

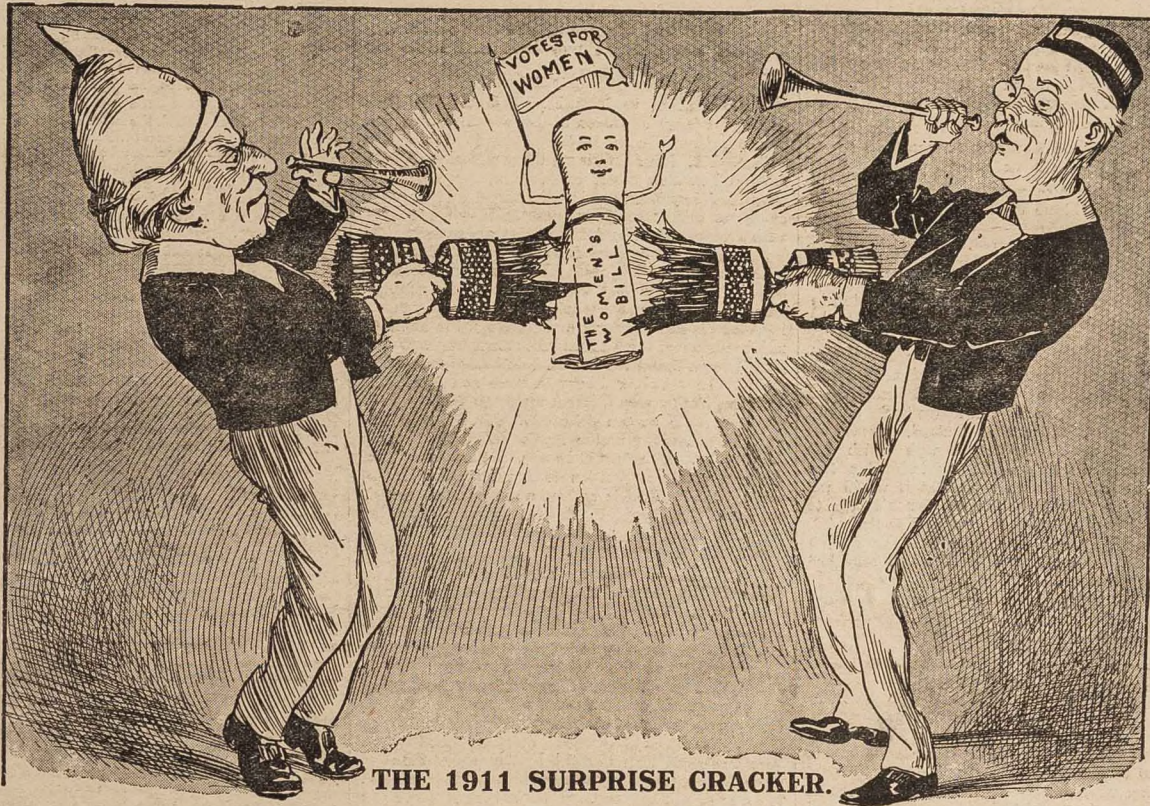
VOTES FOR WOMEN

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To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK.

On Monday in last week the *Westminster Gazette* quoted the following very practical words of Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone:—

It is sometimes necessary in politics to make surrender of what, if not surrendered, may be wrested from us. And it is very wise, when a necessity of this kind is approaching, to anticipate it while it is yet a good way off; for then concession begets gratitude, and often brings a return. The kind of concession which is really mischievous is just that which is made under terror and extreme pressure.

The *Westminster* applied them, of course, to the Conservative party, in reference to the Constitutional Crisis, but it is the Liberal Cabinet at the present day who most sorely need to take this advice to heart with regard to the question of woman suffrage. As practical politicians they must realise that as woman suffrage is coming, and coming very soon, the only thing for them

to decide is whether they will concede it at once or whether in a little while it shall be wrested from them, to their lasting dishonour.

What Does Liberalism Stand For?

Is Liberalism a matter of real principles or only of opportunist measures supported by special pleading? That is the question which was forcibly presented to us by reading the following paragraph in the *Daily News* of Tuesday in last week:—

Home Rule for Ireland is a necessary part of the creed of Liberalism because, as Swift said, and as Mr. Gladstone said after him, government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of tyranny. Liberals are opposed to tyranny in all its forms, whether it takes the shape of House of Lords' arrogance, or clericalism, or Russian absolutism, or the maintenance of alien rule in Dublin Castle. Our belief in Home Rule is not, as Dr. Hanson seems to think, a mere theory of the advantages of devolution. It is a theory of liberty, of the inherent right of civilized nations to self-government, whether the nations are mainly Catholic like Poland or Ireland, or mainly Protestant like Finland.

Liberalism, like charity, ought to begin at home. It is not much good having pious views about the inherent rights of self-government in Poland or Finland if you do not recognise the claim to such rights when they are made in your own country. Liberals who stand in the way of woman suffrage, and imprison the women who are fighting for it, the Liberal Press, which meets the campaign of women by misrepresentation and suppression of the truth, had better not talk too big about the fundamental principles of liberty. Hypocrisy brings its own reward.

The Tyranny of the Cabinet.

The recent Parliamentary history of woman suffrage has exhibited the growing power of the Cabinet and the correspondingly increasing impotence of the private Member of Parliament. To this sinister feature, whose influence extends far beyond the question of woman suffrage, the leaders of this movement have called repeated attention; they have warned the men of the country that if they tolerated this abuse on one

question it would come home to them on other matters in which they felt themselves directly interested. A noteworthy comment on this is to be found in one of the resolutions which will be moved at the Labour Conference, to be held at Leicester on the thirty-first of this month. It reads as follows:—

That in order to establish the authority of the elected representatives of the people in Parliament, as against the overpowering political influence now exercised by Ministers, who treat nearly every important decision of the House of Commons as a vote of confidence, on the refusal of which a dissolution may follow as a penalty, the Labour group in the House of Commons be requested to ignore all such possible consequences and declare their intention to force their own issues and to vote steadfastly on the merits of the questions brought before them.

But to woman suffragists who have no votes and no representatives there is no alternative but militant methods.

The Right of Majorities.

Mr. John Redmond, in an article in *Reynolds's News-paper*, January 8, quotes Mr. Gladstone (1881):—

There is but one sound principle in this House, and that is, that the majority of the House shall prevail. The whole of our proceedings are founded on it, and what consequences have followed? A majority of five threw out the Melbourne Government in 1839; a majority of five turned out Lord John Russell's Government in 1866; a majority of three threw out the Government of which I had the honour to be the head in 1873; a majority of two brought in the Public Education Act; a majority of one threw out the Government of Lord Melbourne, or at least caused the dissolution of Parliament, in 1841; a majority of one carried the *Reform Bill of 1832*, when, if that majority had been the other way, unquestionably whatever Bill was passed would have been of an entirely different character.

The italics are our own. Mr. Redmond uses the quotation in support of his argument that the General Election shows decisively that the national judgment is against the Veto of the House of Lords. "A majority of 124 in January, 1910," says Mr. Redmond, "and a majority of 126 in December, 1910, are conclusive." Women, being entirely unrepresented in the Constitution, are not directly concerned with the issues dealt with in that article, but they are very vitally concerned with the majority of 110, inside the House of Commons, on the Conciliation Committee's Bill, and

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