penalty. Well, sir, I think that in advancing these few arguments I have shown that there is no just reason for withholding the suffrage from women; but that there is very great reason indeed for giving it to them. I consider that men enjoy the high privilege of a seat in this House as the trustees of the people. Members have in trust the privileges and the rights of the people, and the system by which they are entrusted with those rights and privileges is based on the principle that those who have a stake in the country are those who are most anxious to preserve the integrity and the

honour of the country. It has never been assumed that women are less loyal than men,—in fact history has shown us in this country, as in every other country, that women are loyal, patriotic, and self-sacrificing. Facts have shown us that they are educated and intelligent; and I wish, sir, to know what possible reason there can be, in the face of the facts enumerated, why the British House of Commons should withhold from women privileges and rights to which they are in my mind equally entitled with men. (Cheers.)

MR. E. LEATHAM: My hon. friend (Mr. Mason) who moved this resolution, speaking with great ability, stated that the question was making progress. Now I have watched this question for many years in this House, and I cannot congratulate my hon. friend on the fact that it grows stronger in appearance as it grows older. When my hon. friend the member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright) had charge of this question, and the hon. gentleman who succeeded him, I do not know whether I ought to say in the championship or the chaperonship, it assumed the robust proportions of a Bill. When, however, my hon. friend took charge of it, it shrank at once into the dimensions of a Tuesday's motion—a motion which was always coming on, and did not. (No, no.) I thought it was in the time of my hon. friend. But, at all events, it has now shrunk to the very lowest form which a motion can take, to be a motion at all, that of a Friday's motion on going into Committee of Supply. I think last year my hon. friend took care to put it down with another motion before it, in order, I suppose, to save the House from having the trouble of expressing any opinion on it at all. I cannot recall any question during the time in which I have had the honour of a seat in this House, which has taken so feeble a hold upon its sponsors. They are perpetually changing. They are biennials, they flourish for a couple of years, and then they disappear. What has become of my hon. friend, the member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright), who used to advocate this question with marked ability? He retired from the championship long ago, and I suppose my hon. friend, the member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Mason), will soon follow his example. Though the faces of the advocates of this question are always changing, the expression on their faces never changes. They always come up smiling, and nothing can exceed the courage with which they ask us why we refuse to make women the political equals of men. Just as though it were the most natural thing in the world to do. Nothing could exceed the simplicity with which my hon. friend quietly ignored the universal practice of mankind in all ages and in all countries. I happened to read a few words in one of the daily papers this morning with reference to myself. It was inferred that I could be no Radical because I opposed this motion. (Hear, hear.) Well, but the man who turns his back upon the universal experience of mankind—(laughter)—is certainly no Radical, he is much more of a Nihilist. (Renewed laughter and cheers.) My hon. friend has stated very strongly his opinion in reference to giving the franchise to married women, but I very much doubt whether my hon. friend agrees in this view with the view which is taken by many of his supporters. I received this morning a letter from a gifted lady, signed Ursula M. Bright, in which that lady eloquently advocates the franchise for married women, and she states, further, that the Bill which was formerly brought in was carefully worded so as not to exclude married women. When I read the motion of my hon. friend I could not help thinking that that, too, was carefully worded so as not to exclude married women, and I doubt exceedingly whether that motion if embodied in a Bill would not give the franchise to many married women. (Hear, hear.) So far as my hon. friend goes, at all events he bases his proposal on the political equality of the sexes, or upon nothing at all. When my hon. friend proclaims the political equality of the sexes let him think of a few of the things he has to do first. In the first place, he has to make some material changes in the law of the land, because the law of the land decrees the subordination of woman in marriage, and marriage is the normal state of woman. (Oh.) Hon. gentlemen will not deny that—"Hear, hear," from Mr. Newdegate, and much laughter)—because Miss Becker, who is as great an authority on this question as my hon. friend, stated that every woman regarded marriage either from the side of experience or of expectation—(laughter)—and I therefore contend that the state which woman regards from the side of experience or expectation is the normal state. But this subordination of the sex in

marriage is based not only on immemorial usage, but upon some well known declarations in Holy Writ. I contend, therefore, that before my hon. friend can get much further he must expunge some well known passages of scripture. But when he has revised the Bible and amended the statute book he will only be at the beginning of his task, for he has to revolutionise the habits, and tastes, and pursuits of women, which are essentially of a non-political and domestic character. It is the pursuits of men which take them away from their homes, the robust life of the street and the Forum, which alone in my humble opinion qualifies them for the exercise of the franchise. That women should join men in the rude tussle of the streets, or that they should become more and more masculine year after year, is an idea from which human nature revolts, and especially that womanly nature which is the crown and safeguard of the sex, and which I believe to be invincible; for before my hon. friend comes down with his proposal to this House, he has a task to perform which I think is worthy of Hercules. He has to convince and convert woman, for woman does not ask for the franchise. ("Oh, oh," and cheers.) Hon. gentlemen say "Oh, oh," but I have read numerous letters in the newspapers from indignant ladies—(laughter)—complaining of the utter apathy of the sex upon this question. I say, therefore, that woman does not ask for the franchise, and I ask my hon. friend whether he thinks this franchise of England is a thing so poor and mean that it is to be given not to those who ask for it, not to those who will prize it, but to those who sit aloof—surprised, annoyed, amazed that so many generations of Englishmen should have lived amongst us, and yet that there should be found anyone so ignorant of their tastes, of their hopes and wishes, as to get up in his place in Parliament and demand for them an ambition which they disown and a character which they resent. (Laughter and cheers.) But my hon. friend will say that he is not proposing to enfranchise the sex; that he is only proposing to enfranchise one woman here and there—spinsters and widows of a certain standing. Yes, and so far as he goes, as I have endeavoured to show, he bases his proposal on the political equality of the sexes, or upon nothing; and the fact that he only goes so far, that he only proposes to enfranchise one woman in forty, shows how illogical he is. In America, which is the home and birthplace of this movement, the women agitators are the political superiors of my hon. friend. There they demand that women shall sit in Congress; there they demand the enfranchisement of half the American race, and they speak of sex as an accident and of marriage as a superstition. My hon. friend does nothing of the kind. He does not ask for the enfranchisement of half the British race, he does not ask that women shall be permitted to sit in this House; but says that he would altogether wash his hands of this question if such a proposal could be seriously made. He evidently thinks marriage is a Divine institution, and he is of opinion that even political women, when they marry, ought to give up politics and await on the nursery: and this namby-pamby, wishy-washy, milk-and-water advocacy of women's rights he calls the removal of the electoral disabilities of women. (Laughter.) Sir, why are we to enfranchise these women? It cannot be because they have no prospect, as we were told a few years ago, that we should pass in this House legislation affecting their interests; because we have just passed the Married Women's Property Bill, which has swept away the great grievance of the sex; and it cannot be because they are taxpayers, as my hon. friend contends, because we do not happen to live in the age of the Plantagenets, and taxation and representation have long ago shaken hands and parted. In these days of indirect taxation the man who makes for his means the most munificent contribution to the State is the habitual drunkard to whom my hon. friend alluded, and who in all probability has no vote at all. And it cannot be because they are ratepayers, for how can the payment of rates, which is a municipal obligation and which is rewarded already by the municipal franchise, confer the imperial franchise with which it has nothing at all to do? Nor can it be as the hon. gentleman who spoke last contended because women are the owners of property, for if property gave a vote, and the owner of one acre of land ought to have one vote, to be just the owner of 10,000 acres ought to have 10,000 votes. ("Oh, oh," and laughter.) The fact is, none of these things gives the vote. They are simply restrictions more or less arbitrary which have been from time to time imposed on the true qualification, which is, that the voter should be a man. (Cheers.) The franchise has always in this country been based upon manhood. In the old time every

freeman used to vote in the boroughs and in the counties every freeholder; and when you extended the area of voting beyond that of independence, you brought up the independence of the voter by giving him the ballot. What is essential is that the voter in the first place should be a man, and in the next place that the man should be free. (Hear, hear.) In giving, therefore, the franchise to women, my hon. friend mistakes the restriction for the qualification. My hon. friend says, "You have broken through the principle of sex already, because you have given the municipal franchise to women." But because we have made one mistake, the consequences of which may be trivial, surely that is no reason why you should make another and more serious mistake, the consequences of which may be enormous. I remember that the clause which gave the municipal franchise to women was slipped into the Municipal Bill at one or two o'clock in the morning when the House was half asleep, but now the question is better understood and I do not think my hon. friend will find Parliament napping a second time. My hon. friend contends that we have broken through the principle again by giving the franchise to women in connection with school boards. I am prepared, I think, to show that that is not a case in point, but very much the reverse. We thought it a good thing that women should sit on school boards to superintend the education of girls, just as they sit on any other committee which has to do with the special interests of the sex, and in giving them the right of being voted for we necessarily and logically gave them the right of voting. The converse of that argument holds good. Does my hon. friend propose that women should be returned as members of this House? He does nothing of the kind. He does not propose to give them the right of being voted for, and therefore he is not logical in proposing to give them the right of voting; so that the illustration, which my hon. friend cited to bolster up his argument, has demolished it. I do not think I need say much more. My hon. friend and those who act with him are in the habit of posing as the friends of women. It is they who are to elevate and ennoble the sex. I think that the true woman—pure, modest, faithful, and above all shrinking from undue publicity—is noble enough already. Let her aspire to fill the high place to which Revelation and the respect of all good men entitle her, and she will never have cause to regret that she is debarred from dabbling in the mire and filth of political elections. (Cheers.)

Mr. Inderwick: I propose to say a few words in opposition to the motion of my hon. friend the member for Ashton. My hon. friend has said that this is not a party question in the sense of being a party political question, and he has said that on previous occasions expressions were used, which, to say the least of it, were not complimentary to women. I can assure my hon. friend and the House that as far as I am concerned they will not hear a word from me which can be considered in any way offensive or disrespectful to the women who are connected with this movement or their friends. It is a question undoubtedly of a serious political character, which must be discussed fairly and properly; and if we agree to the principle I must express my opinion that if the political franchise ought to be granted to women, we ought to grant it to them not grudgingly or with a sparing hand but with the same free and open hand that we should grant it to men. I would desire as little as possible to say anything which may appear disagreeable to any persons who are connected with this movement. But after all the question is not whether we should desire to extend to women what in men every member of this House must admit to be a legitimate object and an honourable ambition; but we have to consider whether in granting this franchise, whether in taking this step which is an uprooting of the landmarks and the ancient institutions of the country, whether in adopting a policy which has been repudiated by every civilised nation in the world, we shall be doing that which is for the advantage and benefit of this country in whose prosperity and advance we are all so much interested. My hon. friend the member for Ashton has brought before the House this particular resolution. I confess with my hon. friend the hon. member for Huddersfield I had some difficulty in coming to the conclusion whether he intended his proposal to extend to women generally, or whether he intended it simply to be extended to women who in matters of local government have a right to vote—that is to say, whether he intended that women generally who have the qualification should vote everywhere, or whether he proposes to extend the franchise only to those women who are

now entitled to vote in municipal boroughs. I understand my hon. friend means to restrict his motion to women who are entitled to vote in municipal boroughs, and then I should like to ask my hon. friend, and his friends who support him in his proposal, why are members for boroughs to have the privilege of having women amongst their constituents, and why is not the privilege to be extended to counties where women have the qualification? I do not want to be too critical.

BARON DE WORMS: I am sure my hon. and learned friend will not wish to misunderstand me. I wish to extend the privilege equally to the counties.

Mr. Inderwick: I quite understood from what my hon. friend opposite said that that was his view, but I was simply referring to the words of the resolution which gives to the proposal of my hon. friend the member for Ashton a very limited and restricted application. Some objection is usually taken, and I dare say it will be taken by someone to-night, that we are taking what you call the limited and restricted privilege which is proposed, and upon that discussing the general principle of the political privilege of women. It is not competent for my hon. friend to bring before the House a proposal of a very limited character—it may be limited to the very smallest degree to which it can be limited—with the view of obtaining the assent of the House, and, if that proposal is based on a large principle, to say we are not justified in discussing to the fullest extent the question of the principle upon which the proposal is made. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friends have brought before the House what I consider to be a fancy franchise. (Laughter and cheers.) It may suit some of them to say that that is all they desire, but we know perfectly well that it is not what their clients desire—it is not what is desired by the women who are associated with this movement. We know perfectly well, from what is stated elsewhere and from what one hears from members of this House, that the foundation of this proposal is not a limited franchise of this kind, but a general franchise of women who have property and pay rates from one end of the country to the other. That being so, the question we have to discuss, and the question I propose, with the permission of the House to say a few words upon, is the question of whether under any circumstances whatever it is desirable in the interests of this country that the political franchise should be extended to women. With regard to the argument that is brought forward about women voting at municipal elections, and having a right to discuss the mode in which the money is spent in these municipal boroughs, if that argument is based on the ground that the money so spent is contributed to by them, and is expended in respect of their property amongst others in these municipalities, then the sort of proposal which should have been made to the House is that they should have the right to vote for members of Parliament, so long as the duty of these members was confined to voting on the expenditure of public money. We know perfectly well that the House is not always voting away the money of widows and spinsters. There are other important obligations on members of Parliament, with regard to which also women must have a right, if they are to have a right at all. I do not know whether the House entirely appreciates the magnitude of the question now under consideration. According to the census in the year 1881, there were in this country seventeen millions of men from whom the electorate is taken. I don't know exactly what the number of electors is at this moment, but it is some millions, and it is proposed by extending the franchise in counties to increase that number very considerably, with regard to the women, according to the last census there were eighteen millions of women, and that is the body of persons from whom the future electorate as it is proposed here is to be chosen, limited exceedingly now by my hon. friend; but the subject would never bear that limitation if the principle were once adopted. If this proposal is in fact adopted by the House, the result will be that the House will commit itself to the principle of the political enfranchisement of women—(hear, hear)—and, having committed itself to that principle, there is no reason and no argument that I can understand for stopping short at the point at which the hon. member for Ashton now says he is prepared to stop short. If I am not much mistaken there are other members in this House who will probably vote for my hon. friend's proposal who would be ready now to stand up in the House and advocate a greater extension. (Cheers.) The cheers of my hon. friends say that that is so, and they show that what we are really genuinely discussing now is not the limited proposal of my hon. friend the member for Ashton, but that

we are practically discussing the great question whether women for political purposes are to stand on the same basis as men. (Hear, hear.) One of the great arguments in favour of my hon. friend's proposal is the fact that women enjoy the municipal franchise. If the House will permit me I should like to say how it is that they enjoy that franchise. It is generally suggested and stated in the House that women obtained that franchise under the Act of 1869. To a certain extent that is correct, but it is not the whole of the statement. The fact is this, that in certain corporations, in fact in most corporations of the country before the Reform Act of 1835, women who were the wives and daughters of freemen had certain privileges. They could make freemen of their husbands, and widows of freemen on marrying again had also the same privileges. In certain circumstances these women at one time, and for many years, had a right to vote at the municipal contests. When the Municipal Reform Bill was introduced in 1835, and passed with the general assent of both sides of the House, that franchise was taken away from the women. It was not passed over without debate. It was debated in this House to this extent, that on report of the Bill one hon. member proposed that the word "male" should extend to "female," and said there were numbers of women who might be disqualified, principally, I believe, in the city of Bath, which has always, from the oldest days, been celebrated for a considerable number of widows and spinsters; and he made a proposal that a clause should be inserted to that effect. There was no debate on the motion. Nobody supported it but the hon. member; a division was taken, and it was rejected by a majority of sixty-six. The matter there ended, and in that Bill of 1835 the municipal franchise which existed in the hands of women was swept away by the general consent of both sides of the House. Then this state of things happened. The Local Government Board have the power to grant certain charters to new corporations, and in granting these charters they gave power to women being ratepayers in the municipalities to vote, and as these corporations increased this anomaly occurred, that there were in certain parts of the country certain corporations where women were permitted to vote and certain corporations where they were not permitted to vote. The Government of the day thought it desirable that they should be put on the same footing, so that the anomaly might be done away with, and a Bill was brought in for that purpose in 1869, thirty-five years after the Municipal Reform Act. It passed through this House without any debate whatever. I have looked through Hansard for 1869 and I do not find that there was a single line of debate in this House with reference to that Bill. My hon. friend says there was. He may have been in the House at the time, but so inconsiderable was the debate, if any, which took place, that not one line of it appears in Hansard. There was a debate on it in the House of Lords, and as far as I can judge it occupied the space of about ten minutes. One noble lord made some objection to the Bill. Lord Kimberley, expressly guarding himself against committing the House to the general principle of women's suffrage, pointed out the anomalies of the system, and thereupon Lord Cairns stated in a few words the reason why the franchise should be granted. Lord Cairns said that as an unmarried woman could dispose of her property and deal with it in any way she thinks proper, he did not know why she should not have a voice in saying how that property should be lighted, and how it should be watched, and have a voice in controlling municipal expenditure to which that property contributed. (Hear, hear.) It is clear the reason for granting that franchise to women in municipal boroughs who have property in them was to enable them to have a voice in regulating the expenditure to which they contributed in respect to that property. When the Bill was passed no reference was made to Scotland or to Ireland. Certain hon. members from Scotland who took an interest in the matter were told that the women of Scotland did not care about the municipal franchise, or they would have called for a Bill. My hon. friend the member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), who exercises some inscrutable influence over the ballot box, immediately balloted for a day and brought in a bill to extend the municipal franchise to women in Scotland, arguing that it having been granted in England there was no reason why it should not be granted in Scotland; and he succeeded in getting rid of the argument which was thrown at him with regard to Scottish women. I venture to express the opinion that had it not been for the question of woman's suffrage being agitated throughout the country at the time, we should not have heard a syllable of the Scottish Woman's Franchise Bill.

Under the circumstances I ask the House how can it be said that the House has committed itself to the political franchise of women in passing that Bill without opposition? None of the arguments upon which this question is upheld are new, as I have said. We have had an argument from the hon. member for Greenwich which is not a new one, and, indeed, it cannot be said that throughout the debate there is anything new; because the subject has been so long and so often before Parliament and the country that it is impossible to say anything new upon it, yet, it is of course desirable that when a question of this kind is brought forward, that it should be debated, and we cannot give our votes altogether without speech. The hon. member said the higher education of women, which qualified them for holding certain positions, likewise qualified them to exercise a political vote. They do hold certain quasi public offices, which they have held by right immemorial and by Act of Parliament, and he says there is no reason why you should not go a step further and give them a right of voting for members of Parliament. He gave as an instance that women might be churchwardens and overseers, and I will add to that, they may be parish constables—(laughter)—and women may even be High Sheriffs—(laughter)—which, under certain circumstances, might entail the office of public executioner, and one or two other offices a woman may hold; but I think these offices were allowed them in the past rather for the opportunity of extorting fines from them than anything else, and if we find, as a matter of fact, that they never did hold such offices, what are we to think? It is one of the stock arguments that the sovereign power can be held by a woman, and I do not say it is not a strong argument—(hear, hear)—but the power of the Sovereign is so bound down by constitutional limits, that it is very little power that can be exercised by the Crown. (Oh, oh.) Now there is one reason brought forward why we should give the franchise to women, it is this, there are, it is said, so many, far more women in the country than men, and, therefore, they have as many or more social interests than men, and, inasmuch as Parliamentary control is in the hands of men, men are likely to be unfavourably disposed towards women, and to treat them unequally in legislation, dealing with the property and social position of women. That is the statement made, and I should very much like to see how in the result women have suffered any substantial injustice under the law of this country. I will first take the case of women of property. Can any hon. member now, in this year 1883, say that any woman in the country has not absolute control over her own property? She has. It was a misfortune discreditable to this country that for many years she had not that control. It was discussed by a Parliament of men, and a reform was brought about. It was not obtained suddenly, it has been done gradually and with consideration, and we have the result at the present time when it is impossible to say that any woman is not sufficiently protected in her property. And I will venture to say that women of the upper classes were fairly and reasonably protected before, for it has been the habit of this country from time immemorial when property was left to women to make such arrangements by settlements that women had a great protection for their property, and this was not sufficiently recognised at the time of the debates in the House. It is said apart from this that there are legal obstacles to women obtaining protection by reason of devolution of property by death or otherwise. Let us see how that is. If a man dies possessed of personal estate and leaves no will, then his heirs, men and women, share alike; but if he holds real estate, then the eldest son takes the real estate to the prejudice of the rest of the family. But it prejudices the brothers quite as much as the sisters, it is not a sinister prejudice against women, it is the position of the heir-at-law, a position which I will say in my opinion ought to be altered. My view is that in devolution of property in cases of intestacy, real property should go in the same way as personal property. But after all this is not a large question, for very little property descends in that way. We know it has been debated from time to time in the House, and no doubt if any hon. member brings in a Bill bearing on the case it will receive very careful consideration and probably arrive at a second reading. And now let me take the personal protection of women. Now our laws are very stringent here for the protection of young women, and the other House have recently passed a measure to increase the protection for young women. In addition to that there are provisions by which protection is thrown over women who work in factories and mines that they shall not be employed beyond their powers. And there is another principle in our law which must not

be left out of sight. If a man and wife are joined together in the consummation of a crime, the fact of their acting together does not acquit the woman of the crime, but it absolves her from the penalty. This is a kindly and merciful provision of our law from time immemorial, and must not be left out of view in considering the effect of legislation on the position of women. Now under the Married Women's Property Act there is power to the husband or wife to prosecute each other for theft. Objection was made to this in both Houses that this was not expedient or desirable in the interest of married persons. Now I cannot exactly vouch for the correctness of it, but I read in the papers a return of the number of convictions of married persons under the Act of stealing from one another, and out of fifteen such convictions in fourteen cases they were women and in one case a man. If that is so it only shows that to some extent a mistake was made in removing the protection which before that time had proved of a kindly nature. The hon. member for Ashton has referred to the question of married women, but the obstacle had always been to deal with them in relation to this matter, and the difficulty had never been answered in a reasonable and decisive manner. Why, if you give the franchise to women at all, should you under such circumstances exclude married women? Some supporters of the proposal do not want to exclude them, but my hon. friend says nothing would induce him to admit them to the franchise, and the general impression is they should not be admitted. Why? Is it on account of property? Certainly not, for if a married woman could hold property, can own a house and she and her husband occupy it, there is no reason why she should not have a vote on account of property for which she pays rates and taxes. It is her own property with which she is as free to deal as if she had been a single woman, and yet my hon. friend says he would not admit a married woman to the franchise! They say you must not invade the sanctity of the hearth and home. Well, but all married women do not live with their husbands; some have husbands serving their country or fulfilling duties abroad, some are apart under directions of the court, some under deeds of separation. Many may live apart from their husbands just as single women might, occupying their own house, living upon their own money; but you say you would not give a vote to these married women. Why not? (Hear, hear.) If marriage is not a disqualification to men why should it be to women? Here a difficulty arises, and my hon. friends are discussing it among themselves, some saying, "let them have it," and others say, "under no circumstances whatever." Let me put this suggestion to the House and ask how you would deal with it. We heard a few years ago a good deal about fagot votes; it means that a man may give to a friend, or a person in whom he has confidence, a cottage and a piece of land to qualify him for a vote. Now, under existing statute recently passed, a man may assign a cottage or house to his wife, and by this means make his wife a fagot voter, and if he agrees with his wife he will have two votes, and if not he will be disfranchised. (Laughter.) It might be right or it might not, if allowed there will be a large addition to fagot votes beyond any existing in any county in England. I bring forward these matters to show the House how this question is surrounded by difficulties. As to a seat in this House, so far as I am personally concerned, if I had to choose between two evils, I would very much rather see one of the intelligent women connected with this movement sitting in the House and taking part in the debates—(cries of "Oh, oh")—than I would consent to give the franchise to the whole of the sisterhood. But it is not the view of my hon. friends, for they stand up and say under no circumstances would they allow women a seat in the House, and I must say it is exceedingly unkind of my hon. friends to say we will accept your votes at the poll, but we will not give you ours in return. (Hear, hear.) I have alluded to these matters of difficulty, but I do not say that because there are difficulties a proposal should be rejected or passed over. It is the duty of statesmen to get over difficulties or to go round if they cannot get over, if the object is desirable. But when you find a question of this kind surrounded with difficulties, from whatever point of view it is regarded some obstacle stands in the way, then I think the House must say, as I now say, although I know I shall not get much assent from my hon. friends near me, this is a question not within the range of practical politics. (Hear, hear.) There is one matter I would press on the minds of hon. members, I believe it originated with the late Lord Beaconsfield, it is the argument that female suffrage is the best if not the only barrier to interpose to an ever-

increasing democracy. It is said that as we go on the franchise cannot be raised, it must be lowered, and we shall go lower until we get to men of bad revolutionary passions, and we shall be tempted to make overtures to them and to deal with them in a way not for the interest of the country, and we shall find the franchise of women a check and a control upon that, and the anticipated evils may thus be met. I admit this is an agreeable and a fetching argument, but it is founded on a fallacy. If you admit the principle of political franchise for women you must treat them on the same footing as if they were men, and as you lower the franchise to men so must you lower it to women, and how then are you to control or oppose the bad passions of lower classes of men by adding to them, as you must, the bad passions of a low class of women? Do you think if you consider the class of persons to whom you would give the franchise—greatly extended as it must be in course of time—that the House would not come to a right conclusion if they found it was not desirable to extend the franchise in the way now proposed? I shall, of course, vote against this proposal. I believe, myself, that extending the political franchise to women would be a calamity to this country. It will add thousands, if not tens of thousands, to that now too numerous class of electors who never know their own minds at the ballot from time to time—(oh, oh)—who are swayed by the sentiment of the moment, and we know from the great revulsions of political feeling which are increasing in the country, that it is this class of electors that renders the task of government more and more difficult, because they impede a continuous policy in legislation and in the conduct of foreign affairs so desirable if not necessary. (Hear, hear.) There are many of my friends who I know are interested in this movement, and I know that in giving my vote I shall be helping to deprive them of an opportunity of political triumph, but, at the same time, I am satisfied that to adopt this principle would not be for the permanent advantage of the country. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ASHMEAD BARTLETT: I had not intended to take part in this debate, but the observations of the hon. member who has just sat down induce me to say a few words, not on behalf of the proposal of the hon. member for Ashton, for I have not heard the exact tenor of his motion, but in support of the general principle of admitting women to the franchise. Now, the hon. member (Mr. Inderwick) concluded a speech of considerable interest by a statement that the main objection he had to this proposal was that it would increase the class of fluctuating political opinion in the country. Now in that view I do not for a moment agree. I do not believe it would increase the amount of fluctuating political opinion. I differ from the hon. gentleman, and I think the views of women on the great social and economical and moral questions of the day, which are really of more importance than the so-called political questions, are far more stable than those of men. I cannot but think the hon. member must have been somewhat unfortunate in his experience—I do not say it in a derogatory sense—(laughter)—he must have been somewhat unfortunate with regard to those women whose views he has had an opportunity of learning. (Laughter.) So far as I have had the advantage of hearing the opinions of women on any definite subject, I have found them devoted continually, consistently, permanently devoted, to what I may describe as the reformation of the human race. (Cheers and laughter.) I must beg the hon. member for Colchester (Mr. Willis) to restrain himself. Women are devoted to the cause of temperance, to the cause of morality; they are devoted to the improvement of the condition of the poor, and with more or less, though not quite equal, intelligence to the cause of education. They are a refining and elevating influence in all the social relations of life. These are my general reasons for differing from the hon. member's statement. But I have a special reason for supporting this resolution to-night, which is, as far as lies in my power, to remove from the question of women's suffrage the stigma of being represented entirely by a section of the House in which I am sure, as a rule, women take a very small amount of interest. (Laughter.) It appears to me this question can be regarded from several aspects. If you regard it from a logical point of view, it is clear nothing can be said against it; it is absolutely impossible to avoid recognising the claim of women to the franchise. In almost every other sphere of life they possess rights and exercise onerous duties on a full equality with men. Women are allowed to occupy the most distinguished position in the State; the illustrious lady who has ruled over these realms with so much

advantage for forty years discharges functions far more important than any it is proposed to bestow on women by the motion of the hon. member. To the amplest extent they hold and administer property; they can be guardians and executors. You allow women to enjoy the municipal suffrage, and you allow them to take part in all the more important and difficult functions of life; they are now allowed to enter upon the medical profession, and with general benefit. It is perfectly clear that from a logical standpoint you cannot possibly refuse them the Parliamentary franchise. I admit there is some difficulty about proceeding to a further stage and giving them a seat in this House. I am quite prepared to allow that the position of a lady of great ability and possibly of great attractions, as Prime Minister, might occasionally be open to some objections that must occur to any hon. member. (Laughter.) But I do not think an argument of this sort is worth much, it is the *reductio ad absurdum*, and we need not consider it. This is only a stage of progress. It does not follow that because we confer on women the Parliamentary suffrage that they would be admitted to that bench—though at the same time I am free to confess they would adorn it very much more than some of its present occupants. (Laughter.) Then there is the sentimental point of view. What can be said against it from that point? We are told it will be a horrible thing to divide families and give rise to divergence of view between husband and wife, they would surely fall out over the exercise of the franchise. Well, I think that a very considerable amount of divergence of view exists occasionally at present, and I do not think it would be very dangerously increased by giving women the franchise. (Laughter.) The world would not be happier or more rational if all husbands and wives held a dull consensus of view upon every subject. But there is another reason that can be urged in support of the motion which I have rather suggested than stated definitely. It is obvious that to confer the suffrage on women is essentially a Conservative measure. ("Hear, hear," and "Oh, oh.") The principle of Conservatism is to defend and secure all that is good and stable in our social and political constitution. Women are devoted to the same objects, and therefore they must prove a Conservative force in the State. A quotation was made from a remark of a very great and illustrious man, now no more, by the hon. member who spoke last. He quoted an expression of the late Lord Beaconsfield in favour of this extension of the suffrage, and, if I had any doubt about it before, that quotation would be sufficient to induce me to view the question with favour. I therefore urge this last as an additional reason why hon. members on this side should support the motion. I feel I have supported the cause very inadequately, for I had no intention of intruding myself on the House when I came down, but I have given a few reasons why I think the suffrage should be extended to women, and with the permission of the House I will sum them up. You cannot deny it from a logical standpoint, there is nothing of real weight from a sentimental point of view to induce us to refuse the franchise, and it would be a Conservative measure which has had the recommendation of the greatest statesman of this century.

Mr. BERESFORD-HOPE: I am sorry that the House should be so empty, but we all know that those who generally may be expected to be seen here are engaged at present in an amusement which is thought to be more congruous to the portion of the human race in whose favour you are called upon to-night to legislate than to senators. I was rather amused at the refreshing and candid speech of my hon. friend who has just sat down. After a few observations about fluctuating political opinion, and so on, he candidly confessed that he voted for this measure because he thought it was a Conservative one. Well, I own, sir, and I think the House will agree in my sincerity when I say that deep as my political convictions may be, I desire on this matter to vote without any regard to the chance success, on one side or the other, of an electioneering measure. There is something even deeper to the heart than party politics, and that is the politics of patriotism and of nature, and I believe that to these politics belongs this enfranchisement of that half of the world which no doubt are quite equal to us—very likely much superior to us—but who are different from us, that difference being the eternal one which, in spite of sentimental theorists, will exist to the end of the world. I say that this enfranchisement belongs not to party, but to patriotic considerations, and, belonging as it does to patriotic and to natural politics, it excludes this project

from the category of healthy and possible innovations. Well, and what are the reasons for it? I have been amused to-night at the vagueness of the arguments which have been urged, and which are not more vague than the premises on which they are based are far-reaching. The female guardians, the female householder—these form the pretext, and all the arguments tending to the emancipation of the woman, whether householder, whether freeholder, whether married or single, are based on these phenomena, though the Married Women's Property Act in the Statute-book destroys the limitation on which the member for Ashton insisted with such candour and sincerity. I cannot really believe that this proposal, if it were carried, would not go beyond the limited class for whom it in this House and for this night appeals. I cannot for one instant believe in the comfortable predictions which have been ventured. It is, and it always has been, a question not of the female ratepayer, but of the woman. I appeal to the pamphlet which on a former occasion I quoted, I believe, rather largely in this House. I do not mean to quote it to-day, though there are some passages in it which might be instructive and diverting to those who have not read it before: it was the opinion of a hundred women of intellect and of ability, and some of them of conspicuous position, brought together by the Women's Suffrage Society. If this pamphlet happens to have been sent round again on the present occasion, I very much commend it to those who have not read it, to see what are the prospects, the expectations, and the arguments, brought forward by those who really are at the bottom of the agitation, and who do not, like my hon. friend the member for Greenwich, dally with the question with the tips of their fingers. It is really worth while to consider what the state of affairs now is. We have heard in various directions that there is in the air, somewhere or nowhere, a very large scheme for the enlargement of the franchise; great masses of people will be brought in who have not hitherto enjoyed the vote; and upon that scheme, as if it were a parasite hanging on to it, we are asked to engraft the enfranchisement of women. Well, now, what is that but universal suffrage, and universal suffrage in a sense in which no one has ever openly announced it. My hon. friend the member for Greenwich ventured a remark which puzzled me at the time, and I have not yet quite made out whether it was an argument from his mouth or a joke—if a joke it was rather a good one, if an argument not so good—but it was to the effect that this enfranchisement of women would at least get rid of manhood suffrage. It would get rid of manhood suffrage, for it would become manhood and womanhood suffrage; it would be like the gentleman engaged in the shoe trade, who trumped his neighbour's advertisement *Mens conscia recti*, by the superior announcement, *Men's and women's conscia recti*. (Laughter.) When it was objected that this would expose us to see women in Parliament, the question was gravely asked, Why should we not see women in Parliament? The member for Eye drew a very pretty and picturesque picture of a Prime Minister on that bench who is to come to some strange, mysterious fate—I suppose it was marrying the leader of the Opposition, and forming a coalition Government. (Laughter.) But depend upon it, if we have women admitted to the franchise, the claim for them to be in Parliament simply follows as a matter of course. Do we not see that on that mimic Parliament which plays so conspicuous, and on many occasions I have no doubt, a very useful part—the London School Board—there are lady members on that, and would not the argument be very strong indeed from that, that there could be no objection to their sitting here? It is a subject on which, of course, one can draw a great many amusing pictures; but really it is almost sickening, in a matter of this sort, in which the interest of the country, in which the peace of Europe, in which the happiness of those vast colonies, that vast Indian empire that belongs to us—in which the whole of the future of the world is concerned, to have to deal with grotesque propositions like this, propositions grotesque in themselves, but full of grave evils for those for whom the future of humanity, for whom the true mission of the world is not a matter of political calculation, not a matter of cynical amusement in the articles and paragraphs of current journalism, but is a matter of very grave and serious thought. To bring forward a suggestion like this at the eve of a possible Reform Bill, at a time when opinions are seething and agitating, at a time when all kinds of—I must use a phrase which is perhaps not Parliamentary, but which must come out in this debate—at a time which is the reign of omnipotent fads—(laughter)—to bring forward

the idea of enfranchising that charming portion of mankind, whose influence is felt, not seen, is one of the most preposterous and one of the most revolutionary suggestions that could possibly be agitated.

Mr. HENRY FOWLER: The right hon. gentleman who has just sat down has urged upon the House that this subject should be treated as a very serious business and entirely upon an argumentative basis; but he has allowed his uncontrollable sense of humour to triumph over his logical aspirations, and he has favoured us with one of his very amusing, but, so far as I am concerned, I must say, not very convincing speeches. I have no wish to deal with this question as a joke, either for or against women. The question—whatever the decision of the House may be to-night, or perhaps two or three sessions hence—is a question which sooner or later will have to be faced, and I think that in coming to a decision to-night we should see whether there is any sound logical reason for this proposal, and whether there is any sound logical reason against it. Now, the two hon. members—my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield and the member for Rye—seemed to me, in their very able and interesting speeches, never to touch the principle on which the franchise in this country is based; whether it be right or wrong the franchise in this country has been for centuries past, and to-day certainly is, co-existent with either the ownership or the occupation of property. The English constitution recognises no question of fitness, as far as intellectual qualification is concerned—(oh)—the English constitution, in conferring the franchise, recognises no principle of social position—(hear, hear)—of intellectual fitness, or of moral culture. The franchise in this country is given in counties to the owners or occupiers of real property, and is given in boroughs to the occupiers of real property. Of course no one will suppose that I am overlooking the fact that persons disqualified by the commission of crime are excluded; what I say is, excluding that obvious disqualification, that whether the voter be immoral or moral, whether he be good or bad, if he owns property, and discharges the obligations of the State in respect of that property, the law of the land confers upon him the right to vote in the selection of representatives in Parliament. That is the principle of the English constitution. Now, we have admitted in our constitution a class of owners and occupiers of property of the female sex, and it rests upon those who object to their being entitled to all the advantages, so to speak, of property, to show why they should not enjoy them. It has been put to-night, "Why should women have the franchise?" I rather put it, "Why should they not?" Why should not a spinster, or a widow, a woman discharging all the obligations of the State, paying all the required taxes to the State, why should she not enjoy the right of her unit voice, so far as directing the policy of the State is concerned? We have two contradictory theories from the benches opposite in reference to this question; first, the theory of my hon. friend, the member for Rye, and secondly, the theory of the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Cambridge. The hon. member for Rye stated that women were entitled to the municipal franchise simply and solely because municipal councils spend money, and rates are paid by women. As a matter of fact, the duties of town councils are not confined to spending money. Their function is the local administration of the whole of the affairs of the borough, and year by year Parliament is extending and enlarging and elevating the duties which are confided to our various town councils. The right hon. gentleman, who has just sat down, drew an appalling picture of the politics of Europe being involved in the exercise of this franchise, and held out the prospect of some great national decision, which might be fraught with divers consequences to the empires of the world being controlled to some extent by female voices. I am quite willing to meet him upon that ground. He must first tell us that women, *quæ* women, are morally and intellectually inferior to men. I deny that proposition. (Hear, hear.) We were told we were asking for political equality. I say, prove the moral and intellectual inequality—I say, take any question of the politics of this country or Europe, whether it be a question of peace or war, and I say that the opinion of the intelligent woman is just as good as the opinion of an unintelligent man—(laughter, and "Hear, hear")—and a great deal better. (Laughter.) The interests which control the decisions of Parliaments affect women quite as much as men. They have, in respect of their personal feeling as well as in respect of their property, a large stake in the prosperity and progress of the country; and unless you can

show that there is a public danger from entrusting them with the ordinary consequences of the ownership of their property, I think that the *onus probandi* rests with the opponents of the motion rather than with those who advocate it. (Hear, hear.) I am not going to weary the House with a long speech on this question; I want to put the syllogism so to speak as shortly and as concisely as I can. Taxation and representation go together; women are taxed; women ought to be represented. There is no public danger in allowing women to enjoy that representation. Now I know what the answer to me will be, that under the Married Women's Property Act of last year, married women are put into the position of the absolute ownership of their own property, and that therefore they ought to be entitled to be put on the same footing as single women, and to that extent the argument of my hon. friend is unsound. The position of married women is this: A woman by marrying has, deliberately, with her eyes open, surrendered certain advantages—if you like, certain privileges—which would belong to her as a single woman, and she, as a married woman, has no right to complain of the consequences of her marriage. This appeal that is made to Parliament is not made on behalf of married women. Married women are content to leave these interests in the hands of their husbands; and I believe that to introduce a question of political differences into the home would be a step of very grave public danger and disadvantage, and I for one should strenuously oppose it. It is not for that that my hon. friend the member for Ashton is pleading to-night. It is proposed to extend the franchise to women who equally with men are separate, individual owners of property, who discharge all the duties of property, and who therefore claim all the rights of property. One word more. The hon. member for Warwickshire referred to the legislation in which women are concerned, and said that that legislation had full attention in this House, and that everything they could desire was carried out. I very much doubt that proposition. I think there are a large number of instances which this House neglects and overlooks, in which women have the deepest interest, an interest affecting themselves personally, affecting the happiness and progress of their children as well as of themselves; and it is because I believe that the extension of this franchise would not be a political danger, but a political benefit; because I believe, not in its Conservatism or in its Radicalism, but because I cannot ignore the historical fact that the influence of women for the last fifty years of the country has on the whole been on the side of progress, on the side of the good and true, that I should be glad to see women brought within the pale of the constitution. (Cheers.)

Mr. NEWDEGATE said the hon. member had ended his remarks with a political watchword—progress. He was afraid that in his dull constitutionalism he should be obliged to answer that by the question, "Whither?" (A laugh.) His objection to this proposal was that it struck at one and not the least of the remaining constitutional foundations of the franchise. (Hear.) While he was listening to the eloquent member for Greenwich he said to himself, "Has the Semitic race forgotten the difference between a man and a woman?" (Laughter.) He was not aware that the unenfranchised women of this country had ever been treated as slaves. He was the surviving collector of the majority that carried the Ten Hours Act for the protection of women and children in their labour. If anything were said in derogation of women, he would ask, "Have we not a Queen?" (Hear, hear.) We were not afraid of placing women in the highest position, when we believed that they had an hereditary right to fill that position. But he had to look to society. He had to look to the constituencies as a whole, and to bear in mind that politics involved a mental, and too often a moral, sometimes a physical, warfare; he should no more think of voting for the embodiment of battalions of Amazons, because we had a Queen, than he should of voting for the enfranchisement of women as such. Let hon. members consider the weight to be attached to the arguments about property as the basis of qualification for the franchise. He (Mr. Newdegate) asserted that according to the constitutional history of this country there was a condition antecedent to the occupation or possession of property, and that condition was fitness. He had seen an hon. member expelled from that House because he was not of sound mind. (Laughter.) He was not fit. Bankrupts were not fit. Women were not fit. ("Hear, hear," and murmurs.) Priests were not fit. (Laughter.) The leader of the Irish members, though nominally a Protestant,

was inaugurated, he might say appointed, by a Roman Catholic Archbishop. He could understand his Irish neighbours' reason for advocating the extension of the franchise to women. He believed the priests had too much influence over the men in Ireland, and they would have still more influence with the women. Hon. members must forgive his having accepted a French teacher, M. Michelet, on this subject. The experience of France had not been wasted upon him. It could not be shown that this House, elected by men only, had neglected the interests of English, Scotch, or Irish women. Had it not years ago passed the Ten Hours Act for the protection of women and children of the labouring classes? It had also more recently passed Acts giving women more command over property. There was not a particle of evidence that Parliament had become so unmanly, that it knew not how to respect, as their forefathers respected, the position and the privileges of women. He thought sometimes that some hon. gentlemen opposite had taken their views of the rights of man from the writings of Tom Paine. He was not prepared to accept that kind of teaching with respect to the supposed rights of women, which he believed would involve most serious evils. He moreover trusted that the men of England felt as the men of the United States had felt, that the enfranchisement of women might make them more negligent than they had been of the due position and the privileges of women.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT: The hon. gentleman who has just sat down, during his long career in this House, has always been advocating failing causes. I have been present at almost every debate that has taken place on this question, and I have always noticed that the matter most dwelt upon has been the question of married and unmarried women. Those who are most concerned about married women with Parliamentary qualifications may be satisfied, I think, with the declaration of my hon. friend the member for Ashton; but, at the same time, I have never concealed my opinion on this subject, or that of the Women's Suffrage Associations throughout the kingdom. It is true that these associations have been founded by men and women who take a far more unassailable position than the line adopted by the hon. member for Ashton. Their principle is electoral equality, and when they say that, they mean that any qualification established by Parliament which gives a vote to a man should give a vote to a woman, and they do not ask the question whether she is married or unmarried. (Hear, hear.) What gives prominence to this question at the present moment is the fact that in the next session of Parliament the Government will endeavour to extend the franchise. Those of us in favour of the motion before the House strongly object that the franchise should be extended as it has hitherto been extended. We say that if you have household suffrage it should be real household suffrage, and that those houses where women are at the head should not be passed over as if there were no human beings there with rights to defend or with interests to protect. It is said, and I think it is true, that something like one house in seven has a woman at its head. Who are these women? One may be a woman of property, another may be eminent in art or literature, another will be a benevolent woman acting as a ministering angel to the poor and needy around her, and others will be persons in humble life, working year by year to maintain their families. The question we put is this—Why are these houses to be passed over? (Hear, hear.) I do not think that question has been answered to-night in a manner to satisfy the people of this country; certainly not in a manner to satisfy those excluded from the franchise. This evening, in the lobby, a distinguished member of the House came to me to speak on the subject. He said, "You know I have always been opposed to you." I said, "Yes, I know. How is it you always oppose this measure?" "Well," he said, "there is only one reason why anybody can oppose it. I oppose the giving of the franchise to a woman because she is a woman." (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") I said, "Do you think that reason will long suffice to maintain their exclusion?" He said, "I doubt if it will." Sir, I doubt myself whether that reason will long hold good. My hon. friend the member for Huddersfield has another reason. When I look at the amendment I see he tells us that from time immemorial only men have voted. But, sir, women have recently discovered that from time immemorial they have suffered from their exclusion. I ask my hon. friend to answer them when they make that declaration. (Hear, hear.) Women are said to be ignorant. If the measure indicated were to pass, undoubtedly a considerable number of ignorant women would be enfranchised—women

almost as ignorant as the men enfranchised. I think it will be in the recollection of this House that when the Ballot Act was passed we took considerable pains to legislate to enable ignorant men to vote. It is true that on this side of the House this measure is opposed because it is regarded as a Conservative measure. Of course action of that sort is inconsistent with Liberal principles. We do not desire to exclude people from the ballot-box even if they are Conservatives. We surely on this side of the House do not intend to say we will admit only those who assist our party. There is one thing anybody can see with regard to women. No one can accuse them of leading disorderly or criminal lives; nobody can accuse them of drunkenness. If there were as little drunkenness amongst men as there is amongst women, we should want fewer policemen, fewer prisons, and there would be less burdens and rates on the people. We hear in this House a good deal about Radicalism, more especially from these benches. Well, sir, that term has never had any great charm for me, and for this reason, that I have often found it dissociated from ideas of justice. (Hear, hear.) A remarkable speech was made in Birmingham the other day by my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade. I read that speech with much interest. It was read with great pleasure by extreme politicians in this country. I heard men say it was one of the best utterances of the gospel of Radicalism. That may be true, but I have my doubts whether it was an adequate expression of the gospel of justice. The right hon. gentleman took a prophetic view of what may happen some years hence. He told us that every person not a criminal and not a pauper was to have a vote, provided that person was of the masculine gender. There was no suggestion that for all time to come a woman should have any constitutional influence over those who made the laws which she is called upon to obey. The right hon. gentleman advocated, as I understand, that members of this House should be paid for their services. He did not tell us from what fund this was to come. I do not know that there is any public fund to which women do not contribute their portion, and I doubt whether it would be just to tax women for service in this House in regard to which they cannot have the least control. Reference has been made to the old maxim that taxation and representation should go together, but my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield treats that principle with something like contempt when it comes from the mouths of women. (Hear, hear.) But there are other and greater reasons than those involved in the question of taxation why women should have some influence in the House. This House sometimes passes laws which apply to women only. It sometimes inflicts grievous penalties upon women which would be intolerable to men. It interferes with the labour of women, perhaps sometimes advantageously to them, but at other times with considerable danger to their interests. Supposing some assembly were to legislate for men over which men had not the least control. I undertake to say there would not be one man in a million who would not see the monstrous injustice of such a state of things. (Hear, hear.) It is somewhat comic that the "time immemorial" argument should be relied upon on these benches. (Hear, hear.) Many things have existed from time immemorial. The Established Church and the political position of bishops have existed from the remotest times, and I should like to know, if the hon. member for Huddersfield were to stand up and recommend important changes in these respects, what he would say if the argument of "time immemorial" came from the opposite benches. (Hear, hear.) If we had always adhered to what had been consecrated by time, instead of now being the foremost nation in the world we should probably be a group of painted savages. (Laughter.) The hon. members for Huddersfield and North Warwickshire have told us women can get what they want without the franchise. That used to be said of working men—(cheers)—but since they have had a vote members in every part of this House have had a generosity and sympathy and courage with regard to all matters affecting working men which they never had before. Precisely the same effect would follow if you gave women the franchise. I admit that women have gained much without the franchise, and I will tell the House when that gain began. It began with the introduction of the question of women's suffrage to the House, and the gain has been mainly due to the awakening intelligence of women on political questions owing to the widespread agitation and the demand for women's suffrage. They have gained without the franchise municipal votes, school

board votes, the right to sit on school boards, the magnificent Act of last year—an Act which ought to confer lasting fame on the present Lord Chancellor—I mean the Married Women's Property Act. And, owing to the untiring energy of the right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld), they have succeeded in inflicting a blow on an Act of Parliament more unjust to women than any which has ever been passed, a blow from which that Act will never recover. These things they have gained without the franchise. But who will tell me that they would not have gained them sooner, with less heart-breaking labour, if they had had the political franchise? I contend that to declare women incapacitated to vote, whatever property they may have, whatever may be their intellect and their character, and yet to declare men capable of voting, however wanting they may be in the qualifications to which I have referred, is to degrade women in their own estimation and in the estimation of every one else. To give the franchise to men is to raise and to strengthen them. It would have the same effect upon women. Universally, to possess political influence is to command respect, and if women were more respected they would be less open to injury of every kind. We are going to enfranchise the farm labourer. Why, I ask, should we not also enfranchise the farmer? (Hear, hear.) I believe it has already been shown by the hon. member who moved the resolution (Mr. Mason) that a very large number of women are farmers—as many as ten per cent of the farmers in England and Wales being women employing farm labourers. If we are going to enfranchise the labourers, is it right that the women who employ them, who pay their wages, and who have all the responsibility of the enterprise on their shoulders, should be treated as political cyphers? Again, one-seventh part of all the persons holding land of one acre and upwards are women. On what ground can we refuse to give them a vote? Five per cent of the lay patronage of the Church of England is in the hands of women. Those women have a right to appoint the spiritual pastors of large and small parishes, and yet they are not allowed to perform the very humble function of giving a vote for a member of Parliament. There is no greater delusion than to imagine that a high qualification is necessary in order to give such a vote. The instincts of the people, as a rule, enable them to decide which is the ablest or the most trustworthy candidate. In conclusion, I shall merely say that clever speeches, from whatever side of this House they come, will not subdue this agitation. In spite of what my hon. friend the member for Huddersfield says, indications come to me which show that this agitation grows because women believe that its object is just, and God has planted the passion for justice in every human heart, in the hearts not less of women than of men. (Cheers.)

Mr. RAIKES: I desire to detain the House only a short time, but I am bound to say that it is difficult to abstain from offering some observations in reply to hon. members who have advocated this motion. I was particularly struck with what fell from the honourable member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler), who laid great stress on the restricted objects of the motion, and disclaimed for himself, and his friends, any attempt to bring about the universal enfranchisement of women which has been alluded to. The hon. member pointed out that the motion is one which extends only to women who possess the necessary qualifications—that is to say, that this question comes before the House to-night as it has done on one or two former occasions, merely as a question of the enfranchisement of those women—widows and spinsters—who happen already to possess the franchise in local matters. I would venture to remind my hon. friend that this year that position has become something of an anachronism. A very important measure was passed last session, and when this House deliberately set itself to the abolition of the ancient relations of husband and wife with regard to the possession of property it took a new departure, which we cannot ignore in considering this question. The hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright) has not dwelt quite so much, as he might have been expected to do, on that wider view of the question with which he might have concerned himself. It was only to-day that I received, as I presume other hon. members had done, a printed letter which has been signed and circulated by a lady who has taken great interest in this question; and who is treasurer of the Manchester association for promoting the enfranchisement of women. In that letter, the writer argues with considerable logical force the case of the general enfranchisement of females, as compared with the partial enfranchisement contemplated by the present proposal. I cannot refuse

full assent to the arguments I have seen in that letter. If we agree that women are to be equally entitled with men to the benefit of the franchise it is impossible logically to refuse the franchise to that large number of women who are living in matrimony, and who have had that experience and knowledge of life, and of the affairs of life, which the position of a wife and mother must necessarily bring. (Hear, hear.) Anything, therefore, more unjust, ungenerous, and indefensible than the exclusion of wives from such a proposal is hardly to be thought of; and I certainly shall do what I can to secure that the married women of this country shall not be ignored in the bestowal of the franchise, if it is to be conferred on women at all. There is another point on which I would briefly touch. Hon. members in their anxiety to minimise this enormous change have told the House that women do not desire seats in this Chamber. This seems to me a more unreasonable limitation than the other. The hon. member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler) has told us that an enlightened woman is at least as qualified for the franchise as an unenlightened man. We are always reading about enlightened women, and hearing much that is said with respect to women on account of their intellectual qualifications. I should be sorry if anything I am about to say should be considered disrespectful to any members of that sex. I think, however, there is much more argument in favour of their sitting in this House than for the enfranchisement of the whole sex, in order that they might vote for the members of this House. There is no doubt that many women are quite as well qualified for seats in this House as many hon. members; and no one can deny that there have been and are numerous examples of women of great intellectual capacity, and of high cultivation and attainments, who have specific and peculiar knowledge of many questions on which their opinions are entitled to the highest respect. This is, as far as it goes, an argument in favour of their sitting in this House; but I cannot see that it constitutes a valid reason for flooding the register with all the 95 or 96 per cent of other women, who have not the time or the qualifications for the study of political questions. I venture to call attention to what I think the illogicality of the two limitations I have referred to. If we are going seriously to deal with this question, we must be prepared to face it as a whole, and either to enfranchise women generally or to leave it alone. Much has been said as to the importance of the claims of women to direct representation. The hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright) has said that the working men have been able to exercise greater influence on this House since they have had the franchise than before. The hon. member, however, rather spoils his argument by what he said in reference to the position of women in their recent relations with this House. But I would point out that those who argue from this point of view are arguing from a position unfortunately too common, particularly among those who hold advanced opinions, namely, that nobody can have any interests unless they are antagonistic to those of others, and that therefore it is necessary that those interests should be guarded by direct representation. I do not believe this. I believe it is from the calm judgment of the collective community that we get at the best opinions, and that it is not necessary to look to a particular class to vindicate the rights it claims. (Hear, hear.) With regard to women this idea appears to be a greater delusion than in the case of any other class. I believe that the interests of women, so far from being antagonistic to those of the men among whom they live, are indissolubly bound up with those of the other sex. (Hear, hear.) I believe it is absolutely impossible for any man, who is qualified to take his seat in this House, not to be largely governed by considerations of what is due to women, who so greatly contribute to the happiness of the country, and I do appeal to the House to consider this matter, not so much with regard to questions of foreign politics, or of peace or war, or even as to whether or not the clergy of all denominations may not have or exercise undue influence; but I do press my opposition to this proposal on grounds which I shall always oppose it upon, as long as I have a seat in this House, and which lead me to believe that anything more injurious to the women of this country could not be conceived, than a scheme which proposes to put an imperial or at least a Parliamentary *imprimatur* on doctrines which lead to the unsexing of women and putting them on a false equality with men. Far be it from me, or anyone in this House, to speak of or dwell upon the general physical and mental inferiority on the part of women. I fully and freely

recognise their great moral superiority in other respects. But we are endangering the moral superiority of women if we tell them that their duty in life is not that duty it has hitherto been conceived to be—not that simple round of daily domestic life in which a woman's days are passed. (Hear, hear.) If we are going to detach women from those duties which reconcile her to the sphere in which her lot is cast, and to ask her to turn her attention to political affairs, to study the columns of the political magazines and daily newspapers in order to arrive at conclusions on questions which otherwise she could but imperfectly understand, and to expose her to the annoyances which appertain to political and public action, to bring her from that place in which she is so happy, and where she contributes so much to the happiness of the other sex, in order to make her a bad copy of man, the day I trust will be long distant when such a result will be achieved. I regret to find that a class of modern politicians is to be found on the public platforms of the country, doing that than which nothing could be more unworthy their position in society. When I see men of great gifts, of high aspirations, and noble example, such as the hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright), who can find nothing better to do than go about from place to place to try and catch the cheers of poor, unreflecting, and thoughtless women, by uttering conventional platitudes, which they may fully believe, but which are sterile of any good for the country, and exciting an agitation out of which no definite result can be achieved; or when I see their female colleagues ascend those platforms and make public speeches (I wish to speak with all due respect of those ladies and of their public aims and aspirations, and even their ambition)—I must say that these things cause to me, and to many people in this country who do not belong to this House, and who are not active politicians, something of a feeling of pain, in the presence of a public scandal which we grieve to witness, especially when I see that this is done at the expense of that sex which we all honour and revere. (Hear, hear.) I apologise to the House for having so long intruded on its attention, but I trust I have explained that so far from deprecating the well recognised merits of women, I rather desire to preserve that safe and honourable seclusion which is given to them by nature and sanctioned by Revelation, which up to the present time has been respected by the law of England, and will, I trust, in the future continue to be respected and protected by that law. (Cheers.)

Mr. COURTNEY: The right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Raikes), who has just spoken, and also his colleague in the representation of that University (Mr. Beresford Hope), have insisted that if we granted the franchise to women, we must, in logic, go still further and admit women to this House. Those two speeches were equally remarkable, whether regarded as coming from members of the Conservative party, or as the expositions of opinion proceeding from members having a constituency consisting to the extent of more than one-half of unbeneficed clergymen. But he believed that both—he was certain that one of them—had voted for the Bill which proposed to prevent unbeneficed clergymen from sitting in that House. The right hon. gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Raikes) has added some remarkable observations with regard to the position and character of women. He began his speech by saying that it was impossible to accede to this proposition, because if it were acceded it must go much further.

Mr. RAIKES: The hon. gentleman has misconceived what I have stated. I did not rest my objection to the proposal on that ground; but I said it appeared to me that those who do not accept the wider view which I have referred to are illogical.

Mr. COURTNEY: At any rate the right hon. gentleman has said that if we accept one proposal we must accept the other. With regard to what I have said as to the constituency of the two right hon. gentlemen whose speeches I have referred to, I would ask, do they intend to disfranchise the unbeneficed clergymen, because that is the logical deduction to be made from what they have said. With regard to this matter of logic, which requires that women should give a vote in the limited form proposed, as votes were already given to the Universities, I am bound to say it is a strictly moderate proposition. It is based on the following grounds: we have already given to spinsters and widows, possessed of certain qualifications as to property or occupation, the privilege of voting for town councils, boards of guardians, and school boards. We have laid down the principle that so far as regards these public

functions sex is no disqualification. Marriage remains a disqualification, but sex does not; and the proposition laid down by the hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright) is that as far as we have already gone in local matters we should now go in Parliamentary matters. This is, I think, a strictly moderate and a Conservative proposition. It goes on that principle of politics which we all respect, since it proceeds from experience. We have tried it, and what are the results? Are they beneficial or are they the reverse? Are they advantageous, whether as regards the constitution of the boards so elected or the character of the women who form part of the constituency? If they have been beneficial, they are in favour of our going further. No one has said they have produced injurious effects in either direction. On those, then, who oppose the extension of the principle that has been so far successful, the burden is thrown of showing the ineligibility of women for the Parliamentary franchise. I can conceive one reason why hon. members may refuse to give votes for women being members of this House. They themselves might be affected by the change. This is, however, a very small reason indeed, and I should like to know what is the real explanation of this singular anomaly that hon. members are ready to give women votes at elections in which those hon. members are not directly concerned and yet they refuse them in cases where they are so concerned. I confess I should have thought that one of the most hazardous things possible was the giving women votes at elections for boards of guardians, except, perhaps, making them eligible for seats in the school boards. One would have thought that the enfranchisement of women in respect of boards of guardians might have tended to thwart the operation of the poor-law, yet, as a matter of fact, a totally different result had been witnessed, and so successful had been the experiment of admitting women, and so charitably and admirably had they endeavoured to carry out the operations of the poor-law, that the Local Government Board has used its power of nominating women as guardians where they have not been elected. If we take the case of elections to the school boards, I ask is there a single thing that is of more importance to the nation than the education of the democracy of the future? And yet we give women votes for school boards, and allow them to be elected as members of those boards, because they have to do with the education of girls. In making women capable of sitting on school boards we have supplied them with a strong argument in favour of this motion, for the work of the school boards far transcends in importance the ordinary questions that come before us at general elections. (Hear, hear.) Let me point out this with respect to the alleged injurious influence of public life upon the female nature. You find women engaged in the elections for boards of guardians, the elections for school boards, and the elections for town councils. The first taking place yearly, the second once in three years, the third yearly; but the general Parliamentary election, the effect of which is to be so injurious on the character of women, comes on the average only once in five years. (Hear, hear.) But it is said, if you do give women this vote in the restricted form proposed by my hon. friend, you must go further and give votes to married women too. ("Hear, hear," and "No.") That is the sort of logic that we have heard over and over again. If you give the £10 householder a vote you must give every householder a vote. (Cheers.) If you give every householder a vote, you must give every man a vote. If you give every man a vote you must give every woman a vote, and so on. Principles of abstract political reasoning are perhaps not dealt with by any political party in this country, but these are principles which I am most surprised to hear from members of the Conservative party. I proceed on the lines of experience. (Laughter.) I do not catch the secret explanation of the laughter which is now excited. You have women as electors in local affairs, women who are widows and spinsters and possess the qualifications required by law. Proceeding on that line, I ask why the same class of women possessing the same qualifications should run any danger by becoming Parliamentary electors. It is, I dare say, possible that my hon. friend, the member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright), desires to see the franchise extended to married as well as to single women. It is just possible that married women may ultimately demand the franchise too, but that change certainly will not be introduced till after much discussion and deliberation, and with many safeguards. I can see great reasons against it; but I utterly repudiate a line of opposing argument which is unworthy of any person educated in the political history of this country. (Hear, hear.) That line of

argument is this: You shall not confer the franchise upon persons who have proved their fitness for it, because you might possibly raise hereafter the question of conferring it upon persons in a different position, and against whose admission there are special and powerful arguments. Sir, the present proposal is, as I said before, simple, moderate, and Conservative; and let me remind hon. members on the opposite benches, that the proposition received the approval of Lord Beaconsfield—(cheers)—who voted for it again and again. It also received the approbation of another man who was long known in this House, who sat on the Conservative side, and who was most justly respected by every member. I refer to him not only on account of his position and authority, but because he became a convert to the cause after once opposing it; and he was a man whom certainly no one would suspect of any mawkish sentiment or weak feeling. I refer to Mr. Henley, who sat in the House for years, and after opposing this proposal for three or four years rose in his place one day and said, "I have been voting on this question; I have been watching what has been done; I have observed how women have voted for local councils and boards of guardians, and I have come to the conclusion that both as regards themselves and the bodies for which they have voted, the change is beneficial, politic, and much to be desired." (Cheers.) At this hour I will not detain the House much longer. But I must say a word or two in answer to the latter portion of the speech of the right hon. member for Cambridge University. The right hon. gentleman protested in vigorous and powerful language against the degradation of women which would ensue when some of them were called upon to discharge public functions upon political occasions. And he discoursed also in still more vehement language upon what I think he regarded—though his language was uncertain—as the degradation of those ladies especially who appear in public to advocate the claims of their sex. Sir, I altogether take issue with the right hon. gentleman upon those points. I protest that so far from degrading her the bringing of woman into contact with the ideas of public life, with the conceptions of national progress, with the development of national character, with the elevation of the people, and with the relation of this nation to other nations, just supplies that want which is necessary for herself and, still more, which is necessary for her as the companion of man. (Cheers.) If you want to have a heroic woman—(laughter)—if you want a woman with public spirit, one who shall be the companion and help-meet of the ideal English citizen, you must have a woman who shall understand and sympathise with the ideals and the pains and the life of her husband. I have on former occasions expressed in this House what I believe to be a fact—that in too many cases the husband is pulled down from the position which he would occupy and the aims he would pursue and from the ideals which he would seek to realise by the scantiness of education, by the limitation of motives, and by the restriction of feelings and ideas in his wife. (Hear, hear.) Unless you develop in woman a power of sympathising with and supporting man in the developments of political life, you will not only secure a stunted woman—(laughter, and cries of "Order!")—but you will also be punished by finding in her society little of that which will elevate you and her. You will have to reach to another ideal, and you will find society fall away from the standard that you desire to reach, and the national life, instead of becoming richer and fuller in successive years, will become more and more impoverished, poor, and petty. (Laughter and cheers.) It is said that there are women who do not want the franchise. It is one of the strong points of the opposition that some women do not desire it. I often find that objection brought forward; but I doubt whether it is true. (Hear, hear.) This is a question on which you may get any evidence you like, according to the point you desire to make. Just as you desire the answer you may find it; but the practical experience of political life, so far as it goes, shows that women do exercise municipal functions just as freely, largely, and jealously as men. (Hear, hear.) Those women who tell you in society, as many of them will, that they do not want votes, are, I find, mixed up in politics very zealously; but the politics they pursue are the petty politics of personal relations, instead of the politics of national progress and national development. (Cheers.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said: I have almost to apologise to the House for intruding now. I have to apologise to the House because I have so often expressed my opinion on this question, and I am

only prompted to do so again because I feel so earnestly and sincerely on it, and I shall give a most earnest vote against this motion. (Cheers.) I am glad to think that the mask is at last thrown off. To-night, for the first time, we know the real intention of the supporters of this motion. For years they have expressed one view to the public, while their object and their aim and their purpose has been a different one. ("No, no," and "Hear, hear.") They have told us that their object has been to give a vote to unmarried women only, and by that representation they have secured support. Sir, to-night it is useless for them to tell us that. Add to this motion the legislation of last session, and it will be seen that the vote is to be given to every married woman as well. (Mr. Mason: "No.") Let the hon. mover of the resolution make his declaration if he likes. It was worth nothing except the word that he gave. He meant, no doubt, what he said; but let this resolution pass into a Bill, and let the Property Qualification Act, 1882, remain unrepealed, and every holder of a freehold in the country become a voter. (Hear, hear.) Let there be no mistake about this. If this resolution is drafted into a Bill, and the legislation of 1882 remains unrepealed, you will give a vote to the married woman in the county and deny it in the borough. The husband in the county may enfranchise his wife. Every husband who has the means will have the right to confer a 40s. freehold on his wife, and he can then either ask her to vote with him or against him. Let hon. members who are about to record their votes understand that this would be the legal result of a successful issue to this resolution. Now, in that is a plain issue. If you tell me that the difference would be nothing as regards women between the county and the borough franchise, what do you say to the illogical difference between giving a married woman a vote in the county but not in the borough? Notwithstanding what my hon. friend has said about mysterious qualifications, I want to know what you are going to do about this Property Qualification Act in the case of married women. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. Fowler), who has given a most unsound definition of political rights, has said that occupation and ownership should always be represented. According to that view, every house that holds a man has a vote and not every man who holds a house. (Laughter.) Occupation and ownership are to be represented. What does that mean? In a borough a man who pays no rate but only promises to pay has a vote. The man who owns a whole town is not entitled to vote; and that is what he calls the representation of occupation and ownership. My hon. friend says in effect that fitness has nothing to do with the right to vote. Does he not know that property qualification is only held to be an evidence of fitness? (Hear, hear.) A short time ago it was thought that no person below a £10 qualification should be allowed to vote. The hon. member's proposition is that mere ownership or occupation or the payment of taxation gives a right to vote; but the man who has lived twenty years in a house managing the property is not allowed to vote, and why? Why don't you allow them to vote? Because they are not fit. You do not allow persons of weak mind to vote. It is because they are not fit. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Wolverhampton said, "Why not give the franchise to woman when she is willing to pay all the obligations to the State?" (Hear, hear.) But was she able to do so? Ought not a person who claimed the rights of citizenship to be able to fulfil all its burdens? What is the first duty of a citizen? It is to defend the country in time of war. (Cheers, and cries of "Oh!") It is a principle which has been recognised in every State from the earliest times. Will she do that? ("No.") There is another duty of citizenship—to assist in the suppression of internal commotion. Will woman take part in that? Will she be a special constable? Will you make of woman a justice of the peace? Will you make her a jurymen? Will you allow her to be a bishop? (Laughter.) I will not say that the office of a bishop represented the greatest degree of unfitness for women, but I might mention different offices, none of which they could fulfil. I will ask my hon. friend, Would he allow women to sit in this House? (No.) Why not? Does not fitness come in there? (Mr. H. Fowler: "No.") The hon. member for Wolverhampton says distinctly no; and there we have a justifiable test of inequality between men and women. My hon. friend (the Financial Secretary to the Treasury) is an old opponent of mine on this subject, and I am sure he will not object if I reply to some of his remarks. He said that both the right hon. members for Cambridge University opposed women's suffrage on the ground

that women could not sit in the House, and yet many of their constituents were clergymen who could be voters but were not eligible for election to Parliament. Yes, that is true, but a clergyman is not disqualified. It is his office that disqualifies him. Take off his robe and take him away from his office, where he is supposed to exercise spiritual duties which he cannot exercise if he becomes a member of Parliament, and then that man may come into this House. (Cheers.) I have one word more to say to my hon. friend the Financial Secretary. He has made an eloquent and I know sincere appeal on behalf of giving votes to women, with the object of raising them up. I should like to translate his views and put them explicitly before the House, in order that you may understand the persons for whom he so earnestly asks for the franchise. These were his own words, expressed to this House on a former occasion, "The narrowness of woman's range of ideas is absolutely deleterious in its effect." (Laughter.) "Our earliest lessons are received from them. Are they not often lessons that we have afterwards to unlearn with great difficulty? We often find a difficulty in freeing ourselves from them, and in emancipating ourselves from the errors of our earliest days." (Laughter.) Those are the ladies upon whom my hon. friend proposes to confer the franchise. What does my hon. friend say with regard to married life? "Again, of those who enter into the marriage relations of life how constantly does it happen that the man's freedom of intellect is a thing unto himself, that he is incapable of imparting to the woman, with whom so much of his life is spent, any conception of the range of his thought." (Laughter.) "He does not find in her any companionship; but on the contrary a drag upon his aspirations." Now, sir, I understand it is by giving women the franchise that my hon. friend now seeks to lift them from this condition of weak-minded error. I say that is a proposition of very serious aspect. What period of probation are these women to go through before they arrive at the ideal of my hon. friend? ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Hon. members laugh, but if I have quoted my hon. friend correctly, where is his answer to the question? If you are going to put these unfit women into the rights of citizenship, are we to sacrifice the interests of this country in the hope that they will improve? (Cheers.) I believe that my hon. friend has approached the subject from a different point of view to that taken by most men. I differ from him even more in his premises than in his conclusions. If hon. members look back to the lessons of their earliest years, they will not find anything to lead them to agree with my hon. friend. The difference is that we did not wish those lessons to be political, and, because they were not political, they were valuable. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend wishes the mother and the wife to become a politician, but he makes a great mistake in thinking that the public life will make women virtuous rather than the private life by which they have made so many men good. (Hear, hear.) Now, sir, one word more in answer to my hon. friend the member for Wolverhampton. What qualifies a man for admission to this House? Have not men experience of all professions? Do we not one and all bring to bear something of a peculiar and particular knowledge? Cannot my hon. friend, the member for Wolverhampton, and others in the same profession, enlighten us respecting the law? Do not commercial men tell us their views upon trade and commerce? Do not military men give us their experience of armies and of war? To any one of these subjects can woman contribute any experience? (No.) She can tell us no doubt of her great experience of domestic life; but, unhappily for us, that is not a subject with which we have to deal here. It is useful on school boards, but not in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) When we had to deal with great questions of peace and war, what would result if women took part in politics. We should find them timid in time of panic and violent in time of outbreak. (Cheers.) I believe that if a war were proposed for restoring the temporal power of the Pope every woman in France would support it. Whom do you think were the most earnest for war when France went into her unhappy conflict with Prussia? Why, the women. (Hear, hear.) If they have to decide questions like these I am afraid the goodness of their nature will stand them in little stead. We shall have the impulses of hearts rather than the reasoning of minds. I am told to-night that the supporters of this motion have a majority in the House and that there is to be a great victory for them. Well, sir, they may from accidental circumstances and great importunity—(hear, hear.)—have secured for this time a majority; but it will be a very fleeting

one. It is easy enough to bring down a few devoted followers in support of a movement which has been well canvassed; but let this once be found a serious question and there will be deserters on one side and recruits on the other. (Cheers.) I am certain of this, that we have forces still in reserve. (Hear, hear.) The women of England have never yet really expressed their opinion upon this question. ("Oh!" and "Hear, hear.") Were it not for that class of women who are happy in gazing upon and being gazed upon by crowds there would be no demand at all for women's suffrage. Those who represented the real feminine feeling of the country did not go to public meetings. (Hear, hear.) The voice of the mob was heard and the clamour of their loud cry was supposed to represent the voice of the women of England. To-night, we as men of different political parties express our view; but there is a class in the country that does not often speak, and yet it has at times determined the state of parties; I mean those men who take but little heed of political life, who find their happiness at home, and who wish to see this country well governed, and who believe that upon the stability of their homes depends the greatness and prosperity of the country. When once they know that from those homes you seriously mean to take the women who are their light and happiness, they will deprecate the measure as an influence that can add nothing to the happiness and the strength of any man's domestic life, and that will bring within the life of public men a source of weakness and of impulse detrimental to the very best interests of this country. (Cheers)

The House divided, when there appeared—	
For Mr. Mason's resolution...	114
Against	130
Majority against	16

ADDITIONAL PAIRS.

FOR.	AGAINST.
F. Mappin.	Sir W. Harcourt.
Cyril Flower.	Lord Baring.

[NOTE.—The division list and list of pairs were given in our interim number of July 19th.]

CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES.

On Saturday morning, July 7th, a conference of delegates and friends of the movement met at the offices of the society, in Parliament-street, to consider the position of affairs in view of the vote of the House of Commons on the previous night. There were present most of the leaders of the movement, including the Rev. S. A. Steintal, of Manchester, who was called to the chair, Miss Becker, Miss Tod (Belfast), Mrs. O. Scatterd (Leeds), Miss C. A. Biggs, Mrs. Cowen (Nottingham), Miss Laura Whittle, Miss M. Whittle and Miss Jessie Macgregor (Liverpool), Miss Smith and Mrs. Moss (Hyde), Miss Williams, Mrs. M'Laren and Miss Kirkland (Edinburgh), Mrs. Tanner and Miss Priestman (Bristol), Miss Cooper, Mr. A. Oakley, Mrs. M'Cormick (Manchester), Mrs. Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Hallett (Bath), Miss Edith Lupton (Bradford), Miss L. Staepole, and others. The following resolutions were unanimously passed:—Proposed by Mrs. Lucas, and seconded by Miss Williams, "That the best thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Hugh Mason, Baron de Worms, and the members of Parliament on both sides of the House who supported them in the debate and division on the resolution of last night." Moved by Mrs. Scatterd, of Leeds, and seconded by Mrs. Moss, of Hyde, "That the Central Committee be requested to arrange for deputations from the society to the federations of all political parties during the present autumn urging them to support the demand for women's suffrage." Proposed by Miss Becker, and seconded by Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, "That this conference strongly recommends the committees in all parts of the country to arrange for as many public meetings as possible during the autumn and winter." A vote of thanks to the chairman brought the proceedings to a close.

By Imperial decree, in case of the birth of an Archduke in the family of the Crown Prince a salute of 101 guns will be fired in the chief cities of the Empire, while the birth of an Archduchess will be greeted with 21.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The annual general meeting of the Central Committee was held on July 19, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and was well attended, there being a large number of ladies present. Mr. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., presided, and among those present were Dr. Cameron, M.P., Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., Mr. Coleridge Kennard, M.P., Mr. Thomasson, M.P., Mr. Archdale, M.P., Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., M.P., Mr. J. R. Yorke, M.P., Mrs. Chant, Miss Tod, Mrs. Lucas, Miss Courtenay, Miss Müller, Mrs. Garrett-Anderson, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Charles M'Laren, and others.

Letters were read from Mr. Hugh Mason, M.P., Professor Fawcett, M.P., and the Right Hon. C. Pelham Villiers, M.P.

"33, Onslow Square, S.W., July 18, 1883.

"My dear Miss Becker,—I warmly congratulate you and our Society in having secured the valuable services of Mr. Courtney as chairman at the annual meeting to-morrow. I could not put off or get away from my engagement, as I told you a fortnight since. The chair will be very much better filled than if I had taken it. I am sorry not to be able to join in the rejoicing of the meeting at the splendid division on Friday, the 6th. We must go on working upon our present lines, and I do not fear that success will eventually reward us. The question is indisputably making way in the country. We must keep united as a Society. There will be differences of opinion, as there are in all bodies united for a common end, but never let it come to pass that any difference among us shall lead to the withdrawal of even one supporter from our cause. Our victory depends entirely on our union. As regards myself, I am ready and willing to work in the ranks. If a better man can be found to lead in the House of Commons, I shall be delighted to give place for the sake of the good cause. Do not consider me for one moment. Consider only what is best for the work. Hoping you will have a spirited meeting, I am very truly,

"HUGH MASON.

"Miss Becker, Secretary."

"51, The Lawn, S. Lambeth Road, July 17, 1883.

"Dear Miss Becker,—I regret very much not being able to attend the annual meeting of the Women's Suffrage Society on Thursday, as I feel it prudent to avoid attending all public meetings for the present. I can assure you that my interest in the question of women's suffrage is strengthened by every year's experience of the value of representation to those who have it, and of the excellent work done by women in a great variety of ways, which shows that so far as fitness for the suffrage is concerned the exclusion of women can in no way be justified. It seems to me that with regard to an almost indefinite number of questions that are likely in future to engage the attention of Parliament, it is of the first importance that women should be represented. To take one example, what is happening in other countries may warn us that the efforts made a few years since to impose further restrictions on the labour of adult women may be revived; and in view of the extreme difficulty which tens of thousands of women now have to encounter in earning their own living, I cannot help thinking that they should have an opportunity of giving effect to their opinions on these subjects before any further impediments are imposed upon their industry. Other examples will readily suggest themselves. I will not, however, enter upon them, but I will simply say that you may always rely upon me to do what I can to promote the enfranchisement of women.—Believe me, yours very faithfully,

"HENRY FAWCETT.

"Miss Becker."

"39, Sloane-street, 16th July, 1883.

"Mr. Villiers presents his compliments to Miss Becker, and regrets to say that he is prevented by indisposition from being present at the annual meeting of the Society for Women's Suffrage, to be held on Thursday, July 19th, to which the Committee have done him the honour to request his attendance.

"Miss L. Becker."

Miss Becker read the report of the Executive Committee, which recorded the satisfaction felt at the improved position of the question in Parliament, as shown by the recent division. The balance sheet showed that the receipts, including a balance of £67. 9s. 7d. from last year, were £1,260. 12s. 9d., and the disbursements £887, leaving a balance in hand of £262. 13s. 11d., which it was explained would be absorbed by existing liabilities. The Committee believed

that the opinion of the country was in favour of the proposal, and that the cause was within measurable distance of success.

The CHAIRMAN said: The position which I at present occupy should properly be occupied by the Parliamentary sponsor of the movement. We are here assembled to support Mr. Mason. Unfortunately he is not able to attend, and your indefatigable secretary came and asked me to take his place. The report of the committee has spoken with great joyfulness of the recent division in the House of Commons, and I think that that satisfaction at the division is entirely justifiable. (Hear, hear.) It is true that the advocates of women's suffrage were beaten upon that occasion, but they were beaten by a very small majority. Bearing in mind that the House is not now in the exuberance and enthusiasm of its first session, that it is getting a little elderly and languid, the society ought to be extremely gratified at the result. Parliamentary reform is a subject which but little concerns them at present, for we know that the House was counted out on the recent occasion when it came under discussion. We ought to be extremely satisfied at the division. But still more satisfied ought we to be if we look at the composition of the members who voted for and against. We find a considerable absence of Conservative members, which is just what I think might be expected, inasmuch as the members of that party are by profession and principle not disposed to take any rash movement of any kind, and they are therefore more inclined to abstain than to take part in any movement for the increase of the electorate of the kingdom. But I have not the slightest doubt that when Parliamentary reform becomes again an active question, when its solution is urgent, when in the House of Commons we shall in a business way be debating the actual proposals which we anticipate will soon be put into operation and become law, then we shall find our hands considerably strengthened by many who on the recent occasion were absentees. I look forward with great confidence, and with assurance that when that movement takes the next stage—that movement for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer—in the assimilation of the suffrage of the counties to the towns—that the enfranchisement of women must be a part of the scheme of reform which will be included in any Bill having that for its principle and main object. (Cheers.) But now I do not think I should be perfectly honest if I represented to you that our position is one of unmixed satisfaction. I think I detected in the recent debate, and certainly in some circumstances that happened in connection with it, a little difference, at least some differences of opinion amongst ourselves—some differences which might possibly develop into divergence of action. We were undoubtedly taunted by our opponents in that debate with being inconsistent in our principles, and we were told that some of us said one thing and others said quite another. I do not think, if we take the trouble to reflect a little upon our position, we shall find any real grounds for apprehension. All we have to do is to think—which I admit is not always the easiest thing to do—but all we have to do is to think, and we may then ascertain among ourselves that we have a common basis of action and common aims to pursue—even although we may arrive at the particular object which we have in contemplation by different methods; and although some of us, outside the particular object which we now endeavour to achieve, may have other objects auxiliary and supplementary to it. Considering these alleged diversities of aims among the supporters of women's suffrage, I will ask you to pursue a method which is always valuable, especially in connection with this subject;—that is, take your thoughts away from the immediate question, and apply them to something analogous thereto. When I attend a debate in the House of Commons, or when I read articles in the newspapers dealing with the question of women's suffrage, I am always disposed to erase, as it were, the word "women," and to see how the arguments and how the statements would run if applied to men. For instance, we hear in the House of Commons very frequently amongst the opponents of women's suffrage that women are the creatures of prejudice. I dare say they are; but are not men also subject to prejudice? It is said that women are subservient to the clergy. That is brought forward by our opponents—two of the most vigorous of whom are the representatives of the clergy in the House of Commons. (Cheers and laughter.) It is said that women are excitable, that they are led hurriedly into demonstrations of opinion which they perhaps find occasion soon to retract. Well, we have not very far to go and not a very long way back in the stream of time in order to find that men too

can be excitable in the market place, the forum, and on the Stock Exchange. Whatever is said or alleged against women I will ask you always to consider in respect of men, and to apply it in that method. Now, let us use this in respect to the alleged diversities of the aims of the supporters of women's suffrage. Consider, when the ordinary questions of Parliamentary reform are proposed—such, for example, as the assimilation of the borough to the county franchise—is that not supported by men whose reasons for supporting it rest upon different grounds, and who in supporting that may or may not desire to go still further? There is in this question of Parliamentary reform, considered in relation to men, two distinct schools of politicians. There is one school who proceed upon what may be called the historic method and the other who proceed according to the *a priori* method. The members belonging to the first school look to the facts of our Parliamentary representation as they are. They examine the experience which we have of its working—they examine what appears to them to be its defects—they look at the elements of society outside our representative organisation; and reasoning from what we have they proceed to consider what we might do in the way of supplementing and augmenting the electoral system which we possess. The other school proceeding from some doctrine of abstract right, as for example, that one man is as good as another, may desire something in the way of not merely household suffrage, but of manhood suffrage. But they unite with the former school in supporting a claim for what is certainly a limited suffrage which both are ready to defend and to advance. I am aware that historically there have often happened differences between these two schools in agreeing upon the one principle of action. If you were to go back some forty or fifty years in history you would find that the Chartists and Whigs were fighting against one another, and that the Whigs refused to act with the Chartists not because the actual thing in debate was not desired by the Whigs, but because the Chartists desired something more. The Chartists also refused to act with the Whigs because the Whigs were not ready to go to the lengths they wished to go. I confess that it appears to me when looking back in the light of history, we should be justified in condemning both Whigs and Chartists. The Whig is very foolish who refuses to go for what he believes to be proper simply because somebody else demands something more which he deems unwise. The true way to resist what is unwise is to be zealous in procuring that which you believe to be expedient and justifiable. A Chartist on the other hand is not to be defended who refuses to accept what he can get because those who are fighting with him are possibly not prepared to go the whole length to which he would go. Now, in the same way among ourselves, if we are to consider these differences which no doubt have sprung up amongst some of our friends, and with which we are taunted by our adversaries, we shall find just the same feeling. We have the historical school, and we have also the *a priori* school. Both the members of the one and of the other are capable of agreeing in a certain practical movement. The members of the one who refuse to go further are not justified in saying that they will not work with the other because they desire to go further, nor are the members of the second school who do desire to go so far justified in refusing to work with the others, because they will not go the whole length they desire. We take here as a society the constitution of the Parliamentary system as we find it. What we do find is this—that sex is an absolute disqualification in Parliamentary elections no matter what the status of the woman may be. No matter what her qualifications may be in respect of property or occupation, the mere fact that she is a woman disqualifies her from having a voice in the election of members of Parliament. It is not so in the election of Town Councils; it is not so in the election of Boards of Guardians, or in the election of School Boards, and we find it is universally admitted that in the election of these municipal bodies—these local bodies—the action of women has been beneficial, both in the choice of the persons elected and the influence upon women themselves. Reasoning by analogy, those who proceed on the historic method are justified in saying, "Give the women the Parliamentary franchise and you will find there the useful results which have been obtained from the gift of the municipal franchise following in a large degree because the sphere is greater." You will find there an improvement in the choice of members, and an improvement in the reflected influence upon the character of the women. The actual disqualification of women as women operates to the prejudice of the elected, and operates also

to the prejudice of women, and therefore these, who proceed upon the historic method, are amply justified—in fact, I believe, more than justified—in desiring to remove that disqualification. (Cheers.) They proceed, they say, upon the lines which experience has pointed out. Well, there is another set of our supporters and friends with whom I have the strongest sympathy, and for whom I have the greatest respect, who desire to enfranchise women under all conditions without any consideration just as they would enfranchise men—introducing women's suffrage as a parallel to manhood suffrage. I am not going to quarrel with the aims they are eager to pursue, but I desire that they should recognise it as perfectly allowable that they should co-operate with those who proceed upon a more restricted fashion, upon the lines rather of experience, and who desire a more limited enfranchisement than they would aim at. It is said that, logically, those who go for one should go for the other. I altogether demur from that allegation. Logic is perfectly consistent with the position of each party. They proceed on different methods, and the difference between the two is not in the application of the facts before them, but in the appreciation of the facts with which they have to deal. I hope and believe that women in the future, as in the past, will work together, showing some improvement upon the conduct of the Chartists and the Whigs to whom I have referred, and that they will not drop these differences, and will not conceal them, but that they will each state, whenever necessary, his or her opinion, and will be more ready to co-operate with those who differ from them in opinion in pursuing that which is common to both. (Cheers.) Let us look at this a little more in detail. Take the case of a man or a woman who limits his or her aims entirely to what is being proposed in the House of Commons, who desires simply that an unmarried woman, spinster, or widow possessing the property or occupation qualification should receive the vote just as the man does, and who is not ready to extend the vote to married women. They say they want to remove that disqualification of sex which is found to be prejudicial in actual local elections. We have experience to go by which shows that this removal can be done not only without injury, but with benefit, both to the State and to women themselves. But they will go on to say, "We are not prepared to enter into the bigger question of the position of married women, because then we feel some little difficulty in the reconciliation of electoral rights with her position as a married woman." There is to our mind—this is their argument—a difficulty which we are not able to get over in reconciling electoral independence with domestic dependence. Well, the other side may think that is extremely feeble, timid, uncertain, faulty; but at all events it is a difficulty which ought not to prevent the other side from working with them so far, nor is it a difficulty which cannot be got rid of by gradually leading these persons to see things with bolder eyes and more courageous hearts, which would be probably the result of introducing the franchise bit by bit. I would point out to those most vehement in their scorn and indignation of the persons who cannot go so far as themselves in the emancipation of married women—that these unfortunate persons are perfectly logical and consistent. All their fault is that they are more anxious for the preservation of domestic peace, which they think would be in danger—but probably very rashly think so—than they are for the emancipation of married women, which the other side insist upon. They are ready to go for the great principle of the removal of the disqualification of sex, leaving the further question to be settled by the future. I altogether condemn those who limit their aspirations to the emancipation of unmarried women, if they say they will not work with those who go further, because of the danger of the position of those who go further. This, to my mind, is a perfectly unjustifiable position. You cannot refuse what you believe to be right, because in going for it you go with other persons who demand what you believe to be wrong. On the other hand, I equally condemn the *a priori* school who insist upon demanding what their more timid brethren and sisters shrink from, and who will not work with those who shrink from the full demands, while both are pursuing what both desire. We are constantly taunted with being illogical, and are told that our principles are leading us further than what we aim at. I altogether protest against my principles being constructed for me. I have a set of principles and I quite imagine that others have theirs, and it is perfectly consistent to leave them to promote a limited or to insist upon an enlarged demand. But there is no logic in requiring you to proceed

from one to the other. It is perfectly justifiable for people who differ upon certain issues, who are quite agreed upon the importance of the issue, that the disability of women as women should be remedied. (Cheers.) Before I sit down let me say one other word as to the constitution of the society, or rather as to the action the society has taken in Parliament. It is said by some of our opponents that our position is altogether changed since the carrying of the Married Women's Property Act last year. They say that before that time it was quite probable—we might say it was certain that the passing of an Act founded upon your resolution would only give the vote to spinsters and widows, but now that married women can hold property, it is certain if your Bill passed into law married women would also get the vote. I do not myself agree with that view of the law. Anyhow we are proceeding upon the same lines now as before this Act was passed. My impression is that if this Act was passed what would probably happen would be just the same as before. In local elections a married woman would be occasionally put upon the register. I suspect they would. That is a thing which is done now. There is a historic example in which at Manchester some one who rejoiced in a name which did not reveal whether it was a man or a woman got on the register, and so I dare say it would be in the future, as it would be impossible in all cases for the overseer to know whether a woman was married or single. I have no doubt that some married woman would get upon the register; but in the Parliamentary elections it would rest with the opponent to show to the revising barrister that the person was a married woman. The revising barrister might decide it one way or the other. Then it would probably come to the High Court of Judicature for decision, and without pretending what its decision would be, I should say it would naturally follow upon this line. It would be said that woman has been under a double disability. She has been incapable by reason of sex from holding any political right, and she has been incapable by reason of marriage or coverture of holding any political right or possessing property. The Legislature has passed an Act taking away the disability of sex, but leaving untouched the disability of coverture. Therefore, should the Bill have passed and become an Act, women as spinsters and widows would get the franchise, but married women would not get it. That is what I believe would happen. But what I want to impress upon all our friends is this—we are simply proceeding as a society. We have been proceeding in Parliament to get if possible the removal of the disability of the sex. What follows after that is for others to concern themselves with, for some of us to take up and prosecute if we feel so moved. But we are strictly moving along the line laid down at first. We want to get rid of the disability which we believe to be so prejudicial to the nation and so prejudicial to the character of women. We are confident that we are approaching a time when that disability will be removed, and I trust and hope—and the whole object of what I say is to secure that important end—that we shall not be distracted by any antagonism amongst ourselves, that those who wish for the enfranchisement of all women shall co-operate with those who wish to emancipate only unmarried women, and those who wish to enfranchise unmarried women shall still work with those who desire a larger enfranchisement, because they believe what they are working for is good, and that the future must be left to God and the future. (Cheers.)

Dr. CAMERON, M.P., moved: "That this meeting adopt the report and statement of accounts just read, and direct that they be circulated." He said: This society has now been in operation for twelve years, and there is no question which during that time has made greater progress as that of women's suffrage. The report reminds us also that we have had our losses during the year. We have, I am sorry to say, lost many friends and supporters. Among them is Miss Rhoda Garrett, Mr. Edward Eastwick, Sir David Wedderburn, M.P., and Mr. Ashton W. Dilke, M.P. Their losses we very much regret. I think there can be no doubt whatever, as the report plainly sets forth, that public opinion in the matter of women's suffrage has made immense strides since the subject last came before Parliament. Upon the last occasion when it did come before the House of Commons, which was in 1879, the majority against our proposal was one hundred greater than in the division which occurred the other day. Out of doors, too, the growth of public opinion in our favour has been manifested by hosts of petitions, not only from private individuals, ratepayers, and electors, but from public bodies, municipal and parochial. All this tends to

show that the subject has at last become to be recognised as one of practical politics; and that the consummation pointed out in the last paragraph in the report is one which we may now regard as within measurable distance of achievement. I was present at the last debate in the House of Commons. I was not like my hon. friend distracted by the prospect of having a speech to make, and therefore I was able to listen with greater impartiality to the speeches that were then made. But I did not gain very much enlightenment from them. There was not a single additional argument adduced against our proposal, and we had the usual array of jokes and stale platitudes and fallacies which we have heard before. The best joke was that resuscitated by Mr. Beresford Hope, regarding whom himself a much better joke was made not very long ago. It was said, and I am afraid too truly, that in every question relating to the social and political rights of women he is Hope divorced from all faith and charity. (Laughter.) The joke of Mr. Beresford Hope related to a Prime Minister, who was said to have formed an attachment to the female leader of an Opposition and married her, and that they had set up an Opposition Government. (Laughter.) The usual platitudes were heard also to the effect that the supporters of the movement wished to degrade women by thrusting them into the vortex of politics, and this was cheered to the echo by those who forgot that the Queen is a woman. They forgot also that we allowed women to be degraded, as they call it, at the annual elections of municipal councils and parochial boards, and that neither the women nor ourselves appear to be much the worse for the process. (Cheers.) We were told that our ultimate object was to get women into Parliament, to have a female Secretary to the Treasury, or something of that sort. Well, that appeared to be considered as argument. As a matter of fact, everyone who knows anything about the question must be aware that there is no connection between the exercise of the right of the electoral franchise and the right to sit in Parliament. Clergymen are allowed to vote, but they are disqualified from sitting in Parliament. Again, Civil servants have the right to vote, but except in a few cases they are disqualified to sit in Parliament. And lastly, most men are qualified to sit in Parliament although they may not be electors in any constituency. But the most extraordinary fallacy and the only novelty of the debate was introduced by the Attorney-General, who brought it out as if it were a clenching argument, viz., that, after all, we must look to the great and indispensable qualification for the exercise of the franchise, namely, the fitness of the persons who exercise it to bear arms and to go into the field in defence of their country. He was forgetful of the fact that most of our recruits were minors, and therefore had not the franchise, and also that crippled and aged and broken-down men were allowed to exercise it without anyone thinking that any great principle was contravened thereby. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend, however, has alluded to the unfortunate differences of opinion which were brought before the public at the time of the recent debate; but I must say that, in the face of the publicity given to those differences of opinion in our own camp, the great diminution in the majority against Mr. Mason's resolution which has taken place has, to my mind, an enhanced significance. Had it not been for that we should have shown still better results. So far as I am concerned, I am in favour of extending the franchise either in the case of men or of women. But I quite agree with my hon. friend that it is a most foolish thing, if you cannot get everything your own way, not to get as much as you can. (Cheers.) It is all very well to talk about logic; but, as Mr. Disraeli once said, the country is not governed by logic but by votes, and we must look to what will secure votes as well as to be logical. I therefore accept heartily the proposal in Mr. Mason's resolution as a great step in the right direction, and as embodying the establishment of a most important principle. I shall be prepared to support that principle, and shall do my utmost to further its cause, for I am convinced that the addition of women electors to the Parliamentary electoral roll of this country can do no possible harm to themselves or to any other people; but that, on the contrary, it will be productive of an element of purity, an element of temperance, and of justice in connection with our electorate, which in the face of those disgraceful facts which each general election discloses, we cannot well afford to do without. (Cheers.) I have great pleasure in moving the resolution.

Mr. COLERIDGE KENNARD, M.P., seconded the resolution, and said: It was with considerable diffidence that I accepted the invita-

tion to address you, when I reflected how very, very small had been the attention which it has been my lot to give to the great question which you have in hand. And for this simple reason it was not until quite lately, when under Providence I was placed in a position to do so, that I was able to do this cause any real practical service. When I was so fortunate as to attain the great privilege and the correspondingly high responsibility of a seat in Parliament I hastened to place at the disposal of this your cause my vote on the last occasion. It was the first time I had an opportunity of giving a vote and I gave it; but unfortunately I did so in a very half-and-half way. But I had to pair in honour of the first woman of this land. I was to go to the Queen's ball to take my wife and daughter, and I therefore made haste, in honour to this cause, to pay my *début* to my Sovereign. But I went away, having paired with another who would have voted against you. (Cheers and laughter.) I am gratified to see present so many gentlemen who differ from me upon almost every political subject, and to find that we have a bond of sympathy. I have heard, however, from time to time many of the minor objections which are being urged against this movement, but it would be unbecoming for me to urge them upon you, as you so little need them. The real reasons in favour of your object, that representation should be co-existent with taxation, is a proposal which needs no enforcement from me. I have often heard it repeated that by the introduction of the female upon public questions, a species of impulsiveness would be introduced into that which should be calm and dispassionate. Well, now, I have always from my youth thought that if there is anything a woman possesses it is a more unerring instinct than man. I think, sir, we may set off the so-called impulsiveness, haste of conviction, and conclusion on the part of the woman—we may set off against that her better gift of truer and purer instinct in dealing with the questions that come before us. (Cheers.) Sir, I am one of those who believe that the time is stretching out before us all as a nation when the great passions which awaken people of religious tendencies will meet and collide with those minds which are entirely ungifted with those feelings. I do, sir, believe that with the assistance of the women of England, when the clash of religion meets with that of irreligion and freethought—commonly called Secularism—I believe that we shall have the invaluable aid of women's judgment; I believe that they will be on the side—as a previous speaker has referred to it—of purity and temperance; and, under God's blessing, I do believe that it will be in the interest of true and Godlike religion that women should have the franchise. And for that reason I, as a member of the Tory party, and standing here, sir, alone among the members of that political party—(A Voice: "No, no, Mr. Archdale is here.") I beg his pardon, he sits with his back to the light, and I did not see him. I thought that our friend Mr. Reginald Yorke would have been able to be here with me on the platform, but he requested me to tell Miss Becker that he greatly regretted he was unable to be present.

Mrs. CHANT moved "That the best thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Hugh Mason, Baron de Worms, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Mr. Henry Fowler, Mr. Jacob Bright, and Mr. Courtney for introducing and supporting the resolution for extending the Parliamentary franchise to women who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and pledging itself to support any further steps that may be taken by their Parliamentary friends to obtain the assent of the Legislature to this proposal."

Dr. Cameron here took the chair, as Mr. Courtney was compelled, owing to other engagements, to leave.

Mr. G. H. ARCHDALE, M.P., said: I have been called upon unexpectedly by Miss Becker, the worthy secretary of this society for the conferring of the franchise upon women, to second the resolution. I have, ever since I have been in Parliament, supported this question, and I intend to do my best always to endeavour to obtain the franchise, as I think women in this matter suffer the greatest injustice. You see a lady with an annual income of about £10,000 or £12,000 deprived of the franchise, whilst her ploughman, her coachman, and the other servants in her employ have the vote. She may be possessed with wonderfully good talents, and be everything that is noble, but yet she is debarred from the vote. We have had a specimen from Mrs. Chant of the eloquence of women, and one is almost persuaded to say that he should like to see such a lady as this a member of Parliament, as well as to have a vote.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The Right Hon. JAMES STANSFELD, M.P., moved the third resolution, "That the Executive Committee for the ensuing year consist of the following persons, with power to add to their number:—Mrs. Ashford (Birmingham), Miss Becker (Manchester), Alfred W. Bennett, Esq., M.A., Miss Caroline Ashurst Biggs, Miss Bigg (Luton), Miss Helen Blackburn, Miss J. Boucherett, Dr. Cameron, M.P., Hon. Emmeline Canning, Miss F. Power Cobbe, Miss Jane Cobden, Miss Courtenay, Leonard Courtney, Esq., M.P., Miss Mabel Sherman Crawford, Mrs. Ashton Dilke, the Hon. Mrs. Maurice Drummond (Hampstead), Mrs. H. Fawcett, Miss Agnes Garrett, Rev. C. Green (Bromley), Mrs. Ashworth Hallett (Bristol), Viscountess Harberton, Thomas Hare, Esq., Mrs. Haslam (Dublin), Miss K. Hill, Frederick Hill, Esq., Mrs. John Holland, C. H. Hopwood, Esq., Q.C., M.P., Mrs. John Hullah, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. E. M. Lynch, Robert Main, Esq., Mrs. Charles M'Laren, Duncan M'Laren, Esq., Mrs. M'Laren (Edinburgh), Miss Muller, Frederick Pennington, Esq., M.P., Mrs. F. Pennington, Miss Reeves, Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd (Leeds), Mrs. Shearer (Nottingham), Miss Lillie Stacpoole, Mrs. James Stansfeld, Rev. S. A. Steintal (Manchester), J. S. Symon, Esq., Miss Helen Taylor, J. P. Thomasson, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Thomasson, Miss Tod (Belfast), and Miss Williams." I have to move that these ladies and gentlemen be the Executive Committee for the next year. And now let me say a few words that occur to me of congratulation to you upon the conditions under which you are now placed. I have had a somewhat lengthy Parliamentary experience, though, after all, the experience of twenty-two or twenty-three years is a very limited and trifling experience, if we come to regard the march of the great events which control and make the history of humanity, I must say that during the whole of those twenty-two or twenty-three years of my Parliamentary experience, and of my greatest interest in public movements and in public questions, I have not known and do not at this moment think I can recall any question which has made so great a progress in so short a time, and which involves issues so deep, so wide, and so far-reaching as this question of women's suffrage. (Hear, hear.) Now when I say it involves issues deep and wide and far-reaching, I will make a present of that admission and conclusion to the opponents of the extension of the franchise to women. I am not afraid of making that admission, for I am not afraid of their fears. What I have always observed and found is this, that the timidity and narrowness and the unwisdom of the opponents of a given reform, when the time was ripe for that reform, have generally done as much to secure its acceptance and its transmutation into the shape of law, as perhaps all the thought and the intellect and the eloquence and the devotion of those who had given their lives to further that cause. This may seem a paradox, but I do assure you that it is the result of a considerable experience, not only in my own time but in the study of the history of former times. It is, I suppose, an incidence of the law of progress under which we live that those who desire to oppose progress shall be unwittingly opposed at the wrong time and in the wrong way. At first they oppose just enough to excite a little spirit of resistance on the part of those who, if they were perfectly quiescent, might have been quiescent too, and then they never yield in time to allay any movement which has any reality or any great future before it. They seem doomed and destined by their mistakes of judgment and by their blindness to contribute to the great movements to which they would oppose themselves if they could. And it is so in this case, and it will ever be so. You have made immense progress within a very few years, and the progress that you have made is an assured progress. And now the question for you is, What is the next step of progress which you have to make, and what is the best way of getting it? I entirely agree with the remarks made by your chairman upon that branch of the subject, but I would add just a word or two. I would say we ought not to be too anxious or troubled about differences of opinion on such a point amongst ourselves, because I have never known a cause with any vitality in it, which moved the hearts and consciences of men and women, that did not give birth and rise to differences of opinion of that description. And I take these differences of opinion amongst ourselves

as an evidence of the vitality and future growth and ultimate success of this great cause. (Cheers.) What I would say, therefore, is just a simple word or two to both parties who have been referred to to-day; and I would say do not let any person interested in the question of women's suffrage—interested in Mr. Hugh Mason's specific proposals or any other proposals—do not let any such person ask anyone else to be silent—to conceal any opinion which he or she may have upon this particular subject. An expression of that opinion will do no harm, none whatever. In my opinion people will not be more frightened by being told that if you admit single women now married women will be admitted hereafter. I do not think that will affect their minds or that it ought to affect your policy. You have no need to suppress the expression of opinion, but you have a right, and it is your duty, to determine your actions with reference to some considerations of practical prudence and of probable immediate success. Well, then, I say you are wise in asking now for what you may and what I have a very strong hope you will ere long obtain, and that you would be very unwise if, for the sake of consistency and of principle, you were to ask what by no possibility you could obtain from the Legislature. What is the situation at the present moment? We are coming very near to the question of the extension of the franchise—of household franchise from the boroughs to the counties. This is an occasion which you are absolutely bound, if you have only a little common sense, not to neglect—it is absolutely essential as a matter of prudence and ordinary political tactics that you should make your mark upon that Bill, so as to make it one step in your progress. I will tell you two reasons why you should do that. First, that if you do not do it, you postpone, I do not know for how many years, the occasion when you may have the chance and the opportunity of gaining something towards the object which you have in view. But you would not only postpone your chance to another time, but you would very seriously endanger—as seriously as it is possible for you to endanger—the future prospects of your cause if you were to allow household suffrage to be extended to the counties of England, and not make every possible effort to secure the admission of women to a share of that extension of household suffrage. If you do not succeed in an attempt of that kind, and if simply male householders are allowed to vote in the future by the passing of the County Suffrage Bill in both counties and towns, then it may be that the next question—and it may be ten or twelve years before that arises—of the extension of the suffrage will be the extension to manhood suffrage. And let me point out to you that that has been already indicated by an extremely influential member of the present Government and of the present Cabinet, namely, Mr. Chamberlain, the President of the Board of Trade, and one of the members for Birmingham, who has raised the flag of manhood suffrage. Now I say you must get women within the pale of the franchise before the question of manhood suffrage can be brought to the front. (Cheers.) And if there is no other reason, that is a reason why you should strike and not delay, in the vain hope that by delaying you may strike a more vigorous blow at a future time. I believe very probably you will attain your object. I am as sanguine as the chairman has expressed himself upon the subject. I think a very great diversity of motives will tend to help you in attaining that object; you are not justified in calling upon people to conceal their opinions, but you are justified in asking for that and for nothing more than that which it is prudent and tactical at a given moment to demand; and you are justified in bringing forward all the honest arguments addressed to the various aspects of the question which are most likely to attract attention and to affect the minds of those whom it is your business to convince. Therefore I have only to express my entire concurrence, and if you will permit me I will say my entire approbation of the policy which has been followed by this association from the first. (Cheers.) In conclusion I will only say that you should not make too much of these differences; do not ask for any sacrifice of principle from any man or woman; do not ask for the sacrifice of silence; but persistently pursue the policy which you have hitherto pursued with so much success, and work for that which you may attain, and which it is of great importance that you should attain. (Cheers.) I have very great pleasure in moving the resolution.

Miss MULLER seconded the motion. Dr. ANNA KINGSFORD rose in the body of the hall and read a letter from Mrs. Jacob Bright, who therein enforced the view that the society should demand the suffrage for married women.

Mrs. PERRIER spoke to the same effect. Miss WILKINSON supported the resolution, which was carried. The chair was taken by Mr. A. W. BENNETT. Miss TOD moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Courtney for presiding and Dr. Cameron for presiding. This was seconded by Miss BIGGS. After the vote had been agreed to, the CHAIRMAN (Mr. A. W. Bennett) said they could not over-estimate the value to the cause of having the support of a man like Mr. Courtney. Words of wisdom had fallen from Mr. Courtney and Mr. Stansfeld, asking them to unite their forces against the common enemy and to settle all minor differences, and these words he thought would go a long way towards promoting the harmony which was so desired among them. For his (the speaker's) own part, being a married man, he utterly scorned the idea that giving the franchise to married women would introduce discord to the family; but as a humble follower of the movement he should follow the advice given by Mr. Courtney and Mr. Stansfeld, who were both practical and experienced men. They could do so with the utmost readiness and zeal, because the advice given them was for the ultimate success of the cause, and it was by following the advice given that they would the more readily gain the object which they had in view. The meeting then separated.

THE PROPERTY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

A HUSBAND RESTRAINED FROM GOING TO HIS WIFE'S HOUSE. A case which will be of far-reaching importance under the Married Women's Property Act has been decided by Mr. Justice Chitty. A husband had left his wife and was, it was stated, in occupation of a separate establishment, but he occasionally returned to the house in which his wife was living, and on leaving took with him any article on which he could lay his hands. The house had been comprised in the marriage settlement, and was settled upon trust for sale with consent of both husband and wife, while the house itself until sale, and, when sold, the proceeds of sale, were to be for the separate use of the wife without power of anticipation. Acting on the precedents of Green v. Green and Allen v. Walker, Mr. Justice Chitty, on the application of the wife, made an order restraining the husband from going to the house. It was urged that this was in effect to grant a judicial separation, which could only be done in the Divorce Court; but the learned Judge pointed out that it was only granting the wife that protection for her property to which she was as much entitled against her husband as against a stranger, and if the husband was aggrieved he could provide another house for his wife, and if she refused to live there could sue for the restitution of conjugal rights. As in such a case he could scarcely be successful, it is obvious that under the new Act, by which all a married women's property is henceforth settled to her separate use, the power of the wife is likely to be materially extended, not only over her property, but also over her person.—Law Times.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY IN NEW ZEALAND.—We learn from the New Zealand Times of the 15th of last June that Major Atkinson, the Colonial Treasurer, in his address to his constituents at Hawera, on the 29th of May, stated that among the measures which the Government would bring in during the present session was a Bill to deal with Married Women's Property on the same lines as the English Act.

Obituary.

Mrs. MATILDA CHAPLIN AYRTON, M.D.—We record with much sorrow the death of this accomplished and amiable lady, which took place in Sloane-street, London, on July 19th. As Miss Chaplin she was one of the pioneers who fought the battle of medical education for women at Edinburgh. She took her degree as M.D. in the University of Paris, and obtained the diploma which entitled her to practice in this country, from the King and Queen's College of Physicians, Ireland. She married Professor Ayrton, and her death causes much regret in scientific circles. Although she took no specially active part in the suffrage movement, she was a warm supporter and helper of the cause. She took part in the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Central Committee in July last year, and she died on the day when the meeting was held this year.

MANCHESTER SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Table with columns for subscriptions and donations, listing names and amounts for various locations including Blackburn and Darwen, Accrington, Wigan, Burnley, Liverpool, and Macclesfield.

S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, TREASURER, 28, JACKSON'S ROW, MANCHESTER.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

Table with columns for subscriptions and donations, listing names and amounts for various locations including Liverpool, Macclesfield, and Wigan.

LAURA M'LAREN, TREASURER, 29, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.

BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND.

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